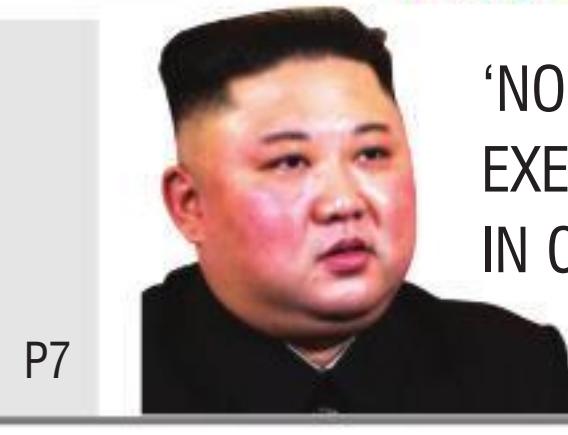


SHOTGUN
ALLIANCE



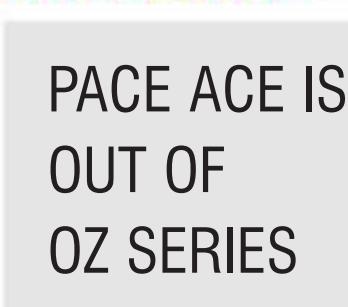
'INDIA HAS
UNDER-PERFORMED'

P6



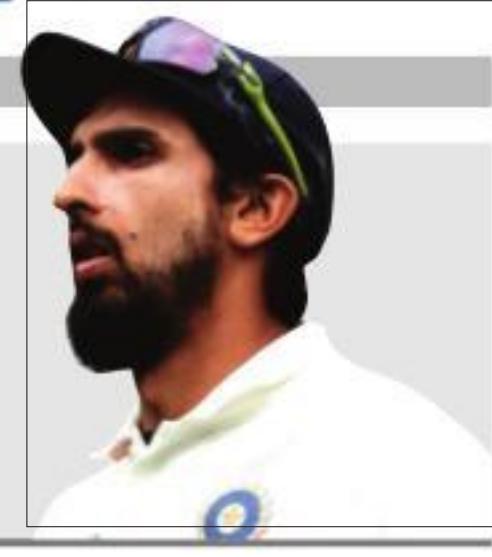
'NORTH KOREA
EXECUTED PEOPLE
IN COVID FIGHT'

P7



PACE ACE IS
OUT OF
OZ SERIES

P11



P12

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Mist in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 25 and 09 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 95% Min: 43%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 27.0°C (0) Min: 10.2°C (-1)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

06:55 hrs 17:24 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

16:15 hrs 05:44 hrs

THUMBNAILS



The Majherhat bridge being readied ahead of the inauguration. In Kolkata on Friday. ■ SNS

MIG-29K Jet crashes in Arabian sea: An Indian Navy's MIG-29K trainer aircraft crashed in the Arabian Sea on Thursday following which one pilot has gone missing while the other has been rescued. "MIG-29K trainer aircraft operating at sea ditched at about 1700 hrs on 26 November 20. One pilot safely recovered, search for the second pilot Cdr Nishant Singh, by air & surface units is in progress. An enquiry to investigate the incident has been ordered," the Indian Navy spokesperson tweeted on Friday.

SC extends Arnab's interim bail: The Supreme Court on Friday extended the interim of TV anchor Arnab Goswami and two others till four weeks after the Bombay High Court decides their pleas for quashing of an FIR in the 2018 abetment to suicide case, stating that the judiciary should ensure criminal law does not become a weapon for selective harassment. Goswami, Editor-in-Chief of Republic TV, Neetish Sarda and Feroz Md Shaikh were arrested by Alibaug police on 4 November.

Economy claws back: GDP fell only 7.5 pc in Q2

GDP had contracted by a record 23.9 pc in first quarter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 NOVEMBER

India's economy recovered faster than expected in the September quarter as a pick-up in manufacturing helped GDP clock a lower contraction of 7.5 per cent and held out hopes for further improvement on consumer demand bouncing back.

The gross domestic product (GDP) had contracted by a record 23.9 per cent in the first quarter of 2020-21 fiscal (April 2020 to March 2021) as the coronavirus lockdown pummeled economic activity. The second straight quarter of contraction pushed India to its first technical recession.

The GDP contraction of 7.5 per cent in July-September compared with a growth of 4.4 per cent in the same quarter last year, according to data released by the statistics ministry on Friday.

The construction sector, which is the second-largest employer in the economy, contracted only 8.6 per cent in Q2 versus (-) 50 per cent in Q1.

Public spending was down 12 per cent.

Analysts and economists, who have projected the economy shrinking for the full fiscal, had expected a wider contraction in Q2.

China's economy grew by 4.9 per cent in July-September this year, faster than the 3.2 per cent growth in April-June 2020.

Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy Subramanian said the recovery from the lockdown has been stronger than expected and the economy could show growth in the fourth quarter.



quarter's performance. He said, "We should be cautiously optimistic and cautious is warranted because the economic impact is primarily due to pandemic."

Rumki Majumdar, economist, Deloitte India said recent high-frequency data possibly suggest a quicker rebound ahead. "The possibility of a release of several highly effective vaccines soon gives us hope that there is an end date to the pandemic, even if it may not be immediate," she said.

Analysts said the recovery was 'V' shaped.

Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das had on Thursday stated that the recovery from the lockdown has been stronger than expected and the economy could show growth in the fourth quarter.

As the tide snowballed, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said no government in the world can stop farmers

Farmers allowed to enter Delhi after hours of chaos

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH,
27 NOVEMBER

Thousands of farmers gathered at various entry points into the national capital were allowed in on Friday to hold a peaceful protest at a north Delhi ground, defusing some of the tension building up since morning around the city's edges and beyond.

The concession came after hours of a standoff that saw police using teargas shells, water cannons and multi-layer barriers to block the protesters and the farmers pelting stones and breaking barricades in some places in their determination to push through as part of their 'Delhi Chalo' march against the Centre's new farm laws.

"After holding discussion with farmer leaders, the protesting farmers have been permitted inside Delhi to hold peaceful protest at Nirankari Ground in Burari. We appeal to all farmers to maintain peace," said Delhi Police PRO Eish Singh.

At the Tikri border, farmers were escorted by police personnel around 3 p.m. and taken towards the Nirankari Ground, one of the biggest in the city.

But those gathered at the Singhu border, one of the main routes used to access the city from Punjab, had not entered the city till evening.

As the tide snowballed, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said no government in the world can stop farmers



Farmers shout slogans during their 'Delhi Chalo' protest against Central government's newly-passed farm laws, at the Singhu border. In the Capital on Friday. ■ AMARJEET SINGH

fighting the "battle of truth". In a tweet, Gandhi said Modi should remember that whenever arrogance takes on truth, it gets defeated.

"The Modi government will have to agree to the demands of the farmers and take back the black laws. This is just the beginning!" he tweeted with the hashtag 'IamWithFarmers'. Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh welcomed the Union government's decision to allow the farmers to enter Delhi to exercise their democratic right to protest.

They should also now initiate immediate talks to address farmers' concerns on the #FarmLaws and resolve the simmering issue," he tweeted.

But those gathered at the Singhu border, one of the main routes used to access the city from Punjab, had not entered the city till evening.

As the tide snowballed, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said no government in the world can stop farmers

president Darshan Pal.

Earlier in the day, clashes broke out at multiple places and Delhi's borders resembled a virtual battle zone with restless crowds of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, milling around and a sea of police personnel keeping them at bay.

Drones circled the air and plumes of smoke from teargas shells could be seen from far.

Beyond the border points, the tension spilled over on highways where groups of farmers squatted on the road, and stood in trucks and tractors, waiting impatiently to make their way into the national capital.

At the Singhu border, multi-layer barricading, including sand-laden trucks and water cannons, was put up to block the farmers.

Delhi Police used tear-gas to disperse farmers who had reached Singhu.

At Tikri, a few kilome-

tres away, some farmers used a tractor to pull away a truck placed as a barricade to prevent them from entering the city. Water cannons were used against the farmers. Hundreds of farmers from western Uttar Pradesh were also moving towards Delhi from Greater Noida to join the protest.

The Bharatiya Kisan Union had given the call to farmers from the region, including Meerut, Muzaffarnagar and Baghpat, to come together for the 'Delhi Chalo' march.

"We have started our onward movement. But our route to Delhi is yet to be decided by our union leaders," BKU spokesperson Pawan Khatana said.

Delhi Police had expressed concern over the pandemic situation in the city, had sought permission from the AAP government to use the city's nine stadiums as temporary jails for farmers arrested but this was denied.

India's Covid caseload climbs to 93.09 lakh

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 27 NOVEMBER

FACT FILE

TOTAL CASES	ACTIVE CASES	NEW CASES	NEW RECOVERIES	TOTAL DEATHS
93,09,787	4,55,555	43,082	39,379	1,35,715

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M.
FRIDAY 27 NOVEMBER 2020



which pushed its Covid toll to 8,909, the health bulletin said.

SEE P2

5 dead in Guj Covid hospital blaze

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, 27 NOVEMBER

The fire started after midnight in Uday Shivanand hospital in Davdi area of Rajkot. Of the 33 Covid-19 patients admitted, six have sustained injuries while five died due to the fire.

Apex Court takes note: The Supreme Court took cognizance of the fire incident and sought a report from Gujarat government on the issue.

Gujarat Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel said 26 patients at the hospital were rescued and shifted to other facilities.

Rajkot Police Commissioner Manoj Agarwal said, "Out of the 11 coronavirus patients admitted to the ICU ward, five lost their lives in the fire, which was quickly brought under control before it could spread to other floors."

Chief minister Vijay Rupani has ordered a probe into the incident and announced an ex-

gratia relief of Rs four lakh each for the kin of the victims.

Patel said the blaze broke out in the ICU ward and was brought under control within half an hour by the fire brigade. While three coronavirus patients died on the spot, two others succumbed to the injuries while they were being shifted to another hospital.

"Nobody else was injured in the incident. Twenty-six other patients, including those who were undergoing treatment on the upper floors, were shifted to other hospitals," Patel said. The Chief Minister's Office said senior IAS officer ARK Rakesh would carry out the probe into the incident.

In August, eight COVID-19 patients were killed after a fire broke out on the top floor of a four-storey private hospital in Ahmedabad.

In the Supreme Court, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, assured the bench that the Union home secretary will convene a meeting latest by Saturday and issue directions on fire safety in government hospitals across India.

PM to review vaccine work in three cities

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 27 NOVEMBER

Modi will also be visiting the Zydus Biotech Park in Ahmedabad to review development of the company's ZyCoV-D vaccine, as well as the facilities of the Serum Institute of India in Pune, which has partnered with AstraZeneca and Oxford University for the vaccine.

TRS MPs today raised the issue of the PM's trip while lambasting the four BJP MPs and Union minister from the state for remaining silent on the demands of state for projects or funds. "Neither the Prime Minister nor the Union ministers had visited Hyderabad during the floods. They didn't give any funds. But they are all visiting the state just before GHMC polls. Don't be surprised if the Prime Minister makes an announcement of free distribution of Covid Vaccine before GHMC polls," said Nama Nageshwara Rao the TRS floor leader in the Lok Sabha.

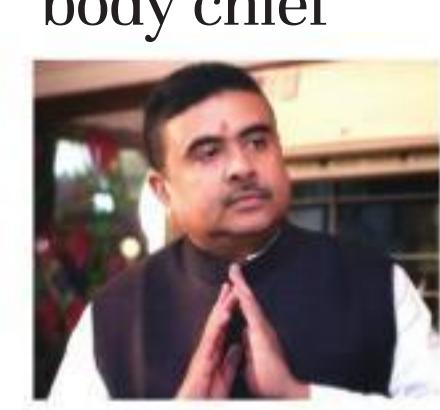
Bharat Biotech is developing the Covaxin vaccine in collaboration with Indian Council of Medical Research which has entered its third phase of trial.

The BJPs has already included the promise of free vaccine and Covid tests in its manifesto.

Bharat Biotech is developing the Covaxin vaccine in collaboration with Indian Council of Medical Research which has entered its third phase of trial.

The nation will always remain indebted to them for their supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty, said the

Suvendu quits WB Cabinet, as Haldia devp body chief



A day after being replaced as the chairman of the Hooghly River Bridge Commissioners (HRBC), influential Trinamul Congress leader Suvendu Adhikari tendered his resignation as the state's transport minister today amidst speculations over his next political move.

Adhikari, who was the prime architect of the Nandigram anti-land acquisition movement which catapulted Mamata Banerjee to power in 2011, defeating the 34-year-long Left regime in Bengal, sent his resignation letter to the chief minister by fax, which he also forwarded to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar by e-mail. Adhikari also tendered his resignation as Chairman of the Haldia Development Authority to Firad Hakim, the state's urban development and municipal affairs minister.

Soon after he submitted his resignation letters, it is learnt, chief minister Mamata Banerjee called Adhikari over the phone and talked with him for a few minutes, but what transpired during the interaction was not immediately known.

"Our party is trying to talk with him to douse his anger. MPs Sougata Roy and Sudip Bandopadhyay have been deputed to talk to him," a senior TMC leader said. ■ DETAILS ON PAGE 5

On eve of DDC polls, Mufti put under house arrest

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 27 NOVEMBER



Huge gap in demand, supply of organs for transplant in country: AIIMS chief

NEW DELHI, 27 NOVEMBER

There is a "huge gap" in the demand and supply of human organs and tissues for transplant in the country and the myths prevalent in this domain must be busted to ensure that lives are saved by timely availability of vital body parts, AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria said on Friday.

He was speaking during a webinar where the country's largest paramilitary force—the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)—handed over a total of 79,572 organ donation pledges undertaken by its personnel to Union health minister Harsh Vardhan. The country is observing the 11th Indian organ donation day on Friday.

Vardhan urged people to come together for this noble cause, saying it was time for everyone to "burst the myths" and realise that the act of donating organs is not against "religion or religious customs".

"There cannot be a bigger gory work than organ donation," Vardhan said.

Guleria said the AIIMS was working to "very soon" start a lung transplant programme even as it has facilities available for transplantation of heart, kidney, liver, pancreas, cornea, heart valve and bones.

The AIIMS chief said the premier medical institute at present has organ banks for eyes, heart valves, bones and "in future a skin bank will also be operational".

Strong winds, less stubble burning make Delhi's air cleaner

PTI
NEW DELHI, 27 NOVEMBER

Delhi's air quality improved to be in the moderate category on Friday morning due to favourable wind speed and is likely to get even better, according to the India Meteorological Department.

The city's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI), which was 302 on Thursday, improved to 137 on Friday. On Wednesday, the 24-hour AQI was 413, which falls in the "severe" category. An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", between 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

Stronger winds and a dras-

tic reduction in the contribution of stubble burning were two major reasons for cleaner skies over Delhi, according to experts.

V K Soni, the head of the IMD's environment research centre, said the wind speed remained favourable throughout the night, leading to a better than predicted situation.

Usually, winds remain calm at night. On Thursday night, favourable wind speed (8-12 kmph) led to better dispersion conditions, he said. The maximum wind speed was 18 kmph on Friday, the IMD said. The central government's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi said the air quality is likely to remain in the satisfactory to moderate category on Saturday and in

the moderate to poor category on Sunday. The share of stubble burning in Delhi's pollution has also reduced significantly as the harvesting season has ended. The contribution of stubble burning in neighbouring states to Delhi's PM_{2.5} levels was just 2 percent on Friday and 1 percent on Thursday, according to the Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR. The minimum temperature was 10.2 degrees Celsius on Friday. The maximum temperature is likely to settle around 25 degrees Celsius, the weather department said. Calm winds and low temperatures trap pollutants close to the ground, while favourable wind speed helps in their dispersion.

Farmers' protest: AAP govt refuses to let Delhi Police use stadiums as temporary jails

PTI
NEW DELHI, 27 NOVEMBER

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government on Friday denied permission to the Delhi Police to convert the city's stadiums into temporary jails in view of the protest by farmers against the Centre's new farm laws.

While rejecting the Delhi Police's request, Delhi Home Minister Satyendar Jain said that every Indian citizen has the constitutional right to protest peacefully for which they cannot be put in jails.

In a letter to the principal home secretary, Jain said the central government should

accept the demands of the protesters and added that putting farmers in jails is not the solution.

Police used tear gas at the Singhu and Tikri borders to disperse protesting farmers, mainly from Punjab, as they tried to enter the national capital on Friday morning as part of their 'Delhi Chalo' march.

But later in the day, after discussions with farmer leaders, the Delhi Police allowed the protesters to enter the national capital and hold peaceful demonstration at the Nirankari ground in Burari. Jain in his letter also said that the demands of the farmers are justified.

"The Centre should immediately accept demands of the farmers. Putting farmers in jail is not a solution of it."

Their protest is completely non-violent. Agitating non violently is the right of every Indian. They can not be sent to the jail for this," he said.

"Therefore, the Delhi government denies this application by the Delhi Police to convert stadium into jail," Jain said in the letter.

Earlier, the Delhi Police had sought permission from the AAP government to use the city's nine stadiums as temporary jails for the agitating farmers.

Somebody asked why national president of BJP is campaigning in municipal elections. I want to say that I am ready to go anywhere to carry forward politics of development and to end corruption.

J. P. NADDA
BJP NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Delhi logs 98 fresh Covid fatalities, 5,482 cases

AAP hits back at the BJP-ruled Centre over its remarks in SC blaming Delhi govt for Covid surge

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 27 NOVEMBER

Delhi today recorded 5,482 fresh cases of Covid-19, which raised the city's cumulative tally of such patients to 5,56,744, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital logged 98 fresh coronavirus fatalities, which pushed its Covid toll to 8,909, the health bulletin said.

The city's fresh coronavirus infections came to light after 64,455 tests were conducted across the national capital, the bulletin said. The positivity rate was 8.51 per cent.

The coronavirus patients who recovered during the past 24 hours after getting treatment in different hospitals numbered 5,937. As a result, the number of Covid patients in the city who have recovered so far went up to 5,09,654. The recovery rate was now 91.54 per cent.

There were 38,181 active cases of the deadly virus infection, including 9,565 patients who remained hospitalised and 23,134 under home isolation. The number of containment zones across the national capital stood at 5,229.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 5,475 coronavirus infections and 91 more fatalities.

These cases were detected out of 63,266 tests, including 28,897 RT-PCR ones—the highest till date—and 34,369 rapid antigen tests. The posi-



A civil defence volunteer in face mask holding a placard as part of an anti-vehicular pollution drive in the Capital on Friday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

tivity rate was then 8.65 percent.

Meanwhile, the AAP today termed as "very unfortunate" the Union home ministry's remarks in its affidavit filed before the Supreme Court blaming the AAP-led Delhi government for the rise in Covid cases in the city, saying the BJP-ruled Centre has chosen to play "dirty politics" at this critical hour.

The Centre today blamed the Delhi government for rising Covid cases in the national capital and said that despite "repeated exhortations", it did not take steps to enhance testing capacity, particularly for RT-

PCR, which remained static at around 20,000 tests for a long time. In a statement, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) said the comments of the Centre about Delhi government in its affidavit before the Supreme Court are "very unfortunate".

"It is extremely unfortunate that the central government has chosen to play dirty politics in this critical hour. The affidavit seems to have been drafted by a BJP spokesperson rather than by the Union government which is meant to work in collaboration with the states at the time of a pandemic. The affidavit is also factually incorrect."

Classified

ADMISSION NOTICE

CPJ
College of Higher Studies & School of Law, Narela, Delhi
Plot No. OCT Sector - A6, Narela, Delhi - 110 040
Ph: 011-27384333/34, Mob: 9893001362
Email: cpjchsl@gmail.com

(Recognized by Govt of NCT of Delhi, Bar Council of India & Affiliated to GGSIP University, Delhi)

CET-2020 qualified & eligible students seeking admission in BBA, BCA, B.Com (H) 1st & 2nd Shift & CLAT-2020 qualified students seeking admission in B.A.LL.B (H) & BBALL.B (H) against Management Quota Seats may apply on prescribed application available in the college office. The last date for the submission of application form is 13.12.2020. The counseling will be held on 15.12.2020 at 11:00 a.m. Reservation of seats as per GGSIPU/GNCT rules.

Director

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform the public at large that Late Sh. Kamwar Lal Davey was the title holder in possession of DOI having up to date upto 2015. Plot No. 276, Second Floor, Category-LIG, Pockar-2, Mayur Vihar, Phase-I, New Delhi (hereinafter referred to as "Schedule F Plot") vide Conveyance Deed dated April 2000, was registered as Registration No. 2223, Book No. I, Vol. No. 1479, pp. 152-153 on 28.04.2005 in the Office of the Sub Registrar-VII, Vikas Nagar, New Delhi. That upon demise of Late Sh. Kamwar Lal Davey, a suffix for partition bearing CS No. 1461/2015 was filed by Smt. Manjula against Sh. Ashish Davey (both children of Late Sh. Kamwar Lal Davey) vide Suit No. 2000/2015 dated 07.02.2020, the court held that decree dated 12.10.2018 is made absolute and the Schedule Plot is to be sold and the same will be shared between Smt. Manjula and Sh. Ashish Davey. Further vide Order in Misc. No. 724/2018 dated 07.02.2020, the court held that decree dated 12.10.2018 is made absolute and the Schedule Plot is to be sold and the same will be shared between Smt. Manjula and Sh. Ashish Davey. Therefore, the aforementioned persons in compliance of Court Order dated 07.02.2020, have initiated sale of Schedule Plot in favor of Smt. Manjula and Sh. Ashish Davey and shall proceed with the registration of the Sale Deed w.r.t. the Schedule Plot in favor of Smt. Smita Lata and Sh. Anil Sharma (hereinafter referred to as "Buyers") during the pendency of suit w.r.t. the Schedule Plot.

Whereas a petition under Section 276 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 for the grant of Probate/Letters of Administration to the petitioner in respect of the immoveable property of the estate of Late Ms. Aloka Dasgupta.

Notice is hereby given to the general public that any person having objection to the Grant of Letters of Administration/Probate in his favour in respect of the estate of the deceased particularly Property/Flat. Bearing No. 1069, Sec-A, Pocket-B, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070, may file the same in the court personally or through counsel or before the court at the date of hearing 08-12-2020.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on the 27th day of November, 2020.

AD-02 & Waqf Tribunal (NDD)

Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

President

Advt. No. UCL/ADVT-04

Dated: 25-11-2020

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF SH. R. L. MEENA

ADJ-02 & Waqf Tribunal (NDD)

Room No. 1, Main Bldg.

Patiala House Courts,

New Delhi

PC No. 11/2020

NDH : 08-12-2020

Deepak Dasgupta, s/o S.

Dasgupta, r/o C-604, Central Park-1, Golf Road, Sector-42, Galleria DLF-IV, Gurugram, Haryana-122009.

— Petitioner

Versus

State (Govt. of NCT of Delhi), New Delhi.

— Respondents

Whereas a petition under Section 276 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 for the grant of Probate/Letters of Administration to the petitioner in respect of the immoveable property of the estate of Late Ms. Aloka Dasgupta.

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AD-02 & Waqf Tribunal (NDD)

Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

President

Advt. No. UCL/ADVT-04

Dated: 25-11-2020

AIR-SURCHARGE

Kathmandu - Rs. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1

All other stations in India - Re. 1

Seal of the Court

SITUATION VACANT

UTTARYAN COLLEGE OF LAW

Vill-Matkata

P.O.-Madhpur

Dist-Cooch Behar

E-mail:

uttaryantrust@gmail.com

Mobile-9953678888

Faculty Required: 1.

Principal, 2.

Assistant Professor of Law - 08 Posts,

3.

Assistant Professor of English - 01 Post.

Qualification and experience required are as per UGC & BCI Guidelines.

Candidates are called for walk-in interview with all testimonials on 11-12-2020 at 11.00 a.m. in the College Campus.

President

Advt. No. UCL/ADVT-04

Dated: 25-11-2020

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF SH. R. L. MEENA

ADJ-02 & Waqf Tribunal (NDD)

Room No. 1, Main Bldg.

Patiala House Courts,

New Delhi

PC No. 11/2020

NDH : 08-12-2020

Deepak Dasgupta, s/o S.

Dasgupta, r/o C-604, Central Park-1, Golf Road, Sector-42, Galleria DLF-IV, Gurugram, Haryana-122009.

— Petitioner

Versus



Classifying Utkal University as a Central University would not only cater to the needs of students from coastal and eastern Odisha, but also create tremendous potential for employment generation and advanced research in the region.

DHARMENDRA PRADHAN
UNION PETROLEUM MINISTER

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2020

03

More Punjab farmers head for Delhi protest

By Friday evening Haryana Police removes barricades at Punjab, Delhi borders meant to thwart farmers' 'Delhi Chalo' march against the Centre's farm laws, restoring traffic on highways

PTI
CHANDIGARH, 27 NOVEMBER

More Punjab farmers crossed the state's border with Haryana on Friday, some of them after facing water cannons and teargas as they headed towards Delhi to join thousands who had already reached the national capital's borders.

But by evening, all Haryana Police barricades at the border with Punjab and along the highway to Delhi were lifted, allowing traffic to run as before.

Traffic on the highway to Delhi's and other roads was restored, with the Haryana Police removing barricades meant to thwart the Delhi Chalo protest against the Centre's new farm laws.

The barriers which had been put up earlier have been lifted. Vehicular traffic is plying normally, Karnal Range Inspector General of Police Bharti Arora told PTI over phone.

There was confrontation



Farmers from Punjab shout slogans against the Centre's farm laws during their 'Delhi Chalo' protest march, at Singhu border on Friday.

AMARJEET SINGH

earlier in the day at Shambhu border as police tried to stop farmers from Punjab from entering Ambala district. They used water cannons and lobbed teargas shells.

Protesters threw metal barricades into the Ghaggar river from the bridge where they were stopped, repeating what an earlier group of farmers had done on Thursday.

In the evening, however, the Haryana Police removed the barricades at Shambhu, allowing farmers to pass through on their tractor-trolleys and continue their march to Delhi.

Farmers linked to the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ekta-Ugrahan) also broke through police barricades at Khanauri and Dabwali border points between Punjab and Haryana.

Their union leaders had earlier said they will stay put at Khanauri and Dabwali, holding their protest there. But the organisation changed its stand under pressure from supporters.

BKU (Ekta-Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan claimed that over 50,000 farmers were heading towards Delhi from Khanauri itself. Another leader made a similar claim about farmers from Dabwali.

Farmers under the banner of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee (SMS) also began a march from Amritsar on Friday.

As the new groups of Punjab farmers took the national highway through Haryana to Delhi, thousands had already reached the capital.

After confrontations at Delhi's borders, during which they faced teargas and water cannons, the earlier groups were told they can enter the city and continue their protest at Burari ground.

A large number of farmers had camped Thursday night and around Panipat, before resuming their march Friday morning towards Delhi's border.

BKU leaders from Punjab and Haryana, including Balbir Singh Rajewal and Gurnam Singh Charuni, said the farmers' strike has now become a people's movement, drawing support from various sections of society.

Congress leaders Randeep Singh Surjewala and Pawan Khera met Charuni and other farm leaders in Panipat in the morning, and extended their support to them.

Ahead of the protest, Haryana had announced sealing of its borders with Punjab to prevent farmers from entering the state on their way to Delhi.

Punjab's farmers are protesting against the three new laws that deregulate sale of farm produce. They say this will dismantle the minimum support price (system).

Himachal CM seeks plan for power transmission from Chenab basin

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 27 NOVEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Friday urged the Centre to ask Power Grid Corporation to prepare an effective plan for power evacuation/transmission from the Chenab basin and the Spiti area in Lahaul Spiti district.

He was addressing the Chief Ministers' Plenary Session of virtual 3rd Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo, RE-Invest 2020 in which around 25,000 delegates virtually participated from across the world.

Thakur said the state government had identified renewable energy of 6,000 MW in Chenab basin as well as Spiti area of the state and the power projects had been allocated for execution to SJVN, NTPC and NHPC on Chenab River.

"In addition to this, 880 MW mega solar park has been allocated to SJVN in the Spiti area for development but an effective transmission plan is required to evacuate power from both these areas," he added. He further stated that the state government was also working on 'Green Gaushala' Scheme in the state under which self sufficient bio-gas would be produced by fully harnessing solar power. He urged



the Union government to help the state government in this regard and said Himachal had immense potential of biomass which include lakh of tonnes of biomass every year in form of pine needles and lantana in the forests of the state.

He said to exploit this potential for power generation, we have started a 'Pine Needle Based Briquettes' scheme.

The Chief Minister urged the Union Minister of State for Power and Renewable Energy RK Singh for sanctioning Power Equipments Manufacturing Hub to HP and the government will provide manufacturers power at attractive rates besides other utilities.

He also urged the Union Minister for providing grants for common facilities and infrastructure.

"Himachal has around 24,000 MW power potential in

the state which is about 40 percent of the total potential of the country. Till date, 10,596 MW power has been harnessed and the state government has set up a target of harnessing another 10,000 MW in the next ten years," he added.

Union Minister of State for Power and New and Renewable Energy R K Singh said the annual renewable energy capacity addition had been exceeding that of coal based thermal power since 2017. In the last six years, India had increased installed renewable energy capacity by two and half times and the country had shown the world that sound environmental policies can also be vibrant economics.

"Under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, today India has achieved the aim of 'One Nation One Grid,'" he added.

UNDP launches innovation database to address livelihood issues

ASHA RAMACHANDRAN
NEW DELHI, 27 NOVEMBER

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the lives and livelihood of people at all strata of society, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) today launched an innovation database to collate some 1,500 solutions developed by grass root communities, individuals, start-ups, students and other innovators across the country that can be implemented at the community level.

These innovative solutions, ranging from simple to complex in design, form part of Grass-root Innovation Database (GRID) that was launched by UNDP

Accelerator Lab India to foster inclusive development.

The unique database caters to various sectors which include livelihood, natural resource management, agriculture, agro-biodiversity, pest management, water management, farm machinery, biodiversity conservation, augmentation, inclusive growth, waste management and circular economy.

GRID has been co-created for public use by GIAN (Grassroots Innovation Augmentation Network), HoneyBee Network, Institution and UNDP Accelerator Lab-India. It can be accessed at grid.undp.org.in

The UNDP Accelerator Lab India was launched a year back to leverage technology to evaluate

localised problems and address the solutions in partnership with local stakeholders, thus augmenting the success of SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) in the country.

The network taps into local innovations to create actionable insights and reimagine sustainable development for the 21st century. The Accelerator labs globally try to address development challenges, especially Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) issues by scouting for local solutions and integrating the learnings through international network.

In India, the UNDP Accelerator Lab has been engaged in ground-breaking work on developmental innovations. From

using Geospatial technology, Artificial Intelligence and Mobile technology to target hotspots of air pollution from space to leveraging Blockchain for agricultural value chains and IoT for water conservation in agriculture, there are many. The Lab also conducted an innovation challenge in December 2019 to seek the best technological innovations towards air pollution mitigation in India. Similarly, as part of its COVID-19 response strategy, the India Accelerator Lab designed and delivered an innovative game ~ Corona Champion ~ under pro-bono partnership with IPE Global. The game was designed to bust myths and spread awareness related to COVID-19 while

offering an immersive experience to the users.

"We believe that if an individual with little or no resources can solve an issue through strategic innovation, why can't we, as an organisation with the necessary prowess, address it in a manner that helps to scale it up and take it to wider groups of communities," the UNDP Accelerator Lab team said,

speaking on the Grassroot Innovation Database launch. "Grassroot Innovation Database will encourage inclusive development, which has become all the more critical in the COVID era."

The team stressed that during the time of COVID-19 there is need for innovation at all levels, from hi-tech to low level,

involving various stakeholders.

"There is exponential growth of innovations during COVID and a lot of innovative platforms," said Swetha Kolluri, Head of Experimentation, UNDP Accelerator Lab, India, at a webinar for media persons. "People are creating new ways of conducting business."

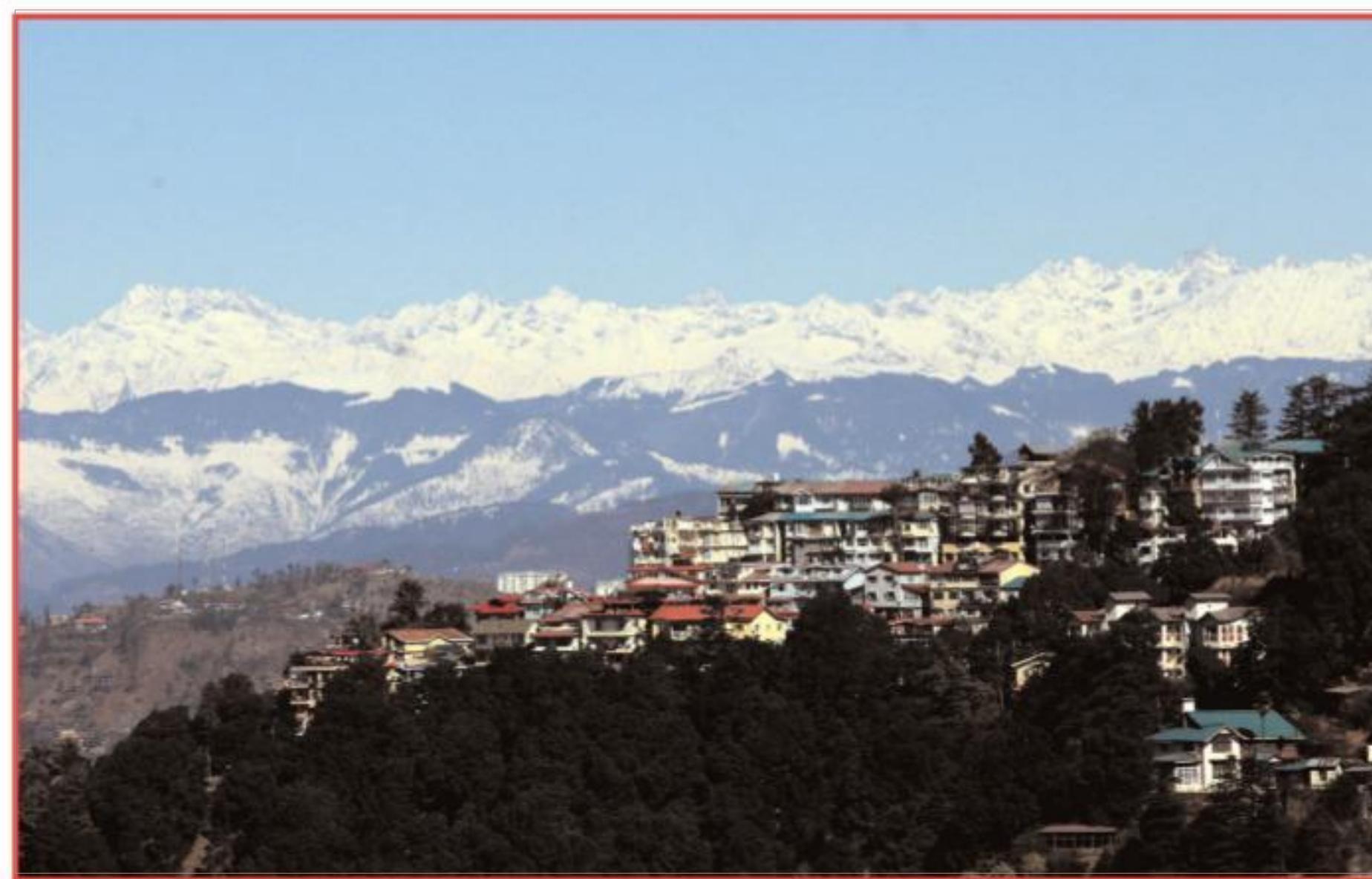
At the macro level, said Roziya Singh, Head of Solutions Mapping, UNDP Accelerator Lab, India, GRID demonstrates to the policy makers that there is potential to learn from creative communities and individuals at the micro level, as this encompasses solutions that can be implemented on ground in real time, complemented by the fact that being tried and

tested the cost of failure is minimal.

"GRID can also be leveraged for setting up distributed enterprises and for catering to the local or niche markets," she added. On the Blockchain project for Indian spices, Krishnan Srinivasaraghavan, Head of Exploration, UNDP Accelerator Lab, India, said it was introduced after a lot of consultation, especially in the COVID scenario.

"We thought of increasing farmers' income while boosting livelihood, conservation of biodiversity and associated knowledge system for inclusive development. Lot of practices in GRID are in DIY mode which can be used by people freely: the grid reaches the poorest with possibility of using knowledge about innovations for augmenting their well-being."

CRYSTAL CLEAR



A view of snow-clad mountains after snowfall from Shimla on a sunny day. On Friday.

LALIT KUMAR

HP Govt asks police to act as per law

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 27 NOVEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatraya on Friday said the character of police is very important and they should perform their duties in a responsible and humane way. He asked them to take decisions as per the law.

Addressing the Passing out Parade of 21st batch of Constables at Himachal Pradesh Police Training College (PTC), Daroh in Kangra district, Bandaru Dattatraya congratulated the constables and said that now they would be part of HP Police.

He expressed hope that all trainees would follow the constitution, democratic moral values and law with responsibility.

He further expressed hope that the trainees would work with dedication towards serving the society.

He appreciated the efforts of Director General of Police

Sanjay Kundu, Principal and staff of HP PTC for imparting training to the trainees even during the Corona period. He said that every police personnel had worked as a Corona warrior and served the people of the state with utmost dedication.

Himachal Pradesh Police is known for being the most honest and professional police force of the country. Presently, a sudden rise is being seen in terrorism, drug abuse, etc in the country which needs to be tackled with professional approach," he added.

834 constables participated in the passing of parade out of which there were 642 men and 192 women.

Governor also laid the foundation stone of modern barracks to be constructed with an outlay of Rs 14 crore in premises of PTC.

Pugmarks of 'missing' tigress of Rajaji reserve found

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 27 NOVEMBER

The Rajaji Tiger Reserve personnel have now succeeded in tracking the location of tigress who had been missing for the past two months.

The Rajaji Tiger Reserve's western side is known to have currently two tigresses living in isolation.

One of the tigresses, named T-1 by the park, disappeared suddenly that sparked panic among the forest staff.

The big cat failed to feature in any of the camera traps, installed in different parts of the tiger reserve, and was not sighted by the forest staff that led to various theories.

D K Singh, director of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve, said, "We have found pugmarks of the tigress at Kansro forest of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve.



reta and sent them for a test at the Wildlife Institute of India (Dehradun)."

The Rajaji Tiger Reserve — located in Dehradun, Haridwar and Pauri districts in Uttarakhand — has made extensive preparations

for the translocation of five tigers in its western side, which has just two tigresses.

The mysterious disappearance of T-1 tigress sent out shockwave through the park staff following which a number of personnel were deployed to conduct a search operation for the tigress. The park staff found pugmarks of a tigress at Motichur forest and those of another tigress at Kansro on the same day a couple of days ago.

The findings provided huge relief to the park authorities.

Rajendra Nautiyal, ranger of the Kansro range of the Rajaji Tiger Reserve, said, "We are installing camera traps in the area where we found the tiger pugmarks." After finding the pugmarks, the Rajaji Tiger Reserve is keen on getting the digital evidence of the tigress.

Centre releases Rs 326 cr to HP under Jal Jeevan Mission

SHIMLA, 27 NOVEMBER

The Central government has released Rs 326 crore under Jal Jeevan Mission to Himachal Pradesh. Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur thanked the Centre government for releasing a total amount of Rs 326 crore and said Himachal was the only State in the country to have released all the four installments of Rs 81.5 crore each.

"The grant will facilitate the state government to achieve the target of providing piped drinking water to every household of the state at the earliest. All this was possible due to the continuous efforts made by State Jal Shakti Minister Mahender Singh Thakur and other senior officers of the department for empathetically taking up the case before the Central government," he added.

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures

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ARROW Raymond ColorPlus LOUIS PHILIPPE PARK AVENUE

- PUNCHKUAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chkr.)
- WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
- JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing



SHRI SHRIPATI SINGHANIA
28.11.1939 - 4.12.1988

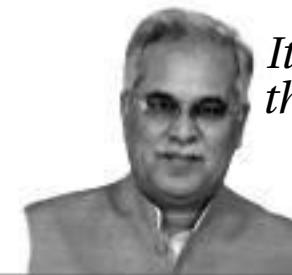
His vision and dynamism as a young business leader contributed immensely to the growth of J. K. Organisation. His concern for people and pursuit of excellence continues to inspire us.

Today we remember him with great fondness.



Issued by the Member Units of

J. K. ORGANISATION



It is not clear till date whether the Centre intends to provide the vaccine for free or the states will have to pay for that

CHHATTISGARH CHIEF MINISTER BHUPESH BAGHEL
WHILE SLAMMING THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT FOR MISHANDLING PANDEMIC

India

India offers to train Vietnam defence forces

NEW DELHI, 27 NOVEMBER
Amid growing Chinese aggressiveness on territorial and maritime issues, India today offered to enhance the scope and level of training for all the three services of the Vietnamese defence

forces in Indian defence institutes. The offer was made by defence minister Rajnath Singh to his Vietnamese counterpart Gen Ngo Xuan Lich during their bilateral talks via video conferencing.

The Vietnamese minister thanked India for the assistance rendered by the Indian armed forces in capacity building of his country's armed forces, especially in the field of human resource development. Singh called for stronger defence industry cooperation between India and Vietnam by concluding an institutionalised framework agreement in the near future. India and Vietnam signed an implementation arrangement for cooperation in the field of hydrography. It will enable the two countries to share hydrographic data and assist in the production of navigational charts by both sides.

TENDER

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SHIBPUR HOWRAH - 711103
(An Institute of National Importance under MHRD, Govt. of India)
Date: 26.11.2020
Advt. No. CHST 1633
E-PROCUREMENT
Quotations are invited for supply and installation of DLS System for CCRH funded project. For details please visit: www.iiests.ac.in and <https://e-procure.gov.in/eprocure/a> pp. Last date: 30.12.2020 at 6.00 pm. (A. Code DRC-T015/20-21)

Dean (R&C)

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)	
N.I.T. No	14/20-21
Name of work with its location	(A) Replacing the window fixed glass by the provision of uPVC sliding window Rail Bhawan in the section of SSE/W/RB under ADEN E III NDLs
Approx. Cost of work	(A) 10999727.08
Earnest Money	(It should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway Only. Note: FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tenders invited on IREPS as per Railway Board's letter no 2015/CE-IC/T/5/1 dated 31.08.2016)
Completion period of work	(A) 205000.00
Date and time for Submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 15.00 hrs on 18.12.2020 Opening of tender at 15.00 hrs. on
Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in
128-W/2019/OET/20-21/WE/NIT/14 Dated : 27.11.2020	2671/2020
Serving Customers With A Smile	

POLICE HEADQUARTERS J & K JAMMU
Phone/Fax No.: 0194-2443031/2443032 (Sgr), 0191-2459029/2459255 (Jmu)
Website :- www.jkpolice.gov.in, E-mail :- phqjk@jkpolice.gov.in

NIT NO: 53 OF 2020

DATED: 23.11.2020

E-tenders are hereby invited by Police Hqrs, J&K, from Original Manufacturers or their authorized dealers having proper authorisation of the manufacturer to quote against the tender for the supply of Hook & Line Set as indicated in the detailed SBD & BOD. The download of NIT shall start on 24.11.2020 at 1100 hours. Tenders shall be submitted online on JK Government e-procurement Portal www.jktenders.gov.in before 15.12.2020 upto 1800 hours.

The tenders (technical bids only) will be opened online on 17.12.2020 at 1100 hours at Police Headquarters, Gulshan Ground Gandhi Nagar Jammu. In view of COVID-19 pandemic there will be no pre-bid conference. However, intending bidders can furnish queries etc. if any, to PHQ within one week from the date of publication of this tender. No query shall be entertained after stipulated time. The queries shall be examined and placed on the portal, if deemed to be fit, before opening of technical bid. In case of unforeseen circumstances, the date of opening will be next working day or else as notified separately. Detailed tender documents with terms and conditions are available on J&K Government State e-procurement Portal www.jktenders.gov.in.

Sdr. Rayees Mohammad Bhat (IPS),
AIG (Procurement/Transport),
For Director General of Police, J&K - Jammu.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE	
The Dy. Chief Engineer /Const.-II, Northern Railway Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi, for and on behalf of President of India Invites open e-tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:	
1. Name of work and location	"Hiring of one Vehicle such as (Jeep, Gypsy, Tata Sumo type of vehicles) on monthly hiring basis for three years for XEN/C/SRE working under Dy. Chief Engineer /Const.-II, Northern Railway Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi".
2. Completion period of the work	36 (Thirty six months)
3. Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 15.13 Lakh (Rupees Fifteen lakh & thirteen thousand only)
4. Earnest money amount (to be deposited online)	Rs. 30,300/- (Rupees Thirty thousand three hundred only)
5. Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs on 22.12.2020 on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in . The bidders can only participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs. on 22.12.2020.
6. Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document	The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway website i.e. www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in . Above tenders document will be available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 08.12.2020 to 22.12.2020. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.
No. 120-B-Acs-Dy-CE-C-II-CSB	Dated : 27.11.2020.
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION	
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER CENTRAL STORE	
B-2, BLOCK, NEAR 212 BUS TERMINAL,	NAND NAGRI, DELHI-110093
NIT No.EE(Central Store)/TC/2020-21/19	Dated: 25.11.2020
NOTICE INVITING TENDER	
Executive Engineer (Central Store) EDMC on behalf of Commissioner, EDMC invites only Online open tenders from reputed agencies/firms/Agencies [Registered and Unregistered firms or agencies both are eligible] for the following work. S.No. 1, Name of Work:- Selection of Consultant to Work as "PROJECT CONSULTANT" Under the Scope of Consultancy And MONITORING of PPP PROJECT FOR DOOR-TO-DOOR COLLECTION & TRANSPORTATION OF MSW IN EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION AREA Head A/c: XL-III-D-IV, Tender Amount: Item Rate, Bid document fee in (Rs.): 25000/-, Time of Completion: 9 years. Tender No.: 319379.	
Detailed NIT can be seen from the following website or from the office of the undersigned http://mcetenders.com .	http://mcetenders.com
R.O. No. 67/DPI/EDMC/2020-21	Executive Engineer (Central Store / EDMC)
EDMC'S CITIZENS HELPLINE NO. 155303	

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
GURU HARGOBIND THERMAL PLANT, LEHRA MOHABBAT DISTT. BATHINDA (PUNJAB) - 151111
e-tendering website: <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through E-tendering)**

Tender Enquiry No.: 63/CHP/Op.-303/GHTP/2020-21 Dated: 27-11-2020

SHORT DESCRIPTION: To provide Assistance in operation of Bulldozers and Loco-Shunters at 2x210 MW + 2x250 MW, GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat. EMD : Minimum Rs. 1,00,000 (Rupees one lakh).

Last date & time for bid submission : 28-12-2020 up to 11-30 hrs.

Date & time of opening of Fee stage bid : 30-12-2020 up to 12-00 hrs.

Detailed NIT and tender specification can be downloaded from PSPCL website: <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. from dated 28-11-2020 onwards.

Note:

1. The prospective bidders can obtain clarification regarding tender specifications from this office. For registration of digital signatures and uploading of tender, information may be sought from <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>.

2. It is informed that in case the tender process is not completed due to any reason no corrigendum will be published in newspapers. Detail regarding corrigendum may be seen on PSPCL official website i.e. <https://pspcl.in>.

Superintending Engineer
Mechanical Mtc. Circle-II, O&M
GHTP, PSPCL, Lehra Mohabbat
Distt. Bathinda (Pb)-151111

469/GHTP-57/2020

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

469/GHTP-57/2020



If he (Suvendu Adhikari) decides to join the BJP, it will be beneficial for both him and the party

BJP NATIONAL VICE-PRESIDENT MUKUL ROY
AFTER SUVENDU ADHIKARI RESIGNED AS STATE TRANSPORT MINISTER

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2020

05



THUMBNAILS

Football lovers pay tribute to Diego Maradona in Kolkata on Friday.

SNS

TMC expels youth wing's GS: TMC today expelled district general secretary of party's youth front in Bankura, Bidyut Das. He had campaigned against certain leaders of the district TMC committee at a public meeting at Ranibandha.

SNS

One killed after bike rams into bus: One person was killed after a speeding bike hit a moving bus near Kestopur on the arterial VIP Road here on Friday, officials said. Both the vehicles caught fire after the accident, they said. The person riding the bike died at the spot, while the pillion rider was taken to a nearby hospital with serious injuries, the officials said. No passenger on the bus was hurt.

SNS

Muralidharan: Hospitalisation of Raveendran suspicious

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 27 NOVEMBER

Union minister of state for external affairs V Muralidharan on

NOTICE Southern Market

184A S P Mukherjee Road, Kolkata-700026

Notice is hereby served to all concerns that my client is the owner of the property being premises No 184A, Southern Avenue, P.S. Tollygunge, Kolkata-700026 popularly known as "Southern Market". It has come to my client's notice that the tenant of the following stalls/shops have not been paying rent to my client for a considerable period nor opening the stalls/shops. Moreover none of them have contacted my client nor informed cause of default till date. Any person/persons who has/have got any right and/or claim pertaining to the following stalls/shops is/are requested to lodge his/her claim in writing with original documents to the undersigned within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice, otherwise it would be deemed that there is no claimant of the said shop/stalls and the right and/or interest of the tenants of the said stalls/shops are deemed to be surrendered to my client by default. Any claim after the stipulated date will be rejected and will not be entertained. Details of stalls/shops: Stall No. N-14, N-16, N-19, E-13 & 14, E-23&24, Ws-16, S-9B, E-2, E-3, E-4, E-15&16, E-23/28/35/36, E-31&34, E-32, E-37&44, SC-13, W-12, W-15, W-30, W-38, W-2.

Amit Kumar Sinha, Advocate
Temple Chambers, 6 Old Post Office Street, 3rd Floor, Room No-84, Kolkata-700001

PENSION FUND REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

B-14/A, Chhatrapati Shivaji Bhawan, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi-110016

25th September 2020

Public Notice

Caution against fraudulent offers in the name of PFRDA/NPS
It has come to notice that some unscrupulous elements are making phone calls in the name of PFRDA promising to release large sum of money lying with NPS/PFRDA and these unidentified callers also provide deceitful explanations to extort money for release of payments.

This is to inform that PFRDA is a statutory body which regulates National Pension System (NPS) and the general public is hereby cautioned not to fall prey to the designs of such unscrupulous elements who are trying to dupe the unsuspecting citizens in the name of NPS/PFRDA.

PFRDA NEVER MAKES CALLS TO INDIVIDUALS REQUESTING THEM TO DEPOSIT MONEY FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS FROM NPS/PFRDA. ANY SUCH COMMUNICATION RECEIVED TO DEFRAUD MAY BE INFORMED TO POLICE IMMEDIATELY.

davp 15102/11/0011/2021

Massive setback for Mamata: Suvendu resigns from Cabinet

Sougata Roy insists Adhikari still in TMC, Dilip Ghosh says doors open for Adhikari

BISWABRATA GOSWAMI
MIDNAPORE, 27 NOVEMBER

Senior Trinamool Congress leader Suvendu Adhikari, who has been at odds with the party's leadership, tendered his resignation as the state's transport minister on Friday amid speculations over his next political move.

Adhikari, the prime architect of the Nadigram anti-land acquisition movement which finally catapulted Mamata Banerjee to power in 2011 in Bengal, faxed his resignation letter to the chief minister, which he then forwarded to Governor Jagdeep Dhankar by e-mail.

In his letter to Miss Banerjee, Adhikari wrote, "I do hereby tender my resignation from my office as Chairman. Steps may be taken for its immediate acceptance. I am simultaneously communicating this to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt of West Bengal, for doing needful at her end," Adhikari wrote in his letter to Firhad Hikam.

On Wednesday, he had resigned as the chairman of the Hooghly River Bridge Commissioners (HRBC), which is the custodian of several bridges and flyovers of Kolkata, including the iconic Second Hooghly Bridge.

Soon after his resignations, it is learnt, Miss Banerjee spoke with Adhikari over the phone for a few minutes but no details of their interaction are yet to be disclosed.

"Our party is trying to talk with him to resolve the issue and his annoyance. In this regard, MPs Sougata Roy and Sudip Bandopadhyay have been deputed to talk to him and address the grievances," a senior state Trinamool Congress leader said, even as



napore district.

"I do hereby tender my resignation from my office as Chairman. Steps may be taken for its immediate acceptance. I am simultaneously communicating this to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Govt of West Bengal, for doing needful at her end," Adhikari wrote in his letter to Firhad Hikam.

When contacted, Sisir Adhikari, a veteran TMC leader and Suvendu's father told The Statesman, "We, the family members, are holding some important posts of office of profits. So, we have decided to leave these posts as some people (indicating TMC leaders) are jealous over these posts. They think why a family will hold such posts. So, Suvendu has tendered resignation."

On whether Suvendu will leave the party, the veteran leader said, "No such decision has been taken yet. We will now hold MP and MLA posts only".

When contacted, a close associate of Adhikari said, "Dada (Adhikari) was very disappointed when he was asked to leave as HRBC chairman yesterday. Replacing him, the party has awarded the post to Kalyan Banerjee who is a bitter critic of Adhikari. Banerjee had attacked his family with unparliamentary words and threw a challenge

to leave. So, dada has left his posts."

Senior TMC MP, Saugata Roy today said Suvendu Adhikary is still an MLA of TMC. Asked why his talks failed with Adhikary, he said, "Discussions are on. One may resign from the post of a minister but that doesn't mean he is leaving the party."

Adhikary also shunned his Z-category security cover provided by the state government, sources said.

"Today at 1:05 pm a resignation letter of Mr. Suvendu Adhikari from office as minister addressed to Hon'ble Chief Minister has been forwarded to me. The issue will be addressed from constitutional perspective," the governor tweeted.

The BJP said that the resignation was a reflection of the anger of TMC leaders against the party's top brass.

BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, however, declined to comment on speculation that Adhikari was joining his party.

State BJP chief Dilip Ghosh said that Adhikari's resignation indicated the "end of Trinamool".

"The exit of Suvendu from Trinamool was only a matter of time. There are several leaders of the ruling party who are disgruntled with its way of functioning. We have kept our doors open," he told reporters.

The senior party leader said that during the two meetings with Adhikari, he had a feeling that he does not want to leave the party.

"We will talk to him," Roy said.

Apart from his home district of East Midnapore where his family members hold public offices, Adhikari has influence over at least 35-40 Assembly segments that are in West Midnapore, Bankura, Purulia and Jhargram, and parts of Birbhum—the tribal-dominated Jangalmahal region.

The charges of the three departments that were held by Adhikari—transport, water resources investigation and development and irrigation and waterways have been vested on Miss Banerjee.

She held a high-level meeting with senior party leaders at her Kalighat residence this evening.

"The party (TMC) will cease to exist," Ghosh said on the development.

Sources close to Adhikari, who has not attended state cabinet meetings over the last few months, said that he was unhappy with the organisational rejig, effected a few months ago.

Reacting to the development, Roy said he was hopeful that Adhikari will continue to remain in the party as he has not given up its membership or resigned as an MLA.

The senior party leader said that during the two meetings with Adhikari, he had a feeling that he does not want to leave the party.

"We will talk to him," Roy said.

According to sources, the Eastern Railway is mulling over plans to run 27 pairs of trains in 11 sections. The passenger services are to be resumed in sections including Burdwan-Rampurhat, Rampurhat-Gumani, Rampurhat-Dumka-Jasidih, Katwa-Azimganj, Azimganj-Rampurhat, Burdwan-Rampurhat, Andal-Sainthia, Asansol-Dhanbad, Asansol-Jasidih-Jhajha, Andal-Jasidih and Malda-Barhawa. As informed by sources, the divisional railways have also been informed about the decision.

While the ER is all set to resume services of non-suburban short-distance trains from next week, the SER, which has also got a nod from the state government is

ER plans to resume short-distance passenger trains from 2 December

NISHAT NIZAMI
KOLKATA, 27 NOVEMBER

Commuters depending on non-suburban trains in the state are soon to get relief. The Eastern Railway is considering plans to resume passenger services of non-suburban short distance trains from 2 December.

The zonal railway today has written a letter to the state government mentioning the date of resumption of services along with the list of sections and the trains that are being planned to be operated from next week. The letter comes after the state government gave an official nod to Howrah," said an official of Railways.

"While services of other express train from Barbil to Howrah will also be resumed. After everything is done from our end we will send it to the Railway Board for an approval," he added. According to the official, the SER is likely to seek approval of the Railway Board on next Tuesday. The entire process of resuming passenger services of non-suburban short distance trains is expected to take 10 days.

Notably, the SER authorities are also weighing options of resuming services in other sections including Bankura, Purulia and so on. The SER is said to have sought a viability analysis of running trains in such sections from its Commercial department. In addition, the zonal railway has got permission to run services of daily Howrah-Purulia mail express and is planning to resume its operations soon.

Aviation safety meeting

KOLKATA, 27 NOVEMBER

A meeting on aviation safety was conducted at NSCB airport today. The session was led by Capt. Nandita Halder, Air India flight safety manager, and focused on the safety of airport operations.

Sources said it highlighted the air-side safety issues, ground safety, how to avoid runway incursions. A runway safety walk was carried out. The authority is still waiting for the relocation of a mosque near the secondary runway.

In a press statement issued today, the Eastern Railway gave a detailed timeline of the project highlighting the stages in which time had been lost because of the state govern-

No delay on part of zonal rally: ER on Majerhat Bridge

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 27 NOVEMBER

A day after chief minister Mamata Banerjee blamed the Railways for slowing down the reconstruction of the Majerhat Bridge, the Eastern Railway today claimed that there was no delay on the part of the zonal railway.

In a press statement issued today, the Eastern Railway gave a detailed timeline of the project highlighting the stages in which time had been lost because of the state govern-

1,000 volunteers from city needed for Covaxin trial at NICED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, 27 NOVEMBER

Around 1,000 volunteers, required for the proposed phase III trial of Covaxin—the vaccine for Covid-19—at the National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Disease (NICED) in Kolkata, will be selected from among the people living within a radius of 10-15 km of the city, a senior official said on Friday.

NICED has already started getting applications from people interested to be part of the trial for the vaccine, the official of the medical institute said.

"We have decided to rope in volunteers staying in areas within a radius of 10-15 kilometer of Kolkata. We need to find people who will be able to travel quickly from their residence to the institute in case we need them for any purpose during the trial," the official said.

Till Thursday, the institute has received hundreds of applications from people of different districts of West Bengal, expressing their interests to be volunteers for the phase III trial, he added.

"It's a good sign that people are expressing interest to be part of the phase III trial.

The list of 1,000 volunteers will be finalised by the

health. Mannan was taken ill with cough, cold and respiratory distress after visiting Darjeeling last week.

Mannan's friend Bikash Bhattacharya, CPI(M) MP and a senior lawyer, also tested Covid positive couple of days ago. He has been advised home-quarantine.

Mannan and Bhattacharya's friendship blossomed more than five years ago when Bhattacharya as a lawyer had helped Mannan in the Supreme Court.

Mannan had moved the apex court demanding CBI inquiry into Saradha chit fund scam in the state.

first week of December when the phase III trial is likely to begin, the official said.

As part of the pan-India phase III trial for the vaccine, Covaxin vials reached NICED from Hyderabad on Thursday, he said.

"We are preserving the vials at minus 4 degrees Celsius at the institute's laboratory," the official said.

TMC MP flays Centre over crimes on Dalits

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 27 NOVEMBER

Jognagar Trinamul MP Pratima Mondal today lashed out at the Centre against increasing atrocities on Dalits in

in 2019.

Mondal said as per NCRB, cases of atrocities against SCs/STs were increasing in BJP-run states since 2018—cases of violence on SCs rose by 7 per cent and of STs by 26 per cent.

She said atrocities against SC in UP was 25.5 per cent and 11,829 cases alone were registered in UP; 14.8 per cent in Rajasthan; 14.2 per cent in Bihar and 0.3 per cent in West Bengal.

However, Mamata Banerjee's government has already passed an anti-lynching Act

highest in MP-23.3 per cent, Rajasthan 21.8 per cent, UP 8.7 per cent and West Bengal 1.2 per cent.

Mondal said Miss Banerjee so far has declared about 69 schemes and slammed the Centre for not allocating any budget for scholarship of students belonging to the SC category in the pre-Matric classes.

Mondal said the state government has allotted funding for students belonging to the SC category under Shikshasree project.

45L minority students granted scholarship in Bengal this year: Official

KOLKATA, 27 NOVEMBER

At least 45 lakh students from six minority communities in West Bengal have received scholarships from the state government amid the pandemic, a top official here said.

Minority students, who belong to families that have less than Rs 2 lakh as family income, are eligible for the scholarship programme, provided they have secured at least 60 per cent mark in the previous exam, P.B. Salim, the chairman of West Bengal Minorities Development and Finance Corporation, said.

The state hopes that every eligible student-elementary education to PhD level gets benefited from the programme, he said.

"The government had begun doling out scholarships on August 1. We aim to reach the 50-lakh figure by December 15," he said. Last year, 42 lakh minority students had received scholarships, whose amount, ranging from Rs 1,500 to Rs 60,000, is directly transferred to bank account.

PTI

TMC's Coochbehar (S) MLA joins BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 27 NOVEMBER

Shotgun alliance

Tamil Nadu is the only State in the Indian Union to be ruled by regional parties continuously for more than half a century and it stands out as among the best ruled in the country. The BJP is determined to put an end to this stranglehold of regional parties as Tamil Nadu goes to the polls in the summer of 2021. Amit Shah, Union Home Minister and a former BJP president, during his two-day visit to Chennai last week declared at a government function in Chennai that his party would contest the coming Tamil Nadu Assembly election in partnership with the ruling AIADMK.

Cadres and leaders of the AIADMK were taken by surprise as there were no internal discussions within the AIADMK about forming any alliance for the Assembly poll. Tamil Nadu has never had a coalition government though electoral alliances have been common. In the 2016 Assembly election the AIADMK decided to go it alone and won a comfortable majority to keep up the tradition of single-party government.

The decision to form the alliance was taken by Edappadi Palaniswamy, deputy coordinator of the AIADMK and Chief Minister who had vowed to follow in the footsteps of former Chief Minister J Jayalalitha. In her long political career, she drew a complete blank only once, in the 2004 Lok Sabha election which her AIADMK contested as an ally of the BJP. After this bitter experience, Jayalalitha vowed never to enter into any alliance with the BJP. Though she had been on the best of terms with Narendra Modi, she refused to align the AIADMK with the BJP in the 2014 Lok Sabha election.

But Palaniswamy joined the NDA in 2019. Except for a solitary Lok Sabha seat the AIADMK won, the alliance came a cropper. Most BJP candidates forfeited their security deposits, but the party took comfort in raising its vote share in Tamil Nadu from two to 3.71 per cent. Workers of the AIADMK are not very enthusiastic about continuing the ties. Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam justified the ties as continuation of a "victorious alliance." Perhaps Shah has a magic formula. The BJP may be able to enter the new Assembly by riding piggyback on the AIADMK, but the ruling party may well its unsolicited ally a liability and spoil its chances of scoring a hat-trick.

Since the NDA alliance is led by the BJP, leaders of the party's Tamil Nadu unit are coveting the Chief Minister's post and are having visions of bringing Tamil Nadu under BJP rule. To sugar-coat the bitter pill and to impress Tamil Nadu voters, Shah "laid" foundation stones or inaugurated various infrastructure projects, including Phase II of the Chennai Metro Rail Project, estimated to cost Rs 67,378 crore. One or two of these projects have already been completed and a few are ongoing.

The promised entry into politics of superstar Rajnikanth with his own party for which he has got a flag and name ready is a non-starter while the Opposition DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance with the Congress as major partner is waiting in the wings eagerly.

Disunited kingdom

As if the tortuous exit from the European Union weren't daunting enough, the United Kingdom now faces a fresh challenge with the announcement by Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon this week that she will seek a fresh independence referendum. As reported in a section of the British Press, Mrs Sturgeon has said Scotland should have an opportunity to decide in the early part of the next Parliament, which commences next year, whether it wants to remain a part of the United Kingdom.

A referendum in 2014 had seen 44.7 per cent of Scots choosing to leave and 55.3 per cent opting to remain. But that changed with the Brexit referendum in June 2016 and soon thereafter the Scottish Parliament had authorised the government to initiate steps for a second referendum. The pro-independence Scottish National Party, which Mrs Sturgeon heads, has held an outright majority since 2011 and is keen to push ahead with its agenda after the past 14 opinion surveys showed that a majority of Scots now favour independence.

The Scots were peeved with the decision to leave the European Union - they had voted to stay, but overall the vote was in favour of leaving - and in recent months have been increasingly perturbed by London's handling of the coronavirus epidemic. The SNP will seek to get its mandate reinforced in elections due next May and Mrs Sturgeon will claim endorsement of her plans for a second referendum should the party be returned to power, as is widely expected. If that transpires, the government in Edinburgh will push ahead, notwithstanding the stance adopted by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is on record as having said that the decisive 2014 verdict must be respected.

Last August, even as he faced bitter recriminations from Scots on his handling of the virus, Mr Johnson went on record to say, "The union of the United Kingdom is, for me, the greatest political partnership the world has ever seen. It would be such a shame to lose the power, the magic of that union." While it is ultimately for the British Parliament to decide if it will allow a referendum, and the ruling Conservative Party has said it opposes independence for Scotland, a strong showing by the SNP could add to the pressures on Mr Johnson.

At stake is a third of the United Kingdom's landmass, a tenth of its population, an integral part of its identity and a significant contributor to the economy. Scotland was an independent country through the Middle Ages and joined a political union with England in 1707. While political demands for self-government began in the 19th century, it wasn't until 1999 that powers were devolved to the Scottish Parliament.

Empowering Elderly ~ II

A sizeable percentage of our elderly population is in good health, and therefore the challenge is of how to help them gainfully engage with society. Digital empowerment can pave the way to get them connected on the internet and provide them with opportunities to share their competencies



Older population faces some specific challenges in using technology. Jeff Johnson and Kate Finn in their book Designing User Interfaces for an Aging Population have listed some of these challenges. These include elders taking longer to learn new applications or devices, performing poorly on tasks relying on memory, having frequent challenges with the accidental movement of the pointer, making more input errors and having more trouble hitting on-screen targets. With the growing number of senior citizens as well as the increased lifespan of human beings and the fact most people are always online, designing digital devices and user interfaces suitable for senior citizens is extremely important.

User experiences of senior citizens is very different from that of other generations and therefore appreciating their physical and mental state would be essential for designing the user interfaces and the applications. Visual consistency and keeping things simple would be necessary to create comfort and trust with this user group. Large readable fonts should be used to make reading easy.

With hearing and sight related difficulties increasing with age, smart phones are not the ideal platform for accessing information as the screens are not made for reading or for navigation. Hence touch screen PCs or tablets should be ideally considered for developing applications aimed at frequent usage by senior citizens. It is also important to bear in mind that it would be necessary to explain icons and how to move between screens.

A sizeable percentage of our elderly population is in good health, and therefore the challenge faced is how to help them to gainfully engage with society. Digital empowerment can pave the way to get them connected on the internet and provide them with opportunities to share their knowhow or competencies with the younger generation through online communities. This could

lead to an excellent collaboration between the younger and the senior groups with the former benefiting from the wisdom and experience of the latter while the latter could be helped by the younger lot to learn to use technology and navigate through the array of applications.

AI bots are predicted to become companions of lonely elderly persons; these can act on their command as well as support them in their daily chores. While currently there is a lack of digital literacy and there exists high levels of illiteracy amongst the elderly, in the next 20 years we are going to witness a sea change in their profiles. This group would be tech-savvy and more demanding than today's elders. Hence it is time we start paying more attention to the elderly segment and their needs. It is not just because this segment would have more paying power but also because this will help senior citizens to integrate and engage with society at large.

The share of senior citizens which was around 8 per cent in 2011 will be 20 per cent by 2050. Therefore, we need a robust planning process and a sound support system for senior citizens. While the government has a significant role to play in this context to build the structures for health, finance, elderly care and social support, there are numerous avenues for digital technology intervention that should be pursued.

The need for technology intervention is not only on account of the convenience or opportunities for superior support; in several areas, technology support would be the only option to cater to their needs. The costs required to be incurred in order to build the support systems would be enormous and devel-

oping nations like India would find it challenging to find such resources. This is another reason for identifying areas where smart technology interventions would mitigate the costs.

For instance, sensors and artificial intelligent agents could be considered for providing higher security measures as well as advanced warnings for critical care and timely actions to avert mishap or provide medical support. Quality of life for senior citizens could substantially be improved with the help of sensors for movements and even for minimizing their loneliness with applications such as Alexa. The tech savviness and ability to pay by senior citizens is also on the rise.

Senior citizens are now an attractive target segment with their own specialised needs for products and services. Travel companies, banks and real estate companies have started making specialised offerings catering to this segment.

Digital empowerment for seniors is truly the need of the hour. Without this our older generation faces the risks of digital isolation and may well be deprived of a happier life. Imagine a senior whose adult children live in a different city or country. Social media apps like Face book and WhatsApp help senior citizens to stay connected with their loved ones. As the Help Age India report shows, more than 90 per cent of elderly internet users utilise social media platforms primarily to connect with family and friends.

For many seniors, moving around the city due to mobility or health problems can be a challenge and that is why mobile apps and websites are a boon to them. Online payment service is another important convenience that seniors can avail - from pay-

ing their mobile, internet and utilities bills, to their shopping needs that can be fulfilled online. Even banking transactions can be done from the comfort of your home these days. Other useful online services include booking a cab, ordering food, hiring housekeeping help, entertainment on demand, etc. Be it for shopping needs, travel needs or even ordering food to satisfy a craving - there is an app for everything. In fact, there is an app to teach you how to use other apps.

In short, technology can improve the quality of life of senior citizens. But there is a learning curve. Just like when we are presented with something new, we need time to understand it, similarly, seniors require time and patience to learn new things. Seniors typically ask for help on the same query more than once. This is natural - to register something new, repetitive learning is required.

Another important outcome of teaching technology to seniors is that it makes them digitally independent. Often, their family or relatives do the task at hand for seniors. This surely helps the seniors but it does not teach them how to do things themselves. It is important that seniors be taught hands-on. Digital know-how leads to digital independence. There is a need in India for technology training specifically designed for the senior community. They require interactive sessions where they can try out the applications under the guidance of a patient teacher. Only practice will make them comfortable with the digital world.

The focus of the government's Digital India project has been on the country's youth. But it also needs to recognize this growing elderly community and introduce training programmes on technology to better equip this group for contemporary life. To see true digital progress in the nation, we need to ensure that senior citizens too are made digitally savvy.

(Concluded)



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A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES
Prolonged silence

North Korea has kept silent on the outcome of the US presidential election on Nov. 3 in an apparent indication that it is at a loss how to deal with the incoming Joe Biden administration.

In previous US presidential votes, it usually took a couple of days for the North to mention or issue a statement on the results.

Apparently, Pyongyang wanted to see the reelection of President Donald Trump, who has boasted of his friendly relations with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. Trump and Kim have tried to project their personal ties as amicable, though the three meetings between them in 2018 and 2019 did little to work out a deal on denuclearizing the North. Pyongyang's uncommonly long silence may be partly due to caution about giving an official response to the election results while Trump has yet to concede defeat. The North has been antagonistic toward Biden, with its state-run media deriding him as a "fool of low IQ" and an "imbecile bereft of elementary quality as a human being."

During a presidential debate with Trump, Biden said he would not meet with Kim without substantial progress in denuclearizing the North, calling him a "thug." The Biden administration is expected to focus on working-level negotiations with Pyongyang on dismantling the recalcitrant regime's nuclear arsenal.

Biden's emphasis on conventional "principled" diplomacy in contrast with his predecessor's top-down manner is prompting speculation that he will return to the approach of strategic patience taken by former US President Barack Obama's administration, in which he served as vice president.

Some observers raise the possibility that the Biden team will depart

H The Korea Herald

from the strategy - if it can be called one - of waiting for the North to come back to the negotiating table while tightening sanctions against the isolated state. They note it may have to be taken into account that Pyongyang's nuclear capabilities have significantly advanced since Obama began his first four-year term in 2009.

President Moon Jae-in's administration, preoccupied with inter-Korean reconciliation, appears to be hoping that the Biden administration will move in that direction. Since Moon took office in May 2017, his government has adhered to its peace agenda for the peninsula, inviting the criticism that it is lukewarm to the fundamental resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.

It should be noted that, despite changes of power, Washington has remained staunch and will do so in applying pressure on Pyongyang until it achieves the complete and irrevocable denuclearization of the North. Even Trump walked out of his second summit with Kim in Hanoi in February 2019, rejecting Kim's demand that the US lift most sanctions in return for a partial scrapping of the North's nuclear weapons development program.

In its latest endeavor to show a firm stance, the US Department of the Treasury added two companies involved in the exportation of "forced labor from North Korea" to its list of entities subject to sanctions imposed on the totalitarian state for its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile tests.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Of two useless ministries

SIR, In autumn, at the end of the harvesting season, there are a number of important religious festivals in India. In North India we have a new festival of pollution. This year there is a double-bill with Covid-19 joining in.

As stubble burning gathers pace in Punjab and Haryana, there is the annual name-calling duel between the Centre and the Delhi government. By the time we are

into November, even the name-calling ceases. All we get on a daily basis are reports on how the air quality is going from bad to worse; this year the number of available hospital beds is also reported.

The northern regions should not be growing paddy; indeed, about thirty years ago there was very little paddy cultivated outside the rain-fed belt. Now we have farmers pumping out groundwa-

ter with free electricity, nourishing the crop with subsidized fertilizer, and selling the crop at a high MSP, only for it to rot in government godowns. Then there is the stubble, that has to be got rid of in a hurry. If you want these farmers to dispose of this off without inflicting a terrible environmental cost on urban areas, even more subsidies are called for.

The air quality in Beijing was pathetic until about five years ago. The Chinese government got its act together and cleaned it up. In a

democracy the government should, in theory at least, be more responsive to the public's concerns.

Instead, we have some farmers insisting on growing rice, and making society pay for it. Given the

UNNECESSARY AND UNCONSTITUTIONAL

SIR, This refers to the editorial, "Roti Hindus?" (26 November). The ruling by the Allahabad High Court that the State's interference in a private matter such as marriage - interfaith or otherwise - will result in a serious encroachment on constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties comes as a relief. It is expected that rulings such as these will dissuade the BJP from keeping the bogey of "love jihad" alive and the BJP-ruled states should desist from enacting laws which are openly discriminatory.

By clearing an ordinance that claims to check "unlawful" conversion, especially aimed at countering love jihad, the Uttar Pradesh government has trespassed on an inalienable right guaranteed by the Constitution. While the administration insists that the ordinance aims to protect the unscrupulous designs of men, it is amply clear that the law aims to criminalize interfaith marriages and, in turn, Muslim men who dare fall in love with Hindu women.

In 2018, the Supreme Court affirmed in the case of Hadiya (formerly Akhila) and Shafin Jahan that no one had a right to interfere in the marriage of consenting adults. If the POCSO Act can be misused against an adult in an interfaith marriage, then one can imagine how the new law will make the lives of interfaith couples miserable. By seeking to cramp and constrict the freedom of the individual, the Yogi Adityanath government imperils the larger freedoms of a constitutional democracy. It must withdraw the proposed law.

Yours, etc., S S Paul, Nadia,

26 November.



Raising marriage age alone will not empower women

ANNESHA MUKHERJEE AND SATYAKI DASGUPTA

Discussions are on to raise the legal minimum age of marriage of women in India. A committee set up by the Government for this purpose issued its report in October, saying that doing so would help increase female enrolment in college and consequently participation in the labour force. The move is supposed to bring about "enormous" economic and social gains for India. A glance at the Employment-Unemployment Survey of the National Sample Survey (NSS-EUS) data shows that female labour force participation rates (FLFP) are the highest among college graduates in urban areas and one of the highest in rural areas. Thus, the reasoning put forward by SBI Ecowrap finds support from this data.

However, there are other aspects related to the issue of female employment which have not been taken into account. FLFP in India is one of the lowest in the world and over time (1993-94 to 2011-12), it has in fact declined. This holds true across all age groups, educational qualifications, and marital status, with the decline in FLFP of the highest educated group being one of the sharpest. Academic papers find that while the decline in FLFP among younger women (15 to 24 years) is due to attendance in educational institutions, this alone does not explain the secular decline in the FLFP of higher age groups.

Moreover, the Periodic Labour

Force Survey of 2017-18 (PLFS) show that the unemployment rate is the highest (43 per cent) among young women who have a college graduate degree or above. While this can be explained by the fact that educated individuals expect higher wages, it does not explain why the unemployment level of females in the age group of 15-29 years is almost 10 per cent higher than that of males.

Thus we see that not only are fewer females participating in the labour force, but their unemployment rate consistently increases with higher educational qualifications. There are certain factors affecting women specifically that need to be considered in this context, and they question the linear assumption of the SBI Ecowrap report.

It is imperative to understand the functioning of our patriarchal society in order to examine the validity of the assumption that increasing the minimum age of marriage will financially empower women. The norms of our patriarchal society give rise to a dichotomy within households whereby males are the primary breadwinners while females are responsible for household chores of cleaning, cooking and caring. The inferior status of women emanates from the fact that the activities of men outside the household are remunerative, while those of women are unpaid and often socially unacknowledged. Accordingly, women are considered secondary workers, and they participate in the labour force only to supplement the family income. These norms affect both the

demand and the supply of female labour.

Educated women face certain impediments in the labour market. First, there is the issue of employability of women and it emerges primarily because social norms restrict the subjects to be studied by women. They are expected to pursue "soft" subjects like home science, history and the like, and are discouraged to pursue "hard" and technical skill-based subjects like engineering and technology. This follows from the presumption that the primary objective of women is to marry, have children and take care of the household, none of which demand technical training.

The Indian Human Development Survey-II (2011-12) shows that while 53 per cent of students attaining a degree in Arts are female, the same in Information Technology is a meagre 19 per cent and in Engineering 25 per cent. This shows that educational attainment in India is segregated on the basis of gender. Since the subjects studied by women don't receive a market value in a capitalistic society, degree holders of "soft" subjects are deemed unemployable. Since their degrees only serve the purpose of increasing their marriage prospects, higher educational attainment by women has returns in the marriage market, rather than in the labour market.

Second, the Indian job market is also segregated on the basis of gender, relegating women to specific kinds of work like nursing, pre-primary teaching, etc. For example, in nursing 84 per cent of the workers are

females, and in pre-primary teaching 83.29 per cent of the workers are females. As many as 70 per cent of workers among health professionals including doctors are male, and among college, university and higher education teaching professionals 61.79 per cent of workers are males (PLFS 2017-18). Thus the patriarchal manifestation of sexual division of labour which exists in the household also persists in the job market.

Third, even when women join the workforce, discrimination practised against them acts as another discouraging factor. Such discriminations include lower wages paid to them as compared to their male colleagues, lack of maternity benefits and restricted upward mobility in their jobs. Additionally, the issue of sexual harassment in workplaces renders their work environments unsafe.

Finally, women suffer from the problem of "mommy track", whereby they are socially expected to set aside the most productive years of work, that is between 25 and 35 years, to get married, have children and take care of household members. This slows down their progress, and leaves them with less on-the-job experience than men of the same age group. This particular social expectation acts as a justification for employers to deny female workers promotions, higher wages, required maternity leave, crèche facilities and other associated benefits. Consequently, women tend to become victims of such forms of institutional discrimination.

With higher levels of education

and income, it has been posited that the patriarchal norms whereby women are supposed to be restricted within the household get strengthened. Women from higher income families get educated but do not participate in the labour force, since it is believed that they do not "need" to supplement the family income. They are expected to maintain the status symbol of their families and represent ritual purity. Thus, the patriarchal notion of women being secondary workers in the family who get employed solely to supplement the family income comes to the fore in explaining the low and declining labour force participation rate (LFPR) of educated women. A case in point would be the finding that one of the primary factors contributing to the decline in LFPR of women above 24 years of age in the post-liberalisation period was their increased participation in household and related activities.

Patriarchy also plays a significant role in shaping the aspirations of women. Since household work is done primarily by women, and this work is undermined because it is unpaid and unacknowledged, it inculcates a lack of respect for these activities in particular and towards women in general. Accordingly, women set themselves a "glass ceiling", that is, the highest limit which they believe they can achieve.

Thus we see that there are different determinants which influence the LFPR of women. Although an increase in the minimum age of marriage might lead to an increase in college education, the assumption that the latter would necessarily translate into their higher financial empowerment is naive at best and gimmicky at worst. Until the social context and norms which are responsible for the low LFPR of women are addressed, any move to empower women would be incomplete.

The writers are Ph.D scholars at, respectively, the Centre for Development Studies, Kolkata and Colorado State University, USA.

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The mosquito blight of the tea bush is a subject painfully familiar to planters, while to readers of reports or letters from the tea districts it is known more or less vaguely as one of the planter's troubles. An interesting account of the insect, and of experiments made with the object of checking the damage it causes, is contained in the Quarterly Journal of the Scientific Department of the Indian Tea Association. The Journal reproduces an address given before the Committee of the Indian Tea Association (London) by Mr. Andrews, the entomologist. In the first place, the name of the insect is misleading. The tea mosquito is not a mosquito at all, but "a true plant bug." The larva of the domestic mosquito, as Mr. Andrews says, is a wriggling worm-like grub, which lives in water; the larva of the tea mosquito is an insect, closely resembling the adult in all save the possession of wings, which spends its existence on the tea-plant, and never goes near water at all. Mr. Andrews traces the life cycle of the larva through its moultings until, after the fifth moult, the insect emerges in the adult winged condition. It may lay as many as five hundred eggs scattered over a considerable area, so that the spread of the blight is easily intelligible. This afforded confirmatory evidence that the effect of the treatment was to render the bush repellent to the insect.

NEWS ITEMS

UNIVERSITY FOR DELHI

With reference to the meeting held at Delhi, presided over by the Chief Commissioner to consider the desirability of founding a university and the report of the committee formed for the working out of details, it is now announced that among the recommendations made by the committee are the following. It was thought that the number of students in each hall should not exceed 200, that tutorial work should be given in the halls, that the degree courses should include among other subjects economics, physics, chemistry, botany, and zoology, and that English should remain the medium of instruction, but English as a separate subject should not be compulsory. A site has been reserved for the university in the new city, and estimates are being made.

MR. GANDHI AT BENARES

Mr. Gandhi with Maulana Azad arrived Benares on Thursday evening and were accorded a warm reception at the station. Mr. Gandhi addressed the Hindu University students yesterday morning and delivered a public lecture in the afternoon. In the course of his public lecture he repeated his old arguments in support of the withdrawal of co-operation with the Government. Maulana Azad and others also spoke. In his speech Mr. Gandhi said that the present Government could be improved only by following the resolutions adopted by the Congress and Moslem League, which enjoined severing connection with the Government. Mr. Gandhi said that it was the duty of parents to withdraw their children from schools and colleges controlled by the Government, and also to abstain from giving votes to candidates standing for the Council.

MANY CONTRACTS CANCELLED

Replying in the House of Commons to Mr. Robert Clough who drew attention to the wholesale cancellation of Indian contracts due to the fall in value of the rupee, Mr. Montagu stated that he was aware of the serious effects on the British export trade, but no undertaking had been given by the Government of India to stabilise the rupee at two shillings. Since the announcement of the Indian currency policy last February, the Government had sold drafts on London to the extent of fifty millions sterling for the purpose of supporting the exchange, but the effect of this had been obscured for various reasons, particularly on account of the stagnation of the export and the unusual strength of the import trade in India during recent months.

INDIAN TROOPS IN PERSIA

Reports have been circulated to the effect that an Indian Regiment mutinied at Constantinople, and in a recent speech at Paris, Mr. Muhammed Ali stated, already in Persia, it is stated, Indian troops refused to fight. Enquiries were made to ascertain whether there was any foundation for these statements. The General Officer Commanding Constantinople has replied as follows, the report regarding the mutiny of Indian troops is absolutely without foundation. Far from mutinying their services in recent operations have been remarkably good. The General Officer Commanding Baghdad has wired that there is absolutely no truth in the statement and report referred to by Mr. Muhammed Ali.

SATURDAY INTERVIEW

India has under-performed'

AHSAN H MANSUR is Executive Director of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh. In an exclusive interview with ERESH OMAR JAMAL, Dr Mansur talks about the recent revelation by the IMF that Bangladesh is set to surpass India in terms of per capita GDP, and other factors relating to Bangladesh's growth.



Q. According to the International Monetary Fund's latest World Economic Outlook report, Bangladesh is set to surpass India in terms of per capita gross domestic product (GDP) in 2020. How significant is this achievement? And what are its major ramifications?

We can take some pride in this because India is a big economy, and even though India has many problems, it has always been ahead of us in terms of GDP. We have somewhat overcome that and reached a parity, which is a big achievement. This has happened because of two opposing developments - while Bangladesh has consistently recorded good economic growth, India's growth performance faltered in recent years.

The two main positive developments for Bangladesh have been: (i) consistently accelerating economic growth over the last 20 years; and (ii) much more stable exchange rate of the Bangladeshi Taka compared with the Indian Rupee, underpinned by much better macroeconomic management by the Bangladeshi government.

If we look back at what happened in India, until the Modi government came to power, India was substantially ahead in terms of per capita GDP in dollar current terms. Why India couldn't maintain that differential included the following factors. First, Modi government's mismanagement through demonetisation, which was very costly and not carefully thought through and which turned out to be an economic disaster. Second, the Indian economy and society, driven by politics, has been going through a period of increased social division, induced by religious

riots, lynching, and regional communal and other issues like the unilateral move on changing the status of Kashmir. Once a society gets divided and the government's attention remains focused on socially divisive issues, it is proven that the economy suffers - India being a poster-perfect example of that.

Finally, we should take pride from this, and it is particularly interesting because in the recent Indian political narrative, many influential political leaders labelled Bangladeshis as termites and alleged that poor Bangladeshis were invading India by migrating en masse. That is a myth and fearmongering that some politicians have created to make political gains. And this projection by the IMF, an independent global organisation, is definitely going to create a new narrative debunking that myth.

Q. Some Indian writers have suggested that Bangladesh surpassing India in terms of per capita GDP is a result of India underperforming, rather than Bangladesh performing well. What is your take on that?

I fully agree with that assessment. India has really underperformed in the last five years, since it was at least 20 per cent ahead of Bangladesh in per capita terms five years ago. The main contributing factors are the ones I have already mentioned. I would also like to underscore and recognise that Bangladesh's performance in terms of exports, remittances and balance of payments stability have been consistent, and that its macro-stability has been stellar in the context of South Asia.

Q. Is there any chance of these figures being skewed by rising inequality, and their calculation being based on nominal GDP rather than on purchasing power parity?

A. Absolutely. That is also a factor. India is still significantly ahead of us (in per capita income) in terms of purchasing power parity. And for ordinary people, it is the PPP based measure that matters - because although our dollar income has been higher, on average, our citizens can buy less than what an Indian citizen can afford.

Prices in Bangladesh are higher than in India for most categories of goods and services.

This is another indicator that shows why we shouldn't get complacent. Yes, we have outperformed India in some way, but in other ways India is certainly ahead of Bangladesh.

Q. Overall, what have been the major factors behind Bangladesh's growth success?

A. Bangladesh's growth success comes down to many reasons. One is the steady performance of our exports and remittances. Even though we are vulnerable due to being overdependent on a single export product, our export growth has been better than most other South Asian countries. Remittance performance is also similarly better.

Secondly, Bangladesh's remittances, because our workers are low-skilled and rural based, are aimed more towards the poor and more towards the rural economy. Inflow of workers' remittances to rural Bangladesh has contributed to a vibrant rural non-farm economic base in the country. The other day, I was telling an Indian journalist that no one ever heard of our farmers committing suicide because of economic hardship, which is very common in India. In part, our farmers are doing quite well despite some problems from time to time. They are getting better prices and access to markets. The rural people are also getting a lot of support from internal remittance (from urban to rural areas) and from external remittance (from other countries to rural areas). That helps the rural economy and creates good demand in the whole economy. And finally, this has created a situation where non-farm income is more than the farm income in rural areas. Sixty per cent of rural income comes from non-farm sources, which is a very different picture compared to most other developing countries. Most of the people, about 65 per cent, still live in rural areas, so that has increased general economic wellbeing. And their wellbeing ultimately determines the wellbeing of the country.

The third factor is that our social indicators have been remarkably good - in part, supported by the strong perfor-

mance of the rural economy. In social indicators like life expectancy, child and maternal mortality rates, fertility rate of our women, gender parity in education, access to water, better sanitation - Bangladesh is ahead of India, and in some cases ahead of Sri Lanka as well.

Finally, good fiscal management has also contributed to macro-stability and growth performance. Bangladesh's macro-stability has been anchored by good fiscal policy, and that continues to be the case. Despite our unimpressive performance on the revenue side, fiscal deficit and public debt have been contained well below what are considered sustainable.

In terms of impediments, in my opinion, so far what we have achieved are the low-hanging fruits. We have not gone for the fruits which are hanging high. But we must go there. If we want to become an upper-middle income country or a high-income country, which the government and we all aspire to be, we have to undertake fundamental reforms in wide-ranging areas. The tasks ahead will be extremely challenging and multi-dimensional. We have an education system which needs to be completely overhauled and made up-to-date. We have to improve the standards of our public education system and significantly increase the skill level of our workers. Unless we do that, we cannot technologically advance, and without technological advancement and adaptation, we will not succeed.

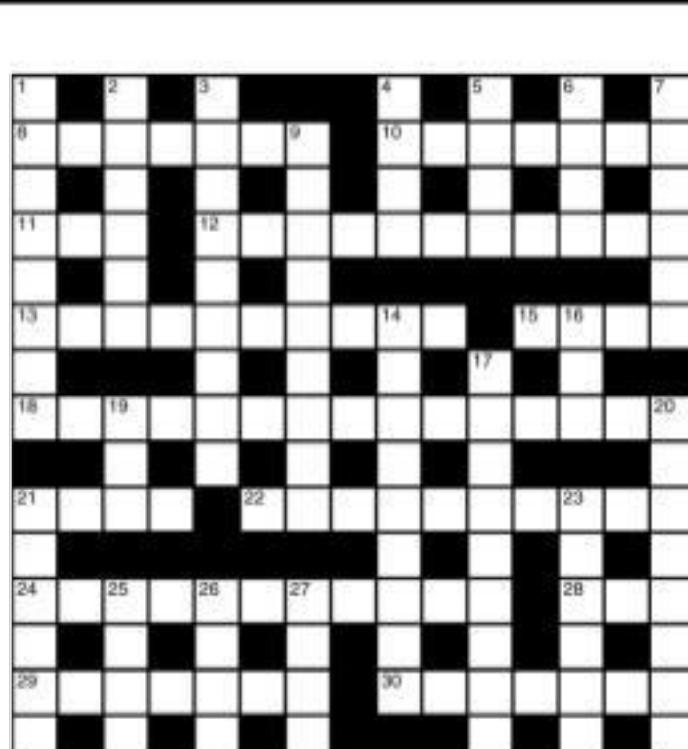
Q. Has Bangladesh's impressive economic growth benefitted its people fairly?

A. Economic growth generally helps people for the most part, unless the income distribution is absolutely horrendous. That being said, I will also emphasise that income distribution is becoming a major problem in Bangladesh, and not only in Bangladesh, but in the entire world. The US is the worst case scenario, while Northern European countries are good examples of countries with equitable income distribution and social justice. Bangladesh needs to learn from these good examples.

The Daily Star/ANN

NO 28148

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



SOLUTION FOR 21 NOVEMBER

ACROSS

- 8 In casino it avoids rejecting a hand (7)
- 10 Capital banked by chief, he left for France (1,6)
- 11 False claim a twist in the tail for Feds (3)
- 12 Builders' merchants slowly move feet - at least six of them (11)
- 13 Game baker subduing big bust meeting a sad end (3,3)
- 15/3 Too cover lifted, sit awhile: which 9 preceded 23 1? (4,9)
- 18 ... (see 2 Down) AND ... (9,2,4)
- 21 One's fleece, on fire leaving kitchen, has charred sleeves (4)
- 22 Trust to assume nurses record finish (6,4)
- 24/9 6 4 originally right to run tavern, "Bar One Hundred", the writer's favourite (11)
- 28 One devious rogue in Brick Lane Market? (3)
- 29 J, P, G and R: certainly not C, D, F and N here! (3,4)
- 30 Lies accompanying divination in great speaker's opening (7)
- 31 See 23
- 32 (with 18 Across) Rogue transported women AND Granddad took a bus (3,3)
- 33 See 15 Across
- 34 See 25
- 35 She's entitled to be taken to heart by soulful Knight? (4)
- 36 Evidence of injury from collision of bus and cars? (4)
- 37 Trustee (4)
- 38 See 25
- 39 See 24 Across
- 40 Timely gift set unwrapped since cart's back before

DOWN

- 1 Have to admit it hurt so close to recognition (3)
- 2 Wanton broody lover not content with new man, "2 and 18" to 5 - sad 26 27 - 21 Across (4,5)
- 3 Pistol associated with him 24 9's taken over (5)
- 4 Western islands supply a lift for sailors (8)
- 5 Cut line? What's going on in theatre's rotten (3,3)
- 23/1 "Forty" body type falters around two shillings (9)
- 24/7 ... this 9, by loading First Class up with whizz next to hold (4,4,6)
- 25 9 against image (4)
- 26 He's entitled to join 26 to make arrangements for 5 21 Across (4)
- 27 He's entitled to join 26 to make arrangements for 5 21 Across (4)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)





Faqir Kohli formed and led Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) from its founding days. He guided the company in its early years and defined the vision for its growth.

RATAN TATA
INDUSTRIALIST

THUMBNAILS

Sebi invites bids from agencies for office maintenance: Markets regulator Sebi on Friday invited applications from agencies to provide staffers for maintenance of its office. In a notice inviting application from the interested parties, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said the services would be required at the regulator's northern regional office in Delhi. The agency would provide outsourced staff to perform jobs related to office maintenance. The agency would be responsible for providing the services of the support staff such as receptionist, data entry operator, driver, cook, office assistant and house keeper.

TVS Motor unveils mobile app for customers: TVS Motor Company on Friday said it has launched an app which allows customers to explore and buy any model online from the comfort of their homes. The TVS Augmented Reality Interactive Vehicle Experience (A.R.I.V.E.) app allows an in-depth product exploration and purchase experience using AR technology, the company said in a statement.

Heranba Industries eyes Rs 1,200 cr revenue: Agrochemical company Heranba Industries, which is planning to enter the capital markets soon, is expecting Rs 1,150-1,200 crore revenue in 2020-21 as the economic activities are improving gradually after the havoc caused by the pandemic, a top company executive has said. Being an agrochemical company, we were not affected much by the disruption.

Mirras Coffee to expand retail business to South this year: Mirras Coffee, a filter coffee producer, plans to expand its retail business across South this fiscal and North by the next financial year, a top official of the company said on Friday. The Mirra Group of Companies was marketing filter coffee only in Chennai and Coimbatore at present. During this year, it would expand

RBI has set precedence in Lakshmi Vilas bond write-off

During the Yes Bank rescue earlier this year also, there was an over Rs 7,000-crore bond write-off.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 27

The write-off of Rs 318-crore tier-II bonds by Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) ahead of its merger with DBS Bank is a precedent set by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and will hurt the private sector lender's peers, according to a report.

During the Yes Bank rescue earlier this year also, there was an over Rs 7,000-crore bond write-off, but that involved a different instrument called additional tier-I bonds.

In the case of LVB, which is being merged with DBS in a scheme proposed by the RBI, investments of Rs 318.20 crore in bonds issued by LVB will be written-off, the lender informed the exchanges late Thursday night.

"RBI has set a precedent with the proposed write-off as it's first time a tier-II bond is being written off," ratings agency ICRA said in the report on Friday.

The agency added that investors should factor in the risk in Basel-III instruments,

as these instruments can be completely written off in case the bank gets into trouble.

"We expect the risk premiums for such instruments to increase for weaker private banks to increase, given this event," the ratings agency said.

In an exchange filing late on Thursday evening, the bank said the RBI has advised it of the need to fully write down the Series VIII, Series IX and Series X Basel-III-complaint tier-II bonds before the amalgamation with DBS Bank comes into effect on Friday.

"If the relevant authorities decide to reconstitute the bank or amalgamate the bank with any other bank under the Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act, such a bank shall be deemed as non-viable and both the pre-specified trigger and the trigger at the point of the point of non-viability for write-down of bonds shall be activated."

"Accordingly, the bonds shall be written off before amalgamation or reconstitution in accordance with applicable rules," according to the terms of the information memorandum of the respective Basel-III Tier-II bonds issued by the bank, LVB said.

Hence, such Basel-III tier-II bonds would need to be fully written down before amalgamation of the bank comes into effect, LVB said quoting



Thursday's letter from the RBI.

On Wednesday, the RBI notified the effective date of merger of November 27 soon after the Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the Scheme of Amalgamation of LVB with DBS Bank India Ltd (DBIL).

The RBI superseded LVB's board on November 17 after the private sector lender was placed under a 30-day moratorium restricting cash withdrawals at Rs 25,000 per depositor. The RBI simultaneously placed in public domain a draft scheme of amalgamation of LVB with DBIL.

Started by a group of seven businessmen of Karur in Tamil Nadu under the leadership of V S N Ramalingam Chettiar in 1926, LVB now has 566 branches and 973 ATMs spread across 19 states and Union territories. With non-performing assets (NPAs) soaring, the bank was put under the prompt corrective action framework of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in September 2019. LVB is the second private sector bank after Yes Bank that has run into rough weather this year. In March, capital-starved Yes Bank was placed under a moratorium. The government rescued Yes Bank by asking State Bank of India to infuse Rs 7,250 crore and take 45 percent stake in the lender.

FM pushes large CPSEs to exceed capex target by March

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOV 27

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday exhorted large central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) to exceed their planned capital expenditure (Capex) target for 2020-21 by March to accelerate economic growth hit by the COVID-19 crisis.

She held a virtual meeting with secretaries of power, mines and atomic energy along with the chairman and managing directors (CMDs) of 10 CPSEs, belonging to these ministries, an official statement said.

This was the fifth in the ongoing series of meetings that the finance minister is having with various stakeholders to boost the economic growth amid the pandemic.

While reviewing the performance of CPSEs, Sitharaman said that Capex by CPSEs is a critical driver of economic growth and need to be scaled up for the 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Appreciating the efforts of the ministries and CPSEs for making visible efforts to meet the capital expenditure targets,



the finance minister said that "more efforts are still required to achieve the target of 75 per cent CAPEX by Q3 and more than 100 per cent by Q4 of the FY21". The overall achievement as on November 23, 2020, is Rs 24,227 crore (39.4 per cent) against the Capex target for 2020-21 - Rs 61,483 crore, the statement said.

Sitharaman encouraged the CPSEs to perform better to achieve targets and to ensure that the capital outlay provided to them for the year 2020-21 is spent properly and within time. The finance minister said the better performance of CPSEs can help the economy in a big way to recover from the impact of COVID-19. Sitharaman asked the secretaries to closely monitor the performance of CPSEs to ensure to achieve the Capex targets and make plans for it.

She also asked them to proactively sort out the unresolved issues of the CPSEs.

Mirras Coffee to expand retail business to South this year



Mirras Coffee, a filter coffee producer, plans to expand its retail business across South this fiscal and North by the next financial year, a top official of the company said on Friday.

The Mirra Group of Companies was marketing filter coffee only in Chennai and Coimbatore at present. During this year, it would expand to Karnataka, Hyderabad and Kerala, the managing director of the company Sundar Subramanian told reporters here.

The group would expand to Mumbai and Delhi during the next financial year and plans to open at least 100 kiosks in Tamil Nadu, including in the Chennai airport, by this year, he said. On business in the wake of the pandemic, Sundar said onlineline sales of coffee doubled and institutional sales remained top during the lockdown period.

Stating that the company was exporting coffee products to Singapore and New Zealand, he said Mirras has added estate products like spices and wood-pressed oils in its catalogues well. With a tagline of Asia's first coffee planter, Mirras, with 175 acres of coffee estates in Coorg and Sakleshpur in Karnataka, is looking at expanding the plantation in state with another 100 acres in the near future, he said.

Gutgutia emphasised that it is imperative for brands and sellers to shift their focus to online quickly and enable a seamless online experience for the customer in order to thrive in a post COVID-19 world.

The report noted that 40 million shoppers came from tier II and beyond cities. "This festive season was one dictated by affordability and ease of access to a wide assortment of products," it added.

Hitachi ABB Power, Ashok Leyland, IIT-Madras team up for e-mobility pilot



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOV 27

Hitachi ABB Power Grids in India, Ashok Leyland and the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT-M) on Friday announced a partnership for an e-mobility pilot.

The tripartite partnership will run an electric bus (e-bus) pilot to support sustainable in-campus com-

munity by IIT-M's students and staff. The e-bus, which will incorporate Hitachi ABB Power Grids' innovative flash-charging technology Grid-eMotion Flash, will be provided by Ashok Leyland, while IIT-M will host the infrastructure required to operate the flash-charging system for the e-bus, Hitachi ABB Power Grids in India said in a statement.

LPG subsidy for BPCL consumers to continue post-privatisation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOV 27

LPG customers of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) will continue to get cooking gas subsidy post-privatisation of the nation's second-largest fuel retailers, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Friday.

"Subsidy on LPG is paid to consumers directly and not to any company. So the ownership of the company that sells LPG is not of any material consequence," Pradhan told PTI.

The government gives 12 cooking gas (LPG) cylinders of 14.2-kg each to households in a year at a subsidised rate. This subsidy is directly paid into the bank accounts of the users.

The subsidy is paid in



advance and consumers use this to buy LPG refills that are available only at market price from dealers of oil marketing companies -- Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), BPCL and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL).

The moment a refill is bought using the subsidy, another installment is transferred into the user bank accounts. Pradhan said the

LPG subsidy payment is done digitally to all verified customers.

"Since it is paid directly to consumers, it does not matter if the servicing company is public sector or private sector," he said. "LPG subsidy will continue as before to BPCL consumers even after disinvestment."

The government is selling its entire 53 per cent stake

along with management control in BPCL. The new owner will get 15.33 per cent of India's oil refining capacity and 22 per cent of the fuel marketing share. It also owns 17,355 petrol pumps, 6,159 LPG distributor agencies and 61 out of 256 aviation fuel stations in the country. BPCL services 7.3 crore out of 28.5 crore LPG consumers in the country. Asked if the consumers of BPCL will after some years be transferred to IOC and HPCL, he said there is no such proposal as of now.

"When we pay a subsidy to consumers directly, the ownership does not come in the way," he said.

Privatisation of BPCL is part of plans to raise a record Rs 2.1 lakh crore from disinvestment proceeds in 2020-21.

Ola focussed on aggressively building global electric two-wheeler biz: CEO



and two and three-wheelers.

"Our ambition is to be the leader in electric mobility for the small vehicles and small city four-wheelers. And unlike Tesla or many of the American companies, which are building for their own audiences, we have to build for our audiences. India is the world's largest two-wheeler market."

According to sources, Ola is planning to foray into elec-

tric scooter manufacturing and plans to hit the market with its first vehicle in January next year. The electric scooter, initially manufactured at a facility in the Netherlands, will be sold in India as well as Europe. Ola, however, has not commented on the exact timeline for the launch of e-scooter.

In May this year, Ola Electric announced the acquisition of Amsterdam-based Etergo BV for an undisclosed amount. At that time, the firm had said it aimed to launch electric two-wheelers in India in 2021, and that the acquisition of Etergo further bolstered its engineering and design capabilities.

Aggarwal, speaking at the event, said he believes Ola will have an important role in the smaller four-wheeler segment, but did not provide specific details.

India's e-commerce festive season sees \$8.3 bn worth gross sales: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOV 27

India's e-commerce festive season from October 15-November 15 this year delivered \$ 8.3 billion (about Rs 58,000 crore) worth of gross sales for brands and sellers, up 65 per cent from \$ 5 billion (Rs 35,000 crore) last year, research firm RedSeer said on Friday.

This was also higher than the pre-festive forecast of \$ 7 billion (Rs 45,000 crore) last year, RedSeer said in its report titled 'The Festival of Firsts'.

About \$ 3.2 billion (Rs 22,000 crore) worth of gross sales was registered in the first event, \$ 1.2 billion (Rs 8,700 crore) in the second event and \$ 1.4 billion (Rs 9,700 crore) and \$ 1.5 bil-

lion (Rs 10,300 crore) in other events by e-commerce companies, including Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart.

Festive season sees players holding multiple sale events, timed around Dussehra and Diwali.

The report said Flipkart group (including Mynta) and Amazon accounted for more than 88 per cent of the entire gross merchandise value (GMV) for the festive month.

Between the two players, Flipkart accounted for a large share (66 per cent), it added.

"The overall growth story has been very bullish this festive season. We had forecasted \$ 7 billion of sales but the actual figures surpassed our expectations fairly comfortably, showing how comfortable consumers have become with shopping online even in this pandemic hit

year," RedSeer Director Mrigank Gutgutia said.

Headed that one clear lesson from this festive season is that e-commerce has become more mainstream than ever. "And it has proven that with the right assortment at the right prices which is delivered quickly in the safety of customer's homes, the value proposition of e-commerce is very powerful," he said.

Gutgutia emphasised that it is imperative for brands and sellers to shift their focus to online quickly and enable a seamless online experience for the customer in order to thrive in a post COVID-19 world.

The report noted that 40 million shoppers came from tier II and beyond cities. "This festive season was one dictated by affordability and ease of access to a wide assortment of products," it added.

Govt seeks public feedback for registering vintage vehicles



the new rules

is to preserve and promote heritage vehicles in India.

The ministry now defines vintage vehicles as two-wheelers and four-wheelers (non-commercial/personal use) and are more than 50 years old from date of their first registration (including imported vehicles).

In its latest rules, the Ministry has included a restriction in the definition: no substantial overhaul of the vehicle which includes modification in chassis or body shell, and/or engine.

An earlier notification from the ministry in December 2019 declared that vintage cars will have the letters 'VA' in their registration plates, to show they are vintage vehicles and exempt

them from being scrapped.

Currently, there are no confirmed statistics on num-

ber of vintage motor vehicles in India despite annual vintage car events.

A well-known annual event

is the Statesman Vintage & Clas-

sic Car Rally in New Delhi and

Kolkata, the oldest, continuously-run such event in India and the sub-continent

since 1964. The new rules proposed all applications for registering vintage vehicles to be made in the ministry's 'Parivahan' portal.

Other rules include:

- Registering authority in each state will appoint a nodal officer to process applications for registering vintage motor vehicles.

- States will form a committee to inspect a vehicle to certify it as 'vintage motor vehicle'.

- A 10 digit alphanumeric number will be assigned to each vintage vehicle. This registration shall be valid for 10 years. The format for the registration mark will consist of the letters "XXVAYY****", where VA stands for vintage, XX stands for State code, YY

will be a two letter series and **** is a number from 0001 to 9999 allotted by State Registration Authority.

• Fees for new registration will be Rs 20,000 and subsequent registration Rs 5,000.



India is discussing further opportunities
to work with UAE in a changing world'

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER S JAISHANKAR
DURING HIS VISIT TO UAE

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2020

09

Odisha CM agrees for SIT to probe minor girl murder case

BJP demands CBI probe, dismissal of agriculture minister Dr Sahoo

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 27 NOVEMBER

Odisha Assembly witnessed tumultuous scenes for the third successive day today as Opposition BJP and Congress persisted with their demand for resignation of Agriculture Minister Dr Arun Sahoo and a impartial probe into the minor girl 'Pari' murder case.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, addressing the Assembly, from his residence via video conferencing, tried to break the deadlock by stating "if SIT investigation is what is required, the state government will take steps in this regard and do it immediately. My government is always committed for free and fair investigation and we always want justice to be done".

"I am deeply saddened by the incident. My government will always stand for rule of law. I would request all the members to cooperate and participate", CM said.

The CM's statement came after veteran Congress MLA and former law minister Narasingha Mishra forcefully demanded a High Court monitored SIT probe into the murder case since allegations had been levelled against a cabinet minister.

Mishra stated that it was but natural for the opposition to dis-

rupt proceedings since the government failed to respond to demands and had even ignored directions of the Speaker.

It may be noted that the Pari murder case caused an uproar in the state only after the parents of the girl had attempted self immolation in front of the state Assembly three days ago.

The distraught parents alleged that their daughter had been abducted and killed by a person close to Agriculture Minister Dr Arun Sahoo and over the last four months the police was not arresting the culprit due to political pressure.

The Opposition has since stalled proceedings of the Assembly. The BJP organised protests in different parts of the state demanding the resignation of Minister Sahoo.

What was the police doing

for four months? Why have the accused not been arrested? Who is protecting them? Questioned the BJP while insisting that a CBI probe alone would unravel the truth.

In another shocking development, a sarpanch of the area in Nayagarh district where the minor was killed, Soumyaranjan Pradhan today accused Minister Sahoo of protecting the culprits. He informed that even the local police had dissuaded him from organising protests. The sarpanch has moved the High Court seeking protection for his family.

It may be noted that Minister Dr Sahoo has denied the accusations against him. Pari should get justice, the guilty booked, he added saying that the tragic case should not be politicised.

Three farmers of Odisha attempt self immolation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 27 NOVEMBER

Three days after the self-immolation bid by couple seeking justice, three farmers of Cuttack's Athagarh block attempted to set themselves on fire in front of Odisha Assembly today alleging they had been duped by the Cooperative bank as huge loan outstanding was shown against their names.

The three were promptly whisked away by security personnel at the spot.

The farmers alleged that some miscreants availed loans from the cooperative bank by fraudulently using their names and now they were forced to repay the loan amount.

Meanwhile several farmers staged a roadside protest dharna against the farm laws of the NDA government.



It may be recalled that three days ago a couple had done the same in front of the Assembly as the police had failed to arrest culprits involved in murdering their five year old daughter four months ago.

The attempted suicide has created an uproar in the state and forced the government to order a crime branch probe to apprehend the culprits.

Senior Odisha forest officer and son arrested

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 27 NOVEMBER

mi transactions and properties are also being looked into, it added.

The vigilance has formed a 20 member Special Investigation Team for thorough investigations.

The two have been arrested U's 13(2) r/w 13(1)(b) PC Act, 1988 as amended by PC (Amendment) Act, 2018/12PC Act, 1988.

They were forwarded to court and have been remanded to judicial custody till 9 December.

Akhay Pathak told media persons that the allegations 'are false and there is no disproportionate asset'. His son Akash alleged it to be a 'conspiracy'.

Incidentally, Akash is engaged to the daughter of a BJL leader and former minister and his marriage was to take place on 11 December.

The case has also raised questions on the state crime branch police which had failed to act effectively on a complaint filed by Tata Motors Limited in May against Akash Pathak alleging that he has been illegally impersonating as MD of the company Pune passenger division and cheating unemployed youths.

Pradhan seeks Central University status for Utkal University

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 27 NOVEMBER

Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has requested his ministerial colleague Dr Ramesh Pokhray Nishank to upgrade Utkal University, Bhubaneswar to a Central University.

Utkal University, established in 1943 celebrated its Foundation Day and Pradhan noted that it has 28 Post Graduate Departments and 17 self-

financing courses, 3 constituent colleges and 373 affiliated colleges spread across 9 districts of Odisha, with an enrolment of almost 3 lakh students.

Prestigious institutions like Max-Planck Institute, University of Tübingen, John Hopkins University and UNICEF etc. have signed MOUs with the University. It was accredited A+ grade with a score of 3.53/4 by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and ranked 96th

among universities by National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) in 2020, noted Pradhan.

Granting Central University status will help unlock the full potential of Utkal University, he said.

Odisha has only one Central University whereas states like Bihar which has four and Andhra Pradesh which has three, he noted in his letter to the Union Education Minister.

Odisha reports 594 fresh Covid cases

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR,
27 NOVEMBER

Odisha on Friday reported 594 fresh Covid cases and 14 deaths.

The overall death toll in the state has risen to 1,718.

As many as 343 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 251 infections were detected during contact tracing on Friday.

Khurda district, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the highest 56 new cases, followed by Cuttack and Sundergarh with 55 cases each.

Of the latest fatalities, Sundergarh and Angul reported four deaths each, followed by Balasore and Khurda (two each) and one patient each died in Nayagarh and Puri districts.

Khurda has recorded the highest number of fatalities with 288 deaths so far, followed by Ganjam (240), Sundergarh (145), Cuttack (134) and Puri (101).

Despite the spike in deaths, the case fatality of 0.54 percent in Odisha is considerably on a lower side in comparison to national average of 1.46 percent case fatality rate.

The State's recovery rate

Bhubaneswar records 38 new Covid cases

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR,
27 NOVEMBER

Odisha's capital city Bhubaneswar on Friday registered 38 fresh COVID-19 positive cases while the active cases at 483 have dipped marking a steady slowdown of the pandemic.

As many as 29,929 patients have recovered from the contagion till date. A total of 215 patients from the city have succumbed to the virus.

stands at 97.35 percent and is comparatively higher than the country's 93.65 percent.

Odisha currently has 6,629 active cases.

A total of 57,77,570 sample tests have been conducted in the state so far, including 44,980 on Thursday. Odisha has reported 5.49 percent positivity rate.

Angry 'slap' kills minor girl

KORAPUT, 27 NOVEMBER:

An angry father slapped his six year old daughter from playing all the while as schools were closed and the girl died on the spot. The father Bangru Pangti of Pottangi was shocked and scared. He put the body of his daughter in a bag and buried her near the Deomali mountain range, said SDPO Sunabeda, Nirjan Behera.

To cover-up the killing, Bangru went to the local police and lodged a missing person complaint saying his daughter was missing. The police grew suspicious and detained Bangru who finally broke down confessing to his crime, said the police. sns

Toxic waste destroys crop

JAJPUR, 27 NOVEMBER:

A farmer has lodged a complaint with the Korei Police against a private tiles and bricks manufacturing unit accusing it of damaging his paddy crop land by releasing toxic chemical water of the plant in Taluri village in Jajpur district.

According to the complaint filed by one Bishnu Charan Pratihari the toxic release had damaged his crop.sns

Villagers drive out officers from Baliapal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BALASORE, 27 NOVEMBER

It is learnt that the district collector had earlier held a meeting with a section of villagers to discuss the proposed petrochemical unit in Baliapal area.

The villagers had rejected establishment of any such industry stating that the land was fertile and in agricultural use. They had also sought details of how much land is to be acquired, how many families will be displaced and compensation or rehabilitation plan etc. Many of them did say that they have been living and cultivating government land since ages but will not leave the area.

The tehsildar of Baliapal, Dipak Das, however, said "yesterday we had gone to identify the forest land in the village. After identifying 5-6 points the villagers opposed our presence and we came back. However, the work for the project is going on."

The anti displacement brigade while organizing meetings in the area of and on they asked the residents to remain alert.

It may be noted that the project proposed to be established at Baliapal near Subarnarekha port entails an investment of over Rs 70,000 crore with employment opportunities for over 10,000 people.

Work on the Subarnarekha port project is already in progress.

It may be noted that foundation stone for several projects including Subarnarekha port were laid by the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik during his visit to the district ahead of general elections in 2019.

Are Gold-loan firms turning 'safe haven' for stolen jewellery?

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 27 NOVEMBER

tack have exposed the newly developed modus operandi of such criminals. Involvement of insiders is said to be key to the operations of the gold looters.

Berhampur city police cracked a major gold robbery case with the recovery of 540 grams of stolen gold and found the dubious role played by gold-leasing companies either in overtly and covertly patronizing the burglaries.

We have arrested two burglars who had committed robbery of gold to the tune of 1.3 kilograms from

a jewelry shop in Bada Bazar area earlier this month. The accused duo- identified as Santosh Sahu and Deepak Mohapatra- confessed to mortgaged the stolen gold at Manappuram gold-leasing finance company to borrow Rs 21 lakh from the financier", said Pinak Mishra, Superintendent of Police, Berhampur.

The disposal of stolen gold in finance companies to avail loan is a disturbing trend. Possible involvement of gold-leasing companies in gold loot cases may not be ruled out. We are questioning the staffs

of the gold-leasing firm, he said

It has been seen in the past that the burglars used to mortgage the booty in banks while concealing the source of the yellow metal.

Evidently the burglars find gold-loan companies an easier option to dispose of the stolen gold and get cash in the form of loan in the process.

The verification process rarely crosschecks the antecedents of the mortgagor, said a senior police official.

The sensational 19 November IIFL gold robbery case in Cuttack city has been found

out to be an inside job. Around 40 kg of gold was looted and the looters were arrested including the insiders from the non-banking finance company.

It was startling to find that a portion of gold leased in the IIFL was deposited in another gold loan company and loan was availed from the mortgaged gold.

Interestingly the fact that the police managed to nab seven culprits in the IIFL gold theft case within a week of its occurrence has raised hopes of the police in Rourkela where a similar gold robbery

had taken place from the IIFL branch there in July 2016.

DSP Asim Panda said, "the case of 2016 has not been closed as yet. At that time teams were formed and were sent outside the state to investigate the case but it did not bear any result. In 2016 in the same manner the IIFL branch here, on Madhusudan Marg, was looted. The CCTV cameras were not operational, the siren was not working and there was no security person. The looters had decamped with 16 kg of gold.

Finally, the officials had to return without any work.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



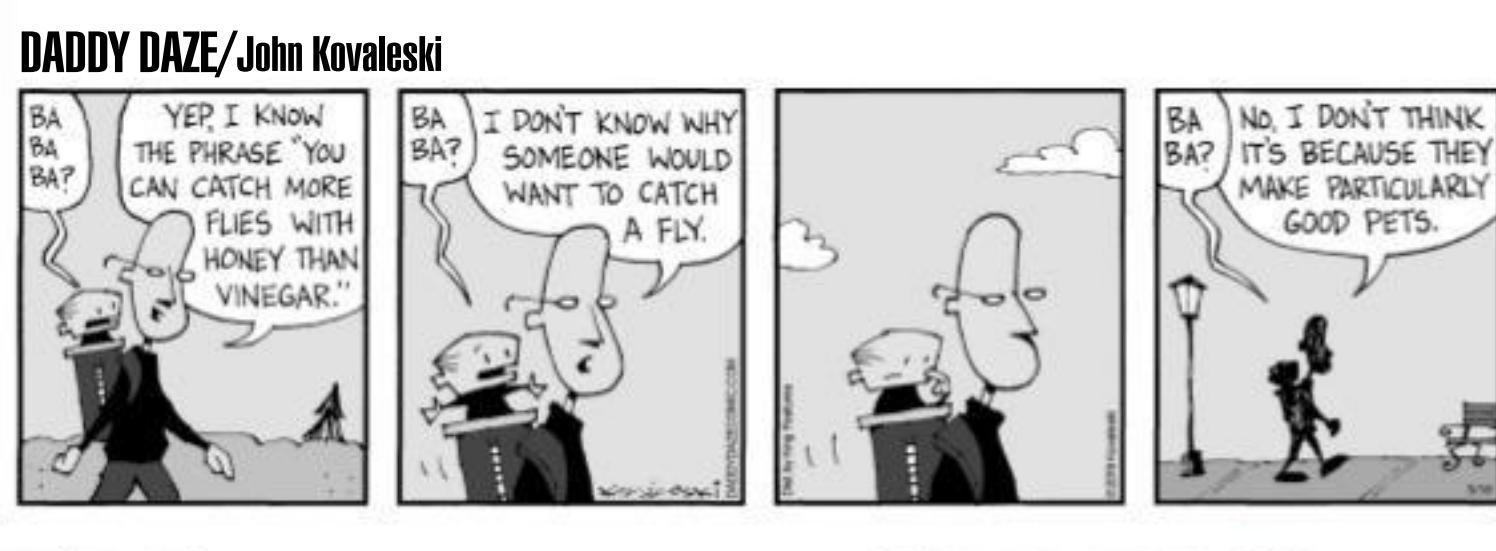
BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD
ACROSS 1 Skin (4), 3 Wharf (4), 7 Big (5), 8 Concisely expressed (2,1,4), 10 Soft roll (7), 12 Rule (5), 14 Racecourse feature (7,4), 16 Anxiety (5), 17 Plant support (7), 19 Mexican food item (7), 21 Primp (5), 22 Small river island (4), 23 Biting fly (4).
DOWN 1 Merciful (9), 2 Chopper (3), 3 Fourfold (9), 4 Fuss (3), 5 Body fat (4), 6 Winter sleep (11), 9 Mound of sand (4), 11 Make narrower (9), 13 Bankrupt (9), 15 Smear (4), 18 Transmited (4), 20 Beam of light (3), 21 Play on words (3).
SIGHTS es, 12 Tag team, 14 Respire, 16 Later, 17 Amen, 18 Sweat.
SWEAT, 19 Vest, 20 Eyeliner, 21 Run, 22 Debt, 5 Less, 6 Patron, 11 Shiver.

By arrangement with The Independent
Figures in parentheses denote
the number of letters in the words required

NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free Nos. 1800112511

Chemist Shop 42000447

Vidyasagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304



The lack of progress is frustrating since the EU had sounded optimistic about a deal last Friday

EU CHIEF NEGOTIATOR MICHEL BARNIER

AS BREXIT TRADE TALKS REMAIN STUCK AFTER ANOTHER WEEK OF TALKS

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	30	24 H
HONG KONG	24	19 CL
TOKYO	14	11 R
LONDON	8	2 H
DUBAI	29	21 H
SAN FRANCISCO	15	8 CL
NEW YORK	15	8 S
MOSCOW	2	-1 H

S=sunny, CL=clear, H=hazy, R=rainy...

THUMBNAILS



Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (R) with Speaker of South Korea's National Assembly Park Byeong-seug in Seoul on Friday.

IANS

Tesla probe: The US government's road safety agency is investigating complaints that suspensions can fail on nearly 115,000 Tesla electric vehicles. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says it has 43 complaints that linkages near the ball joints can fail, allowing contact between the tire and wheel liner. AP

China hikes taxes on Australian wine: China is raising import taxes on Australian wine, stepping up pressure on Australia over disputes including its support for a probe into the origin of the coronavirus. The anti-dumping duties of up to 212.1% take effect Saturday. AP

South Korea cases stay above 500: South Korea's daily virus tally hovered above 500 for the second straight day, with 569 new cases over the past 24 hours, as the country's prime minister urged the public to stay home this weekend to contain a viral resurgence. AP

Navalny urges EU to be ready for Russian election

BRUSSELS, 27 NOVEMBER

Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny urged the European Union to reject the results of Russia's parliamentary election next year if any candidates are blocked from taking part and he called Friday on the EU to impose sanctions on oligarchs close to President Vladimir Putin.

Navalny, a corruption investigator and longtime foe of Putin's, has been recovering in Germany from a poisoning attack with what experts have said was a Soviet-era nerve agent. He told EU lawmakers he thinks it's important that Europe not remain silent on conditions in Russia.

Navalny described next September's election for Russia's lower house of parliament as an absolutely crucial event. He said that while he and other opposition politicians expect some vote-rigging, what is most important is the right to participate.

Navalny, who has been blocked several times from registering as a candidate, said the EU's approach should simply be: If everyone is allowed to participate, we can discuss it further. But if some are not allowed to participate, the results of such an election will never be recognised.

He urged the 27-nation bloc to change its approach to sanctions, saying there is little point in slapping travel bans or asset freezes over poisonings or election irregularities on military officers because they generally don't move much outside of Russia, own real estate or hold bank accounts in Europe.

Navalny said the EU should ask itself why these alleged crimes are happening. AP

'Will leave WH if Biden win is formalised'

Trump renews baseless claims that 'massive fraud' and crooked officials in battleground states caused his election defeat

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 27 NOVEMBER



"This has a long way to go," Trump said, even though he lost.

President Donald Trump said Thursday that he will leave the White House if the Electoral College formalises President-Elect Joe Biden's victory, even as he insisted such a decision would be a "mistake," as he spent his Thanksgiving renewing baseless claims that "massive fraud" and crooked officials in battleground states caused his election defeat.

"Certainly I will. But you know that," Trump said Thursday when asked whether he would vacate the building, allowing a peaceful transition of power in January. But Trump, taking questions for the first time since Election Day, insisted that "a lot of things" would happen between now and then that might alter the results.

ing, he and his legal team have nonetheless been working to cast doubt on the integrity of the election and trying to overturn voters' will in an unprecedented breach of democratic norms.

Trump spoke to reporters in the White House's ornate Diplomatic Reception Room after holding a teleconference with US military leaders stationed across the globe. He repeated grievances

and angrily denounced officials in Georgia and Pennsylvania, two key swing states that helped give Biden the win.

Trump claimed, despite the results, that this may not be his last Thanksgiving at the White House. And he insisted there had been "massive fraud," even though state officials and international observers have said no evidence of that exists and Trump's campaign has repeatedly failed in court.

Trump's administration has already given the green light for a formal transition to get underway. But Trump took issue with Biden moving forward. "I think it's not right that he's trying to pick a Cabinet," Trump said, even though officials from both teams are already working together to get Biden's team up to speed.

And as he refused to concede, Trump announced that

he will be traveling to Georgia to rally supporters ahead of two Senate runoff elections that will determine which party controls the Senate. Trump said the rally for Republican Senators David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler would likely be held Saturday. The White House later clarified he had meant December 5.

One of the reasons Republicans have stood by Trump and his baseless claims of fraud has been to keep his loyal base energized ahead of those runoffs on January 5. But Trump, in his remarks, openly questioned whether that election would be fair in a move that could dampen Republican turnout.

"I think you're dealing with a very fraudulent system. I'm very worried about that," he said. "People are very disappointed that we were robbed."

As for the Electoral College,

Trump made clear that he will likely never formally concede, even if he said he would leave the White House.

"It's gonna be a very hard thing to concede. Because we know there was massive fraud," he said, noting that, "time isn't on our side." "If they do," vote against him, Trump added, "they've made a mistake."

Asked whether he would attend Biden's inauguration, Trump said he knew the answer but didn't want to share it yet.

But there were some signs that Trump was coming to terms with his loss.

At one point he urged reporters not to allow Biden the credit for pending coronavirus vaccines. "Don't let him take credit for the vaccines because the vaccines were me and I pushed people harder than they've ever been pushed before," he said.

As for whether or not he

plans to formally declare his candidacy to run again in 2024, as he has discussed with aides, Trump said he didn't "want to talk about 2024 yet."

All states must certify their results before the Electoral College meets on December 14, and any challenge to the results must be resolved by December 8. States have already begun that process, including Michigan, where Trump and his allies tried and failed to delay the process, and Georgia and Pennsylvania.

Vote certification at the local and state level is typically a ministerial task that gets little notice, but that changed this year with Trump's refusal to allow Biden the credit for pending coronavirus vaccines. "Don't let him take credit for the vaccines because the vaccines were me and I pushed people harder than they've ever been pushed before," he said.

As for whether or not he

UK asks regulator to approve AstraZeneca vaccine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, 27 NOVEMBER

RAY OF HOPE

► The UK will be one of the first countries in the world to receive the vaccine, if authorised, with AstraZeneca expecting to have up to 4 million doses ready for the country by the end of the year

► The move to formally seek approval follows the vaccine team declaring its efficacy in trials earlier this week

determine whether it meets rigorous safety standards. This letter is an important step towards deploying a vaccine as quickly as safely possible," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock, in reference to a formal letter to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA).

The UK will be one of the first countries in the world to receive the vaccine, if authorised, with pharmaceutical major AstraZeneca expecting to have up to 4 million doses ready for the country by the end of the year and 40 million by the end of March 2021, the government said.

The move to formally seek approval follows the vaccine team declaring its efficacy in trials earlier this week. However, there have been some concerns raised around the way the results were collated.

"We have formally asked the regulator to assess the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, to understand the data and

the vaccine was at least 70 per cent effective in protecting individuals from Covid-19. This rose to 90 per cent effective when administered as half a dose, followed by a full dose rather than two full doses.

The UK government's Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) said that the MHRA has already started a rolling review to determine whether the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine meets its "strict" standards of safety, efficacy and quality.

Once the MHRA receives the full data from the company, its team of scientists and clinicians stand ready to progress its assessment of the vaccine. Until the end of December,

and as part of the Brexit transition period, vaccines must be authorised via the European Medicines Agency and that authorisation will automatically be valid in the UK.

However, if a suitable Covid-19 vaccine candidate, with strong supporting evidence of safety, quality and effectiveness from clinical trials becomes available before the end of the transition period, EU legislation allows the MHRA to temporarily authorise the supply of a medicine or vaccine, based on public health need.

The letter, signed by Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England Professor Jonathan Van-Tam and Director for Covid-19 Vaccine Deployment Antonia Williams, asks MHRA Chief Executive Dr June Raine for the regulator to evaluate whether the vaccine can be authorised under this regulation. The DHSC said the UK was the first country to receive the vaccine.

The UK government's Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) said that the MHRA has already started a rolling review to determine whether the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine meets its "strict" standards of safety, efficacy and quality.

Once the MHRA receives the full data from the company, its team of scientists and clinicians stand ready to progress its assessment of the vaccine. Until the end of December,

Germany preps vaccine drive as Covid cases hit 1M

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TUTTLINGEN, 27 NOVEMBER



the EU orders and bilateral deals with three manufacturers in Germany, including BioNTech and CureVac, a company based in Tuebingen that says its vaccine can be stored at regular refrigerator temperatures for up to three months. Its trials are not far along, however, as Pfizer/BioNTech and others.

Man-sized freezers such as those manufactured by family-owned firm Binder GmbH could become a key part of the vast immunization program the German government is preparing to roll out when the first vaccines become available next month.

That's because one of the front-runners in the race for a vaccine is BioNTech, a German company that together with US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer has developed a shot it says is up to 96% effective in trials but comes with a small hitch: it needs to be cooled to minus 70 degrees Celsius (minus 94 degrees Fahrenheit) for shipping and storage.

Ensuring such temperatures, colder even than an Antarctic winter, is just one of the many challenges that countries face in trying to get their populations immunized.

The effort has been compared to a military operation. Indeed some countries, including Germany, are relying on military and civilian expertise to ensure the precious doses are safely transported from manufacturing plants to secret storage facilities, before being distributed.

Germany has benefited from the market power that comes with being a member of the European Union. The 27-nation bloc's executive Commission, led by former German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen, has spearheaded negotiations with vaccine makers, ordering more than a billion doses so far.

German officials have said the country hopes to secure up to 300 million doses from

Rome airport poised to try 'Covid tested' flights from US

ROME, 27 NOVEMBER

Italian authorities will soon approve an experiment with "Covid tested" flights from three US airports with the aim of eliminating the required 14-day quarantine for passengers arriving in Italy, Rome's main airport has said.

ADR, which operates Leonardo da Vinci Airport, said that similar "Covid tested" corridors were also expected to be approved for flights between the airport and the German cities of Munich and Frankfurt.

An ADR statement on Thursday said that pending approval from Italy's transport, health and foreign ministries, starting sometime in December passengers coming from New York, Newark or Atlanta airports wouldn't have to quarantine if they test negative for the coronavirus within 48 hours of departure and also upon arrival in Rome. The experiment involves Alitalia and Delta Air Lines.

Under pandemic rules in effect in Italy through at least December 3, the only passengers who can enter the country from the United States are citizens of European Union nations, relatives of EU citizens, holders of Italian residency permits or those coming for reasons of study or a few other, essential purposes like health care.

Coming from the United States to Italy for tourism isn't allowed. Nothing in the ADR statement indicated that is about to change, even as Italy reels under plummeting tourist revenues during the pandemic.

ADR expressed hopes that the limited, experimental program will prove workable and be expanded by next summer. Delta Air Lines said in a statement that along with Rome's airport and Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, it has joined in a "first-of-a-kind trans-Atlantic Covid-19 testing program that will enable quarantine-free entrance into Italy." AP

IN MEMORIAM



► Jewish outreach movement Chabad has unveiled a plaque at its synagogue in this southern Israeli coastal city in memory of six Jews killed in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, demanding that the Pakistani perpetrators of the carnage be brought to justice

► Rav Hecht and First Secretary at the Embassy of India in Israel Rohit Mishra unveiled the plaque mounted on a wall inside the synagogue.

► The Mumbai Chabad House at Nariman Point was one of the targets of the attacks

► The Chabad Movement and Jews of Indian origin in Eilat have also requested Mayor Meir Itzhak Ha Levi to set up a 26/11 memorial square in the city on the lines of the one dedicated to the victims of the 9/11 attack

dows. The scene looked similarly empty at the nearby Manhattan Mall.

At the Garden State Plaza mall in Paramus, New Jersey, parking spots were easy to find shortly after the mall opened at 7 a.m. Inside, there was a line at video game store GameStop and several police officers to control the crowd.

Things were quiet at a Walmart in Saddle Brook, New Jersey. The nation's largest retailer has been offering its best deals online this month to deter any crowds from showing up on Black Friday.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has labeled shopping in crowded stores during the holidays a "higher risk" activity and says people should limit any in-person shopping.

Instead, the health agency

recommends shopping online, visiting outdoor markets or using curbside pickup, where workers bring orders to you in the parking lot.

The day after Thanksgiving has been losing its luster as the unofficial start to the holiday shopping season for the past several years, with more stores offering holiday discounts throughout the month. Still, Black Friday has remained the busiest day of the year, according to ShopperTrak.

The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, has taken an optimistic view, predicting that shoppers will be looking for reasons to celebrate. The trade group expects sales for the November and December period to increase between 3.6% and 5.2% over 2019 compared with a 4% increase the

year before. Holiday sales have averaged gains of 3.5% over the past five years.

"After all they've been through, we think there's going to be a psychological factor that they owe it to themselves and their families to have a better-than-normal holiday," said NNF Chief Economist Jack Kleinhenz.

Retailers were successful in convincing shoppers to spend early by pushing big discounts in mid-October. And shoppers have shown their willingness to spend for other holidays like Easter and Halloween.

Online sales could realize even bigger gains heading into the holidays. Black Friday is projected to generate \$10 billion in online sales, a 39% bump from the year ago period, according to Adobe Analytics, which measures sales at 80 of the top 100 US online retailers. And Cyber Monday, the Monday after Thanksgiving, will remain the biggest online shopping day of the year with \$12.7 billion in sales, a 35% jump.

The pandemic has already benefited Amazon, which continues to seal its dominance in the online space as jittery shoppers click on their devices instead of venturing into stores. Likewise, big box chains like Walmart and Target that were allowed to stay open during the spring lockdown fared far better than department stores and other non-essential retailers that were forced to close. That disparity helped speed up bankruptcy filings of more than 40 chains, including J.C. Penney and J.Crew, and resulted in hundreds of stores closings.

Black Friday offers beacon of hope to struggling stores

<p



If we ease off now, we risk losing control of this virus all over again and forcing us back into a New Year national lockdown with all the damage that would mean.

UK PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON

WARNING UK OF NEW YEAR LOCKDOWN AS HE DEFENDS NEW TIER SYSTEM

THUMBNAILS

Iran shuts offices, tightening virus restrictions: Iran on Friday announced that all government offices will effectively close and operate with only essential staff, further tightening coronavirus measures as the country struggles to contain its most widespread wave of infection yet. On Friday, Iran again set a record for new virus cases in a single day with 14,051 cases, bringing the total to 922,397. **PPI**

Families of 6 Americans convicted in Venezuela cry foul: Hopes of families for a quick release for six American oil executives detained in Venezuela for three years over an alleged corruption scheme have evaporated, with a judge finding them all guilty and quickly sentencing them to prison. Alirio Rafael Zambrano, whose two brothers were among the defendants, said they were undeniably innocent and victims of judicial terrorism. **AP**

North Macedonia anti-government protest: Some 2,000 protesters staged an opposition rally in North Macedonia to demand the resignation of the country's Social Democrat prime minister, Zoran Zaev. The conservative Opposition leader Hristijan Mickoski on Thursday and accused the Zaev government of being too conciliatory to neighbouring Bulgaria, which recently blocked the negotiations for North Macedonia to join the European Union. **AP**

4.7 quake hits eastern Turkey: An earthquake with a 4.7 magnitude shook Malatya province in eastern Turkey on Friday, sending people out into the streets in fear. No report of any damage. **AP**

Japan spacecraft carrying asteroid soil samples nears home

TOKYO, 27 NOVEMBER

A Japanese spacecraft is nearing Earth after a yearlong journey home from a distant asteroid with soil samples and data that could provide clues to the origins of the solar system, a space agency official said on Friday.

The Hayabusa2 spacecraft left the asteroid Ryugu, about 300 million kilometres (180 million miles) from Earth, a year ago and is expected to reach Earth and drop a capsule containing the precious samples in southern Australia on 6 December.

Scientists at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency believe the samples, especially those taken from under the asteroid's surface, contain valuable data unaffected by space radiation and other environmental factors.

Makoto Yoshikawa, a Hayabusa2 project mission manager, said scientists are especially interested in analyzing organic materials in the Ryugu soil samples.

"Organic materials are origins of life on Earth, but we still don't know where they came from," Yoshikawa said. We are hoping to find clues to the origin of life on Earth by analyzing details of the organic materials brought back by Hayabusa2," a scientist said.

JAXA, the space agency, plans to drop the capsule containing the samples onto a remote, sparsely populated area in Australia from 220,000 kilometres (136,700 miles) away in space, a big challenge requiring precision control.

The capsule, protected by a heat shield, will turn into a fireball during re-entry in the atmosphere at 200 kilometers (125 miles) above ground, a parachute will open to prepare for landing, and beacon signals will be transmitted to indicate its location. JAXA staff have set up satellite dishes at several locations in the target area to catch the signals, while also preparing marine radar, drones and helicopters to assist in the search and retrieval mission. **AP**

Ethiopia's PM rejects dialogue with AU

Abiy Ahmed has rejected international "interference" in the conflict between Ethiopian forces and armed forces of TPLF

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NAIROBI, 27 NOVEMBER

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed again ruled out dialogue with the leaders of the defiant Tigray region Friday but said he is willing to speak to representatives "operating legally" there during a meeting with three African Union special envoys, trying to end the deadly conflict between federal troops and the region's forces.

The meeting occurred as people fled the Tigray capital in fear of an imminent assault after Abiy said the army had been ordered to move in for the "final phase" of an offensive to arrest the leaders of the Tigray People's Liberation Front who run the region. Abiy's government and the regional one each consider the other illegitimate.

There was no immediate word from the three AU envoys, former Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former Mozambique President Joaquim Chissano and former South African President Kgalema Motlanthe. AU spokeswoman Ebba Kalondo did not say whether the envoys can meet with TPLF leaders, something Abiy's office has rejected.

The prime minister appreciated the AU envoys' "elderly concern" and told them his government's failure to enforce the rule of law in Tigray would "nurture a culture of impunity with devastating cost to the survival of the country," his office said.

Abiy, last year's Nobel Peace Prize winner, has rejected international "interference."

Fighting reportedly remained well outside Mekele, a densely populated city of a half-million people who had been warned by the Ethiopian government of "no mercy"



if they didn't separate themselves from the TPLF leaders in time. Abiy on Thursday told residents to stay indoors and disarm as the army, with tanks, was given the order to move in. His government has vowed to protect civilians.

With communications and transport links severed, it remains difficult to verify claims about the fighting that erupted 4 November between Ethiopian forces and the heavily armed forces of the TPLF, which once dominated Ethiopia's government but has been sidelined under Abiy's rule.

Hundreds of people have

been killed. The fighting threatens to destabilise Ethiopia, which has been described as the linchpin of the strategic Horn of Africa, and could even destabilise its neighbors.

Food and other supplies are running out in the Tigray region of 6 million people. The United Nations continues to urge immediate access for humanitarian aid that is neutral and impartial. Ethiopia's government has said a "humanitarian access route" would open under the management of the country's Ministry of Peace.

Multiple crises are growing. Some of the refugees from Eritrea who are living in camps in northern Ethiopia have been in the line of fire as fighting sweeps by them.

Refugees have also told that Ethiopian forces near the border with Sudan are impeding people from leaving Ethiopia, while refugee crossings have largely slowed to a trickle.

Ethiopians flee Tigray capital fearing assault

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NAIROBI, 27 NOVEMBER

Tigray leaders in time. More than 40,000 refugees have crossed into a remote part of Sudan where local communities and humanitarian workers struggle to provide food, shelter and care. Nearly half of the refugees are children. The spread of Covid-19 is just one concern.

We cannot keep social distancing here in the camp, said Mohammed Rafik Nasri, from the UN refugee agency. It is really challenging among the several issues in need that are growing because the number is growing. Today we are receiving a convoy of 1,000 in the camp.

Iran scientist linked to military nuclear programme killed, Teheran sees Israel hand

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBAI, 27 NOVEMBER

An Iranian scientist that Israel alleged led the Islamic Republic's military nuclear programme until its disbanding in the early 2000s was killed in a targeted attack that saw gunmen use explosives and machine gun fire Friday, state television said.

Iran's foreign minister alleged the killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh bore "serious indications" of an Israeli role, but did not elaborate. Israel declined to immediately comment, though Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu once called out Fakhrizadeh in a news conference saying: "Remember that name." Israel has long been suspected of carrying out a series of targeted killings of Iranian nuclear scien-

tists nearly a decade ago.

The killing risked further raising tensions across the Mideast, as just a year ago Iran and the USA stood on the brink of war. It comes just as President-elect Joe Biden stands poised to be inaugurated in January and likely complicates his efforts to return America to the Iran nuclear deal.

State TV said Fakhrizadeh was attacked by "armed terrorist elements." He died at a local hospital after doctors and paramedics couldn't revive him. The semi-official Fars news agency, believed to be close to the country's Revolutionary Guard, said the attack happened in Absard, a small city just east of the capital, Tehran. It said witnesses heard the sound of an explosion and then machine gun fire. The

attack targeted a car that Fakhrizadeh was in, Fars said.

State television on its website later published a photograph of security forces blocking off the road. Photos and video shared online showed a Nissan sedan with bullet holes in the windshield and blood pooled on the road.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack. However, Iranian media noted the interest that Netanyahu had previously shown in Fakhrizadeh. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Twitter also pointed a finger at Israel, calling the killing an act of "state terror."

"Terrorists murdered an eminent Iranian scientist today. This cowardice ~ with serious indications of Israeli role ~ shows desperate war-mongering of perpetrators,"

Zarif wrote on Twitter.

Hossein Salami, chief commander of the paramilitary Guard, appeared to acknowledge the attack on Fakhrizadeh. "Assassinating nuclear scientists is the most violent confrontation to prevent us from reaching modern science," Salami tweeted.

Hossein Dehghan, an adviser to Iran's supreme leader and a presidential candidate in Iran's 2021 election, issued a warning on Twitter. "In the last days of their gambling ally's political life, the Zionists seek to intensify and increase pressure on Iran to wage a full-blown war," Dehghan wrote, appearing to refer to U.S. President Donald Trump. "We will descend like lightning on the killers of this oppressed martyr and we will make them regret their actions!"

Pope backs Argentine women's opposition to abortion Bill

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ROME, 27 NOVEMBER

Pope Francis is encouraging Argentine women who are protesting a proposed new law to legalise abortion, saying the protection of life is above all a matter of human ethics.

In the letter to the women dated 22 November, the Argentine pope wrote: Is it fair to eliminate a human life to solve a problem? Is it fair to hire a hit man to solve a problem? After Francis' handwritten letter circulated on social media this week, the news portal of the Holy See confirmed Francis' intervention on Friday.

Vatican News said Francis was responding to a group of women from the shantytowns of Buenos Aires where he used to minister who have organised in recent years to oppose efforts

to decriminalise abortion.

In the letter, Francis thanked the women for their activism and encouraged them, saying the country is proud to have women like you.

President Alberto Fernandez announced that he would present a Bill to legalise abortion,

saying it would save lives by preventing women from resorting to unsafe, clandestine procedures.

Argentina currently criminalises abortion except in the case of rape or risk to the mother's health.

Fernandez campaigned on promises he would propose legislation to legalise it, but the pandemic delayed movement on the proposal.

Francis has strongly upheld Catholic doctrine forbidding abortion, denouncing it as part of today's throwaway culture that doesn't respect the dignity of the unborn.

France, UN to host new Lebanon aid conference amid deadlock

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PARIS, 27 NOVEMBER



rebuilding Beirut, but the country's severe economic crisis has further deteriorated. Macom visited Beirut twice in the aftermath of the blast and promised to help the former French protectorate rebuild.

But his initiative and roadmap for a new government that would enact urgent reforms has gone nowhere amid Lebanon's political paralysis, and billions of dollars in international aid remain blocked.

The massive blast killed

nearly 200 people and injured more than 6,000 when 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate detonated at Beirut's port.

It also devastated several neighborhoods, shattering thousands of residential, historic and other buildings. It is considered to be one of the largest non-nuclear explosions ever recorded.

The cause of the explosion still is not known, but it is widely seen as the culmination of decades of corruption and mismanagement by Lebanon's ruling class.

'N Korea executed people in coronavirus fight'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL, 27 NOVEMBER

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ordered at least two people executed, fishing banned at sea and locked down capital Pyongyang as part of frantic efforts to guard against the coronavirus and its economic damage, said a South Korea's spy agency to lawmakers on Friday.

Kim's government also ordered diplomats overseas to refrain from any acts that could provoke the United States as it worried about President-elect Joe Biden's possible new approach on North Korea, lawmakers told reporters after attending a private briefing by the National Intelligence Service.

One of the lawmakers, Ha Tae-keung, cited the NIS as saying Kim is displaying an excessive anger and taking irrational measures over the pandemic and its economic impact.

Ha said the NIS told lawmakers that North Korea executed a high-profile money changer in Pyongyang last month after holding the person responsible for a falling exchange rate.

He quoted the NIS as saying that North Korea also ex-

ecuted a key official in August for violating government regulations restricting goods brought from abroad. The two weren't identified.

North Korea has also banned fishing and salt production at sea to prevent seawater from being infected with the virus, the NIS told lawmakers.

North Korea recently placed Pyongyang and northern Janggang province under lockdown over virus concerns. Earlier this month, it imposed lockdown measures in other areas where officials found unauthorised goods were brought in, Ha cited the NIS as saying. North Korea also made an unsuccessful hacking attempt on at least one South Korean pharmaceutical company that was trying to develop coronavirus vaccine, the NIS said. The agency has a mixed record in confirming developments in North Korea, one of the world's most secretive nations.

The NIS said it couldn't immediately confirm the lawmakers' comments. North Korea has maintained it hasn't found a single virus case on its soil, a claim disputed by outside experts, though it says it's making all-out efforts

to prevent the spread of Covid.

A major outbreak could have dire consequences because the North's healthcare system remains crippled and suffers from a chronic lack of medical supplies.

The pandemic forced North Korea to seal its border with China, its biggest trading partner and aid benefactor, in June. The closure, along with a series of natural disasters over the summer, has dealt a heavy blow to the North's economy, which has been under punishing US-led sanctions.

The North's trade with China in the first 10 months this year stood at \$530 million, about 25 per cent of the corresponding figure last year. The price of sugar and seasoning has shot up four times, Ha quoted the NIS as saying.

North Korea monitoring groups in Seoul said that the North Korean won-to-dollar exchange rate has recently fallen significantly because people found few places to use foreign currency after smuggling has largely been cut off in the aftermath of the closure of the China border.

According to the NIS briefing, North Korea ordered overseas diplomatic missions not to provoke the United States, experts have been debating over whether North Korea would resume a major missile test soon to try to get Biden's attention. During past government changes in the US, North Korea often conducted big weapons launches to increase its leverage in future negotiations with a new US administration.

Books by bike: Sri Lankan man runs mobile library for kids

ASSOCIATED PRESS
COLOMBO, 27 NOVEMBER



Dasanayaka, 32, works as a child protection officer for the government. On his off days mostly during weekends he rides his motorbike, which is fixed with a steel box to hold books, to rural villages and distributes the reading material to children free of charge. The children are very keen and enthusiastic, they are eagerly waiting for me always looking for new books, Dasanayaka said by phone.

His programme is mainly centred in Kegalle, a mountainous region of the Indian Ocean island nation about 85 kilometres (52 miles) northeast of Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, with poor villages scattered among tea plantations. He visits the villages once or twice a week to distribute the books.

His collection includes about 3,000 books on a vari-

ety of subjects. Boys mostly like to read detective stories such as Sherlock Holmes, while girls prefer to read youth novels and biographies, he said.

He then conducts a discussion on books the children have read, with the aim of eventually forming reading clubs.

His programme has spread to more than 20 villages in Kegalle. He also has expanded it to some villages in Sri Lanka's former civil war zone in the northern region, more than 340 kilometres (211 miles) from his home.

The long civil war ended in 2009 when government troops defeated Tamil rebels who were fighting to create a separate state for their ethnic minority in the north.

Dasanayaka, who is from the ethnic majority Sinhalese, believes books can build a bridge between two ethnic groups. Books can be used for the betterment of society and

promote ethnic reconciliation because no one can get angry with books, he said.

He also has established mini libraries at intersections in some of the villages he visits, giving children and adults a place to share books. These involve installing a small steel box that can be opened from one side onto a wall or on a stand. So far, he has built four such facilities and aims to set up 20 in different villages.

While Dasanayaka spends his own money on his program, he is not wealthy, with a take-home income of 20,000 rupees (\$108) a month from his job.

"Live a simple life," he said. No big hopes, and I am not chasing after material values such as big houses and cars.

He has set a real example for society, Liyanage said. With very little resources, he has done remarkable things, and his project has opened the eyes of many others to do similar things.

Mohamed Haris Shihara, 48, a nursery school teacher in the village of Kannantota, about 20 kilometres (12 miles) from

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

LAST WISH

Few people had the power to say no to Maradona (in photo, left) in life but his family appears to have put its foot down on an unusual last request. Maradona told friends during the coronavirus lockdown that when he died he wanted to be embalmed and put on show for fans, according to a journalist.

THUMBNAILS

Sixers win: Brazilian striker Carlos Vinicius opened his account for Tottenham Hotspur with two first-half goals and Harry Winks scored a spectacular long-range effort in a 4-0 win over Ludogorets in Group J of the Europa League on Thursday.

Gunners roar: Arsenal's Nicolas Pepe got back in manager Mikel Arteta's good books with the opening goal in a 3-0 win at Molde on Thursday virtually to clinch his side's place in the Europa League knockout stages. Pepe was sent off for a head-butting last weekend.

Coleman's appeal: World 100m champion Christian Coleman has appealed against his ban for breaching anti-doping whereabouts rules. The Court of Arbitration for Sport said it had registered his appeal after he was banned for two years by the Athletics Integrity Unit.

Comeback talks: Zlatan Ibrahimovic is in talks with Sweden head coach Janne Andersson about a potential return to the national team. The news comes only a day after he, having retired from international football in 2016, hinted clearly at his availability again.

Belated triumph: Iranian weightlifter Navab Nasrshai will receive his 2012 Olympic Games gold following the disqualification of Ukrainian Oleksiy Torokhty, the International Olympic Committee has said. A fresh look at Torokhty's samples resulted in a positive test.

Final warning: Pakistan Cricket Board chief executive officer Wasim Khan has revealed the New Zealand government has given the Pakistani team a "final warning" against violating coronavirus safety rules after six members of the touring side tested positive for Covid-19.

The Hundred: England's Tom Curran will line up alongside his brother Sam as part of the Oval Invincibles in the inaugural edition of The Hundred in 2021. The left-arm quick has come through major injuries in his career and returned to the England team in 2020.

New Zealand beat West Indies: A savage spell of fast bowling from Lockie Ferguson and an unbeaten 48 from Jimmy Neesham propelled New Zealand to a five-wicket win over the West Indies in the series-opening Twenty20 international on Friday. Neesham produced his highest score in T20 internationals and combined in partnerships of 77 with Devon Conway (41) and 39, unbroken, with Mitchell Santner (31 not out) to see New Zealand home with four balls to spare.

Hamilton fastest in 1st practice: Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton posted the fastest time Friday in the first practice session for the Bahrain Grand Prix. The Mercedes driver was .45 seconds quicker than teammate Valtteri Bottas and .97 seconds ahead of Racing Point driver Sergio Perez on the 5.4-kilometer (3.3-mile) desert track.

Organisers postpone PBL-6: The sixth edition of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) was on Friday postponed to next year, keeping in mind the health and safety of the players amid the raging COVID-19 pandemic. The league was initially scheduled to take place in the last week of December in Delhi, Mumbai and Pune. However, SportsLive, the official license holder of the league under the aegis of the Badminton Association of India (BAI), decided to postpone the event due to the prevailing conditions.

LAST WISH

India badly missed a sixth bowling option with none of their specialist batters good enough to roll their arms for even two to three overs. It was a day when the bowling unit barring Mohammed Shami (3/59 in 10 overs) flopped badly and poor fielding only added to their woes.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SYDNEY, 27 NOVEMBER

Hardik Pandya's career-best effort wasn't good enough to compensate for a forgettable bowling effort as India slumped to a 66-run defeat against Australia in the first ODI, making a rather unimpressive start to the tour, here on Friday.

Virat Kohli's men started exactly on a note they wouldn't have liked, giving away 374 runs in 50 overs with rival captain Aaron Finch (114 off 124 balls) and his illustrious predecessor Steve Smith (105 off 66 balls) hitting contrasting hundreds. A pitch that looked docile during the first half suddenly came to life in the second as Josh Hazlewood (3/55) bounced out the Indian top-

order, including Kohli and a frightened Shreyas Iyer, who got himself into a tangle. Pandya's 76-ball 90 and a 128-run stand with senior opener Shikhar Dhawan (74 off 86 balls) delayed the inevitable but it was always a catch-up game after the team was reduced to 101 for 4 inside 14 overs.

Big-hearted leg-spinner Adam Zampa (4/54 in 10 overs) dismissed Dhawan and Pandya in quick succession as India surrendered to scoreboard pressure finishing at 308/8 after 50 overs. Pandya, who hit seven fours and four sixes, carried his blazing IPL batting form into the first game of the series but it was his fast-medium bowling that Kohli missed on the day as he lacked options when Smith was sent his regular bowlers on a leather-hunt.



India badly missed a sixth bowling option with none of their specialist batters good enough to roll their arms for even two to three overs. It was a day when the bowling unit barring Mohammed Shami (3/59 in 10 overs) flopped badly and poor fielding only added to their woes. As many as three sitters were dropped and numerous

sloppy efforts on the field added to the misery. The normally steady Yuzvendra Chahal (1/89 in 10 overs) earned the ignominy of worst figures by an Indian spinner and Jasprit Bumrah's wretched ODI form (1/73 in 10 overs) continued.

India's fastest bowler Navdeep Saini (1/83 in 10 overs) also struggled like any newcomer

does, unable to hit the right length on Australian tracks. Ravindra Jadeja (0/63 in 10 overs) wasn't as costly as Chahal but since the past two and half months, his bowling has lacked sting.

India's eternal nemesis Smith seems ready to torment them a lot in next two months if his 11 fours and four sixes were any indication on Friday.

Not once was he troubled by the Indian bowlers, who were already under the pump after a 156-run opening stand between Finch and David Warner (69). A lot of credit should go to Warner and Finch for the manner in which they attacked Chahal. While Finch used his feet to smother the spin and play against the turn, Warner stayed back in the crease to hit Chahal with the turn, disturbing his line and length completely.

It helped as Smith and Maxwell (45 off 19 balls) had no problems in laying the bowlers during the last 10 overs.

SCOREBOARD

Australia Innings	India Innings
D Warner c Rahi b M Shami	69
A Finch c Rehul b Umrah	114
S Smith b M Shami	105
M Stoinis c Rahi b Chahal	0
G Maxwell c Jadeja b M Shami	45
M Labuschagne Dhawan b Saini	2
A Carey not out	17
P Cummins not out	1
Extras: (B-1, LB-6, NB-12)	21
Total: (For 6 wickets in 50 overs)	374
Fall of wickets: 1-156, 2-264, 3-271, 4-238, 5-331, 6-372.	308
Bowling: M Shami 10-0-59-3; J Umrah 10-0-73-1, N Saini 10-0-83-1, Y Chahal 10-0-89-1.	10-0-55-3, Cummins 8-0-52-0, Zampa 10-0-54-0, Stoinis 6-2-0-25-0, Maxwell 6-4-0-55-0.

Lack of all-round options affecting balance: Kohli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SYDNEY, 27 NOVEMBER



India skipper Virat Kohli (in photo) on Friday questioned his team's body language after the opening ODI loss to Australia and said Hardik Pandya not being fit to bowl is affecting the side's balance as he doesn't have enough all-rounders at his disposal.

India made a dismal start to their tour of Australia, losing the first ODI by 66 runs here, chasing a mammoth 375-run target after Aaron Finch and Steve Smith smashed hundreds for the hosts.

"Everyone needs to show the intent in the entire 50 overs. Probably, we played 50 overs after a long time that could have an affect...but having said that we have played so much ODI cricket that it is not something we don't know how to do," Kohli said in the post-match presentation. "I think the body language in the field wasn't great after around 25 overs. It was a disappointing part. If you don't

take your chances against a top-quality opposition they'll hurt you and that is what happened today." With Hardik Pandya yet to fit to bowl, Kohli said it is affecting the balance of the team. "We have to find out away to get few overs from partners, unfortunately, someone like Hardik is not ready to bowl yet, we have to accept that, we don't really have all-round options as such right now," he said. "That is an area to be looked

at, it is a big part in any team's balance, someone like Marcus Stoinis, Glenn Maxwell bowl a few overs for Australia helped." Kohli said his bowlers couldn't pick wickets regularly and it allowed the Australians to post a big total in the end.

"The key to winning games is picking up wickets, that is something we were not able to do, also lapses in the field were also a reason why we couldn't capitalise on any kind of momentum, the pressure that we created in early part of the innings."

Asked if being in quarantine after arriving in Australia from the UAE affected the performance of the team, Kohli said it cannot be cited as a reason. "(We) got enough time to prepare. Don't think there can be any excuses."

Talking about the batting unit, Kohli said: "I think we gave ourselves the best chance."

"Hardik's innings was the best example of that. As a batting unit we committed nicely to positive cricket and we are

going to do that in the future as well." Winning captain Aaron Finch said he took his time early in the innings. "Found it reasonably hard to get my timing. Took a couple of chances, got lucky," he said.

"We've barely been together as a team. Each guy has different strengths and weaknesses. You embrace that. Davey (David Warner), he's moving beautifully. His rhythm looked outstanding. Smudge (Smith) was different class altogether," he said. "Maxi (Glenn Maxwell), the rare ability he's got to just click his fingers and put pressure on the opposition."

Steve Smith, who was adjudged the Player of the match, said the superb innings by Finch (114) and Warner (69) gave him the license to thrill as he smashed a 66-ball 105 to take Australia to 374 for 6.

"Have been searching for something for a couple of months now. About three days ago something just clicked. My rhythm came back, everything came back," he said.

Ishant Sharma out of Australia series

AGENCIES
SYDNEY, 27 NOVEMBER



India suffered a blow today with fast bowler Ishant Sharma (in photo) ruled out of their Test series against Australia, as skipper Virat Kohli blasted a lack of clarity over the fate of star bowler Rohit Sharma. Ishant has been struggling with a side strain picked up during the Indian Premier League, and while he has recovered officials said he was not match-fit.

"While he's building up his workload in order to achieve Test match fitness, Ishant Sharma has been ruled out of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy," the Indian cricket board said in a statement.

Senior batsman Rohit hurt his hamstring last month and would have another assessment on 11 December, six days before the opening day-night Test in Adelaide. Complicating matters was his father falling ill in Mumbai, which delayed Rohit's arrival at India's National Cricket Academy to begin his

rehab. Kohli said the way the matter had been handled was "very confusing" and that both players should be in Australia to complete their recoveries.

"It definitely would have increased the chances of both of them playing Test matches," he said in video comments from his hotel room in Sydney ahead of the opening one-dayer against Australia today.

World Test Championship
Kohli yesterday criticised the new International Cricket Council points system for the World Test Championship that ranked teams in terms of per-

centage points instead of the overall points earned. The ICC-adopted system ranks teams on the basis of points earned from the number of matches contested.

The new system has seen India, who were first in the rankings with 360 points, being pushed down to No 2 in the rankings while Australia have moved up to No 1. India now have 75 per cent of the points with 360 out of the 480 contested points. Australia have 82.22 per cent with 296 out of 360 points. "It is definitely surprising (the new system) because we were told the points are the matter of contention with the top two teams qualifying for the final. Now suddenly it's all about percentage points. It is very confusing, very difficult to understand why. If such a thing had been told to us on day one, it would have been easier for us to understand. But it happened out of nowhere. The ICC should be asked why this has been done and what the reasons are for this," said Kohli.

Delhi Half Marathon will help in uniting people: Bindra

NEW DELHI, 27 NOVEMBER

AGENCIES
GOA, 27 NOVEMBER

Sunday's Airtel Delhi Half Marathon (ADHM) will bring people together in India, said Abhinav Bindra, event ambassador and India's only individual Olympic gold medallist, on Friday. At the event, the Elite runners will be at the starting line at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, amateurs from across the globe will join them via the exclusive Airtel Delhi Half Marathon Mobile App.

"Sport unites people and the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon will help in uniting people. Bringing in more solidarity is important at the moment. Each one of the runners participating in ADHM 2020 has a good role to play in uniting people and the community. My best wishes to the participants and also congratulations for their contribution," said Bindra

Bindra added that ADHM 2020 is a significant moment for Indian sports since the pandemic started earlier this year. "The ADHM 2020 is a very significant moment for Indian sports since the pandemic started. Our athletes have resumed training but we have to get them in the competitive space again. This is a very important step towards resuming competitive sports in India. This event would be a benchmark for other sports to follow in the future," said the Olympic gold medallist. Speaking on the amateur runners participating from remote locations, Bindra said, "This era forces us to embrace technology more and innovate more. Sports need technology and innovation. To survive a challenging situation, we have to adapt to the situation."

Meanwhile, SCEB made three changes to the eleven that featured in the opening win against Kerala Blasters with Robbie Fowler sprang a few surprises with Jeje Lalpekhlua and Eugeneson Lyngdoh starting on the bench.

The first half proved to be a cagey contest with either side

failing to break the deadlock. SCEB dominated possession early on but barring one opportunity, they failed to threaten the ATKMB backline. Habas' side came close to grabbing the lead early on in the ninth minute when Prabir Das attempted cross from the right flank hit the roof of the crossbar before ricochetting off.

Jacques Maghoma also had a chance to put SCEB ahead around the half-hour mark when Narayan Das whipped in a cross from the left. The Congolese leapt high but directed his header wide.

Despite SCEB taking the game to their opponents, it was the Mariners who came close to taking the lead in the 36th minute.

A throw-in found Javi Hernandez, who swivelled beautifully to create space for himself and shoot towards goal. SCEB keeper Debjit Majumder

reacted with a fine save. Moments later, there was an opportunity for SCEB. Suraj Singh found himself on the right flank and delivered an inch-perfect cross

for Balwant Singh, who missed the target. It didn't take long for ATKMB to open the scoring soon after the drinks break. SCEB's defense was in disarray and the Mariners punished them with Krishna finding the net once again.

ATKMB found space through the middle before Hernandez laid on a pass to Krishna outside the box. The Fijian took a touch before firing in a powerful shot that was enough to beat Majumder.

The Red and Gold pushed hard for an equaliser in the dying minutes with Anthony Pilkington coming close on two occasions. However, ATKMB put the game to bed with Manvir getting his name on the scoresheet with a fine goal. The striker received the ball on the right flank and made a solo run into the box. He cut inside before drilling his shot into the top left-hand corner.

Huge, unruly crowds say goodbye to Maradona in Argentine capital city

BUENOS AIRES, 27 NOVEMBER



after unruly fans took over an inner courtyard of the presidency. Huge crowds gathered to say goodbye to Maradona during the day, and with emotions running high, clashes between police and fans broke out near the presidential palace in the Argentine capital where the soccer great was lying in state.

Thousands of people surrounded the pink-hued Casa Rosada and there was a febrile atmosphere more akin to a rowdy soccer game than a formal wake, with fans clambering up the palace gates to get as close as possible to their hero. Fans had earlier proceeded past Maradona's casket inside the palace to pay their final respects. On Thursday

afternoon, the coffin was taken in a hearse on its way to a cemetery on the outskirts of the city where he was laid to rest. The death of Maradona at the age of 60 on Wednesday, following a heart attack, has sparked mourning worldwide and celebrations of a true sporting star, who was a genius on the soccer field but lived a life marred by struggles with addiction.

In Italy, crowds tied hundreds

of blue and white scarfs to the railings outside his former club Napoli, while in France, L'EQUIPE's front page blared out: "God is dead".

In Argentina, three days of national mourning were called for the player who had led the country to a 1986 World Cup win and was revered with a cult-like status. Tens of thousands took to the streets, not all wearing masks, despite fears over the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving flowers and messages at his childhood home. "Maradona for me is the greatest thing that happened to me in life. I love him as much as my father and it's like my old man died," Christian Montelli, 22, a supporter of the star's former club Boca Juniors said with tears in his eyes after he had filed past the coffin. "If I die young, hopefully upstairs I can play ball and watch a Boca game with him," added Montelli, who had a tattoo of Maradona