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FEAR OF PEACE

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BANGLADESH BEGINS RELOCATING ROHINGYA REFUGEES TO ISLAND

SPORT 12  
PSG BEAT MAN UTD IN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

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10 VIVACITY

## Marathon talks fail as farmers stick to their guns

Next dialogue on Saturday; unions' leaders present five-point demands to Govt, say won't accept anything less than repeal of all three farm laws

STAFF REPORTER/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

The eight-hour-long fourth round of talks between the agitating farmer unions and the Government on Thursday failed to end the standoff over the new farm laws as the protestors refused to accept anything less than the repeal of all the three farm laws. Another round of discussions will be held on Saturday in a bid to forge a resolution.

Although the Government side, led by Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, assured the group of nearly 40 farmer leaders that all their valid concerns would be discussed and considered with an open mind, but the farmers stuck to their demand of repealing the three "hastily-passed" farm laws, saying there were several loopholes and deficiencies.

Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ambari) president Rishpal Singh, said, "The Government noted all points. Ministers assured that they will look into them and sought one day's time."

The farmer leaders emphasised on a five-point set of demands that seeks to frame a specific law on Minimum Support Price (MSP) and end the punishment provision for stubble burning.

Farmer leader Kulwant Singh Sandhu said the government made many proposals including on MSP and procurement system, which would be discussed among the farmer organisations on Friday, before the next meeting.

The farmers emphasised that the provision to register a case for stubble burning should be ended, and asked why the Government wasn't ready to



Farmers arrive at Vigyan Bhawan for their meeting with the Govt over the farm laws in New Delhi on Thursday. Panjanj Durrani / Pioneer

give them "written assurance" on MSP despite its earlier statements that MSP will continue.

The farmer union representatives emphasised that a new law on MSP be framed in a special session of Parliament, demanding that it must guarantee them MSP not only now but in the future as well.

The farmer leaders said, "Let us assume that MSP will continue but the procurement would stop. The MSP will have no meaning then."

The farmer union representatives said the Government said the three farm laws were brought in with the interests of farmers in mind.

## Farmers squat on Delhi-Meerut e-way, roads blocked

SHEKHAR SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

As protesting farmers continued to be adamant on their demand for scrapping of the Centre's agriculture reform laws and stayed put at the national Capital's borders with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, the police on Thursday closed routes on two national highways connecting Ghaziabad to Delhi as the farmers sat on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway.

The protesting farmers had on Wednesday threatened to block other roads of Delhi if their demands were not met.

The local police have closed the routes on NH-9 and NH-24 from Ghaziabad to Delhi. On NH-1, both sides of the route have been closed



Farmers block a part of the Delhi-Meerut Expressway during their protest march against the new farm laws, on Delhi border on Thursday. PTI

near Shani Mandir, the Delhi Traffic Police tweeted. The crowd of farmers continued to swell at Ghazipur, prompting the police to close the Delhi-UP border on NH-24.

"The Ghazipur border on NH-24 is closed for traffic from Ghaziabad towards Delhi due to farmers' protests. People are advised to avoid NH-24 for coming to Delhi and use

## Farmers' delegation rejects Govt's food, arranges own lunch

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Farmer leaders on Thursday refused the lunch offered by the Government during their meeting with three Union Ministers here and preferred to eat the food ferried in a van from the Singhu border, where thousands of their colleagues are sitting in protest against the new agri laws.

During the lunch break, a small van carrying food for around 40 people was seen outside the Vigyan Bhawan, where the meeting is underway.

"Our farmers' representatives did not accept the lunch

offered by the Government and we arranged it from the Singhu border," Lok Sangarsh Morcha president Pratibha Shinde told PTI.

Farmers' leaders told the Government to focus on resolving the issues instead of trying to be a good host by offering lunch, said the Lok Sangarsh Morcha president.

"How can we have lunch offered by the government when our fellow farmers are sitting on roads," said Shinde, expected to increase on all non-BJP Haryana MLAs who helped the BJP form the Government.

JJP threatens to withdraw support if farmers' MSP demand not met

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

NDA ally Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) in Haryana warned the BJP that it may not hesitate to step out of the Government if the demand of the agitating farmers was not met by the Centre.

JJP chief Dushyant Chautala, who is Deputy Chief Minister of the State with core electoral base of Jat farming community, has said his party would stand with farmers on the MSP issue.

If the standoff between the farmers and the Centre continues, pressure is expected to increase on all non-BJP Haryana MLAs who helped the BJP form the Government.

## Peeved Parkash Singh Badal returns Padma Vibhushan

MONIKA MALIK ■ CHANDIGARH

The honour the BJP Government bestowed upon Punjab's five-time former Chief Minister Parkash Singh

Amarinder meets Shah, says protest affecting eco, national security

New Delhi: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Thursday made an appeal to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the protesting farmers to find an early resolution to the impasse over the new farm laws, saying the agitation is affecting Punjab's economy and the nation's security

Badal in 2015 has apparently ended up embarrassing the party. Often dubbed as the founder of the NDA, Badal on Thursday returned Padma Vibhushan — country's second highest civilian award — to protest "betrayal of farmers".

Rajya Sabha MP Sukhdev Singh Bhindsa too returned his Padma Vibhushan award to oppose the farm laws.

The BJP Government, in March 2019, had presented him the award after he announced to part ways with the Akali Dal following political differences with party chief Sukhbir Badal, in an apparent attempt to woo him.

## PATHAK DA CASE ₹1.28-cr more cash deposit detected

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Vigilance police, which is investigating into the disproportionate assets (DA) cases of Additional PCCF Abhay Kant Pathak, on Thursday detected further cash deposits of Rs 1.28 crore in his bank accounts at Bhubaneswar and Pune.

Thus, the total amount of deposits in his three bank accounts till date has gone up to Rs 16.05 crore. Out of this, the cash deposit amount is Rs 10.76 crore.



Besides, bank accounts and insurance policies of Pathak have also been traced at Brahmapur and Balangir. Apart from this, bank accounts in his family members' names have been traced at Brahmapur and are under verification.

## PRADEEP PANIGRAHI ARRESTED



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Another charge against Panigrahi is that he also collected money from aspirants for jobs at the Tata company unit in his native Ganjam district.

Earlier on the day, Crime Branch officials took Panigrahi from his house here for questioning. Panigrahi's wife Sujata Panigrahi said, "The Government claims that Rs 2.5 crore has been deposited in my husband's bank account. I accept that. We are ready to clarify on that."

Another charge against Panigrahi is that he also collected money from aspirants for jobs at the Tata company unit in his native Ganjam district.

Another charge against Panigrahi is that he also collected money from aspirants for jobs at the Tata company unit in his native Ganjam district.

## State reports 434 new Covid +ve

- Total reaches 3,20,017
- Day's highest 54 cases in Khordha
- 5 more die; total toll now 1,755

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State on Thursday reported 434 new Covid-19 cases in 28 districts and the State pool in the last 24 hours, pushing the total positives tally to 3,20,017.

Of the new cases, 249 were from quarantine and 185 local contact cases, the Information & Public Relations Department said.

Khordha district reported the day's highest 54 cases followed by Angul 45, Sundargarh 41, Nuapada 30, Balangir 29, Cuttack 28, Mayurbhanj 27, Keonjhar 25, Bargarh 23, Puri 19, Jajpur 16, Baleswar 10, Ganjam and Jagatsinghpur nine each, Kalahandi Sambalpur, Bhadrak and Kendrapada eight

Of the new cases, 249 were from quarantine and 185 local contact cases, the Information & Public Relations Department said.

Each Jharsuguda seven, Koraput six, Boudh three, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur and Dhenkanal two each and Nayagarh Rayagada, Subarnapur and

## 32 NEW +VE CASES IN BBSR

- Total now 30,834
- 1 more dies; 34 recover

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

State capital Bhubaneswar on Thursday registered 32 new Covid-19 positive cases, taking its total tally to 30,834.

Of the new cases, 18 were local contacts and 14 were

Deogarh one each. Besides, 11 cases were reported from the State pool.

Meanwhile, five patients succumbed to the disease in the last 24 hours, with which the State's total death toll mounted to 1,755.

Three deaths were reported from Ganjam district and one each from Khordha (Bhubaneswar) and Nayagarh, the Health and Family Welfare Department said.

## Vaccination to start by year end or early Jan

There is good data available that vaccines are very safe, says Delhi AIIMS Director

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Director of AIIMS, Delhi, Dr Randeep Guleria on Thursday said he was hopeful that an emergency regulatory nod will be given to coronavirus vaccine by the end of this month or early next month to start vaccinating people.

Amid reports of allegations of an adverse event case against Covishield vaccine, he said that safety and efficacy of vaccine are not compromised at all.

"Around 70,000-80,000 volunteers have received the vaccine and no significant serious adverse effects were seen. The data shows that in the short term, vaccine is safe," he said.

"There is good data available that the vaccines are very safe. We should get emergency use authorisation from Indian regulatory authorities to start giving vaccine to public," Dr Guleria said to a news agency here. Dr Guleria is also a member of the national task force on Covid-19 management.

He added, "Chennai trial case is an incidental finding rather than related to vaccine.

## SUPPORT TO 'DELHI CHALO' STIR NKS holds torch rally in BBSR



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Expressing solidarity with the agitating farmers in New Delhi, Odisha-based farmers' body Navnirman Krushak Sangathan (NKS) held a torch rally here on Thursday evening.

The NKS activists, who went in a procession from Master Canteen Square to Ram Mandir Square, shouted slogans against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and VK Singh demanding that

the new farm laws be withdrawn.

NKS State coordinator Seshadev Nanda said that till the new farm laws are withdrawn, they would continue to agitate and many farmers from Odisha would join the agitating farmers in New Delhi.

NKS assistant coordinator Umakanta Bharat said that if large numbers of farmers from the State attend the Delhi Chalo agitation, they can prove that they don't need political parties' support to pressurise the Government.

ing vaccinators and availability of syringes."

On Covid-19 pandemic's new wave in India, he said, "Now, we've seen a decline in current wave and I hope this will continue if we are able to have a good Covid-19 appropriate behaviour. We're close to having a big change related to a pandemic if we manage this behaviour for the next three months."

Guleria also said that in the beginning, Covid-19 vaccine will not be available in sufficient doses to give to everyone. "We need a priority list to see

## Give security to Pari's kin: HC to N'garh SP

PNS ■ CUTTACK

The Orissa High Court on Thursday directed the Nayagarh Superintendent of Police to provide adequate security to the family members of five-year-old girl Pari, who was kidnapped and murdered in July by influential persons allegedly having political links of the locality in Jadupur village of the district.

Adjudicating a writ petition filed by advocate Padmalaya Mohapatra, a Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Mohammad Rafiq, also asked the SIT of Crime Branch police to submit a status report to the court detailing the investigations made so far into the case.

Besides Mohapatra's writ, another petition was also filed in the court by Ganjam-based advocate Surendra Panihari-headed social organisation Bharatiya Bikash Parishad having similar prayers for an order of CBI enquiry and adequate compensation to the family of the victim. Both the writs will be jointly adjudicated, the court ordered posting the matter to be heard again on December 16.

Classes-X, XII exams to be held offline

PNS BHUBANESWAR

The annual matriculation and Plus II examinations 2021 would be held offline...

inations that will be conducted in written mode next year, the State Government will also hold the examinations accordingly...

and Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE) to conduct the matric and Plus II examinations in February and March, respectively...

the schools for the students of Class-IX onwards, the board examinations can only be held after resumption of the classes offline," Dash said.

Mass Education Department can reopen for Classes-IX to XII as per the SOP issued by the department.

As board tests to be conducted in written mode

board examinations of 2021 would be conducted in the conventional written mode. The board examinations of 2021 will be in the regular written manner and not online...

INBRIEF

NAVEEN GRIEVES DEATH OF MDH'S GULATI



who turned the MDH Spices into an iconic brand. He would always be remembered for his philanthropic work.

Bhubaneswar: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed his deep grief over the demise of Dharanagari Gulati, owner of the iconic spice brand MDH, on Thursday...

PROTEST AGAINST CUSTODIAL DEATH Congress bandh hits life in Birmitrapur



PNS ROURKELA

Normal life was completely paralysed at Birmitrapur as the Sundargarh district Congress on Thursday observed a 12-hour dawn-to-dusk bandh...

George Tirkey picketed the shops at a market complex. The Congress demanded a major reshuffle of officials in the Birmitrapur police station...

Road area in Birmitrapur town, had been detained in connection with abduction of a businessman, Pradeep Kuku. He was reportedly taken into the custody from Simdega district of Jharkhand on November 25.

Tribal among 2 from Odisha shines at ICF Miss India

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Bringing laurels to the State, two young girls, including a tribal, have been adjudged the first and second runner-ups, respectively...



After qualifying at the State level, six girls from Odisha were selected for the national beauty pageant that had two categories: Miss India Global Universe and Miss India Tourism.

Bike lifter gangs busted; 5 held in city

46 vehicles, 7 mobile phones seized

BHUBANESWAR: The Commissionerate police on Thursday busted two bike lifter gangs and arrested five persons for their alleged involvement in stealing of motorcycles.

The Nayapalli police also recovered as many as 46 motorbikes and seven mobile phones from the arrestees possession.

The other gang used to steal sport bikes which got involved in snatching and other criminal activities, added sources. Nayapalli Police Station Inspector In-Charge (IIC) Sarad Sahoo and his team under the supervision of ACP Anil Mishra were collecting inputs against bike lifting gangs and busted the racket today.

EDUCATIONIST CHOUDHURY NO MORE

Paralakemundi: Emergent educationist Gourachandra Choudhury passed away on Monday at his Sunari Street residence in the town. He was 89. Choudhury superannuated as DI of Schools and also served as Head Master of MRBH School.



Following his demise Paralakemundi MLA K Narayan Pao, Press reporters Garudadhwaaj Choudhury, Tarini Prasad Panda, Bhagabat Panda and many others visited his residence and paid their last respects. A condolence meet was also held by the Uttal Hiteishini Samaj.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS-LADEN TRUCK CATCHES FIRE IN B'SWAR

Baleswar: A truck carrying household goods of lawyer caught fire at Janmuhadi on NH-16 in Baleswar district late on Wednesday night. All the goods loaded in the truck were reduced to ashes. The truck was moving from Baripada to Bhubaneswar. A short circuit was suspected as the cause of the fire.

In BBSR: 97 DLs of unruly bikers cancelled in 10 days

PNS BHUBANESWAR

The Bhubaneswar Regional Transport Officer (RTO) has cancelled driving license (DL) of as many as 97 motorcyclists for rash and negligent driving during the last 10 days. While RTO-1 has cancelled DL of 13 persons, RTO-11 has cancelled 84 DLs. Besides, over 50 cases are pending in both the RTOs and more than half of them would be cancelled, said sources.

out helmet do not own the vehicle in most cases. And such violators are not being punished, neither their DLs are cancelled since they managed to flee. In such cases, the enforcement squad issues challans on the basis of number plates for which the owners are forced to shell heavily. penalty. If any violator manages to escape, the vehicle he or she was driving would be seized the next time they are caught during checking. There is also a law to seize one's vehicle of those not showing DL, said RTO-1 Pradeep Mohanty.

Nirmalya sale: SJTA files FIR against Amazon

PNS PURI

The Three Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) on Thursday filed an FIR against e-commerce platform Amazon over the online sale of Nirmalya Prasad of the Puri shrine and sought action against the company.

is being sold on Amazon at higher prices without permission of the temple administration. The persons or organisation involved in the sale should be punished," said Khuntia. Anil Kumar Sahu, convener of Puri Zilla Yuva Adhivakta Sangha, has sent a legal notice to Amit Agarwal, Global Senior VP and Country Head, Amazon India, over the issue seeking a reply from him within 20 days.

The Prasad was being sold on the website at Rs 59 per packet containing 25 grams of Nirmalya with a delivery charge of Rs 50.

The Suar Mahasuar Nijog had also filed an FIR at the police station on Wednesday over the matter. Earlier, Sambabhatti Khuntia, a servant of the temple, had also filed a complaint against the Amazon India. "Nirmalya



City IIT's Annual Convocation today

PNS BHUBANESWAR

The IIT Bhubaneswar is all set to celebrate its 9th Annual Convocation on December 4, live by a hybrid mode where students can join physically or by online in view of the pandemic time.

₹32-CR PRODUCTS PROCURED FROM WEAVERS, ARTISANS

11 LAKH MAN-DAYS GENERATED DURING COVID PERIOD

PNS BHUBANESWAR

As another measure towards livelihood support activities during the Covid period, the State Government has extended a number of direct and indirect carry-ups to the weavers, craftsman and artisans.

Products of worth Rs.132.29 cr were procured from them besides creation of 11 lakh man-days and extension of other schematic benefits. said Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy here on Monday reviewing activities of the Textile Handloom and Handloom Department during the Covid period.

He also directed the officials to create more livelihood opportunities through expansion of sericulture in convergence with MGNRSRGs.

Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mohapatra said, "Asana and Arjuna plants are the natural feed for sericulture. These are forest species and hence can be planted in forest areas. To tap up more such plantation,"

The Department Secretary Subha Sharma said around 11 lakh man-days were generated through sericulture within April to September 2020 and the workers were paid around Rs.24.53 cr towards wages. Besides, around 4,400 people were provided direct employment in textile and apparel sector particularly through Shahi Exports and Aditya Birla groups. Out of them about an 87% were women. Around 1,267 elderly persons with at least 20 years of working experience were also provided financial assistance of Rs 500 to Rs 800 per month.

Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mohapatra said, "Asana and Arjuna plants are the natural feed for sericulture. These are forest species and hence can be planted in forest areas. To tap up more such plantation,"

IIT BBS PLACEMENTS ON RISE THIS YEAR

Despite corona effects

PNS BHUBANESWAR

Despite fear of corona effect, the placements now being handed out at IIT Bhubaneswar are showing a rising trend this year.

a few days. The placement season 2020-21 witnessed 88 offers from reputed companies ranging from Code Nation Innovation Labs, Analog Devices, Amazon, Dream 11, Adloio, Rupeek, JLR, Caterpillar, Persistent, Mathworks, Optum (UHG), Oil India Limited etc. Director of Prod. & RA Raj Kumar said the IIT Bhubaneswar had seen a surge in placements this year with the

offers received already surpassing last year's as on date. Offers as high as Rs-45 lakh per annum CTC have already been made to seven B.Tech students of Electrical Sciences. Majority of the recruiters are IT and core industries and are wide ranging indicating a growing trend in the recruitment. The students are all geared up with full enthusiasm for the ongoing placements via online mode.

State can raise annual fish production by 1.24L tonnes

BHUBANESWAR: Boosted by cage culture fishery, the State's annual fish production can increase by over 1.24 lakh tonnes, said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik during signing of a MoU with entrepreneurs for cage culture fishery in the Hirakud reservoir on Thursday.

immensely benefit the Primary Fishery Cooperative Societies also. Patnaik said such facilities will provide a number of useful services to fishers and farmers including registration of fishing boats and licenses, registration of brackish water farms and avails subsidy for setting up of new livestock and fishery units.

Development Department under the ST initiatives. Such applications will provide a number of useful services to fishers and farmers including registration of fishing boats and licenses, registration of brackish water farms and avails subsidy for setting up of new livestock and fishery units.

Adequate institutional credit to weaker sections amiss in Odisha

MANAS JENA

The financial inclusion strategy by the RBI speaks about opening of banking facilities within 5 km radius of every village and the RBI has drafted guidelines for priority sector lending and special credit policy for the weaker section of the society such as SCs, STs, minority, rural poor, PWD and women. But in Odisha, a majority of people engaged in agriculture and informal sector, mostly SCs and minority communities, are deprived of easy loan facility.

Performances of banks very poor

population states Odisha where it can cover majority of the population identified as potential beneficiaries of such credit-based economic intervention. The credit inclusion will lead to positive changes in production, employment, income and improve quality of life of a vast majority of people in rural area. But in spite of increase in credit flow to agriculture sector in post bank nationalisation era, the disparity in flow of credit among regions and social groups remains a worry.

agriculture sector is the mainstay of the State economy engaging about 60 per cent of the people in a number of ways. The socio-economic condition of the people in the majority of people engaged in agriculture and allied activities has not changed to a minimum standard in comparison to others. The Union Ministry of Labour reports on cost of living based consumer price index 2014 say the cost of living of the agricultural workers in Odisha is one of the lowest in the country; Odisha is the third lowest higher than Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

SOCIAL CANVAS

with controlling distress migration and unemployment. The RBI issues credit policy for the banks within which it has identified priority sector to bring sectoral balance. The priority sector lending includes financing agriculture and allied activities, micro and small entrepreneurs, education and housing loans and others targeting the weaker sections, which depend on traditional money lending.

ity concentrated districts in the country and in Odisha. It is equally important to take care of the minority communities within the weaker sections with equitable portion of the credit under priority sector lending. RBI notification says that 15 per cent of the total advance should be for weaker sections of the society and RRBs should have 60 per cent of the credit for the priority sector. Within this, half of the loan should go to small and marginal farmers possessing less than two hectares of land.

as agricultural implements, irrigation and other developmental activities undertaken in the farm. The various activities in pre harvest and post-harvest periods, such as spraying, weeding, harvesting, grading, sorting and transportation, and exporting can also be covered under the activities. The common guidelines for priority sector loans say there should be no service charge on small loans with a slab and the bank has to maintain a separate register covering data on receipt, sanction, rejection and disbursement of the loan. The bank has to issue acknowledgement for loan applications. The loan applications by SCs and STs will be rejected by the next higher authority of the branch with sufficient reasons of rejection.

2019-20 only 449 loan applications have been disbursed as reported in SLBC meeting. It is observed that there is lack of sufficient branches and ATMs in Odisha that do not follow the orders of Government officials due to lack of monitoring and periodic review of the annual credit plan targets fixed by the Government. It was also reported that many banks whose were performing well in other States were performing very poorly in Odisha.

Take for example the standup India scheme. As per guidelines, each branch of a scheduled bank has to extend loans at least to one SC or ST and minimum one woman entrepreneur. There were target of 5,830 applications for

# Ganjam A'wadi tender: Lowest bidder ignored

### Deviations in bid conditions raise eyebrows

SAROJ MISHRA ■ BHUBANESWAR

Even though the State Government has repeatedly stressed on following the ST norms, the awarding of the tender (No. 11418, dated 30.9.2020) by the PD DRDA, Chhatrapur in Ganjam district for supply of fans and LED bulbs for Anganwadi Centres in the district has led to many eyebrows raised on a number of deviations in the tender conditions.

The lowest bidder (L1) for the tender has been ignored and the L2 bidder was favoured

by the purchase committee. For which the firm has requested the Ganjam district Collector for a review the matter.

Sources said the Sona Garments of Mayurbhanj became the lowest bidder for fans when the bids were opened at the DRDA office. The firm's Bajaj Fans met the technical specification of Istar fan. As per the Government norms after October 31, 2019, the Bajaj model and now the same model has been benchmarked as 1 star rated category. But later, the authorities issued a corrigendum (No 11761, dated 12.10.2020) and changed into 3 Star in the financial bid, though they had not mentioned it in the technical bid.

Notably, in any tender the technical bid specification is always countable. The purchase issued the order to the L2 bidder in basis of financial bid specification with Rs 209 rate difference is illegal.

Similarly, the Sona Garments 3 star Havells Bulb was ignored and the purchase committee selected a non-brand bulb (Rs 168) of a firm which claimed to be a MSME, without any testing. Besides, the L2 bidder was exempted paper cost and EMD claiming to be a MSME unit. But he applied for Usha fan through an authorised person but was again exempted paper cost and EMD, though the fan was not his own products. It should have been disqualified in this ground.

The Sona Garments, besides a review by the Collector, has in an RTI sought on what conditions its bid was disqualified. But it is yet to receive a reply.

# Ganjam NAC contractors' dues not cleared

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The contractors have submitted a memorandum to the Executive Officer of Ganjam NAC expressing their unwillingness to work under the NAC anymore.

The memorandum collectively signed by all the contractors said that during last few months they feel suffocated to work under Ganjam NAC due to non-payment of their monthly bills.

The contractors have further alleged that, even after completion of the assigned work, most of them do not get their EMD and security deposits in time which they ought to get.

Mention may be made that, most of these contractors are unemployed qualified local youths taking contract works with very little resources. They hardly possess big capital to undertake any major contract works.

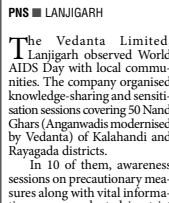
# Vedanta holds awareness drive on AIDS Day

PNS ■ LANJIGARH

The Vedanta Limited, Lanjigarh observed World AIDS Day with local communities. The company organised knowledge-sharing and sensitisation sessions covering 50 Nand Ghars (Anganwadis modernised by Vedanta) of Kalahandi and Rayagada districts.

In 10 of them, awareness sessions on precautionary measures along with vital information were conducted in strict adherence to Covid guidelines. The members and beneficiaries of the remaining 40 Nand Ghars participated virtually.

During these sessions, the cluster coordinators of Nand Ghars interacted with around 400 women beneficiaries and front-line workers about HIV/AIDS. Various facts about the disease including the symptoms of the disease, modes of



transmission and precautionary measures to be taken to prevent the disease, were also elaborated during the programme.

On the occasion, Chief Operating Officer, Vedanta Limited, Lanjigarh unit Rakesh Mohan said, "As HIV/AIDS continues to be a critical and high-risk health concern, we have come forward to sensitize our communities about the



disease. I am confident that the knowledge-sharing sessions organised on the World AIDS Day will go a long way towards imparting important information to our communities about the disease. We will continue to conduct such awareness programmes in the future as well to make our communities aware and informed for leading a healthy life."

Some unidentified miscreants broke open two ATMs in Soro of Baleswar district late on Wednesday night and looted lakhs of rupees from the dispensers. One ATM is of the Axis Bank while the other was of a private finance company at Bagudi Bazar in Soro.

# In Baleswar: Lakhs looted from 2 ATMs

PNS ■ BALESWAR

Some unidentified miscreants broke open two ATMs in Soro of Baleswar district late on Wednesday night and looted lakhs of rupees from the dispensers. One ATM is of the Axis Bank while the other was of a private finance company at Bagudi Bazar in Soro.

The miscreants used gas cutters to break open the machines in both the incidents, locals said. The exact amount stolen from two kiosks was yet to be ascertained. On being informed, police



rushed to the spot and started investigation. The cops suspected the loots to be the handiwork of an inter-State gang, who have committed a series of such crimes in different parts of the country. Police are investigating into all the angles to trace and nab the culprits.

# LINK WITH PATHAK! Ranger under Vig scanner in Balangir

PNS ■ BALANGIR

Forest Ranger in Balangir district came under Vigilance scanner over unaccounted wealth on Thursday.

Four Vigilance teams of Balangir, Sonepur, Sambalpur and Bargarh divisions conducted simultaneous raids on houses and the office of Muribahal Ranger Prashant Nayak at three different places in Titilagarh on the charge of accumulating wealth disproportionate to unknown sources of his income. The Vigilance officials

raided Nayak's residence at Hatapada in Titilagarh, his office at Muribahal and a farmhouse near Belpadar. The raids were carried out by around 25 officials.

Till the last report came in, the searches were underway. Source said that Nayak was posted at the Bangomunda Forest Range prior to his joining at Muribahal. The Vigilance raided his residences and office suspecting his connection with tainted IFS officer Abhay Kant Pathak, who has been arrested on DA charge.

# KONARK FEST DAY 2 Manipuri, Odishi glue audience to seats SAND ART ON THEMES OF SEALIFE, ETHNIC CULTURE, COVID WOVES SPECTATORS

PNS ■ KONARK/BHUBANESWAR

The day two of the Konark Dance Festival on Wednesday witnessed a beautiful set of performances by a troupe from Kolkata's Manipuri Nartanalaya led by renowned choreographer Bimbavati Devi.

Manipuri is associated with rituals and traditional festivals; there are legendary references to the dances of Shiva and Parvati and other gods and goddesses who created the universe. It incorporates both the tandava and lasya and ranges



from the most vigorous masculine to the subdued and graceful feminine. Generally known for its lyrical and graceful movements, Manipuri dance has an elusive quality. The second set of performances in Odishi was by a

troupe of the Sanjali Ensemble from Bengaluru, led by exponent Sharmila Mukherjee.

Both the audience and participants lauded the facilities and detailed Covid-19 safety protocols put in place by the Odisha Tourism.

During the day, sand artists at the Chandrabhaga beach worked through sculptures of the golden sand on themes of seafife, ethnic culture and Covid awareness.

The popular beach spot now has OTDC serving delicious quick bites and refreshing beverages at the Chandrabhaga Beach Cafe.

# Bhitarkanika records less mammals this yr

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

A total of 7,904 numbers of mammals have been recorded within the Bhitarkanika National Park. This is 201 less than last year, Bikash Ranjan Dash, DFO of Rajnagar mangrove (Wildlife) Forest Division said.

Forest authorities carried out anti-poaching census for three days last month in five forest ranges under Bhitarkanika National Park.

The enumeration of mammals has been undertaken to assess the numerical growth pattern of these animals living within the marshy wetland and mangroves of this Ramsar international wetland site, Dash said.

The enumerators carried out the headcount of deer, wild boar and hyenas, and other mammals by direct sighting method in 34 forest beats under five wildlife Range of Bhitarkanika National Park.

The mammal census was carried out during the morning and afternoon hour.

As per the latest census report published by the Rajnagar Wildlife Division, the mammals such as spotted deer (Chital), wild boar and Rhesus Macaque are more than thousand in numbers in the National Park. However, sighting of other mammal species such as hyena, hare, fox, leopard cat and sambar were less than 10 numbers.

# 3 of marriage party killed As SUV from B'garh hits truck in C'garh

PNS ■ BARGARH

As many as three persons were killed and four others suffered critical injuries when a marriage party vehicle collided head on with a truck near Kondatarai in Chhattisgarh.

The injured persons were rushed to the Veer Surendra Sai

Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR), Burla for treatment.

As per reports, an SUV was carrying the people from Katapali in Bargarh district for a marriage party in Raigarh of Chhattisgarh when the accident took place. Further details were awaited.

# IN KALAHANDI CDPO NABBED TAKING BRIBE

PNS ■ BHAWANIPATNA

Vigilance officials on Thursday arrested Jayanti Mohanty, Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), Koksara, Kalahandi district, for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 7,000.

According to reports,

Koraput Division of the Vigilance has registered a case in this connection

Mohanty had demanded the bribe from one Arati Dandaseena, an Anganwadi Worker in Sunamati Centre of the district, for releasing the latter's salary of three months.

Dandaseena lodged a complaint in this regard with the anti-corruption agency, following which a trap was laid and the official was caught red-handed by Vigilance sleuths while accepting the money from the complainant. The Koraput Division of the Vigilance has registered a case in this connection.

# Rourkela SOS Village holds AIDS Day

PNS ■ SUNDARGARH

The SOS Children's Village, Rourkela under family strengthening programme observed the World AIDS Day on Tuesday.

Mothers attended the event from Dhamra and Bagbudi-A. Chief Counsellor from ICTC Centre, Rourkela Pusparani Mishra and village director, SOS Children's Village, Rourkela, Tapan Kumar Suna were the guests.

Suna explained as to why the World AIDS Day is observed on December 1. FSP Incharge SK Ojha said to be alert is the best way to avoid HIV/AIDS infection. Pusparani Mishra said every person can get information



about AIDS and counselling from ICTC centre which is totally free of cost and take the medicine whole life. They can get pension Rs 500 from the Government Hospital,

Rourkela. Government Hospital. They can take medicine totally free of cost and take the medicine whole life. They can get pension Rs 500 from the Government Hospital,

she told. A quiz session regarding HIV/AIDS was organised for caregivers. Candles were lighted for those who died due to HIV/AIDS.

# Man attempts immolation before Cesu office AS LAID-OFF WORKERS PROTEST

PNS ■ ANGUL

Tension ran high in front of the Cesu office at Palahara in Angul district when a man tried to immolate himself while several laid-off workers were staging a protest on Thursday.

Champak Kumar Sahu poured petrol on him and attempted to set himself ablaze. However, police rescued him and foiled the suicide bid. More than 50 persons, who were earlier working with the Enzen company for Palahara, Khamar, Paral and Rengali sections of the Cesu, have been laid off. They resorted to a dharna before the office demanding



their reinstatement. Though some officials of the district administration and police held

a discussion with the protestors to resolve the issue, the former employees demanded a written

assurance by the concerned Assistant Engineer regarding their fresh recruitment.

# AIDS Day observed at MKCG

BRAHMAPUR: The World AIDS Day was observed at the MKCG Medical College Hospital here by the Academic Society Principal and Dean of the college Prof Diprimayee Tripathy inaugurated the event.

Prof Durgamadh Satapathy, Prof Ganeswar Sethi, Prof Sangita Dash, Dr MV Narasimham and Prof Sunil Agarwal were guests of honor. The speakers elaborated the significance of the day and preventive measures against the deadly disease. Academic Society Secretary Sibasis Mishra, joint secretary A Nabeedya, president Nayak Pati, general secretary Siddhartha Toppa and Suchimita Panda coordinated. Similarly an AIDS awareness camp was held near the Brahmapur railway station by voluntary organisation Aruna, Ganjam district Collector. Vijaya Amrute Kulange flagged off a 'Sachetana Rath'. Brahmapur MLA Bikram Panda was present. PNS

# IN SAMBALPUR Man hacked to death over property feud

Neighbour arrested

PNS ■ SAMBALPUR

A long standing dispute over a patch of land took a violent turn when an elderly man was hacked to death in Kuanram village under the Dharuadihi police in Sambalpur district on Thursday afternoon.

The deceased was identified as Tularam Nayak (67). After receiving information, the police reached the spot and detained one Dubaraj Pradhan, a neighbour of the deceased.

A police official said Tularam was working near his house, when Dubaraj reached the spot carrying a sharp weapon. Before Tularam and his

A police official said Tularam was working near his house, when Dubaraj reached the spot carrying a sharp weapon

sister, who was also present at the spot, could comprehend anything, Dubaraj hacked Tularam to death. Following the incident, the accused fled the spot.

The police official said based on the complaint of the deceased's son, police later raided a place and nabbed the accused. The complainant said there was a dispute between Tularam and neighbour Dubaraj over a patch of nine decimals land for the past 40 years.

# In Jagatsinghpur: Youth found burning before beloved's house

JAGATSINGHPUR: A youth was found burning in front of his beloved's house at Balichandrapur under Naugaon block in Jagatsinghpur district on Wednesday evening. The youth, Bipin Sahu, hailed from Dhenkanal and was working as a mason at Naugaon.

He sustained critical burn injuries and admitted to the Naugaon hospital and later was shifted to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack when his condition deteriorated. Villagers said Bipin tried to self-immolate in front of the house of a young woman with whom he was in love. But the youth's family members contradicted the claim of villagers and said the young woman's family members poured petrol on the youth and set him afire as they were opposing her love affairs with the youth. PNS

# In Jajpur: 55 illegal stone crushing units sealed

PNS ■ JAJPUR

The district administration on Thursday sealed 55 illegal stone crusher units on Thursday under Dhamarsala Tehsil in Jajpur district.

The district administration has recently identified 243 illegal crusher units in the district and decided to shut down all these units, said Jajpur ADM Akshay Kumar Mallick. The Orissa High Court has recently directed the district administration to shut down all the illegal crusher unit within January 9, 2021 after hearing a PIL for which they formed a task force comprising all the Tehsildars, BDOs, labour officials, officials of Odisha State Pollution Control Board and police to close all the illegal units," added Mallick. When contacted, district

stone crusher unit owners' association general secretary Chandan Nayak said, "Around 30,000 workers are earning their livelihood by working in many crusher units in the district. We welcome the decision of the district administration to shift all the crusher units to safer places far away from the

highways and villages." "160 persons applied before the authorities to get land to open crusher units. But the officials are yet to allot land to them. It is high time the authorities shift all the units as soon as possible for the benefit of the workers and owners," Nayak added.

# Balangir farmers stage demo

Against paddy deduction during procurement

PNS ■ BALANGIR

The members of the Balangir Zilla Krushak Mahasangh led by Sudhir Parichha, Jati Pradhan and others on Wednesday staged a dharna before the collectorate here, opposing the deduction of paddy in the name of FAQ, streamlining the process of issuing tokens, besides hike in paddy purchase limit. "Today we are staging a token strike demanding streamlining of the paddy procurement process in the district so that farmers will not face problems while selling their paddy. Unless the Government ensures it, there would be agitation in coming days," warned Krushak Mahasangh district president Sudhir Parichha.

# Covid caseload past 95L mark

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's Covid-19 caseload breached the 95-lakh mark on Thursday while the total number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 89,73,373 pushing the national recovery rate to 94.11 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 95,34,964 with 35,551 new infections being reported in a day, while the death toll climbed to 1,38,648 with 526 new fatalities.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 89,73,373 pushing the national recovery rate to 94.11 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.45 per cent.

The active Covid-19 caseload continues to remain below 5 lakh. There are 4,22,943 active coronavirus infections in the country which comprises 4.44 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20 lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It went past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, and surpassed 90 lakh on November 20.

India has reported more daily recoveries than the daily new cases during the past 24 hours. While 35,551 persons were found to be infected with Covid in India, during the same period, India has registered 40,726 new recoveries. It has led to a net decline of 5,701 cases from the total Active Caseload in the last 24 hours.



The new recoveries continue to overtake the daily new cases continuously over the past 6 days. India's active caseload has fallen under the 4.5 per cent mark.

The trend of more daily recoveries than the daily cases has led to a continuous contraction of India's Active Caseload. It has ensured that India's present active caseload of 4,22,943 consists of just 4.44

per cent of India's Total Positive Cases.

New Recoveries outnumbering the daily New Cases has also improved the Recovery Rate to 94.11% today. The total recovered cases stand at 89,73,373. The gap between Recovered cases and Active cases is steadily increasing and presently stands at 85,50,430.

Ten States/UTs have contributed 75.5 per cent of the new cases, said the Ministry,

# No directive for affixing posters outside homes of Covid patients, Govt tells SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre informed the Supreme Court on Thursday that its guidelines do not contain any instructions regarding affixing posters and signages outside the homes of Covid-19 patients and there cannot be any stigma attached to it.

The Government said this before a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan which reserved order on a plea seeking directions to do away with the practice of pasting posters outside the homes of those

infected by coronavirus.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta referred to the affidavit filed in the apex court by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and told the bench, also comprising Justices R S Rood and M R Shah, that the guidelines do not require any such affixation of posters.

"The Central government guidelines do not require this," he said, adding, "There cannot be any stigmatic impact."

The bench asked Mehta whether the Centre can issue an advisory that this should not

be done.

To this, Mehta said the central government has already done this.

"We will close it. Heard. Judgement reserved," the bench said.

The counsel appearing for the petitioner told the bench that there are no such instructions in the guidelines to affix posters outside the home of those found Covid positive but the "reality is very different".

"Posters are also affixed with names of COVID positive patients on it," the counsel said.



Air Commodore B Ahluwalia, Secretary of Kendriya Saikha Board, pins the Armed Forces Flag Day badge on the Chief of the Army Staff General MM Naravane in New Delhi on Thursday

# Congress demands immediate withdrawal of all three farm laws

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday stepped up the demand for the immediate scrapping of the farm laws in view of the farmers' protest in the national capital.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said in a tweet: "Accepting less than scrapping of these black farm laws will be deceit to farmers and the country."

Rahul said it would be a betrayal of India and its farmers if the Centre fails to repeal the farm laws.

The 68-year-old party has been attacking the government over the use of force against the protesting farmers, and urged them to withdraw the new farm laws and redress the grievances of the protesters.

Taking to Twitter ahead of talks between farmers and government, Rahul Gandhi wrote, "Accepting anything less than the complete withdrawal of black farm laws will be a betrayal of India and its farmers."

Rahul's remarks come at a time when farmers from several states are protesting at Delhi borders against the Centre's new agriculture reform laws.

Well before, Rahul had attacked the Centre over its claim of doubling farmers'



income and alleged that their income in fact 'halved' under the 'suit-boot' government, while during protests by farmers his income has grown four times.

"They said farmers' income will be doubled. What they did was increase the income of friends' four times and halved that of farmers. This is a government of suit-boot, lies and loot," the Congress leader said in a tweet.

Rahul also shared a video showing police using water cannons and firing tear gas shells during protests by farmers with a speech of Prime Minister Narendra Modi playing in the background wherein he says his government is taking steps to resolve the problems faced by farmers and double their income.

"Modi government, stop giving 'jumbas' (retorts) to farmers, stop the dishonesty and atrocities, stop giving them the falsehood of talks, (and) abolish all three black laws which are against farmers and labourers", Rahul Gandhi said.

# CBSE's 10th and 12th exams to be held in conventional written mode

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday said that the class 10th and 12th Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) exams for the year 2021 will be conducted in the conventional written mode and that as of now there is no consideration to conduct the exams online.

"The Board examinations of 2021 will be in the regular written manner and not online," the CBSE stated. The dates of examination, however, have not been decided yet, Education Ministry officials said.

Besides this, the CISCE, which conducts the ISC and ICSE board exams has written to the chief ministers of all states and union territories asking for permission to partially reopen schools from January 4 so that board exam students of classes 10 and 12 could participate in project works, practical works, SUPW, and doubt-clearing sessions.

According to the Ministry of Education, "Conducting the examinations is important to ensure the progress as well as for the better future of the students."

This year, amid the pandemic and 'new' operations scheme of things, a wide range of discussions have been underway among students, parents and teachers regarding the examinations.

From registration of Board exams to the final examinations, everything is being conducted virtually.

Earlier, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank had said: "Online education is a big challenge for students who are consistently away from schools and college. But students should always be ready to turn this challenge into an opportunity."

In view of all such possibilities, the government has taken a new initiative to conduct the examinations timely amid the Covid-19 situation.

The Education Minister has planned a three-stage dialogue with the alumni, parents and teachers for conducting the examinations. He is likely to communicate directly to students, parents and teachers through webinars on three different dates.

After this virtual dialogue,

the education minister will review the examinations to be held in the states and union territories. In this way, a detailed plan to conduct the examinations will be made according to the orders of the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Home Affairs.

"The biggest challenge is to study with better resolve and will, and to release the results on time so that students do not waste an entire academic year," he said, adding, "for the better future of students, it is necessary to conduct examinations across the country on time."

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) said in a statement that in case schools are allowed to reopen, they would follow all the safety guidelines and SOPs prescribed by the government.

CISCE has also asked the dates for the state elections to be held in April-May 2021 from the Chief Election Commissioner of India so that CISCE can finalise the ICSE board exam 2021 and ISC board exam 2021 dates, the commission said in their official statement.

# Pet animals turn saviours in times of no contact

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the absence of human-to-human contact due to coronavirus induced lockdowns, job losses and social isolation, pet animals filled the need by providing much-wanted comfort via cuddles, pats and a constant physical presence, according to a study published in the journal of Behavioural Economics for Policy (JBEP).

Researchers from University of South Australia asserted that as pets have played a lifesaving role in 2020, the Governments need take notice of this connections. Hospitals, hospices and aged care facilities should be encouraging pet connections with residents, they said in the study.

Lead author Dr Janette Young underlined that physical touch is a sense that has been taken for granted - even overlooked - until Covid-19 visited our door earlier this year.

"To fill the void of loneliness and provide a buffer against stress, there has been a global upsurge in people adopting dogs and cats from animal shelters during lockdowns. Breeders have also been inundated, with demands for puppies and kittens some waiting lists," she said.

It is estimated that more than half the global population share their lives with one or more pets. The health benefits have been widely reported, but little data exists regarding the specific benefits that pets bring to humans in terms of touch.

Touch is an understudied sense, but existing evidence indicates it is crucial for growth, development and health, as well as reducing the levels of the stress hormone cortisol in the body. It is also thought that touch may be particularly important for older people as other senses decline, she said.

In interviews with 32 people, more than 90 per cent said touching their pets both comforted and relaxed them - and the pets seemed to need it as well while many referenced pets' innate ability to just "know" when their human counterparts weren't feeling



well and to want to get physically close to them.

Kavita Kumar, a Defence Colony resident in New Delhi, agreed with the observation recalling how her furry pet, Muffin, has been a harbinger of peace and solace in these trying times. "He has been able to gauge my ups and downs and has provided me with sane and streamlines thoughts taking away the stress surrounding us," said Kumar a teacher in a Delhi school.

Unathi G Hunjan and Jayasankara Reddy, researchers from Christ University, Karnataka in their study in Sage Journals too have talked about various benefits of touch healing of pets.

"Biochemicals which can further boost the immune system and enhance health and well-being," they said.

Impairments like physical, visual, intellectual and speech and hearing impairments were from Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Delhi, Uttarakhand, Assam, Meghalaya, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Maharashtra.

"People with disability suffered significantly more than the rest of the population in accessing health and rehabilitation care during the Covid lockdown. We need to be adequately prepared so that we do not compromise their health needs," said Prof Murthy while Dr. Sara Varughese from CRM India, added "Many faced difficulties in even accessing basic necessities. Incomes were compromised and even withdrawing their money from their bank accounts was a challenge."

The lockdown also posed major difficulties in accessing medicines due to travel restrictions, out-patient services at hospitals/clinics, regular blood pressure monitoring, rehabilitation services.

At least 81.6 per cent reported experiencing moderate to high levels of stress. Among the 34.5 per cent who stated that they needed information on mental health issues, only 25.9 per cent had access to such services.

Only 20 per cent were able to get regular mental health counselling or therapy related services during the lockdown period, and 11.4 per cent faced problems getting their regular psychiatric medicines. 58.2 per cent were unhappy that the therapy sessions for their child with disability has ceased during the lockdown, said the study. Participants with varied

# Congress leader Chowdhury seeks short Winter Session to address farmers' issues

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Thursday requested Speaker Om Birla to convene a short Winter Session of the House to discuss several issues including the farmers' agitation and preparation of COVID-19 vaccine.

In a letter to Birla, Chowdhury, also the West Bengal Congress chief, said that the winter session of the House be convened with all the COVID-19 protocols in place to help the people understand the important issues the country is facing at present.

"There are a number of very important issues that the nation is facing in present times. The most notable among them are the ongoing farmers' agitation and the status/preparation of the COVID-19 vaccine."

Listing issues like "economic slowdown, unemployment scenario, continuous stand-off along the India-China border and unabated ceasefire violation along the India-Pakistan border", Chowdhury said, "There is a need for a thorough and transparent debate/discussion on all the above-mentioned important issues."

# 10 police stations get MHA awards for best policing

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Ministry on Thursday released a list of the top 10 police stations in India for the year 2020. Nongpok police station in Manipur topped the list followed by Sannamagalam AWPIS in Tamil Nadu and Kharang police station in Arunachal Pradesh in the 2020's top 10 police stations in the country.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in a statement said that 2020's survey for the best police station was done by MHA under "challenging circumstances" due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. It also said that Home Minister Amit Shah had noted that a "vast majority" of police stations shortlisted for the list were from small towns and rural areas.

Top 10 police stations award started in 2015 as per suggestion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the DGPs conference. The best police stations were selected from a total of 16,671 police stations on certain parameters, said MHA. "From these, 75 police stations were selected for the next stage, out of which 10 were selected as the country's best police stations. A total of 4,065 respondents participated in the survey," said MHA.

The fourth best police station award was given to Jhimli police station in Chhattisgarh, followed by Sanguem in Goa, Kalighat in Andaman, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Pakyong in Sikkim, Kanth in Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh, Khavel in Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Jamnukunta Town police station in Karimnagar, Telangana.

# SC grants bail to ex-DGP Saini in 1991 alleged murder case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Thursday granted anticipatory bail to former Punjab DGP Surendh Singh Saini in a fresh case lodged in 1991 disappearance and murder of a junior engineer Balwant Singh Multani.

A bench of justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and M R Shah allowed the appeal of Saini and set aside an order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court declining him the pre-

arrest bail in the 29-year-old case.

The top court directed Punjab Police to release Saini on bail in the event of arrest in the fresh case on furnishing of a personal bond of Rs 5 lakh and two sureties of the like amount.

It directed Saini to surrender his passport and to cooperate with the investigation in the fresh case without any prejudice to his rights and contentions in the pending proceedings before the top court for quashing of the FIR.

# HC grants custody parole to Bihar MP Shahabuddin

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has granted custody parole for three days to jailed former MP Mohd Shahabuddin, who is lodged in Tihar Jail and serving life term in a murder case, to meet his family in the national capital, noting that the police departments of Bihar and Delhi are in union that they cannot assure his safety in Siwan.

# NIA arrests one in human trafficking case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA has arrested accused Gopal Oraon of Khunti district, Jharkhand, in connection with a case relating to a human trafficking racket running in guise of placement agencies.

Oraon was a close associate of arrested accused Panna Lal Mahto and was actively involved in human trafficking racket, the NIA said on

Thursday.

The case arose out of FIR No. 07/2019 dated July 19, 2019 registered at PS-AHTU, Khunti, Jharkhand under various Sections of the Indian Penal Code and relevant Sections of the Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act.

The NIA re-registered the case as RC-09/2020/NIA/DLI on March 4 this year and took up the investigation.

# SC refuses to entertain IMA's contempt plea over non-payment of salaries to docs

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Thursday refused to entertain a contempt plea filed by Indian Medical Association (IMA) against the Delhi Chief Secretary for alleged non-payment of salaries to doctors. The court asked it to approach the high court which is dealing with the issue.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and M R Shah said the issue was being dealt with by the Delhi High Court and there is no point in entertaining this plea in the apex court.

Senior advocate Maninder

Singh, appearing for IMA, said the salary for April and May was paid after the high court's intervention but no salary was paid again from June to October.

The bench said the high court had already passed its order on July 29 and it is monitoring the issue.

Singh submitted doctors are termed as frontline warriors and they have to be paid salary on time but there was no substantial hearing in the HC.

He said that after the contempt application was filed in the top court, salaries for the

months of June to October were paid to the doctors.

Singh contended that doctors should be paid their salary on time to which the bench said that there is no doubt that salary has to be paid and Union of India has already passed an order in this regard.

On July 29, the Delhi HC had told the AAP Government to release to the North Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) the funds it required to pay the stipends of the resident doctors in the six hospitals run by the civic body. PTI

Repeat farm laws or face nationwide stir: Mamata

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has extended her support to the farmers' movement and asked the Centre to repeal the three 'oppressive laws' threatening a nationwide movement by her party if the 'anti-peasant' legislations were not taken back immediately.

Meeting was likely to hold a congress on Friday to discuss the strategy regarding the proposed movement even as a number of leaders are in favour of taking a large number of farmers from Bengal to Delhi to support the movement. The Chief Minister tweeted saying 'We will discuss how the Essential Commodities Act is impacting common people and resulting in skyrocketing prices. The central government must withdraw this anti-peasant law.'

prices go up... this is blatant thieving of the common people at the mercy of the rich,' she said. On the large-scale privatization she said, how 'The Government of India is selling everything. You cannot sell Railways, Air India, Coal, BSNL, BHEL, banks, defence etc. Withdraw ill-conceived disinvestment and privatization policy. We must not allow treasures of our nation to be transformed into BJP party's personal assets.'

UP Police makes first arrest under new anti-conversion law

Bareilly (UP): The Uttar Pradesh Police has made its first arrest under the new anti-conversion law, days after a man complained that someone is harassing his daughter in a bid to change her religion, officials said on Thursday.

Under Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel on November 28 had given assent to the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020, against forcible or fraudulent religious conversions. The law provides for imprisonment of up to 10 years and a maximum fine of Rs 50,000 under different categories. 'This is the first arrest under the new law. Accused Owais Ahmad was arrested from the Richha railway gate in the Bahedi area here on Wednesday. He was produced before a local court and was sent to 14 days judicial custody,' Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police, Bareilly, Rajesh Kulkarni said.

Barreilly (UP): The Uttar Pradesh Police has made its first arrest under the new anti-conversion law, days after a man complained that someone is harassing his daughter in a bid to change her religion, officials said on Thursday. The complainant has accused Ahmad, a resident of the same village, of trying to convert his daughter through 'allurement', police said. According to the complaint, Tikaram's daughter and Ahmed studied together in Class 12. Three years ago, the accused started pressuring her to undergo religious conversion and perform 'nikah' (marriage) with him, according to the complaint. But when the woman opposed, he threatened to kidnap her, Tikaram said in his complaint. Displeased that the daughter married someone else in June. However, Ahmed continued to harass her and her family members, he has alleged. Under the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance 2020, which deals with different categories of offences, a marriage will be declared 'null and void' if the conversion of a woman is solely for that purpose, and those wishing to change their religion after marriage need to apply to the district magistrate. Agencies

Didi outreach steps try to undo loss of clout with Adhikari's exit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday announced a host of 'outreach' measures that could to some extent offset the loss of clout with the exit of powerful mass leader Suvendu Adhikari who is almost on the verge of quitting the party the ruling Trinamool Congress. The Chief Minister told reporters her Government decision to cap the price of RTPCR test for ascertaining corona infection to Rs 950/. Earlier the test was priced at Rs 1,250. 'I have told that no one will be allowed to charge more than Rs 950/- Banerjee said. Initially the tests cost anywhere between Rs 4,000 and Rs 5,000 which were reduced by the Chief Minister to Rs 2,000 and then to Rs 1,500. Apart from reducing the charge of corona test Banerjee also announced that about one million students of government schools would be provided with tabs for continuing with their online classes. 'There are about 9.5 lakh students (class XII) in 14,000 government aided schools and 636 madarasas... they have been facing immense problem in continuing their online classes. So we have decided to provide them with tabs so that they can carry on their education. The Marathi-medium students in lesser classes the government schools will be provided with computers for facilitating online education. Apart from this the Chief Minister also announced 3 per cent dearness allowance for state government employees in January. 'We have limited resources still we will provide 3

percent DA to our Government employees in January,' Banerjee said even as BJP leader Samir Bhattacharya said that 'these decisions are aimed at winning back the fleeing electorate... but people have tolerated her for ten years they are not willing to see her coming to power again... so these measure will not help her win elections.' Launching a scathing attack on the Chief Minister Didi Ghosh said 'the populist schemes --- including Duarey Sarkar (Government at the door steps) --- that the Government is unleashing are aimed at the voters but the Chief Minister will have to answer as to what she was doing all these years. Why her officers did not meet the people there, why the people would have to return empty handed from the BDO offices... so these schemes will not work for her now.' On rebellions in the TMC Ghosh said that 'there are more police men guarding the TMC leaders than they are guarding the people there. Why the people who are leaving the party like the ones who are coming out of Trinamool now.' Though he would not name Suvendu Adhikari inside sources said that the powerful TMC leader had already been contacted by a top senior BJP leader including an MP. Earlier even as the efforts to pacify him failed the TMC leadership said they would not communicate with him any longer. 'We are not going to him any longer. Now he will have to take his decision... We have communicated our mind to him,' senior leader and TMC MP Saugato Roy who was holding dialogues with him as emissary of the Chief Minister said.

Mumbai gets Sea Harrier Monument

TR RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In an effort to motivate the youth of Mumbai to serve the nation with pride, a Sea Harrier Monument was dedicated to the city of Mumbai by Maharashtra's Tourism and Environment Aditya Thackeray on Thursday, a day ahead of the Navy Day. Held in the presence of Rear Admiral V Srinivas, Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra Naval Area, the dedication of the monument to the citizens of Mumbai marked 'reassurance of devotion and commitment of Indian Navy towards safeguarding our maritime boundaries.'



State privacy to rule ICI Bank Ltd. Maharashtra's Tourism and Environment Minister Aditya Thackeray with Rear Admiral V Srinivas, Flag Officer Commanding Maharashtra Naval Area at a ceremony marking the dedication of Sea Harrier Monument to the youth of Mumbai, at Bandra Band Stand junction on Thursday

Located at the popular junction of Bandra Band Stand, the monument stands tall and proud next to the sea, reminding of the heydays of the aircraft's illustrious service towards safeguarding the maritime frontiers of the Nation. The monument showcases the Indian Navy's aviation capabilities as well keeping the legacy of INS Virat alive from whose deck the aircraft operated.

Landing (STOVL) VTOL jet fighter, reconnaissance and attack aircraft. The aircraft formed part of INAS 300 squadron popularly known as 'White Tigers' whose legacy is being continued by the latest MIG 29 K fighters onboard INAS Vikramaditya.

Shekha Jheel dries up, foreign birds missing

PRADEEP SAKENA ■ ALIGARH

Despite the cold December, foreign birds are not coming on Shekha Jheel. While these days there were plenty of foreign birds on the lake and some birds also breed, but due to lack of water in the canal, the birds have not come here this year. In the last week of October, the foreign birds started coming here, but this time due to the halting of the upper Ganga Canal, the water in the lake, only 10% water is left in the lake. Due to the water scarcity that has been going on for twenty days, only 2% of the visitor birds are seen on the lake. All the bird watchers and ornithologists are blaming the administration and public representatives for the plight of the lake. It is alleged that after the declaration of the bird sanctuary, the construction of 2 tube-wells, administrative buildings, toilets and boundary walls was proposed with a budget of 3 crores and 4 lakhs. In which administrative buildings were built, while the tube-well required for the lake is still pending. If tube-wells had been arranged, there would have been no scarcity of water in the lake and birds would have stayed. Nature guide Mohammad Ishaq said that the lake was dried in December 2003, 17 years ago. Till then the then DFO Anupam Gupta had constructed footpaths due to which the water in the lake was reduced, but this time due to lack of water in the canal, the water in the lake is decreasing day by day.

Maha primary teacher wins global teacher prize

TR RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra's Zilla Parishad Primary school teacher Ranjitsinh Disale has bagged the prestigious Global Teacher Prize (GTP) 2020 worth USD One Million (Rs.7.40 crore). Disale, a 40-year-old teacher, earned the 'life chances of young girls' at the Zilla Parishad Primary School at Paritewadi in Solapur district of western Maharashtra, was selected from over 12,000 nominations and applications from over 140 countries around the world. The Global Teacher Prize was set up to recognize one exceptional teacher who has made an outstanding contribution to the profession as well as to the world. Disale is not only an important role that teachers play in society. Disale is credited with transforming education by using QR codes and other innovations to impart lessons which helped reduce the dropout rates, especially among the girl students. He was among the 10 global teachers shortlisted in October for the top global honour. He was declared the winner at a ceremony held in London on Thursday. The impact of Ranjitsinh (Disale) interventions has been extraordinary; there are now no teenage marriages in the village and 100 per cent attendance by girls at the school. The school was also recently awarded the best school in the district with 85% of students performing well in annual exams. One girl from the village has now graduated from University, something seen as an impossible dream before Ranjitsinh arrived. The GTP's official citation stated that Disale, who studied the Zilla Parishad Primary School at Paritewadi in Solapur district when he was a student, studied the system and submitted its report in 2018 and finally the National Council of Educational Research & Training (NCERT) decided to

Aligarh farmers protest at Noida-Delhi border against farm laws

Aligarh: In protest against the 3 farm laws, under the Delhi Jan Program of 32 Farmers Organizations, the workers of Bhanu, the Indian Farmers Union of Aligarh, continued to stage the Noida-Delhi Border. They announced that the protest will continue till the law is changed. The Indian Farmers Union Bhanu is on an indefinite strike under the leadership of National President Thakur Singh Bhanu Pratap Singh on Noida Delhi Border for the demand of farmers. During this, State President Yogesh Pratap Singh has demanded that the strike will continue till the purchase of the national produce at the minimum support price will be legalized and the anti-farmer laws will be changed. State General Secretary Dr. Shaileendra Pal Singh said that now the conch of the battle between the government and farmers has been sounded. PNS

adopt the QR codes in their textbooks, majority of the girls students were from tribal backgrounds which did not prioritize education and teenage marriages were a common practice in the region. The Marathi-medium schools where Disale teaches had multi-language courses in Kannada or Telugu owing to which many students were not able to perform well. Disale made a point to learn Kannada, an official language of neighbouring Karnataka. Afterwards, he redesigned all the textbooks of primary school Std. I-IV standards to ensure easier understanding by the young students. Along with unique QR codes, Disale also incorporated audio poems, video lectures, stories and assignments in Kannada which proved to be a boon for the young learners. So much so that Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella had earlier congratulated his work in his book, 'Hit Refresh'.

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Better facilities to be given to Divyans soon: Raj CM

Jaipur: Chief Minister Shri Ashok Gehlot said that the State Government is constantly making sensitive decisions towards the welfare of Divyang and to prepare them as skilled human resources.

He said that in the public letter, we had promised to provide facilities to Divyang similar as provided to BPL. Soon the proper decision will be made in this regard. This will be another big humanitarian decision that there was a time when state government to increase from three percent to four percent Reservation for the disabled in state services and increase in their honors pension amount. Mr. Gehlot was addressing the State Level Divyangan honor ceremony on the occasion of International Day of Disabled Persons.

Education Minister speaks on NEP 2020 in AMU online seminar

Aligarh: The implementation of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 will transform India as it connects the past with the future and focuses on leading India to the top,' said Union Education Minister, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'. He was speaking in the online seminar on National Education Policy-2020 of the Aligarh Muslim University and the virtual book release function of 'Physics of Neutrino Interactions' (Cambridge University Press) authored by Prof M SaJJad Athar and Prof S K Singh. Stressing that NEP is based on concepts of equity, quality and accessibility, the Education Minister said that the education policy is aimed to bring India's diverse nature in terms of regional languages with the benefit of providing primary education in mother tongue. PNS

Notice Inviting e-Tender

M. SSA/Spl./Prog./Management/ 05/334/2020/3129 Date: 01.12.2020 Mission Director, Axam Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission (Samagra Shiksha), Kahlipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites tender through e-Tendering process from manufacturing of uniforms for supply of Dress for learners of RSTC- NRSTC Centre. To participate in the tender process through e-procurement document, bidder should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal https://assamtenders.gov.in by themselves. The Bidder who have downloaded the tender schedules containing the tender details, terms and conditions, from the website shall submit their tender on-line on the website https://assamtenders.gov.in, with proof of payment of non refundable tender assessment fees of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand) only in the form of demand draft/Bankers Cheque drawn in favour of Mission Director, Axam Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission, Kahlipara, Guwahati-19, Assam, from any nationalized/Scheduled Bank and payable at Guwahati. The tender should be submitted on-line as per date and time of submission as per prescribed schedule.

OFFICE OF THE PROJECT MANAGER CONSTRUCTION UNIT UTTARAKHAND PEYJAL NIGAM. Notice Inviting e-Tender. Name of the work: CONSTRUCTION OF REMAINING WORKS AT PRIMARY SCHOOL, KUNWARPUR, BLOCK SITARGANJ (UDHAM SINGHPUR). Estimated Cost: Rs. 34.97 Lakh. Date of completion: 06 Month. Date and time of availability of Bid documents in the portal: 03.12.2020 (12.00 Noon). Last date/Time of receipt of bids in the portal: 22.12.2020 (17.00 Noon). Name & Address of the Officer inviting bid: Er. Om Prakash, Collectorate Compound, Rudrapur (Uttar Singh Nagar). For further details, details of subsequent Amendment/ correction documents etc. may be obtained from the e-Procurement portal: www.eassamtenders.gov.in

## A probing eye

SC makes CCTVs and audio recordings made at interrogation rooms in police stations, agencies and jails to curb custodial excesses



Finally, a process has been set in motion to hold the police to account for custodial excesses and crossing the line. In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court has made it mandatory for all police stations and probe agencies — the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) — to install CCTV cameras with night vision and audio recording facilities. States, too, have to deploy cameras with audio at all police stations. The court has even detailed the placement of such tracking devices at interrogation rooms, lock-ups, entries and exits, lobbies, offices of the inspector/sub-inspector and even outside washrooms lest officials find a way of hoodwinking technology. The video and audio recordings have to be preserved for 18 months for evidence and an independent panel can periodically source them to assess claims of human rights violations. After this overarching ruling, the police will undoubtedly find it difficult to justify brute practices in the guise of extracting vital information or cover up inconvenient truths under political pressure. The ruling assumes significance following the brutal custody death of two men in Tamil Nadu that had outraged our collective conscience and given us our own #lives matter moment. A father and son in Tuticorin, who were booked for running their shop 15 minutes beyond closure during a lockdown — a minor infraction by any stretch — ended up dead after the local police subjected them to a long, brutal and sustained interrogation, torture and sexual abuse in custody. Fifty nine-year-old P Jayaraj and his son, 31-year-old J Fenix, were booked under Section 188 of IPC (Disobeying the time restrictions ordered by a public servant, Section 383 (Extortion by threat) and Section 506 (Criminal intimidation). However, disobeying Section 188 is not so serious an offence that requires sustained questioning and night-long torture in custody. Apart from that, there were no witnesses to back up the need for the police to book the two men under Section 383 and Section 506. But witnesses living 500 metres away from the police station, where the two men were held, heard their screams and cries for help through the night. The next day, when the men were released from custody, their clothes were found ripped and they were bleeding profusely from their private parts, forcing them to change their clothes at least 10-12 times in a few hours. Yet, they were given a clean bill of health by the doctor on duty who obviously did not want to incur the wrath of the all-powerful inspector. And then they died within hours for lack of critical care. This incident showed how common custodial deaths had become, particularly at the local levels of administration where the policing system had internalised the right to be judge, jury and executioner.

According to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) data, compiled over a decade till March 2020, 17,146 people were reported to have died in judicial and police custody, which means about five a day. The rights panel listed 914 deaths in custody, 53 of these under police watch alone, this year despite the long months of lockdown. Besides, there have been far too many reports of Dalits, the poor and the marginalised being at the receiving end of the cops's wrath lest they expose the ugly face of upper caste atrocities. Police torture has become routine simply because no errant officer has been booked since 2005. And considering that conviction in case of custodial torture is difficult because Government permission is required to prosecute public officials, who defend themselves saying they were just using a coercive tactic while discharging their official duties, there's little hope for redress. Besides, there's still no law against custodial excesses. Torture may have begun as a tested medieval ploy to get information out of suspects but has now become an intimidatory tactic by policemen who use it to settle scores, either on their own or at the behest of their political bosses, and close a case file according to a presumed, often pre-judged, course of events. The lack of policing reforms has meant that the forces are not trained in more modern and digitally-aided methods of interrogation and cross-examination that could do away with traditional methods of conducting an inquiry altogether. Besides, most deaths are attributable to the extended periodicity of custody. As the NHRC data shows, 92 per cent of the deaths were in judicial custody, which can extend up to 60 or 90 days. A person may be held in police custody for 24 hours but that can be extended to 15 days on the orders of a magistrate. Besides, not every custody death is reported though mandatory and "failure to report" is still not a crime. Over the last few years, rarely have errant cops been held accountable for overreaching their powers, especially in cases with a decidedly communal tilt, like those involving protesters against the new citizenship law. In the Mumbai of the 80s and even later, "encounter specialists" were treated as heroes of the forces for delivering instant justice and were even endorsed by civil society. Of course, the brutality during the lockdown isn't the only example worth noting. The visuals of the ferocious crackdown on dissenting students of Jamia and Aligarh Muslim University during the anti-CAA row haunt thousands of families even today as we wait for those responsible to be held accountable for the heinous misuse of power against peaceful demonstrators. And while the cases drag on in courts, the offenders would never be put on trial or would have been moved out of the public eye to other posts. Simply because the police has been reduced to being a malleable tool of the powers that be and is increasingly being used to serve their political will and agenda. At least, the Supreme Court has decided the police can be policed, too, when required.

## Vaccine tourism

Rich Indians hope to fly to UK to get themselves inoculated though citizens there will get first preference



When the UK became the first country to approve the use of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against COVID-19 next week onwards, little did it know that it would trigger a "vaccine tourism" trend. Given that it could take some time coming here, many well-heeled Indians are busy making plans to get the shot there and are flooding travel agents with queries. Such is their desperation that they are willing to overlook the fact that the UK would cater to its citizens first before visitors and there can be no jumping the queue. Given that the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors have suffered a body blow due to pandemic-induced restrictions, travel agents are upbeat about the development and are doing all they can to assist. Some enterprising souls have come up with "packages" for Indians, planning on getting deals with airlines to offer fixed-price seats and with hotels and hospitals in the UK for "dosing" stays.

This desperation is fuelled by three factors. First, we are the second-worst-hit country in the world after the US. Second, there are mixed signals from the Government. October saw the Prime Minister assure the country that every single citizen would get the vaccine as soon as it was ready, albeit in a phased manner with certain categories of people set to get it first. Now Health Secretary Rajesh Khushi says that the Government has not talked about vaccinating the entire population. Senior officials say that India may not need to vaccinate all of its 1.3 billion people if it manages to inoculate a critical mass and break the virus' transmission. Plus, there have been issues with the AstraZeneca and Oxford University vaccine with a trial volunteer suffering serious side effects and suing the company and the manufacturer earlier revealing that its high efficacy may have been in part due to a dosing error. Given the high efficacy of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, it's not surprising that those who can afford it want to opt for the UK protocol. Besides, the Pfizer shot is unlikely to be available in India any time soon because we cannot put a sub-zero cold chain infrastructure in place overnight. We have to work with what's best suited to us. Efficacy is more important than being the first in the race.

## Fear of peace

For politicians like Netanyahu, peace delegitimises their political appeal and instead provocation, tension and violence strengthen the same



BHOPINDER SINGH

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu is a stereotypical Israeli politician, who has served in the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). Hailing from a military family that includes elder brother Yonatan Netanyahu, who commanded the daring Operation Entebbe and became its only Israeli fatality, Benjamin himself was a team leader in the Sayeret Matkal (Special Forces Unit) and took part in multiple covert operations in Syria like Operation Gift and Operation Isotope. He was also shot in the shoulder during an anti-hipack operation. But, yes, Benjamin Netanyahu is also a great political survivor and the longest-serving Israeli Prime Minister (1996-1999, 2009-till date). The politician par excellence also has an unmatched CV in escaping tight spots. Foremost among them has been surviving the difficult tenures of former US Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama (both of them were not policy hawks), surviving sex tapes, indifferent colleagues, accusations of media manipulation, ongoing criminal trials for fraud and bribery, and above all, facing yet another potentially complicated relationship with the incoming American administration under Joe Biden.

But is it yet another illustrious Israeli war hero? Well, Sayeret Matkal colleague of Netanyahu's, Ehud Barak, who throws insights into the mind of the political escape-artist. Barak himself is the former Israeli Chief of the General Staff and the most decorated soldier in Israeli history. Later, he replaced Netanyahu as the Prime Minister in 1999. Barak, who has worked along with Netanyahu in the military and the Knesset, claims, "Netanyahu has shown that no legal regulations exist in Israel and give rise to legal entanglements surrounding his fate, 'he understands that he is going nowhere, and his priority will be anything that will get him out of a trial.' Barak assesses that a desperate, amoral and reckless Netanyahu will create internal and external circumstances that would galvanise his political popularity and make him irreplaceable. Barak is joined by over 300 retired officers from the Israeli Army, Police, Shin Bet Security Service, Mossad and



multiple former IDF Chiefs of Staff like Gabi Ashkenazi, Moshe Yaalon and the temporarily aligned Benny Gaantz. Years ago, as the leader of the Opposition, Netanyahu had led infamous protests against the then prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin (who had just signed the Oslo Peace Accord), where he walked at the head of a mock funeral procession, featuring an empty black coffin and chants of "Death to Rabin." Days later, Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by an Israeli opposed to the accord and that marked the return of extremist hardliners, among whom Netanyahu has been the most dominant player on the scene.

Netanyahu has been bracing for a post-Donald Trump administration. The nomination of Anthony Blinken as the Secretary of State has accelerated his worries. Blinken is a known supporter of rapprochement with Iran, as also a rare critic of the controversial move to shift the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Netanyahu realises the inevitability of the looming change in the dynamics, as also of the very narrow window of a few weeks before Trump is eased out of the White House. Frequent backdoor activities are in full swing to secure positions in the chessboard of the Middle East, among which was the not-so-secretive meeting between Saudi Prince Mohammed Bin Salman and Netanyahu at Neom. Beyond public posturing, political rhetoric and official denials, both Riyadh and Tel Aviv are more strategically aligned than

“ BEYOND PUBLIC POSTURING, RHETORIC AND OFFICIAL DENIALS, BOTH RIYADH AND TEL AVIV ARE MORE STRATEGICALLY ALIGNED THAN EVER BEFORE, AND BETWEEN THEM, THE IRRECONCILABLE SECTARIAN ANGULARITY OF IRAN IS A UNIFYING FACTOR. IT IS A COMMON DREAD AND THE TARGET OF COVERT OPS ”

ever before and between them, the irreconcilable sectarian angularity of Iran is a unifying factor. The Iranians are militarily challenging the Saudis through their proxies in Yemen (Houthi rebels) and rallying against the Saudi-supported Sunni militia in the Syrian-Iraqi swathes whereas the Iran-backed Hamas in the West Bank and the co-sectarian Shia Hezbollah in Lebanon are taking on the Israelis. Iran is the common dread and, therefore, the essential playground for accusations, intrigues and covert operations.

During a news conference at the Ministry of Defence in 2018, Netanyahu had spoken about and stood before the image of Iranian president Mohsen Fakhriadeh. Pointing to the image, Netanyahu had chillingly warned, "Remember that name, Fakhriadeh!" Last week when Fakhriadeh was assassinated by unknown gunmen, the Iranians were unequivocal in blaming, "the mercenaries of the oppressive Zionist regime", referring to Netanyahu's Government. The timing was eerily ominous and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani alluded to the desperation of the very limited window of Presidential transition in the US when he said, "the enemies are experiencing stressful weeks."

It has been acknowledged by the international watchdog agency, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), that while Fakhriadeh was indeed the head of the Iranian nuclear programme, there were no alarm bells in the Iranian reactivation status as yet despite the

unilateral pullout by the US from the Iran nuclear deal. Legally also, Iran was no longer bound to restrain its nuclear programme after the US had reneged on the deal, despite assurances from IAEA that Iran had fully complied with all commitments. If anything, Trump-Netanyahu had upped the ante with avoidable and provocative steps like killing the revered General Qasem Soleimani, who had played a pivotal role in destroying the dangerous edifice of the ISIL Caliphate in Iraq-Syria.

The killing of Fakhriadeh cannot possibly make any material impact on the Iranian nuclear preparedness as it is not dependent on any individual, in any case, and the motives could only be purely political. This act looks intended to deliberately worsen the relations to draw retaliatory action from Iran, thereby prematurely stalling any thawing opportunities that are presumably forthcoming with the Biden administration. Details of Trump discussing a possible military strike against Iran just before the Presidential elections are already doing the rounds. From the same political playbook, heightened political tension between Tel Aviv and Tehran can also help shore up crucial and invaluable nationalistic fervour in favour of the much-cornered Netanyahu. For politicians like him, peace delegitimises their political appeal and instead, provocation, tension and violence, strengthen the same.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands)

## SOUNDBITE

We are going to defend the honesty of the vote by ensuring that every legal ballot is counted and that no illegal ballot is counted.



US President — Donald Trump

We welcome great actor Rajinikanth's decision to enter politics, alliance can be formed with his party.



Tamil Nadu Dy CM — Pannarselvan

I'm very happy that Red Bull Campus Cricket will be conducting a women's edition. It will be a great platform for Indian women who want to play cricket professionally.



Cricketer — Smriti Mandhana

David (Dhawan) helped me shape my career in choreography through his film. I am excited to get again collaborate with David for his 45th film, Coolie No. 1.



Choreographer — Ganesh Acharya

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Rajini in politics

Sir — At last, Thalaiva has taken the political plunge, ending years of vacillation and suspense. We are not quite sure whether superstar Rajinikanth took the decision to float his own political party at the turn of the year of his own free will or at the behest of somebody else. Either way, it has triggered speculation over the possible political churn it could stir in Tamil Nadu politics ahead of the Assembly elections. The actor is entering the political fray at an age most leaders think in terms of retiring from it. Certainly, his eagerness to do public service despite his age and ill-health is commendable. But what he represents — a slant to the right wing — could make the people quite wary of supporting him and limit his space in the political sphere.

He is close to the BJP and a fan of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He shares their ideology but can't afford to appear as an opponent of the Dravidian movement and its moorings. His "spiritual politics" is, in a way, just a euphemism for "safrican politics." It is no secret that RSS ideologue and Rajini aide

### Why lab-cultured meat is better

Singapore's approval to the sale of cultured chicken, making it the first city-State in the world to give a go-ahead to the production of meat created in a lab, will prove to be a milestone in the history of food consumption. The benefits in a resource-challenged world are many. While the inhumane method of slaughtering animals and poultry can be done away with, cultured chicken is believed to have extremely low and significantly cleaner microbiological content than traditional chicken. Also, the product has a high protein content and no antibiotics. Apparently, it took a long time for the team of Singaporean scientists, product developers and regulation experts to develop the production process. Studies on similar processes have been on at food labs of some other countries as well. With the rise of vegetarianism and veganism in the world, the demand for meat substitutes has certainly gone up. Moreover, post the pandemic that originated from a wet market selling animal meat for human consumption, people have



become conscious about their hygiene and food choices. With growing fears about similar pandemics in the future, people have shifted focus to building a strong immunity by depending on plant-based foods. Besides, animal farming produces 15 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions while cultured meat generates up to 96 per cent lesser.

M Pradyu Kannur

### Badal's statement

Sir — It is noteworthy that former Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal has launched his protest against the new farm Acts and shows support in Delhi by returning the Padma Vibhushan award. He received the second highest civilian honour in 2015. Some sportspersons and coaches from Punjab have also

said that they would return their awards and will march to Delhi on December 5 in solidarity with the protesters. It is worth noting that celebrities and notables of the State are standing by the farming community. The Central Government must negotiate a middle ground lest this becomes another battle of identities and mutates into a social uprising.

Noor Ahmad Hyderabad

Woof! Sir — Someone has rightly said, "Don't trust a person that doesn't like dogs." Most families feel incomplete without a pet. So one of the most interesting news of the week was about Joe Biden getting hurt while playing with his dog. It's nice to know that the next US President is fond of animals like many previous ones. This President will be more reliable than his predecessors, like Obama and Bush among others, simply because he doesn't shy of projecting his home-ly pleasures.

Dennis Fitzgerald Melbourne

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

**FIRST COLUMN**  
**Face read tech is at a tipping point**

For society to derive the most benefit from AI, the core of technology must be the means to serve the end of human needs, not otherwise



MEKHALA PANDEY

George Orwell, in his dystopian masterpiece 1984, had envisioned a society which had progressed technologically. But the individual, constantly supervised and with little privacy, had become a cog in the wheel of a larger, albeit advanced machine. In his novel, Orwell introduced the concept of a device known as the "telescreen", situated in homes and public spaces, which could identify people and monitor and analyse their physiological and facial expressions. This device uncannily mirrors the conception and progression of Artificial Intelligence (AI) today, specifically the Facial Recognition Technology (FRT). It is a biometric technology that utilises unique facial features to identify people, the reading of which is then compared with the database in existence. The Centre has approved the setting up of a national Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS) under the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for "criminal identification, verification among police organisations." Thus, the need of the hour is to regulate and govern both the collection and analysis of personal data for FRT on the basis of the rule of law. As of today, there is no Act or regulation in place in the country which controls such data capture, storage and analysis. This is alarming considering the size of the population in India and the proposed exponential use of FRT in various sectors such as commerce, airports, identification and crime control by the police. For instance, the Airport Authority of India has planned to launch "Dig Yatra" or facial biometric-based air travel by December end. This disruptive technology brings to light two major concerns: First, whether the data collected in an effort to increase the accuracy of the FRT is secure? Second, whether the right to privacy of the individual is compromised in such a society wherein wide scale surveillance feeds the FRT?

The Supreme Court, in the KS Puttaswamy vs Union of India 2017 case, affirmed the Right to Privacy and stated that it extended to public spaces, and that citizens cannot be subject to unlawful collection or exploitation of their personal data. The court clarified that any infringement on the Right to Privacy, such as collecting personal data for law enforcement purposes, must be done keeping in mind the proportionality standard, which dictates that any collection and analysis of data must be done in pursuit of a legitimate aim, which is both necessary and proportionate. India's Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, includes "facial images" as part of the biometric data. Clause 3(7) and such biometric data is categorised as "sensitive personal data" in Clause 3(36). Personal data cannot be processed without the consent of the data principle as per Clause 11. The Bill has addressed some of the privacy concerns and has incorporated laudatory provisions such as the rights of correction and erasure (Clause 18 and 58) in cases of biometric data (FRT) obtained without proper consent or such data being incorrect. Further, Clause 9 of the 2019 Bill requires data fiduciaries to not retain any personal data beyond the period necessary to satisfy the purpose for which it is processed and to delete the personal data at the end of the processing.

While formulating our home-grown regulations regarding data security and privacy of FRT data, one can consider the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of the European Union wherein the processing of biometric data for FRT requires explicit consent. The European data protection Board under the GDPR has issued guidelines on "processing of personal data through video devices." These guidelines incorporate Article 13 of the GDPR and have made video surveillance specific to a purpose and not a "fishing exercise" impinging on the rights of the data subjects. "The data subjects should be made aware of the fact that video surveillance is in operation (via warning signs over monitored premises). Thus, while safeguarding our own data security, India, too, can consider such transparent and full-disclosure methods of the GDPR and establishment of a regulatory board in formulating its own FRT Regulation regime. Globally, countries are becoming increasingly cautious while utilising FRT. The Information Commissioner of the UK has issued directions to the police to "justify" the use of FRT and has called on the Government for a statutory binding code of practice. In the US, the cities of San Francisco, Berkeley, Portland, Boston have banned the use of FRT by Government authorities and private businesses. However, Washington has struck a middle ground and has passed a law which regulates FRT through "meaningful human review." It is subjected to human review so that any discrepancies or errors by the machine can be rectified and the data securely managed. Algorithms evolve in such a manner that the legal framework and regulations need to take the sophistication of the machine into account while formulating policies for its deployment. Thus, it can be compared to creating regulatory embankments on a constant digital flow of interconnections. To prevent such an intrusive evolution of the technology, a regulation driven Act supervised by a body similar to the European data protection board would be a good move. These regulations must entail room for constant review and upgradation, keeping at their core the idea of protection of an individual's data and legitimate processing of such data as per the terms of consent. AI is at a tipping point. For society and individuals to derive the most benefit from it, the core of the technology must be the means to serve the end of human needs and not to make citizens and consumers means to an end.

(The writer is a lawyer)

**WEST BENGAL'S 'GOVERNMENT AT THE DOORSTEP' DRIVE HAS BEEN LAUNCHED TO ENSURE THAT NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND.**  
 —MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS MINISTER  
 FIRHAD HAKIM

**POINT-COUNTERPOINT**



**THEY ARE USING PUBLIC MONEY FOR THEIR ELECTION CAMPAIGN. TMC LEADERS SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF THEMSELVES.**  
 —BENGAL BJP PRESIDENT  
 DILIP GHOSH

**Merger most foul**

Was the selection of DBS India a rational consideration? Did LVB's pre-amalgamation valuation justify the denial of compensation to shareholders? These are big questions



SUBHASH CHANDRA PANDEY

On November 17, the Central Government imposed restrictions on the withdrawal of funds from the Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) till December 16, (except for a maximum ₹25,000 per account as relief to small depositors) on the advice of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Plus, the LVB's Committee of Directors was superseded. The RBI invited suggestions and objections "within three days" on a draft scheme of amalgamation of LVB with DBS Bank India. On November 25, the Central Government approved the scheme proposed by the RBI. The LVB-DBS merger came into force on November 27 and the moratorium imposed on withdrawals was lifted. Foreign banks may operate in India either by having their branches in the country directly owned/operated by them or by creating a wholly-owned subsidiary (WOS) registered here. The Singapore-based DBS Group Holdings Limited has been operating in branch mode since 1994 but switched to WOS model in March 2019.

All the assets and liabilities of LVB now stand transferred to DBS India. By June 2019, DBS India had a sizeable customer deposit base of ₹24,700 crore, including ₹5,700 crore as low-cost deposits. It is now busy rebranding LVB branches and ATMs with its logo. The parent foreign bank is expected to bring an additional investment of ₹2,500 crore. DBS India, with just over 30 branches in the country (most of its business is in the branch-less mode) now gets ownership of ₹24,700 crore assets (historical, depreciated cost of ₹463 crore on March 31, mainly comprising 560 branches and 970 ATMs); cash and investments with the RBI (₹1,048 crore on March 31) and other investments (₹5,384 crore on March 31). The LVB gets access to deposits of ₹21,443 crore, including about 76,000 crore of LVB's savings accounts deposits. On the flip side, DBS has to service LVB's borrowings (₹756 crore on March 31). Out of the total advances (₹13,828 crore outstanding on March 31), about one-fourth (₹3,384 crore) are Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). The gross NPA ratio had deteriorated from 15.3 per cent on March 31, 2019 to 25.39 per cent on March 31 this year, and remained high at 24.45 per cent on September 30.

While the LVB's 20 lakh depositors and 4,000 employees can have a sigh of relief, its over 97,000 investors have been hit hard. Forced mergers of banks are nothing new but in an unprecedented action in the history of the shareholding, reserves and surpluses. Since the value of equity shares is officially decreed to be zero, the erstwhile owners of the LVB will not get any share in the LVB-DBS banking entity. Also hurt are bondholders as all of LVB's Basel-III compliant bonds worth ₹318 crore were written down. Bondholders will not get any of their invested money, nor interest on them. Significantly, snapping Tier-2 bonds is an unprecedented action. The move was thus, swift and uncommon, but the problem had been brewing for some time. The LVB had been incurring losses for the last 18 quarters and had issued a Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) in September 2019, which asked the bank to bring in additional capital, restrict further lending to corporates, reduce NPAs and improve the Provision Coverage Ratio to 70 per cent.

These actions/decisions of the Central Government and the RBI have been challenged by LVB's shareholders in the Mumbai High Courts (HCs). The Mumbai HC

**“SHAREHOLDERS CONTEND THAT THEY HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF THE LVB'S OWNERSHIP WITHOUT ANY MONETARY COMPENSATION. THIS AMOUNTS TO UNJUST ENRICHMENT OF A FOREIGN BANK. THE MANNER OF SELECTION OF DBS INDIA AS THE TRANSFERREE COMPANY HAS ALSO BEEN QUESTIONED. WHAT HAS FRUSTRATED THE LVB SHAREHOLDERS IS THE FACT THAT THE SAME DBS THAT HAS NOW ACQUIRED THE BANK WITH ZERO COMPENSATION TO SHAREHOLDERS HAD OFFERED TO BUY 50 PER CENT OF THE LVB'S SHARES FOR AT LEAST ₹100 PER SHARE IN 2018.”**



declined to stay the amalgamation but kept the plea filed before it for monetary compensation pending. The Madras HC, too, declined to stay the amalgamation but passed some interim orders giving some relief to the LVB's shareholders on a petition filed by AUM Capital Market Private Limited, a retail investor holding shares in LVB.

Shareholders contend that they have been deprived of the LVB's ownership without any monetary compensation. This amounts to unjust enrichment of a foreign bank. The manner of selection of DBS India as the transferee company has also been questioned. What has frustrated the LVB shareholders is the fact that the same DBS that has now acquired the bank with zero compensation to shareholders had offered to buy 50 per cent of the LVB's shares for at least ₹100 per share in 2018. Since then, the LVB's value deterioration has been fast. The share price of the LVB lost 58 per cent this year and went to less than ₹10 a share. The LVB's total business shrank from ₹47,115 crore at the end of September 2019 to ₹37,595 crore at the end of September this year.

By then, the LVB's Tier-1 Capital Ratio and overall Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) as per Basel-III norms had turned negative. With a large gross NPA ratio of 24.45 per cent, the LVB had a negative net worth of ₹699 crore. Therefore, snapping the shares and Tier-2 bonds of the LVB means that the bank has been practically wound up, with core investors asked to bear the accumulated losses. And the junked entity has been handed over to a white knight investor to take over in the interest of the LVB's 20 lakh depositors. A reserved shareholders' committee, if even if the authorities have the power

to reduce the share value during an amalgamation, reducing share value to zero cannot be done without very compelling reasons. And these reasons (if any) have not been disclosed.

Instances of commercial banks failing are rare. As the Government and the RBI are empowered to order consolidation, compulsory amalgamation and liquidation of small banks, no commercial bank has failed. Forced mergers of weak banks with stronger ones are a normal practice to safeguard depositors' interest.

The LVB is one of the oldest private banks. It was founded in 1926 with a fairly distributed ownership. At the end of March 2012, the LVB had 12.92 per cent non-resident shareholding, which increased to 43.1 per cent by March 2019. During the period, resident individual shareholding came down from 56.73 per cent to 27.7 per cent. Resident financial institutions increased their stake from 8.47 per cent to 20.9 per cent.

The 20.9 per cent Indian Financial Institutions and 38.4 per cent foreign companies, together commanding majority control of the LVB, failed to exercise due diligence and control the management even as the bank's lending portfolio became problematic. The LVB is a banking company registered under the Companies Act, 1956. Banking companies are governed differently from other companies in India. They are regulated by both the Companies Act and the Banking Regulation Act, 1949. And the Banking Regulation Act, being a specialised law, takes precedence over the conflicting provisions of the Companies Act. Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 empowers the RBI to apply to the Central Government "for suspen-

sion of business by a banking company and to prepare a scheme of reconstruction of amalgamation." So the triggers, processes, control mechanism and so on for mergers and acquisitions are different than those for non-banking companies.

Just like the Companies Act, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code applies to banking companies, too, but the Banking Regulation Act prevails over the other two Acts. The one month "moratorium" imposed on the LVB on November 17 was akin to anaesthesia that is given before a surgery. Keeping the LVB under a moratorium for too long would have affected 20 lakh depositors. The RBI had to find an able and willing investor ready to take over. For the last two years, the LVB and its promoters have been trying to lure investors to infuse additional capital to meet regulatory norms.

For the takeover of financially distressed non-banking companies, resolution professionals are appointed by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). This invites tenders from potential investors and the company is handed over to the highest bidder. In the case of weak banks that are in need of rescue, there is no such practice of inviting tenders. The transferee banking company is selected based on the professional judgment of the RBI. Whether the selection of DBS India was based on rational considerations and whether the LVB's pre-amalgamation valuation justified shareholders/bondholders being denied any monetary compensation are now sub-judice. Judicial review of regulatory wisdom is not unprecedented.

(The writer is former Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry)

**Coal dust changing the fate of Goa's wildlife**

Beginning with severe respiratory problems, long term exposure to coal dust can decimate both plant and animal life in a biodiversity hotspot



KUNALIKA SINGH

On the night of November 1, thousands of Goans gathered on the railway lines at Chandor, South Goa to protest against the doubling of railway tracks for enhancement of coal transportation from the Mormugao Port Trust (MPT) to steel plants in neighbouring Karnataka. Currently, the State serves as a crucial link to coal transportation to Karnataka. However, despite the existing infrastructure, the Government is looking to fast-track the process by introducing three major infrastructure projects. Goa's fate was sealed by the "devil's dust" (fine particles of coal) in

2016 as the MPT led development programme, Sagarmala, receiving the nod from the Government of India, converted Goa into a coal hub.

During the nationwide lockdown, the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and the National Board for Wildlife gave "virtual clearance" over a video conference to three interconnected biodiversity hotspots — four lining of the existing NH-4A (Goa-Karnataka Highway), laying a 400KV transmission line and doubling of an existing railway line from Mormugao to Londa. The three linear projects are situated within the same protected area. Reportedly, all three projects require felling of 70,000 trees and diversion of 216 hectares of forest and private land in Mollem National Park and Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary in South Goa. This forest is part of the Western Ghats, which are one of the world's most important tiger habitats in the UNESCO World Heritage Site. The protected area is home to more than 721 plant species, 235 bird species, 219

butterfly species, 70 mammal species, 45 reptile species, 44 fish species and 27 amphibian species. This interlinked endemic as well as rare and vulnerable species such as the tiger, dhole, mouse deer, gaur and the Indian pangolin among others. In addition, there are 18 bird species that are endemic to the Western Ghats and seven bird species that are of high conservation concern are found here. This area was marked as an Ecologically Sensitive Area by the Madhav Gadgil Committee in 2012.

The Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary and Mollem National Park, part of a larger contiguous forest, is a treasure trove of flora and fauna and is an important tiger corridor between Goa and the adjoining Kali Tiger Reserve in Karnataka. Of 240 sq km, the sanctuary and the national park constitute the largest protected area in Goa. The Western Ghats are one of the most important tiger habitats in the world. Expanding the highway and doubling of the South Western Railways will leave the southern part

of the Ghats disconnected from the north. This will lead to the tracks and tunnels fragmenting the habitat, other animals as they cross the tracks in their cyclical movements. The Tilti Dam and relentless mining have already decimated elephant habitats and other significant parts of the Ghats. Forests in the Western Ghats that have existed for thousands of years are irreplaceable. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Report, 2019, shows that the Western Ghats are one of the most resilient ecosystems that will buffer us from climate change.

Roads and power lines are known to fragment habitats, other flora and fauna in incalculable ways. The habitat where these projects are proposed is also home to a newly-discovered dragonfly species. Dandel and Goa are believed to be an elephant movement route. Now tigers and leopards are likely to move through here. While there are eight or nine underpasses proposed for wildlife, there is little information on where these will be constructed, and even less

is known about their scientific efficacy. Ironically enough, these projects are being undertaken at a time when COVID-19 has revealed how loss of forest land, wildlife and biodiversity can increase zoonotic diseases.

The Government's move goes to show how India's wildlife laws are open to fragmentation, degradation and a time when COVID-19 has revealed how loss of forest land, wildlife and biodiversity can increase zoonotic diseases. The Government's move goes to show how India's wildlife laws are open to fragmentation, degradation and a time when COVID-19 has revealed how loss of forest land, wildlife and biodiversity can increase zoonotic diseases. The Government's move goes to show how India's wildlife laws are open to fragmentation, degradation and a time when COVID-19 has revealed how loss of forest land, wildlife and biodiversity can increase zoonotic diseases.

Coal dust causes a host of problems for wildlife. Beginning with severe respiratory problems, in the long term, increased exposure to toxic ele-

ments through coal dust can cause animals to suffer from a variety of life-threatening disorders and dysfunction. According to the National Wildlife Federation, "Unsignificant action is taken now, global warming will likely become the most important factor to affect wildlife since the emergence of mankind." Climate change, through increased forest fires and dust among the prominent contributors has the potential to significantly alter ecosystems and cause mass extinction of species. In underground and surface waters, coal dust can cause decrease in aquatic oxygen content and in light penetration. This reduces the growth of aquatic plants. In turn, this leads to manifold increase in mortality of fish and other aquatic species that are dependent on aquatic plants as a food source.

Coal dust also decreases the ability of plants and trees to photosynthesise. If this natural process is stymied, most plants would begin to die. Although they could hold out for a few days, or in some cases, a few weeks,

how long they live would largely depend on how much sugar they had stored within their cells. Large trees, for example, may be able to soldier on for several years because of their energy stores and the slow rate of use. However, the majority of plants would die and so would the animals that rely on them for nourishment. With the herbivores dead, the omnivores and carnivores would soon follow.

Coal dust is affecting humans, too, as it is increasing incidents of respiratory ailments. In 2016-17, a consignment of 12.75 million tonnes of coal was unloaded at the MPT and carried across Goa to power stations and refineries. It is expected to grow to 19-21 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) by 2025 and to 34-40 MTPA by 2035. This will completely transform the face of Goa. Transport of such huge quantities of coal risks entire habitats, villages and towns; it is threatening the ecological resilience of Goa required to deal with the effects of climate change.

(The writer is Communications Associate, Wildlife SOS)

# Trump expected to flex pardon powers

Washington: Advocates and lawyers anticipate a flurry of executive action from President Donald Trump in the coming weeks that could test the limits of presidential pardon power.

Trump is said to be considering a slew of pardons and commutations before he leaves office, including presidential members of his family, former aides and even himself.

While it is not unusual for presidents to sign controversial pardons on their way out the door, Trump has made clear that he has no intention of intervening in the cases of friends and allies whom he believes have been treated unfairly, including his former national security adviser, Michael Flynn.

The list of potential candidates is long and colorful: Trump's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, imprisoned for financial crimes as part of the Russia investigation; George Papadopoulos, who pleaded guilty to lying to

the FBI, just like Flynn; Joseph Maldonado-Passage, aka "Joe Exotic," who started "The Tiger King"; and former contractors convicted in a Baghdad firefight that killed more than a dozen civilians, including women and children.

Trump, long worried about potential legal exposure after he leaves office, has expressed worry to confidants in recent weeks that he, his family or his business might be targeted by President-elect Joe Biden's Justice Department, although Flynn has made clear he won't be part of any such decisions.

Nonetheless, Trump has had informal conversations with allies about how he might be able to protect his family, though he has not taken any steps to do so.

His adult children haven't requested pardons nor do they feel they need them, according to people familiar with the discussions who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private matters.

# Next for Biden: Naming a health care team as pandemic rages

Washington: Up soon for President-elect Joe Biden: naming a team to deal with the coronavirus pandemic rages. It's hard to imagine more consequential picks.

Already one prominent candidate to lead the Department of Health and Human Services has faded from the scene — New Mexico Democratic Gov. Michelle

# Harris picks Tina Flournoy to be her chief of staff

Sacramento: Vice President-elect Kamala Harris has named Tina Flournoy, a veteran Democratic strategist and aide to the Clintons, as her chief of staff, the transition team announced Thursday.

Flournoy's appointment as Harris' top staffer adds to a

# Ex-Hong Kong lawmaker goes into exile, plans to travel to UK

Copenhagen: A Hong Kong pro-democracy activist and former lawmaker who is visiting Denmark said Thursday he is going into exile and will soon move to Britain.

"I hereby announce that I will go into exile and will withdraw my membership in the Democratic Party of Hong Kong to leave Hong Kong," Ted Hui said in a statement to The Associated Press. "There is no word to explain my pain and it's hard to hold back tears."

It was not clear when he would travel to Britain which, in response to a crackdown on opposition in Hong Kong, has extended residency rights for up to 3 million Hong Kongers eligible for British National

Overseas passports, allowing them to live and work there for five years.

"My personal determination is that my exile will not be a migration. My only home is Hong Kong which is why I will not apply for asylum in any country," Hui said.

"I will wait for the day that I can go home with the bells of freedom ringing in a free Hong Kong. Until my last breath I will fight to the end."

Revive Hong Kong, revolution now! In July, another democracy activist, Nathan Law, left Hong Kong after testifying in a U.S. Congressional hearing about a tough new security law imposed by mainland China on the semi-

# Biden facing growing pressure over Secretary of Defense pick

Washington: President-elect Joe Biden is facing escalating pressure from competing factions within his own party as he finalises his choice for secretary of defense.

Black leaders have encouraged the incoming president to select an African-American to diversify what has so far been a largely white prospective Cabinet, while others are pushing him to appoint a woman to lead the Department of Defense for the first time.

At the same time, a growing collection of progressive

# Azerbaijan discloses Nagorno-Karabakh conflict troop toll

AP ■ BAKU (AZERBAIJAN)

Azerbaijan authorities disclosed for the first time on Thursday that the conflict in the country's military casualties in the recent fighting with Armenian forces over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which has lasted last month by a Russian-brokered truce.

Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry said that 2,783 troops were killed during the 44 days of intense clashes, and 103 of them are yet to be identified.

More than 100 servicemen are considered to be unaccounted for, the ministry said, and 1,245 are currently undergoing treatment in medical facilities.

President Ilham Aliyev said earlier this week that 94 Azerbaijani civilians were also killed and 400 more have been wounded. On Thursday, he signed a decree ordering a moment of silence at 12:00 p.m. (08:00 GMT) on Friday to honor the victims of the fighting.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan, but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a separatist war there ended in 1994. That war left Nagorno-Karabakh itself and substantial surrounding territory in Armenian hands.

Heavy fighting erupted in late September, marking the biggest escalation of a long-simmering conflict between the two ex-Soviet nations. AP

# China hits out at US after report of new visa restrictions

Beijing: China on Thursday accused critics in the US government of "an escalation of political suppression" against Beijing following a report of new visa restrictions on members of China's ruling Communist Party and their immediate family members.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said China would "make representations" to the U.S. Following the report Thursday in the New York Times that such people would be limited to one-month, single-entry visas.

Hua called Washington's approach "totally inconsistent with the US's own interests," and said it would damage America's global image. AP

# Pak court sentences Saeed's spokesman to 15 years in jail in terror financing case

Lahore: Mumbai terror attack mastermind and Jamat-ud-Dawa (JUD) chief Hafiz Saeed's spokesperson Yahya Mujahid has been sentenced to another 15 years in jail by a Pakistani anti-terrorism court in a terror financing case.

Mujahid was last month handed down 32 years jail term by the anti-terrorism court (ATC) in two terror financing cases.

Besides Mujahid, the ATC Lahore on Wednesday also handed down 15 years imprisonment to JUD's senior leader Zafar Iqbal and six months jail term to Saeed's brother-in-law Hafiz Abdul Rehman Makki.

Earlier, the ATC Lahore had sentenced Iqbal for 26 years imprisonment in three such cases.

Judge Jaz Ahmad Buttar announced the verdict under different provisions of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997.

The three convicts were present in the court when the judge announced the verdict.

The counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Punjab police had registered as many as 41 FIRs against JUD leaders, including Saeed in different cities. The trial courts have so far decided 25 cases.

The ATC has sentenced Saeed for a collective imprisonment of 21 years on terror financing charges under sections 11-N of Anti-Terrorism Act 1997 in four cases so far. PTI



Rohingya refugees who are being moved to an island called 'Bhasan Char' gather outside a transit area where they are temporarily housed in Ukhliya, Bangladesh on Thursday.

# Bangladesh begins relocating Rohingya refugees to island

Dhaka: Authorities in Bangladesh have begun relocating thousands of Rohingya refugees to an isolated island despite calls by human rights groups for a halt to the process, officials said Thursday.

The United Nations has also voiced concern that refugees be allowed to make a "free and informed decision" about whether to relocate to the island in the Bay of Bengal.

The island's facilities are built to accommodate 100,000 people, just a fraction of the million Rohingya Muslims who have fled waves of violent persecution in their native Myanmar and are currently living in crowded, squalid refugee camps.

On Thursday, 11 passenger buses carrying refugees left Cox's Bazar district on the way to the island, where they are expected to arrive after an overnight stopover, a government official involved with the process said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media. AP

# China's population may decline as fertility rate falls below warning level: Official

Beijing: China's total fertility rate has fallen below the warning line and the population growth has entered a critical turning point, Chinese Minister of Civil Affairs Li Jing has said amid demographers warning that the country's population will soon start to decline.

Facing a demographic crisis with a rapidly ageing population after implementing the decades-old one child policy, China permitted to have a second child since 2016.

Now the demographers call on the government to immediately lift restrictions on having babies and be more tolerant toward babies born out of wedlock, and do more to lower the costs of raising and educating children.

Li in an article said that under the influence of various factors, Chinese people are less willing to have children, the total fertility rate has fallen below the warning line, and the population development has entered a critical transition period, state-run Global Times reported on Thursday. On November 1, China started the world's biggest

exercise of population count to document demographic changes in the country.

About seven million workers began a door to door survey for the seventh census in the country to account for China's population stated to be 1.37 billion in the last exercise conducted ten years ago.

The figures were expected to reveal more data related to the population which is key for China's strategic development as the second-largest economy after the US and demographic crisis faced by it. PTI

**Office of the Executive Engineer, KPDCIL, ED-2, Rajbagh, Srinagar**  
Email ID: [ened2nd@gmail.com](mailto:ened2nd@gmail.com) ; Tel/Fax No. 0194-2311374

**Corrigendum No. 1**

The interested bidders are advised to quote rates per unit (in column 13) for each specified item description pertaining to the BQQ for this office's e-NIT No. ED-11/15 of 2020-21, Dated: 23/11/20 regarding Creation of 100 KVA, 110.0.433 KV Pole Mounted Distribution along with laying of HT/LT network at Firdous Colony, Yayil, Sub-Division Baghat having Tender ID: 2020\_PDD\_109899.1. However, the column no. 53 (and 55) in respect of amount for said BQQ may be ignored due to some error occurred. During the financial bid opening, the comparative of financial bids/offered amounts by the bidders shall be generated manually based on the rates per unit quoted by the bidders for mentioned quantities and shall therefore be treated as final.

However, the rest of the terms and conditions as laid down in the e-NIT shall remain the same.

Sd/- Executive Engineer  
KPDCIL, ED-2, Rajbagh Srinagar

No DFPK-NB-4342/20  
Date: 03.12.2020

# Appeal for Identification

General Public is hereby informed that a male dead body Name: Unknown, S/O Unknown, R/O: Unknown, Age About 50-55 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Gender: Male, Built: Thin, Face: Long, Wearing: Black Colour Pant only was found dead at Infront of 2866 Hamilton Road Kashmir Gate, Delhi. In this regard, DD No. 31-A U/s 174 Dated 29.11.2020 has been lodged at PS Kashmir Gate, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this male but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this male may kindly inform to the following:

SHO  
P.S., Kashmir Gate, Delhi  
Ph. : 011-23967889,  
8750870123  
DP/774/N/2020

**DEVAN HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED**  
National Office: HDL Towers, Boring, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Anant Karanagar, Station Road, Baroda, Gujarat - 390051.  
Branch Office: Plot No.4, Block A, Sector-2, Noida, U.P.-201301

**CORRIGENDUM**

With reference to Appendix IV Possession Notice advertisement of Devan Housing Finance Corporation Limited published in Daily Edition of Pioneer (English) on 27 August, 2020, in this notice borrower Anil Kashyap's all details not mentioned which is given below:

Name of the Borrower/Guarantor/Loan Code	Description of Secured Asset (Immovable Property)	Demand Notice Date and Amount	Date of Possession
(0000773) (Raj Nagar), Anil Kashyap (Borrower Name) /Lalit Kashyap (Co-borrower_name)	Plot No-53, 5th Floor, Tower-3, Signature Home, Noor Nagar, Nagar Extn. NH-58, Ghaziabad (Ghaziabad, Ghaziabad, U.P. Pradesh-201001)	391562/- (Thy) Nine Lac Seventy Five Thousand Eight Hundred and Twenty Two Rupees)	25-Jul-20

Date: 04.12.2020  
Place: Delhi NCR  
Sd/- (Authorised officer)  
DEVAN HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED



A firefighter passes a burning tree while battling the Bond Fire in the Silverado community of Orange County, California on Thursday.

# Scientists: Greenland ice sheet faces irreversible melting

London: The massive Greenland ice sheet could be facing a point of no return, beyond which it may no longer fully regrow, permanently changing sea levels around the world, warns a new study.

Using computer simulations, the study, published in the journal The Cryosphere, analysed how climate change could lead to irreversible sea level rise as temperatures continue to rise and the Greenland ice sheet continues to decline.

While there were scenarios in which the ice sheet melting could be reversed, the scientists, including those from the University of Reading in the

UK, said these relied on actions to counteract global warming before it's too late.

According to the researchers, the ice sheet is seven times the area of the UK, and stores a large amount of the Earth's frozen water.

In the research, the scientists simulated the effects of Greenland ice sheet melting under a range of possible temperature rises, ranging from minimal warming to worst-case scenarios.

At current rates of melting, they said the ice sheet contributes almost one millimetre to sea level per year, accounting for around a quarter of the

**ICICI Bank**  
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

The following borrower/s have defaulted in the repayment of principal and interest of the loans facility obtained by them from the Bank and the loans have been classified as Non-Performing Assets (NPA). A notice was issued to them under Section 13(2) of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act-2002 on their last known addresses, however it was not served and hence they are hereby notified by way of this public notice.

Sr.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-Borrower/Guarantor (Loan Account Number) & Address	Property Address of Secured Asset to be Enforced	Date of Notice	Outstanding as on Date of Notice	NPA Date
1.	K V Buildstate LLP, Himanshu Agarwal, Arman Agarwal, Mrs K V Buildstate-289-C, Greater Kailash-1, Delhi. A/c No:- LBDEL0000292959	Flat No- 8022 Tower Olive, 2nd Floor, Park Laureate Plot No- Gh 01-02 Sector-108, Noida- 201306 U.P. Pradesh	11-Nov-2020	Rs. 61,99,530/-	29/02/2020
2.	Vikas Kumar, Surendra Prasad Yadav, F 704 Siddhi Shivalk Apartment, Gh-02 Sec-10, IInd Mansarovar, Gurgaon, Haryana A/c No:- LBND000004162537	Plot No- 1501, 15th Floor Tower C1, Avalon Regal Court Village Dast, Barabeber, Tehsil Tijara Distt, Bhiwadi- 30141 Rajasthan	11-Nov-2020	Rs. 41,99,182/-	29/02/2020
3.	Rumman Wasif, Kashifa Khan, Kobler Export Pvt Ltd, D-607, Unesco Apartment 1234, Parkapuri, Delhi. A/c No:- LBCH000000000000	Flat No. A-404, 3rd Floor, East Avenue, Plot. No-4, Ahinsa Utrar Pradesh	11-Nov-2020	Rs. 44,64,807/-	30/09/2018
4.	Rumman Wasif, Deepu Virmani, D-607, Unesco Apartment 1234, Parkapuri, Delhi. A/c No:- LBDEL00000998796	Flat No. A-404, 3rd Floor, East Avenue, Plot. No-4, Ahinsa Utrar Pradesh	11-Nov-2020	Rs. 8,84,855,71/-	30/09/2018
5.	Pawan Kumar Tyagi, Neeraj Tyagi, # 4C 104, Building F-60, Sahakar Awas Samal Ltd Sector 4C, 100 Vartak Housing Society Ltd, Vasthokh, Ghaziabad, Utrar Pradesh A/c No:- LBDEL00001993230	House/Plot No- 4C, 104, Building F-60, Sahakar Awas Samal Ltd Sector 4C, 100 Vartak Housing Society Ltd, Vasthokh, Ghaziabad- 201001 Utrar Pradesh	11-Nov-2020	Rs. 1,55,510/-	08/01/2020
6.	Mukul Singhal, Saroj Jain, Navneet Singh, Mukul Singhal, House No- 72, Gali No- 5 Old Arya Nagar, Ghaziabad, Utrar Pradesh A/c No:- LBDEL0001217465	House No- 72, Main Chowk Old Arya Nagar, Ghaziabad-201001 Utrar Pradesh	11-Nov-2020	Rs. 3,34,701,05/-	29/02/2020
7.	Sunil Kumar Singh, Sushant Kumar Singh, G- 8/32 Sector-16 Rohini, Delhi. A/c No:- LBDEL00001382793	Plot No- 25, Gf, Plot No- 25, Gf, Block A, Pk-4, Sec-16, Rohini, Delhi- 110085	11-Nov-2020	Rs. 1,75,651,44/-	31/01/2020
8.	Kundan Singh, Chandan Singh, Elite 9 Unit- 175 Dubai Sport City, Dubai, Dubai A/c:- LBCH000000000000	Flat No 2006, 20th Floor Plot No Gh- 07B, Sector-1, Valencia Noida-201307 Utrar Pradesh	11-Nov-2020	Rs. 20,60,488,44/-	29/02/2020
9.	Sunil Kumar, Saloni Kumari, C- 32 Mahavir Enclave- 3 Gali No- 37, Block-A, Ghumanheri Road Naglaigar, Delhi. A/c:- LBDEL000001961985 LBDEL00005270594	DDA LIG Flat No-20, 4th Floor, Block- B3 Sector-35, Pocket 5 Rohini, Delhi-110085	11-Nov-2020	Rs. 12,47,920,51/- Rs. 70,75,65/-	28/04/2015
10.	Kusum Lata Devi, Surender Singh, B 275 2nd Floor Yojna Vihar, Delhi. A/c:- LBDEL000020711819 LBGIUR0002473954	House No- B 275, 2nd Floor, Yojna Vihar, Delhi-110092	11-Nov-2020	Rs. 8,52,300/- Rs. 25,35,840,27/-	28/02/2014

The steps are being taken to substituted service of notice. The above borrower/s and/or their guarantors (as applicable) are advised to make payments of outstanding within period of 60 days from the date of publication of this notice. In case the steps will not be taken as per the provisions of Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

Date: December 04, 2020  
Place: Delhi NCR  
Authorized Officer  
ICICI Bank Limited





Trend Slazer

Kajol shares words of wisdom

Actor **KAJOL** shared words of encouragement for women. She reiterated that women can do anything. "For what it's worth, it's never too late to be whoever you want to be," Kajol wrote on her Instagram along with the hashtag #womencandoanything.

She often shares words of wisdom and encouragement for fans and followers on social media from time to time. The actor also opens up her mind in her social media posts.

Her next film, *Tribhanga* is expected in January. The film is directed by actor Renuka Shahane, and also stars Tanvi Azmi and Mithila Palkar.



Work under your skin

Given the early onset of winter, it is important to slightly adjust your skincare regimen. Here are a few ways and beauty hacks to do that

**W**inter is everyone's favourite season to shower yourself with love and some hot chocolate. It's a great time to pamper yourself but you should not forget the cold-weather woes—dry, flaky skin, chapped lips and unnecessary redness. As you step out every day, your face is exposed to the chilling wind and dust. This can make your skin look dull. Hence, the change in weather calls for some changes on the skincare regimen too. Here are some ways to take care of your skin during winters.

plays a very important role in skin health. This also helps in delaying the ageing process. Balanced diet can keep ageing at bay for sure. External factor like the weather has an impact on our skin condition. On places where weather is too cold and chilly, our skin tends to get dry, itchy and flaky. And heating on fireworks at home, skin may already have taken a toll. But do not worry, right skin care routine will ensure that glow on your skin.

AVOID ALCOHOL-HEAVY PRODUCTS

Apply right products on your skin. Use heavy cream instead of a moisturiser as it has rich ingredients like hyaluronic acid which helps in retaining natural moisture and hydration. Use antioxidant rich products for skin and as well as diet. It is advisable to use alcohol-free products as they are good for any season. Our skin, be it summer, monsoon, autumn or winter, gets affected by free radicals which eventually leads the skin to premature ageing, fine lines. To keep fine lines and premature ageing at bay one can continue to use the year sunscreen. Another excellent product to keep fine lines and premature ageing at bay is Retinal A. Whether indoor or outdoor, vitamin C rich products which will help in boosting collagen.

at least two times a day to keep away those dry flaky layer on your skin. Check your skin type and decide on scrubbing. Those who have very sensitive skin may use something very gentle like oatmeal as an exfoliator. There are gentle peels available in the market like a glycolic or lactic peel. One can do a patch test behind their ear, if no irritation or redness occurs, you are good to go and use it to remove dead cells. One can also use a muslin cloth as a gentle exfoliator for face. People use it to keep the unwanted facial hair at bay and also any kind of congestion on the face. Retinal A is a great source of exfoliation. One must patch test before using any new product behind the ears. Always use a good heavy cream post usage of a chemical peel or retinal A. Do ensure to use sunblock. Do not step out onto direct sunlight.

the shower a less hot and short. Use alcohol-free and creamy shower wash instead of those harsh soap which has tons of alcohol and takes away the natural moisture. Apply body cream post shower to retain the hydration.

NIGHT SKINCARE

The most important step of the skincare regimen is night care. It is the time when our skin does all the repairing job. Hence opt for products which are more of curing and repairing in nature as per your skin type. I suggest double cleansing your face to remove dirt, oil and makeup. Start with a face oil followed by a gentle moisturiser. Then use eye cream for eye contour. I mix drops of vitamin C oil with anti-ageing night repair cream for both, face and neck. Then use foot and hand cream. Also use sleeping mask for lips to keep it from drying due to the weather. Avoid any kind of mud or clay products during dry skin. It may further make your skin dryer. Keep your skin and diet healthy.

(The writer Ruksmani Thakkar is Technical Head-Skin, Enrich.)

MINDFUL EATING

Our skin condition gets impacted during winters due to various internal and external factors. Internal factors like our skin health and gut has a direct impact. Hence, it is very important to be mindful about what you eat, when you eat and how much you eat. The season is full of goodies and lots of house parties, which has pleasant side effects. So it is advisable to regularly have a handful of nuts to keep your skin nourished. Drink loads of water to remain hydrated. Have food which is rich in vitamins and nutrients as our diet

INVEST IN A HUMIDIFIER

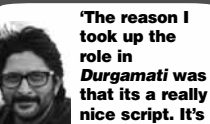
You must ensure that you prepare yourself multi-dimensionally for the change as per the season. It can be preparing your home, switching to the right products or a balance diet. Winter means drier air. Hence, it is important to have the right electronic gadget at home which will help in maximising the level of water in the air. Therefore, investing in humidifier would be a perfect idea for the season. This way the moisture level in the room remains intact and helps skins epidermal layer to retain hydration and natural moisture. Also, ensure a safe distance from the heater.

LOOK FOR GENTLE INGREDIENTS

Look for calming and natural ingredients such as aloe vera, vitamins etc. Just as sunblock plays an essential role all round the year, similarly, exfoliator plays an important part in keeping skin soft and supple. Use any gentle exfoliator on your skin

SHORTEN YOUR SHOWER TIMING

With winters, shower temperature becomes too hot. But keep shower timing short. A hot shower can ultimately impact to premature ageing of our skin and may also dehydrate one's skin. Keep



'The reason I took up the role in *Durgamati* was that it's a really nice script. It's very Indian and

I am sure it will appeal to our audience and their sensibilities. I loved the twists and turns in the story and how unpredictable it is. It has got all the elements that you need for a good film. I have a very strong feeling that people are going to love it.'

—Arshad Warsi

Actor **PRABHAS** and *KGF* director **PRASHANTH NEEL** are set to collaborate on an action film titled *Salaar*.



Sharing his look from the film, Prabhas wrote, "Today I take a leap into the world of #Salaar. Shoot commences from January 2021. An Indian film by Hombale Films, Vijay Kiragandur and Prashanth Neel."

Prabhas's other projects include the romantic drama *Radhe Shyam* with Pooja Hedge and Om Raut's period drama *Adipurush*. He recently also announced an untitled project that will co-star Amitabh Bachchan and Deepika Padukone.

Miley's marriage had conflicts

Pop star **MILEY CYRUS** says her marriage with actor **LIAM HEMSWORTH** had too much conflict, adding that she is looking for a life partner who can be her anchor.

The singer split from the actor in August 2019, less than a year after they exchanged vows. Now, she has revealed that she hates being in a relationship where there are too many arguments.

"There was too much conflict... When I come home, I want to be anchored by someone. I don't get off on drama or fighting," she said. Despite the couple going their separate ways, Cyrus says she has no hard feelings for Liam. "I really do and did love him very much and still do, always will," she said.



Power to the people

Can the Nissan Magnite rewrite the Japanese brand's fortunes in the country?



KUSHAN MITRA



and dropdown LED daytime running lights along with the high ground clearance do give the car a road presence that honestly is more imposing than some of its major rivals like the Maruti Brezza and Tata Nexon. One thing I really liked the most was the fact that roof rails on the Magnite are actually functional, you can fit cross members and suitcases on top as well. While it has an average boot for its class, this additional storage area will manage a major plus during fully-packed long holiday drives.

My issues are more to do with the interiors, where you do get a feeling that the Magnite is built to a cost when you touch the plastics and the steering wheel feel felt a bit off in my opinion. While the overall interior look is very modern with the hexagonal airconditioning vents, the feel could be better. That said, the eight-inch floating touchscreen on the top models, particularly the seven-inch digital display in the instrument cluster with its very large and nice font size and changing displays is definitely a major plus. On the top models, you have a wireless charger and ambient lighting at night, which does give a better feel to the car.

But let us get to the driving, and Nissan's turbopetrol engine. I drove the four-cylinder variant of this engine on the Kicks, but this 99cc three-cylinder unit produces an impressive 100PS of power and it is very smooth indeed. The CVT gearbox delivers that power seamlessly. On the highway and in the city you never feel wanting for power. At cruising speeds on the highway, I got an overall average mileage of 16 kmpl (kmpl), and on the crowded streets of Gurugram, the car gave an impressive 13+ kmpl. This has a lovely engine and the gearbox, the Magnite, unlike its bigger and older sibling, the Kicks, also handles very well indeed. Issues? Well, the Magnite has some noise, vibration and harshness problems. Of course, you can listen to music to drown it out, but there was a bit of rattle and hum about the car. Nothing disconcerting though.

The car was a joyride. Yes, there is a price warrior feel to the interiors although not to the exterior. The engine and gearbox are brilliant and if you keep the Korean cars in this segment aside, it is very good. With its aggressive pricing, introductory or not, the Magnite might even attract small hatchback buyers, folks looking at the Santro or WagonR, let alone small SUV buyers. Nissan's sales and service has been inconsistent till today, and that, and that the car will be the brand's biggest challenge.

**Nissan Magnite Turbo CVT Petrol**  
Price as tested: ₹9.35 lakh (ex-showroom XV Premium)  
Engine: 999cc three-cylinder turbocharged petrol 100PS

**'The car was a joyride. Yes, there is a price warrior feel to the interiors. The engine and gearbox are brilliant and if you keep the Korean cars in this segment aside, it is very good. With its aggressive pricing, introductory or not, the Magnite might even attract small hatchback buyers'**

**F**irst things first, let me make one thing straight, 'introductory prices' as well as extremely low prices of the base version of new cars are nothing more than a ploy to get prospective car buyers into a showroom. Both of these things have a catch, for example, introductory prices usually apply for a certain number of units or have a limited time-frame. And as for the very low prices of base specification models, you get almost no features. Yes, you will get four wheels and the engine, but reading the specifications for base models you often realise just how featureless those cars are.

This isn't true with all manufacturers but this is a major reason that base models rarely contribute more than 10 per cent of overall unit sales of most cars. It is also a fact that during media drives, we auto reviewers always get the fully-loaded variants, which in the case of some cars cost a substantial bit more, sometimes even 60-70 per cent more than the entry-level model. But it is also true that Indian car buyers like having features such as automatic transmissions, smartphone connectivity and automatic air conditioning, so much so that nowadays, across all car brands, fully loaded models contribute almost a third of all units sold.

This brings us to the Nissan Magnite, now you would have read about the fantastic entry-price of this car at ₹4.99 lakh. However, I didn't drive this

Vir captures lockdown stories



Artists are unstoppable and they always have the onus of entertaining, regardless of what they might be going through. Comedian-actor Vir Das took the responsibility of spreading cheer and fun amid creating the first of its kind homegrown comedy special *Outside In* from 30 virtual shows that he did during the lockdown. Though the show itself started off as a one off gig in April but as the demand continued, he converted into a continual series that kept his fans laughing together despite the worst time anyone has experienced anxiety and pressures created due to the lockdown.

After having started the year with a special called *Vir Das: For India*, this time around Vir gave his audience a taste of how a virus ended up uniting the entire globe at the same time. The show originally premiered on his website for charity but will now make it on Netflix on December 16, thus making sure we end the year on a sweet note.

Capturing the mundaneness of being stuck at home, the special has a lot of heartwarming stories about everything that the lockdown put us through. From a young man who can't find his favourite ice cream flavour to lovers separated in different cities weeks ahead of their engagement to a man hoping to dine with his girls soon to a nurse who is on COVID duty every day, the show captures lives of diverse people who are all waiting for the same thing — the world to go back to normal.

In a statement, Vir said, "There couldn't have been a better way to end the year and I say this beyond my personal reasons. The special was a shower of everything that we've gone through this year and how as human beings we went through the same emotions at the same time. It was my most fulfilling piece of work because even for an hour I could make people smile when they needed it the most. And we raised money for charity while doing it. This special is dedicated to each of us who survived a horrific year and hopefully we carry forward the lessons to 2021."



# A SPICE OF WINTER

With the season of sweaters, shawls and hot chocolate kicking in, chef PRABHAKAR NAGARAJ suggests some herbs and spices to maintain a warm and healthy immune system

W hen you notice a certain change to the winter vibe this year, as the season of sweaters, shawls and multiple cups of hot chocolate begins. It has become imperative to consume healthy food and maintain a balanced diet. There is a rising awareness about strengthening the immune system in these challenging times.

Due to social distancing norms and restrictions, people are spending more time indoors and the cold weather has had a direct impact on our bodies. A compromised immune system results in frequent cold and cough, which is why maintaining the right diet is essential.

The foundation of general health and well-being is a diverse diet and consuming healthy food. Fruits and vegetables are just the beginning and have a huge impact on our immune system. So it is important to sufficiently include them in your diet. Taking advantage of the seasonal fruits and vegetables available is an absolute necessity. Let us look at the easily available things at the local supermarkets that can be consumed to keep your immunity in check during winter. Across cafeterias, we have salad bars and focus on serving a variety of menu items containing ingredients that are good indicators of immunity and have distinctive taste.

## INGREDIENTS FROM THE KITCHEN

We must also include certain ingredients in our home kitchens for regular usage. In addition, we also can take advantage of the things that are easily available like green tea. It acts as a great antioxidant and includes high immunity-boosting elements. Sweet potatoes are also available in plenty during



**'A FEW HIGH IMMUNITY-BOOSTING VEGETABLES THAT ARE COMMONLY CONSUMED DURING WINTERS ARE BROCCOLI, GINGER, SPINACH AND ARUGULA. THEY ARE THE BEST NATURAL REMEDIES TO PROTECT THE IMMUNE SYSTEM'**

these months. Peanuts are packed with plenty of energy-boosting ingredients. Multiple things can be made from peanuts by either boiling them or preparing a chutney.

Apart from this, carrots and mushrooms are the go-to ingredients in winters due to their various benefits. Mushrooms can be consumed just by sautéing or preparing a gravy as made by a lot of Indian kitchens. Immunity-boosting elements like parsley protects us from chronic diseases and are rich in vitamins. Ginger tea made with cinnamon and cloves always keeps us fresh and nourished.

## SOME TIME-TRAVELLED AND TESTED FORMULAS

The making of traditional *Kaadah*, a potion that is considered as the best solution to build a healthy immune system involves the usage of secret ingredients — herbs and spices. Some of the herbs that grow well during winter are mint, peppermint, basil, lemongrass and sage.

As we near Christmas, we have turkey stuffed with sage. Basically, when consumed raw by grilling or sautéing, it provides the important elements to strengthen the immune system.

## FRUITS

A lot of fruits and vegetables that are native and healthy are available in these cold months as this is the most appropriate temperature for them to grow — papaya, pamploous or pomelo or grapefruit (a citrus fruit), melons, grapes, gooseberries, guavas, kiwi and pomegranate, to name a few. These fruits contain plenty of vitamins to

fight a flu.

For instance, eating one gooseberry is equivalent to the total amount of Vitamin C needed by a human body for a day, according to scientific reports.

## VEGETABLES

A few vegetables that are commonly consumed and available in plenty with high immunity-boosting power during winters are broccoli, ginger, spinach and arugula, which is a peppery, distinctive-tasting green and is immensely beneficial. They are the best natural remedies to protect the immune system.

All these things are usually grown in the open during winter. They are cultivated under modified temperature-controlled zones like a greenhouse throughout the year. But during this time, they are grown in the open and result in giving better immunity boosting power they grab the natural essence through air and sunlight. Hence, using them in the correct manner and cooking them without killing those essential nutrients is crucial.

## THE BEST MEDICINE

Well, healthy food is the best and natural medicine for all our ailments because we are basically what we eat. One tip: water infused with these immune-boosting spices should be kept at accessible places for people to consume regularly. One must get into the habit of a balanced diet that provides all the nutrition required to keep your health in check.

*(The author is the Managing Partner, Elixir India.)*

# Eat healthy, stay healthy

Beverages like green tea, muscadine grapes and dark chocolate may fight against COVID-19 virus, say researchers



In a unique study, researchers have claimed that chemical compounds in foods or beverages like muscadine grapes and dark chocolate can bind to and block the function of a particular enzyme, or protease, in the SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for COVID-19.

"Proteases are important to the health and viability of cells and viruses. If proteases are inhibited, cells cannot perform many important functions for example, replication," said study author De-Yu Xie from the North Carolina State University in the US.

"One of our lab's focuses is to find nutraceuticals in food or medicinal plants that inhibit either how a virus attaches to human cells or the propagation of a virus in human cells," Xie added.

In the study, published in the journal *Frontiers in Plant Science*, the research team performed both computer simulations and lab studies showing how the so-called "main protease" (Mpro) in the SARS-CoV-2 virus reacted when confronted with a number of different plant chemical compounds already known for their potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

"Mpro in SARS-CoV-2 is required for the virus to replicate and assemble itself. If we can inhibit or deactivate this protease, the virus will die," Xie said. Computer simulations showed that the studied chemical compounds from green tea, two varieties of muscadine grapes, cacao powder and dark chocolate were able to bind to different portions of Mpro.

**'Muscadine grapes contain some inhibitory chemicals in their skin and seeds. Plants use these compounds to protect themselves, so it is not surprising that their leaves and skin contain these beneficial compounds'**

"Mpro has a portion that is like a 'pocket' that was 'filled' by the chemical compounds. When this pocket was filled, the protease lost its important function," Xie explained.

Lab experiments also showed similar results. The chemical compounds in green tea and muscadine grapes were very successful at inhibiting Mpro's function; chemical compounds in cacao powder and dark chocolate reduced Mpro activity by about half.

"Green tea has five tested chemical compounds that bind to different sites in the pocket on Mpro, essentially overwhelming it to inhibit its function," Xie said. "Muscadine grapes contain these inhibitory chemicals in their skin and seeds. Plants use these compounds to protect themselves, so it is not surprising that plant leaves and skin contain these beneficial compounds," the author noted.

—IANS

## R E C I P E S

### CHICKEN-65 BIRYANI

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Onion (thinly-sliced): 2
- Tomato (chopped): 2
- Ginger-garlic-greenchilli paste: 3 tbsp
- Water: 1 cup
- Salt to taste
- Cumin powder: 1 tsp
- Garam masala: 1 tsp
- Turmeric powder: ½ tsp
- Chopped coriander & mint leaves: ½ cup
- Vegetable oil: 4 tbsp
- Basmathi rice: 3 cups
- Cardamom, cloves: 5-7
- Cinnamon
- Lemon juice: 2 tbsp
- Chicken: 1 kg
- Ghee: 1 tbsp

- Oil: 4 tbsp
- Cashew nuts
- Raisin

#### METHOD

- Divide chicken pieces into two portions and set aside. Keep the first portion for the masala and other for layering.
- Heat ghee in a pan. Fry the cashew nuts and raisins until golden brown.
- Remove from pan and set aside. Fry onions.
- For chicken-65 masala:
  - Heat four tablespoons of oil in a pan and add the sliced onion and saute until the onions become slightly golden.
  - Add in the ginger-garlic-green chilly paste.
  - Add in the chopped tomatoes and



saute until they are mushy.

- Add and cook cumin, turmeric and coriander powder, kashmiri chilli powder, garam masala and saute for two to three minutes on low heat.
- Add a cup of water, salt and mix well.
- Add half of the prepared chicken-65 pieces (first portion), chopped coriander and mint leaves, mix well.
- Cover and cook until the gravy is thick. Remove from heat and set aside.

#### For rice:

- Wash and soak the rice for 30 minutes. Drain the water completely. Set aside.
- In a cooking pot, heat one tablespoon of ghee. Add all the spices listed and fry for few seconds.
- Pour enough water, lemon juice and

salt into the pot and bring to boil. When it starts boiling, add the soaked rice and continue cooking.

- When the rice is ¾ done, layer half of the rice over the Chicken-65 masala layer.
- Layer the remaining Chicken-65 pieces (second portion) on top and spread half of the remaining toppings (fried onions, cashew nuts, raisins, chopped coriander leaves) on top of the chicken-65 layer.
- Once the steam comes out from the dough seal, after 20-25 minutes, switch off the flame and keep the biryani pot unopened for 10 minutes. Open the dum, mix the rice and chicken pieces from the bottom of the pan using a long spoon.
- Serve and enjoy.

Courtesy: Anna's secret recipe / DOSAMA.



### WALNUT FIDDICH FASHIONED

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Walnut-infused Glenfiddich (12 yo): 60 ml
- Homemade cranberry syrup: 15 ml
- Cinnamon bitters: 2-3 dashes
- Cinnamon sticks
- Lemon and orange peels

#### METHOD

- Add whisky, cranberry syrup and

bitters over ice in a mixing jar.

- Stir for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Smoke a cinnamon stick in an inverted rock glass.
- Add a block of ice and the drink to the smoked rock glass.
- Garnish with burnt lemon and orange peel oil.

Courtesy: Angad Singh Gandhi, Glenfiddich Indian brand ambassador.

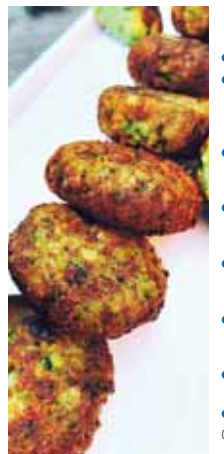
### BROCCOLI & CORN CUTLET

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Potato: 2
- Broccoli: 250 gm
- Sweet corn: 100 gm
- Garlic (minced): 2 tbsp
- Onion (finely-chopped): 1
- Olive oil: 2 tbsp
- Thyme: 10 gm
- Bread crumbs: 500 gm
- Flour: 250 gm
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Oil for frying

#### METHOD

- Boil the potatoes until cooked properly and mash it using fork and allow it to cool.
- In a pan, add two tablespoons of oil. Once hot, add minced garlic and sweat.
- Add onions and cook until translucent. Add minced broccoli and sweet corn.
- Cook the mixture for about two



minutes, add thyme and seasoning.

- Allow the mixture to cool.
- Once the mixture has cooled down, mix it with mashed potatoes, check seasoning and add more if required.
- Shape the mixture into cutlets and store in the chiller for half an hour.
- Make slurry using flour and water with a pinch of salt and pepper.
- Dip the cutlets into slurry and coat them well using bread crumbs all around.
- Fry the cutlets into medium hot oil until the surface of the cutlets turns crispy.
- Remove excess oil if any through paper towel.
- Serve hot.

Courtesy: Chef Charles Jayakumar.



### THE HUNTSMAN

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Tarnished Truth (9 yo) Bourbon: 2 oz
- Grapefruit juice: ¾ oz
- Honey simple syrup: ¾ oz
- French Tarragon

#### METHOD

- Combine bourbon, grapefruit juice and simple syrup in a shaker.
- Add ice and shake.
- Double strain with Hawthorne strainer into chilled coupe glass.
- Garnish with French Tarragon.

Courtesy: Stephanie Kenney.

PTI ■ CANBERRA

Short of resources in ODIs, India will have enough options to choose from to pose a stiffer challenge to Australia when the two sides clash in a three-match T20 series beginning at Manuka Oval on Friday.

The 1-2 ODI series loss reaffirmed that India have a lot of work to do in the 50-over format but they possess a much more balanced squad in the shorter format.

Before the pandemic suspended sporting activities around the world, India had blanketed hosts New Zealand in a five-match series and they will be taking a lot of confidence out of that result into the contest against Australia.

The presence of Washington Sundar, Deepak Chahar and T Natarajan, who did well on his ODI debut on Wednesday, lends much-needed balance to the bowling department.

Sundar will be high on confidence after a solid IPL, where Royal Challengers Bangalore and India skipper Virat Kohli used him effectively in the powerplay and middle overs.

With Hardik Pandya not bowling regularly, India need only one specialist all-rounder in Ravindra Jadeja in the one-dayers.

However, in the T20s, Kohli

# RAPID FIRE ROUND KICKS OFF

## India, Oz work out T20 combos in 1st game today

**Aus vs India (1st T20)**  
**Live from 1:40pm IST**  
**SONY TEN 3 & SIX NETWORK**

will also have the services of Sundar in both the departments and there is a possibility that Hardik can roll his arm over for a brief spell like he did from the second ODI onwards.

Yorker specialist Natarajan, who was a late addition to the ODI squad, could also make his T20 debut on Friday having shown enough promise in his maiden international appearance.

Unlike the SCG, the Manuka Oval surface had enough for both the spinners and pacers. It will be interesting to see who opens up the bowling alongside Jasprit Bumrah with the toss-up being between Mohammed Shami and Deepak Chahar.

Yuzvendra Chahal, who had a forgettable outing in the ODIs, will also be looking to bounce back.

In batting, K L Rahul, who batted at five in ODIs, is expected to go back to his preferred opening slot alongside Shikhar Dhawan.



Indian players appreciate Ravindra Jadeja's effort to dismiss Chris Green during third ODI on Wednesday

The in-form wicketkeeper batsman had also opened in the previous series against New Zealand and would be expected to

bat the bulk of the 20 overs like he did so well in the IPL.

Skipper Kohli looked in good touch in ODIs and will be aiming

to build on that while number four Shreyas Iyer will be targeting big scores from great starts like he did in the preceding three-match

series.

As Kohli mentioned, the win in the inconsequential third ODI was just the kind of result they needed ahead of the T20 series, else the tour would have gotten harder.

Australia, after naming the same squad for ODIs as well as T20s, would be backing themselves to beat India after a clinical display over the last one week despite injury concerns.

Star batsman David Warner is an available day to a groin injury and it remains to be seen if Marnus Labuschagne comes alongside skipper Aaron Finch on Friday like they both did a night ago.

Marcus Stoinis would have been another good opening option with Finch but he too is a doubtful starter due to a side injury he suffered during the ODIs.

Mitchell Starc, who was rested on Wednesday, is expected to return to the attack even as the side misses the services of Pat Cummins, who has been rested as part of the his workload management.

# Williamson puts Kiwis on top

AFP ■ HAMILTON

The West Indies delight at winning the toss on a lush green wicket turned to frustration as New Zealand were rarely troubled in posting 243/2 on day one of the first Test in Hamilton on Thursday.

Kane Williamson, despite being troubled with cramp late in the day, produced a masterful innings to be unbeaten on 97 at stumps with Ross Taylor on 31.

Williamson featured in a 154-run stand with Tom Latham for the second wicket before Latham was bowled for 86.

After the start of play was delayed two hours by rain, the West Indies were delighted to win the toss with an emerald wicket that potentially feared untold demons for their pace attack.

But after Shannon Gabriel bowled Will Young early for five, the tourists found



They did not get the assistance they expected from the wicket.

Williamson, who will resume on Friday requiring just three runs to register his 22nd Test century, worked patiently with Latham

for more than 50 overs, waiting for bad balls to hit as the pair were rarely tempted to play shots at anything else.

Gabriel, Kemar Roach and Holder could not keep a consistent line and saw rare chances spoiled by fielding errors.

The 2.01 metre (6ft 7in) Holder used his height to extract some bounce but the no-risk approach of Latham and Williamson served only to tire the big Barbadian.

Wicketkeeper Shane Dowrich had an uncomfortable day by failing to get a glove to a chance from Young and then he did not appeal when it appeared he had caught Latham on 43 off Holder, who also kept quiet.

On 80, Latham was well out of his crease when he aborted an attempted cheeky single, but Shamrock Shy at the stumps went well wide.

# Green in awe of India's 'quality' spin

PTI ■ CANBERRA

Young Australian all-rounder Cameron Green is in awe of the Indian team's 'quality' spin attack and feels no amount of research work can prepare one for the on-field experience.

The prodigiously talented Green made his international debut in the third ODI against India.

Although Australia lost the fixture by 13 runs, the rookie gained crucial match experience in the middle.

"Their spinners, I take a lot out of it," Green said, referring to Kuldeep Yadav and Co.

saying by cricket.Com.Au.

The 21-year-old came in at number five on Wednesday and hit a boundary and a six before a superb catch by Ravindra Jadeja ended his debut innings on 21.

"Jadeja is a beautiful bowler who knows exactly what he's trying to do: Spin some away from you and dart one back in."

"You can do as much research and watch as much footage as you want to get an understanding how they bowl. But it's a different beast out in the middle. I will take a lot out of it."

Green said, referring to Kuldeep Yadav and Co.

# IPL could have 2 new teams as BCCI seeks AGM approval

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI will hold its Annual General Meeting on December 24 to discuss the induction of two new IPL franchises besides the appointment of India's ICC representative and three new national selectors.

Also on the agenda is the election of a new vice-president. As per norm, the BCCI has sent a 23-point agenda to all affiliated units 21 days prior to the holding of the AGM.

The most significant point is seeking approval for two new teams to make it a 10-team IPL.

It is understood that the Adani Group and Sanjeev Goenka's RPG (owners of the Rising Pune Supergiants) are interested in owning new teams with

# No Du Plessis for Eng ODIs

IAN ■ JOHANNESBURG

Senior South Africa batsman Faf du Plessis has been rested for the upcoming three-match ODI series against England, Cricket South Africa confirmed on Thursday.

Along with du Plessis, Kagiso Rabada, Pite van Biljon, Bjorn Fortuin and Reeza Hendricks have also been released from the squad.

Faf played all the three T20s and scored 121 runs, with his highest score being 58 which came in the first T20.

South Africa squad: Quinton de Kock (captain), Temba Bavuma, Junior Dala, Beuran Hendricks, Heinrich Klaasen, George Linde, Keshav Maharaj, Janneman Malan, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Andile Phehlukwayo, Tabraiz Shamsi, Lutho Sipamla, Jon-Jon Smuts, Glenton Stuurman, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne.

# Lee questions Australia's decision to rest Cummins

AFP ■ SYDNEY

Former fast-bowling star Brett Lee has questioned Australia's decision to rest pace spearhead Pat Cummins after just two games against India in the recently concluded ODI series.

Cummins, who was part of Australia's England tour in August and also played for Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL, was rested for the final ODI and will also miss the upcoming T20 series as part of his workload management.

"It probably wouldn't have been his call, he probably would have wanted to play, the players generally want to play," Lee told Foxsports.Com.Au.

"I would have thought after a couple of games they shouldn't be tired. I always found that for my rhythm personally that the more games I played the better rhythm I had," Lee added.

Lee opined that a player can be rested if he is nursing an injury but a fit one should be playing as many as possible.

# I saw death too closely: Grosjean

AFP ■ SAKHIR

Frenchman Grosjean 'saw death' before he left the hospital on Wednesday following his dramatic escape from a fiery high-speed crash in last weekend's Bahrain Formula One Grand Prix.

"I had a week's break, whether it be a break in the tournament or whether I was rested, it's almost like you've got to go back and find that rhythm again," he said.

"There could be a guy who is carrying a hamstring injury or a little niggle, shoulder might be a bit sore, and the best way to get them into their best preparation is to have a few days off. That's fine but if they're fully fit they should be playing," PTI



broken left foot after a collision with Daniil Kvyat on the first lap of Sunday's race, and was treated at a military hospital in Bahrain.

"I saw death too closely. You can't live that and be the same man," said Grosjean.

The 34-year-old Frenchman was stuck in his car for nearly half a minute before getting out alive, largely thanks to the car's survival cell, his so-

called 'halo' device.

He described the crash, which he said "was not the most violent" of his F1 career and the subsequent fire from which he managed to flee with minor injuries.

"I undid my seat belt right away and I tried to get out of the car, but I realised my helmet was hitting something," Grosjean said, his voice trembling.

"I sat back down, told myself that I was stuck and that I'll wait."

"But on my left, it was all orange and I realised that it was burning. I told myself: 'No time to wait. I'm going to try to get out on the right, but I couldn't. I couldn't get out on the left either.'

"I thought: 'It can't end like this, not now.' I tried to get out again, but I couldn't, so I sat down and I saw death, not close up, but from too close... It's a feeling that I wish on no-one."

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Neymar's brace helped Paris Saint-Germain to a vital 3-1 win over Manchester United on Wednesday that took the French club to within touching distance of the Champions League last 16, while Olivier Giroud scored all four goals in Chelsea's 4-0 thumping of Sevilla.

# PSG boost hopes with United win

Elsewhere, Borussia Dortmund secured their qualification for the next round.

PSG could have been on the brink of elimination from Group H with a defeat at Old Trafford, but Neymar put last season's runners-up ahead in the sixth minute and the world's most expensive player sealed their victory in stoppage time.

In between, Marcus Rashford's shot went in off Dortmund's keeper, United led in the first half, and Edinson Cavani hit the bar

against his former club.

Marquinhos prodded the French champions back in front mid-way through the second half and the game appeared to be for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side when Fred was sent off for a second yellow, having been fortunate to escape a red card early on.

Neymar's late clincher could prove crucial as it gives PSG the head-to-head advantage (in a two-way tie) follow-

ing United's 2-1 win in Paris in October.

There is a three-way tie on nine points at the top of the group with RB Leipzig right in contention after Norwegian striker Alexander Sorloth scored in injury time to give them a 4-3 victory at Istanbul Basaksehir.

Irfan Can Kahveci's superb hat-trick looked to have rescued a draw for Basaksehir as they came back from 3-1 down to

draw level. Yussuf Poulsen, Nordi Mukiele and Dani Olmo also scored for Leipzig.

The German side scored a stunning later goal to throw Group H wide open.

It all means PSG now need only draw at home to Basaksehir next week to qualify.

United also only require a point when they visit Leipzig, but will be out if they lose, while the Germans would in that case go through.



draw level. Yussuf Poulsen, Nordi Mukiele and Dani Olmo also scored for Leipzig.

The Brazilian enjoyed four successful seasons alongside the six-time Ballon d'Or winner at Barcelona before making a world record 222 million euro move to the French capital in 2017.

"It's what I most want, to enjoy being with him on the field again," Neymar, whose contract at PSG runs until 2022, told ESPN.

"I want to play with him for

# Neymar wants Messi reunion

AFP ■ MANCHESTER

Neymar dropped a bombshell on Wednesday as he followed up scoring twice for Paris Saint-Germain in their 3-1 Champions League win over Manchester United by revealing his desire to reunite with Lionel Messi next season.

The Brazilian enjoyed four successful seasons alongside the six-time Ballon d'Or winner at Barcelona before making a world record 222 million euro move to the French capital in 2017.

"It's what I most want, to enjoy being with him on the field again," Neymar, whose contract at PSG runs until 2022, told ESPN.

"I want to play with him for

sure, next year we have to do it." Neymar was heavily linked with a return to Barcelona in 2019, but the Catalan giants were unable to fund an acceptable offer for PSG.

Barca have had to agree salary cuts worth 122 million euros in players' salaries this season to help offset the financial hole left by the coronavirus pandemic and are highly unlikely to be in a position to bring Neymar back next year.

Instead, it is Messi who could be on the move as the Argentine is out of contract at the end of the season and publicly expressed his desire to leave in August.

"He can play in my position, there is no problem," Neymar joked. "Take me out."

**DISTRICT RURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, BARGARH**

**ADVERTISMENT**

No. 3534/DIRDA-NHGRSEA Dated: 03-12-2020

Applications are invited from the eligible candidates of Bargarh District to fill up 58 nos. of post of Gram Razar Sevaks (GRS) to be engaged in different Gram Panchayats of Bargarh District on contractual basis under NHGRSEA. The newly engaged GRS shall get a consolidated monthly remuneration of Rs.7,000/-(Seven Thousand) only and after successfully worked for more than 1 year and less than 6 years shall get 8500/- per month and after successfully worked for more than 6 years will get 9800/- per month. The details regarding Application Form, eligible criteria, selection procedure, remuneration and other related information along with applications are available in the Bargarh district official website www.recruitment.bargarh.nic.in

Applications in the prescribed format duly filled in along with all relevant documents (self attested) are to be submitted through online software only and in no other means with effect from 05.12.2020 to 30.12.2020 (11.59 PM). Candidates need not submit any physical application. It should also be noted that any application sent in hand copy stating that the application could not be uploaded, shall not be processed/considered.

Incomplete Applications, Applications without signature, non-submission of required documents shall be rejected without any information. Further, legal action shall be initiated against the candidates who will submit forged documents. The details of candidates related to notification and online related problems may be given to sv-dsrbargarh@nic.in/dsrbargarh@nyhno.com or call to 06646-230485, 8638276352.

The Collector-Cum-CEO, Zilla Parishad, Bargarh, reserves the right to reject or accept any or all applications without assigning any reason therefor.

Sd/-  
COLLECTOR-CUM-CEO, ZILLA PARISHAD, BARGARH

**OFFICE OF THE SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER**  
PURI PROJECT DIVISION NO-III, PURI-752002

**ODISHA BRIDGE & CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION LIMITED**  
(A GOVT. OF ODISHA UNDERTAKING)

CAD-837

Lr No. 1375  
Bid Identification: 09/2020-21

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Amount to TENDER	Class of Contractor
1	Construction of Precast prestressed SFRC Boundary wall at BADA, OMA, MATTHA near Mangalghat Site, Puri, Saker, Unit-3, Puri	Rs.21.83 Lakhs	'C' & 'B' Class Contractors of PWD or Equivalent Class other Department/ Authorized Manufacturers having MBSE registration throughout India.
2	Ground development of land at Rebatl Ramas, Puri including construction of Precast prestressed SFRC Boundary wall	Rs.58.9 Lakhs	'B' & 'A' Class Contractors of PWD or Equivalent Class of other Department/ Authorized Manufacturers having MBSE registration throughout India.

1. Date and time of availability of bid document in the eProcurement portal: 11.00 A.M. of 09.12.2020.

2. Last date/time for receipt of online bid: 22.12.2020 till 5.00 PM.

3. Further details can be seen from the eProcurement portal "https://www.tenderandbid.gov.in"

Sr. Project Manager,  
Puri Project Divn. No-III, O.B & C.C.Ltd, Puri

OIPR/34106/11/0036/2021

**AFFIDAVIT**

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Baripada on 02/12/2020, 1 Sri Ludhya Murmu, S/O No.4279966F, Rank-IAV, S/O Late Bajum Murmu of Tadisoole, Post-Mayurbhanj hereby declared that my wife's name recorded as PHULAMANI HANSDAH in her all recorded documents including School Certificate. But in my Service record it has been inadvertently mentioned as PHULAMANI MURMU. PHULAMANI MURMU & PHULAMANI HANSDAH & PHULAMANI HANSDAH is one and same person. Hence She will be known as PHULAMANI HANSDAH for all purpose.

Sd/-  
Ludhya Murmu