



## OPTIMISTIC DIA

Actor Dia Mirza says the global lockdown has led to cleaner air than what the planet had in over a decade

LEISURE P2



## MONSOON WEAKENS

IMD says southwest monsoon has weakened in Odisha and rainfall activity will come down

DOWNTOWN P3



## MESSI STAYS

Barcelona overcome Mexit saga as Argentine to carry on at the Camp Nou, however he criticises club president

SPORTS P12

## 8 from state killed in Ch'garh road mishap

CM NAVEEN PATNAIK ANNOUNCES EX-GRATIA OF ₹2 LAKH EACH FOR KIN OF THE DECEASED

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 5: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh each for the next of kin of the eight people from Ganjam district killed in a road mishap in Raipur in Chhattisgarh Saturday morning.

At least eight people were killed and six injured when a bus transporting 50 to 60 labourers from Ganjam district to Surat in Gujarat met with an accident in Raipur at about 3.30 am Saturday. All the injured passengers were undergoing treatment at nearby Ambedkar Hospital. The Chief Minister announced free medical treatment to the injured and wished them a speedy recovery.

Patnaik directed Labour Minister Sushant Singh to immediately proceed to Raipur to extend the necessary assistance to those injured in the accident.

He also asked Director General of Police Abhay to remain in touch with the Chhattisgarh DGP for coordination. The DGP has sent a police team under SDPO Padampur to Raipur to assist the local police.

"An Odisha police team under SDPO Padampur is rushing to Gujarat to assist police authorities. Fifty nine remaining labourers are safe and under care of Raipur admn/police," tweeted the DGP.

Abhay also spoke to the Chhattisgarh DGP who has assured prompt investigation and cooperation.



THE ILL-FATED BUS

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I too used to follow GDP and other economic indicators... before demonetisation and GST... when I had a flourishing business

## Rhea's brother may help uproot drug 'citadel' in Mumbai

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Sept 5: Diving deep into the drugs angle to the late actor Sushant Singh Rajput death case, the Narcotics Control Bureau has claimed that prime accused Showik Chakraborty has revealed many names which could help "uproot the drug citadel in Bollywood and Mumbai", in its remand plea, here Saturday.

Hinting at summons to or even the possible arrest of Sushant's ex-girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty, the NCB remand plea - seeking Showik's custody for five days' interrogation - said that he would have to be confronted with his sister (Rhea) and another person Dipesh Sawant.



This was to investigate the specific roles/ingredients of criminal conspiracy, abetments and various attempts to commit offences, besides track and verify the financial trail of all their previous drug purchases of Showik - who was arrested September 4.

## LAC situation 'very nasty'

Describing the situation along the India-China border as "very nasty", US President Trump says the Chinese are "going at it much more strongly" than a lot of people understand

AGENCIES

New York, Sept 5: US President Donald Trump has asserted that Washington was talking to India and China on resolving "a very nasty situation" in the Ladakh region, but equivocated on whether Beijing was a bully.

He said Friday at a Washington news conference: "We stand ready to help with respect to China and India. If we can do anything we will have to get involved and help. And we are talking to both countries about that."

"It's been very nasty, a very nasty situation," he said about the confrontation between the two sides along the Line of Actual (LAC) in Ladakh, where China has fortified its troop presence and according to India carried out "provocative military movements" on the southern bank of Pangong Tso lake between Sunday and Monday.

Asked by a reporter if China was bullying India, he said: "I hope not, I hope not. They are certainly going at it, and they are going at it very much more strongly than a lot of people even understand."

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had Wednesday accused China of bullying its neighbours.

"From the Taiwan Strait to the Himalayas and beyond, the Chinese



Communist Party is engaged in a clear and intensifying pattern of bullying its neighbours," he said.

But he added, "We are hoping for a peaceful resolution of the situation on the India-China border."

Trump's offer of mediation, which both countries have refused, is a reiteration of an earlier mediation bid in May. Meanwhile, India's foreign secretary Harsh Shringla corroborated Trump's description of the crisis.

The situation on the LAC between India and China is "unprecedented" and it cannot be "business as usual", Shringla said while addressing a webinar at the Indian Council for World Affairs (ICWA).

## DRAGON 'ABDUCTS' 5 PEOPLE FROM ARUNACHAL

ITANAGAR: Five people from Arunachal Pradesh were abducted by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA), triggering tension among the local population, Congress MLA Ninong Ering claimed Saturday. The Indian Army said it is not aware of the incident - said to have occurred Friday - while the state police authorities are collecting the facts. Arunachal's Pasighat West Assembly Congress legislator Ninong Ering in a tweet said: "Five people from Upper Subansiri district of our state Arunachal Pradesh have reportedly been 'abducted' by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA). Few months earlier, a similar incident happened. A befitting reply must be given to PLA and CCP China." Ering, a former Union Minister of Minority affairs (2012-14), while talking to the media said that he has urged the authorities to take appropriate steps to release the five people from the custody of the PLA. P9

## Respect the LAC: Rajnath tells Chinese counterpart



NEW DELHI: As the situation in eastern Ladakh remains tense, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has conveyed to his Chinese counterpart Gen. Wei Fenghe that China must strictly respect the Line of Actual Control (LAC). He asked the Gen. to not make attempts to unilaterally change its status quo, sources said. In the first high-level face-to-face contact between the two sides after border tension erupted in eastern Ladakh in early May, Singh told Wei during their talks in Moscow Friday that China must work with the Indian side for complete disengagement of troops at the earliest from all friction points including Pangong Lake. Asserting that India is determined to protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity, Singh also conveyed that China's actions amassing a large number of troops, its aggressive behaviour and attempts to alter the status quo in Ladakh were in violation of bilateral pacts, according to an official statement.

1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

## MP Anubhav accused of domestic violence

AGENCIES

Cuttack, Sept 5: Kendrapara MP Anubhav Mohanty has been accused of perpetrating domestic violence and torturing his wife Varsha Priyadarshini.

Instead of lodging any complaint with the police, Varsha approached the Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate (SDJM) court here in a criminal miscellaneous case against Mohanty under Section 12 of Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.

Sources said she did this considering her actor-turned politician husband's close proximity with the power corridor.

Varsha's allegation against the Biju Janata Dal MP from Kendrapara came barely a few months after Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had asked Director General of Police (DGP) Abhay to ensure that no woman in the state suffers from domestic violence during the lockdown period

when people are indoors due to the pandemic.

The suit filed in August this year has been scheduled for a preliminary hearing on coming Monday, Varsha's lawyer RK Rath said. The lawyer however refused to divulge the details of the case. Repeated attempts to contact Varsha also turned futile.

But, a family member assured that Varsha would reveal the details of her sufferings soon.

Similarly, Mohanty told a group of journalists that he has not yet received any summons from the Court.

"I have not received any legal notice from the court," the BJD MP said and chose not to make any comment on his wife's petition under Protection of Women from Domestic Violence.

According to the official website of the District Court here, Varsha's case was registered August 7 and the first hearing of the case has been fixed September 7.



## Who should get Covid-19 vaccine first

AGENCIES

New York, Sept 5: At least 19 global health experts have proposed a new, three-phase plan for vaccine distribution - called the Fair Priority Model - which aims to reduce premature deaths and other irreversible health consequences from Covid-19.

"The idea of distributing vaccines by population appears to be an equitable strategy," said study lead author Ezekiel J Emanuel from the University of Pennsylvania in the US. "But the fact is that normally, we distribute things based on how severe there is suffering in a given place, and, in this case, we argue that the primary measure of suffering ought to be the number of premature deaths that a vaccine would prevent," Emanuel added.

In their proposal, the authors point to three fundamental values that must be considered when distributing a Covid-19 vaccine among countries: Benefiting people and limiting harm, prioritising the disadvantaged, and giving equal moral concern for all individuals.

The Fair Priority Model addresses these values by focusing on mitigating three types of harms caused by Covid-19: Death and permanent organ damage, indirect health consequences, such as healthcare system strain and stress, as well as economic destruction.

Of all of these dimensions, preventing death - especially premature death - is particularly urgent, the authors argued, which is the focus of Phase 1 of the Fair Priority Model.

Premature deaths from Covid-19 are determined in each country by calculating "standard expected years of life lost," a commonly-



used global health metric.

In Phase 2, the authors proposed two metrics that capture overall economic improvement and the extent to which people would be spared from poverty.

And in Phase 3, countries with higher transmission rates are initially prioritised, but all countries should eventually receive sufficient vaccines to halt transmission - which is projected to require that 60 to 70 per cent of the population be immune.

The authors also object to a plan

that would prioritise countries according to the number of frontline healthcare workers, the proportion of the population over 65, and the number of people with comorbidities within each country.

They said that preferentially immunising healthcare workers - who already have access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and other advanced infectious disease prevention methods - likely would not substantially reduce harm in higher-income countries.

Similarly, focusing on vaccinating countries with older populations would not necessarily reduce the spread of the virus or minimise death.

Moreover, low and middle-income countries have fewer older residents and healthcare workers per capita than higher-income countries, the researchers said.

## +2 ARTS RESULTS Pass percentage up, girls outshine boys



School and Mass Education department minister Samir Ranjan Dash (C) releases the results at the CHSE HQ, Saturday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 5: The Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE), Odisha declared the Plus II Arts result Saturday for the 2019-20 academic year.

School and Mass Education department minister Samir Ranjan Dash declared the results at the CHSE headquarters here.

The pass percentage in the Arts stream touched 67.56 per cent, a marginal improvement from last year which was 65.89 per cent. A total of 1.48 lakh (1,48,452) students have cleared the Plus II Arts stream exam successfully.

While the pass percentage among boys is 57.53, girls outshone them with 75.48.

Only one student scored above 90 per cent. Bargarh district topped the chart with the highest 76.63 pass percentage where as Nabarangpur had the most dismal show with 44.67 percentage of its students clearing the exams. The minister Saturday declared the results for the vocational courses also. The pass percentage for vocational streams exam stood at 57.53 per cent. In total 7,032 students appeared the exam out of which 4,046 cleared it.

Notably, a total of 3.43 lakh students appeared for the Plus-II exams. Of these, 2,18,800 students appeared in the Arts stream.

## THE STATE RECORDS A BIG FALL AS COMPARED TO 14TH POSITION IT HAD SECURED IN 2017-18 EDITION OF THE BUSINESS REFORM ACTION PLAN

# Is it getting difficult to do business in Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Sept 5: Showing poor performance in terms of ease of doing business, Odisha ranked 29 in the 2018-19 edition of Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP) rankings of the states. The results were announced by Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday.

The state recorded a big fall as compare to 14th position it had secured in 2017-18 edition of the BRAP. In the current edition, Andhra Pradesh secured the first rank followed by Uttar Pradesh and Telangana in the list of 36 states/Union territories. In the

east zone, Jharkhand topped the chart. Odisha was placed at the bottom along with Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.

According to the Ministry, the Business Reform Action Plan 2018-19 includes 180 reform points covering 12 business regulatory areas such as Access to Information, Single Window System, Labour and Environment among others. The Ministry added that the larger objective of attracting investments and increasing Ease of Doing Business in each state was sought to be achieved by introducing an element of healthy competition



through a system of ranking states based on their performance in the implementation of Business Reform Action Plan. The ranking this time gives full weightage to the feedback from over thirty thousand respondents at the ground level, who gave their opinions about the effectiveness of the reforms, the Ministry said.

"India is seen taking the reform process seriously which showed when foreign direct investment in the country increased even during the Covid-19 pandemic, amid what was called world's strictest lockdown. Some states have shown extraordinary energy in putting together action plans and making

■ Andhra Pradesh secures the first rank followed by Uttar Pradesh and Telangana in the list of 36 states/UTs

■ After rank 29, no state gets ranked; likewise Odisha is placed at the bottom along with Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim

sure that reforms happen. States have embraced the true spirit behind the State Business Reforms Action Plan," said Sitharaman after release of the rankings.



## 'AWARD SEASON IS COMPLETELY DEVOID OF ARTISTIC CREATION'

Actor Bradley Cooper believes that Hollywood award season is 'utterly meaningless' as they do not lead to any 'artistic creation'. The actor has been nominated for Oscars eight times but is yet to take home his maiden trophy.

## RITCHSON TO PLAY LEAD ROLE IN JACK REACHER SERIES

Titans star Alan Ritchson is set to play the titular character in the upcoming *Jack Reacher* series set at Amazon Studios. The show is based on Lee Child's *Jack Reacher* book series, revolving around a US Army veteran investigating suspicious activities that frequently put him in danger.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Old, fond memories will define your mood today, which will show up in the manner in which you deal with work, where your mellow side will be visible to others. You are also circumspect with money and tend towards saving it.

**TAURUS**  
Ganesha urges you to be prepared for setbacks and disappointments today. Your efforts may end in being a waste of precious time and energy. The results you get are likely to be far below your expectations.

**GEMINI**  
You will be in a state of heightened sensitivity today. Therefore you need to curb down on your emotions. You will be able to successfully express your feelings to someone, and your feelings will play a vital part in your life, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
Ganesha suggests you not to be sentimental or hasty. Try to handle things deftly in stead of dodging bad episodes or turning a blind eye to them. You will give priority to domestic and private life in stead of career or business aspects.

**LEO**  
You will feel more emotional today and share your feelings with your friends and near ones. For those who are searching for a life-partner, this might be the time when you will get hitched. You will develop a new perspective on some issues in the office. Your day will be different than normal, says Ganesha.

**VIRGO**  
A fear of the unknown will keep lurking in your mind today. The shadow will only grow larger as the day progresses. You may find yourself spending too much on your foreign friends. Ganesha advises you to be cautious in this regard today.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says your children will gain achievements that will have you feel proud of them. You will get monetary benefit either by increment in salary or by inheritance. You will be able to gain substantial gains by investing in real estate or buying insurance policies.

**SCORPIO**  
Ganesha asks you to practice caution today. There are strong possibilities that an evil eye may attack you in some or other way. So, keep a watchful eye. And remember, every day brings along an experience and a lesson with it. Learn and move on.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Your stars are aligned in a way that you may have to travel long distance, either for business or for leisure. Socially, you are active as you are likely to attend a function and take the centre stage. You may also participate in religious activities and give importance of rites and rituals, if need be, informs Ganesha.

**CAPRICORN**  
You have sacrificed a lot on enjoyment with friends and family, done some backbreaking work and kept your focus to reach where you are right now. Ganesha gives you a pat on your back for all the hard work you've put in. Now, it is time to watch the tree bear fruits.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will tackle complicated issues with infinite ease! But you will also find people passing the buck onto you. It irks you no end, having to take the blame for others' mistakes. But here's a chance, says Ganesha, to turn a weakness into a strength.

**PISCES**  
Looking at your planetary positions for today, there is a likelihood that you will suffer from reversals in fortunes financially. Hence be wary when it comes to financial dealings.

## TEACHERS' DAY

# Alaya shares her learnings

**Mumbai:** Actress Alaya F has shared a few insights about her teachers and the learnings she imbibed from them on the occasion of Teachers' Day Saturday. "I think the most important thing that I learned from them (teachers) was just that if you really, really want to do something, nothing is impossible. Like, if you just work hard enough and put in the hours and

put in the effort and just do everything over and over and over again until you get the outcome you want, everything is possible," said Alaya. "And, you know, they really put in a lot of hours and a lot of effort into me. And I put in a lot of hours and a lot of effort into them and classes and, you know, all of that. And I think together it just became a very, very positive, healthy learning environment," she added. Alaya's teacher Dimple Kotecha said: "Her secret is hard work and that is indispensable! Dance may have been our language, but I've closely watched her evolve, come into her own, discover herself and literally fly...which teacher wouldn't be proud?"



# Clean air is a right to life: Dia

**Mumbai:** Actress and environmental activist Dia Mirza has pledged for cleaner air in India. The actress, also UNEP Goodwill Ambassador and UN SDG advocate, will engage in conversation with change-makers championing a cleaner earth September 7, which has been declared as International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies. "We need to make every effort to build back sustainably, because clean air is the right to life," said Dia. "The global lockdown led to cleaner air than we have had in over a decade. Nature can and will recover leading to better health for all people. But the lockdown is not the solution. We need to engage in fruitful partnerships and implement strategies and policies for the global goal of clean air," she added.



# National art expo for kids begins in city

**Bhubaneswar:** Little Art Champ, a three-day online art competition-cum-exhibition kicked off here Friday. Organised by Dhauli College of Art and Crafts in collaboration with India Tourism, the event was inaugurated by Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi president Sudarshan Pattanik in the presence of eminent artist Gouranga Barika, India Tourism additional director Rashmi Sonia Tirkey and artist Sashadhara Patil at the college campus. As many as 218 children from across



the country attended the online event and all were given medals for their participation. Three child artists - Sudiksa Mallik from Odisha, Abhinna Das from Rajasthan and Venish Keisham of Manipur - were honoured with Little Art Champ award for their creative art works. The guests released an e-catalogue on the occasion while the paintings based on corona awareness messages became instant hits among the Internet users. Principal Panchanam Samal introduced the guests to the viewers at the beginning while faculty members Chandan Kumar Samal, Biswakanta Panda, Sasmita Kamila, Madhusmita Das, Laxmidhara Swain and Biswajit Behera coordinated the program on day 1.

# Vishwa Mohan, Madhusmita enthral audience on Day-1



Hema Malini's inaugural speech | A recital by Pandit Viswamohan Bhatt

**Bhubaneswar:** The annual Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Award Festival, for its sheer grandeur, is one of the most awaited events in the cultural calendar of the state. However, the 26th edition commenced Saturday on digital platforms due to the outbreak of coronavirus. This year, the five-day event is being organised by Srjan, a premier institute of Odissi dance and music, to fulfil its responsibility towards the society and art fraternity. In view of pandemic, the gala event was inaugurated virtually in the evening and premiered on Facebook Live and YouTube. Srjan dedicated this year's festival in memories of late Sangeet Martand Pandit Jasraj, who was extremely close to Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra and Jaydev Das, an eminent theatre actor, director and light designer. The event was officially inaugurated by veteran actress and MP Hema Malini and attended virtually by several luminaries from the art world. The festival commenced with an Odissi recital by Madhusmita Mohanty, renowned Odissi dancer from Bhubaneswar. The presentation was choreographed by Guru Aruna Mohanty, set to the music composition of Bijay Kumar Jena and rhythm composition of Guru Dhaneswar Swain and Guru Bijay Kumar Barik. This was followed by a timeless and evergreen composition of the legendary Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra set to

the music composition of Pt. Bhubaneswar Mishra. Madhusmita concluded her recital with the Ashtapadi - "M dhava, m kuru m nini m nam aye," an excerpt from poet Jayadeva's *Geeta Govinda*. In this expressive piece, the 'sakhi' pleads to Radha to forgive Madhava for his behaviour and reunite with him. Choreographed by Guru Aruna Mohanty to the music composition of Subash Pani, this presentation was in *Raag Saveri* and *Ekatali*. The Odissi danseuse was ably accompanied on the vocals by Rupak Kumar Parida, on the Mardala by Guru Bijay Kumar Barik, on the flute by Srinibas Satapathy, and on the violin by Suramani Ramesh Chandra Das and Agnimitra Behera. The highlight of the inaugural evening was the recital by the Mohan Veena virtuoso, Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt. A recipient of the Padma Bhushan and the Grammy award, Pt. Bhatt explored the intricacies of six melifluous tunes, namely *Raag Yaman*, *Raag Ramdasi Malhar*, *Raag Tilak Kamod*, *Raag Jaijaiwanti*, *Raag Pilu*, and *Raag Hamsadhvani*. This online program will conclude Wednesday.

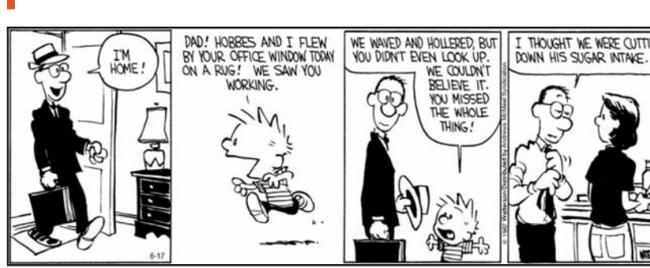


Madhusmita Mohanty during her performance

### PEANUTS



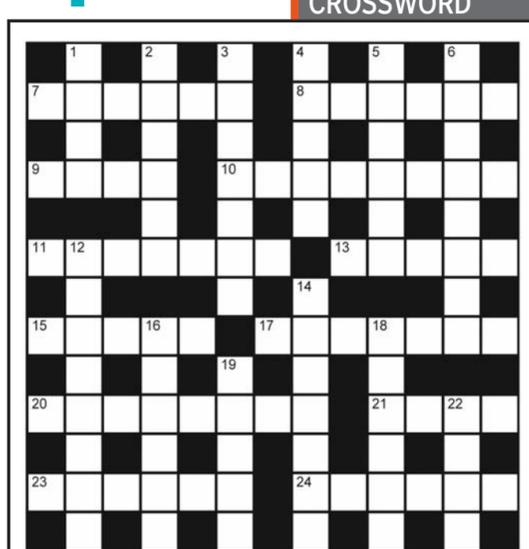
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



### FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Mount Asama locale
  - 8 Opulence
  - 9 Himalayan legend
  - 10 Dreary
  - 11 Part of a place setting
  - 13 English race place
  - 15 Quarrel
  - 17 Desert sights
  - 20 Light-coloured crested parrot
  - 21 Heavenly glow
  - 23 Fragrant compounds
  - 24 Leon Uris novel
  - 4 Impolite dinner sound
  - 5 Lives
  - 6 Brass instrument
  - 12 Fez
  - 14 Pirouetted
  - 16 Maintenance
  - 18 It starts in the Andes
  - 19 Hiding place
  - 22 Defeat decisively
- Down**
- 1 Seafood selection
  - 2 Delegate
  - 3 Cut short

### SUDOKU

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

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

### SOLUTIONS

**CROSSWORD**

R	A	F	F	I	A	E	V	A	D	E	S
U	N	T	E	R	I	R	I				
M	E	D	I	T	E	R	A	N	E	A	N
O	G	E	R	A	S	B					
U	S	E	R	N	A	M	E	E	D	D	A
R	S	S									
W	A	V	E	S							
S	T	O									
O	M	A	N	D	O	U	B	L	O	O	N
R	N	T	A	V	I						
B	O	D	Y	S	N	A	T	C	H	E	R
E	O	E	L	C	O	R	E				
T	O	N	I	C	S	V	O	R	T	E	X

**SUDOKU**

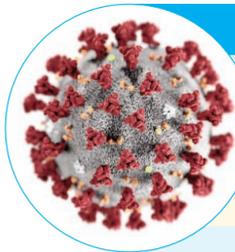
4	A	8	3	1	D	5	C	0	7	6	B	E	9	2
2	B	D	6	5	4	7	9	1	E	0	3	C	A	8
7	5	6	E	C	B	8	2	A	1	4	9	D	3	0
9	C	3	0	A	7	6	E	D	8	5	2	1	B	4
E	1	0	9	2	8	3	B	4	D	A	C	6	7	5
C	4	5	7	B	1	E	3	8	A	2	D	9	0	6
D	8	7	5	9	0	A	1	6	3	B	4	2	E	C
1	3	9	D	E	6	0	4	2	5	C	7	A	8	B
6	0	B	A	8	2	C	5	7	9	E	1	3	4	D
A	2	E	4	3	C	0	9	6	8	0	5	1	7	2
8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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



## RAISING VOICE

Activists of 'We the People of India' hold a demonstration at Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, to defend democratic and constitutional rights



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	2,69,20,373	1,90,20,657	8,80,969
India	39,93,412	30,86,545	69,214
Odisha	1,20,221	93,774	538

# Team to probe minor's gangrape in City: DCP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 5:** The Commissionerate Police has formed a special team to investigate the allegations of gangrape of a minor girl in the Capital city by a police official of Infocity police station and two personnel from an electronic media.

Speaking on the issue through a video message, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Umashankar Dash told the media that the case has been handed over to the Investigative Unit for Crime Against Women (IUCAW), an integrated unit to probe heinous crimes like rape, acid attack among others against women and children.

The DCP said, "We have handed over the case to IUCAW realising the seriousness of the issue. We have been investigating all the an-

## SHAME AGAIN

A cop from Infocity police station along with his two associates and two electronic media representatives had gangraped the minor girl several times in March and April

The case has been handed over to the Investigative Unit for Crime Against Women, an integrated unit to probe heinous crimes



The victim's mother had lodged a complaint with Mahila police August 30

gles to the case."

Dash also said that a special team has been constituted under IUCAW to investigate the case. He further stated that earlier the victim's mother lodged a complaint with Mahila police station August 30. Later, a case (44/20) under various sections of IPC and POCSO was also registered at the Mahila police station based on the complaint.

The victim in her statement under Sections 161 and 164 of the CrPC alleged that the cop along with his two associates and two electronic media representatives had gangraped her several times during the lockdown in March and April. The miscreants allegedly threatened the victim against divulging the matter before anyone. However, she revealed it before her parents a few days back.

## Snake rescued from bank's strong room

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 5:** Employees of a bank were in for a shock when they found that a four-foot-long cobra had slithered into the institution's strong room in the Capital city here, officials said Saturday. The venomous snake was rescued from strong room of State Bank of India's Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (IMMT) branch here Friday.

Informed, a member of the snake helpline reached the spot and rescued the snake.

"When we went to the strong room for cash, we were terrified to see the snake trying to hide under an iron chest. We immediately informed the snake helpline. Its volunteers captured the reptile," a bank employee said.

The IMMT campus is full of greenery and snakes are often found on the campus.

## UP FOR SALE



Sweetcorn vendors wait for customers on Vani Vihar-Rasulgarh road in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

OP PHOTO

# 7,656 houses for poor in 42 ULBs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 5:** The state government has approved 45 projects for construction of 7,656 housing units under Awaas Mission during this financial year.

The state level sanctioning and monitoring committee headed by Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy has recently approved the 45 projects to be implemented in 42 urban local bodies (ULBs) of the state. The total estimated cost of the projects is Rs 230.16 crore. Under the mission, each beneficiary will get Rs 2 lakh assistance, of which Centre will provide Rs 1.50 lakh and state share is Rs 50,000.

The government has also ap-



Each beneficiary will get ₹ 2 lakh assistance, of which Centre will provide ₹ 1.50 lakh and state ₹ 50,000

proved the annual capacity building plan worth Rs 12.23 crore for the current financial year. Besides, revised project cost affordable housing project Gadakana, Satyanagar and Subudhipur in Bhubaneswar also approved by the panel. The cost has been revised from Rs 144.20 crore to Rs 184.73 crore. A total of 2,662 housing units will be con-

structed in these areas.

In October 2015, the state government had launched the Mission to provide housing to urban poor and economically weaker section (EWS) category people. The mission is supplementary to Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY) that proposes to make houses available to all urban poor.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** President Ram Nath Kovind Saturday conferred National Awards on 47 teachers from across the country in the first ever award ceremony held virtually on the occasion of Teachers' Day.

**Basant Kumar Sahu, HM at Govt UP School Sarasara in Boudh and Tapas Kumar Mohanty of Bhima Bhoi School in Bhubaneswar were felicitated**

Among the 47, the President awarded two Odisha teachers - Basant Kumar Sahu, the acting headmaster of Government UP School Sarasara, Harabhanga in Boudh and Tapas Kumar Mohanty,



Teachers Basant Kumar Sahu and Tapas Kumar Mohanty being felicitated with the National Award, Saturday

a teacher at Bhima Bhoi School for the blind under BMC in Khurda district.

The President, in his speech, congratulated the winners of the award and appreciated the steps taken by the teachers for quality improvement in school education. He observed that about 40 per cent of the winners of the National Awards were women and appreciated the role women

have played as educators. Paying obeisance and tributes to former President Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, President Kovind said that he was a visionary, statesman and most significantly an extraordinary teacher.

"Celebrating his birthday as Teachers' Day is a mere token for the services he had rendered towards the development of the nation and also a mark of respect for

the entire community of educators", he said.

The President said that this occasion also gives an opportunity to pay respect to our teachers for their commitment and supreme contribution in the lives of pupils. He further opined that teachers are the true nation builders who are instrumental in building the character and knowledge of the children.

# Monsoon weakens; rain likely for 2 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 5:** India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday said southwest monsoon has weakened in the state now. Therefore, rainfall activity will come down in the state.



"The monsoon has become weak in the state. Rainfall activity has come down. However, thunderstorm will occur in many districts in next two days," said Bhubaneswar Met Centre director HR Biswas.

Thunderstorm with lightning is likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of

Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Bargarh, Nuapada, Bolangir, Boudh, Sonapur, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj, September 6.

The Met Centre said a few places in Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Balasore, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Rayagada and Gajapati districts will witness thunderstorm, September 7.

During past 24 hours, light to moderate rainfall has occurred at a few places over the districts of south interior Odisha with heavy rainfall at one place over the district of Bolangir. Patnagarh in Bolangir district recorded maximum 9 cm rainfall while it was 6 cm at Belpada in Bolangir, 5 cm at Komna in Nuapada and 3 cm each at Khariar in Nuapada & Phulbani in Kandhamal district.

# COVID hospital at VIMSAR in a week, says Chief Secy

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 5:** Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy Saturday said that a 100-bed COVID Hospital would start functioning at VIMSAR, Burla to cater to the needs of infected patients from western Odisha.

Tripathy along with additional chief secretary Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra and other officials visited VIMSAR and took stock of the situation.

"We did a review meeting and a decision was taken that the isolation ward at the hospital is not adequate and thus a need was felt to have a COVID Hospital here and for that we have decided to have a separate COVID Hospital there. We have decided to provide adequate facilities there like oxygen pipe, ICU and Operation Theatre," he said.

He said that within a week a 100-



A 100-bed COVID Hospital would be set up in VIMSAR because entire western Odisha district hospitals are bombarded with COVID hospitals

bed COVID Hospital would be set up in VIMSAR because entire western Odisha district hospitals are bombarded with COVID hospitals.

"This can help in reducing cross infection in District Headquarter Hospitals (DHH). We also visited Sambalpur COVID Hospital. Adequate number of doctors is not there to manage the ICU of the COVID Hospital. We have decided to send 10 senior doctors to VIMSAR. They will join soon. Twenty-three attendants and ANMs will also be deployed in the hospitals," he said.

He said that the district administration and the police administration have been doing good work there. "In Sambalpur district, the recovery rate is 77 per cent. Close to 74 per cent of the COVID patients are now under home isolation. We have also asked the district administration that the test report has to be informed to the patients," he said.

The officials told the media that instructions have also been given to increase screening in the district for better management of the disease. The screening will go on for the next seven days.

## After 16 years in jail, man held again

**BHUBANESWAR:** Commissionerate Police Saturday arrested a person on charges of attacking a woman with a sharp weapon in Airfield police limits here. The accused was identified as Akshaya Sahoo of Panchupalli in Airfield area. Sahoo has been recently released after serving more than 16 years in jail in a murder case. He had been awarded imprisonment for life by the court. Sources revealed that Sahoo allegedly attacked the victim with a sharp weapon over petty dispute. Police later registered a case (164/20) based on the complaint lodged by the victim. Sahoo was sent to judicial custody after being produced in the court here Saturday.

# OTDC Panthanivas privatisation draws flak

Panthanivas at Dhauli, Taptapani, Gopalpur, Bhadrak and Balasore have been privatised

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 5:** The Tourism department's decision to privatise five OTDC Panthanivas has received flak from several quarters even as the workers engaged in these units are now worried about their future.

The whole trouble started with privatisation of a wooden restaurant at Konark.

Speaking to Orissa Post, working president of Utkal Parayatan Nigam Employees' Association Benudhar Patra said, "The Panthanivas has given Rs 2-crore profit to the



state government in 2017-18 and 2018-19 financial years and the Panthanivas is coming under 'Silver Sector' business category. It's doleful to say that this profitable sector is being handed over to private companies on 30-year lease which is beyond anyone's imagination."

The role of Panthanivas was praised highly on OTDC foundation day, but after two days of the ceremony the decision to privatise it is a big shocker, said Patra. He also said that OTDC has the money to take care of a tiger,

'Spandan', and to donate Rs 5 lakh to CM's COVID fund but not enough money to run the Panthanivas.

Notably, more than 700 regular and contractual employees are working at 21 Panthanivas in Odisha. However, in last two months employees of Dhauli, Taptapani, Gopalpur, Bhadrak and Balasore Panthanivas were transferred to other places.

"It's quite shameful act of the department when workers were in dire situation due to COVID and so is hospitality industry, how justified is it to privatise five prime Panthanivas," questioned Patra. He also added the state government should reconsider its decision. Otherwise, employees of OTDC will opt for mass self-immolation in front of CM's residence, he added.

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# Will get 50% of votes in Odisha: Nadda

Be large-hearted, give credit to central schemes instead of hijacking them, BJP president JP Nadda tells CM Naveen Patnaik

# City health centres report 10-fold rise in COVID tests

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 5:** Testing for COVID-19 at different health centres in city is reported to have increased 10 times with denizens actively participating in the process as tests reached 1,085 Saturday, as per Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) sources.



**Apart from urban health centres, civic authorities have allowed nine diagnostics centres/hospitals to carry COVID-19 testing**

carry COVID-19 testing across various locations. While one them has doorstep sample collection service, BMC in collaboration with the Capital Hospital has also made a mobile testing van service available for the citizens.

Meanwhile, with the continuous surge in cases, the BMC appealed to citizens to come to their nearest urban health centres (UPHC/UHC) and get the testing done free of cost. According to Health and Family Welfare department, the city has 22 UPHCs and four UCHCs. Moreover, the civic authority has also shared contact numbers of 11 public health managers coordinating the activities of City Health Society under the Urban Health Mission of Bhubaneswar City.

## 'ECONOMY WAS TAKEN GOOD CARE OF'

**BHUBANESWAR:** India not only took the bold and timely step of imposing a lockdown to save the lives of 1.3 billion people from COVID-19 but also took care of the economy to turn the tragedy into an opportunity, BJP president Jagat Prakash Nadda said Saturday.



PM Modi made it clear that the lives of 1.3 billion people must be saved. He said 'Jaan hai to Jahan Hai' as public health was at the top of his mind, the BJP chief said.

The lockdown was imposed well in time and also implemented effectively across the country as a weapon against the pandemic, he said. Besides taking care of the health-related matters, the Modi

government also addressed the economic issues through several programmes such as the 'Garib Kalyan Yojna' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', Nadda said.

Even the UN secretary-general has acknowledged India's steps in this regard, he added.

Nadda's comments came amid the criticism of the government by the opposition over the sharp decline in the GDP. The country's economy suffered its worst slump on record in April-June, with the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracting by 23.9 per cent as the coronavirus-induced lockdowns weighed on the already-declining consumer demand and investment.

he said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to the development of Odisha and has sanctioned several projects for the state and its people, he added. "I am informed that the state government is taking credit for central schemes like PMAY by putting its logo on the housing projects. This is not fair to deny credit to the Centre, which funds such schemes," Nadda said. He further said there were reports of corruption in implementation of PMAY in state,

reiterating that politics should not come in the way of implementing programmes meant for the poor.

"We have been in politics for decades, but never seen such kind of central funding to states to the tune of thousands of crores. The states should also give credit to the Centre for that," he said.

Nadda said the people of Odisha have recognised BJP's contributions and that is why it emerged as the state's main opposition party.

PNN/AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 5:** Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) President Jagat Prakash Nadda, Saturday, appealed to BJP workers in Odisha to ensure that the party gets over 50 per cent votes in the next Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

Addressing the party's state executive meeting through video conference, Nadda said, "We got 38 per cent votes in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, much higher than 21 per cent votes in the 2014 polls. Similarly, the party also bagged 32 per cent votes

**The BJP chief came down heavily on state govt for not adopting Ayushman Bharat Yojana, which he said would benefit around 2.40 crore poor people of Odisha**

in the 2019 Assembly elections as against 18 per cent five years ago." He appealed to BJP workers to ensure that the party gets over 50 per cent votes in the next Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

Nadda also asked BJP state president Samir Mohanty to prepare a plan for the ensuing urban polls in the state.



BJP's state executive meeting through video conference in progress

"Days are not far when we will form the government in Odisha. We take a vow to achieve this," the BJP chief added.

He said Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik should be "large-hearted" to give credit to the Centre for its welfare schemes, which were being "hijacked" by the BJD government in the state.

Nadda said he has received reports of the state government inserting its logo on Central schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY). "Naveen Babu... 'chhota dil chhod dijiye, bada dil rakhiye' (shun meanness and be large hearted)," he said, urging the ruling BJD to acknowledge welfare programmes of the Union government in the state. The BJP chief also came down heavily on the Odisha gov-

ernment for not adopting the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, which he said would benefit around 2.40 crore poor people of the state.

Those people could not avail the Rs 5-lakh medical coverage because of the BJD government's refusal to adopt the scheme, he said.

"It has been two years since the Ayushman Bharat Yojana was introduced, but it has not been implemented in Odisha. Naveen Babu, please do not become a hurdle for the poor, who face difficulties in getting proper healthcare services," Nadda said. "The state government is there to look after your (Patnaik's) health issues. But, what about the poor and needy who suffer from different deadly diseases like cancer? I appeal to you to adopt the Ayushman Bharat scheme,"

# 1.33 lakh people hit by floods in Puri

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, Sept 5:** The flood situation in Puri district has improved as water levels in most of the rivers have receded significantly.

Sources in the district administration have revealed that the floodwaters have come down in Daya, Kushabhadra, Bhargavi, Ratnachira, Luna, Makara, Dhanua and Rajua rivers.

The administration Saturday claimed that at least nine blocks in Puri district have been affected by the recent floods. At least 237 villages of 62 panchayats in Kanas, Puri Sadar, Pipili, Delang, Nimapara, Astarang, Gop, Brahmagiri and Satyabadi blocks have been affected by the floods. Similarly, two wards of Puri municipality have also witnessed the



deluge, said the administration. "The floods have affected at least 1, 33, 121 people in Puri district. Altogether 1, 14, 088 people of 180 villages were marooned by the deluge. Kanas block is the worst hit. A villager died when a boat overturned at Bijipur in Kanas," said the administration.

It further claimed that 15,682 people were shifted to 82 safer places. With the improvement in flood situation, most of the people have returned to their homes. Only 458 flood-affected villagers are still in

## CONGRESS SEEKS LOAN WAIVER FOR FARMERS

**BHUBANESWAR:** The state Congress Saturday accused the state government of poor flood management and several irregularities in construction works in affected areas. Party leaders Jayadev Jena and Tarapasad Bahinipati held a presser Saturday and appealed to the government to announce loan waiver for the flood-hit farmers. Bahinipati said the recent incidents will be raised in the upcoming Assembly sessions. "A lot of farmlands have been under the flood waters in different parts of Odisha. The farmers' livelihoods have been badly hit. We demand that the farmers who had agricultural lands should have their credits written off," party leader Jayadev Jena said. The leader also demanded independent enquiry into breaking of constructions meant to contain water flow in some areas and alleged contractor-politician nexus. The poor construction works of some flood control structures in Dhannagar was pointed out by the leaders.

16 shelters, it added. As per the data, a total of 32,974 hectares of agricultural land were inundated by the floodwaters. "Altogether 1,310 houses have been damaged by the floods. As many as 731.25 quintals of flattened rice

and 90.725 quintals of molasses were distributed among the flood-hit people of Kanas, Puri Sadar and Gop blocks. Similarly, 15,000 biscuit packets were distributed among the villagers of Kanas block," revealed the administration.

## 50% specially-abled still out of Central database

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 5:** Almost half of the differently-abled population in the state is yet to be registered with the Union government's central database on disability. According to government records, Odisha is home to 12.44 lakh persons with disabilities of whom only 6.40 lakh have been registered with the database the process for which had started in 2016.

The Ministry of Social Justice had launched the UDID project in 2016. Every differently-abled person needs to be registered under the portal to avail the identity

card under this.

After registration of a specially-abled person on the portal, the condition of disability is assessed by the designated medical board, if not done earlier and then the application is forwarded online to the Centre for generation of a disability card.

In case the designated medical boards have already issued disability certificates, the certificates issued should be uploaded on this portal after proper verification instead of reassessing the cases, the instructions said.

The state Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with

Disabilities (SSEPD) department has now asked all the Collectors to ensure integration of the data with the Central system.

"As per Census-2011, the differently-abled population in the state is 12.44 lakh out of which 6.40 lakh have registered under the portal and 3.42 lakh cards are generated till date," the communication from SSEPD department to Collectors said.

The department has now asked for personal intervention of Collectors to ensure compliance and integration of the data on disability from the state to central database.

## Srimandir servitor dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, Sept 5:** A 79-year-old servitor of Srimandir died of cardiac arrest at a private healthcare facility in Bhubaneswar, family sources said Saturday.

Baladev Sinhari's health deteriorated following which he was rushed to a private healthcare facility in the Capital city Friday where he breathed his last.

His mortal remains were consigned to flames at Swargadwar, Saturday.

Sinhari is survived by his wife and son. He was popular among the servitors for being the first engineer in the community.

## PROTESTING NEW EDU POLICY



Members of 'Joint Forum for Movement on Education' protest the National Education Policy 2020 at Bhouma Nagar in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

## Truck catches fire after mishap; driver dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khurda, Sept 5:** In a tragic incident, a truck driver was charred to death after the vehicle which he was driving caught fire following a collision with a stationary truck on National Highway (NH-16) near Harikunda Baradi Chhak under Nachuni police limits in Khurda district, sources said.

The truck was en route to Bhubaneswar from Berhampur in

Ganjam district, when it rammed into another truck from behind around 7am, Saturday, said the sources. Fire broke out in the engine of the truck after collision and its driver was burnt alive inside the vehicle.

A helper who also suffered burn injuries in the mishap has been admitted to Balugaon hospital. However, the identity of the deceased is yet to be ascertained.

Commuters were left in a state of panic as they were unable to control the inferno.

On being informed, a fire-fighting team rushed to the spot and doused the flames. The team recovered the body from truck. Front portion of the vehicle has been completely gutted.

Balugaon SDPO Suresh Das and IICs from Balugaon and Banapur have begun a probe into the matter.

## TAKING TO STREETS



Members of Medical Contractual Employees' Association demonstrate near Puri DHH to press for fulfilment of their demands

# City schools celebrate Teachers' Day in virtual mode

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 5:** Fun, frolic and festivity marked the Teachers' Day celebrations held digitally at city-based schools Saturday.

Students from Play Group to Class XII left no stones unturned to ensure a well organised programme, taking the aid of technology.

Students of Sai International School weaved magic with their wonderful show of love and gratitude through soulful songs, amazing dance performances, heart touching speeches, self-composed poems, beautiful artwork and paintings and heartfelt messages. They also prepared handmade cards as well as homemade cakes and cookies as a token of love. Enthusiastic students created a fun-filled ambience by organising a magic show, recalling funny moments from class-

rooms, organising riddles and surprising everyone with a wonderful rap.

The pre-primary students dressed up as their favourite teachers, paid homage to their gurus by doing aarti, gifting flowers and offering sweets and chocolates. Students were also shown videos on the importance of teachers.

SAI International School organised an entertaining program especially for the teachers to applaud their concerted and sincere efforts to ensure the continuity of learning of the students during the pandemic. The teachers sang some beautiful songs, presented mesmerising dance performances and interesting skits on contemporary issues, as well as enthralled everyone with some brilliant instrumental music.

Nilakantha Panigrahi, Sr: Principal,



SAI International School said, "Each one of you is not only the pillar on which SAI International rests, but also a true and inspired teacher."

On the occasion, Founder and Mentor Dr. Bijaya Kumar Sahoo expressed his gratitude to all the teachers world over for their

painstaking effort in ensuring an interrupted learning of the students. He thanked the teachers of SAI International for their exemplary service, immense patience and dedication.

Teachers' Day was celebrated in ODM Public School also in virtual mode at its Emerald Auditorium with due gaiety and sanctity, decorum and joy with participation by all the teachers online.

While paying tribute to former President of India Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, the chairman of ODM Group of institutions Satyabrata Minaketan addressed the teachers' community and hailed their invaluable contributions to nation-building.

BJEM students also thanked their teachers with poetry and cultural programmes on the occasion.

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# Swachh Bharat raises a stink

TOILETS ALLOTTED TO DEAD PEOPLE IN TRIBAL POCKETS OF KORAPUT; FUNDS EMBEZZLED

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Boriguma, Sept 5:** The government lays a lot of stress on effective implementation of Swachh Bharat. However, irregularities in tribal-dominated Boriguma block of Koraput have defeated its purpose, a report said.

The report said, Boriguma is the largest block in the district. It is alleged that irregularities were committed in the toilet construction executed by RWSS.

A junior engineer has allegedly misappropriated the funds of the beneficiaries of Swachh Bharat without any traces of toilets in most cases. What is most surprising is that toilets have been allotted in the name of people who have died long ago and their funds have been embezzled.

This mess has come when the administration is taking a lot of measures to make the area free of open defecation. Toilet construction was part of the Swachh Bharat drive while residents were made aware of the hazards of open defecation.

For years and months, people in this block have built toilets with their own funds, but their money has not been cleared.

A case in point is Kanagan panchayat. The scam came to light when some people including



## TOILETS FOR DEAD

This mess has come when the administration is taking a lot of measures to make the area free of open defecation while toilet construction is part of this drive

Even official records revealed that toilets were given to people like Loknath Bisoi and Phulamati Bisoi who died many years ago. The bills were cleared

Suspecting a scam, local demanded a high level investigation into the irregularities. Social activists said the objective of Swachh Bharat has been defeated

Ritesh Bisoi of this panchayat approached junior engineer Kalyani to trace about their toilet bills.

Ritesh was shocked when the junior engineer told him that a bill in the name of his father Abhimanyu Bisoi has been cleared and no toilets will be given to

him. In fact, his father has not received any fund for their toilet he had built.

Scores of people in the same village have no toilets. Locals alleged that lakhs of rupees have been misappropriated while they have no toilets.

People like Padmanabh Bisoi,

Ramnath Bisoi, Rajendra Bisoi, Ganesh Bisoi, Shankar Bisoi, Padmavati Bisoi, Hemanta Bisoi, Bandita Bisoi, Pradipta Bisoi alleged that their funds have been looted.

Even official records revealed that toilets were given to dead people like Loknath Bisoi and Phulamati Bisoi. The two had died many years ago. Locals wondered how the bills of the two deceased people were cleared and who have embezzled the funds.

They lamented that they were worn out from frequenting to the block office to get toilets. In another case, then junior engineer had issued an order to a woman named Sabita Bisoi to construct 16 toilets at Guda village in 2018-19.

The woman had built 16 toilets for some beneficiaries, but the bills have not been cleared till date. The villagers lamented the fact that officially bills of toilets have been cleared, but there is no trace of toilets in the village.

Suspecting a scam, they demanded a high level investigation into the scam.

Social activists said given this scenario, the objective of Swachh Bharat has been defeated in this backward tribal-dominated pocket. This scenario is also the same in other areas too.

# Bargarh: Pest attack on paddy spreads; pesticide ineffective

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bargarh, Sept 5:** Kharif farming this year had got delayed in Bargarh district due to erratic rainfall and a shortage of farm-hand amid Corona-induced lockdowns. Shortage of fertilisers also has affected the farming.

Braving all odds, farmers have managed to raise paddy in thousands of acres of land, but pest attack on paddy has become a major concern for them in some parts of the district.

Reports said, stem borers and leaf blighting have started affecting paddy plants in some pockets including in Kalapani.

Suresh Nekanti, a farmer of Kalapani, said, "I have cultivated paddy in 10 acres. Now pest attack on the plants has started. It has been a major concern. I had applied pesticide on the farmland. The agriculture department is not providing adequate pesticides to contain pest at this critical time."

Same is the case with farmer Ekadasia Sahu. He said, "I have farmed paddy in 20 acre. Pests have attacked all plants. This is major problem and we do not know how to save the plants. Despite pesticide being applied, the effort is ineffective."

The paddy plants have started conceiving now. At this juncture, a variety of diseases has been af-



**Farmer Ekadasia Sahu has farmed paddy in 20 acre, but pests have attacked all plants. Despite pesticide being applied, the effort is ineffective, he laments**

fecting paddy plants, which have caused great concern for the farmers, it was learnt.

Farmers were disheartened to see the condition of paddy plants – with leaves drooping and

blighted. "If pest attack is not checked, all their efforts and money invested in paddy cultivation will go in vain," lamented many farmers.

Asked about the problem, district agriculture officer Dinabandhu Gandhi said farmers are being provided pesticide at 50 per cent subsidy. Pesticide required for 200 hectares in each block had been supplied. All the pesticide was delivered to farmers. But the demand for pesticide has gone up. We have intimated the state government to supply more pesticide."

# Ganjam's Covid curve flattens

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, Sept 5:** Once a hotspot district, Ganjam has been on the path towards recovery.

For the first time in two months, the district recorded just 97 Covid-19 cases Friday, breaking the trend of consistently registering more than 100 cases.

The district had reported 95 Covid-19 cases July 1 and the next day 283 cases were reported. And thereafter the district continued to report more positive numbers. As many as 732 positive cases were reported July 23.

But the district administration has managed to flatten the Covid-19 curve by strictly implementing a slew of measures. Strict implementation of social distancing norms, three times door-to-door survey, containment policy, Covid-19 monitoring and Covid care committees' good coordination with people, massive tests and proper treatment of patients are said to have made a huge difference in controlling the situation.

The district has been witnessing



a decline in fresh cases since August 4. According to District Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange, the pandemic disease can only be wiped out from the district if the important Covid-19 guidelines are followed seriously.

Collector Kulange is learnt to have been visiting the blocks and interacting with BDOs, tehsildars, CDPOs, NAC executive officers, representatives of panchayatiraj and Covid-19 monitors.

The Collector has also appealed to people to get themselves tested if they develop any symptoms of Covid-19 instead of concealing them. He has also requested those who have recovered from the disease to come forward and donate plasma.

## Jagatsinghpur MLA tests +ve

**JAGATSINGHPUR:** Jagatsinghpur MLA Prasanta Kumar Muduli went into home isolation after he tested positive for Covid-19 Friday afternoon. The legislator appealed to all who have come in contact with him to isolate themselves.

In a Facebook post, Muduli wrote, "After developing symptoms, I went for the Covid-19 test yesterday ... tested positive. Now, I am in home isolation and with the blessings of Lord Jagannath, I am stable. Those who have come in contact me over past few days are requested to get themselves tested, if required."

Earlier, several leaders including MP Ramesh Majhi, MLA Bikram Kumar Panda, MLA Debiprasad Mishra, Rural Development, Labour and Employees' State Insurance Minister Susanta Singh, MP Manjulata Mandal, MLA Sanjib Kumar Mallick, MLA Sukanta Nayak, MLA Prasant Behera, MP Suresh Pujari, had tested positive.

# ROUTINE SNARLS



## Mineral-laden trucks create traffic chaos on NH-49

**Keonjhar, Sept 5:** Traffic chaos on NH 49 in Keonjhar has become routine due to plying of thousands of mineral-laden trucks.

Various stretches of the NH-49 lie out of bounds for people, leaving public movement in a complete stalemate. Mind-boggling traffic jams are regular at Dangapani BS fuel tank and Baldevjew Filling station

at Anjar. Thousands of trucks are parked for hours at these places to get fuel. As a result, people going on urgent works, jobs, and ambulance services are affected by the traffic jam. People of 10 panchayats along NH-49 are at the receiving end of this routine problem.

Besides, other NHs and roads in the district have become so unsafe and con-

gested that accidents are a regular affair: One has to spend two to three hours to travel a distance of only one km. Ambulances and school buses are the most affected due to the rush.

Restoration work of the NH-49 has also been delayed due to traffic snarls. SDPO PK Toppo said steps are being taken to smoothen the NH restoration work.

# Silk City sees 93% recovery rate

**GANJAM:** Covid-19 situation in Ganjam town is improving with a recovery rate of 93 per cent.

Informing the current pandemic situation in the town, executive officer, Ganjam NAC, Prabhu Kalyan Das said the town's Covid-19 tally is 86 and of them, 81 have recovered from the disease. "As of now, only five patients are undergoing treatment. Our recovery rate is 93 per cent," Das added.

The town reported first Covid-19 case June 4 and a total of 86 patients had contracted the virus.



Covid warrior IIC Dillip Kumar Sahu is one among the 81 patients who won the battle against coronavirus.

The Covid situation in the en-

tire district is also showing a sign of improvement. While it had reported a two digit figure of 97 cases for the first time after two months Friday, the district Saturday reported 102 cases. With this, the district's tally has gone up to 18,544. Of them, 17,374 patients have recovered from the disease and 962 patients are undergoing treatment at different Covid hospitals. The district also reported a Covid-19 death Saturday, taking the district's toll to 200. The number of patients died due to reasons other than Covid is eight.

# Unclaimed, seized vehicles headache for Angul police

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Angul, Sept 4:** Visit any police station in the district and you will invariably find a large number of two-wheelers and other vehicles dumped there. There are no takers for these vehicles. Almost all the police stations in Angul district have been struggling with this problem.

There are 22 police stations in Angul district and they register more than one case daily, mostly involving two-wheelers. Most cases are related to accidents, loot and organised crimes. A majority of such criminal cases are committed on two-wheelers while at times auto-rickshaws and four-wheelers are also used.

Sources said in cases related to accidents, police are returning the vehicles to owners after verifying the documents. Around 60 per cent of vehicles are returned to their respective owners. The remaining 40 per cent are left to rot on police station premises.



Then there are 10 per cent of unclaimed vehicles in the police stations. Most of these have been used in criminal activities. These vehicles use up spaces that could have been used for better purposes.

A senior police official on condition of anonymity said they can't return the vehicles to their respective owners until the cases are solved in courts.

Apart from police stations, such vehicles are also found in the offices of the District Collector, forest department, municipality, works department and hospitals.

The excise department has a similar picture to offer. Sources said the estimated value of the vehicles seized by the excise department will not be less than ₹50 lakh. Excise department sources said, most of these vehicles were seized where they were used for smuggling liquor or other contraband.

A senior police officer, who did not wish to be named, said chances of such vehicles finding their way back to the owners are very slim. "When vehicles remain unclaimed they are auctioned after a particular time frame. However, auctioning of the vehicles has not been done for a long time due to legal hassles. The government is losing a huge amount of money due to this reason," the official said.

SP Jagmohan Meena said the vehicles are being kept in open because of pending court cases. "There are times when we are returning some vehicles to their owners but the numbers are not satisfactory," admitted Meena.

# Anganwadi worker draws accolades for selfless service

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nuapada, Sept 5:** Dhubighat Anganwadi worker Shantilata Majhi (60) under Boden block in Nuapada district has earned laurels for her selfless service.

Majhi Friday received accolades from the Principal Secretary of Women and Child Development department Anu Garg for working tirelessly and providing service to people even during the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

Garg said Majhi has become an example for all those who are working as frontline warriors to banish the deadly disease from the state. Even at this age, Majhi travels miles to distribute ration to the beneficiaries under Boden block in Nuapada district. She is being helped by her grandson.

She has four sons and three daughters. Her husband died long ago. She has been working as an Anganwadi worker since 1986 and



■ Even at this age, Shantilata Majhi travels miles to distribute ration to the beneficiaries under Boden block in Nuapada district. She is being helped by her grandson

■ She received accolades from the Principal Secretary of Women and Child Development department Anu Garg for working tirelessly and providing service to people even during the ongoing COVID-19 situation

has been performing her duty selflessly.

Her village has 56 families. The Anganwadi centre where she works has registered 22 children, five pregnant women and 10 postnatal.

She traverses the area on foot

and carries out awareness programmes initiated by the government from time to time. Majhi also undertakes vaccination and other programmes for the betterment of children and expectant mothers in Boden block.

## Cousins meet watery grave

**Jaipur:** Two persons met watery grave after a makeshift boat in which they were crossing a river capsized near Mediakula village of Mandari panchayat under Bari block in this district Saturday morning. The deceased have been identified as Madhusudan Behera and Mitul Behera. They were cousin brothers and were native of Mediakula village. According to a source, the siblings were crossing the river in a makeshift boat when the mishap occurred. Some youths on being informed jumped into the river and could only rescue Madhusudan. He was immediately rushed to Bari community health centre, but the doctors declared him received dead. Later, fire personnel swung into a rescue operation and retrieved the body of Mitul.

**e-Procurement Notice for Road Work Identification No. 05/EERW/BLS/2020-21**

No. O-322:-

- Name of the work: Roads. 2. Total No. of works: 36 Nos. 3. Estimated cost : Estimated cost Rs.4.42 lakh to Rs.42.43 lakh.
- Class of contractor: 'D', 'C', 'B' & 'A' Class.
- Time of completion: 1 & 2 month (One and Two calendar months).
- Other details:

Procurement Officer	Bid identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of opening of tender in the Office of the Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Balasore
		From	To		
1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive Engineer Rural Works Division, Balasore	05/EERW/ BLS/2020-21	15.09.2020 at 11.00 A.M.	24.09.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.	23.09.2020 upto 1.00 P.M.	25.09.2020 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website: [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)

Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Balasore  
OIPR-25108/11/0001/2021



True knowledge is not attained by thinking. It is what you are; it is what you become.

SRI AUROBINDO



## Whither national security policy

India does not have a national security policy. To the extent that it can be understood from the BJP's manifesto, the policy is "India First" (a line used in 2014) and "Nation First," used in the manifesto of 2019. But what these words mean is not explained.

In the manifesto, Amit Shah wrote: "Friends, this election is not merely to elect a government, it is an election to ensure the country's national security."

Under 'National Security' the manifesto lists two items: purchase of modern weapons to strengthen strike capability and local production of defence equipment. There is no reference to any security threat. India has under Modi focused on counter-insurgency, particularly in Kashmir, as being the core problem of national security. This has been articulated by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval in his talks. His thesis is terrorism from Pakistan is a strategic threat and has to be countered by offensive measures. This is what the surgical strike of September 2016 and airstrikes of February 2019 were about. They came after attacks on the Indian Army camps and a suicide bomb attack on the CRPF. According to Doval's theory of deterrence, the two Indian attacks would work to stop and possibly end Pakistan's support to insurgency in Kashmir. The numbers show that this has in fact not happened. Total fatalities in militancy related violence in Kashmir were 265 in 2016, rising to 357 in 2017 and 452 in 2018.

Doval's national security doctrine needs to be looked at closer, but this has not happened internally in any formal sense. Both the chief of the Indian Army Gen MM Naravane and Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat are counter-insurgency experts. The threat from China has not for this reason been fully appreciated by India. There is another problem and that is the political leadership's refusal to own the national security policy. The army has suggested it is ready for a two-front war: Is that India's national security policy? We must assume that is so because there is no BJP policy on this. Is India's national security threatened by Pakistan? The answer appears to be yes, though the threat is clearly at the moment on the other side.



Aakar Patel

Is India's national security threatened by Pakistan? The answer appears to be yes, though the threat is clearly at the moment on the other side

In 2012, Manmohan Singh's National Security Advisor Shiv Shankar Menon asked a group of people to draw up a foreign and strategic policy for India. The group included historian Sunil Khilnani, Lt Gen Prakash Menon, military scholar Srinath Raghavan, diplomat Shyam Saran and Nandan Nilekani.

The document they drew up was called Nonalignment 2.0 and issues including border management, cyber security, the defence industry, how to engage neighbours and so on. In a chapter on a potential conflict with China, the document says "China could assert its territorial claims (especially in the Arunachal sector or Ladakh) by the use of force. There is the possibility that China might resort to territorial grabs. The most likely areas for such bite-sized operations are those parts of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) where both sides have different notions of where the LAC actually runs. These places are known."

The document then looks at the current military thinking on this issue and says that "the better way of responding to limited land-grabs by China is for us to undertake similar action across the LAC: a strategy of quid pro quo. There are several areas where the local tactical and operational advantage rests with us. These areas should be identified and earmarked for limited offensive operations on our part."

A quick capture of Chinese land is what is being suggested here, which will add to diplomatic pressure on them to return our land. The operative word here is 'quick'. It has been over three months now since the intrusion has happened. We have not acted, and thus have ignored the previous national security strategy of the Manmohan Singh government. And not only do we not have any strategy of response, we have not even acknowledged the problem. This has led to the absurd situation where our defence minister is talking to China's over a problem that the prime minister says does not exist.

Analyst and former soldier Sushant Singh said in an interview with Karan Thapar that Modi should have owned the problem by picking up the phone and speaking to Xi. Instead what has happened is that the government has said the army has been given "a free hand" in executing operations. The muddle is clear: The government has denied there is a problem, but given the army a free hand to solve it. It is astonishing that such a serious issue be handled in so casual and cavalier a fashion, but this has become what is expected of this government. It hides behind vague and meaningless phrases and slogans like "nation first" and "India first" and refuses to lead when we are in the middle of a real national security crisis.

### WISDOM CORNER

- The good times of today are the sad thoughts of tomorrow. **BOB MARLEY**
- It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society. **JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI**
- Doing the best at this moment puts you in the best place for the next moment. **OPRAH WINFREY**

### WORDSWORTH

#### ■ Tickety-boo

It's certainly common in Canada, but is very probably British in origin. The usual meaning, by the way, is more that something is satisfactory, all in order, or OK. We can't be sure what its origin is. Eric Partridge always contended that the word was forces' slang, most probably from the Royal Air Force, and that it dates from the early 1920s or thereabouts (though the Oxford English Dictionary doesn't find a written example before 1939). Considering the number of Canadians who flew with the RAF during World War II, its move to Canada isn't surprising. The difficult bit is taking the word back any further than the 1920s. It could combine that's the ticket - with much the same sense - with the childish phrase peek-a-boo. But some find a link with the British Army in India, suggesting it comes from the Hindi phrase thikai babu, which is translated as "it's all right, sir".

### LOL

#### Three tough mice

Three rats are sitting at the bar talking bragging about their bravery and toughness. The first says, "I'm so tough, once I ate a whole bagful of rat poison!" The second says, "Well I'm so tough, once I was caught in a rat trap and I



bit it apart!" Then the third rat gets up and harass the cat."

### FOCUS PLANNING

# WHY PROJECTS GET DELAYED



One of the major reasons behind the planning fallacy is the so-called optimism bias which is believed to be rooted in neuroscience...Overconfidence, coordination neglect, procrastination are some of the other major contributors to planning fallacy in large projects with big teams of specialists



Dhanada K Mishra

WHEN PEOPLE ESTIMATE HOW LONG A PROJECT WILL TAKE, THEY FOCUS TOO MUCH ON THE SPECIFICS OF THAT PROJECT AND NOT ENOUGH ON HOW LONG SIMILAR PROJECTS TOOK IN THE PAST

In the year 1968, the Governor of New York State, Nelson Rockefeller, received a proposal - for a new subway line called the Second Avenue Subway. Four years later, a ground-breaking ceremony was held but the project was stalled. Years later, a new Governor, Mario Cuomo, tried to restart it. But once again, the budget would not allow. It came to be known as "the most famous thing that's never been built in New York City." The first leg of it was finally completed in 2016. The current Governor Andrew Cuomo took a celebratory ride in the night of December 31. He was the son of Mario Cuomo. The project had cost \$4.5 billion, making it, per mile, one of the most expensive mass-transit projects in history and about \$700 million over budget.

Closer home, the prestigious Bandra-Worli sea link project in Mumbai was a much-celebrated world-class infrastructure project that opened in 2009. The 5.6 km long eight-lane twin carriageway with a cable-stayed bridge at its centre was conceived almost 46 years earlier. Construction began in 2000 and was to be completed in 2004 for an estimated cost of ₹300 crore but was opened to the public in 2009 for a final cost of ₹1600 crore.

In Odisha, among many such examples, a rather infamous one would be the Khurda-Bolangir railway line. It was surveyed in 1945 but the project was sanctioned in 1994-95. The state government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Indian Railways to undertake some parts of the project on a cost-sharing basis. The project which was initially estimated to be ₹1,000 crore (US\$160 million) is now estimated to be nearly ₹2,000 crore (US\$310 million) after almost 20 years of delay due to low budgetary provisions and issues of land acquisition.

We all know of more mundane day-to-day examples of this phenomenon such as a work project, or a home renovation, even writing an article - that always go awry in terms of time and money!

This phenomenon is called the planning fallacy courtesy of psychologists Danny Kahneman and Amos Tversky. Roger Buehler, a Professor of Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University in Canada, and some colleagues set out to measure the planning fallacy. In their first experiment, they used honours students who were working on their thesis projects. The researchers asked each student to predict when they'd submit their thesis? These students took on average 55.5 days against their own predicted average of 33.9 days to finish! That's a 64 per cent delay! Buehler and other researchers found similar evidence of the planning fallacy among stockbrokers, engineers, and doctors. They also found it in everyday activities like shopping, filing taxes, even waiting in line.

One of the major reasons behind the planning fallacy is the so-called optimism bias which is believed to be rooted in neuroscience. Experiments have repeatedly shown that the brain tends to process positive information about the future more readily than negative information and hence we tend to pre-

dict the future optimistically. Overconfidence, coordination neglect, procrastination are some of the other major contributors to planning fallacy in large projects with big teams of specialists. Digital distractions such as messages, alerts, and emails that cause continuous partial attention to tasks on hand also contribute to the delays in execution at the individual level. Employees in large companies often spend more time in meetings about work such as planning, reviewing and reporting rather than doing the actual work.

When people estimate how long a project will take, they focus too much on the specifics of that project and not enough on how long similar projects took in the past. This second approach is called reference-class forecasting. Prof Flyvbjerg of the Oxford University has estimated that infrastructure projects with a budget above \$1 billion total between \$6 and \$9 trillion a year globally. That's about 8 per cent of global GDP. Almost 80 to 90 per cent of all such projects have cost overruns and a similar percentage has time overruns often in years. It led to his "iron law

of megaprojects: Over budget, over time, under benefits, over and over again." The figures for mega projects in India monitored by PMO directly, for this reason, are no better either.

One major reason other than optimism bias for planning fallacy Flyvbjerg looked into is called strategic misrepresentation. Planners are on record saying that they do this deliberately as they actually were incentivised to misrepresent the benefit-cost analysis in the business cases for their projects. Underestimating the cost and overestimating the benefits give their projects a higher chance of getting funded and getting approved. Such skewed project plans make government budgets and accounting processes go completely haywire. One approach to avoid this is to correct time and cost estimates in the other direction by using historical data for similar past projects or reference class forecasting. This is how Amazon is able to predict with close to 100 per cent accuracy the time of its delivery of parcels almost all the time. However, unlike Amazon that can use big data of millions of past deliveries, mega projects that are similar to a current one are few and far between. The governments of the United Kingdom and Denmark have shown major improvements in their project delivery in stipulated time and under approved budget in recent years using such an approach.

In the meantime, the next phase of the Second Avenue subway line in New York - another 1.5 miles, is now under construction. It's set to cost \$6 billion and open between 2027 and 2029. The remaining part of the Khurda-Bolangir railway line is also under construction. None in New York or anyone that I know in Odisha is betting on either of these projects being completed on time or under budget!

The author is an academican currently visiting Hong Kong University of Science and Technology as a Research Scholar.

### SPECTRUM DATA

# The false promise of digital ID

Dirk Helbing & Peter Seele

BIG DATA IS NO PANACEA, AND THE VISION OF A DATA-DRIVEN AND AI-CONTROLLED SOCIETY HAS SERIOUS CONCEPTUAL LIMITATIONS, IN ADDITION TO ETHICAL PITFALLS

Proponents of digital identification see the pandemic as a once-in-a-century opportunity with a potential 'jackpot market' of nearly eight billion people. In these dangerous times, using digital IDs to help control the spread of the virus and eventually to manage the distribution of a vaccine is often deemed appropriate and necessary.

This view aligns with the broader ambition of providing a legal ID for everyone on the planet, particularly the poorest. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 mentions the provision of a 'legal identity for all' by 2030, and a 'digital identity credential' is included in the UN Legal Identity Agenda 2020-2030. It seems that several high-level initiatives in this regard are underway, such as the ID2020 Alliance and possibly the World Economic Forum's Global Centre for Cybersecurity, which involve some of the most powerful transnational organisations and corporations.

The efforts don't stop there. The UN has launched several pilot projects that use digital IDs for refugee identification. Such ideas can quickly become reality on a national level, too: China's Social Credit System, for example, makes use of digital IDs. In global e-commerce, a digital ID is assigned to people - and used to score each customer's profitability and lifetime

value. As far as we know, COVID-19 does not threaten the survival of the human species. But many of the countermeasures adopted to combat it have greatly disrupted societies. Thus, calling for wider implementation of digital IDs "to get the situation under control" seems timely. Digital IDs can be created through biometric approaches such as face recognition or voice and gesture monitoring; blockchain-based technologies; digital tattoos; or, in the most extreme cases, in-body solutions like radio-frequency identification chips or individualised vaccines. Even establishing an Internet of Bodies is within reach.

But, once a digital ID officially exists, the implications for democracy and human rights could be massive. This concern is particularly strong when digital IDs are coupled with the power of a data-driven and AI-controlled approach. Then, humans could be managed like objects, which would be a fundamental violation of human dignity and the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It would be reminiscent of the brands and tattoos used to mark people during some of the darkest chapters in human history.

Applying the same mandatory technology to all humans would not only be totalitarian. "In-body solutions" such as RFID chips or individualised vaccines would also pose considerable health risks. The

side effects would not be known immediately and, with global deployment, might affect hundreds of millions of people.

Human-rights issues are not the only cause for concern. Some years ago, commentators such as Chris Anderson claimed that Big Data would make the scientific method obsolete. But the pandemic has challenged that idea. For starters, it turns out that measurement procedures are not perfect. False positives and overlooked cases, as well as non-representative data samples, have been an issue both in terms of common COVID-19 tests and reported deaths. These numbers have had to be corrected repeatedly in several countries. Moreover, predictions have been often poor. Projections of the number of infected people, for example, have been surprisingly unreliable.

In sum, Big Data is no panacea, and the vision of a data-driven and AI-controlled society has serious conceptual limitations, in addition to ethical pitfalls. This is why we should pay more attention to concepts such as "design for values" and "participatory resilience," which means providing people with tools to help themselves and support each other. The digital revolution certainly offers breakthrough solutions for global-scale communication, information retrieval, system optimisation, and automation.

It can also support decision-making, coordination, and collective intelligence in a consolidated way.

Global resilience in the context of this and future crises would be best achieved by digitally empowering responsible behaviour; based on decentralised, diverse, and participatory approaches. This would also be compatible with the SDGs. What is needed is a combination of competition and cooperation, of intelligent design and combinatorial innovation. Therefore, the open-data and maker movement should be scaled up to formats that can unleash mass innovation and cooperation. Innovative collaborative projects such as city olympics, city challenges, or city cups point the way forward.

Rather than submitting people to a data-driven and AI-directed system that relies on surveillance and control through digital IDs, we should create more of these decentralised participatory frameworks. Such collaborative approaches, based on the power of civil society, form the backbone of a strategy that uses our social talent to achieve humanity's collective goals.

Dirk Helbing is Professor of Computational Social Science at ETH Zürich. Peter Seele is Professor of Business Ethics at USI Lugano. @PROJECT SYNDICATE

#### Case for children's literature

Sir, Children's literature is an important part of the development of our language. Children's literature is not just written for entertainment and education. Stories, poems, essays and science fiction written for children are all read in textbooks. Children's literature is taught at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels. Even composing children's literature is difficult. Children's writers are at the forefront of writing stories, poems, features, essays, novels, and puzzles. But now children's writers are being neglected. That's why many writers no longer focus on children's literature. No effort is being made for development of children's literature by literary academies. District and state-level events involving children and writers are almost invisible. Not even visible steps are taken at government level to attract children to literature. Many children's magazines published by the central and state governments in the past are out of print. If we turn a blind eye to the development of children's literature, we will be indirectly responsible for keeping our children away from language and literature.

Santosh Kumar Mohanty, SAFA, CUTTACK

#### Nailing the neighbour

Sir, Exactly 18 months after the Pulwama terror attack, the accused are readied to be arraigned. Without the local players, such an attack could not have been carried out. So it came as no surprise when four, including locals, have been chargesheeted by the National Investigation Agency. One Mohd Umar Farooq has been charged as the main conspirator along with his uncle, Masood Azhar, the 'chief' of JeM. A woman, who arranged the stay, food, and movement of Farooq, the bomb maker and the other two in Pulwama, has been taken into custody. The terror attack was planned for three years by JeM under the 'watchful eyes' of Islamabad. As is its wont, Pakistan is in denial mode. New Delhi has clinching proof - more than ₹10 lakh cash was deposited by JeM in Farooq's account in two banks in Pakistan for procuring the car, used to carry the bomb, and ammunition. The transactions, India hopes, will push the Paris-based global intergovernmental agency on tracking money laundering and terror financing, Financial Action Task Force, to blacklist Pakistan in another attempt to isolate it. Pakistan continues to hoodwink the world through backroom politics. Pakistan's role in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack was proved beyond doubt. Precious little happened to it despite the world being offered tonnes of evidence.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

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# Chasing drugs, Karnataka revisits 2012 panel report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Sept 5:** As the police continue their crackdown against drug and substance abuse in the state, the Karnataka government has decided to examine an eight-year-old legislative committee report on tackling the menace.

Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai has asked a top bureaucrat to examine the report tabled in 2012 by the assembly's petitions committee, headed by the then Deputy Speaker N Yogish Bhat.

"The report that was given by Yogish Bhat, I have asked the Additional Chief Secretary (Home) to examine it thoroughly. The contents of the report, suggestions made in it to control drugs- it will be thoroughly examined and measures that can be implemented from it, will be looked into," Bommai said.

Speaking to reporters, he said efforts were on to control drug menace, including controlling it scientifically, using technology.

"It is not only a menace in Karnataka, but across the country, so all necessary efforts will be made to control it from all angles, and our crackdown on drugs will continue," he added.

The 2012 committee report focused on drug menace in educational institutions and students falling prey to it besides nexus between the drug mafia and prostitution racket. With the state going to the assembly polls in 2013 and the new government taking over, the report was forgotten.

The minister said from the on-going operation it was clear that the drugs were coming into Karnataka from other states and countries.

Bommai said he has held a meeting via video conference with SPs of all the districts, especially border ones, regarding the measures being taken and to be taken.

The meeting also discussed about drugs coming from foreign countries and from cities like Mumbai and

## Ragini, 11 others booked



**BANGALORE:** The City Central Crime Branch (CCB) booked Kannada film actress Ragini Dwivedi and 11 others for their alleged role in the use of banned drugs in the Sandalwood industry in Karnataka, police said Saturday.

"We have filed a suo motu FIR (first information report) at the Cottonpet police station in the city against Ragini and others, including drug peddlers Shivaprakash, Ravi Shankar, Rahul Shetty and party planner Viren Khanna for their drug links in the Kannada film industry," city joint commis-

sioner of police Sandeep Patil told reporters here.

The FIR against the dozen accused is under various sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 and 120b of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for purchase, possession, distribution and consumption of banned drugs at rave parties and late-night gatherings in the city. While Ragini and Shetty were arrested in the city Friday, Khanna was held in New Delhi by 2 CCB inspectors and being flown into the city on a transit remand.

Delhi through various modes which needed to be controlled and investigated.

"Drug supplies through cargo, courier, post, dark web need to be completely controlled," the minister said.

The recent arrests made by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) had unearthed alleged links of drug peddlers with Kannada actors and musicians, which the CCB police are currently investigating, and it has led to more arrests.

Asked about the arrest of Kannada actress Ragini Dwivedi and high-end party planner Viren

Khanna, the minister said prima facie it appeared that Khanna was also a kingpin and detailed investigation was on.

To a question about Tourism Minister CT Ravi's statement on pressure being exerted on the police, Bommai said, "What he (Ravi) said is right, he has said that as influential people are involved naturally there may be such attempts. He has not said about any specific pressure."

The minister said there was no question of bowing down to any pressure and police have been given free hand to take action in accordance with law.

# Doubling of tests behind surge in cases: Kejriwal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** Declaring a 'war' on coronavirus, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the recent surge in COVID-19 cases in Delhi is attributable to doubling of testing, but asserted that the situation in the city is completely under control and there is no need to panic.

Addressing an online media briefing, Kejriwal said he is not worried about the data, but more concerned about keeping people healthy.

"Delhi declares war on corona. We have doubled testing, started testing at markets, bus stands, mohalla clinics etc. Test, test, test. Isolate infected people and provide them good treatment. I have told officers not to worry if the number (of cases) increases due to multifold testing," Kejriwal later tweeted.

Friday, Delhi recorded 2,914 fresh COVID-19 cases, the highest single-day spike here in 69 days. This is the fourth successive day in



**Out of 5,000 beds, 1,600-1,700 beds are occupied by those who belong to other states**

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | CHIEF MINISTER

September when over 2,000 new COVID-19 cases have been reported in a day. Also, over 36,000 tests were conducted Friday.

"The biggest reason for the increase in the number of positive cases in the last few days is that the Delhi government has doubled daily testing to 40,000 from around 18,000-20,000 a week ago. You can see this doubling of testing as a big attack on the coronavirus pandemic. We have mounted this big assault against coronavirus. I would ensure testing of everyone every day if it was possible for me," the chief minister said at the media briefing. Kejriwal said some people opposed doubling the number of tests, but now everyone is on the same page. "We have doubled tests to identify more infected people so that they are isolated to prevent further spread. Do not think that the situation has deteriorated," he said.

The chief minister asserted that COVID-19 cases in the national capital have "slightly" increased in the last few days, but the situation is completely under control and there is no need to panic.

In March, the World Health Organization, in its recommendation for countries to break the chain of COVID-19 transmission, had said, "Test, test, test. Test every suspected case. You cannot fight a fire blindfolded."

Kejriwal said on Saturday that he has been "honestly" presenting the COVID-19 situation before the people of Delhi from time to time since the virus started spreading four-five months ago.

Appealing to Delhiites to follow preventive measures against COVID-19, such as wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing, he reiterated that there is no scope for being negligent.

The chief minister asserted that there is no need to worry with the rise in the number of coronavirus cases, adding that he would need to worry if the number of deaths increases. The AAP government has taken several steps to reduce deaths due to the virus, Kejriwal said.

## CLASS IN COVID TIMES



Students from a slum area, who do not have access to internet facilities and missed their online lessons, attend an open-air class taken by Naresh Pal after the authorities closed all schools following the coronavirus outbreak, at Yamuna Khadar in New Delhi, Saturday.

PTI PHOTO

## Kannada actress alleges moral policing in park

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, Sept 5:** Kannada movie actress Samyuktha Hegde alleged moral policing and harassment by Congress leader Kavitha Reddy when she was out with her friends at Agara lake in the city.

"We were abused and ridiculed by Kavitha Reddy at Agara Lake. There are witnesses and more video evidence, I request you to look into this. #this is wrong," tweeted Hegde tagging Bangalore Police Commissioner and the city police official's Twitter account.



She shared a 11-second video clipping of the incident which occurred Friday evening in which at least four women can be identified while two boys are also seen at a distance.

Following a girl saying something in Kannada, Reddy was seen trying to shoot a video on her black Apple iPhone.

"These are the girls who are acting too smart," said Reddy while trying to shoot the video as another unidentified girl from Hegde's group could be heard saying here is a lady who abuses young people.

Immediately after this, Reddy charged at one of the girls as if to hit her with her right hand but stopped short as the girl managed to dodge her amid cries of shock and outrage from Hegde and others as the video ends there.

Hegde was seen wearing a sports bra and tights. Her friend was seen wearing a grey t-shirt and body hugging pants while Reddy was in slippers, t-shirt and trousers.

The Congress leader alleged that Hegde abused a park guard.

# 'Demolition of Delhi railway slums to cause great distress'

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** India's top court has ordered the demolition of tens of thousands of shacks alongside railway tracks in Delhi, a move that housing campaigners said could plunge nearly 230,000 poor residents into even deeper poverty.

The Supreme Court, ruling in response to an affidavit filed by state-run Indian Railways, said 48,000 shacks should be pulled down in phases, setting a three-month deadline for the destruction of those in so-called "safety zones".

"No interference, political or otherwise, should be there and no court shall grant any stay with respect to removal of the encroachments," the judges said in this week's order, which did not mention any plans for rehousing residents.

Officials at Indian Railways were not immediately available for comment on the court's ruling in the pollution-focused case, which housing-rights activists said would trigger further hardship and homelessness during the coronavirus pandemic.

"Every time you demolish a jhuggi (slum), every time you evict peo-



Residents of a slum near Sarai Rohilla Railway Station, in New Delhi, Saturday.

ple, you are literally pushing them into poverty and destitution," said Choudhary A. Z. Kabir of the

Human Rights Law Network. He said that without rehousing, "great distress" would be caused

to families that are already at risk due to COVID-19, which is spreading faster in India than anywhere

else in the world. "On the one hand you're telling me to remain indoors, on the other hand you're demolishing my house," Kabir said.

The pandemic and strict months-long lockdown have left millions of people jobless in the world's second-most-populous country, exacerbating the poor's access to food, healthcare and housing.

Kabir said he was helping the slum dwellers and filing an application to the Supreme Court for all their representatives to be added as a party in the case, urging the court to consider their arguments and modify its order accordingly.

He said the original order was passed without giving the "affected parties" prior notice.

**'EQUATED WITH GARBAGE'**  
Campaigners also expressed concern that the Supreme Court's order might violate a 2019 Delhi High Court ruling that said forced and unannounced evictions of slum dwellers on railway land without consultations or resettlement plans were illegal.

The United Nations has called housing the "front line defence against the coronavirus."

But at least 20,000 Indians were evicted from their homes between March 16 and July 31 despite court orders banning evictions during lockdown, according to a report published by the Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN) last month.

Shivani Chaudhry, executive director of Delhi-based HLRN, said this week's order was surprising because the case was concerned with pollution rather than housing.

"It's also an issue of concern that housing of the poor is equated with garbage and all low-income communities are blamed for pollution without substantive evidence," she said.

She urged the government to carry out a thorough survey to determine how many people live within "safety zones" alongside railway tracks, hold extensive consultations with the affected communities and develop an adequate rehousing plan.

"Given the pandemic, the court should consider extending the timeframe for implementation of the order and issue directives for adequate rehabilitation before anyone is removed," she said.

## Karna to soon reach goal of 1 lakh tests per day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bengaluru, Sept 5:** Karnataka will soon reach its goal of conducting one lakh COVID-19 tests per day as it has increased the number of labs and the tests done, Medical Education Minister K Sudhakar said here Saturday.

"From one testing lab for COVID-19 test, we have opened 108 labs in six months. From 300 tests per day, we have increased it to 75,000. This will soon reach the goal of one lakh tests per day," Sudhakar was quoted as saying in a release by his office. He said the state government has shown its commitment to contain the pandemic and has been successful. The Minister was speaking after inaugurating the MVJ Molecular Lab at MVJ Medical College & Research Hospital at nearby Hoskote

Stating that COVID-19 can be prevented completely only with

the use of a vaccine, he said the death rate in the state was about 1.65 per cent and the aim is to bring it down to less than one per cent.

As of September 4 evening, cumulatively 3,79,486 COVID-19 positive cases have been confirmed in the state, which includes 6,170 deaths and 2,74,196 discharges.

Stressing the need to improve the quality of the medical education system in Karnataka and also bring about change, Sudhakar said a study of the medical education system in developed nations must be carried out and measures that aid the system here has to be incorporated to make this possible.

"A decision will be taken in this regard," he added. The Minister noted that molecular test labs should be opened in government medical colleges and asked the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences to look into it.

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** "When will you come home?" the daughters of doctor Ajit Jain would ask when they used to talk over call late at night.

The nodal officer for novel coronavirus at the Rajiv Gandhi Super Specialty Hospital in Delhi has not been home for nearly five months. Duty and fear of spreading the infection among the family members kept him away.

When he finally came home, 13 km away in Kamla Nagar and just a half-an-hour drive from his hospital in Dilshad Garden, his two daughters opened the door and hugged him tight.

Jain's wife, trying not to be overwhelmed with emotion, performed an 'aarti' and applied a 'tilak' on his forehead, as his son shot a video of the homecoming -- the first time since March 17. A cake was cut and the family dined together in almost six months.



**The situation was more serious during the lockdown. Patients were more anxious living in closed rooms. They would call after every five minutes... No one could even imagine the entire country would shut down**

DR AJIT JAIN

"When cases started emerging in March, we understood COVID-19 is one of the biggest challenges mankind has ever confronted," Jain, who availed his first leave Thursday after working for 170 days

on the trot, told PTI. "Initially, I didn't go home for the fear of spreading the infection in my family," the 52-year-old said. "Both my parents are aged above 75. I was worried about them. I didn't

want to put their lives in jeopardy." As the number of patients swelled, it seemed impossible to talk to the family on the phone, too.

"Saving lives was the first priority. There was so much going on," he says. "I could talk to my family only at night, around 1 or 2 am."

Though the government made arrangements for the health staff to stay at Leela Ambience hotel, the doctor spent several nights in the hospital itself. For the initial

three months, not once did Jain sleep for 15 minutes in a stretch. His phone just won't stop ringing. The doctor has given his personal mobile number to all coronavirus patients who are undergoing treatment or have been discharged

from the hospital after recovery. "The situation was more serious during the lockdown. Patients were more anxious living in closed rooms. They would call after every five minutes... No one could even imagine the entire country would shut down," he says.

The doctor also formed a team - including a nurse, nursing orderly and housekeeping staff - who would talk to the patients admitted in the hospital daily on general things so that they do not feel lonely. Separate teams have been created to call up those who have recovered from the virus to know about their well-being.

The doctor has also created WhatsApp groups and is in "regular touch" with all more than 1,500 patients. "They or their family members call me up directly if they want to discuss something," Jain says. "Sometimes people give us blessings, sometimes, they say bad things about us... I am just doing my job."



**COVID-19 pandemic, China and economy -- when questions will not be asked on these matters, then what is the meaning of such a Parliament session?**  
AKHLESH PRASAD SINGH | CONGRESS  
RAJYA SABHA MP

## PARL MONSOON SESSION: 4-DAY COVID TESTING CAMP BEGINS

Ahead of the Monsoon Session of Parliament from September 14, an in-house four-day Covid-19 testing camp was started Saturday for officials and other staff deployed at the complex to ensure minimum health risks during the period



## of the day quote

The exclusion of Punjabi as the official language in Jammu and Kashmir is bound to be seen as an anti-minority step of the Jammu and Kashmir administration  
**SUKHBR SINGH BADAL** | SHIROMANI AKALI DAL PRESIDENT

The Modi government's thinking is minimum government, maximum privatisation. Covid is just an excuse, the government's plan is to free government offices of all permanent staff, steal the youth's future and propel his own friends forward  
**RAHUL GANDHI** | CONGRESS LEADER

A four-year integrated B.Ed degree is being introduced to provide a holistic training programme for teachers, which will include practical teaching skills  
**PRAKASH JAVADEKAR** | UNION MINISTER

# ICMR RECOMMENDS 'TEST ON-DEMAND' FOR COVID-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has issued an advisory on COVID-19 testing strategy, allowing 'testing on demand' for individuals but left it to states to modify the approach as per their discretion. It also advised testing on de-

and screening at points of entry, routine surveillance in non-containment areas, hospital settings and testing on demand -- and choice of test (RT-PCR, TrueNat or CBNAAT and rapid antigen tests) in order of priority has been listed. Under the category of 'routine surveillance in containment zones and screening at points of entry',

## COMBATING CORONA



The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has issued an advisory on COVID-19 testing strategy, allowing 'testing on demand' for individuals. It also advised testing on demand for "all individuals undertaking travel to countries or Indian states mandating a negative COVID-19 test at the point of entry"

It suggested that 100 per cent of people living in containment zones should be tested by rapid antigen tests

mand for "all individuals undertaking travel to countries or Indian states mandating a negative COVID-19 test at the point of entry".

The Advisory on Strategy for COVID-19 Testing in India" (version VI), issued Friday, said the state governments can simplify the modalities to facilitate testing on demand.

It also suggested that 100 per cent of people living in containment zones should be tested by rapid antigen tests, particularly in cities where there has been widespread transmission of the infection.

The ICMR also stressed that no emergency procedure should be delayed for lack of tests, and pregnant women should not be referred for a lack of testing facility. Further, the existing recommendations related to testing for COVID-19 have been extended, elaborated and divided into four parts -- routine surveillance in containment zones

the advisory recommended testing of all asymptomatic high-risk individuals (people above 65 and those with co-morbidities etc.) in containment zones.

Besides, it advised testing all symptomatic (ILI symptoms) cases, including healthcare and frontline workers. All asymptomatic direct and high-risk contacts (in family and workplace, people aged 65 and above, those who are immune-compromised or have co-morbidities etc) of a laboratory-confirmed case are to be tested once between day 5 and day 10 of coming into contact.

As far as choice of test is concerned, rapid antigen test (RAT) is listed first, followed by RT-PCR or TrueNat or CBNAAT as the second option. "Ideally, it is suggested that 100 per cent people living in containment zones should be tested by RAT, particularly in cities where there has been widespread transmission of infection," the advisory said.

## RECRUITMENT CIRCULAR ROW

# 'No ban on hiring for govt jobs'

In the circular, dated September 4, the Department of Expenditure, which comes under the Ministry of Finance, banned some non-developmental expenditures

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** The Department of Expenditure circular issued Friday to curb official spending amid an economic crisis triggered by the coronavirus pandemic, does not affect or curtail recruitment for government jobs, the Centre clarified on Saturday, hours after Congress MP Rahul Gandhi tweeted on the row.

"The Department of Expenditure circular dated 04 Sept 2020 deals with internal procedure for creation of posts and does NOT in any way affect or curtail recruitment," the Ministry of Finance tweeted to clarify some points of the circular. "There is no restriction or ban on filling up of posts in Govt of India. Normal recruitments through government agencies like Staff Selection Commission, UPSC, Railway Recruitment Board, etc



will continue as usual without any curbs," it adds.

In the circular, dated September 4, the Department of Expenditure, which comes under the Ministry of Finance, banned some non-developmental expenditure to "ensure availability of adequate resources for meeting the needs of critical priority schemes".

The Centre, in the document, also announced "a ban on creation of new posts, except with the approval of Department of Expenditure, in

Ministries/Departments, Attached Offices, Subordinate Offices, Statutory Bodies and Autonomous Bodies."

Gandhi, who has been critical of the Centre's handling of the coronavirus situation, had slammed the government over the circular. "The Modi government's thinking is minimum government, maximum privatisation. Covid is just an excuse, the government's plan is to free government offices of all permanent staff, steal the youth's future and propel his own friends forward," Gandhi said in a Hindi tweet, tagging a news report.

India's gross domestic product or GDP contracted 23.9 per cent in the April-June period - much worse than economists' estimates, official data showed last month, as the coronavirus pandemic brought key industries to a halt and rendered millions jobless.

## Sasikala's lawyer hopes for her early release

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, Sept 5:** Late Chief Minister J Jayalithaa's aide V K Sasikala, who is serving a four year prison term in a Bangalore prison, is expected to be released soon, her lawyer hoped while the AIADMK asserted that there is no change in its stand of keeping her out of the party.

N Raja Senthoo Pandian, lawyer of the jailed confidante of the late AIADMK supremo, said that as per the Karnataka Prison Manual, she is eligible for ordinary remission available to all prisoners and this has not been denied to anyone so far.



As per norms, three days of remission for good conduct is available for every month in jail and so far, she has completed 43 months, making her eligible for a reduction of 129 days in prison, he told this news agency.

"The Karnataka Prison Manual does not have any provision barring remission to those convicted for offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

As per the manual, I strongly believe that she will be released by the month end," he said answering a question.

When the remission of 129 days is applied, the release will be during the month end and not the previously expected date of January 2021, he said.

Efforts are afoot to pay the fine of ₹10 crore as per the court order, he said. Sasikala has already spent a total of 35 days in jail in 1997 and 2014 and availed a 17 day parole in 2017, which is deducted from the period she already served, he said.

## SHORT TAKES

### Naxals kill four villagers in Ch'garh

**Raipur:** Naxals have allegedly killed four villagers in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district after accusing them of being police informers, a senior official said Saturday. The killings took place in the last two days in the forest of Dumri-Palnar village under Gangaloor police station area, inspector general of police (Bastar range) Sundarraaj P told PTI. As per preliminary information, ultras had called a few villagers, who were supporting development activities, including road construction, to the forest and brutally killed four of them after accusing them of being police informers.

### Bodies of 2 Hizbul militants recovered

**Srinagar:** The bodies of two Hizbul Mujahideen militants were recovered Saturday from Kishanganga river near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district. The two militants are believed to have drowned in the river near Malangam Tulaili village in Gurez sector while trying to infiltrate from Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir, security officials said. One of the militants was identified as Sameer Ahmad Bhat, a resident of Dangerpora in Pulwama district. The other militant was identified as Nisar Ahmad Rather, resident of Dadsara, Tral in Pulwama.

### Fuel pilfering gang busted

**Hyderabad:** Thirteen members of an inter-state gang involved in tampering with fuel dispensing machine software at various petrol stations in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, thereby causing loss of crores of rupees to consumers, were arrested Saturday, officials said. Those arrested included some petrol station owners, an official press release said. The gang's modus operandi was to deliver less quantity of fuel to customers by tampering with the software.

### Madrasas start modern syllabus

**Patna:** The students of Madrasas in Bihar will learn English, Hindi, Maths and Science along with the traditional course in Islamic studies and Arabic from this academic session that started in April, a top official of the state Madrasa Education Board said Saturday. The board has added "modern and mainstream" syllabus along with the traditional studies in the madrasas to help students keep pace with the society.

## Tribals' stir causes over ₹100cr loss to Railways

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ranchi, Sept 5:** The Indian Railways suffered a loss of more than ₹100 crore due to a three-day agitation by Tana Bhagats, a tribal community in Jharkhand, staged on the railway tracks at Tori Junction in Latehar district.

The Rajdhani Express was delayed for nine hours on Thursday and later its route was changed due to the Tana Bhagats' agitation.

The agitation ended after talks with local Legislator Baidyanath Ram. A delegation of the Tana Bhagats also met Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren Saturday.

On Wednesday evening, the Tana Bhagats had commenced their agitation at the railway tracks with nearly 300 members of the community. On Thursday evening a team of the district administration, including the DC and SP along with a Latehar MLA, had reached the spot and tried to convince the agitators but they did not relent.

Initially, the Tana Bhagats refused to talk to the legislator and the district administration officials and wanted to meet Soren.

## Electronic devices stolen from aircraft carrier project

AGENCIES

**Kochi, Sept 5:** The National Investigation Agency has filed a chargesheet against two people accused of stealing electronic devices from an aircraft carrier project in Ernakulam, Kochi. The case pertains to the criminal trespass and theft of critical electronic components including processors, Random Access Memory (RAM) and Solid State Drives, installed aboard the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier that is under construction at the Cochin Ship Yard Limited, between July and September, 2019.

The case was originally registered under various sections of the Indian Penal Code at Ernakulam Town South Police Station, Kochi City September 16, 2019 based on the complaint of the Deputy General Manager, Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) Project, Cochin Shipyard Ltd.

During the investigation, based on facts revealed thereto,



the Kerala Police had invoked sections of Information Technology Act in the case as well. NIA had re-registered the case on September 26, 2019 and taken over the investigation from Kerala Police October 16, 2019. According to sources, investigations revealed that Bihar native Sumit Kumar Singh and Rajasthan native Daya Ram were behind the crime. They were arrested from their respective locations and after interrogation, confessed to the crime. NIA investigations revealed that the accused were engaged as contract employees for painting work aboard the IAC between February and September 2019.

## India's security would be maintained in 'extended neighbourhood' as well

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** In the emerging defence paradigm, India's security would be maintained not only along the northern and western borders but in the strategic space of the "extended neighbourhood" as well, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat said Saturday.

He also said that India values its emerging relationship with the US and cherishes its traditional relationship with Russia, adding the country shares a mature and robust defence and security framework with both these powers.

Addressing a symposium on defence exports, Gen Rawat said the armed forces will have to work through the budgetary constraints by finding the best solutions through new acquisitions and optimisation considering the macro-economic parameters.

Referring to proposed reforms in the military structure, Gen Rawat said the Chief of Defence Staff and the theatre commanders would "continently" provide "unity of command"



while the service headquarters and the "component commanders" could provide "unity of effort".

Under a big-ticket reform initiative, India is working on setting up of a number of theatre commands, integrating some of the commands of the three services, to deal with future security challenges facing the country.

Each of the theatre commands will have units of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and all of them will work as a single entity looking after security challenges in a specified geographical territory under an operational commander.

The government had appointed Gen Rawat as India's first Chief of

Defence Staff December 31 last year to bring synergy in the functioning of the three services.

Talking about the regional security paradigm, he touched upon key aspects of India's security doctrine. In this context, he mentioned International Border (IB) and Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan as about Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

"In the emerging security paradigm, India's security would be maintained not, as hitherto, on the IB, LC or the LAC alone, but in the strategic space of the 'extended neighbourhood' and the 'strategic frontier'," he said without elaborating further.

# Indian-origin scientist finds 'cause' for fall of Indus Valley Civilisation

The analysis by Indian-origin scientist Nishant Malik used a new mathematical method to study ancient climate patterns in North India over time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

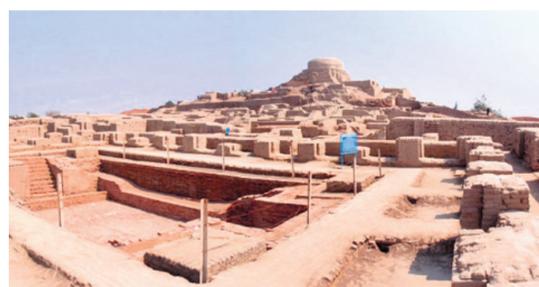
**New Delhi/New York, Sept 5:** Shifting monsoon patterns linked to climate change likely caused the rise and fall of the ancient Indus Valley Civilisation, according to a study by an Indian-origin scientist which analysed data from North India covering the past 5,700 years.

The analysis by Nishant Malik from Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) in the United States used a new mathematical method to study ancient climate patterns in North India over time, providing insights about past cli-

mates using indirect observations. The research, published in 'Chaos: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Nonlinear Science', noted that by measuring the presence of particular chemical forms in stalagmite mineral deposits in caves in South Asia, scientists could develop a record of monsoon rainfall in the region for the past 5,700 years.

However, Malik said studying ancient climate time series with mathematical tools typically used to understand climate is a challenging task.

"Usually the data we get when analysing paleoclimate is a short



time series with noise and uncertainty in it. As far as mathematics

and climate is concerned, the tool we use very often in understanding

climate and weather is dynamical systems," Malik said.

"But dynamical systems theory is harder to apply to paleoclimate data. This new method can find transitions in the most challenging time series, including paleoclimate, which are short, have some amount of uncertainty and have noise in them," he explained.

While there are several theories about why the Indus Valley Civilisation declined, including invasion by nomadic Indo-Aryans and earthquakes, climate change appears to be the most likely scenario, the study noted.

However, Malik said there was no mathematical proof until the new hybrid approach was applied.

According to his analysis, there was a major shift in monsoon patterns just before the dawn of this civilisation and that the pattern reversed course right before it declined, indicating it was in fact climate change that caused the fall.

The Rochester Institute of Technology scientist believes the new method will allow scientists to develop more automated methods of finding transitions in ancient climate data, leading to additional important historical discoveries.



**PM (Narendra) Modi who promised that we will defeat coronavirus in 21 days must explain why India failed when other countries seem to have succeeded**

**PM MODI OFFERS TRIBUTES TO TEACHERS ON TEACHERS' DAY**  
Paying tributes to teachers on the Teachers' Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday said people are grateful to them for their contribution towards shaping minds and building our nation



### of the day quote

**Reluctance and inability of the GOI to give full compensation to the States is a betrayal of the commitment it made in the Union Parliament and also in all the council meetings held so far (sic)**

**HEMANT SOREN | JHARKHAND CHIEF MINISTER**

**Raut is a good friend of mine. He is a Shiv Sena leader, a party spokesperson as well as the Saamana editor. I don't know the entire truth but if at all he has threatened the actress it is quite unfortunate**

**RAMDAS ATHAWALE | UNION MINISTER**

**We hope Prime Minister Modi and the Defence Minister will come forward and take the nation into confidence regarding the development in talks with China**

**RANDEEP SURJEWALA | CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON**

### SHORT TAKES

#### Intense shelling by Pak along LoC

**Jammu:** Pakistan used small arms and mortars Saturday to violate ceasefire on the Line of Control (LoC) in three sectors of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district. Colonel Devender Anand, spokesman of the Defence Ministry said, "At about 9.15 a.m. today Pakistan initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and intense shelling with mortars along the LoC in Shahpur, Kirni and Degwar sectors of Poonch district. Pakistan has been violating the bilateral ceasefire on the LoC with impunity this year."

#### Tana Bhagats end stir in J'khand

**Gumla, (Jharkhand):** Tana Bhagat - a tribal community of Jharkhand - who were demanding land rights and amendment in the Chhota Nagpur Tenancy Act, ended their stir after 55 hours Saturday. Around 250 members of the community had blocked the railway tracks near Tori Junction on the Barkakana - Barwadih rail route of Eastern Central Railways. They sat on the railway tracks for the past 55 hours, paralysing over 70 goods trains on the route. Transportation of coal was affected in the area.

#### 2 arrested with drugs worth ₹8cr

**Noida:** Two men were arrested while allegedly transporting 1.727 kg cannabis in Madhya Pradesh's Agar Malwa district Saturday, the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) said. The action was carried out around 12.30 pm by a team of the local Madhya Pradesh Police and the Noida unit of the STF, the agency said. "Two men were arrested and a container truck impounded which had a secret cavity in which the contraband was stored." Additional Superintendent of Police (STF) Raj Kumar Mishra said.

#### Two mild quakes hit Palghar

**Palghar:** Two low-intensity earthquakes were experienced in Palghar district of Maharashtra, an official said Saturday. The tremors were recorded late on Friday night within a gap of nearly half an hour, he said. The first earthquake of 4.0 magnitude was felt in Dahanu tehsil at 11.41 pm, while the second one of 3.6 magnitude was recorded at 12.05 am in Talasari tehsil, chief of Palghar district disaster control cell Vivekanand Kadam said.

## PLA abducts 5 villagers from Arunachal: Cong MLA Ering

**The Arunachal Police said Saturday that several teams have been sent out to find the whereabouts of those 'abducted'**

AGENCIES

**Itanagar, Sept 5:** Amid escalating border tension with China in eastern Ladakh, Congress MLA from Arunachal Pradesh Ninong Ering has claimed that five people have been abducted by the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Ering also said that the five people had gone for fishing when they were abducted by the Chinese Army.

The five people - identified as Tanu Bakar, Prasat Ringling, Ngaru Diri, Dongtu Ebiya, and Toch Singkam - have reportedly been abducted from Sera 7 area under Upper Subansiri district along the India-China border in Arunachal Pradesh.

Ering told the media that the Chinese Army has started incursions in Arunachal Pradesh after Ladakh and Doklam. The Congress lawmaker also claimed that the Chinese have crossed the LAC.

"The Chinese have again started creating a nuisance. Just like in Ladakh and Doklam, they [Chinese



Army] have started incursions in Arunachal Pradesh. It is proved that they have entered our [side of] LAC," he said, claiming it was the second time that the Chinese Army has abducted people from India.

"It is very unfortunate that this is the second time this has happened," Ering said.

On Saturday, the Congress lawmaker from Pasighat West had tweeted to Prime Minister Narendra

Modi and Chief Minister Pema Khandu, raising alarm about Chinese incursions into Arunachal Pradesh. He also attached a screenshot of a Facebook post by one Prakash Ringling who claimed that his brother was one of the five people who were abducted from by the Chinese Army.

The Facebook post by Prakash Ringling read: "My bro, Prasat Ringling S/O Tako Ringling and other four youth of Nacho circle had been abducted by People Liberation Army from Sera-7 (Indo-China border). So, kindly request to state government and Army authority take immediate actions. To bring these boys back to their home. It is an appeal from family members of these boys."

Seeking a strong response from the Central government, Congress MLA Ering said, "Indian government has to intervene. It is our ancestral land and our people have their rightful claim on it." He also said China wants to divert attention from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh.

Terming it as a Chinese diversionary tactic, the Congress MLA said, "They want to divert attention from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh. These Chinese guys who come on patrolling into the Indian side create nuisance."

Ering said even Arunachal BJP MP Kiren Rijiju is aware of such incursions and that the government should take the matter up at the highest level. "The behavior

of the PLA is totally unprofessional," he said.

Police Superintendent of Upper Subansiri district Taru Gussar has told the media that the police were aware of the information shared on social media but was yet to ascertain the facts on the ground.

"We have not received any formal complaint from any of the family members. We are trying to get the facts on the ground from the police station at Nacho. We are also trying to reach out to the Army. But we have not been able to do so due to communication issues," he said.

Deputy Commissioner Kanto Dangen said, "These are uninhabited areas. It is about 11-day walking distance from the Nacho town; therefore it is very difficult to get information from the area. Only the army can give an update on the matter. Officially we have got no complaints. Last time a similar incident happened and one person was subsequently released."

The Arunachal Police have been sent to trace the five 'abducted'.

## Indian Army rescues three Chinese citizens in Sikkim

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** The Indian Army extended a helping hand to three Chinese citizens who lost their way in the Plateau area of North Sikkim at an altitude of 17,500 feet.

This happened when both the countries were engaged in a four month long standoff at the border in Eastern Ladakh. The incident happened September 3.

Realising the danger to the lives of the Chinese citizens, which included two men and one woman in the sub zero temperatures, the soldiers of the Indian Army immediately reached out and provided medical assistance, including oxygen, food and warm clothes to protect them from the vagaries of extreme altitude and harsh climatic conditions.

The Indian troops also gave them appropriate guidance to reach their destination after which they moved back.

## Hizbul trying to re-establish base in north Kashmir: Army

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Sept 5:** Terror group Hizbul Mujahideen is trying to re-establish its base in north Kashmir, the Army said Saturday a day after three terrorists of the outfit were killed in an encounter with security forces in Baramulla district.

Addressing a joint press conference with Deputy Inspector General of Police (North Kashmir Range) Muhammad Sulaiman Choudhary at Pattan, Commander 10 Sector of the Rashtriya Rifles of the Army Brigadier NK Mishra said it was after a long gap that terrorists belonging to the Hizbul Mujahideen were killed in north Kashmir where, in the recent years, only terrorists from Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-

Mohammad had been neutralised. "The activity of the Hizbul Mujahideen terror group was very less here (in north Kashmir). It seems that Hizbul is trying to re-establish its base in north Kashmir," the Army officer said.

However, he said the security forces were alert and ready to foil all the plans of the terror outfit aimed at its revival in the north Kashmir.

"If anyone wishes to join the mainstream, they are always welcome, but if anyone wants to become a terrorist, they will not be given any opportunity," Brigadier Mishra said.

The DIG North Kashmir Range said the three terrorists killed Friday in Yeddipora area of Pattan in north Kashmir's Baramulla district were affiliated with the Hizbul Mujahideen.

## READY TO ROLL



Trial run of a metro between Samaypur Badli to Huda City Centre on Yellow line near Azadpur metro station in New Delhi, Saturday

## 80 new spl trains to run from Sept 12

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** Eighty new special trains will be operational from September 12, reservations for which will begin from September 10, Railway Board Chairman VK Yadav said Saturday. He said the trains will be notified later in the day.

"Eighty new special trains or 40 pair of trains will start operations from September 12. Reservations will begin from September 10. This will run in addition to the 230 trains already in operation," he said. Yadav said the Railways will be monitoring all the trains that are currently in operation to determine which trains have long waiting list.

"Wherever there is a demand for a particular train, wherever the waiting list is long, we will run a clone train ahead of the actual train, so that passengers can travel," the railway board chairman said.

## Antibodies against corona stay in body for at least 60 days: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** A sero survey conducted at a leading hospital in the city over five months has found that the prevalence of antibodies, in a person who has recovered from coronavirus infection, persists for 60-80 days.

The survey found that antibodies persisted in the recovered patient's body for at least 60 days, depending on when the participant was infected or came in touch with infected people.

The participants of the sero survey, jointly done by the Max Hospital and Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology under the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), will again be tested to assess how long the anti-bodies last in the person who contracted COVID-19, said Shantanu Sengupta, the IGB scientist who conducted the study.



A total of 780 samples were used for the serological testing which include hospital workers and individuals who visited the hospital during the pandemic.

"Our study results confirm that anti SARS-CoV-2 antibodies could remain for more than 60 days in the body. This is a step forward towards better understanding of the infection recovery and re-infection pattern. There is a need for larger follow-up studies to further assess how long the antibodies remain stabilised

in the body," Sengupta said.

Sujeet Jha of the Institute of Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Metabolism Max Healthcare, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Saket, said, "This study, being a longitudinal study, would help us to understand if asymptomatic or seropositive individuals are protected for COVID-19 and if yes, for how long," said. "We observed an increasing trend of seropositive cases amongst the hospital staff, over a period of four month."

## COVID snag in bullet train project

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** The Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project, which is scheduled to be completed by December 2023, may fail to meet its deadline due to the coronavirus pandemic that has led to delays in opening tenders and land acquisition, officials said.

The National High Speed Rail Corporation (NHSRCL) has already acquired 63 per cent of the land for the project - about 77% land in Gujarat, 80% in Dadar Nagar Haveli and 22% in Maharashtra. Officials said there are still issues in acquiring land in areas like Palghar in Maharashtra and Navsari in Gujarat.

Last year, the company had floated nine civil work tenders which could not be opened because of the coronavirus pandemic, officials said. "Because of COVID we had to

postpone the opening of a few of the tenders. It is difficult to assess the impact of the pandemic on the project as it is still continuing. We cannot say how the pandemic will affect the project as I don't know how long it will last," NHSRCL MD Achal Khare said.

Officially, the NHSRCL spokesperson maintained that the deadline for the project remained 2023.

One of the civil work contracts for construction of stations, bridges, viaducts, maintenance depots, and tunnels across the network is to the tune of ₹20,000 crore.

Tenders for civil works for 345 kms out of 508 kms alignment, or 68 per cent of civil works, have already been floated. This includes six MAHSR stations (including one underground station in Mumbai). The works related to utility diversion are progressing well and the construction of

Sabarmati passenger hub (a multi modal hub) in Sabarmati, Gujarat has also started.

The hostel building of High Speed Training Institute (which is presently being used for COVID-19 patients) and training tracks in Vadodara are also completed.

The 508.17-kilometre long network will pass through three districts in Maharashtra (Mumbai, Thane, and Palghar) and eight districts in Gujarat (Valsad, Navsari, Surat, Bharuch, Vadodara, Anand, Kheda, and Ahmedabad).

Apart from land acquisition, another major cause for delay could be cost escalation owing to a fall in the rupee against the Japanese yen.

While the extent of the cost escalation has yet not been confirmed by the railways, sources said it is estimated that it will rise from the present ₹1.08 lakh crore to ₹1.70 lakh crore.

## NCB busts Goa-Mumbai 'buds' syndicates; heat now on film stars

**EVEN AS THE NARCOTICS CONTROL BUREAU CRACKDOWNS ON THE DRUG SYNDICATE LINKED WITH THE SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT DEATH CASE, THE APEX NARCOTICS AGENCY TRAILS ANOTHER MAJOR SYNDICATE OPERATING FROM GOA**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi/Mumbai, Sept 5:** Even as the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) crackdowns on the drug syndicate linked with the Sushant Singh Rajput death case, the apex narcotics agency trails another major syndicate operating from Goa, accused of supplying curated marijuana (buds) to several Hindi film stars.

The interrogation of drug trafficker Fayaz Ahmed, associated with a luxury resort in Calangate, Goa, has revealed names of over a dozen Mumbai based film personalities who were being supplied buds, highly placed sources in NCB

told this news agency.

Though after his arrest September 2, Fayaz Ahmed turned out to be a COVID-19 positive, yet his thorough interrogation by NCB sleuths has unravelled the entire network and nexus of Hindi film-mafia. Ahmed revealed that drugs were being transported by means of parcels through Foreign Post Office in New Delhi.

One of the consignments was dispatched by one Dan Patel, a resident of Modugno Street, Saint Laurent, Canada. Saint Laurent, a borough of Montreal city in Canada's Quebec state, is infamous for drug cartels and crime syndicates, many having Indian con-



nections. During his questioning, Fayaz Ahmed has reportedly said that parcels containing curated mari-

juana were collected either from New Delhi or from a shop located in Calangute-Anjuna Road in Goa. Once the consignment reached

Ahmed the suppliers in Mumbai were contacted.

For every one gram of buds, ₹5,000 to ₹6,000 were charged. The entire racket linked with Canadian drug syndicates was unearthed by Deputy Director (operations) of NCB, KPS Malhotra, who is also supervising the investigations into Sushant case, in which actress Rhea Chakraborty's brother Showik and Sushant's manager Samuel Miranda has been arrested.

Top sources in NCB said that over a dozen drug suppliers have been identified during interrogation of several drug traffickers and peddlers including Fayaz

Ahmed. Similarly key information has been extracted from drug supplier Abdel Basit Parihar, who was procuring drugs from one Zaid Vilatra and delivering to Samuel Miranda. The NCB is also trying to find any link between the syndicate associated with Parihar and that of Fayaz Ahmed.

Sources in NCB said that enough evidence has been gathered by NCB during interrogation of Basit Parihar, his aides Abbas Lakhani and Karan Arora on supply of buds to leading Hindi film personalities. Information on cocaine and other high quality drugs delivered to Hindi film personalities is also collected.

# international



There is a risk of famine and widespread food insecurity in four countries affected by conflict – Congo, Yemen, northeast Nigeria and South Sudan and the lives of millions of people are in danger  
ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

## VIRTUAL CLASSES BEGIN

The Vivekananda Yoga University in Los Angeles -- world's first yoga university outside India -- has commenced classes virtually



## of the day quote

Once COVID-19 vaccines become available, Singapore's approach will be to protect those at higher risk or people who may be more likely to be exposed to infection  
GAN KIM YONG | SINGAPORE HEALTH MINISTER

Inclusion is key, because without inclusion the suffering of those who are already left behind, will continue and we cannot guarantee peace in that kind of a context  
TUJANI MUHAMMAD-BANDE | UN ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT

Being a working American during the COVID-19 pandemic has become a matter of life or death due to the poor economic policies of President Donald Trump  
JOE BIDEN | DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

# Trump drags India into US electoral minefield

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, Sept 5: President Donald Trump has dragged India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi into a possible minefield of US politics by asserting that India and Prime Minister Narendra Modi give him "great support" in the context of the US elections where foreign involvement is a sore point.

"We have great support from India, we have great support from Prime Minister Modi, and I would think that the people, the Indian people would be voting for Trump," he said Friday when asked about the Indian American vote.

A reporter referred to a video "Four More Years" targeting Indian Americans that was released during the Republican National Convention and was retweeted by his eldest son, Donald Trump, Jr., and asked if the community would vote for him.

"I do," Trump said. "We had an event in Houston, as you know, and it was a fantastic event. I was invited by Prime Minister Modi, this was massive, this was where they play football, Houston football team, it was incredible. It was



actually incredible. The prime minister could not have been more generous."

He then made the assertion about support from India and Modi, which could be controversial given the allegations of foreign interference in the November presidential elections.

Democrats have said that Russia was backing Trump and the Republicans have said that China was backing the Democratic Party's candidate, former Vice President Joe Biden.

The concept for the video, "Four More Years," credited to Al Mason,

the co-chair of the Trump Victory Indian American Finance Committee is subtle by using clips of Modi praising Trump at the "Howdy Modi" rally of about 50,000 Indian Americans in Houston last year and Trump praising Indian Americans and India, and saying the US will always be a "loyal and faithful friend to the Indian people" at the "Namaste Trump" rally in Ahmedabad in February.

However, Trump's assertion at the Friday news conference of backing from Modi and India was more forthright and implies direct

support from them for Trump in the elections which could complicate relations with the Democrats. Indian Americans have traditionally been a bastion of the Democratic Party.

The Pew Research Centre has found that 65 per cent of Indian Americans are Democrats or lean towards the party. According to Karthick Ramakrishnan, the director of the Asian American Pacific Islander Data which produces political research about those communities, 77 per cent of Indian Americans voted for the Democratic Party nominee Hillary Clinton and only 16 per cent for Trump in the 2016 election.

But Ramakrishnan told a National Public Radio interviewer in February, "My hunch is that there's probably some movement towards President Trump but still overwhelming support for the Democratic Party and Democratic candidates as opposed to President Trump."

Indian American voters could play a role in the battleground states -- the swing states where neither party has an overwhelming majority and could go either way.

# 17 killed, 20 hurt in explosion at mosque

Worshippers were at Friday evening prayers when the blast sent a ball of flames through the Baitul Salat mosque in the central district of Narayanganj

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Sept 5: A gas leak in an underground pipeline caused six air conditioners to explode almost simultaneously in a mosque during Friday evening prayers on the outskirts of Bangladesh's capital Dhaka, killing 17 people, including a child, and injuring 20 others.

Worshippers were at Friday evening prayers when the blast sent a ball of flames through the Baitul Salat mosque in the central district of Narayanganj, officials said.

At least 17 people including a seven-year old boy, succumbed to their injuries at Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery here, the Dhaka Tribune reported.

About 20 victims are undergoing treatment at the hospital and are stated to be in critical condition. Fire



officials suspect accumulated gas from a leaked pipeline triggered a spark and all six air conditioners on the ground floor of the mosque exploded.

"A gas pipeline passes beneath the mosque. We are suspecting that gas leaked from the pipeline and accumulated inside as the windows were closed. The explosion was probably triggered due to sparks when someone tried to switch on or off the ACs or fans," Narayanganj Fire Service's Deputy Assistant Director Abdullah Al Arefin was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

## SHORT TAKES

### Terror bid foiled in Pakistan

Peshawar: Pakistani security forces Saturday foiled a terror bid by defusing a 5.5 kg bomb planted on a roadside in northwest Pakistan. The Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) after an intelligence information recovered a remote-controlled bomb planted on a roadside in Janikhel area of Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and neutralised the explosive. The bomb was planted for a big terror activity by unknown terrorists, however quick action by the security forces averted the sabotage attempt, police said.

### Iran begins new school year

Tehran: Iran Saturday opened the new school year after nearly seven months of closure. In a video conference, President Hassan Rouhani said the education of 15 million students is as important as the health system. "Education will not be closed in our country even under the worst situation," he said, urging authorities to implement health measures in schools to the level of those in military garrisons.

### Georgia candidate's post removed

Atlanta: Facebook removed a photo illustration showing a Republican congressional candidate in Georgia posing with a rifle next to three Democratic House members, saying Friday that it violated the social media platform's policy against inciting violence. The illustration, a montage of four photos, was posted Thursday by Marjorie Taylor Greene, a candidate who has previously courted controversy with her support of a baseless conspiracy theory involving President Donald Trump and her inflammatory remarks about two Muslim congresswomen.

# World's loneliest elephant to quit zoo for new life

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Islamabad, Sept 5: An elephant who has become a cause célèbre for animal rights activists around the world will be allowed to leave his Pakistani zoo and transferred to better conditions, the animal welfare group helping with the case said Saturday.

Dubbed the 'world's loneliest elephant' by his supporters, Kaavan has languished at a zoo in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad for more than 35 years. Martin Bauer, a spokesman for Four Paws, said the elephant has been finally given medical approval to travel, most likely to Cambodia, where he will find companionship and better conditions.

The overweight elephant Kaavan underwent a full medical examination at the zoo Friday, said Bauer. In May, Pakistan's High Court ordered the Marghazar Zoo closed because of its abysmal conditions blamed on systemic negligence.

Rescuing Kaavan from the zoo's dire conditions attracted the attention of animal activists around the world, and celebrities including US singer Cher, who lobbied for his relocation. "Unfortunately, the rescue comes too late for two lions that died during an attempted transfer at the end of July after local animal handlers set a fire in their enclosure to force them into their transport crates," Bauer said in

a statement released on Saturday.

He said Four Paws was invited by the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board to safely transfer the remaining animals in the zoo. Kaavan has until now been forced to live a solitary life in a small enclosure. Friday's medical examination showed the elephant was overweight, even as he showed signs of malnutrition. His nails were cracked and overgrown apparently from years of living in an improper enclosure with flooring that damaged his feet.

"Following the checks, which confirmed Kaavan is strong enough, steps will now be taken to finalize his relocation to an animal sanctuary potentially in Cambodia," Bauer said. His recovery will be a long one, said Bauer, adding that Kaavan's wounds are more than just physical. He also suffers behavioral issues.

Kaavan, who lost his partner in 2012, has battled loneliness as well as poor living conditions. Both have taken their toll, said Bauer in an interview.

"He also developed stereotypical behavior, which means he shakes his head back and forth for hours. This is mainly because he is simply bored," said Bauer. The Four Paws team that carried out Kaavan's physical included wildlife veterinarians and experts. It wasn't immediately known when Kaavan would be able to travel.



## FEAST TIME



A fisherman collects his catch as a cat walks past him at Gaza Seaport, after Israel allowed fishermen back to work up to 15 nautical miles offshore following an agreement to end a week-long escalation between Israel and Palestinian militant groups, in Gaza City

# Taliban return to Doha setting stage for Afghan peace talks

With many of the Taliban leadership council living in Pakistan, Islamabad has been pressed by Washington to use its influence to push negotiations forward

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Islamabad, Sept 5: Taliban officials say a senior delegation returned early Saturday to Qatar, paving the way for the start of peace talks with the Afghan government that are expected to take place in the tiny Gulf state.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to the media. The negotiations are the second, critical part to a peace deal the US signed with the Taliban in February in Doha.

Washington has ramped up pressure on Afghans on both sides of the conflict to get started with their negotiations to decide what a post-war Afghanistan might look like, how rights of women and minorities would be protected, and how the tens of thousands of armed Taliban



Representational image

and government-allied militias are disarmed and re-integrated.

The US Security Adviser Robert O'Brien had a long call with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani last week. American officials have also pressed neighbouring Pakistan to get the Taliban to the table. Relentless delays over the exchange of prisoners — 5,000 held by the Afghan government and 1,000 by the Taliban — have hindered efforts to get intra-Afghan talks started.

In late August, a delegation led

by the Taliban's political office head and the chief negotiator of the February deal with the United States, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar came to Pakistan. While little was revealed about the details of his meetings with Pakistani officials, it is believed he was pressed to get started with intra-Afghan talks.

With many of the Taliban leadership council living in Pakistan, Islamabad has been pressed by Washington to use its influence to push negotiations forward. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has repeatedly said he wants peace talks started and that a military solution for Afghanistan is impossibility.

Pakistani officials reportedly met a second time with Baradar on Friday before his return to Doha again pressing for a swift start to Afghan peace talks, it is believed.

# Fire under control, says Lankan Navy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Sept 5: The fire on board an oil tanker off Sri Lanka's coast has been brought under control with India's help and it was towed to the deep sea away from land, the Navy said Saturday.

The ship was carrying 270,000 metric tonnes of crude oil from Kuwait to India. The Sri Lankan Navy on Friday confirmed that a Filipino sailor died in the boiler explosion in the engine room of the Panama registered tanker MT New Diamond that caught fire Thursday.

Indian ships were supporting the Lankan Navy to douse the flames on the tanker off the coast of Sangamankanda in the eastern district of Ampara. "The fire on board MT New Diamond has been successfully contained to a greater extent and it lies about 35 nautical miles at 5:30 am. As a result of the combined operation, the ill-fated oil tanker has been secured from all sides," the Lankan Navy said in a press release.

# Toddler killed in shooting

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Baton Rouge (US), Sept 5: A toddler was fatally shot while riding in a vehicle along a Louisiana road late Friday in a shooting that was condemned by the city's mayor.

Ivorie Combs, 4, was identified early Saturday as the child who was killed, Baton Rouge Police Sgt. L'Jean McKneely Jr said in a news release. Detectives believe a passing vehicle opened fire on the vehicle Combs was riding in, and the child was struck. Combs was pronounced dead at the scene.

The driver of the vehicle crashed during the shooting and was taken to a hospital with injuries, McKneely said. A photo from WAFB-TV appeared to show a car overturned at the scene. A description of the passing vehicle wasn't immediately available. No suspects or arrests were announced in the Saturday morning release.

# Spanish docs hope beach trips can help ICU virus patients

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, Sept 5: After nearly two months of being sedated and connected to IV lines in a hospital's intensive care unit, Francisco Espana took a moment to fill his ailing lungs with fresh air at a Barcelona beachfront.

Lying on a hospital bed at the beach promenade and surrounded by a doctor and three nurses who constantly monitored his vital signs, Espana briefly closed his eyes and absorbed as much sunshine as possible. "It's one of the best days I remember," he said.

A medical team at the Hospital del Mar — the Hospital of the Seas — is seeing if short trips to the beach just across the street can help

COVID-19 patients after long and sometimes traumatic ICU stays. Dr. Judith Marin says it is part of a program to "humanize" ICUs that the group had been experimenting with for two years before the coronavirus hit Spain.

The strict isolation protocols that have had to be adopted since mid-March undid months of efforts to integrate ICU patients with professionals in the rest of the hospital, the doctor said. In April, the hospital was operating several additional ICU wards and expanded its normal capacity of 18 patients to 67.

"It was a big blow, coping with scarce resources and with a big emotional toll among the medical workers. We had to roll back all



this great work that we had been doing in the field of therapeutic care," Marin said. "We were suddenly reverting to the old habits of keeping relatives away from their loved

ones. And it's really hard to convey bad news over a phone call."

Since restarting the program in early June, doctors said that even 10 minutes at the beach seems to

improve a patient's well-being. The team wants to take this anecdotal evidence further, and see whether such outdoor trips can help in the mid- and long-term recovery of COVID-19 patients.

Spain managed to bring down its infection curve with a strict three-month lockdown that ended June 21. But the country now leads Europe's new wave of infections, with a surge that has brought to the total number of cases to nearly half a million. At least 29,400 people have died in Spain. "It's important to keep in mind the emotional well-being of patients and to try to work on it in the early stages of the recovery," added Marin.

For Espana, who works in a

local market and has a passion for music, his memories of 52 days in intensive care are "cloudy." "They say I've overcome something really big. I am starting to realize that I should be very happy," the man known to his friends as "Paco" said as joggers and passers-by were attracted by the sight of a hospital bed under the boulevard's palm trees beside the Mediterranean.

"The Paco we said goodbye to was in a very bad state. He couldn't talk and he could hardly breathe, he was choking," said Xavi Matute, a longtime friend who was with Espana when an ambulance brought him to the hospital. Matute was back on Friday to greet his friend.



**If government can condone the loans of certain sectors, we the traders of India are simply demanding to off load us from bank interests and other liabilities for the time being**  
PRAVEEN KHANDELWAL | SECRETARY GENERAL, CAIT

## CHINESE CHIPMAKER TO BE BLACKLISTED

The Trump administration is considering whether to add China's top chipmaker SMIC to a trade blacklist, a Defense Department official said, as the US escalates its crackdown on Chinese companies



## of the day quote

Cloud is undoubtedly the dominant force, driving change in the industry...the labs in India - our software labs and hardware labs - are driving innovative solutions and developing capabilities for IBM cloud offerings, which are made in India for India and the world



SANDIP PATEL | INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA MD, IBM

The near-term outlook remains uncertain as consumer trends and industry dynamics constantly evolve in the backdrop of the yet unfolding impact of the pandemic and shape of economic recovery



SANJIV PURI | CHAIRMAN, ITC LTD

The government is focusing on e-mobility by pushing for better infrastructure and providing incentive to EV manufacturers. Once the cost of EVs goes down, the demand will increase and this segment will be highly profitable



PRAKASH JAVADEKAR | UNION MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Explore smart solutions: Goyal

**New Delhi:** Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal Saturday asked the auto components industry to improve productivity and look at smarter solutions for becoming preferred suppliers to customers. While addressing the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association's 60th annual session, the minister said that there is a huge demand for trusted partners in resilient global supply chains. "We should start taking measures to tighten the belt, improve productivity and start looking at every element of cost," he added.

### FADA appoints Gulati as prez

**New Delhi:** The Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) Saturday announced appointment of Vinkesh Gulati as its new president. Gulati, Director of United Automobiles based out of Allahabad and Faridabad, takes over from Ashish Harsharaj Kale and his tenure will be from 2020 to 2022, FADA said in a statement. His appointment was approved at the 29th governing council meeting of FADA, it added.

### Happiest Minds raises ₹316 cr

**New Delhi:** IT services firm Happiest Minds Technologies has raised ₹316 crore from anchor investors, ahead of its initial public offering that opens Monday. Some of the anchor investors include Government of Singapore, Goldman Sachs, Kuwait Investment Authority, Nomura Funds Ireland, Jupiter India and Pacific Horizon Investment. A total of 25 anchor investors have been allotted 1,90,30,541 equity shares.

### BPCL to offer stock options

**New Delhi:** State-owned Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) has offered its employees stock options at one-third of the market price as the company looks to reward staff ahead of its privatisation. The board of BPCL Friday approved the proposed Employee Stock Purchase Scheme to the specified employees through the trust mechanism, subject to the approval of the shareholders, the company said in a regulatory filing.

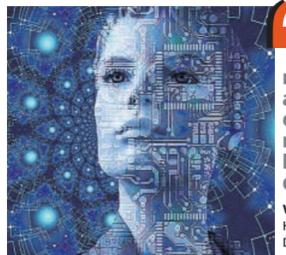
# AI-RELATED JOB HUNT ON THE RISE: INDEED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Sept 5:** Job searches related to artificial intelligence (AI) have risen 106% during June 2019 to June 2020 period, with accelerated adoption of AI-led technologies over the recent years in the country, according to a report by global job site Indeed.

This compares with the data of June 2018 to June 2019 from Indeed. Job searches related to AI saw 20% rise during March- July 2020 period amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the report added.

In the wake of the pandemic, industries across the board are witnessing an accelerated adoption of AI-led technologies in order to ensure business continuity dur-



**In light of our new reality in a post-pandemic world, the need of the hour is to reinvent existing tech to adapt to the new norms of social distancing and reimagine physical boundaries, and to drive innovation**

VENKATA MACHAVARAPU | HEAD OF ENGINEERING, INDIA AND SITE DIRECTOR, INDEED

ing the changed circumstances, the report said.

An increasing number of functions are being automated, creating a need for more skilled tech talent, it added. Job openings for AI-related jobs saw 28% increase from August 2019 to August 2020 while job

searches saw 91% spike.

Further, the report revealed that job postings related to AI have also seen a steady rise in the last two years, with 46% rise between June 2018 and June 2019, and 51% surge between June 2019 and June 2020.

The March-July 2020 period alone witnessed a rise of 17 per cent in job postings in this space.

A large number of companies, both within the technology sector and beyond, are seeking talent with specialised skills required to develop and implement machine learning solutions to post-COVID-19 requirements, the report observed.

In fact, it said several companies, and even job seekers independently, are actively pursuing avenues to upskill themselves in order to keep pace with the evolution of new-age tech.

"In light of our new reality in a post-pandemic world, the need of the hour is twofold - to reinvent existing tech to adapt to the new norms of social distancing and reimag-

ine physical boundaries, and to drive innovation in the creation of the tech solutions that are now required in the new normal," Venkata Machavarapu, Head of Engineering, India and Site Director at Indeed India, said.

With machine learning finding applications across sectors from healthcare, to digital finance to logistics, there are ample opportunities for skilled job seekers to explore, he added.

Further, a key application of machine learning has turned out to be in the ed-tech space, which is supporting the upskilling needs of job seekers, in order to ensure that they stay relevant in a rapidly advancing environment, the report added.

## Diesel prices now falling, petrol steady

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** The auto fuel seems to have switched sides over revision in rates with diesel prices now beginning to fall while petrol holding steady. The oil marketing companies (OMCs) on Saturday reduced the pump price of diesel across the country, the second such downward revision this week.

In the national capital, diesel prices have fallen by 13 paise per litre Saturday, bringing down the transport fuel price to ₹73.27 a litre. The price of diesel also fell on Thursday by 16 paise per litre.

While diesel prices have fallen, OMCs have kept the petrol prices steady. The fuel prices have remained at the same level so far this month. But petrol prices have been rising regularly since August 16, when it stood at ₹80.57 a litre in Delhi. The price of fuel may remain steady or fall in coming days as global crude prices have shown some indication of softening over expectation of a prolonged demand squeeze over Covid-19 disruptions.

# Foreign investors taking reform measures seriously

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Saturday said India's commitment to reform is being taken seriously by foreign investors, which is evident from the good inflow of FDI even during the time of COVID-19. Between April-July, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India stood at \$20 billion.

"India's commitment to reform is taken seriously by investors abroad and they take India to be a very desirable destination, otherwise we wouldn't be seeing good amount of FDI coming even during the pandemic time when India, as many of our critics would say, had the strictest lockdown," Sitharaman said.

Releasing the state rankings based on the implementation of State Business Reform Action Plan 2019, Sitharaman said that Aatmanirbhar Bharat would help India build on its strengths and become self-reliant.

"Aatmanirbhar Bharat will lead to greater export competitiveness, better pricing and quality of exports, which show the Indian skill of making things to perfection,"



## TOWARDS REVIVAL

There has been a good inflow of FDI even during the time of pandemic

The FDI into India stood at \$20 billion between April-July

**It is not for making India inward-looking, but to build on its strengths, one of the ways in which the country can become more competitive**

she said.

Sitharaman said Aatmanirbhar Bharat is not for making India inward-looking, but to build on its strengths, one of the ways in which the country can become more com-

petitive. In the states' ease of doing business rankings released Saturday, Andhra Pradesh retained the top position followed by UP and Telangana at the second and third spots, respectively.

Aatmanirbhar Bharat would help India build on its strengths and become self-reliant, said Sitharaman

# Auto industry needs to ramp up R&D: Kant

The Niti Aayog CEO said India's recovery is seen on the back of automobile and component manufacturing

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 5:** Centre's think-tank Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant believes that auto industry needs to ramp up R&D to create indigenous technology. Speaking at the 60th Annual Session of ACMA, which was held virtually on Saturday, Kant said the move will aid the country in reducing imports.

"There is also need for new synergies such as with IT industry in the areas of power electronics," he said.

"India must look at using the first mover advantage for producing all components for EVs, thus driving towards the path of being a future global leader."

According to Kant, with EV battery prices set to go below \$100, there is a huge opportunity in the sector to localise indigenous EVs.

"The future course requires to focus on local manufacturing and across tier 1, 2 and 3 suppliers as we believe all resources and capabilities are available in India," he said.

In his address to the session, Kant said India's recovery is seen on the back of automobile and



component manufacturing.

"We must make the Indian companies excel, capture the large domestic market and using it as springboard to penetrate the international market," he said.

"Level of localisation remains 20-30% in tier-1 auto components suppliers, which comprises low tech components provides a technological imperative to produce and source within India."

In addition, he said that being one of the largest employing sectors, the auto component sector employs 72% of the total workforce in the auto sector; 10 times the labour intensity of OEMs.

"With such potential, we believe that there is a need to create more jobs in the components sector with skill development programs in new technologies such as EVs," he said.

# Tata Motors MD urges stakeholders to collaborate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Sept 5:** Calling for a collaborative approach among stakeholders, Tata Motors MD and CEO Guenter Boutschek Saturday said there are new challenges for the automotive industry in the restart phase of the economy.

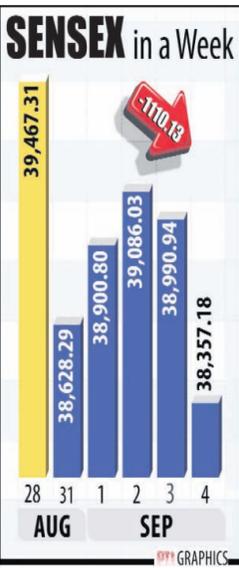
"Now that we are in the restart phase, new challenges like growing virus cases and acute shortage of labour have come up. The end of the lockdown doesn't necessarily mean that we are post-COVID, because it is still there, it can possibly create more intermittent disruptions," Boutschek said.

He was speaking at the 60th annual convention of the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) in New Delhi on Saturday.

Stating that COVID-19 has placed extraordinary, unprecedented demand on the industry, he stated that the pandemic hit the industry at a time when it was managing transition from the BS-IV fuel emission norms to BS-VI in a new fiscal while battling the extremely low activity and subdued demand in 2019-20.

The impact has been nothing short than devastating, he added. He said that supply chain disruption has been a significant problem for the automakers globally in this crisis along with funding issues, a slump in demand, among others.

"Collaboration in this new environment are equally important between our suppliers and strategic partners and OEMs," he said, while emphasising the need for working together.



# US DEBT WILL SOON EXCEED SIZE OF ENTIRE ECONOMY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Washington, Sept 5:** The US government's war against the coronavirus is imposing the heaviest strain on the Treasury since America's drive to defeat Nazi Germany and imperial Japan three-quarters of a century ago.

The Congressional Budget Office has warned that the government this year will run the largest budget deficit, as a share of the economy, since 1945, when World War II ended.

Next year, the federal debt — the sum of the year-after-year gush of annual deficits — is forecast to exceed the size of the entire American economy for the first time since 1946. Within a few years, it's on



**The Congressional Budget Office has warned that the government this year will run the largest budget deficit, as a share of the economy, since 1945, when World War II ended**

track to set a new high.

It might be surprising to hear that most economists consider the money well-spent — or at least necessary.

Few think it's wise to quibble with the amount of borrowing deemed necessary to sustain

American households and businesses through the gravest public health crisis in more than 100 years.

That's especially true, economists say, when the government's borrowing costs are super-low and investors still seem eager to buy its debt as fast as the Treasury issues it.

# Motor insurance: Keeping your vehicle monsoon-ready

People look forward to monsoon as a respite from the scorching summer heat. During this season they like to go on long drives with their friends and family. Although, it's fun to go on drives, it's important to know that not all roads are safe to drive with potholes here and there. Moreover, monsoon also leads to slow traffic, especially in cities. Hence, it becomes crucial to take utmost care of yourself and your vehicle during this season.

It's during monsoon that most vehicle owners incur huge expenses for the repair and maintenance of their vehicles and hence it becomes necessary to take precautionary measures to minimise excessive damage. Some of the safety checks that you need to do for your vehicle during monsoon are scrutinising various vehicle

parts. For instance, look out for damaged wiper, discoloration and cracks on your wiper blades, as it may otherwise affect clarity while driving. Due to slower traffic, brakes face the maximum load, hence it's crucial to check if they are functioning fine.

However, even after taking good care of your vehicle, there are various risks which are unpredictable. Here's where a comprehensive motor insurance comes to your rescue wherein it not only provides third party cover which is mandatory, but also covers damages to the vehicle which is known as 'own damage cover'. I believe that over and above a standard comprehensive motor insurance cover, one should look at opting for various add-on covers based on the vehicles age and their specific requirements. Below are some of the add-ons which are a

must have:  
**Engine Protector:** A standard motor insurance policy does not cover damages to the engine by water intake. Hence, if you stay in an area that is prone to flooding during monsoon, this add-on cover is a must for your car. This cover provides coverage against damage to the car's engine due to water ingress leading to hydrostatic lock. It also covers instances like leakage of lubricating oil and damage to the gearbox.

**Zero Depreciation Cover:** Depreciation refers to the decline in the value of your vehicle considering factors like age, wear and tear and obsolescence.



ADITYA SHARMA

Usually, in case of claim under any comprehensive policy, the insured receives an amount that is subject to depreciation

**24\*7 Roadside Assistance:** This is another important add-on that should not be missed especially during the rains. It provides emergency roadside assistance services like help in changing flat tyres and other minor spot repair services, alternative travel arrangements, emergency fuel refilling, towing facility on a 24x7 basis.

**Conveyance Benefit Cover:** In case your car is being repaired at a workshop post accidental damage and the claim for the same has been accepted by the insurer, you can claim conveyance till the time your vehicle is in the workshop (maximum

upto 15 days).

**Tyre safeguard:** Tyres are the most affected parts in monsoon and their chances of getting these damaged due to accidents are high. Usually, a standard policy covers upto 50% in case of tyres getting damaged due to accident. With this add-on, you get 100% coverage for damage to tyres as well.

Over and above opting for these add-on covers, in case of any damage, it is advisable to get in touch with your insurer at the earliest for claim, so that necessary assistance is provided in time. A comprehensive motor insurance is an indispensable tool for all vehicle owners to drive safely and worry-free.

(The writer is Business Head - Motor, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance)

KEY QUOTES

When I communicated my wish to leave to my wife and children, it was a brutal drama. The whole family began crying, my children did not want to leave Barcelona, nor did they want to change schools

Mateo is still little and he doesn't realise what it means to go somewhere else and make your life a few years elsewhere. Thiago, he is older. He heard something on TV and found out something and asked. I didn't want him to know anything about being forced to leave, to have to live in a new school, or make new friends. He cried to me and said 'let's not go'. I repeat that it was hard, really. It was understandable. It happened to me

I want to compete at the highest level, win titles, compete in the Champions League. You can win or lose in it, because it is very difficult, but you have to compete. At least compete for it and let us not fall apart in Rome, Liverpool, Lisbon. All that led me to think about that decision that I wanted to carry out

I thought and was sure that I was free to leave, the president always said that at the end of the season I could decide if I stayed or not. Now they cling to the fact that I did not say it before June 10, when it turns out that we were competing for La Liga June 10 in the middle of this awful coronavirus and this disease altered all the season

I told the club, including the president, that I wanted to go. I've been telling him that all year. I believed it was time to step aside. I believed that the club needed more young players, new players and I thought my time in Barcelona was over. I felt very sorry because I always said that I wanted to finish my career here

It was a very difficult year, I suffered a lot in training, in games and in the dressing room. Everything became very difficult for me and there came a time when I considered looking for new ambitions

Sending the burfax was making it official that I wanted to go and that I was free and the optional year - I was not going to use it and I wanted to go. It was not to make a mess, or to go against the club, but the way to make it official because my decision had been made. If I didn't send the burfax, it's like nothing happens, I have the optional year I had to have continued all year

Of course I had a hard time deciding. It does not come from the Bayern result, it comes from many things. I always said I wanted to end here. I wanted a winning project and to win titles with the club, to continue expanding the legend of Barcelona

And the truth is that there has been no project or anything for a long time, they juggle and cover holes as things go by. As I said before, I always thought about the welfare of my family and the club

Now I am going to continue in the club because the president told me that the only way to leave was to pay the 700 million euro clause, and that this is impossible

There was another way and it was to go to trial. I would never go to court against Barca because it is the club that I love, which gave me everything since I arrived. It is the club of my life, I have made my life here



'SPORT' went with the now infamous quote 'He stays' for their main headline. They also have a selection of quotes from Messi's interview but decide to go with a picture of the captain in the new home kit for 2020-21

MESSI STAYS

Barcelona overcome Mexit saga as Argentine to carry on at the Camp Nou, however he criticises club president Bartomeu for 'not keeping his words'

AGENCIES

Barcelona, Sept 5: Finally, after all the drama and speculations, Lionel Messi came in front of camera Friday to reveal his desire to carry on with Barcelona jersey. For days, the football universe was transfixed by where the Argentine star was going to end up.

The air is cleared by the talisman himself during an exclusive interview by 'Goal'. However, nothing will be same again.

Messi said that he craved the chance to play elsewhere, but under-fire president Josep Maria Bartomeu would not let him leave. The six-time Ballon d'Or winner believes he can technically walk away for free, but cannot face a battle with his club in court over the escape clause in his contract.

Instead, against his will, he must play out the final year of his deal with Barcelona, the club of his life since moving to the Catalan capital from Rosario as a teenager.

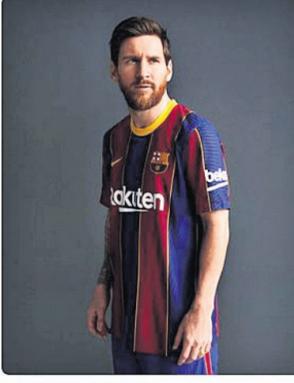
Now the questions arise, what is next for him, for the club which lives in Messi's image, for Bartomeu and new manager Ronald Koeman.

At least one thing is quite sure that the Argentine must take his PCR test for COVID-19 before making his return to training. He is likely to speak to his teammates, as the captain to explain his attempt for a departure.

"He's still in the group chat," said midfielder Frenkie de Jong tentatively earlier in the week, unsure if Messi would still be a Barcelona player when he returned from international duty with the Netherlands.

If any Barcelona player is unhappy with the club's talisman, it shouldn't take too long to win them over; giving his standing as possibly the best player of all-time, club's top scorer and an essential part of the team, one which they can't do without if they are to win any silverware.

A face to face talk between Messi and



Bartomeu in the coming weeks is also on cards. This would definitely be an awkward situation considering the way Messi accused Bartomeu on going back on his word about letting in the Argentine go. He also criticised a regime which has squandered hundreds of millions of euros on inadequate players.

The talisman will find himself in a different dressing room altogether as Ivan Rakitic moved to Sevilla. And the most important change he will encounter - the likely absence of his close friend and neighbour Luis Suarez who has been strongly linked to Juventus. Arturo Vidal, on the other hand, is being ushered out of the door too.

The winds of change are finally coming to Camp Nou, albeit a year or two too late. Messi has already pledged that he will give his all to the club this season.

"I will continue at Barca and my attitude

will not change no matter how much I have wanted to go," Messi told 'Goal'. "I will do my best. I always want to win, I'm competitive and I don't like to lose anything. I always want the best for the club, for the dressing room and for myself."

That's the one quote from the interview that Barcelona's official channels recognised, posting it under a photo of Messi in the new jersey.

Nobody should doubt whether Messi loves the good ship Barcelona; it's those at the helm he does not trust. That might include Koeman, who has achieved nothing of note at club level, despite a good spell with the Dutch national team.

Messi must put his thoughts of leaving aside and give everything he's got again this season, just as he has over the past two decades.

He may be surrounded by new, youthful players, rough around the edges, like Ansu Fati, Francisco Tincao and Pedri, but that vibrancy will help him at 33 as much as it might frustrate him too. He has to be the wise head on ageing shoulders.

At least he will be able to hear the applause he will get at stadiums around the country in his farewell year, as and when fans are allowed back into stadiums.

If this is indeed his final year - when Bartomeu goes, the next president might convince Messi to stay - he can agree a deal with clubs like Manchester City, Inter or PSG as soon as January, with club elections set for next March.

It remains to be seen whether they will be bumped forward again; there is a motion of no confidence against Bartomeu gathering pace. If Victor Font is appointed as the club's next president, he will bring Xavi Hernandez in as the first team coach, and Messi can discuss his future with his friend and former teammate.

Spanish media reactions...



'as' went simple with the headline 'I stay' alongside a picture of Messi and his quote that he would not go to court against "the club of my life." The front page also noted how Messi said Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu always told him he could decide his future at the end of the season but "did not keep his word"



'MARCA' are a little more downbeat. 'Messi stays and so does the crisis' is their take on recent events at the Camp Nou. Their front pages focus on Messi saying he wouldn't take the club to court and his criticism of the board: "There has been no project or anything for a long time, they juggle and cover holes as things go by"



'MUNDO DEPORTIVO' went for the headline - 'I will stay and give the maximum' - on its front page. The Catalan daily also has a selection of key quotes from Messi's interview, focusing on how he thought his time at the club was up, the upset it caused his family but how he refused to take Barca to court.



LIONEL MESSI WAS PREDICTABLY ALL OVER THE FRONT PAGES AGAIN SATURDAY FOLLOWING HIS DRAMATIC INTERVIEW WHERE HE ANNOUNCED HE WOULD BE STAYING AT BARCELONA

NEWS IN BRIEF

IPL schedule to be released today

New Delhi: The much-awaited IPL schedule will be released Sunday, chairman Brijesh Patel said Saturday. All eight teams are currently awaiting the release of fixtures but due to different quarantine rules in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, IPL's operations team took time to finalise the schedule. "The IPL schedule will be released Sunday," Patel told PTI. It is expected that defending champions Mumbai Indians and runners-up Chennai Super Kings will be pitted against each other in the first game of this edition of the tournament September 19. The upcoming 53-day edition is by far the longest in the history of the league and the number of double headers is expected to be reduced this year.

Hamilton takes Italian GP pole

Monza: Formula One (F1) champion Lewis Hamilton set a track record at the Italian Grand Prix as he clinched a record-extending 94th pole position, nudging Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas into second place by just 0.069 seconds Saturday. But Ferrari's troubles went from bad to worse as both cars failed to qualify inside the top 10 at the team's home circuit for the first time since 1984, with Sebastian Vettel not even making it out of Q1. Leclerc qualified 13th while Vettel finished 17th after being hampered by traffic on his final lap. McLaren driver Carlos Sainz - who moves to Ferrari next year - was third, 0.808 behind the British driver and just ahead of Sergio Perez and Verstappen.

Rahman denied NOC to feature in IPL 2020

Dhaka: Left-arm Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman has been denied a no-objection certificate (NOC) by the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for the upcoming season of the IPL slated to be held from September 19 to November 10. According to a report in ESPNcricinfo, Akram Khan, the cricket operations chairman at BCB, said that Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka in October and November was the reason for the denial. It is said that KKR were interested to bring in Mustafizur at one point to replace Harry Gurney. Bangladesh are set to tour Sri Lanka for a three-Test series, scheduled to begin October 24 at a time when IPL will be on in the UAE.

Osaka overcomes Kostyuk test

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, Sept 5: Naomi Osaka spiked her racket after one errant forehand late in the second set at the US Open, then flung it the length of the baseline after a missed backhand return ceded that tie-breaker.

Sometimes, that's the sort of reaction it takes to right things for Osaka. And, perhaps surprisingly, she needed whatever push she could get in Friday's third-round match.

Facing an opponent competing in just her second major tournament, two-time Grand Slam champion Osaka eventually figured out a way to turn a tight one into a runaway and beat 18-year-old Marta Kostyuk 6-3, 6-7(4-7), 6-2 by claiming the final five games at Flushing Meadows.

After taking things out on her racket, Osaka sat with a white towel draped over head during a changeover. Still, she improved to 7-0 since tennis resumed after a hiatus of more than five months because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Next up for Osaka will be big hitter Anett Kontaveit, an Estonian seeded 14th. She had a much easier time in a 6-3, 6-2 win over No.24 Magda Linette.



NAOMI OSAKA

OTHER RESULTS

ATP's top-ranked Novak Djokovic took his win-loss record to 26-0 this season - and his winning streak dating to late last year is now at 29 matches - after a 6-3, 6-3, 6-1 victory over Jan-Lennard Struff

2016 US Open winner Angelique Kerber defeated 20-year-old American Ann Li 6-3, 6-4. Kerber's next opponent is another American, Jennifer Brady, a 6-3, 6-3 winner against Caroline Garcia

In the day's last women's match, two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitová and Noah Rubin 6-2, 6-4. The Indo-Canadian pair will next play sixth seeds Kevin Krawietz and Andreas Mies

The day ended with a meltdown by No.4 Stefanos Tsitsipas, who wasted six match points in the 4th set and fell to Borna Coric 7-6(7-2), 4-6, 6-4, 5-7, 6-7(7-4)

Indian Rohan Bopanna and his Canadian partner Denis Shapovalov advanced to the second round of the men's doubles event beating American rivals Ernesto Escobedo and Noah Rubin 6-2, 6-4. The Indo-Canadian pair will next play sixth seeds Kevin Krawietz and Andreas Mies

England beat Oz by 2 runs in T20 thriller

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Southampton, Sept 5: England beat great rivals Australia by two runs in a T20 thriller that went down to the final ball to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series here.

Chasing 163 to win at the empty Rose Bowl Friday, Australia collapsed from 124/1 after 14 overs to fall short on 160/6 in their first match of international cricket in six months because of the coronavirus pandemic.

After losing four wickets for nine runs off 14 balls, the Australians needed 26 runs off the final three overs, 19 off the final two and then 15 off the last, bowled by Tom Curran.

Marcus Stoinis hit a huge six over cover off the second ball to leave the tourists needing nine runs off four, but couldn't hit another boundary. Australia was handed a brilliant start to the chase as captain Aaron Finch (46) and David Warner (58) shared a 98-run opening stand. England eked out a total of 162/7 mainly thanks to Dawid Malan (66) and Jos Buttler (44). No other player



Tom Curran (R) celebrates with Eoin Morgan after closing out the game

reached double-figures, with Kane Richardson having figures of 2/13 and Glenn Maxwell getting 2/14. BRIEF SCORES: England 162/7 (David Malan 66, Jos Buttler 44; Kane Richardson 2/13, Glenn Maxwell 2/14) beat Australia 160/6 (David Warner 58, Aaron Finch 46; Adil Rashid 2/29) by two runs.