



SUPPORT FOR YECHURY

Congress comes out in support of Sitaram Yechury and others named in chargesheet in the Delhi riots case

TWO STATES | P7



UK EX-PMs SLAM BORIS

John Major and Tony Blair urge lawmakers to reject govt's plans to override the Brexit deal with the EU

INTERNATIONAL | P10



WRESTLER EXECUTED

Iran has executed national champion wrestler Navid Afkari for homicide during the 2018 anti-govt protests

SPORTS | P12

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Yes, I'm here to sign her. But I'm not a filmmaker. I run a news channel.

SHORT TAKES

Amit Shah admitted to AIIMS again

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who recently recovered from COVID-19, has been admitted to AIIMS here for 1-2 days for a complete medical check-up before the Parliament session begins, hospital authorities said Sunday. The 55-year-old minister was admitted to the hospital at 11 pm Saturday. Shah was earlier admitted to the AIIMS here August 18 for post-COVID care and discharged on August 31 following recovery, hospital authorities had said.

Raghuvansh Prasad Singh no more

Patna: Former Union minister Raghuvansh Prasad Singh died at AIIMS, Delhi Sunday, a close aide said. Singh died around 11am due to breathlessness and other complications, Kedar Yadav, who remains by the side of the septuagenarian, said. He is survived by two sons and a daughter, he said. Singh's wife had died earlier. Singh had fallen critically ill late Friday night and was put on a ventilator in ICU in the AIIMS, Yadav added. Earlier in June he had tested positive for COVID and was admitted at AIIMS.

Heavy rain in four dists today

Bhubaneswar: The State Meteorological Department Sunday issued warning of heavy rains in four districts Monday in the light of change in formation of depression in the Bay of Bengal. The department has issued Yellow Warning for the four districts which are expected to witness heavy rainfall. "Heavy rainfall very likely to occur at one or two places over the district of Malkangiri, Koraput, Gajapati, Rayagada," the department said in its evening bulletin. **P3**

WEATHER

BHUB

CTK

TEMP

MAX

34.0°C

34.6°C

MIN

26.5°C

25.0°C

Humidity

80%

75%

Rainfall

1.2mm

Nil

Forecast

Light rain likely

MONSOON SESSION

Govt statement on LAC standoff likely

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 13: The Centre is likely to make a statement in Parliament on the India-China standoff, sources said ahead of the Monday's Monsoon Session. The matter was raised at the Parliament's Business Advisory Committee meeting Saturday, which was meant to discuss and slot agenda for business for the coming session.

Asked whether a statement will be made on the India-China stand-off, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said, "On Tuesday we will have a leaders' meeting and keeping in mind the sensitivities of the situation, and the strategic points, the government will take a decision and we will brief the leaders in the meeting". "We have said that the government is ready for discussion whatever the issue may be," said Joshi.

The government has been under consistent attack from the Congress leaders, spearheaded by Rahul Gandhi, over the stand-off with China at the Line of Actual Control, the de factor border between the two nations.

The transgressions by soldiers of the People's Liberation Army at Pangong

Lake and several other areas, have been escalating. On 15 June, 20 Indian soldiers were killed in the line of duty in Ladakh -- a first in more than four decades. Twice over the last two weeks, Chinese troops had engaged in provocative action in the south bank of the glacial Pangong Lake.

But India was able to "prevent these attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo" at the LAC, the Foreign Ministry had said, underscoring that there were no physical clashes.

The last action August 31 was a daytime operation during which Indian soldiers were surrounded by Chinese soldiers, who were trying to regain the heights that are being

dominated by the Indian Army.

Given the circumstances, the government would have found it difficult to avoid a discussion on the issue, sources said. Over the last months, Congress' Rahul Gandhi has directed frequent barbs at PM Modi and his government, demanding that the real situation at the LAC be revealed to the nation.

"The Chinese have taken our land. When exactly is GOI planning to get it back? Or is that also going to be left to an 'Act of God'?" the Congress leader tweeted earlier this week.

Earlier in the day, Opposition parties sought a discussion in Lok Sabha on the issues of economic slowdown, unemployment and standoff between Indian

and Chinese forces during a meeting of floor leaders of the House Sunday to discuss the agenda for the Monsoon session, DMK leader TR Baalu said.

A day before the start of the session, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla chaired the meeting of the business advisory committee (BAC) of the Lower House.

Opposition leaders have sought discussions on the standoff between India and China at the LAC, unemployment and economic slowdown, Baalu said.

The DMK leader said he has also sought a discussion on issues such as revising the creamy layer for OBC and non-payment of states' share of revenue collected under GST.

On Tuesday we will have a leaders' meeting and keeping in mind the sensitivities of the Indo-China border row situation, and the strategic points, the government will take a decision and we will brief the leaders in the meeting

PRALHAD JOSHI | PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS MINISTER

State's Covid tally breaches 1.5L; toll 626

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: State's Covid-19 tally rose to 1,50,807 with 3,913 more people testing positive for the disease Sunday, while 10 fresh fatalities pushed Odisha's death toll to 626, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW)

Khurda district reported the highest number of 556 fresh cases, followed by Cuttack at 382 and Puri at 212

department said.

The new cases were reported from all the 30 districts of the state. Of the fresh cases, 2,348 were reported from various quarantine centres and 1,565 were detected during contact tracing, the official said.

On the other hand, three new deaths were registered in Khurda district, two in Cuttack and one each in Balasore, Ganjam, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj and Subarnapur.

Ganjam accounted for 215 of the 626 fatalities in the state, followed by Khurda (92). As many as 53 Covid-19 patients have died in the coastal state due to comorbidities, the official pointed out.

Khurda district, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the

highest number of 556 fresh cases, followed by Cuttack at 382 and Puri at 212.

Odisha now has 34,849 active cases, while 1,15,279 patients have so far recovered from the viral infection.

The state has so far conducted over 24.23 lakh sample tests, in-

COVID UPDATE

With 3,913 more people testing positive for novel coronavirus, Odisha's COVID-19 tally rose to 1,50,807

Of the fresh cases, 2,348 were reported from various quarantine centres and 1,565 were detected during contact tracing

As many as 10 fresh fatalities pushed State's virus death toll to 626

cluding 48,504 Saturday, said the official.

Meanwhile, 395 new cases took the City's Covid tally to 16,240.

The Capital city reported another 395 Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the tally to 16,240, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) tweeted Sunday.

While 279 were local contact cases, 116 were quarantine cases, the civic body said.

The Temple City, on the other hand, registered higher recoveries in the last 24 hours. As many as 604 Covid-19 patients in the City recovered from the disease.

With this, the total number of recovered cases in Bhubaneswar rose to 11,430. The Capital city has so far witnessed 62 persons succumbing to the viral infection.

A migrant holds her baby as she runs to avoid a small fire in a field near Mytilene town on the northeastern island of Lesbos, Greece

AP/PTI PHOTO

Vig yet to dispose 69 cases

OF THE 349 CASES RECEIVED BY VIGILANCE & PROSECUTION CELL OF GA DEPT, 69 CASES ARE STILL PENDING IN THE ABSENCE OF CLEARANCE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: With a view to root out corruption, the state government had constituted a Vigilance wing under General Administration and Public Grievance department. However, delays in filing chargesheets and obtaining clearance from the Prosecution Cell has virtually nullified the purpose for which the Vigilance wing was constituted.

According to statistics released by GA & PG department, at least 69 cases received by the Vigilance Prosecution Cell are still pending. The Cell has received a total of 424 cases between 2014 and August 2020, of which 355 cases have been dis-

Year	No of cases received	No of cases disposed of	No of cases pending
2014	75	75	0
2015	123	120	3
2016	85	82	3
2017	48	43	5
2018	43	25	18
2019	31	10	21
2020	19	0	19
Total	424	355	69

posed off and remaining 69 cases are still pending.

Before filing chargesheets against senior government officials, the Vigilance wing seeks clearance from

the Prosecution Cell, which examines the evidences collected and other legal angles of the case. The Cell gives its nod once it is satisfied with the evidences collected, sources said.

The Cell has received 75 such cases in 2014 and disposed all cases. But, three cases received in 2015, three in 2016 and 5 cases of 2017 are still pending with the government.

Similarly, out of 43 cases received in the year 2018, the Prosecution Cell is yet to clear 18 cases. The number of pending cases increased to 21 in the last one year.

Besides, the Cell has received 19 corruption cases between January and August this year. Ironically, not a single case received this year has been disposed off so far.

Veteran actor Ajit Das passes away

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: Veteran Odia actor Ajit Das passed away while undergoing treatment at a private healthcare facility in the Capital city Sunday, family sources said, adding that he was 71.

Das had tested positive for COVID-19 September 1 and was undergoing treatment since then. The hospital and civic authorities were yet to declare the reason for his death till the last report came in.

He is survived by his wife and three daughters.

Odia film fraternity and several politicians expressed their deep condolences on the sad demise of the veteran artist.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has expressed deep grief at the passing away of veteran Odia film personality. Describing Das as a great genius, the Chief Minister said that he has left an indelible mark in Odia film industry as a versatile actor and director.

"A former head of the department of drama at Utkal Sangeet Mahavidyalaya, the demise of Ajit Das has created a great void in the Odia film industry which will take years to fill. Ajit Das will continue to live in the hearts of innumerable cine lovers of Odisha," Patnaik said. **More P2**

Chinese virologist claims nCoV was made in Wuhan lab

DR LI-MENG YAN, A SCIENTIST WHO HAS BEEN IN HIDING REPORTEDLY FOR FEAR OF HER LIFE, HAS MADE AN EXPLOSIVE CLAIM THAT SHE HAS SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE TO PROVE COVID-19 WAS MAN-MADE IN A LABORATORY IN CHINA

AGENCIES

London, Sept 13: A Chinese virologist who has been in hiding reportedly for fear of her life has stepped out into the public eye again to make an explosive claim that she has scientific evidence to prove COVID-19 was man-made in a laboratory in China.

Dr Li-Meng Yan, a scientist who claims to have done some of the earliest research into COVID-19 in 2019, made the comments during an interview on British talk show "Loose Women."

When asked where the deadly

virus that has killed more than 900,000 around the globe comes from, Yan -- speaking via video chat from a secret location -- replied, "It comes from the lab -- the lab in Wuhan and the lab is controlled by China's government."

Yan insisted that widespread reports that the virus originated last year from a wet market in Wuhan, China, are "a smokescreen."

"The first thing is the [meat] market in Wuhan ... is a smokescreen and this virus is not from nature," Yan claimed, explaining that she got "her intelligence from the CDC in China, from the local doctors."

Dr Li-Meng Yan

The virologist has previously accused Beijing of lying about when it learned of the killer bug and engaging in an extensive cover-up of her work.

She had said that her former supervisors at the Hong Kong School of Public Health, a reference laboratory for the World Health Organization, silenced her when she sounded the alarm about human-to-human transmission in December last year.

In April, Yan reportedly fled Hong Kong and escaped to America to raise awareness about the pandemic. Now, Yan said she is planning to

release scientific evidence to prove that the virus was made inside a lab in Wuhan.

"The genome sequence is like a human finger print," she told the talk show. "So based on this you can identify these things. I use the evidence ... to tell people why this has come from the lab in China, why they are the only ones who made it."

Yan added, "Anyone, even if you have no biology knowledge, you can read it, and you can check and identify and verify by yourself."

We may now know the origins of coronavirus, according to scientists

"This is the critical thing for us to know the origin of the virus," she said. "If not we cannot overcome it -- it will be life-threatening for everyone."

She said she is coming out now because "I know if I don't tell the truth to the world, I will be regretful."

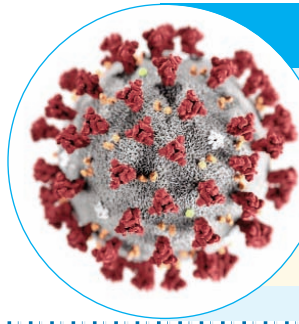
Yan also claimed that before fleeing China, her information was wiped from government databases.

"They deleted all my information," she told "Loose Women," claiming that people have been recruited "to spread rumors about me, that I'm a liar."



RELIGIOUS FERVOUR

Devotees take out a religious procession from the Gadagadia ghat of Mahanadi river in Cuttack to an altar at Pattapola to observe the Solapua Maa Puja, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	2,90,29,976	2,08,92,634	9,25,690
India	47,54,356	37,02,595	78,586
Odisha	1,50,807	1,18,642	626

Lopar over Bay of Bengal; heavy rains likely

Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Malkangiri, Koraput, Gajapati and Rayagada, says the weather department

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: The State Meteorological Department Sunday issued warning of heavy rains in four districts of Odisha Monday in the light of formation of a low pressure area in the Bay of Bengal. The department has issued Yellow Warning for the four districts which are expected to witness heavy rainfall as per the prediction of Met department.

“Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Malkangiri, Koraput, Gajapati and Rayagada,” the department said in their evening bulletin.

The department also said that south interior Odisha and few places over other districts may also see



THE DEPT ISSUES YELLOW WARNING FOR THE FOUR DISTRICTS

INTERIOR AND COASTAL REGIONS LIKELY TO BE IMPACTED

light to moderate rains. “Light to moderate rain or thundershower is very likely to occur at many places over the districts of South Interior Odisha and at a few places over the rest districts of Odisha, the bulletin

report from the department said.

The department, however, refrained from issuing any warning for the next four days. It has however also predicted light to moderate rain and thunderstorm

in parts of the state.

The state as per the department may see moderate rain Tuesday at a few places. Wednesday, however, light to moderate rain or thundershower is very likely to occur at a few places over the districts of interior Odisha and at one or two places over the districts of coastal Odisha.

The department on the other side also said that Thursday, light to moderate rain or thundershower was very likely to occur at a few places over the districts of interior Odisha and at one or two places over the districts of coastal Odisha.

The department said that Sunday, Daringbadi and Nayagarh reported the maximum of 3mm rainfall. It was followed by Angul which saw 1mm of rainfall during the day.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



BJD, BJP, Cong confident of winning 2 by-elections

POST NEWS NETWORK

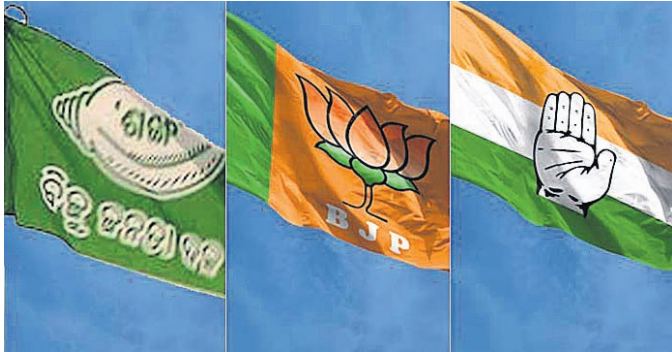
Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: The major political parties from the state have tightened their belts to prove their power and mettle in the upcoming Tirtol and Balasore by-elections.

The major parties in the state—Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress Sunday expressed their confidence of winning the elections.

The Congress party is said to have listed out six candidatures for the by-elections. For the Balasore seat, the name of Navjyoti Patnaik, son of Niranjan Patnaik is making the rounds. The party has been trying their best to increase the number of MLAs it can send to the Odisha Legislative Assembly from the existing nine to 11.

“We have filed our reports. We have recommended six names including the name of women candidates too. Navjyoti Patnaik is also a strong candidate for Balasore. He has the power and determination to fare well in the elections. We are going to increase the number of elections and bag the Tirtol and Balasore seats,” party leader Suresh Routray said.

The BJP on the other hand is working towards getting the right



THE CONGRESS HAS LISTED OUT SIX CANDIDATURES FOR THE BY-ELECTIONS

VERY SOON BJP'S PARLIAMENTARY BOARD WILL TAKE A DECISION ON THE CANDIDATES' ANNOUNCEMENT

BJD'S FIVE SENIOR LEADERS HAVE BEEN ROPED IN AND A PANEL HAS ALSO BEEN FORMED WITH THEM TO LOOK INTO THE POLLS

candidates for the polls. The party after picking up their choice of candidate will send it to the approval of higher authorities.

Party leader Prithviraj Harichandan said, “The party has planned for the seats. The selection of prospective candidates is going on and almost in the culminating phase. Very soon the Parliamentary Board of the party will take a decision on the same and announcements will be made accordingly. We are confident of winning both the seats.”

The ruling party-BJD has also tightened its belt to lock horns

with the Opposition parties and increase their base in the two Assembly constituencies. The party has given the charge of managing the affairs of the Tirtol by-elections to five important and senior leaders of the party like Pratap Jena, Sanjay Das Burma and others.

BJD leader Debasish Samantaray said, “Five senior leaders have been roped in and a panel has also been formed with them who will look into the elections. They will give their input to the party. The final calls on the candidates will be taken by the Chief Minister and BJD Chief Naveen Patnaik.”

Murder accused out on bail, victim's family 'threatened'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: The relatives of Amaresh Nayak, who was killed over a scuffle by a group of around 20 youths in October 2019, have alleged threats to their lives from the accused released on bail a few days back. As many as four persons accused of killing Nayak were granted bail by Orissa High Court recently.

Meanwhile, some even claimed that the scared family members of deceased Nayak have left the city following the release orders of the accused persons. The friends and relatives of Nayak are also in fear expecting revengeful attack from the accused on bail. That apart, the procession rally organised by the supporters of the accused from Jharpada jail to the accused home Thursday panicked the close friends and relatives of the accused.



4 held with 479kg of ganja, ₹9 lakh cash & luxury car

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: The Special Task Force (STF) of the state police Sunday arrested four persons after recovering a huge cache of ganja from their possession at Kasahalpur under Subalaya police limits in Subarnapur district.

The accused were identified as M Narayan Patra alias Munu of Kasahalpur, Sanjay Meswa of Kadaligarh in Redhakhol, Saurabh Kumar Barik of Birmaharajpur and Sushil Mishra of Madhya Pradesh, according to an official of the STF.

The accused were identified as M Narayan Patra alias Munu of Kasahalpur, Sanjay Meswa of Kadaligarh in Redhakhol, Saurabh Kumr Barik of Birmaharajpur and Sushil Mishra of MP

About the crackdown, the official said that acting upon a tip-off, they carried out a raid at a deserted location along Kasahalpur-Pitamahal Road and arrested the four.

“Ganja worth 479kg, Rs9,77,200 in cash, a pickup van and a luxury four-wheeler were recovered from them. A case (70/ 2020) has been registered with Subalaya police,” the official pointed out.

Green activists are opposing govt's riverfront projects

Recently, the NGT in a case took objections to the encroachments in the flood areas of Mahanadi riverside

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: Several environmental activists from and outside the state are battling for non interference of the natural flow of the rivers like Mahanadi in view of the riverfront projects of the government.

This comes after the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in a recent case took objections to the en-

croachments in the flood areas of the riverside. It recently asked the state government to inspect the areas in Cuttack along Mahanadi river to see the encroachments in the region.

Biswajit Mohanty from the Wildlife Society of Odisha cited the example of Mahanadi river of Cuttack and satellite images of the area of 2017 and 2020 hinting at human interference in the river flow and artificial obstructions created.



Representative pic

“This was an indication on how the ecology was murdered in daylight in the name of riverfront. This will further threaten the river

flood as because the bed of the river is being squeezed and thereby floodwater will impact the nearby city,” he said.

Sankar Prasad Pani, an environmentalist and lawyer with the National Green Tribunal (NGT), meanwhile, demanded a stringent law to protect the river from getting distorted in the name of developmental projects.

“The governments are trustees of the natural resources. They should never try to obstruct the natural flow of the river or interfere with their flood plains and other riverside areas in the name of development. This can have adverse

ecological impacts,” he said.

The discussions were held on the issue of riverfront development in a webinar organised by the Odisha Environmental Collective. Himanshi Thakkar from South Asia Network of Dam River and People, New Delhi said that while the whole world is looking for more space for river, many institutions and government are doing the opposite.

Shailaja Deshpande of Jivit Nadi Foundation Pune emphasised that the river should be allowed to flow on its own term and tampering its flow in the name of “River Front” will have adverse impact on river ecology.

HOW TO SAVE JAGATSINGHPUR FROM FLOODS

Researchers at IIT-Bombay and the TERI Institute of Advanced Studies develop a new risk mapping tool for the flood prone district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay and the TERI Institute of Advanced Studies, New Delhi have developed a new risk mapping tool for flood prone Jagatsinghpur district.

The study said that substantial research had been put into addressing the compound impacts of rainfall and surge on coastal flooding but an understanding of the individual impacts of rainfall and storm-tide is crucial for long-term flood planning and management and has not been investigated.

Mohit Mohanty, one of the researchers engaged in the study, told **Orissa POST**, “In this research

work, we developed a new metric named ‘Tide-rainfall flood quotient’ to identify the dominance of either tide or rainfall to flooding over any coastal region in the globe. We have demonstrated the performance of this metric over three flood-prone regions in India, namely Jagatsinghpur district (in Odisha), Mithi catchment (in Mumbai) and Chennai Metropolitan Area (in Chennai).”

He also said, “The new metric throws light on existing knowledge gaps on the propensity of coastal flooding induced by the marginal/individual contribution of tide and rainfall. It shall prove useful in rationalising strategies customisable for storm-tide and pluvial dominated global



Representative pic

coastal regions.”

The present study explored characteristics of coastal catchments by developing a new metric—Tide-Rainfall Flood Quotient (TRFQ) which classifies them into ‘storm-tide dominated’ and ‘pluvial dom-

A FEW FINDINGS

The flatness of the terrain in the dist is not conducive for easy drainage of floodwater to the Bay of Bengal, consequently progressing the flooding extent and hazard with time

This is why the ‘high’ and ‘very-high’ hazard spots continue to increase at higher rainfall elevations

great value by bringing a new dimension to the widely practiced flood-risk maps,” Mohanty said.

“Our goal in this paper is not to identify the compound behavior or understand the joint occurrence of flood drivers that have been extensively researched before, but to develop an incisive measure to explicate the marginal/individual contribution of storm-tide and rainfall to coastal flooding,” the report said.

The report said that Jagatsinghpur region in Odisha is identified as a severe flood-prone region as it faces severe floods recurrently during monsoon. This region, in the shape of a trigon, is surrounded by Rivers Mahanadi and Devi on two sides and the Bay of Bengal on the other side. The heavy streamflow from

these rivers inundates the floodplains, while tide along with surge during post-monsoon cyclones affects the coastal villages.

“The flatness of the terrain in this region is not conducive for easy drainage of floodwater to the Bay of Bengal, consequently progressing the flooding extent and hazard with time. This is why the ‘high’ and ‘very-high’ hazard spots continue to increase at higher rainfall elevations,” the report said.

Interestingly, the storm-tide impact is prominent even at lesser design elevations due to the presence of vast intertidal areas and complex network of small streams as they continue to inundate larger areas in the coastal stretches with ‘high’ and ‘very-high’ hazard, the report said.

Rising nCoV cases worry Khurda dist

The people and shopkeepers in all Red zones across the district will be asked to test their swab samples

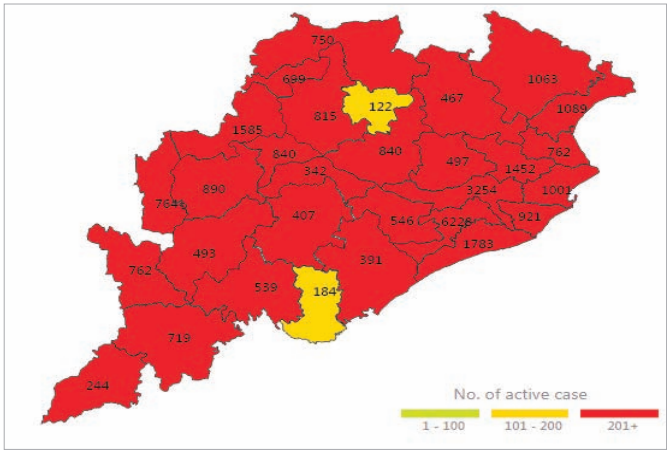
POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Sept 13: Surge in positive cases for Covid-19 in the rural areas of Khurda district has become a matter of concern for the district administration.

As many as 325 positive cases were reported from the rural pockets of the district Sunday. "A total of 325 people have been tested positive for the deadly virus from Khurda district excluding the localities coming under the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) while altogether 308 people have recovered from the Covid-19 infections Sunday. On the other hand, the virus claimed the life of a person," said sources in the district administration.

As per the data, altogether 23 persons from Baliaata block have been tested positive for Covid-19 Sunday while the number was 31 from Balipatna, 13 from Bhubaneswar block, 53 from Jatni, 63 from Khurda, 29 from Begunia, 27 from Bolagarh, 53 from Tangi, 16 from Banpur and 17 from Chilika block.

The administration, meanwhile, has initiated measures to take stern action against people and organisations who flout the Covid-19 norms. "We will collect fines from people who do not wear masks and violate the social distancing norms



at public places. No violator would be shown any mercy," said an official of the district administration.

Sources in the district administration have claimed that several enforcement squads have been deputed to the rural areas of Khurda to ensure social distancing and other precautionary measures at market places. "The enforcement squads are inspecting the market places in three phases from 6 am to 7 pm daily," said the official.

It is learnt that the administration has launched a Ganjam-style operation in Khurda rural areas to check the virus spread. "Strict enforcement of Covid-19 norms, contact tracing and testing of more number of samples have helped

Ganjam administration to check the virus spread. Now, we are following the same methods in Khurda to deal with the pandemic," said a source in the district administration.

The people and shopkeepers of all Red zones in the district will be asked to test their swab samples, said the administration.

Collector Sanat Mohanty, meanwhile, sought cooperation from the people to tackle the pandemic. "We have sought the help of local committees to fight virus. Our BDOs, Tehsildars and other senior officials are supervising the operations against Covid-19 pandemic. We urge people to follow the Covid-19 norms strictly," Mohanty said.



People queuing up at a counter to collect tickets for visiting the Blue Flag beach in Puri, Sunday. Many of them were seen flouting the Covid-19 norms OP PHOTOS

Huge croc spotted in Ganjam paddy field

POST NEWS NETWORK

Digapahandi, Sept 13: Digapahandi forest officials with the help of local police rescued a six-foot-long crocodile from a farmer's paddy field Saturday afternoon.

It was a few farmers of Talasingi village of Kaithakhandi panchayat under Digapahandi block in Ganjam district who first spotted the giant reptile in the paddy field. They were frightened at first and then they informed Simanchal Panigrahi, the owner of the paddy field. They were on their way home when they spotted the reptile.

As the news spread, people from



the village and nearby villages gathered at the spot to have a look at the crocodile. Meanwhile, panchayat samiti member Arun Gouda had al-

ready informed the forest department and police.

After a while, forest department officials and a police team led by

Digapahandi IIC Basant Kumar Sethi reached the spot. While the police controlled the crowd, following the directions of Digapahandi ranger Pramod Khadgaray, the forest department officials including forest guard Muralidhar Nayak and Sujata Rath with the help of some policemen and local social activist Kishore Shukla rescued the amphibian and then released it in nearby Ghodahada dam reservoir.

When asked, ranger Khadgaray said the crocodile was swept away in the canal water of Ghodahada dam. Then it had crawled into the paddy field. While it is aged about four years, its length is about six feet.

State Cong in-charge is Covid-19 positive

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: The newly appointed in-charge of Odisha Congress A.Chella Kumar Sunday said that he was infected with Covid-19.

This comes days after his appointment by the All India Congress Committee (AICC) as the in-charge of the Odisha Congress in a major reshuffle of the party posts by the AICC.

The leader took to Twitter to announce the same. He said, "I have been tested positive for Covid-19. I would like to request to all those who had come in contact with me the past few days to get themselves tested as a precautionary measure. Stay Safe (sic)."

Rourkela police bust 4-member robbers' gang

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Sept 13: In a major breakthrough, Bondamunda police busted a four-member gang of thieves of Rourkela in Sundargarh district Saturday afternoon, the police sources informed.

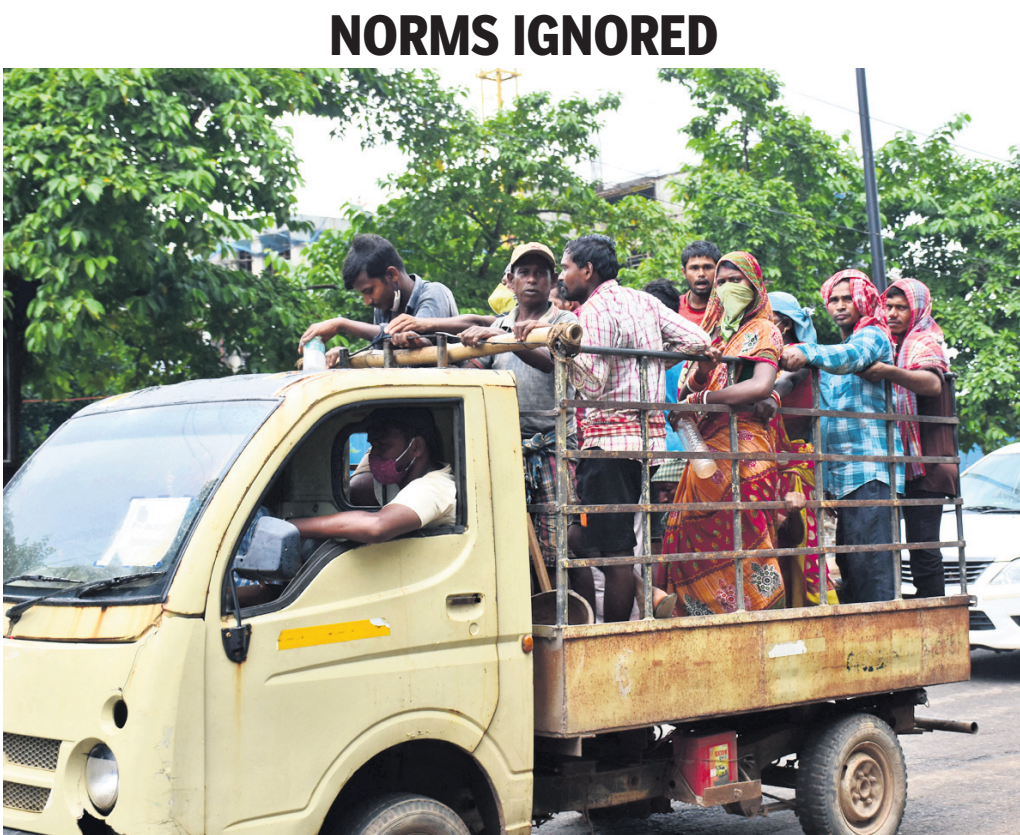
The arrested youths were involved in a number of thefts under Bondamunda, Lathikata, Brahmanitaranga and Raghunathpali police limits.

A special team of police had kept vigil on the activities of the accused leading to their arrest

Bondamunda police have recovered nine mobile phones, 17gm of gold ornaments, a Bullet motorcycle, a CD deluxe bike, a laptop, a scooter and an Apache bike from their possession.

Acting on a directive issued by Rourkela Superintendent of Police (SP) K Siva Subramani, a special team of police had kept vigil on the activities of the accused leading to their arrest.

The accused were forwarded to a local court. Bondamunda police launched investigations. Rourkela police have become more aggressive in dealing with criminals, following a directive from the SP.



Flouting the Covid-19 guidelines, workers travel in a vehicle on the Janpath in Bhubaneswar, Sunday OP PHOTO

NORMS IGNORED

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: As agriculture plays a vital role in the economy and livelihood of the majority of people, the Odisha government is according priority to the farm and allied sector to provide opportunities to young entrepreneurs, a senior official said.

Adequate measures should be taken to encourage young entrepreneurs to make use of the opportunities of the schemes of the Centre and the state government for agricultural growth of the state, and investment in the sector, said Agriculture Secretary Saurabh Garg.

Schemes like Agriculture Infrastructure Development Funds, Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture and

Mukhyamantri Krushi Udyoga Yojana will strengthen the states' economy while ensuring its agricultural growth, Garg said addressing a webinar.

The webinar titled 'Agri-Business: Scopes and Opportunities' was organised Saturday by Odisha Corporate Foundation (OCF), a non-profit organisation.

Noting that Rs 1 lakh crore loans will be provided to the farmers in the country by banks and other institutions under the Agricultural Infrastructure Fund, he said Odisha farmers can avail loans of Rs 2,500 crore under this fund.

Farmers as well as those keen to invest in agriculture and allied fields should reap the benefits, he added.

Director, Agriculture and Food Production, M Muthukumar said the use

The use of new technologies and the availability of proper agri infrastructure will help the younger generation to take a plunge into the sector

M MUTHUKUMAR | DIRECTOR, AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PRODUCTION

Schemes like Agriculture Infrastructure Development Funds, Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture and Mukhyamantri Krushi Udyoga Yojana will strengthen the states' economy while ensuring its agricultural growth

SAURABH GARG | SECRETARY, AGRICULTURE DEPT



of new technologies and the availability of proper agri infrastructure will help the younger generation to take a plunge into the sector.

However, a lot needs to be done to encourage the youth to tap the vast potential of the farm sector, he said, while throwing light on proper storage of paddy and vegetables as the state produces a huge volume of these.

Director of Horticulture Rohit Kumar Lenka emphasised on the need for trans-

forming agriculture into agri-business and emphasised on identifying and sorting out obstacles with regards to adopting modern technologies.

There is no dearth of schemes for this transformation. But, the youth needs encouragement and proper guidance to avail benefits of these schemes, he said.

Interested people will get all support from the government in this regard, he said, urging the youth to invest in floriculture, mushroom cultivation and pro-

duction of spices.

He also discussed subsidies made available in different schemes to develop infrastructure and storage of agricultural produce.

The state government is planning to promote one agri product from each district to encourage micro-enterprises. Besides, integrated supply chain hubs in two major cities - Bhubaneswar and Sambalpur - are on the cards, officials said.

Lenka also urged the bankers to favourably consider agricultural projects. The Agricultural Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha Limited (APICOL) is the nodal agency to bring enterprise into agriculture and will provide all support to the agri entrepreneurs of the state and the Non-Resident Odias (NROs) keen to invest in agri-business, said its managing director PK Roul.

Former Odisha Chief Secretary Bijay Kumar Patnaik encouraged the youth to embrace agriculture and allied sectors and feel proud to be farmers.

He encouraged them to opt for organic farming and floriculture for a profitable career in agriculture.

Organic farming combined with proper marketing is one of the most profitable occupations, Patnaik concluded.

Silver City's 4-year-old secures ranks in multiple record books

Devansh Agarwal, son of Sujit Kumar Agarwal and Neelam Agarwal, is yet to begin his formal school education

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Sept 13: A four-year-old boy of Kathagada Sahi here has registered his name in several record books for his exceptional talent in singing rhymes and telling stories.

Devansh Agarwal, son of Sujit Kumar Agarwal and Neelam Agarwal, is yet to begin his school education. But, he has entered into the India Book of Records, World Genius Records-Nigeria and Exclusive World Records for his extraordinary talent. Devansh has also won the Exclusive Talent Award-2020 for storytelling and singing of rhymes, sources said.

Family sources said Devansh can sing as many as 35 rhymes at a time. Similarly, he can tell several



stories at one go.

"We had uploaded a few videos of Devansh singing rhymes and telling stories in the social media in May this year. Later, the videos were sent to the authorities of Exclusive World records. Devansh secured a place in the record book after his videos were thoroughly examined by the authorities," said Sujit.

We had uploaded a few videos of Devansh singing rhymes and telling stories in the social media in May this year. Later, the videos were sent to the authorities of Exclusive World records

SUJIT KUMAR AGARWAL | FATHER OF DEVANSH AGARWAL

Brainstorming on agri entrepreneurship among youth

THE WEBINAR WAS TITLED 'AGRI-BUSINESS: SCOPES AND OPPORTUNITIES'

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Unknown disease stalks Malkangiri; toll 13

VILLAGERS DO NOT SEEK TREATMENT AT HOSPITALS, BUT REPOSE FAITH ON LOCAL QUACKS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Sept 13: A mysterious disease has reared its ugly head again in a tribal village of Malkangiri district, a report said. The unknown disease has claimed lives of 13 people within a month at Sodiguda village under Mathili block, even as panic gripped tribal pocket.

Villagers say, the disease starts with swelling of the body then the patient loses appetite. S/he gets weaker by the day and dies within a week. The village has lost 13 lives in a month.

Among the victims were Baman Madhi, Adma Sodhi, Midia Sodhi, Jasa Madhi, Laxmi Kabasi, Irma Kabasi and Mangala Madkami. Two children like Sanmati Madhi and Padma Madhi have lost their lives to the mysterious disease too. The residents say the disease is spreading fast in the village, they are living in panic.

As locals of this remote village lack consciousness, they swear by local quacks instead of doctors. Affected people have reposed faith in sorcerers or traditional



Mathili sub-divisional medical officer Dr Amiya Kumar Swain said patients from the village had come to the hospital about a month ago. He was affected by kidney disease, but there are no reports about the unknown disease from the village.

healers. Some villagers pointed out that the village headman advises patients to seek treatment from witch doctors.

Youths of the village said, villagers believe that healthcare is not properly taken care of at hospitals due to Covid situation.

It may be noted here that Kenduguda village with a population of about 400, under Malkangiri block had seen similar situations in May and June. By June 3, 2020, the

village has lost 15 Koya tribals to the mysterious disease.

Those who had died used to complain of swollen legs and swollen stomach. Local villagers said that most of those who died didn't have the strength even to walk or stand properly and suffered acute respiratory problems. Health officials had said those who died were aged between 25 and 65 and all of them showed symptoms like cold, fever, vomiting and swollen legs. The first

TRIBALS PANIC

Among the victims were Baman Madhi, Adma Sodhi, Midia Sodhi, Jasa Madhi, Laxmi Kabasi, Irma Kabasi and Mangala Madkami. Two children like Sanmati Madhi and Padma Madhi have lost their lives to the mysterious disease too

Affected people have reposed faith in sorcerers or traditional healers. Some villagers pointed out that the village headman advises patients to seek treatment from witch doctors.

death was reported February 24, 2020.

Mathili sub-divisional medical officer Dr Amiya Kumar Swain said patients from the village had come to the hospital about a month ago. He was affected by kidney disease, but there are no reports about the unknown disease from the village.

He added that a special medical team will be formed to take stock of the situation and collect blood samples.

Leopard skin smuggling racket busted, four held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, Sept 13: Nabarangpur forest officials arrested four persons Sunday for allegedly trying to smuggle a leopard skin in the district. The officials also seized a leopard hide from the four.

The department is yet to reveal the identifications of the accused as it fears it will hamper investigations. Currently a probe is on to find out if there are others associated with the four, said police officials.

The forest department was tipped off about the smuggling of the leopard skin. The department swung into action and a team of Tentulikhunti section was tasked with the duty. The team tracked the four near Nandahandi and apprehended them.

The four could not give any valid reason as to why they were in possession of the leopard skin. They were arrested under several sections of the Wild Life (Protection)



Forest officlas got a tip-off about the smuggling of the leopard skin and rounded up the four near Nandahandi

Act, 1972.

Two motorcycles and as many mobile phones were seized from their possession.

Notably, the Special Task

Force (STF) of Crime Branch had arrested three persons including the mastermind in connection with the leopard skin smuggling case in Nayagarh district in June 2020.

Acting on tip-off, the STF had raided a location in Giripuja jungle and nabbed two persons June 7. After interrogating them the STF had arrested the mastermind five days later.

From the trio, four leopard skins, two deer skins and some pieces of animal bones were seized.

Sandalwood worth lakhs seized, 3 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mohana, Sept 13: Mohana police of Gajapati district seized a vehicle transporting sandalwood timber worth lakhs of rupees near Chandragiri area in Gajapati district, Sunday.

Police said sandalwood timbers were being illegally transported from Gajapati district to Berhampur. Police arrested three persons after receiving information about the illegal transportation of sandalwood to Berhampur.

Police intercepted the four-wheeler at Chandragiri area and found sandalwood in the car. They seized the sandalwood weighing around 80 kg from their possession.

Aadhaar, PAN cards dumped under bridge in Deogarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Deogarh, Sept 13: Tension flared up when villagers had to collect their Aadhaar cards and other important documents from under a bridge near Ambha village in this district Sunday.

The villagers were shocked to know from an unknown person that their cards were lying dumped under the bridge. Losing no time, they rushed to the spot to check the veracity of the caller's claim and they found it to be true.

Sources said a villager was passing by the location when he spotted Aadhaar cards, PAN cards and

several other important documents dumped under the bridge.

He went down the bridge and even called up some people, informing them that their documents were lying under the bridge and asking them to come and collect those.

As the news spread, hundreds of local people gathered at the spot. Villagers held the Gogua village post office responsible for the mindless act. Later, a post office employee came up with an explanation that he was passing through the bridge when the bag slipped from his motorcycle. "After travelling 30 kms from the spot, I realised that the bag had fallen," he added.

Woman, daughter brutally murdered in Keonjhar dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Sept 13: A woman and her daughter were brutally murdered by miscreants in their home at Sankarpur village of Dhaladihi panchayat under Champua police limits in Keonjhar district Saturday, police informed.

The deceased have been identified as Saraswati Munda (35) and her seven-year-old daughter Lakshmi. According to reports, the mother-daughter duo was sleeping when they were killed late in the night. The killers barged into the house by breaking open the door. The five-year-old son of the woman was also sleeping with her. However, the

miscreants murdered the woman and her daughter and fled the spot.

The incident has triggered tension in Champua locality. On being informed, Champua police reached the village and launched an investigation. A forensic team also thoroughly scanned the crime area for any probable evidence. Police have recovered the bodies and sent to a nearby hospital for post-mortem. The reason behind the gruesome murder can only be ascertained after the post-mortem reports come in.

Sources said, the woman's husband is currently lodged in jail in connection with a murder case. So the revenge angle cannot be disregarded said sources.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Raisuan, Sept 13: People crossing Baitarani in creaky boats risking their lives is a routine sight at forested and tribal-dominated Kendughati village in Phulajhar panchayat under Bansapal block of Keonjhar district.

Villagers bemoaned, they have been suffering commuting woes over years sans a bridge while the district generates a huge amount of funds for district mineral fund foundation.

Many villages in the district are being connected with pucca roads funded by the district mineral fund foundation, but the village is deprived of a bridge, they lamented. The river Baitarani has been a curse for them even as the river is said to be the life-line of the district.

Over 2,000 people live in Kendughati and other villages which is surrounded by the river Baitarani and Malda rivers from three sides and a hill on the other side.



ENCIRCLED BY RIVERS AND HILLS

BAITARANI HAS BEEN A CURSE FOR THEM EVEN WITHOUT A BRIDGE ACROSS IT EVEN AS THE RIVER IS SAID TO BE THE LIFELINE FOR OTHER PARTS OF THE DISTRICT

THE PANCHAYAT OFFICE AND MARKETS ARE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVERS. THE RESIDENTS GO ACROSS THE RIVER TO GET PDS RICE AND OTHER PROVISIONS FROM THE PANCHAYAT OFFICE

Since the village is situated in a hilly area, a little shower can bring the rivers to their brims.

The panchayat office and markets are on the other side of the rivers.

The residents get PDS rice and other provisions from the panchayat office and buy daily needs from markets.

To reach the panchayat office

and markets, these villagers have to wade through water in dry seasons. But in the rainy season, crossing the rivers becomes an arduous task.

PASTORAL LIFE



A man taking out his herd of goats to graze in a forest on the outskirts of Angul

OP PHOTO

Coronavirus infects 26 BJD MLAs so far

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, Sept 13: BJD MLA (Baliguda) Chakramani Kanhar tested positive for COVID-19 Saturday evening. With him, 26 BJD MLAs have contracted the virus.

MLA Kanhar informed the media of him having tested positive for the disease and advised those who came in contact with him over last few days to take precautions and, if necessary, get themselves tested.

Informing that he is in home isolation, he said he had got himself tested at the Baliguda sub-divisional hospital and the report came out to be positive.

Besides Kanhar, BJD MLAs who have so far tested positive are Kendrapara MLA Sashi Bhushan Behera, Patnagarh MLA Saroj Meher, Nabarangpur MLA Sadasiva Pradhani, Laxmipur MLA Prabhu Jani, Anandapur MLA Bhagirathi Sethy, Khandapada MLA Soumya Ranjan Patnaik, Basudevpur MLA Bishnubrata Routray, Bhubaneswar North MLA Susant Rout, Bhubaneswar Central MLA Ananta Narayan Jena, Berhampur MLA Bikram Panda, Chandbali MLA Byomakesh Ray, former Badamba MLA Debi Prasad Mishra, Pottangi MLA Pritam Padhi, Bhadrak MLA Sanjib Mallick, Bari MLA Sunanda Das, Polasara MLA Srikant Sahu, Remuna MLA Sudhanshu Shekhar Parida, Jagatsinghpur MLA



Nabarangpur MP shows no improvement

Nabarangpur: Nabarangpur MP Ramesh Chandra Majhi who had tested positive for COVID-19 September 4, has been admitted to a COVID hospital in Bhubaneswar Saturday night for developing breathing difficulties. Besides, Minister for Textiles, Handlooms and Handicrafts, Padmini Dian was shifted from Jeypore COVID-19 hospital to SUM Hospital in Bhubaneswar Saturday. The BJD MP took to social media to reveal his diagnosis September 4. From them he had been in home isolation following the advice of doctors. As his condition deteriorated he was admitted in the COVID hospital. He also requested their friends who had come in contact with them last week to home quarantine themselves. It may be noted here that besides Majhi, earlier Bhadrak MP Manjulata Mandal tested positive for the virus.

Prasanta Muduli and Selapur MLA Prasant Behera.

They apart, six ministers Ranendra Pratap Swain, Tukuni Sahu, Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi, Susanta Singh, Arun Kumar Sahu

and Padmini Dian and two MPs Ramesh Majhi (Nabarangpur) and Manjulata Mandal (Bhadrak) have also tested positive.

Meanwhile, Minister for Textiles, Handlooms and



Oxygen level screening at Berhampur

Handicrafts, Padmini Dian and Nabarangpur MP Ramesh Chandra Majhi have been shifted to Bhubaneswar COVID-19 hospitals after they complained of breathing problems.

Maoists threaten to kill ex-sarpanch

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, Sept 13: Posters and banners allegedly put up by Maoists appeared at Kurtamgarh Bazar under Tumudibandh police limits Sunday. The ultras have threatened to kill former sarpanch of Kurtamgarh panchayat Sirish Kumar Mallick through the poster.

Panic gripped residents of Kurtamgarh area in the district, after the Maoist posters were seen



here. The posters also stated that, the Maoists killed in recent encounters with police are martyrs and their deaths will not go in vain, some villagers expressed.

Notably, security personnel had gunned down four Maoists

September 9 inside Sirki forest in Bhandarangi area on the border between Kalahandi and Kandhamal districts. Earlier, two Maoists were killed in an encounter inside a forest in Tumudibandh area July 23.

Tumudibandh police seized the posters. A combing operation has been launched in the infested area as Maoists have threatened to kill the former sarpanch. The CPI called for observing martyrs' day Sunday.

HERE, LIFE HINGES ON RICKETY BOATS

₹ 8-CR BRIDGE PROJECT REMAINS NON-STARTER AT KENDUGHATI OWING TO POLITICAL APATHY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Raisuan, Sept 13: People crossing Baitarani in creaky boats risking their lives is a routine sight at forested and tribal-dominated Kendughati village in Phulajhar panchayat under Bansapal block of Keonjhar district.

Villagers bemoaned, they have been suffering commuting woes over years sans a bridge while the district generates a huge amount of funds for district mineral fund foundation.

Many villages in the district are being connected with pucca roads funded by the district mineral fund foundation, but the village is deprived of a bridge, they lamented. The river Baitarani has been a curse for them even as the river is said to be the life-line of the district.

Over 2,000 people live in Kendughati and other villages which is surrounded by the river Baitarani and Malda rivers from three sides and a hill on the other side.

Residents lamented, "Our difficulties worsen in the monsoon, when we need to go to panchayat office, hospital and marketplace. We cross the river by the rickety country boat."

"It is always risky to use rickety boats to cross the rivers particularly when they are in spate. We have been leading a wretched life for years. The government has been constructing roads and bridges under various schemes. But we are not lucky as our pleas have fallen on deaf ears," others alleged.


The rivers also pose a threat to their farmlands as the floodwater gets their agricultural land sand cast and damage crops.

They have long been urging the government to mitigate their sufferings by constructing a bridge to their village.

It may be noted here that Rs 8.22 crore was sanctioned from the DMF for a bridge across Baitarani in 2017, but the project remained a non-starter due to political and administrative apathy.

“By your stumbling, the world is perfected.”

SRI AUROBINDO



Beirut must be saved

For millennia, Lebanon has been a meeting point for different cultures and peoples, and also a victim of regional power struggles that have stood in the way of lasting peace. Yet even through the country’s long civil war (1975-90), Lebanon’s capital, Beirut, managed to preserve its open culture. As a bastion of free media, creative literary forums, and renowned academic institutions, it is the pearl of the Middle East.

But historical wounds do not heal easily. Despite adopting a new constitution and achieving a national renewal after the war, the Lebanese political system has remained riddled with corruption, leaving the state weakened and the economy dysfunctional. As the country has stumbled from one crisis to the next, its leaders have made no effort to change course, fueling widespread discontent. On October 17, 2019, Lebanese citizens took to the streets nationwide, denouncing the political class and demanding the kind of radical institutional and economic reforms that the country desperately needs. But this was no “Lebanese Spring.” The demands were ignored, and Lebanon, like the rest of the world, soon found itself confronting the COVID-19 pandemic. For much of this year, the need for social distancing has effectively stifled popular mobilisations.

Then, on August 4, a massive warehouse explosion in Beirut’s port ripped through the heart of the city, killing some 200 people, injuring more than 6,000, and causing as much as \$4.6 billion in physical damage. And now, barely a month later, more fires are raging in the same part of the city.

The August explosion was a social, economic, political, and moral travesty. Beyond the immediate destruction of homes and businesses, it has also disrupted trade, and thus deprived the country of desperately needed revenues. The damage done to historic neighborhoods, livelihoods, and young people’s prospects is simply incalculable.

The blast was the culmination of decades of corruption, exploitation, incompetence, and irresponsibility. Since the end of the civil war in 1990, politicians and political parties whose ultimate loyalty lays with foreign powers have chronically neglected stewardship of the Lebanese state. In a sense, Lebanon has once again become collateral damage in others’ wars.

As the governor of Beirut, I am appealing to the international community to help us preserve our spirit of liberty, diversity, and intercultural exchange. Lebanon is now in the midst of a deepening economic and social crisis that demands immediate attention. Most urgently, the Lebanese health system needs direct support. As if the pandemic were not bad enough, the port explosion damaged or forced the closure of many health institutions, including the Saint George Hospital and the Rosary Sisters Hospital.

Moreover, Lebanon needs international assistance to revive its productive economic sectors. A meaningful contribution from global institutions could make a significant difference in putting the economy on the path to recovery. But there is also an urgent need for global advisory assistance to help Lebanon’s threadbare state agencies modernise their operations and implement growth enhancing reforms.

Similarly, Lebanon needs international financial assistance to support its education system. Without stronger public and private schools and universities, the country cannot continue playing its pioneering cultural role in the Levant. Already, Beirut’s mounting crises are bringing about a change in its identity, as young people pursue their ambitions elsewhere. To prevent a catastrophic brain drain, we must create more opportunities for study and personal development to keep our young people here.

Among the 300,000 inhabitants whose homes were damaged by the blast, many are now homeless and dependent on help from churches and local organisations. To get them back on their feet, we will need a more comprehensive and transparent system for sponsoring individual families, either through direct donor-to-household relationships or through trusted institutional intermediaries. According to the World Bank, Beirut’s public-sector “reconstruction and recovery needs for this year and the next are estimated in the range of US\$1.8 and US\$2.2 billion.” The work has already begun, and with the help of civil-society groups (including the Beirut Relief Coalition of NGOs, Caritas, Farah Al Ataa, Save the Children, the International Orthodox Christian Charities, the Saint Porphyrios Association, and many other non-governmental organisations), we are becoming ever more efficient. The task is to provide not just financial but also legal and moral support for those clearing the rubble, providing food and shelter to the displaced, and so forth. The blast must be used as an opportunity to initiate long-needed co-operation between the municipality of Beirut, the army, front-line NGOs, and international donors.

Such moral support has come from French President Emmanuel Macron and other foreign leaders who have visited Beirut in the weeks since the explosion. The recent agreement to install Mustapha Adeb as the country’s new prime minister can be seen as a direct result of French engagement.

But it is Lebanon’s civil society that must determine the country’s future. The political reforms that Lebanon needs must promote a non-sectarian national identity, which will require clear thinking, transparent dialogue, and good-faith leadership on behalf of all the country’s citizens.

The true value of the land of cedars – a tiny country covering just 4,036 square miles (10,452 km2) – is its identity as a haven for intercultural exchange, artistic creativity, and scientific research. Maintaining this identity will be possible only if the international community helps us to preserve a future for our young people. It is they who will embody any Lebanese Spring that awaits us.

The writer is Governor of Beirut. @Project Syndicate



Marwan Abboud

As the governor of Beirut, I am appealing to the international community to help us preserve our spirit of liberty, diversity, and intercultural exchange



Saeed Naqvi

THE SALIENCE GIVEN TO THE GANDHIS KEEPS THEM IN THE PUBLIC EYE AND THEREBY CREATES A MASSIVE ROADBLOCK IN THE WAY OF ANY OPPOSITION UNITY

If the Gandhi trio stirred themselves into action as a serious opposition, is there a possibility that they would end up in jail? If they were spared despite this affront, it would imply that the Modi outfit has come to the conclusion that the Gandhis are now totally harmless.

Requirements of the media in this regard are helpful to the Narendra Modi establishment in a peculiar way. It keeps the Gandhis in frequent focus with the express purpose of sustaining the delusion that they are still the rallying point for a national opposition. This salience given to the Gandhis keeps them in the public eye and thereby creates a massive roadblock in the way of any opposition unity, particularly since the Gandhis and their limping cohorts constantly “emote” an urge to “revive”.

They know that such a revival is impossible but the belief serves a purpose indicated above: it obstructs opposition unity. The media is content with the simplicity of the ‘tweedledum versus tweedledee’ narrative. After all, coalitions and regional diversities are complexities impossible to contain in sound bytes. In recent times, a story that has wafted out of the Gandhi enclosure is one of differences between them. Sonia Gandhi, with reliable retainers like Ahmad Patel, is averse to rocking any boat. Status quo, uncomfortable though it may be, is about the best she sees for the brood in the given circumstances. Her listless politics is also a function of her indifferent health.

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra’s status quoism derives from her personal anxieties, family problems and an inability to cope with responsibilities. Ask Kishori Lal Sharma, appointed years ago to nurse the “family burroughs” of Rae Bareilly and Amethi and he will guardedly spill the beans. The poor fellow’s Stan Hardy (as in Laurel and Hardy) moustache greyed waiting for Priyanka to address the “Congress volunteers”. But Priyanka, like Godot, never showed up.

Rahul Gandhi, meanwhile, is being more assertive about beliefs he has long held and which ap-



After the BJP’s stunning victory in UP in 2017, the Opposition, armed with data on electoral fraud, sought Sonia Gandhi’s permission to hold a press conference. She refused to get involved in “controversies”. Likewise, she backed away from “snoopgate” which had both Modi and Amit Shah in difficulties

proximate to the line Rajiv Gandhi enunciated at the 1985 Congress Centenary in Mumbai, chastising the “power brokers”. Is Rahul Gandhi looking for that kind of a platform? In 1969, when his grandmother, Indira Gandhi, split the Congress away from the “power brokers”, the regional satraps, the capitalists, eventually joined up with the Socialists and the RSS in the Bihar movement of 1974 under the leadership of arch Gandhian, Jayaprakash Narayan.

The 1969 Congress split had a Left-Right dimension to it because it was in the context of the Cold War. In the post Cold War world “inequality” has emerged as the principal affliction of democracies where people’s demands are dismissed as “populism”. Crony capitalism thrives but no political party is allowed to find its feet if it intends to harness the discontent of the people who have borne the brunt of, say, the extended lockdown in India.

There is a huge Left-of-Centre space for the opposition to occupy. It does not have to be terribly ideological. All it has to do is to make available to the people social benefits such as health, education, housing etcetera. Surely Rahul

Gandhi is aware of this opening, even though Sonia Gandhi is averse to any politics that would incur the wrath of the state.

Politics these days is at a standstill because of the lockdown, of course, but also because of what I call the “Eulalie” syndrome. This light-hearted diversion comes from Wodehouse. The resourceful Jeeves has come to the assistance of his master, Bertie Wooster, at a challenging moment. Spode, the Earl of Sidwick, has become a permanent social menace in a country house which is Bertie’s favourite haunt. How to cut down Spode’s bombast?

That is Bertie’s challenge. Jeeves provides the panacea. Bertie’s has to sneak upto Spode and whisper, “I know all about Eulalie.” Bertie follows Jeeves’ advice. The result is electric. Spode becomes white as a sheet and collapses in the chair like a deflated balloon. It turns out that before Spode began to float in London’s high society, he owned a store called Eulalie which sold lingerie known for its bras with bold designs. Eulalie, then, is harmless blackmail. But the blackmail which has become the staple in contemporary politics is brutal.

A whisper on the National Herald case or Robert Vadra’s land deals and Sonia Gandhi will begin to resemble Spode after the latter heard the threat made to him, “I know all about Eulalie.”

After the BJP’s stunning victory in UP in 2017, the opposition, armed with data on electoral fraud, sought Sonia Gandhi’s permission to hold a press conference. She refused to get involved in “controversies”. Likewise, she backed away from “snoopgate” which had both Modi and Amit Shah in difficulties.

Take a look at Lucknow. Jockeying has begun for the 10 Rajya Sabha seats from UP. Conventional wisdom concedes eight to the BJP and one to the SP. One would have expected the opposition to jointly keep the BJP out on the solitary remaining seat. But individual party leaders are in an almighty state of funk just in case the Enforcement Directorate comes knocking at their door.

Even though the opposition has a comfortable majority in the Upper House, the BJP rammed through nearly a hundred bills without any vote. A petrified Akhilesh Yadav is hiding behind columns to avoid political leaders who are pressing him to approach the Supreme Court. What if Yogi Adityanath sets the dogs on him?

In uniformed cities like New Delhi, these examples of the ruling party’s impunity, away from the media’s critical glare, enhance an impression of the BJP’s invincibility. Forgotten are dismal economic figures and the simple catalogue that the party is not in power in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal, Punjab, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Delhi. Just as your eye settles on these facts, India Today thrusts before you its poll results: Modi’s approval ratings are 78 per cent. Like the Priest in Kurosawa’s Rashomon, you walk away nodding your head, “What is the truth?”

The writer is a senior commentator on political and diplomatic issues. IANS

SPECTRUM HANDLOOM

Tapping technology: e-route to success



Sanjay Kumar Panda

THE SUCCESS OF INTERNET-BASED MARKETING OF THE SHRI GANEET SAREE SHOWS THE SCOPE FOR REDUCING THE TRANSACTION COST BY E-MARKETING

Actress Vidya Balan wearing the Shri Ganeet saree, woven with mathematical formula in the traditional tie & dye (Bandha) technique by Bhagabat Meher in the promotion of her film Shankuntala Devi, won huge appreciation. Later, the same saree was put to e-auction by a private firm and it fetched a high price of ₹55,000, which was paid to Meher. This has unfolded the power of marketing handloom on the internet. The newly constructed Odisha Krishi Bhavan, designed after the traditional tie & dye handloom fabrics, got the Dezen Award-2020 from a London-based entity, and this has further reinforced the uniqueness of Indian handloom.

A major challenge for handloom came from weaving in power loom. Availability of power loom fabrics of similar type at a lower price made marketing of plain handloom fabrics difficult. This scenario got further aggravated with implementation of the highly subsidised rural wage employment programmes like MGNREGA. Taking the case of Odisha, the daily wage for unskilled work like earth-cutting increased from ₹25 in 1990 to ₹207 now.

During this period, the daily

earning of a skilled handloom weaver increased from ₹200 to ₹500. In retrospect, earnings of the skilled weaver got proportionately reduced from eight times the wage of an unskilled labour in 1990 to only 2.5 times in 2020. This relative deprivation affected the economic, social and mental conditions of the weavers. There were requests for covering weavers under MGNREGA, which was declined on the ground that weavers are skilled and MGNREGA is meant only for unskilled labour.

An analysis of the costing of a typical handloom fabric would help in understanding the position better. Weaving of a silk saree (khandua pat) with traditional tie & dye design in Maniabandha area of Cuttack district requires about 500gm of raw silk. Cost of yarn, dyes and chemicals comes to about ₹2,000 per saree. The weaver earns about ₹2,000 for a saree; i.e. ₹500 for preloom tie & dye making and ₹1,500 for weaving on the loom. The total cost of production of one khandua saree comes to about ₹4,000. This is sold for about ₹6,000 to the customer. In this process, about ₹2,000 per saree goes as the transaction cost in various stages from the loom to

the wardrobe. With four days taken to weave a saree, the weaver earns about ₹15,000 a month by weaving eight sarees.

The success of internet-based marketing of the Shri Ganeet saree shows the scope for reducing the transaction cost by e-marketing. Connecting the producer weaver with the tech savvy new generation consumer within the country and abroad, digitally, will reduce the transaction cost, as also cost of transport and dispatch, to one level of dispatch by speed post/ courier. The transaction cost indicated above can be reduced from ₹2,000 to ₹500 per saree. This will place the weaver in an advantageous position; increase the demand and lead to an increase in the earnings of the weaver. The weaver will also get information about the choice of the consumer directly. A well-heeled consumer will not mind paying a bit more for the fabrics of his/her choice. The weaver will produce it virtually with same amount of material and labour. This new paradigm is the need of the hour.

The major challenge in operation of this new model lies in winning the trust of the consumer, which makes branding of handloom a

must. Keeping this in view, the India Handloom Brand was launched by Prime Minister Modi on the 7 August 2015. The producer weaver is required to submit an application with details about the fabrics and process to the local weaver service centre and to the development commissioner of handloom. After field verification, the applicant weaver is given the brand and details of composition, photo, and price of the fabrics and the weaver is hosted on official website of the Ministry of Textiles. This gives greater visibility to the fabrics (product) and the weaver. Interested buyers get details from the website and place order after making payment online to the weaver’s account. Thereafter the weaver sends the fabrics by speed post or courier.

The Atma Nirbhar Bharat announced by the PM in May this year envisages production with quality at a competitive price and this helps avoiding dependence on others, for exports too, where we have competitive advantages like PPE and N-95 masks produced for fighting Covid-19.

The writer is a former secretary to the Union Ministry of Textiles.

WISDOM CORNER

- “Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.” THE DALAI LAMA
- “Well done is better than well said.” BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
- “The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.” WALT DISNEY

WORDSWORTH

To boot

Let’s not be confused by apparent associations with boot for the heavyweight footwear, from which we also get boot in the sense of restarting a computer. The only one of three terms linked in this way is bootlegger. Booty comes from Middle Low German buite, exchange or distribution. To boot usually means “in addition, besides, moreover,” as here in Falk, by Joseph Conrad: “At all events he was a Scandinavian of some sort, and a bloated monopolist to boot.” The phrase can sometimes contain the idea of some positive outcome or advantage, not just something additional. In this, it’s reflecting its ancient origin in Old English bot, advantage, remedy. It’s of Germanic origin and is related to Dutch boete and German Busse (a penance or fine) as well as to the English words better and best. Boot could at one time exist alone with the idea of profit or advantage (along with its opposite, bootless). Shakespeare uses it this way in Antony and Cleopatra: “Give him no breath, but now / Make boot of his distraction” — in other words, take advantage of his being distracted. It also turns up in several terms from feudal times that referred to the right of tenants to take materials from the manor for their own use, such as firebote, hedgebote, and housebote, in which it can be translated as “benefit”.

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

Question Hour

Sir, Asking questions, holding debates on various issues and expressing the concerns of the people through other modes are integral to the functioning of the Parliament. When Rahul Gandhi asked a question relating to names of top willful defaulters of bank loans, the finance minister preferred not to answer the question. This, despite the fact that the issue was a serious one. Now, the government says it does not want Question Hour during the coming session of the Parliament. This is anti-democratic. Question Hour is a must. We, the people, need to know what is what.

K. Lakshman Rao,
VISAKHAPATNAM

Waste of public funds

Sir, Public funds are hugely wasted by way of misappropriation, callousness, carelessness, and other actions. This is happening on a massive scale. Several projects with millions of public funds are mismanaged and or looted by people’s representatives and bureaucrats. Money is simply wasted in many ways. The Bagala Dharmasala where around ₹4 crore was spent is being abandoned now. Years ago, an ecotourism project at Manchabandha met with opposition from locals even after spending around ₹20 lakh of government money on it. The money is lost. Similarly, a Panthanivas, after spending around ₹60 lakh, is found abandoned. The accountant general keeps a detailed note of each such project where public funds are involved but no disclosure is made, even via resort to RTI provisions. By a rough estimate, around ₹2000 crore of public money is found drained during the last decade on dumped projects, be it of road, building, irrigation, or rehabilitation. No responsibility is fixed on errant officials. There is lack of accountability and India is in a miserable plight. A very sad state of affairs.

Janaki Ballav Dash, MAYURBHANJ

Dogs & bottles

Sir, On a fine morning, I found that one plastic bottle filled with coloured liquid hanging on the road outside of my compound wall. That area has been a scene of dogfights and excreta. Some people used to park bikes and vehicles in the shadow of a mango tree there. They might have put up the bottle there, I guess. Dogs, it is said, are afraid of petrol. One wonders how will dogs know the liquid in the bottle is petrol without any test or knowledge in chemistry! What I noticed was dogs now keep off this place.

Sudhansu Sekhar Dhada,
BHUBANESWAR.

DELHI RIOTS CHARGESHEET

Cong comes out in support of Yechury

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 13: The Congress Sunday came out in support of Sitaram Yechury and others named in the supplementary chargesheet in the Delhi riots case and accused Delhi police of bringing the criminal justice system to ridicule.

The opposition party said the BJP has "stooped to a new low" in its attempt to suppress peaceful dissent against its policies.

"Delhi police have brought the criminal justice system to ridicule by naming Sitaram Yechury and many other scholars and activists in a supplementary charge sheet in the Delhi riots case," Congress leader P Chidambaram tweeted.

He questioned how "if an accused (Gulfisha Fathima) mentions a name in her statement, that person will be named as an accused in the chargesheet."



"Has the Delhi police forgotten that between the Information and chargesheet there are important steps called Investigation and Corroboration," he asked. Other than Yechury, Swaraj Abhiyan leader Yogendra Yadav, economist Jayati Ghosh and Delhi University professor Apoorvanand figure in the supplementary chargesheet.

However, Delhi police have clarified that they have not filed a

Delhi police have brought the criminal justice system to ridicule by naming Sitaram Yechury and many other scholars and activists in a supplementary charge sheet in the Delhi riots case
P CHIDAMBARAM | CONGRESS LEADER

chargesheet against them and underscored the difference between naming someone as an accused and mentioning a name due to allegations. Chidambaram said he was glad that former police officer Julio Ribeiro has "upbraided" the Delhi police for its "biased handling" of the Delhi riots case.

"Will the Delhi police listen to this iconic police officer," he asked. Congress general secretary KC

Venugopal said, "The BJP has reached new lows in its attempt to suppress peaceful dissent against its policies which have torn the socio-economic-politico fabric of this nation." "The misuse of Delhi police to choke voices like Sitaram Yechury and others is shameful and highly condemnable," he said.

Another Congress leader Jairam Ramesh has said, "This is worse than atrocious. I am in full solidarity with those chargesheeted. They are greater desh bhakts than the fraudulent ones in power now."

Party's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, "If speaking truth to power is a crime, if exposing circle of hate is a crime, if standing up to rioters is a crime, if being righteous and just is a crime, then, each one of us must be booked, chargesheeted and jailed. Only then will my country survive. Jai Hind."



A barber gives a hair cut to a child at his roadside make-shift salon, during Unlock 4, in New Delhi, Sunday. PTI PHOTO

Political blame game over removal of Delhi's slums



A closed house near Lajpat Nagar Railway line, in New Delhi, Saturday. The Supreme Court had August 31 ordered the removal of 48,000 slum dwellings along railway tracks in Delhi within three months. As per rough estimates, there are around 2,40,000 people living in slums

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 13: After the Supreme Court directed to remove slums along railway tracks, a political war of words in Delhi has broken out with the Congress targeting the BJP and AAP over the fate of 48,000 'jhuggis' along the tracks.

August 31, the Supreme Court had ordered removal of around 48,000 slum dwellings along railway tracks in Delhi within three months and said no political interference will be entertained in the matter.

The Congress has blamed AAP and BJP for the crisis as Delhi

Congress chief Anil Kumar Chaudhary said, "Neither BJP nor AAP cares for the poor and they are responsible for the fiasco as they are ruling at Centre and the state and now where will these people go?"

There are around 2,50,000 people living in slums along the railway tracks. The Congress has moved

the court again for revision of the order. Congress leader Ajay Maken, in an intervention application, said the agencies - such as the ministry of railways and Delhi government - have already initiated the process of identification and removal of jhuggis and have 'issued demolition notices' in various slums in Delhi.

The plea urged the top court to direct authorities (including the Ministry of Railways, government of NCT of Delhi and others) to rehabilitate the slum dwellers prior to eviction/demolition of their jhuggis and to follow the Delhi Slum & JJ Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy, 2015 and the protocol (for removal of jhuggis) in letter and spirit. While BJP has attacked the Kejriwal government as its Delhi unit chief Adesh Gupta said, "It is because of Kejriwal that the residents of these jhuggis are facing eviction as the Chief Minister has not implemented the PM housing scheme."

Delhi government and the AAP have in turn blamed the BJP for the crisis and have written to the Northern Railway Divisional Manager.

The Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB), headed by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, stated in the letter that "in case of JJ (Jhuggi Jhopri) existing on land owned by central government agencies like the Railways, rehabilitation will have to be done by them as per the Delhi Slum and JJ Rehabilitation and Relocation Policy, 2015."

Pak using hidden tunnels to push terrorists: J&K DGP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Sept 13: Pakistan is using cross-border underground tunnels to push terrorists into India and drones to drop weapons for them, the chief of Jammu and Kashmir police said Sunday.

Director General of Police Dilbag Singh, however, said the anti-infiltration grid is active and anti-tunnelling operations are underway to scuttle "nefarious designs".

"Digging of tunnels beneath the IB is part of the nefarious designs of Pakistan to facilitate infiltration of terrorists into this side to step up terrorism," Singh told reporters in Samba district after inspecting the recently discovered 170-metre tunnel at Galar village along the IB.

The tunnel with a depth of 20-25 feet and originating from Pakistan was found by a BSF team near the border-fencing August 28.

"I saw this huge tunnel which is almost similar to the one detected in Chanyari in 2013-14. After the Nagrota encounter, we had received specific inputs that infiltration had taken place through a tunnel and was searching for it," the DGP said. Three Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terrorists were killed in the encounter in Nagrota in January this year.

"The investigation is on but the



ground indicators suggest that the tunnel was used by Pakistan in the past to push infiltrators," he said but did not rule out the possibility of more such tunnels.

He said BSF and police personnel are searching the area for any other tunnel.

On the recent recovery of sophisticated weapons, including an M-16 rifle, from a Kashmir-bound truck near Qazigund, he said the investigation is going on and it is believed that the arms were airdropped using drones in Samba sector.

Two overground workers of JeM, who were transporting the weapons in a truck, have identified the place in Samba from where they picked up the consignment for delivery to terrorists active in south Kashmir;

officials said.

Asked about the possibility of presence of overground workers of terrorists in Jammu, Singh said the region has always been on the radar of Pakistan and it is evident from suicide attacks on military installations in Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts over the years. "We have made adequate deployment and are taking all necessary precautions to frustrate the designs of Pakistan both along the border and in the hinterland," he said.

Officials said the DGP reviewed the overall security situation, especially along the IB, in the district during his visit and was also briefed by senior police and BSF officers.

Omar hails resolve of JEE toppers from J&K despite internet curbs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Sept 13: National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah Sunday congratulated two Jammu and Kashmir residents - Aryan Gupta and Naveed-Ul-Amin - for cracking the prestigious JEE-Mains examination with striking percentiles, saying their accomplishment has highlighted the resilience, aptitude, and diligence of the young generation of the Union territory.

Abdullah said the achievement has yet again underlined the strength and determination of our youth and the fact that their resolve could overcome all difficulties.

"Aryan Gupta from Jammu has scored 99.73, the highest score in J-K for the second time, while Naveed-Ul-Islam from Kashmir has also scored impressive 99.23. It is elevating to see our youth achieve laurels at the national level. I congratulate the toppers for making their parents and all of us proud. I wish them exciting and satisfying careers ahead. My good wishes to them as they commence a new phase

The gags and curbs have failed to put off their resolve. It is indeed a remarkable achievement which will act as an inspiration for others aspiring engineers. I congratulate them again with a view that they will contribute a lot towards nation building
OMAR ABDULLAH, EX-CM

in their lives," the NC leader said.

The former chief minister said the two youngsters have been able to clear the prestigious and tough entrance test despite the persistent internet suspensions and blockage of 4G internet service for over a year now.

"The gags and curbs have failed to put off their resolve. It is indeed a remarkable achievement which will act as an inspiration for other aspiring engineers. I congratulate them again with a view that they will contribute a lot towards nation building," Abdullah said.

‘Contact tracing’ helping Army wean youths away from terror

Efforts are made to contact the families of youths identified as vulnerable to radicalisation so that they too are counselled to guide their wards

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 13: As the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on education becomes severe day by day, it is the deprived who are put to the maximum disadvantage. Since schools are shut, classrooms have moved online. However, only those children can attend classes whose families have the luxury of possessing multiple mobile phones.

The situation has left underprivileged children in a state of misery. However, a group of students from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has taken the initiative to help a few such children. For the last 11 days, around 15 students of JNU have been regularly visiting Madhukar Basti, a slum in Munirka locality and teaching

over 30 children there. The unit of Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) from the JNU is spearheading this initiative, named Basti Ki Pathshala.

"We initiated the Basti Ki Pathshala programme to enable uninterrupted learning and education to the schoolchildren of Madhukar Basti. Our volunteers go every evening and teach more than 30 children from the slum whose learning had stopped as they could not afford mobile phones to continue with their studies," said Shivam Chaurasia, president, ABVP-JNU.

Chaurasia said the student volunteers teach core subjects like Mathematics, Science, English, and others. "We intend to keep the momentum of education even during the lockdown period for these de-



prived children," he added. The volunteers said that they had kept a whiteboard in an open space in the slum where they gathered each evening to attend the class held between 5 to 6 pm. Besides, they also provided study materials to these children.

"The children seem elated while attending our classes with new books, notebooks, pencils in their hands. They told us that they have been missing it badly as it enables

them to meet their friends and study together. We felt encouraged after their response," said Meenakshi Choudhary, a volunteer who teaches English to slum children. Choudhary is a student of languages and is pursuing her PhD in Persian.

Praneet Duholiya, the convener of the Basti Ki Pathshala programme, said the volunteers are happy on playing an essential role in these children's lives. "The children of Madhukar Basti are al-

an encounter was launched by officers and men on ground.

The results have been encouraging and "many prospective militants have been weaned away from terrorism," Lt Gen Raju said refusing to either divulge further details or numbers. He also did not indicate the number of locals who had picked up guns this year, saying that "numbers are only notional and the aim is to counter the idea of picking up the gun."

However, Deputy Inspector General of Police (South Kashmir) Atul Goyal was quoted to have said that around 80 local youths had joined various militant groups this year. Lt Gen Raju said that in many cases, mothers and family members release social media messages requesting their loved ones to come back from the path of violence. Families and society have a huge role in providing the right guidance to misguided youths, he said.

of the day quote

My government waived off the loans of 26 Lakh farmers of the state. I openly challenge (MP Chief Minister) Shivraj Singh Chouhan and (Congressman-turned-BJP Rajya Sabha MP) Jyotiraditya Scindia to refute this claim

KAMAL NATH | MP CONGRESS PRESIDENT

I will have to remove the mask of Chief Minister to respond to politics. I don't speak doesn't mean I don't have answers

UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CM

The news of suicide by a medical aspirant in Madurai has shocked every family

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

■ BJP worker's body found

Chinsurah (WB): The body of a BJP worker was found hanging from a tree in West Bengal's Hooghly district Sunday, police said. Ganesh Roy, a middle-aged daily wage, was found hanging from a tree near his village in Khanati area near the Goghat railway station, they said. The BJP alleged he was murdered by members of the Trinamool Congress, a charged denied by the state's ruling party. Roy was missing since Saturday evening, police said, adding that the circumstances behind his death were being investigated.

■ Close shave for Meghalaya minister

Nagaon/Shillong: Meghalaya Power Minister James P K Sangma, who tested positive for COVID-19 in Manipur, had a narrow escape after a car in his convoy hit a truck in Assam Sunday, police said. The minister, brother of Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, escaped unhurt while four of his security personnel were injured in the accident that took place near Nonoi in Assam around 4.30 am when they were returning to Meghalaya from Manipur.

■ India, Pakistan trade heavy fire

Jammu: Indian and Pakistani troops traded heavy fire on the Line of Control Sunday after Pakistan resorted to unprovoked firing and shelling at Indian positions in J&K's Poonch district. Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Devender Anand said at about 5.45 p.m. Sunday, Pakistan initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars along the LoC in Mankote sector of Poonch district.

■ Soldier injured

Srinagar: A soldier of counter-insurgency force Rashtriya Rifles (RR) was injured Sunday after his weapon discharged accidentally in J&K's Bandipora district. Police sources said the RR trooper identified as Hambir Kumar of 27 RR was injured critically when his service rifle went off accidentally inside a camp.

■ BSF trooper hurt

Srinagar: A Border Security Force (BSF) trooper guarding the residence of the District Magistrate (DM) in Jammu and Kashmir's Badgam district was injured Sunday in a bear attack. Police said BSF trooper, Rajinder Singh, who was guarding the residence of DM in Badgam district, was injured when a bear attacked him during the night.



FIGHT AGAINST CORONAVIRUS VACCINE LIKELY BY EARLY 2021: VARDHAN

Harsh Vardhan also said that the government is considering emergency authorisation of Covid-19 vaccination to senior citizens and people working in high-risk settings

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 13: The coronavirus vaccine might be ready by the first quarter of 2021, Union Health and Family Welfare Minister Harsh Vardhan said Sunday. "While no date has been fixed for the vaccine launch, it may be ready by the first quarter of 2021," he said. Harsh Vardhan also said that the government is considering emergency authorisation of Covid-19 vaccination to senior citizens and people working in high-risk settings. "This shall be done after a consensus has been reached," he added.

The National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 is drawing up a detailed strategy on how to immunise the majority of the population, he said during the 'Sunday Samvad' programme where he interacted with his social media followers and answered their questions.

The Health Minister also assured that the government is taking full precautions in conducting the human trials of the vaccine. "Issues like vaccine security, cost, equity, cold-chain requirements, production timelines, etc, are also being discussed intensely," he said. He assured the vaccine would be first made available to those who need it the most, irrespective of their paying capacity.

Harsh Vardhan also said he would be happy to take the first dosage of the vaccine if some people have a trust deficit. His statement came in the wake of an incident in the UK where one of the participants in the ongoing trial of the



University of Oxford's vaccine candidate developed a severe complication right after being administered its dose.

The minister also informed about vaccine candidates and their development in India. "Department of Bio-Technology (DBT), as well as the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), have been proactive in responding to the emerging situation to support the advancement of vaccine candidates. India is actively partnering with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), and trials at different phases are ongoing with respect to several vaccines in Indian laboratories (private or public) and hospitals," he said.

The minister also noted that a safe and effective vaccine will help in establishing immunity to Covid-19 at much faster pace as compared to natural infection. It is hoped that a consensus will emerge in the next few months over the desired level of protective herd immunity in any community, he said.

KANGANA MEETS MAHA GOVERNOR



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 13: Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut, who is locked in a bitter battle with the ruling Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, Sunday met state Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari here and told him about the "injustice" done to her. The meeting came days after the Shiv Sena-ruled Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) demolished alleged illegal alterations at Kangana's bungalow at Pali Hill in suburban Bandra.

Talking to reporters after the meeting that took place at the Raj Bhavan, the actor said, "I met the governor. He heard me as a daughter. I came to meet him as a citizen. I have nothing to do with politics." "I told him about the injustice meted out to me and what happened was improper. It was indecent behaviour," she said.

The trouble between the Sena and Kangana started after the actor recently said she feared the Mumbai police more than the "movie mafia" and likened the Maharashtra capital to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

The 33-year-old actor, who returned to Mumbai Wednesday from her home state Himachal Pradesh the same day as her house was partially demolished by the civic body, had alleged that the Maharashtra government was targeting her because of her clash with the Sena.

Friday, the "Queen" actor had urged Congress president Sonia Gandhi to intervene and stop the "harassment of women". In a tweet, she had asked Gandhi if she was not anguished by the treatment given by the Maharashtra government, in which the Congress is also a part.

I can assure you that the Left Front-Congress tie-up would be a game-changer in Bengal politics. Unlike 2019 Lok Sabha polls, I won't let the 2021 assembly elections be a cakewalk for the TMC and the BJP

ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY | CONGRESS LEADER

CORONA CARE

The Punjab government has armed its policemen with Covid-care kits which will have medical gadgets like mask, oximeter besides medicines and an immunity booster to combat the virus



Bihar a 'powerhouse' of talent: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Sept 13: In the run up to the Assembly polls in Bihar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday inaugurated three petroleum sector projects, gave a big thumbs up to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, and reached out to voters, calling the state a "powerhouse of talent".

Modi's praise of alliance partner Kumar came weeks ahead of the elections that are likely in October-November, as he dedicated three petroleum projects worth nearly Rs 900 crore to people. These included a gas pipeline that extended from Durgapur in West Bengal to Banka in Bihar.

Banka was also the beneficiary of an LPG bottling plant while another such unit is located at



Harsiddhi in East Champaran district. "I had the opportunity of flagging off the work on extension of the gas pipeline a year-and-a-half ago. I am delighted to see its completion. The country and Bihar

have come out of an era when a project was announced and a generation had to wait for its completion. Nitish ji has played an important role in ushering in this change in the state," Modi said.

In his trademark style, the prime minister began his speech with a few sentences in Angika, the dialect spoken in Banka and adjoining districts. He marvelled at the gas pipeline project which was no mean feat" as it involved working across a stretch of nearly 200 km of difficult terrain dotted with many rivers, dense forests and hills.

"I would like to use the terms gas-based industry and petro-connectivity, which may sound very technical but actually impact the lives of the common people," he said, addressing the function virtually from the national capital.

"Just imagine what would have been the situation if people were to keep venturing out in search of wood and other fuel for cooking their meals. The need is no longer there thanks to schemes like the Ujjwala Yojana which has ensured that LPG reaches households of the poorest of the poor," he said while talking about the coronavirus outbreak.

The prime minister recalled how people would queue up in front of the residences of MPs for a cooking gas connection from their quota. "There was a time when having an LPG connection was a luxury not many could afford," he said.

ADAPTING TO COVID



Parliament House canteen employees wearing gloves serve tea in New Delhi, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

SSR CASE: NCB NABS 6 MORE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Sept 13: NCB, Mumbai Zone has arrested at least six persons in connection with the ongoing investigations into the drugs angle in the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput case, an official said here Sunday.

In the continuing raids from Mumbai to Goa, the NCB teams led by Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede has arrested one Karamjeet Singh Anand (23). Banned substances such as ganja and charas have been recovered from him. One Ganja supplier, Dywan Anthony Fernandes, along with two others was arrested from Dadar (West), Mumbai. The NCB has recovered half-kilo Ganja from them. Besides, one Ankush Arenja (29) was nabbed from Powai in the citywide swoops in the past couple of days.

Arenja is described as a receiver of contraband from Karamjeet and also supplied it to another accused Anuj Keshwani, arrested earlier in the same case. The NCB has recovered 42 grams of charas and cash of Rs 1, 12,400 from Arenja.

DGCA clarifies order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 13: Aviation regulator DGCA "clarified" Sunday passengers can take photos and videos inside flights but can't use any recording equipment that creates chaos, disrupts flight operations, violates safety norms or is banned by the crew members.

Saturday the regulator had said that a scheduled flight will be suspended for a period of two weeks if anyone is found taking photographs inside the plane. Two days back, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation had asked IndiGo to take "appropriate action" after it found alleged violation of safety and social-distancing protocols by media persons in the airline's Chandigarh-Mumbai flight that had actor Kangana Ranaut as a passenger.

According to a video of the incident that took place inside the flight September 9, reporters and cameramen were jostling and bunched up to get a comment from Ranaut, who was sitting in one of the front rows of the plane.



The DGCA order Sunday "clarified that a bona fide passenger travelling in an aircraft engaged in scheduled air transport services may do still and video photography from inside such an aircraft while in flight; take off and landing" as per its circular dated December 9, 2004.

"However, this permission does not include use of any recording equipment which imperils or compromises air safety; violates prevalent norms; creates chaos or disruption during operation of flight or expressly prohibited by crew," the order noted.

Action may be initiated against those persons found in violation of above guidelines, the order added. The Sunday order is a clarification on top of the Saturday order.

Raghuvansh: The MGNREGA man

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 13: The man behind the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) who stood by his boss Lalu Prasad Yadav through thick and thin, only to recently quit the RJD in a surprise move - Raghuvansh Prasad Singh died in Delhi's AIIMS battling post-COVID symptoms on Sunday morning.

Singh's demise comes close on the heels of his unceremonious and some would argue, unexpected exit from RJD, a party he served for the better part of his political life. In his handwritten resignation to Lalu Prasad, he said, "I kept standing behind you for 32 years after the demise of Karpuri Thakur, but not any longer."

The five-term Lok Sabha MP representing Vaishali died at the age of 74, bringing an end to a long era where he espoused the cause of social justice. The man who was once part of Karpuri Thakur's Cabinet later stood by



Lalu Prasad, even when the latter was prosecuted for charges of corruption in the fodder scam. He also stood by the Yadav family when Rabri Devi was steering the Bihar government in the absence of her husband.

A well-read and well-educated man who was known for his simplicity, Singh's socialist bent made him well respected not just in the RJD but by leaders of all political parties riding on the promise of social justice. However, the legacy of this mathematician would be steering the UPA-era flagship scheme Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) which is a social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 is seen as one of the main reasons apart from UPA's civil nuclear deal with the US that swept the alliance back to power consecutively for a second time in 2009.

However, the Modi era proved to be uncharted political territory for this mass leader who lost both the 2014 and 2019 general elections when the BJP won power at the Centre with a thumping majority. However, his political relevance was intact in Bihar's psyche.

He spoke his mind, did not mince words and had even questioned the government he was a part of. A rarity, Singh's political legacy is so powerful and deep, that Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose to start Sunday's virtual inauguration of three petro projects for Bihar by paying homage to him, calling him "a person who understood poverty", even before the customary protocols of addressing the Bihar Governor or Chief Minister at the event.

Yoga, walks: Centre's tips for post-Covid care

THE PROTOCOL PROVIDES AN APPROACH FOR MANAGING PATIENTS WHO HAVE RECOVERED FROM COVID-19 FOR CARE AT HOME

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 13: Yogasana, Pranayama, meditation and intake of chyawanprash are among some of the suggestions given by the Union Health Ministry in its new management protocol for patients who have recovered from COVID-19.

Calling for a holistic approach for follow up care and well-being of all post-COVID recovered patients, the Health ministry said such patients must continue COVID appropriate behaviour by use of mask, hand and respiratory hygiene, physical distancing.

The protocol provides an approach for managing patients who have recovered from COVID-19 for care at home. However, the procedure is not meant to be seen as preventive or as a curative therapy.



"The recovery period is likely to be longer for patients who suffered from more severe form of the disease and those with pre-existing illness," it said.

At individual level, the protocol suggested drinking adequate amount of warm water (if not contra-indicated), taking immunity promoting AYUSH medicine prescribed by a qualified practitioner of AYUSH

and if health permits then regular household work to be done. It advised people to resume professional work in a graded manner.

Daily practice of Yogasana, Pranayama and meditation, as much as health permits or as prescribed, breathing exercises as prescribed by treating physician and daily morning or evening walk at a comfortable pace as tolerated

were among other measures.

The protocol also called for self-health monitoring at home of temperature, blood pressure, blood sugar (especially if diabetic), pulse oximetry etc (if medically advised). "If there is persistent dry cough/sore throat, do saline gargles and take steam inhalation. The addition of herbs/spices for gargling/steam inhalation. Cough medications, should be taken on advice of medical doctor or qualified practitioner of Ayush. Look for early warning signs like high grade fever, breathlessness, unexplained chest pain, new onset of confusion, focal weakness," it said.

At the level of community, the ministry said recovered individuals should share their positive experiences with friends and relatives using social media, community leaders, opinion leaders, religious

leaders for creating awareness, dispelling myths and stigma.

"Take support of community based self-help groups, civil society organizations, and qualified professionals for recovery and rehabilitation process (medical, social, occupational, livelihood). Seek psycho-social support from peers, community health workers, counsellor. If required seek mental health support service," the protocol said. The ministry also advised recovered patients to participate in group sessions of yoga, meditation etc. while taking all due precautions like physical distancing.

In healthcare facility setting, the ministry advised the first follow-up visit (physical/telephonic) should be within seven days after discharge, preferably at the hospital where he/she underwent treatment.

of the day quote

The passing away of Raghuvansh Prasad Singh is tragic. An outstanding leader rooted to ground, Raghuvansh Babu was a true stalwart with phenomenal understanding of rural India. With his spartan and sagely lifestyle, he enriched public life. Condolences to his family & followers

RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT

Government of India is implementing the 'Jal Jeevan Mission' to provide household tap connections to 190 million rural homes, thereby ensuring drinking water security

GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT | JAL SHAKTI MINISTER

Insurance cover of ₹50 lakh has been extended to all health workers in Goa

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

SHORT TAKES

History-sheeter arrested

Lucknow: History-sheeter Surendra Kalita, who had allegedly staged an attack on himself in Lucknow to get police gunner and had escaped to evade arrest, has been found hiding in Kolkata in West Bengal. Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), Lucknow, Somen Barma told reporters, "A team has been sent to seek remand of Surendra Kalita from Kolkata. Kalita carries a cash reward of ₹50,000 on his head. He also ran an extortion racket and took railway contracts." Kalita was arrested from a hotel in Jadavpur police station area on August 31. Kolkata Police chanced upon Kalita while conducting a drive to enforce lockdown. He was living in the hotel under the false identity of Surendra Kumar, said Kolkata Police officials.

Woman raped

Ballia (UP): Uttar Pradesh Police have arrested a 25-year-old man for allegedly raping and thrashing an elderly woman aged 70 in Ballia district. SHO of the Haldi police station, Satyendra Rai, said the youth forcibly entered the woman's house at around 4 a.m. and allegedly raped her. The incident took place on Saturday.

42 held

Panaji: Forty-two persons were arrested following a gambling raid by the Goa Police in the beach village of Calangute in North Goa, a spokesperson said Sunday. The North Goa district police, which conducted the raid at the hotel Karishma Grande in Calangute village, in the early hours of Sunday, also seized around ₹10 lakh in cash, 57 mobile phones and gambling related paraphernalia.

Former DSP dies

Mathura (Uttar Pradesh): The 82-year-old former Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) of Rajasthan Police, Kan Singh Bhati, who was recently sentenced to life imprisonment along with 10 other former policemen, for the murder of the royal scion of Bharatpur, Raja Man Singh, in a staged "encounter" 35 years ago, died in a Jaipur hospital. Mathura district jail senior superintendent Shailendra Maitrey, told reporters that Kan Singh Bhati was referred to district hospital in Mathura on September 8 after he complained of gastrointestinal problem and later, he was referred to the S. N. Medical College, Agra.



My best wishes to the students appearing for NEET exam and my sympathies to those who couldn't take it due to the Covid pandemic and floods. Wish Modi ji was as concerned about JEE-NEET aspirants and students as he is about his crony capitalist friends

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

JADAVPUR VARSITY TO HELP STUDENTS

Jadavpur University has formally decided to provide android handsets and data pack to students, not having such facilities, as new semester classes are slated to begin this month



India battles mental health crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 13: Hemmed inside their homes for months on end as a pandemic raged outside, millions of people are emerging timorously into a world that has drastically changed -- an uneasy adjustment process resulting in a spectrum of mental health issues ranging from depression to that final step, suicide.

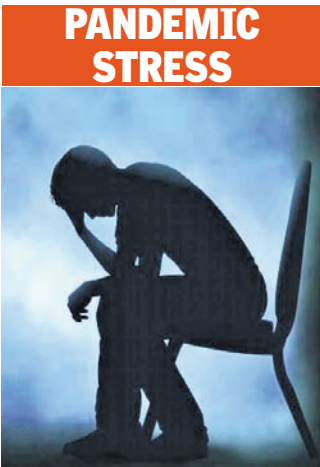
The dread of contracting the disease combined with the realisation that the incidence of COVID-19 spiralled instead of being contained in the lockdown and that the days of suspending life as they knew it could extend indefinitely has been profoundly disturbing for many.

Add to this new normal, ill-health, joblessness, financial crises and

the everyday stresses that people anyway had to deal with and the COVID-19 tunnel stretches dark and seemingly endless with no light at the end of it.

"This prolonged uncertainty has led people to feel a lot more anxious. So people who were on a mild anxiety spectrum earlier have moved to moderate and severe anxiety. When anxiety gets severe, the kinds of behaviour of self harm increase," said Arvinder Singh, psychologist, psychotherapist and director of the Ashoka Centre for Well-Being in New Delhi.

As India's COVID-19 tally crossed 47.5 lakh with 94,372 new cases reported on Sunday, Singh's concerns find echo across the country. The worries are rooted in reports of more people inflicting injuries on



themselves, several ending their lives and many complaining of depression and severe anxiety.

In Gujarat, for instance, the 108 emergency ambulance service received about 800 cases of "self injuries" and 90 cases of suicide in April, May, June and July, officials said. The numbers began to spike soon after the nationwide lockdown, which came into effect March 25.

Vikas Bihani, 108 service official, said the suicide prevention and counselling helpline usually got around eight to nine calls per month but the numbers have doubled since March.

"Between March and August, we got 142 calls from depressed people. A majority of the callers were facing economic, family or mental health related issues and wanted to end their lives," he said.

Some people who test positive

for coronavirus inflict injuries on themselves because they cannot tolerate "disappointment", B N Gangadhar, director of the Bangalore-based National Institute of Mental Health and Neurological Sciences (NIMHANS), said.

His colleague V Senthil Kumar Reddi, coordinator at NIMHANS' department of psychiatry, said the reasons behind cases of self-inflicting injuries need to be studied. Gujarat-based psychologist Prashant Bhimani said the economic crisis is fuelling "suicidal thoughts".

"There is a 70 per cent increase in the number of patients suffering from depression and obsessive compulsive disorder due to the coronavirus. People are worried about what will happen to them if they contract the coronavirus," he added.

TRIVIAL ISSUE

Boy killed for using pump

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mainpuri (UP), Sept 13: A 15-year-old boy was allegedly hacked to death with an axe by his cousin brother in Nagla Kondar village in Mainpuri over a trivial issue of using pump for irrigating their fields.

The police have registered an FIR in the case and the main accused has been detained for questioning. According to reports, the Robin Yadav, a student of class 11, had gone to plough his field when he was attacked by his cousin brother Rahul Yadav (26).

A FIR under Section 302 (murder) of IPC has been registered against three persons including Rahul Yadav on a complaint filed by the deceased's family members at Dannhar police station

There was a dispute between them over using the pumping set for irrigating their fields, which had been distributed between two families. However, the ownership of the pump set is not yet clear, said police. Interestingly, despite the dispute, the two families were living together in one house.

A FIR under section 302 (murder) of IPC has been registered against three persons including Rahul Yadav on a complaint filed by the deceased's family members at Dannhar police station. The deceased's father Vinod Yadav had died earlier.

SP Mainpuri Ajay Kumar said that a clash between them was reported two days ago too and police had reached the spot and the matter was resolved after intervention of their respective family members. On Saturday, Robin was hacked to death when he was going to plough his field. The deceased was attacked from behind. He was rushed to the district hospital but doctors declared him brought dead. The body has been sent for post mortem, said police.

Jawan kills wife before ending life

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jammu, Sept 13: A Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) jawan killed his wife and himself while his sister-in-law escaped miraculously on Sunday in Jammu and Kashmir's Jammu division.

Police sources said a CRPF jawan identified as Constable Madan Singh Chib shot his wife and himself dead after a heated verbal exchange with his family. He also shot at his sister-in-law who was injured, but escaped death miraculously. Eight-year old daughter of the couple was also present when the incident took place. She is safe.

"The jawan was posted at the CRPF headquarters in Jammu division. An FIR has been registered in the incident", police sources said. Reports said the CRPF has also ordered an inquiry to ascertain the facts of the incident.

Seeking to study law at 77, woman challenges BCI rule

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 13: Aspiring to study law, a 77-year old woman has approached the Supreme Court challenging the fresh BCI rules prescribing an upper age limit of 30 for admission.

Denied admission to pursue a three year LL.B course, Rajkumari Tyagi, a resident of Sahibabad in Uttar Pradesh, moved a plea seeking to intervene in a case already pending on the issue wherein the Bar Council of India (BCI) rule has been challenged. The BCI rules prescribe an upper age limit of 20 years for 5-year and 30 years for a 3-year LL.B course.

The plea says that Tyagi developed an interest in law after she was left alone to defend the estate of her late husband. It says that she had dealt with legal complications, without having to resort to a lawyer, at every given point when han-

dling the will or identification of records. The plea claims that the fresh rules violate Articles 14 (equality before the law), 19(1)(g) (Right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business) and 21 (Protection of life and personal liberty) of the Constitution.

She has urged the court to declare that she has a fundamental right to pursue legal education in a college or institution of her choice and that the right is protected under Article 21 of the Constitution.

"It has been laid down (by the Supreme Court) that Right to Life under Article 21 of the Constitution, is not limited to mere 'animalistic existence' but also includes right to live with dignity which includes facilities for reading and writing and the right to receive instructions in a course/medium of one's choice," the plea says.

COVID tally breaches 47L-mark

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 47,54,356, while the death toll climbed to 78,586 with 1,114 people succumbing to the infection in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed

PRESS TUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 13: India's COVID-19 tally of cases sprinted past 47 lakh with 94,372 new infections being reported in a day, while 37,02,595 people have recuperated taking the national recovery rate to 77.88 per cent Sunday, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 47,54,356, while the death toll climbed to 78,586 with 1,114 people succumbing to the infection in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate due to the coronavirus infection has further dropped to 1.65 per cent. There are 9,73,175 active cases of COVID-19 in the country which



comprises 20.47 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark August 7, 30 lakh on August 23 and it went past 40 lakh on September 5. According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 5,62,60,928 samples have been tested up to September 12 with 10,71,702 samples being tested on Saturday.

Of the 1,114 new deaths, 391 are from Maharashtra, 94 from Karnataka, 76 each from Tamil Nadu and Punjab, 67 each from Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, 59 from West Bengal, 37 from Madhya Pradesh, 28 from Delhi, 24 from Haryana, 23 from Assam, 20 from Chhattisgarh, 15 each from Kerala and Gujarat, 14 each from Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

Twelve fatalities have been reported from Tripura, 10 each from Goa, Jammu and Kashmir and Jharkhand, six from Chandigarh, five from Pondicherry, three from Sikkim, two from Himachal Pradesh, while Meghalaya, Manipur and Ladakh have registered one fatality each.

A total of 78,586 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 29,115 from Maharashtra followed by 8,307 from Tamil Nadu, 7,161 from Karnataka, 4,846 from Andhra Pradesh, 4,715 from Delhi, 4,349 from Uttar Pradesh, 3,887 from West Bengal, 3,195 from Gujarat and 2,288 from Punjab and 1,728 from Madhya Pradesh. The health ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

LEADING FROM THE FRONT

It is duty first for Assam's Cachar DC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, Sept 13: The Deputy Commissioner of Assam's Cachar district who is leading the fight against the coronavirus pandemic from the front preferred duty over personal life as she refused to take leave even for a day for her marriage and instead the groom flew in for the ceremony.

Keerthi Jalli, a 2013 batch IAS officer, surprised family and friends when she told them that she could not come home in Hyderabad for her wedding by leaving aside her crucial official responsibilities.

Rather, she told them, she would be happy to get married at her official bungalow in Silchar if the groom comes to her place of posting. "I just could not think of taking leave for my wedding. I understand it is the most important event of anyone's life, but I could not imagine going away from my district where the average positive cases is about 100 and I am fighting to save lives," Jalli said.



Her family, in-laws, especially the groom, appreciated her decision. The groom, Aditya Shashikant, who is from Pune, came to Silchar well in advance so that he could remain in mandatory quarantine, following the local COVID-19 protocols.

The wedding took place on Wednesday, an Assam government holiday with no pandal or decorative lights but only Carnatic music playing in the background.

About 800 family members and friends watched the wedding through Zoom video app from different parts of the country as well as abroad. "My parents could not come from Hyderabad as they were recuperating from COVID after both of them tested positive. Only my younger sister was on my side at the wedding," Jalli said.



Reshuffle goes for a toss

The much touted reshuffle in the BJP and Cabinet seems to have gone for a toss. And BJP president JP Nadda has a reason to be somewhat disappointed. One, he has not been able to re-constitute his team for almost a year now; two, he failed to snatch Rajasthan from the jaws of the Congress in a coup. It is a different matter that Nadda was not directly handling

Rajasthan affairs either and such operations had a lot to do with the powerful man in North Block. Secondly, organisational changes are directly linked to changes in the Council of Ministers. At least that has been the tradition for a long time since Modi has taken over reins of power. Perhaps, the PM has not made up his mind to reshuffle his team. There is a view that a reshuffle of the Cabinet may be only after the Bihar polls.

PM to prune bureaucracy

With the Prime Minister outlining his plans to provide a "responsible, responsive and efficient administration," panic has gripped 36 lakh employees. The 10-page circular notified by the Department of Personnel & Training directly under the PM, has kick-started review of every three

months instead of earlier practice of every year. The plan is aimed at weeding out the inefficient and persons of doubtful integrity. Modi has also brought down the age of review from 55 years to 50 years to start quarterly review of all employees.

The Jaya Bachchan connection

What has Samajwadi Party MP Jaya Bachchan got to do with the Congress' internal crisis? The Gandhis and Bachchans parted company three decades ago when Amitabh Bachchan quit politics and returned to Hindi films. Since then, both the families were not on talking terms. However, one of the most successful former actresses of Hindi films and RS MP may have inadvertently played a key role in shaping the current crisis in the Congress. Insiders say that during

the Winter Session of Parliament in 2019, a BJP MP from UP criticised late Rajiv Gandhi. Jaya Bachchan protested over the "foul" language used. Next day, Sonia Gandhi called her up to thank her for the stand taken by her. It may be mentioned that Sonia Gandhi gets a written report on a daily basis from parliamentary party secretary what happened in each House. Therefore, she was reportedly extremely upset with Azad for his lackadaisical attitude in not protesting when Jaya Bachchan was protesting.

'Mystery seed' creates panic

Farmers across the globe, including India, have been warned about the existence of "mystery seeds" which can threaten agriculture production and national food security. An

official memorandum was issued by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare. The memorandum stated that such consignments of mysterious seeds can cause "serious threats to the environment, agriculture and ecosystem." The memorandum goes on to say that "brushing scam and agriculture smuggling" of this nature can cause serious threat to "national security." It warns the states and Union Territories to be on the guard against such shipment and parcels of such seeds.

Why did British High Commissioner quit?

There is utter shock and disbelief as British High Commissioner to India Sir Philip Robert Barton left the country within a month of taking over. The outstanding diplomat presented his credentials

to the President on July 8 and had tweeted, "Honoured to present my credentials...look forward to forging an even stronger relationship." Come August and he is gone leaving everybody baffled. Insiders say he found the atmosphere in the Indian bureaucracy not conducive for the British companies wanting to set up shop here. Many British companies were keen to exit China and come to India to set up their establishment in India. But Sir Robert found that things are not moving the way they should. He called on many top officials of the government and even a couple of ministers. He wanted expeditious clearance to all the companies who were keen to move. After recent developments relating to China at a global level, there is a growing desire by multinational companies to shift their base from China. Modi is also keen to take full advantage.



We remain deeply concerned by Turkey's ongoing operations surveying for natural resources in areas over which Greece and Cyprus assert jurisdiction
MIKE POMPEO | SECRETARY OF STATE, US

SK EASES SOCIAL DISTANCING

South Korea Sunday eased its tough social distancing policy for the next two weeks in the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area, with new daily novel coronavirus cases hovering stubbornly.



of the day quote

The decision to impose a full lockdown over the holidays was planned in advance out of a lack of appreciation to the Jewish holidays



YAAKOV LITZMAN | HOUSING MINISTER, ISRAEL

I am committing at least USD 100 million to help Joe Biden's presidential campaign in the crucial battleground state of Florida



MICHAEL BLOOMBERG | FORMER MAYOR, NEW YORK CITY

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's intention to override part of the legally binding Brexit agreement is all-round extraordinary



KIM DARROCH | BRITAIN'S FORMER US AMBASSADOR

SHORT TAKES

Australia warns foreign journo

Sydney: A senior Australian government minister on Sunday warned foreign journalists working in the country they might come under the scrutiny of federal agencies if they provide a "slanted view" of Australian affairs. Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton made the comments during a television interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corp, referring to journalists reporting to "a particular community." "If people are here as journalists and they're reporting fairly on the news, then that's fine," Dutton told ABC TV's Insiders programme.

Philippines deports American Marine

Manila: A US Marine convicted of killing a Filipino transgender woman was deported Sunday after a presidential pardon cut short his detention in a case that renewed outrage over a pact governing American military presence in the Philippines. Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton left a message to President Rodrigo Duterte and to the family of Jennifer Laude, who he was convicted of killing in 2014 after finding out that she was a transgender in a motel northwest of Manila.

China's domestic air travel recovers

Beijing: Domestic air travel in Wuhan, the epicentre of the global coronavirus outbreak, has returned to pre-pandemic levels, authorities say. The virus was first detected in Wuhan late last year and the city underwent a draconian 76-day lockdown as its hospitals struggled to deal with a tidal wave of cases that required the rapid construction of field hospitals to handle the overflow. Since re-opening in early April, life has gradually returned to normal and numbers of domestic flights had fully recovered.

1 dead in mall shooting in US

Mishawaka: A shooting at a northern Indiana mall left one person dead and sent shoppers running for safety, authorities said. St. Joseph County Coroner Michael McGann said Saturday evening that one person was killed in the shooting about 3 p.m. at University Park Mall in Mishawaka. He did not release further details or the identity of the person killed. Police also did not release information on a possible shooting suspect. The shooting prompted the evacuation of the mall.

CALAMITOUS FIRES PUMMEL WEST

AGENCIES

Salem, Sept 13: The path of devastation spans thousands of miles where flames have consumed people, homes and cars while leaving a barren, gray landscape.

But the massive wildfires aren't done chewing through the West, shrouding the skies with choking smoke or driving residents from their homes.

It's an ominous harbinger of fall for the region that was the first to be hit hard by the coronavirus and where the cries for social justice have rung especially loud this summer with protests in Portland for more than 100 days.

"What's next?" asked Danielle Oliver, who had to flee her home southeast of Portland ahead of the deadly flames. "You have the protests, coronavirus pandemic, now the wildfires.

What else can go wrong?" She's one of tens of thousands of people displaced by wildfires in Oregon, California and Washington state. Many more are living with air contamination levels at historic highs. The region's death toll has topped 30 and could increase sharply, with Oregon officials saying they are preparing for a possible "mass ca-



sualty event if more bodies are found in the ash.

Among the people killed was Millicent Catarancuic, who was found near her car on her 5-acre home in Berry Creek, California. At one point she was ready to evacuate with her dogs and cats in the car. But she later changed her mind as the winds seemed to calm and the flames stayed away.

Then the fire changed direction, rushing onto the property too quickly for her to leave. She died, along with her animals. "I feel like, maybe when they passed, they had an army of cats and dogs with her to help her through it," said her daughter, Holly Catarancuic.

RUSSIAN INTERFERENCE IN US POLLS

White House continues to play down question



AGENCIES

Washington, Sept 13: A whistleblower's allegation that he was pressured to suppress intelligence about Russian election interference is the latest in a series of similar accounts involving former Trump administration officials, raising concerns the White House risks undercutting efforts to stop such intrusions if it plays down the seriousness of the problem.

There is no question the administration has taken actions to counter Russian interference, including sanctions and criminal charges on Thursday designed to call out foreign influence campaigns aimed at American voters. But Trump's resistance to embracing the gravity of the threat could leave the administration without a consistent and powerful voice of deterrence at the top of the government heading into an election that U.S. officials say is again being targeted by Russia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin is not deterred," said Connecticut Rep. Jim Himes, a Democratic member of the House Intelligence Committee. Himes said Putin feels "empowered, probably inoculated in the U.S. because of the president's behaviour."

Brian Murphy, the former top intelligence official at the Department of Homeland Security, alleges in the complaint made public Wednesday that he was instructed to hold back on reports on

Russian interference because they "made the president look bad."

That follows previous reports that Trump berated his then-intelligence director after a congressional briefing about Moscow's interference and that the president sought the firing of another official who told Congress he supported intelligence agencies' assessment that Russia had interfered on Trump's behalf during the 2016 election.

The department denied Murphy's allegation, and the White House issued a statement describing instances in which it said the president had it taken action against Russia.

"This president has been resolute that any foreign adversary seeking to disrupt our elections will face tremendous consequences, White House spokeswoman Sarah Matthews said.

Senior Trump administration officials have been eager to focus more on China in discussing election interference, asserting that Beijing is the more potent danger.

Though intelligence officials do say China is a major espionage concern, there is also bipartisan consensus, including in a Republican-led Senate report, that Russia directly interfered in 2016 with the goal of helping Trump defeat Democrat Hillary Clinton. This year, intelligence officials say, Russia is working to denigrate Democratic nominee Joe Biden.

Murphy is not alone in alleging that he felt stymied from raising the Russia threat head-on.

Miles Taylor, as chief of staff to former Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, participated in high-level administration meetings and has in recent weeks publicly conveyed his concerns about Trump's leadership.

CALIFORNIA BEARS THE BRUNT

California has borne the brunt of the death toll so far, as more than two dozen active major fires have burned thousands of square miles. President Donald Trump plans to visit Monday for a briefing. Some of the worst blazes were still burning in northeastern Washington and Oregon. The Democratic governors of all three states have said the fires are a consequence of global warming. We absolutely must act now to avoid a future defined by an unending barrage of tragedies like the one American families are enduring across the West today," said Joe Biden, the party's presidential nominee. The dry, windy conditions that fed the flames were likely a once-in-a-generation event, said Greg Jones, a professor and research climatologist at Linfield University in McMinnville, Oregon.

in the wildfires died in an instant, overcome by flames or smoke as they desperately tried to escape.

FLAMBOYANT DESIGN



A model wears a creation by Marta Casal during the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Madrid, Spain, Sunday

Former leaders slam Johnson

AGENCIES

London, Sept 13: Two former British prime ministers who played crucial roles in bringing peace to Northern Ireland joined forces Sunday to urge lawmakers to reject government plans to override the Brexit deal with the European Union, arguing that it imperils that peace and damages the UK's reputation.

In an article in The Sunday Times, John Major and Tony Blair slammed the current British government for "shaming" the country with legislation that, in places, goes against the very deal it signed to allow for the UK's smooth departure from the EU earlier this year. Major, a Conservative prime minister from 1990 to 1997, and Blair, his Labour successor for a decade, said Prime

BREXIT PLAN



Minister Boris Johnson's Internal Market Bill "questions the very integrity of the U.K.

The planned legislation, which will be debated by British lawmakers this week, has led to a furious outcry within the EU as it would diminish the bloc's previously agreed oversight of trade between mainland Britain and Northern Ireland if a UK-EU trade

agreement isn't secured.

The British government has admitted that the legislation would break international law, but argues that it's an insurance policy in the event a trade deal with the EU is not secured by the end of this year. Johnson has said the legislation is needed to end EU threats to impose a "blockade" in the Irish Sea that the prime minister asserted could "carve up our country." EU leaders have furiously rejected that charge.

Justice Secretary Robert Buckland told the BBC on Sunday that the legislation was a "break the glass in emergency provision, if needed, and that he would resign if he believed the rule of law was broken in an "unacceptable" way.

"I don't believe we're going to get to that stage," he said.

TAMED GROUP

OPEC's most hawkish members, Iran and Venezuela, have been sidelined by U.S. sanctions

Its kingpin, Saudi Arabia, has shown it would rather appease Washington than risk losing U.S. support

what he needs for the oil price - and he is served," Chakib Khelil, who was Algeria's oil minister for a decade and OPEC's president in 2001 and 2008, told Reuters. "So indeed OPEC has changed." The Saudi Energy Ministry declined to comment. The White House declined to comment.

Reuters spoke to eight current and former OPEC officials, representing over a third of the group's output, as well as analysts, traders and investors to ask how U.S. sanc-

ACCLAIMED IRANIAN WRESTLER EXECUTED

AGENCIES

Tehran, Sept 13: Iranian state TV reported that the country's authorities executed a wrestler for allegedly murdering a man, after President Donald Trump asked for the 27-year-old condemned man's life to be spared.

State TV quoted the chief justice of Fars province, Kazem Mousavi, as saying "The retaliation sentence against Navid Afkari, the killer of Hassan Torkaman, was carried out this morning in Adelabad prison in Shiraz."

Afkari's case had drawn the attention of a social media campaign that portrayed him and his brothers as victims targeted over participating in protests against Iran's Shiite theocracy in 2018. Authorities accused Afkari of stabbing a water supply company employee in the southern city of Shiraz amid the unrest.

Iran broadcast the wrestler's televised confession last week. The segment resembled hundreds of other suspected coerced confessions aired over the last decade in the Islamic Republic.



The case revived a demand inside the country for Iran to stop carrying out the death penalty. Even imprisoned Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, herself nearly a month into a hunger strike over conditions at Tehran's Evin prison amid the coronavirus pandemic, passed word that she supported Afkari.

The International Olympic Committee in a statement Saturday said it was shocked and saddened by the news of the wrestler's execution.

Once an American foe, now a friend: OPEC turns 60

SHIFTS IN GLOBAL POLITICS AND A SURGE IN AMERICA'S OIL PRODUCTION HAVE TAMED THE GROUP

REUTERS

New York, Sept 13: In 1973, Arab members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries brought the U.S. economy to its knees. Now, the cartel created 60 years ago is more likely to do Washington's bidding.

Since Saudi Arabia and other Arab OPEC members imposed their famous oil embargo as retribution for U.S. support for Israel during the Yom Kippur War, shifts in global pol-

itics and a surge in America's oil production have tamed the group.

OPEC's most hawkish members, Iran and Venezuela, have been sidelined by U.S. sanctions while its kingpin, Saudi Arabia, has shown it would rather appease Washington than risk losing U.S. support, current and former OPEC officials say.

While OPEC as a bloc resisted U.S. pressure to lower oil prices for decades, notably in 2011 during the uprising against Libya's Muammar Gaddafi, its record over the past three years has largely been one of capitulation, these officials say. Founded in Baghdad Sept. 14, 1960 to counter the power of seven U.S. and British oil companies, OPEC has repeatedly yielded to pressure from Washington to pump more oil since U.S. President Donald Trump took office at the start of 2017.

Trump has regularly called for lower gasoline prices to help U.S. consumers. And when prices got too low



for U.S. drilling companies to make money this year, OPEC hashed out a deal to bring them back up slightly, in an agreement spurred on by

Washington's threat to reduce its military backing for Riyadh, sources have told Reuters.

"Trump orders from Saudi Arabia

of the day quote

Government must see how they can make the industry more profitable and attractive to investors. If you want investments, you have to make the business case attractive



TV RAMACHANDRAN | PRESIDENT, BIF

During the shift from BS-IV to BS-VI the auto industry invested close to ₹80,000 crore, 40-50 per cent of which was by the auto component industry



DEEPAK JAIN | PRESIDENT, ACMA

The very high interest cost in comparison to the global industry which makes investments very burdensome particularly in these times is unfortunate



ABHAY FIRODIA | CHAIRMAN, FORCE MOTORS

SHORT TAKES

MFs withdraw ₹17.6Kcr in Jul

New Delhi: Mutual funds have pulled out Rs 17,600 crore from stock markets in July mainly on account of negative sales in equity-oriented schemes. This comes against the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic-related disruptions, a sharp slowdown in economic activity across the globe and volatility in equity markets. Prior to the withdrawal, mutual funds (MFs) had made a net investment of Rs 39,755 crore in stock markets during January-June 2020, data available with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed.

Discoms' dues to gencos rise 36 pc

New Delhi: Power producers' total outstanding dues owed by distribution firms rose over 36 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1.29 lakh crore in July 2020, reflecting stress in the sector. Distribution companies (discoms) owed a total of Rs 94,704 crore to power generation firms in July 2019, according to portal PRAAPTI (Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators). The portal was launched in May 2018 to bring in transparency in power purchase transactions between the generators and discoms.

EAC to review CPCL's TN project

Chennai: The Expert Appraisal Committee has reviewed CPCL's proposed 9.0 MMTPA project in Nagapattinam in the State and has sent its recommendations for clearance from the Environment Ministry, a top company official has said. Chennai Petroleum Corporation Ltd (CPCL), an IndianOil Group company, has proposed to set up the project.

FPIs turn net sellers in Sept

New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) turned net sellers in Indian markets by pulling out Rs 2,038 crore so far in September as participants turned cautious in view of rising Indo-China tensions and weak global cues. According to the depositories data, a net Rs 3,510 crore was withdrawn from equities, while Rs 1,472 crore was pumped into debts by FPIs between September 1-11. FPIs were net buyers for three consecutive months -- June to August.



The difference between wholesale and retail inflation is primarily due to supply-side factors which should decrease and therefore going forward even the retail inflation should ease

KV SUBRAMANIAN | CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISER

SECONDARY LISTING PLAN IRKS INVESTORS

REUTERS

Mumbai, Sept 13: Indian companies that list overseas will have to later launch on a domestic bourse under policy changes being considered by government officials, sources told Reuters, a move that global investors fear will harm valuations.

India said in March it would allow local firms to directly list abroad to better access foreign capital for growth, but the rules have yet to be decided. Currently only certain types of securities such as depository receipts are able to be listed in foreign markets, and only after the companies go public in India.

The new policy, aimed at helping local firms achieve better valuations, could be a shot in the arm for Indian unicorn start-ups valued at over \$1 billion and Reliance's RELINS digital unit which is eyeing a U.S. listing after raising over \$20 billion from global names like KKR & Co KKR.N.

But in recent weeks Indian officials told global investors and companies in meetings they were considering mandating a secondary listing for local companies on Indian bourses after they list abroad, five sources said. The time period under consideration for such a requirement ranges from 6 months to 3 years, sources said.

A separate senior regulatory source in India said "dual listing was being considered by the (finance) ministry for sure," but a final position on the matter has not been reached. Japan's SoftBank 9984.T and an Indian payment firm



DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

The new policy, aimed at helping local firms achieve better valuations, could be a shot in the arm for Indian unicorn start-ups

However, India is concerned that the upcoming policy change will mean that companies hunting for higher valuations would choose to only list abroad

it backs, Paytm, as well as Reliance and U.S.-based Sequoia Capital have conveyed to the government the secondary listing provision risks splitting trading volumes, hurting long-term valuations and raising compliance needs and costs, the sources added.

"To require companies to subsequently list in India will make these rules meaningless," said a senior executive working at a global venture-capital firm. SoftBank and Sequoia have invested in various Indian firms like ride-hailing company Ola and hospitality firm Oyo. Foreign listings could provide exits for such investors at higher valuations but also allow Indian firms, especially from the tech sector, to access specialised investors abroad who can better value their companies.

JIOFIBER SERVICES NOW IN JATNI, PURI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 13: Broadband service provider JioFiber has now expanded its services to Jatni and Puri. The service was rolled out across different cities and towns of Odisha in a phased manner and is now available in key areas across 15 cities and towns.

At present the service is available in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Rourkela, Bolangir, Brajaraj Nagar, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Angul, Bhawanipatna, Koraput, Kendrapara, Puri, Jagajpur Road and Jatni.

Jio has set its eyes on replicating the same success and ushering in transformation in broadband internet arena too, taking JioFiber to each household in major cities and towns, introducing the digital world to every-



one in the process.

JioFiber has recently revamped its tariff plans to empower every Indian home, further reinforcing its customer-obsession and to celebrate Naye India Ka Naya Josh. Along with providing extreme affordability during these challenging times, JioFiber plans come with truly unlimited internet, unlimited voice calling, symmetric speed and affordable plans starting from just ₹399.

PETROL, DIESEL PRICES UNCHANGED

Fuel prices remained unchanged across the four metro cities Sunday with petrol being sold at ₹81.86 per litre in the national capital.



India's coal import drops 35%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 13: India's coal import declined by 34.9 per cent to 12.46 million tonnes (MT) in August on account of subdued demand for the dry fuel from consuming sectors like power and cement.

The country imported 19.14 MT of coal in August last year, according to provisional compilation by Mjunction, based on monitoring of vessels' positions and data received from shipping companies.

Mjunction, a joint venture between Tata Steel and SAIL, is a B2B e-commerce company that also publishes research reports on coal and steel verticals.

Also, the first five months of the current fiscal saw 32.51 per cent decline in coal import at 73.08 MT, over 108.29 MT during the year-ago period, it said.

Although there has been a modest recovery in coal-consuming sectors such as power and cement, coal stock continues to be ample and



To boost coal demand, the government has announced a slew of measures like increased supply for linkage consumers

hence import demand subdued. If we go by the current trend, coal imports may see a significant decline this year, it said.

Of the total imports in August, non-coking coal's shipment was at 8.87 MT and coking coal at 2.18 MT.

Coal India (CIL), which accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output, has been mandated by the government to replace at least 100 million tonnes of imports with domestically-produced coal in the

ongoing fiscal.

To boost coal demand, the government has announced a slew of measures like increased supply for linkage consumers.

The Centre had also announced several relief measures for CIL consumers, including the power sector.

The country imported 247.1 MT of coal in 2019-20, about five per cent higher than 235.35 MT imported during 2018-19.

Banks sanction ₹1.63L cr loans to 42 lakh MSMEs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 13: The finance ministry on Sunday said banks have sanctioned loans worth over ₹1.63 lakh crore to more than 42 lakh business units under the ₹3-lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for the MSME sector.

On the disbursement front, however, over ₹1.18 lakh crore doled out to 25 lakh MSME units, till September 10, which were hit by the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdowns.

The scheme is the biggest fiscal component of the ₹20-lakh crore Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in May to mitigate the distress by providing credit to different sectors, especially micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

As of September 10, as reported by public sector banks (PSBs) and top 23 private sector banks, additional credit amounting to ₹1,63,226.49 crore has been sanctioned to 42,01,576 borrowers, the ministry said in a statement.

Amount of ₹1,18,138.64 crore has been disbursed to 25,01,999 borrowers, it said while sharing the progress of implementation of various schemes under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan package.

Sharing details of other schemes being implemented by the finance ministry, the statement said banks have approved purchase of portfolio of ₹25,055.5 crore under ₹45,000-crore Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme 2.0 for NBFCs, HFCs and MFIs to do fresh lending to MSMEs and individuals scheme as August 28.

Lenders are currently in the process of approval negotiations for additional ₹4,367 crore, it said.

Talking about income tax refunds, it said the department has issued ₹1,01,308 crore to more than 27.55 lakh taxpayers between April 1, 2020 and September 8, 2020.

Income tax refunds of ₹30,768 crore have been issued in 25,83,507 cases and corporate tax refunds of ₹70,540 crore have been issued in 1,71,155 cases. In fact, all corporate tax refunds up to ₹50 crore have been issued in all cases, wherever due.

BIZ BUZZ

Audi biz back on track, sees heightened demand

New Delhi:

With its business back on track having "moved out of the pandemic", German

luxury carmaker Audi sees heightened demand as the festive season in India peaks on the back of pent up demand and its new products, according to a top company official. The company is witnessing increased footfalls at its showrooms although it has not reached pre-COVID levels, while it is also gaining a lot of traction in online customer interactions. "As we have moved out of this pandemic in terms of business, of course, the number of cases is still growing, but by and large the business is back on track and so are the customers," Audi India Head Balbir Singh Dhillon told PTI.



DPIIT working on credit guarantee scheme for startups

New Delhi:

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is working on two schemes -- credit guarantee and seed funds -- to support startups in the country, a top government official has said. DPIIT Secretary Guruprasad Mohapatra said that an inter-ministerial consultation process is on to work out the contours of the two schemes. "We are working on a credit guarantee scheme and a seed fund scheme. Both are under inter-ministerial consultations," the secretary told PTI. He said there would be a corpus in the credit guarantee scheme which would be given to banks and they will leverage that to lend to startups. This scheme would give banks a comfort to lend.



SBI Card to enrol 'delinquent' customers

New Delhi: SBI Card is in the process of enrolling "delinquent" customers, who did not repay after the end of moratorium, in the RBI restructuring scheme or its own repayment plan to provide them more time for repayments, a top company official said. Due to the moratorium, a number of customers had not been paying for the first three months and the company treated them as standard accounts in line with the entire industry. However, since then, as the first moratorium ended, SBI Card made it a customer-led enrolment in the second moratorium in which a lot of customers did not enrol, SBI Card Managing Director & CEO Ashwini Kumar Tewari said.



Geopolitical developments to dictate market terms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 13: Investors in the coming week will closely follow developments surrounding India-China border tensions, which have been a worrying factor for the equity market as well, besides focusing on key macro data release and global cues, according to analysts.

Both benchmarks Sensex and Nifty saw a good recovery last week after a correction of over 2.5 per cent in the previous week.

The BSE Sensex zoomed 497.37 points or 1.30 per cent, while the NSE Nifty gained 130.60 points or 1.15 per cent during the trading week ended on September 11.

A massive rally in index heavyweight Reliance Industries also drove the benchmark indices higher, though uncertainties around economic recovery, rising COVID-19 cases and Indo-China tussle kept weighing on sentiment.

With the lack of any official statements from the high level talks to



defuse border tensions, investors need to be prepared for slow progress in this regard. As such, this uncertainty will keep worrying the markets for the short term, Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Both India and China last week agreed on a five-point plan to resolve the border tensions in eastern Ladakh, and now all eyes will be on the actual disengagement of forces

on the Line of Actual Control. Nair further said the lack of any fresh domestic triggers will mean that investors will continue to watch global cues for any directional trend for the next week. Many small-cap companies are declaring their results over the weekend. Stock specific moves can be expected.

Analysts also see the US Fed interest rate decision and release of inflation data at home giving some

A massive rally in index heavyweight Reliance Industries also drove the benchmark indices higher, though uncertainties around recovery and Indo-China tussle kept weighing on sentiment

directional cues for investors.

Both retail and wholesale inflation data will be released on Monday. Consume Price Index (CPI) inflation in July shot up to 6.93 per cent due to rise in food and fuel prices.

Among major triggers, participants will first react to IIP numbers, followed by CPI and WPI inflation data in the coming sessions... Meanwhile, markets will continue to take cues from global indices

and upcoming FOMC meet, said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

Industrial production shrank by 10.4 per cent in July, mainly due to lower output of manufacturing, mining and power generation sectors, official data showed on Friday.

On the COVID-19 front, the rising infection cases and death toll remained a key reason for market volatility, though the rate of fatality from the disease has dropped further.

India's COVID-19 tally of cases sprinted past 47 lakh with 94,372 new infections being reported in a day, while 37,02,595 people have recuperated taking the national recovery rate to 77.88 per cent on Sunday, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

This week, investors would track Fed monetary policy meet, news flows around Covid vaccine trials and global cues, said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd.



India has 12 major ports under the control of the central government - Deendayal (erstwhile Kandla), Mumbai, JNPT, Mormugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Kamarajar (earlier Ennore), V O Chidambaram, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia).

Govt to give major push for 'electricity for cooking': Min

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 13: Union Power Minister R.K. Singh Sunday said that the government is aiming to push electricity for cooking in a big way, in a bid to provide the poor a cheaper option for their cooking fuel requirement.

Addressing a virtual conference of NTPC, he said that the move will also allow the economy to be self-reliant and give India independence from imports.

"Electricity is the future of India and most of its infrastructure will



be powered by electricity. The government has envisaged a Power Foundation to be formed at the Ministry's level and its objectives include cooking to completely run on electricity, which will allow our economy to be self-reliant and give us independence from imports," he said.

SHORT TAKES

Now IPL emojis
New Delhi: Ahead of the Indian Premier League (IPL), Twitter launched Sunday nine special team emojis. These emojis can be activated by hashtags in English and six Indian languages. “Through these nine emojis, fans will be able to show instant support to their favourite teams. Fans will also be able to follow and participate in live conversations,” the microblogging site said in a statement. Some of the hashtags that will unlock the team emojis are #OneFamily, #WhistlePodu, #PlayBold, #KorboLorboJeetbo, #SaddaPunjab, #OrangeArmy, #HallaBol, and #YehHaiNayiDilli.

Bogey free day
Napa (California): Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri kept his card clear of bogeys for the second day running as he returned a five-under 67, which included an eagle on the 18th, to be tied-33rd after the third round of the Safeway Open tournament here Saturday. The performance took Lahiri to 10-under for 54 holes in a low scoring event, where Brian Stuard finished with a scrambling birdie for a six-under 66 and a share of the lead with James Hahn (67) and Cameron Percy (68). Lahiri's last bogey came on his ninth hole in the first round, where he started from the 10th.

2 new recruits
Chennai: Two-time champions Chennaiyin FC announced Sunday the signing of defenders Lalchuanmawia Fanai and Reagan Singh ahead of the Indian Super League (ISL) season starting in November. The 31-year old Fanai hails from Mizoram while the 29-year old Reagan from Manipur. Both have joined Chennaiyin on free transfers, a press release from the club said. Fanai and Reagan are important additions to our squad in the key full-back positions. They bring valuable experience of playing in the ISL. They will have a vital role to play in our success,” CFC head coach Csaba Laszlo said.

Shuttlers' plights
New Delhi: Thomas Cup and Uber Cup badminton events have been hit hard by withdrawal of five countries. The tournaments were to be played October 3 to 13. Subhankar Dey is part of the squad for the Thomas Cup. He is hoping the tournament happens on schedule as it would ease the financial burden the players are facing. “The players are suffering right now because unless we play we won't get any money. Sponsorships are also not coming so we are facing a lot of problems,” he said.

WORLDWIDE PLEAS TO SPARE GRAPPLER NAVID AFKARI IGNORED

Iran executes champion wrestler for homicide

AGENCIES

Tehran, Sept 13: Iran has executed national champion wrestler Navid Afkari after accusing him of ‘murder’. The country has defied international appeals for him to be spared. Afkari, 27, was sentenced to death over the murder of a security guard during a wave of anti-government protests in 2018. Afkari said he had been tortured into making a confession. In a leaked recording released by people close to him, Afkari is heard saying, “If I am executed, I want you to know that an innocent person, even though he tried and fought with all his strength to be heard, was executed.” Afkari was executed by hanging in the southern city of Shiraz, ac-

cording to state media. His lawyer said his client had been prevented from seeing his family before his death, as required under Iranian law. “Were you in such a hurry to carry out the sentence that you deprived Navid of a last visit?” lawyer Hassan Younesi said on Twitter. Human rights organisation ‘Amnesty International’ described Afkari’s execution as a ‘travesty of justice’. There had been many calls to stop the execution, including from a union representing 85,000 athletes worldwide. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) called Afkar’s execution ‘very sad news’ and said their thoughts were with his family and friends. “It is deeply upsetting that the pleas of athletes from

“If I am executed, I want you to know that an innocent person, even though he tried and fought with all his strength to be heard, was executed”
NAVID AFKARI

around the world and all the behind-the-scenes work of the IOC... did not achieve our goal,” it said in a statement. Provincial prosecutor general Kazem Mousavi was quoted as saying by Iran’s state television’s website that 27-year-old Afkari was ex-

ecuted Saturday in a prison in the southern city of Shiraz. Afkari had been found guilty of ‘voluntary homicide’. He was guilty of murdering a man during the anti-government protests in 2018. Amateur wrestling’s governing body United World Wrestling (UWW) also said it was ‘shocked’ by the development and that the news has left the ‘entire wrestling community’ mourning. “United World Wrestling has learned that the scheduled execution of Iranian wrestler Navid Afkari took place Saturday morning in Iran,” said UWW in its statement. “It is deeply upsetting that the pleas of athletes from around the world did not achieve the goal of saving Afkari,” it added.



OSAKA WINS 2ND US OPEN WOMEN'S SINGLES CROWN BEATING AZARENKA

Two to tango

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, Sept 13: After one errant forehand in the first set of the US Open final, Naomi Osaka looked at her coach in the mostly empty Arthur Ashe Stadium stands at the Flushing Meadows here with palms up, as if to say, ‘What the heck is happening?’ She was playing in the final of the US Open tennis tournament, so every point mattered. In response to another wayward forehand against Victoria Azarenka seconds later, Osaka chuckled her racquet. It spun a bit and rattled against the court. Osaka was surprisingly off-kilter in the early going Saturday. She kept missing shots and digging herself a deficit. Until, suddenly, she lifted her game, and Azarenka couldn’t sustain her



PROUD MOMENT: Naomi Osaka with the US Open trophy

start. By the end, Osaka pulled away to a 1-6, 6-3, 6-3 victory for her second US Open championship and third Grand Slam title overall. “For me, I just thought it would be very embarrassing to lose this in under an hour. I was down a set and a

break. I needed to do something quickly, real quick. Then I wasn’t really thinking about winning. I was just thinking about competing. Somehow, I ended up with the trophy,” the Japanese, now settled in California, added. Osaka all through the tournament has worn masks to voice her concerns over various issues. She showed up for Saturday’s match wearing a mask with the name of Tamir Rice, a Black 12-year-old boy killed by police in Ohio in 2014. “The point,” Osaka explained, “is to make people start talking.” Osaka added to her triumphs at the 2018 US Open – earned with a brilliant performance in

a memorably chaotic and controversial final against Serena Williams – and 2019 Australian Open. Azarenka carried an 11-match winning streak of her own Saturday, including a stirring three-set victory over Williams in the semi-finals, stopping the American’s bid for a 24th Grand Slam title. So it had to be a close match. Even after Osaka surged ahead 4-1 in the third set, the outcome was unclear. Azarenka drew to 4-3, then stood and stretched during the ensuing changeover. “Had a little bit of an energy dip,” Azarenka said. It was all that Osaka needed to close out the match. Azarenka led early thanks to terrific returning and let-no-ball-by defense, stretching points until Osaka missed. And Osaka repeatedly missed; the first set was over in a blink. Azarenka broke early in the second set, too, to lead 2-0. But then the comeback began.

OSAKA	MATCH STATS	AZARENKA
6	Aces	3
2	Double faults	2
61%	1st serve points	59%
5/10	Breakpoints won	7/12
34	Winners	30
26	Unforced errors	22



PACER SREESANTH'S 7-YEAR BAN ENDS

Finally free to bowl fast again

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 13: India pacer S Sreesanth’s ban for alleged spot-fixing came to an end Sunday, concluding a seven-year punishment that was originally meant to be for life and was aggressively contested by the flamboyant bowler. The 37-year-old has already made it clear that he intends to resume at least his domestic career at the end of the ban. His home state Kerala has promised to consider him if he manages to prove his fitness. “I’m completely free of any charges and anything now gonna represent the sport I love the most. Will give my very best to every ball I ball even (if) it’s just practice (sic),” Sreesanth had tweeted Friday. “Just have another 5 to 7 years max to give it all I’ve got and I will give the very best to any team I play (sic),” he added. However, with the Indian domestic season postponed at present due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it remains to be seen when exactly

Sreesanth is able to make a comeback if Kerala decides to give him a chance. The domestic season starts in August but COVID-19 has left scheduling in complete disarray. Sreesanth’s life ban for alleged spot-fixing in the 2013 edition of the IPL was reduced to seven years by BCCI Ombudsman DK Jain last year. Jain had observed that the cricketer is well past his prime having already served six years. The BCCI had banned Sreesanth in August 2013 along with his Rajasthan Royals teammates Ajit Chandila and Ankeet Chavan. However, March 15 last year, the Supreme Court set aside the BCCI disciplinary committee’s order and asked the board to reconsider the quantum of punishment. “I will never ever cheat cricket even when I am playing a friendly match... I don’t ball (bowl) easy ones or try to loose... so pls get that right with everyone... (sic)”, Sreesanth posted recently. Sreesanth played 27 Tests and 53 ODIs for India, taking 87 and 75 wickets respectively. He has also taken seven wickets in 10 T20 Internationals.



EGYPTIAN ON SONG WITH HAT-TRICK IN SEASON-OPENER

Salah saves Liverpool’s day

AGENCIES

London, Sept 13: Mohamed Salah scored a hat-trick, including two penalties, as Liverpool began their Premier League title defence with a hugely entertaining 4-3 win Saturday over promoted Leeds United at Anfield. Leeds were making their return to the top flight after a 16-year absence. They fought back from behind three times and played the brand of intense, attacking football that their Argentine manager Marcelo Bielsa established during their promotion campaign last season. A season beginning with spectators still barred from the grounds due to COVID-19 restrictions needed a start to spark some excitement among frustrated fans and this high-energy, incident-packed encounter certainly delivered. Jurgen Klopp’s side grabbed a fourth minute lead after referee Michael Oliver harshly ruled that Leeds’ debutant German defender Robin Koch had handled a Salah shot which deflected off his thigh on to his outstretched arm. Salah himself blasted home the spot-kick and Leeds looked as though they may be in for a very long day. But eight minutes later Jack Harrison brought Leeds level with a fine solo goal, picking the ball up on the left-flank and cutting inside, skipping past Trent Alexander-



ON THE MONEY: Mo Salah (right) of Liverpool scores against Leeds during the Premier League game played Saturday

Arnold and Joe Gomez, before drilling into the bottom corner. Liverpool restored their lead in the 20th minute and this time Leeds had only themselves to blame, leaving the obvious threat of Virgil van Dijk unchallenged with the towering Dutchman heading home an Andy Robertson corner. But Leeds showed their resolve again with Patrick Bamford slotting home after Van Dijk had uncharacteristically failed to deal with a ball over the top. Salah, sporting a new short haircut, blasted Liverpool back in front,

12 minutes before the break, when he pounced on an attempted header clear from Pascal Struijk with a first-time shot which gave Illan Meslier no chance. But there was to be a third comeback for Leeds. Helder Costa’s low ball into the box found Polish midfielder Mateusz Klich whose deft touch earned him space for a low drive past Allison to make it 3-3. But, with just two minutes remaining, Liverpool secured the points with another Salah penalty after Rodrigo Moreno clumsily brought down Fabinho.

2 IN FRAY FOR EB COACH’S JOB

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Sept 13: Mario Rivera, who guided East Bengal (EB) to a second place finish in the last I-League wants to be back at the helm, even as former Serbian international Risto Vidakovic’s name is doing rounds for the chief coach’s post. East Bengal are yet to finalise their head coach following their acquisition by ‘Shree Cement’ who will make an ISL bid for the upcoming season. “I receive many messages every day from East Bengal fans asking me to come back but at this moment nothing is closed,” Rivera said Sunday. “I’m always ready to go back to India. My future plans are coaching wherever a club wants me and enjoy every day of my passion,” the 43-year-old added.

Oz bowlers restrict England

AGENCIES

Manchester, Sept 13: World Champions England are on the threshold of losing the three-match ODI series against Australia. The hosts scored in 231 for nine in 50 overs after opting to bat on winning the toss. Had it not been for No. 10 batsman Adil Rashid’s (35, 26b, 3x4, 1x6) blitzkrieg England would not have crossed the 200-run mark. He was well-supported by Tom Curran (37, 39b, 5x4). The two put on runs 76 for the ninth wicket to give a semblance of respectability to the England total. Australia won the first ODI by 19 runs. Except for skipper Eoin Morgan (42, 52b, 5x4) and Joe Root (39, 73b, 4x4, 1x6) none of the England batsmen got going against a very impressive Australian attack.



Adam Zampa

Leg-spinner Adam Zampa (3/36) led the way for the Australians with a fine spell. He picked up the wickets of both Root and Morgan after the two together had stitched together a partnership of 61 runs

for the third wicket. Zampa also got the prized scalp of Sam Billings (eight) who got a ton in the first ODI. The batsman trying to cut a fast leg-break got cramped for space and was bowled off the bottom edge. Zampa also got a Morgan with a ball that beat the batsman on flight, but did not turn enough to miss the stumps. Initially, the umpire had adjudged not out, but Aussie skipper got the ‘review’ perfect to sent back his England counterpart. Pacers Mitchell Starc (2/38) and Josh Hazlewood (1/27) also impressed. Both were miserly and picked up crucial wickets. **Brief scores:** England (Eoin Morgan 42, Joe Root 39, Adil Rashid 35 n o, Adam Zampa 3/36, Mitchell Starc 2/38) vs Australia. Match to continue.

2 UAE players suspended by ICC for fixing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Sept 13: The ICC provisionally suspended Sunday UAE cricketers Amir Hayat and Ashfaq Ahmed on match-fixing charges. The Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) had suspended opener Ashfaq during the ICC Men’s T20 World Cup Qualifier in October last year but no formal charges were laid as it waited for investigations to get over.

The 38-year-old Hayat, a medium pacer has played nine ODIs and four T20Is while 35-year-old Ashfaq has represented the country in 16 ODIs and 12 T20Is. “The players have 14 days from 13 September to respond to the charges. The ICC will not make any further comment in respect of these charges at this stage,” ICC said in a release. Amir and Ashfaq have been charged under article 2.1.3 and four

other from 2.4.2 to 2.4.5 of ICC’s anti-corruption code. The article 2.1.3 is specific to match-fixing. It states, “Seeking, accepting, offering or agreeing to accept any bribe or other Reward to: (a) fix or to contrive in any way or otherwise to influence improperly the result, progress, conduct or any other aspect of any International Match; or (b) ensure for Betting or other corrupt purposes the occurrence

of a particular incident in an International Match. The other four breaches (2.4.2 to 2.4.5) are specific to non-disclosure of corrupt approach to the anti-corruption unit (ACU). The non-disclosure violation ranges from delay in intimation, intentionally accepting gifts or benefits that is higher than USD 750 which can include personal gifts, hospitality and cricket specific hospitality.