



## AT THE RECEIVING END

Actor Sonam Kapoor is being brutally trolled for saying she wants to be like Jaya Bachchan when she grows up

LEISURE

P2



## NEET HEAT

The NEET generates heated debate in Tamil Nadu Assembly

TWO STATES

P7



## 'nCoV MAY TURN SEASONAL'

Once herd immunity is attained, the Covid may become a seasonal virus, says a new study

INTERNATIONAL

P10



**IRREGULAR** by MANJUL

## SHORT TAKES

### Flipkart to hire 70,000 in India

**New Delhi:** Walmart-owned Flipkart Tuesday said it will help generate over 70,000 direct and lakhs of indirect seasonal jobs in the country ahead of the festive season and its Big Billion Days (BBD) sale. The Bengaluru-based company said while direct job opportunities will be created across Flipkart's supply chain, including roles like delivery executives, pickers, packers and sorters, there will also be additional indirect jobs created at Flipkart's seller partner locations and kiranas.

P11

### Jadhav gets 4 more months for appeal

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's Parliament extended for four months an ordinance that allowed Indian death-row prisoner Kulbushan Jadhav to file an appeal against his conviction in a high court as required by the International Court of Justice. The ICJ (Review and Reconsideration) Ordinance promulgated in May was set to expire on September 17 but the National Assembly or the lower house Monday through a voice vote extended it for four months, the Dawn News reported.

### Kangana seeks ₹2 cr damages from BMC

**Mumbai:** Actor Kangana Ranaut has amended her petition before the Bombay High Court to seek a compensation of Rs 2 crore from the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) for "illegal" demolition at her bungalow. After the BMC demolished what it termed as illegal alterations at the actor's bungalow at Pali Hill September 9, Ranaut moved the high court. A division bench had stayed the demolition, saying that the civic body's actions seemed "malafide" (having dubious intentions). In her plea, Ranaut alleged that the BMC's decision to demolish her property was a direct consequence of her comments against the Maharashtra government.

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX			VARIATION
SENSEX	39044.35	▲	287.72
NIFTY	11521.80	▲	81.80
DOLLAR	73.92	▲	₹0.12
EURO	87.67	▲	₹0.30
GOLD	₹51,665	▼	₹22
SILVER	₹68,794	▼	₹171

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
MAX	35.2°C	34.6°C	
MIN	26.6°C	25.0°C	
Humidity	90%	85%	
Rainfall	0.6mm	Nil	
			Forecast Generally cloudy sky

# Together, China, Pakistan test lethal pathogens

AGENCIES

**New Delhi/Beijing, Sept 15:** Under the garb of Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China's Wuhan Institute of Virology and Pakistan Army's Defense Science & Technology Organization are conducting experiments on deadly pathogens to expand potential bio-ware capabilities.

An Australian investigative media group The Klaxon, in an exclusive report in August this year, revealed that the two countries have been carrying out extensive research operations on deadly 'animal to human' pathogens in Pakistan involving more than 7000 Pakistani farmers, herders and others and over 2800 camels and other animals.

The Wuhan scientists have been conducting tests in collaboration with Rawalpindi in Pakistan since 2015, the Klaxon reported. The programme is funded by China under Xi's ambitious BRI project.

The results of at least five studies conducted on some of the world's deadliest and most contagious pathogens - West Nile Virus; MERS-Coronavirus; Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever Virus; the Thrombocytopenia Syndrome Virus; and the Chikungunya Virus - have been published in scientific papers between December 2017 and March 9, 2020. The China-Pakistan research involves experiments and genome sequencing of the deadly viruses. One of the studies thanked Wuhan's National Virus Resource Centre for "providing the virus-infected Vero cells".

In its comprehensive report, the Klaxon reported that each of the five studies stated it was "supported" by the "International Cooperation on Key Technologies of Biosafety along the China-Pakistan Economic



## UNHOLY NEXUS

The two countries have been carrying out extensive research on deadly 'animal to human' pathogens in Pakistan involving over 7,000 Pakistani farmers

The Wuhan scientists have been conducting tests in collaboration with Rawalpindi since 2015. The programme is funded by China under Xi's ambitious BRI project

Corridor". The Klaxon said "international cooperation on key technologies program" has not been formally announced, and the only public references to it appear to be in the acknowledgements sections inside the five scientific papers it obtained.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, or CPEC, is the flagship component of China's Belt and Road infrastructure programme, both of which were announced in 2015. "The Belt and Road program has been widely criticised as being a veil for Chinese colonial expansion, which lumps poor countries with unsustainable amounts of debt and so undermining their sovereignty, enabling China to exert control and influence over them," the Klaxon reported.

As recently as late 2018, Pakistan's government publicly attempted to push back against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, declaring it a bad deal, but it was almost immediately overruled by Pakistan's powerful military, which has said it would defend the programme "at all costs".

## Indian economy to contract 9 pc: ADB

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** India's coronavirus-battered economy will shrink by 9 per cent this fiscal, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said Tuesday saying growth outlook remains highly vulnerable to either a prolonged outbreak of the pandemic or a resurgence of cases.

This will be the first time in four decades that the Indian economic growth will contract. In its Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2020 Update, ADB forecasts a strong recovery for the economy in FY2021, with gross domestic product (GDP) growing by 8 per cent as mobility and business activities resume more widely.

"India imposed strict lockdown measures to contain the spread of the pandemic and this has had a severe impact on economic activity," said ADB Chief Economist Yasuyuki Sawada. Sawada further noted that "it is crucial that containment measures, such as robust testing, tracking, and ensuring treatment capacities, are implemented consistently and effectively to stop the spread of COVID-19 and provide a sustainable platform for the economy's recovery for the next fiscal and beyond."

With lockdowns stalling private spending, ADB said GDP will shrink by 9 per cent in April 2020 to March 2021, sharply down from its June's forecast of (-) 4 per cent. "The growth outlook remains highly vulnerable to either a prolonged outbreak or a resurgence of cases, with the country now having one of the highest number of COVID-19 cases globally," It said.

P11

# Cabinet approves OGST Amendment Bill

**TENDER FOR CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGE OVER SUBARNAREKHA RIVER IN MAYURBHANJ ALSO GETS CABINET NOD**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 15:** Ahead of monsoon session of the Assembly, the state cabinet Tuesday approved four proposals including amendment of Odisha Goods and Services Tax (OGST) Act-2017

The cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, held through video conference, cleared a proposal for introduction of the Odisha Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2020 and replacement of two ordinances, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy said.

As the State Assembly is set to meet for the monsoon session from



September 29, the Cabinet approved the bill for introduction in the house, finance secretary AK Meena said. The amendment in the OGST Act aims at providing certain facilities to the taxpayers and tax authorities, he said. The suggestions include empowering the state government to make provision for issuance of removal of difficulties order for another two years, and inserting a

new section - 168A - to extend due dates for various compliances on the recommendation of the GST council during war, epidemic, flood, drought, fire, cyclone and natural calamities, he said. The amendment will also make the beneficiary of the transactions of passing on or availing fraudulent Input Tax Credit liable for penalty similar to the penalty leviable on the person who commits such specified offences.

Meena said the punishment to a person who commits the offence of fraudulent Input Tax Credit has been extended and it was made a cognizable and non-bailable offence. The bill also empowers the gov-

ernment to make provision for issuance of removal of difficulties order for another two years, i.e. till five years from the date of commencement of the OGST Act, 2017.

The panel also decided to amend the Odisha Local Fund Audit Act, 1948, as difficulties were faced while to physically serving surcharge notices and orders on delinquent officers in time, the finance secretary said. It also approved a proposal by the works department for construction of a bridge over river Subarnarekha near Haldipada on National Highway-16 at a cost of over Rs 138.74 crore, works secretary Krishan Kumar said.

## e-MUSTER ROLL

# Govt wages to workers to be paid on DBT mode

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 15:** In a step ahead to bring in more transparency in governance, the state government has decided to implement e-muster roll to directly transfer wages to the bank accounts of labourers in all works that are being executed by government departments.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday reviewed the progress in implementation of the new system. In the first phase that would be launched October 2, this initiative will be implemented in projects worth more than Rs 10 crore in the departments of works, water resources, panchayati raj & drinking water, rural development and housing & urban development.

Under this initiative, muster rolls will be maintained in electronic format (E-muster roll) so as to prevent manipulation and ensure transparency. This will also ensure stricter monitoring of minimum

wages and timely deposit of ESI and EPF dues.

The Chief Minister directed all departments to have the system in place by January 1 next year for universal implementation of the system.

Stating that the project is a critical step towards transparency and accountability in executing works, he emphasised on use of robust technology in implementing this initiative along with enabling legal frame work.

Concerned officials were asked to undertake state level training and capacity building programmes among staff, extensive awareness campaign for all categories of workers to make them aware of this and sensitisation of other stakeholders like banks and concerned agencies.

The works department will be the nodal department for execution of this initiative under the 5T charter. All departments have been directed to have provisions for incentivising and penal provisions under the system.



IAF transport aircraft C17 brings in essentials to a base in Ladakh, Tuesday as the security forces gear up for winter amid tensions at the LAC

# SC restrains Sudarshan TV from airing 'UPSC Jihad'



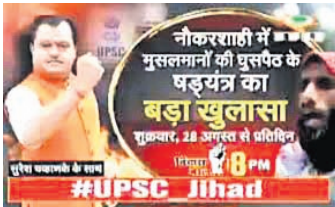
"Most of the channels are running for the TRPs," the bench observed. There should be some kind of self-regulation in the media, the apex court said

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** The Supreme Court Tuesday restrained Sudarshan TV from telecasting two episodes of 'Bindas Bol' programme, which are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday, saying it prime facie appears to "vilify" the Muslim community.

"At this stage, prima facie it does appear that the programme does vilify the Muslim community," the apex court said while staying the telecast of two episodes of the programme on alleged infiltration of Muslims into the bureaucracy.

A three-judge bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud, which was



hearing a plea which raised grievance over the programme, said it would hear the matter September 17. The bench, also comprising Justices Indu Malhotra and KM Joseph, suggested that a committee can be appointed to help in self-regulating the electronic media. "We are of the opinion that we may appoint a committee of five

distinguished citizens who can come up with certain standards for the electronic media. We don't want any politically divisive nature and we need members who are of commendable stature," the bench said.

The counsel appearing for the petitioner has sought reliefs, including injunction on broadcasting of the programme whose promo had claimed that channel would show the 'big expose on conspiracy to infiltrate Muslims in government service'. The bench, which said it is necessary to hear the matter further, observed that court is duty bound to preserve the "salutary principles" It referred to the Cable TV rules and

said that "defamatory, false and reflective of half-truth and innuendos" must not be shown.

The bench said that pending further orders, the channel is "injunctioned from making any more broadcasts on this subject on any other name too".

Senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for Sudarshan TV, told the bench that the channel considered it an investigative story on national security and the programme has 10 episodes. "Most of the channels are running for the TRPs," the bench said. observed. There should be some kind of self-regulation in the media, the apex court said while raising questions over the programme.



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said on Tuesday three vaccine candidates against the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) are in the clinical stage of trials in India and one of them will soon begin Phase 3 trials after getting clearances.

Covid-19 vaccine candidates being manufactured by Cadila Healthcare and Bharat Biotech have completed the first phase of the trial while the Serum Institute of India (SII) will begin with Phase 3 trial after getting the nod, Bahram Bhargava, ICMR's director general, said during the health ministry's briefing.

Union Health Ministry Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, who was also at the press conference, said no one has presently applied for the emergency authorisation of the vaccine.

Bhargava said the country distributed the Covid-19 curve in such a way that it did not have many deaths and did not witness a huge peak. The comments came against the backdrop of All India Institute of Medical Sciences Director Dr Randeep Guleria's statement that India is witnessing a second wave of coronavirus.

"During the peak in Europe and the US, there were huge numbers of mortalities. We took learning from that and were able to

distribute the curve in such a way that we did not have those deaths. This was attributed to the lockdown. We were able to distribute the curve and did not have a huge peak at all," said Bhargava, at a press conference, on being asked about the second wave.

The country's overall Covid tally stands at 49,30,237 and 9,90,061 of them are active cases. Emergency authorisation is not only for vaccines but for drugs, with an existing provision in the Drugs and Cosmetic Act for this. It is an accelerated process which permits the regulator to grant permission which is distinct from regular marketing authorisation.

One example is the US FDA giving emergency authorisation to Remdesivir. Emergency authorisation to Remdesivir was given by the India regulator too. About the Sputnik vaccine, Bhushan said: "Russia has a good history of vaccine manufacturing and hence, we assume that this vaccine is also good. There is a dialogue going on between the high-level committee of the governments of India and Russia. We are trying to work out its mechanism."



# leisure

## FORTUNE FORECAST

**GaneshSpeaks.com**  
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
You are ever eager to socialise, and today especially, you may want to mix business with pleasure. You will be welcomed to join in group activities because you can work and play with equal enthusiasm. In fact, you may learn a lot from such a healthy exchange of ideas, says Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
Light bulbs will flash relentlessly today, as you ideate in the fervour of a creative mood. Your business acumen will help you negotiate problems with ease. The reticent Taurus charm will ring out loud in your laughter, as you deal with your bosses and colleagues at the workplace, says Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Routine work bores you, and today you will go all out to break free from the shackles of boredom. The results, however, may not be as dramatic. You will have to depend on your children, if any, to rescue you from the tyranny of routine.

**CANCER**  
You may feel like flaunting your so-called superior social and financial status today. Chances are that all that gas about how successful you are may end up exploding in your face, and you may end up spending a lot more than you would have liked.

**LEO**  
You may wear the trendiest suit, drive the swankiest car and dine at the costliest restaurant, but if luck is not on your side, you can forget becoming a business tycoon. Fortunately, that is not the case with you today. With a favourable alignment of the cosmos, you are set for a day where your business proposals will be the hardest thing to overlook.

**VIRGO**  
Family matters. And matters of family matter more. Your negotiation skills are supreme and you shall bring harmonious ends to disputes today. Life has taught you to be balanced and level-headed, and you strongly believe that there is progression in opposition.

**LIBRA**  
It's a full platter today, and you have to manage it all somehow. The day promises to be full of activities, especially those that involve writing letters and reviving old contacts. Expect a call to appear for an interview for a better job. Also, look forward to being put in charge of organising events at work, says Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
In all probability, you are set to shine out as a man of care and kindness. Ganesh advises you to shut the doors on worries and open the windows to let merrymaking and happiness sweep you off your feet today. The social bug will bite you hard, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Providence smiles upon you today, predicts Ganesh. Catching a film with your beloved today is a very good idea. Chances are you may have a nice outing along with your friends or family. In either case, the load in your wallet is likely to lessen, steadily if not dramatically.

**CAPRICORN**  
Not many can match you when it comes to living a healthy lifestyle, and as Ganesh says, health won't be an issue today either. On the work front, you are likely to complete pending projects successfully and your boss, who may be furious because of the delay caused, will reluctantly admit that you did justice to the work and that it was worth the wait.

**AQUARIUS**  
Today, you will wish there were two of you! You are deluged with pending work, and even doubling up efforts will not seem enough. You may even cancel your movie date, deciding to deal with your sweetheart's tantrums later.

**PISCES**  
Bright prospects will greet whatever new ventures you decide to focus on today, says Ganesh. It is a good time to implement your plans. Apart from short-term monetary gains, you may also find yourself pursuing activities which bring you intangible rewards, like goodwill for example.



## DON'T MIND BEING UGLY ON SCREEN: MICHELE MORRONE

Italian actor Michele Morrone says he doesn't mind being ugly for a film, as it is more important to be an artiste rather than a sexy man. Notably, female fans are in awe of his good looks after the release of his erotic film *365 Days*.

## EVANS USES NUDE PHOTO LEAK EPISODE TO PUSH VOTER TURNOUT IN POLLS

*Captain America* star Chris Evans wants to turn his accidental explicit photo leak incident into a public service announcement. He took to Twitter to break his silence after accidentally sharing his private photo, and used it as an opportunity to boost voter turnout for the upcoming US presidential election.



## 'Nepotism is an overrated debate'

**Mumbai:** Filmmaker Anubhav Sinha feels the raging debate over nepotism, which has found fresh steam after the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, is overrated. "Nepotism is an overrated debate. It exists everywhere and I have been telling this from the day one. Too much has been made out of the word 'nepotism'," Sinha said. He opened up on the issue of favouritism, too, and he admitted not being too aware of the newly-

popular term 'movie mafia' before. "Speaking of 'mafias', I haven't heard this term too many times in regards to the industry. Yes, favouritism and bullying exist in the business and it exists in every business. But we all should be very careful about our fellow workers. We all should think about each other and work in a friendly manner," said the Thappad director.

IAN S



Anubhav Sinha



## Matto Ki Saikal to be premiered at Busan film fest

**Mumbai:** The film *Matto Ki Saikal*, featuring actor-filmmaker Prakash Jha and directed by M Gani, is all set to have its world premiere at the 25th Busan International Film Festival in South Korea, to be held from October 21 to October 30.

The film has been selected to be screened in the A Window On Asian Cinema section of the festival. "I extend my heartfelt thanks to the selection committee of the prestigious Busan International Film Festival and

to Prakash Jha, who stood by me and believed in the story: I was fortunate that I had a wonderful team that made this film possible and I thank each member associated with the film," said Gani.

The story of the film revolves around a family's struggle to buy a new bicycle and how their lives depend on it. The film also features Anita Choudhary and Aarohi Sharma among others. Jha, who plays a pivotal role in the film said: "I was surprised when they approached me for playing Matto! It is a beautiful story, almost heartbreaking, but Matto is completely opposite to what I am in real life!"

IAN S

## Sonam heavily trolled for lauding Jaya's speech

**Mumbai:** Actress Sonam Kapoor is being trolled all of Tuesday for saying she wants to be like Jaya Bachchan when she grows up.

Veteran actress and Samajwadi Party member Jaya Bachchan in her speech at the Rajya Sabha has alleged that a continuous attempt is being made to defame the film industry.

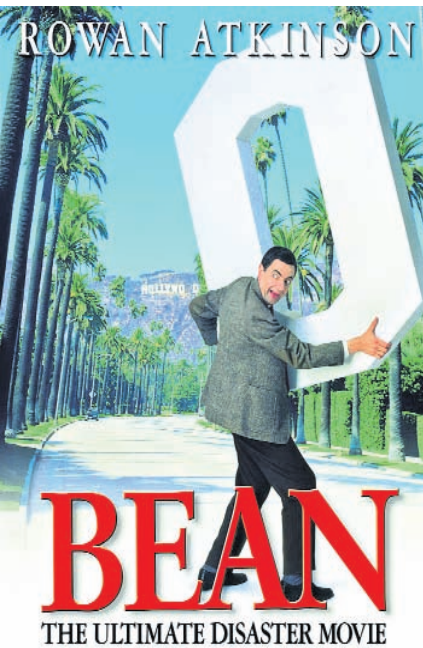
Extending support to her, Sonam Kapoor tweeted from her verified account: "I want to be her when I grow up." Netizens immediately replied to her tweet, questioning the 35-year-old actress what does she mean by 'growing up' at 35.

"Aur kitna grow?? U already became an aunty. Do u think urself to be sweet 16?? And yes, say directly that u too wanna support consumption of drugs & save criminals like Jaya! #WeStayUnited4SSR," tweeted a user. "kaun se class mein padhti hain aap (in which class do you study?)" asked another user. "Chachi, you are already 35 now. So when you will grow up?" asked another user. "Sonam Kapoor still thinks of growing up? Acted in movies, modeled, gossiped on Karan Johar shows, got an award, and later got married. When will she grow up? God!" exclaimed another user.

IAN S

## THIRTY YEARS ON Mr Bean is essentially a kid in a man's body: Atkinson

**Mumbai:** The popular Rowan Atkinson-starrer series, *Mr. Bean*, has completed a 30-year run. The English comedian star said he always believed that the show had a very good chance of being successful and long-running, partly because the character is essentially a child in a man's body. "I always believed that *Mr. Bean* had a very good chance of being successful and having longevity, partly because the comedy is mainly visual and partly because Mr. Bean is essentially a child in a man's body. Across all races and cultures, the behaviour of children tends to be the same and so is easily identified and laughed at," Atkinson said. What makes Mr Bean rel-



evant today, 30 years on? "His childish, anarchic behaviour will always be funny," Atkinson replied.

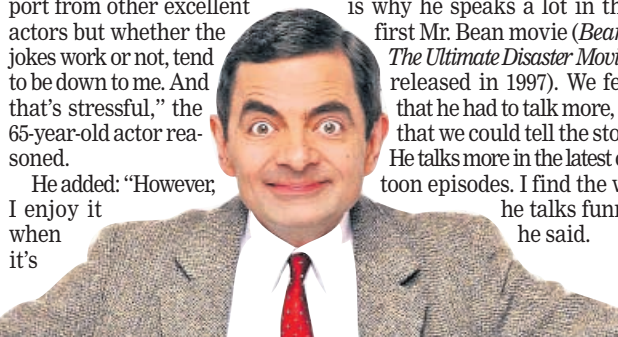
Talking about his fondest memories from filming *Mr. Bean*, Atkinson said that he found filming the show 'stressful.'

"I'm sorry to say that I find all filming stressful but Mr. Bean especially so, because of the burden of responsibility I feel to make it funny. Of course, you have support from other excellent actors but whether the jokes work or not, tend to be down to me. And that's stressful," the 65-year-old actor reasoned.

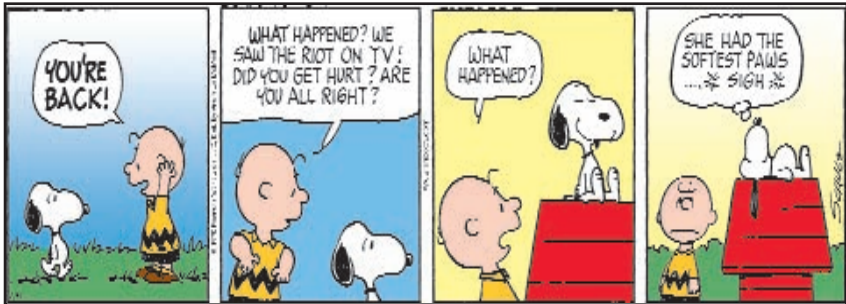
He added: "However, I enjoy it when it's

over! I enjoy whatever success we have. If an audience finds it funny, then it's been worth it."

Were there any moments when Atkinson wanted Mr. Bean to speak? "Often, which is why he speaks a lot in the first Mr. Bean movie (*Bean: The Ultimate Disaster Movie*, released in 1997). We felt that he had to talk more, so that we could tell the story. He talks more in the latest cartoon episodes. I find the way he talks funny," he said.



## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS

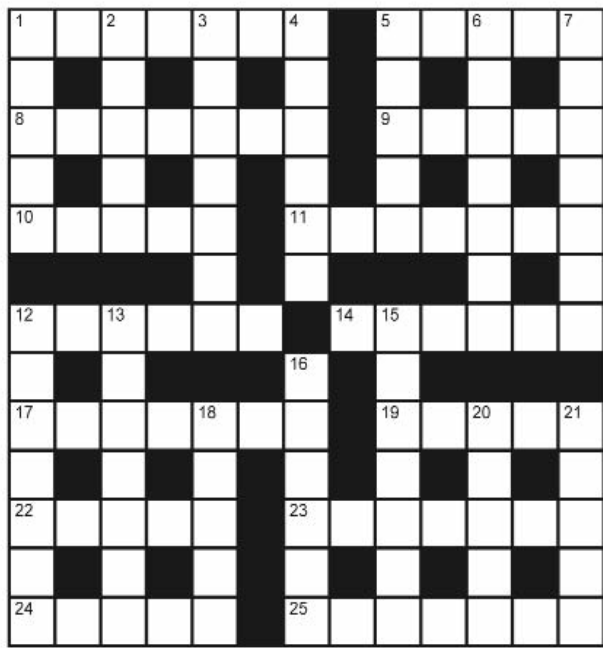


## BREVITY



## FUN post

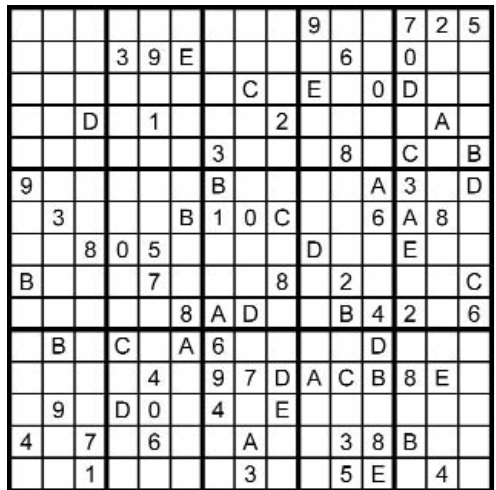
## CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Frankness
  - 5 Large pheasant
  - 8 Tranquillised
  - 9 Deadly African snake
  - 10 Pancake topper
  - 11 Pccan producer (3,4)
  - 12 Hate
  - 14 Put on hold
  - 17 Backache
  - 19 Kenyan tribesman
  - 22 Peach
  - 23 Sidestepped
  - 24 Grocery section
  - 25 Store-bought dessert (4,3)
  - 5 Acknowledge
  - 6 Gable roof
  - 7 Kind of cat
  - 12 Quandary
  - 13 Mexican steamed dishes
  - 15 Knoll
  - 16 Patterned art work
  - 18 In the know
  - 20 Sin city
  - 21 Type of finger or card

## SUDOKU

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



## SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW







# Three arrested for flesh trade in Puri

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, Sept 15:** Baliapanda police Tuesday arrested three persons in connection with an alleged flesh trade in an apartment here.

Police also seized an SUV, Rs 4,200 and some objectionable items from the accused.

According to police, some people were running flesh trade racket in a private apartment in Baliapanda area in the Pilgrim City. On a tip-off, police raided the apartment and found three persons including a woman in compromising position from a room, sources said.

Police arrested Chinmaya Swarupa Panda, 52, and Chinmaya Ranjan Rout, 49, of Jajpur Road

in Jajpur district in connection with the incident. "A case has been registered against the accused duo. Our officials are probing the incident," said Puri Superintendent of Police Akhileshvar Singh.

Meanwhile, the rescued woman, a resident of Balugaon area of Khurda district, lodged a complaint with police and alleged that some people forced her into immoral activities.

Police registered a separate case as per the woman's complaint and arrested Sunil Kumar Samal of Balichandrapur. However, another accused, Anand Ram, of Mangalabag area in Cuttack managed to escape, said the SP.

Locals, meanwhile, expressed concern over the alleged flesh trade in the Pilgrim City and sought stern action against the accused.



Police seized an SUV, ₹4,200 and some objectionable items from the accused

# ECoR's maiden fly ash load through business devpt units

As many as 58 wagons of fly ash were loaded from Tata Steel BSL Limited Siding at Meramandali and left for West Bengal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 15:** In spite of challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Indian Railways has undertaken a slew of initiatives to boost freight operations. The East Coast Railway (ECoR) has started transporting commodities both in tariff and non-tariff sectors.

In order to increase Railway's share in transportation, the ECoR is now getting closer to trade and industry bodies through its recently launched Business Development Units (BDUs) so that

various sectors including non-bulk goods traffic can be transported by Railways.

These units are attracting trade and industries for transportation of their products, which being moved on road, by rail. For this, an incentive of 40 per cent in freight has been given as per the different schemes provided under BDU.

One rake consisting of 58 wagons of fly ash was loaded from Tata Steel BSL Limited Siding at Meramandali and left for Ambuja Cement Eastern Limited at Sankrail in West Bengal September



# NCST seeks report on virus spread among PVTGs

State's COVID-19 caseload nears 1.6L; toll 645

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 15:** State's COVID-19 tally Tuesday mounted to 1, 58, 650 with 3,645 people, including a ruling BJD MLA, testing positive for the infection, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

The death toll reached 645 with eight more people succumbing to the infection—three in Cuttack and one each in Boudh, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Sambalpur and Subarnapur, said the official.

Of the 3,645 new infections, 2,151 were reported from various quarantine centres, and 1,494 during contact tracing.

mit a factual report and an action taken report by September 25.

Besides Bonda and Didayi, there are 11 more particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) in Odisha which are characterised by declining or stagnant population, low level of literacy, pre-agricultural level of technology and economic backwardness. The Bondas, scattered across 32 remote hilltop vil-

lages in the Eastern Ghats of Malkangiri district, are believed to have come to India as part of the first wave of migration out of Africa about 60,000 years ago

avirous, officials said. According to media reports, one member of the Bonda tribe and five from the Didayi tribe tested COVID positive in August.

The commission said it is a matter of grave concern and the Chief Secretary of Odisha should sub-



THREAT TO RARE TRIBES

One member of the Bonda tribe and five from the Didayi tribe tested COVID positive in August

The NCST has sought a factual report and an action taken report from Chief Secretary by Sept 25

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has sought a report from the state government after six members of two primitive tribes in the state contracted the novel coron-

Khurda district reported the maximum 517 new cases, followed by Cuttack 357 and Puri 246, the H&FW department official said.

BJD MLA from Pipli in Puri district, Pradeep Maharathy, after learning that he has contracted the disease, asked people who re-

cently came in touch with him to isolate themselves and undergo tests, if necessary.

Meanwhile, Odisha reported 3714 recoveries, taking the total recoveries in the state to 1,25,738.

As many as 53 COVID-19 patients in the state died due to comorbidities, according to the official.

## Prisoner dies of corona in City

Panic gripped the staff and prisoners of Jharpada jail in Bhubaneswar after an under-trial prisoner in the jail died while undergoing treatment at a hospital before testing positive for COVID-19, Tuesday. The information was shared by the jail authority Tuesday. The deceased has been identified as Jugul Khandual. Police had arrested Khandual for his alleged involvement in the chit fund scam. He has been lodged in jail since 2019. According to jail authorities, Khandual had developed flu like symptoms and complained of fever, for which he was admitted at Capital Hospital in Unit-VI, September 13.

lages in the Eastern Ghats of Malkangiri district, are believed to have come to India as part of the first wave of migration out of Africa about 60,000 years ago.

Earlier, the NCST had asked the Andaman and Nicobar administration to submit an action taken report on the spread of COVID-19 among 10 members of the dwindling Great Andamanese (GA) tribe

on the tiny Strait Island.

Nine out of 10 members have recovered from the virus. However, the archipelago administration is yet to submit a report to the commission, according to officials.

There are only 59 surviving members of the GA tribe, a PVTG. Experts have said the virus can have a serious impact on the PVTGs due to their poor levels of immunity.

## FOR A CAUSE



CPI(M) leaders demonstrate at Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday, demanding arrest of BJP leaders 'involved' in riots and withdrawal of 'fake cases' against Communist leaders and other intellectuals

## 'ECMO can help curb state's COVID fatalities'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Sept 15:** Extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) would go a long way in curtailing the novel coronavirus-related mortality rate in Odisha, state government's technical advisor on COVID-19 Jayant Panda said, Tuesday.

The senior healthcare expert said that he has recently suggested the state government for using ECMO.

"Odisha's COVID-19 mortality rate is 0.49 as against the national average of 1.65 per cent. Hence,

using such technology in case of critically-ill COVID-19 patients would definitely help reduce the fatalities. People should be made aware about the high-end technology—ECMO," Panda pointed out.

ECMO is an extracorporeal technique of providing prolonged cardiac and respiratory support to persons whose heart and lungs are unable to provide an adequate amount of gas exchange or perfusion to sustain life. ECMO would be a life-saver for a person infected with COVID-19, according to a senior health expert.

How does it work?

The ECMO machine is connected to a patient through plastic tubes (cannula). The tubes are placed in large veins and arteries in the legs, neck or chest. The ECMO machine pumps blood from the patient's body to an artificial lung (oxygenator) that adds oxygen to it and removes carbon dioxide. Thus, it replaces the function of the person's own lungs. The ECMO machine then sends the blood back to the patient via a pump with the same force as the heart, replacing its function. The perfusionist or ECMO specialist will adjust the settings on

the machine to give the patient the amount of heart and lung support they need.

About the duration of usage, the expert said that the machine should be used depending on how the patient's condition progresses, said the expert, adding that the machine is currently being used only at a few healthcare facilities in India.

"The way Odisha saw a huge success in plasma therapy, ECMO can also play a key role in saving many precious lives in COVID times," Panda pointed out, adding that it will take Odisha to a new level in COVID management.

## 3 held for PDS kerosene pilferage

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 15:** Special task force (STF) sleuths Tuesday claimed to have arrested three persons for their alleged involvement in pilferage of kerosene meant for supply through public distribution system (PDS) in Cuttack.

Acting on a tip-off, the sleuths raided the premises of Khirad Chandra Patra near Church Baula under Gurudijhatia police limits in Cuttack and recovered around 21,000 litre of PDS kerosene oil hoarded for the purpose of black-marketing.

"Gokulananda Pal of Kolar under Gurudijhatia police limits in

Cuttack, Radhashyam Barik and Jitendra Rout of Ganjam were taken into custody as they were found to be in illegal possession of a huge quantity of PDS kerosene. Two oil tankers, an electric motor, five empty drums, chemicals used for conversion of blue kerosene oil to white and Rs 18,900 were also recovered from the trio," the STF said, pointing out that Patra, however, managed to flee the spot.

A case (111/2020) in this regard has been registered with Gurudijhatia police under Sections 379, 411, and 285 of the IPC along with 7(1)(ii) of the EC Act, 1955, the STF added.

## Ban porn sites: OPF

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 15:** Expressing grave concern over readily available pornographic materials being provided by several Indian Internet service providers and social media platforms, the Odisha Parents' Federation (OPF) has written to the President of India, and Union and state governments demanding a ban on these sites.

The OPF alleged that pornographic videos are prepared with Odia language and uploaded on social media platforms by some new set of groups apparently to attract students during online classes.

## Central team's 2-day visit

**Bhubaneswar:** An inter-ministerial Central team led by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) joint secretary Praveen Vashista will make a two-day visit to Odisha for assessment of the situation in the wake of recent flood. The team comprises of members from the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Water Resources, Road Transport & Highways, Rural Development and Finance. The team is scheduled to arrive here September 16 morning. During the two-day programme, the team is likely to visit four flood-affected districts—Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Puri and return to Bhubaneswar the next day. A wrap-up meeting will be held here with the team under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy before their return to Delhi, September 17.

## Non-COVID patients suffering: Sura

**Bhubaneswar:** Congress leader Suresh Routray Tuesday said that several non-COVID patients are suffering in silence and many are losing their lives due to lack of treatment. "About 22 non-COVID 19 patients have died during the last 10 days due to the apathy of the health institutions in taking care of the patients who are not infected with Covid. Recently, many people who have the ability to pay for hospital services have been refused treatment in hospitals due to the linear focus on the health institutions for treatment of only COVID patients," he said.

# How nCoV altered Khurda idol maker's occupation

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khurda, Sept 15:** Until COVID-19 outbreak, he was known as a clay idol maker. Now people know him as a successful mushroom farmer.

Meet Asish Rana from Gurujang Mali Sahi on the outskirts of Khurda, who has not only made the transition possible but also have become an example for others, who hesitate to change their traditional occupation even during trying times like these.

Earning livelihood from clay idols has been in Asish's family for generations. Asish's father Jatadhari Rana has been a clay idol maker since his childhood. Asish and his brother Subhashish were happy to carry forward the legacy.



According to them, their season starts with Ganesh puja. For this, they start preparations from January. They collect straw and clay – the two main raw materials needed in idol making – in January and February, and begin idol-making in March.

The season starts with Ganesh puja, followed by Khudrukuni puja, Biswakarma puja, Durga puja, Kali puja, Laxmi puja, Kartik Purnami and closes with Saraswati puja. The earning from these festivals sees

them through the entire year. "Apart from our family members, we employ 10 labourers to meet the demand for idols. We would have so many orders with us that taking rest would become a luxury," Asish said.

## TRYING TIMES

Earning livelihood from clay idols has been in Asish's family for generations

They collect straw and clay – the two main raw materials needed in idol making – in January and February, and begin idol-making in March

As the source of earning got squeezed during the pandemic, the family found it difficult to make both ends meet. Finding no other way, they started growing mushrooms in their backyard

"This year, COVID-19 has spelt doom for us. We had already made Ganesh idols of varying sizes starting from three-feet to 12-feet tall. Then came COVID-19 restrictions prompting the committees to cancel their orders that led to heavy financial losses for us," he added.

"As our source of earning got squeezed, we found it difficult to make both ends meet. Finding no other way we started growing mushrooms in our backyard. My father and brother are assisting me," he said. They are selling 30 to 40 kg mushrooms every day and it has kept them afloat in the turbulent times. "Mushroom cultivation has given me a totally different identity. I plan to expand the scale," Asish revealed cheerfully.

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Unpaid insurance claims  
irk Sambalpur, Deogarh  
farmers; admin placates



Farmers protest in Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur/Deogarh, Sept 15:** Hundreds of farmers of Sambalpur and Deogarh districts are fuming over 'inordinate delays' in clearing the insurance claims of their damaged crops for last two years. "For the last two years, we have been running to the offices of tehsil, DRCS and the agriculture department to get our insurance money, but our plight has fallen on deaf ears of the administration and the concerned departments," said some farmers who staged agitations, protesting non-payment of crop insurance in Sambalpur, Monday. Farmers of Dakara panchayat under Maneswar block of Sambalpur have started relay hunger strike at the tehsil office since Sunday.

Farmers from Dakara panchayat walked 30 km to the tehsil office amid blistering heat and started the hunger strike. They were adamant on their stand that they would not leave the place unless they are given any written assurance from the administration about clearance of their insurance money. They wanted explanation from the Collector over 'inordinate delays' in payment of insurance. The farmers warned that 10 farmers will sit in hunger strike in turns every day until their insurance is cleared. The tehsildar held talks with agitating farmers, but it was futile. According to farmers, their crops were insured in 2018 kharif season. The crop got damaged due to unseasonal rains and pest attack in most parts of the district. The Revenue department, the insurance company concerned and the Statistics department had conducted survey of the crop loss and prepared a report. Several panchayats in the district were en-

**Farmers of Dakara panchayat under Maneswar block of Sambalpur have been on relay hunger strike at the tehsil office since Sunday**  
**They sought written assurance from the administration over payment of pending insurance claims**  
**The crop got damaged due to unseasonal rains and pest attacks in most parts of the district**

listed in the report. "Two years have passed, but their insurance claims have not been cleared," they fumed. About 800 farmers have approached the administration several times in the past about insurance, they said. An agitator said majority of the farmers in some panchayats have not received their compensation money. Reports from Deogarh said, about 85 per cent of farmers in the district were covered under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna in 2019-20. The co-operative societies have not yet paid their insurance till date. Though the farmers have taken up the issue with the administration in the past, no step has been taken till date, farmers alleged. Members of Deogarh Zilla Sangharsh Samiti staged a hunger strike at the Collectorate Monday. Assistant Collector Kaibalya Kar talked to farmers, urging them to withdraw their agitation. However, the farmers refused to do so and warned that their agitation will go on until their insurance claims are settled. DAO Pradip Kumar Sahoo later assured the farmers that crop insurance claims will be cleared soon. However, farmers remained adamant on their stand.

MGNREGA wages yet to be paid

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bolangir, Sept 15:** Hundreds of daily wagers launched an agitation at the DRDA office in Bolangir Tuesday to protest against delay in wage payment and massive corruption in the execution of projects under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme and demand timely release of their wages. MGNREGA beneficiaries from Belapada came to the DRDA office to lodge their protest. They alleged that massive irregularities were committed in the projects under the MGNREGS at Kenkeba and Madhyapur villages. "We had to do hard labour under the scheme with a hope to earn for our families. Our wages have not been cleared till date due to corrupt officials, Gan Sathis, GRSS.



The workers protest near the DRDA office in Bolangir, Tuesday.

In some cases, wages of the beneficiaries have been misappropriated through forged bank accounts," the agitating workers alleged. They demanded action against the corrupt officials and those involved in the irregularities. Social activist Achyut Sipun demanded a vigilance probe into the alleged irregularities. The delay in disbursement of

Youth thrashed  
over love affair

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nabarangpur, Sept 15:** A youth was thrashed by locals of Boragaon of Nabarangpur district for allegedly having a love affair with a young girl of the village. The victim has been identified as Surendra Harijan of Udayapur.

Surendra was presented  
before a kangaroo court  
which directed him to  
pay ₹60,000 as a penalty

According to reports, Surendra was having a relationship with a girl of Boragaon area. However, the relationship was not accepted by the girl's family members and the locals. The incident occurred when Surendra went to Boragaon to meet the girl and got chased by the locals. A panicky Surendra left his bike at the spot and managed to run away. Later, the next day, when Surendra went to retrieve his bike, he was trapped by the locals who then thrashed him black and blue before locking him up in a room. Later, Surendra was presented before a kangaroo court who directed him to pay ₹60,000 as a penalty. While Surendra managed to pay ₹10,000, the villagers did not give him back his motorcycle. With no other options left, Surendra sought the help of police and filed a complaint regarding the same. Acting on the FIR, cops lodged a case (136/20) and called upon the family members of the youth and the girl for questioning, sources said.

MKCG waiting for oxygen plant

THE HEALTHCARE FACILITY HAS BEEN FACING SHORTAGE IN SUPPLY OF OXYGEN CYLINDERS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Sept 15:** Thousands of people in south Odisha, Puri and even neighbouring Andhra Pradesh throng MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur, seeking treatment on a daily basis. In view of growing number of patients, oxygen has been a major need of the critical patients. At present, the patients are being supplied oxygen through cylinders, which are in shortage most of the time at the hospital. There is a proposal to set up a liquid oxygen plant on the medical premises. Officials of the State Medical Corporation and the medical authorities have started stock taking of the existing basic infrastructure favourable for the proposed facility. Meanwhile, the PWD has started hunting proper vacant space for the liquid oxygen plant, giving hopes of its establishment. MKCG is the only referral hospital in the south Odisha. About 4,000 patients turn up at the medical college and hospital every day. The state government has made efforts to ensure quality healthcare with proper facilities and infrastructure. Meanwhile, all the departments in the old indoors building have been shifted to a new building. The patients in the new building are supplied liquid oxygen through cylinders from medifold room. In 2017, there was a plan to set up an oxygen plant for the super-spe-



All buildings of the MKCG Medical College and Hospital will have oxygen supply. Currently, oxygen is supplied to patients through cylinders from medifold room  
PROF. SANTOSH KUMAR MISHRA  
I SUPERINTENDENT, MKCGMCH

cialty building. Tender process for the oxygen plant was initiated, but it was halted halfway. A new super-specialty block has been set up at a cost of ₹150 crore under PMSSY. "All buildings of the MKCG Medical College and Hospital will have oxygen supply. Currently, oxygen is supplied to patients through cylinders from medifold room," said Superintendent of the College, Prof. Santosh Kumar Mishra. It is said that earlier experts of various companies had visited the area after consultation with the state government.

The government has sanctioned ₹6 crore for the project, which will be executed by the state-owned Odisha Medical Corporation. The pipelines will pass through the beds of patients at the 28-bed central intensive care unit. It will help them to get oxygen whenever required. Though the construction of the building of the 28-bed central intensive care unit has been completed, the installation of the gas pipelines has been delayed with companies not showing interest in the liquid oxygen plant. MKCG Medical College and

- The govt has sanctioned ₹6 crore for the project, which will be executed by the state-owned Odisha Medical Corporation.
- The pipelines will pass through the beds of patients at the 28-bed central ICU
- Though the construction of the building of the 28-bed central ICU has been completed, the installation of the gas pipelines has been delayed with companies not showing interest in the liquid oxygen plant

Hospital was established 54 years ago with 512 beds only. The number of beds has increased to 1,082 in 33 departments, including eight super-specialty departments. However, the number of attendants and Class IV employees, which was 470, 54 years ago, has now decreased to 220. The liquid oxygen plant and ancillary gas pipelines, which were to be installed at MKCG Medical College and Hospital for the newly built 28-bed central intensive care unit and other wards, has been delayed. Earlier, convener of Manaba Adhikar Surakhya Manch, Abani Gaya, had raised the issue of oxygen plant earlier through 'Ghanta Yatra'. Now, educationist Prof. Jayanta Mohaptra has tweeted about the issue to the Chief Minister and the chief secretary.

CELEBRATING THE MAKER



An artisan is selling idols of Lord Biswakarma on the road side in Keonjhar town, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

Man dies minutes  
after getting  
Covid test report

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, Sept 15:** A man allegedly died minutes after receiving his Covid positive report at Dhenkanal district headquarters hospital, Monday. The deceased, identified as Sushant Kumar Prusty of Angul, was brought to the hospital Sunday morning by his wife and brother-in-law for Covid-19 test as he had developed flu-like symptoms. Prusty's family members alleged that he was unattended at the hospital for several hours. Later, he tested positive for Covid-19 in the antigen test. When he came to know that that he had tested positive for the virus, he collapsed at the hospital, the Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) said. A doctor wearing PPE kit examined him and declared him dead.

Residents spend sleepless  
nights over jumbo menace

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Deogarh, Sept 15:** Elephant menace has returned to haunt 15 villages under Deogarh block in Bolangir district as elephants have been on a rampage and destroying crops and houses in the area for the last few days. A herd of 14 elephants have trampled crops, maize and vegetables in Uparjhar, Mukundapur, Udhar and Gaibahal panchayats. The animals also damaged crops at Gurudipalli, Bandhapalli, Phatamunda and Gengali. The Forest department, meanwhile, has been accused of failing to keep the animals at bay. This has led to discontent among the locals. The animals are holed up in Mathakhia reserve forest and come

to Bhima hill. As they have been damaging crops, farmers are spending sleepless nights trying to drive them away with drums and torches. On the other hand, the Energy department has resorted to power cuts from 7 pm till 7 am to save the animals from electrocution. As a result, people in 15 villages have to live in dark for the last several days. The forest department has engaged 20 staff to drive away the animals. Worthy to note, the frequent intrusions by the pachyderms to the farmlands have robbed the farmers of their sleep. Crops in large tracts of farmlands were destroyed by the elephants in the above three villages. This situation has led to widespread panic among the villagers.

Exorbitant essential goods make hole in our pockets

OFFICIALS OF CONSUMER WELFARE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT BLAME THE FLOODS FOR SUCH A SITUATION

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar/Balasore, Sept 15:** Onion and potato prices have increased the woes of the consumers across the state amid the COVID-19 pandemic. One can safely say the spiraling costs of onions and potato are bringing tears to the eyes of the people. Both are now being sold above ₹40 per kilogram. The Odisha government has said that prices of these two commodities have sky-rocketed across India. However, consumers here have complained that it is making a huge dent in their pockets. However, it is not just that the prices of onions and potatoes have increased. Prices of other vegetables have also shot up due to the recent floods which destroyed large amounts of vegetable crops in different parts of Odisha. Retail traders said that they have no option but to



In the last month, we have been buying potatoes at around ₹35 per kilogram and ₹37 for each kilogram of onion. So, it is indeed a difficult time for us amid the COVID-19 pandemic  
JAYANTI PANDA | HOMEMAKER, BHUBANESWAR

increase rates as they have to shell out extra cash to procure vegetables from farmers and middlemen. Odisha's famous wholesale market Chatra Bazar is situated in Cuttack. Onions and potatoes are being sold at ₹100/3kg there. In other markets of the Silver City, potatoes

are being sold at ₹40 per kg while for onions the price is varying between ₹36 to 40 per kilogram. Similarly, in markets here and those in Balasore, the prices of both

potatoes and onions are hovering around the ₹40-mark for one kilogram. Traders in Angul district have started hoarding the stuff as shortage will enable them to increase the prices of both potatoes and onions. Consumers alleged that in some places the prices of onions and potatoes have gone over ₹40 per kg. Shopkeepers however, said they have no option but to increase the prices. They said they are being forced to shell out large amounts to get the vegetables from middlemen. "We have already reduced the consumption of potatoes as the price is very high. In the last month, we have been buying potatoes

at around ₹35 per kilogram and ₹37 for each kilogram of onion. So, it is indeed a difficult time for us amid the COVID-19 pandemic," said Jayanti Panda, a homemaker staying at UNIT-IX in Bhubaneswar. Officials of Consumer Welfare and Civil Supplies department blamed the floods for such a situation. They assured that the 'government is keeping a close watch on the situation' to see that prices do not escalate anymore. Decrease in production due to the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the prices of onions and potatoes. The situation is likely to continue for some more days, the officials said. It should be stated here that the Centre has banned the export of onions a couple of days back with immediate effect. People are hoping that this will bring down the prices of the staple consumer product within a short time.


GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. B-252  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,  
SUNDARGARH (R&B) DIVISION, SUNDARGARH  
E-mail id: pwd\_sng@yahoo.co.in, Tel./Fax: (06622) 272230  
"e" Procurement Notice  
Bid Identification No. EE-R&B-SNG-26 of 2020-21  
Letter No. 4471/WE Date: 07.09.20  
The Executive Engineer, Sundargarh (R&B) Division on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in Single Cover  
1. System on ONLINE mode from eligible contractors with valid licences for Construction of Building Works (Including EI & PH works) as detailed in DTCN.  
2. Nature of Works : Building Works  
3. No. of Work : 03 (three) Nos.  
4. Tender Cost : Rs.4000/- & Rs.6000/-  
5. Class of Contractor : "D", "C", "B" & "A" Class Contractor  
6. Availability of Bid document in the website : From 10.00 A.M. of Date: 18.09.2020 to 05.00 P.M. of Date: 28.09.2020.  
7. Date of opening of Bid : 11.00 A.M. on Dt.29.09.2020.  
8. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>). Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation of tender can also be seen in the website said only.  
Sd./- Executive Engineer  
Sundargarh (R&B) Division  
OIPR-34043/11/0012/2021

Government of Odisha No. B-256  
"e" Procurement Notice  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,  
RAYAGADA(R&B) DIVISION NO -I  
Bid Identification No: RC (RANDB) RGD 09/2020-21(Online Tender)  
File No. E-II-C8- 28/2020 No.4381 Dated 04.09.2020  
1. No. of the works : 01(One) No. of Building work  
2. Estimated Cost : Rs13, 13, 576.-/(Excluding GST).  
3. Cost of document : Rs.6000/-  
4. Bid Security : Rs13,200/-  
5. Class of Contractor : 'D' & 'C'  
6. The Bid documents will be available in the website [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in) from 11.00 hrs. of dated 21.09.2020 to 17.00 hrs. of dated 29.09.2020 for online bidding.  
7. Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal: - Upto 17.00 hrs. of Dated 29.09.2020.  
8. Bids received "on-line" shall be opened at 11.00 hours on dated 30.09.2020 in the office of the Executive Engineer, Rayagada (R&B) Division No-I.  
9. Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal: "[www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)". Any Addendum/Corrigendum/ Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.  
Sd./- Executive Engineer  
Rayagada (R&B) Division No-I  
OIPR-34040/11/0005/2021



When mind is still, then truth gets her chance to be heard in the purity of the silence.

SRI AUROBINDO



# No land, some peace

Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has hailed the agreement normalising relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates – which the two countries will sign at a White House ceremony on September 15 – as a historic step that equals Israel’s previous peace deals with Egypt and Jordan. The Israeli leader also boasted that the agreement with the UAE vindicated his ‘Netanyahu doctrine’ of peace for peace, rather than land for peace. But even peace with a country with which Israel does not share a border and has never fought a war required Netanyahu to give up his plans to annex large parts of the West Bank. So, there was a ‘land for peace’ aspect to the deal after all.

More important, Netanyahu’s ‘doctrine’ practically buries the concept underlying the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative: that an Israeli-Palestinian peace should be the precondition for normalisation of Arab states’ relations with Israel. The Arab League itself has rejected the Palestinians’ request to condemn the Israel-UAE deal, and the pact also signals the defeat of the Israeli left’s vision of Palestine as the key to peace with the Arab world.

Throughout the many decades of Arab-Israeli antagonism, Arab states have betrayed the Palestinians no less than Israel has. In his 1979 peace agreement with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin made far-reaching commitments on the Palestinian question. But both leaders knew that theirs was a separate peace driven by vital strategic needs – as shown by its subsequent survival despite Israel’s ever deepening occupation and settlement of Palestinian lands.

Why, then, has Mohammed bin Zayed, the UAE’s ruler, invited the rage of the betrayed Palestinians by normalising relations with the Jewish state? First, he proved to be a man with the courage to call a spade a spade. Gulf states including the UAE and Saudi Arabia have had discreet security relations with Israel for years. As a major military and technological power in the Middle East, Israel has become a necessary ally for conservative regimes shaken by the 2011 Arab Spring, the threat of Islamist radicalism, and Iran’s growing regional clout.

But it is mainly the fear of a withdrawal from the region by the United States that is bringing Arab states closer to Israel. They saw how US President Donald Trump refrained from any direct military response to Iran’s devastating September 2019 attack on Saudi Arabia’s oil installations. Moreover, Trump didn’t even respond to Iran’s downing a few months earlier of a sophisticated US surveillance drone over the Strait of Hormuz.

The idea that peace with Israel also means peace with America has always been a fundamental motive behind the Arabs’ decision to consider reconciliation with the Jewish state. Sadat signed the 1979 peace agreement because he wanted to shift Egypt’s strategic orientation from the Soviet Union to the US. The \$2 billion in annual military aid that Egypt still receives from the US is a direct product of that peace. And Syria, Israel’s staunchest Arab enemy, evinced interest in peace only after the Soviet Union collapsed.

The Emiratis do not need America’s money, but they do need its continuous involvement in Middle Eastern affairs. Israel is the guarantee that America will always be around, and offers the UAE a path into the US Congress, where arms deals and financial packages are approved.

The Trump administration’s apparent decision to sell F-35 stealth fighter jets to the UAE has been an important objective in the Emirati peace strategy towards Israel. These advanced warplanes – which only the US and Israel currently possess – will secure America’s engagement with the UAE, and add muscle to a small country that has global ambitions and many enemies.

Chief among these foes are Qatar and Turkey. Both countries support the Muslim Brotherhood, a UAE nemesis, which explains Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s virulent reaction to the normalisation deal. In Libya, the UAE is fighting together with Egypt and Russia in support of the Tobruk-based Libyan Army led by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, while Turkey and Qatar are backing the internationally recognised government in Tripoli. The UAE has also sought to check Turkey’s punitive incursions against Kurdish forces in northern Syria.

Framing the Israel-UAE agreement as part of the continuous effort to contain Iran, as Netanyahu and the Trump administration are doing, is a convenient way to make the F-35 arms deal palatable to increasingly isolationist US public opinion. The truth is that the UAE has been pursuing a prudent strategy vis-à-vis Iran. It recently abandoned the Saudi-led coalition in the war against Iran’s Houthi proxies in Yemen, and has even disengaged from Trump’s sanctions regime against Iran.

Be that as it may, Netanyahu is right to say that the Palestinians are losing their most important strategic asset: their veto power over an all-Arab peace with Israel. Bahrain has already announced that it will follow in the UAE’s footsteps, and more Arab countries are likely to do so as well. The region is changing, and the Arabs are accepting that Israel is a legitimate strategic player. Palestine, the supposed epicenter of the region’s worries, has become a disposable cause.

The Palestinians must recognise that they have brought this situation on themselves by their serial rejection of peace offers in the past. How could they assume that the Arab states would forever mortgage their national interests in a changing region to fulfill Palestine’s implausible expectations? Should they not now shift strategy, stop their ‘boycott’ of the US, and engage Israel in the search for a realistic peace plan?

*The writer is a former Israeli foreign minister and Vice President of the Toledo International Center for Peace. @PROJECT SYNDICATE*



Shlomo Ben-Ami

Throughout the many decades of Arab-Israeli antagonism, Arab states have betrayed the Palestinians no less than Israel has



Vijay Darda

THE AMAZING THING IS THAT DESPITE THE ATMOSPHERE TURNING AGAINST CHINA IN THE WHOLE WORLD, IT IS BROWBEATING EVERYONE

## FOCUS CHINA

# REIN IN THE DRAGON



China has got the small countries of the world in a debt-trap by liberally distributing loans to them. The question is, who will save these countries from its grip? Now the debt-ridden countries have no alternative but to support China. In such a situation, how will big countries fight China? At present, in at least 100 countries, dictators masquerading as democrats are sitting in the lap of China

All of you must have read about the dreaded Kalia Nag (serpent) in our mythology. The lake in which it lived had become so poisonous that even the birds and animals passing over it used to die. Even the river Yamuna had become poisonous due to its venom. Lord Krishna jumped into that lake. Kalia Nag had a hundred heads. When Krishna crushed him, Kalia Nag realised its mistakes.

In today’s context, China wants to subjugate the whole world just like Kalia Nag. Besides being the world’s second largest economy, it is equipped with all the resources of genocide like atomic bombs and biological weapons. There is no existence of dignified human life or human rights in China. In 1989, it had used tanks to crush the student protests and ruthlessly killed them for demanding a democratic set-up in the country. If such a country loses even one lakh soldiers due to its misadventure, what difference will it make to it? But can democratic countries like the US, Japan or India think so? We can’t think so because we know the worth of human life and human values. China is exactly the opposite. It has no faith in the philosophy of ‘live and let live.’ It has banned temples, mosques and churches. It has sent off Lord Buddha from its soil. It’s fraught with cunningness and fraud. On one hand, it pretends to negotiate with India and on the other hand plays a bloody game of grabbing our land on the border. It talks to our defence minister Rajnath Singh in Russia, the next day it says it will not cede even an inch of land. It is clever and devious like a demon. The question is how to overcome such a country.

Here I want to make it clear that I have no malice towards the citizens of China. They are my friends. I remain worried for them because the dictatorship of the Chinese Communist Party has made the lives of the people there hellish. It has suppressed the electronic and the print media so that the real news does not reach the citizens. I am opposed to the de-

monic government that has imprisoned more than one million Uyghur Muslims. It has got the small countries of the world in a debt-trap by liberally distributing loans to them. The question is, who will save these countries from its grip? Now the debt-ridden countries have no alternative but to support China. In such a situation, how will big countries fight China? At present, in at least 100 countries of the world, dictators masquerading as democrats are sitting in the lap of China.

China is openly supporting terrorists. If we want Hafiz Saeed to be declared as a terrorist in the United Nations Security Council, China imposes a veto. Is it easy to fight China like this? The amazing thing is that despite the atmosphere turning against China in the whole world, it is browbeating everyone. It has crossed swords with the US. It is trying to usurp Taiwan like Tibet. It is fighting with Japan. There is a ruckus in the South China Sea and the Red Sea. Here, it has created a war-like situation on the

Indian border. India is acting with restraint, otherwise a war would have already started. China has been messing with Europe, its approach is the same with Australia. On the Hong Kong issue, it directly violated the agreement with Britain but no one could save Hong Kong.

A new case of China’s antics has come to the fore. Many people in various states of America received unopened packets which read ‘ornaments.’ When people opened it, they found various types of seeds in it. As soon as the US government came to know of this, it started collecting these seeds and asked people not to sow them. After this, similar packets have been received in other countries. India has also issued an advisory regarding this last week. But it is difficult to understand how the seed packets reached other countries because there is no permission to carry any seed or plant from one country to another: China has kept silent on this matter. It has only said that it is investigating the case.

You may recall that when wheat was sent to our country by the US in the period of starvation, red wheat seeds also came with it. Today due to the presence of ‘carrot grass’ in our millions of hectares of land, it has become non-cultivable. With this action of China, it seems that it wants to destroy the fertile land of other countries of the world. It’s a form of ‘bio-warfare on the sly.’

I do not understand how the world will control China, which is becoming uncontrollable. I want to congratulate the US, which has shut its business to a great extent. India has also taken some steps with restrictions on Chinese apps, but will China mend its ways after all these measures? I don’t think it will mend its ways that easily! For this, it is necessary that the powerful nations of the world forget all their differences and unite and tighten the screws on China.

*The author is the Chairman, Editorial Board of Lokmat Media and former member of Rajya Sabha.*

## IN JEST THIS



Melvin Durai

EVEN IF A POLLSTER CAN PREDICT WHICH CANDIDATE WILL WIN MORE VOTES, PREDICTING WHO WILL WIN THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE IS MUCH HARDER

The polls look good for Joe Biden, the Democratic nominee for president in America, putting him as many as 12 percentage points ahead of President Donald Trump nationally. But public surveys also looked good for Hillary Clinton in 2016; yet, Trump managed to eke out a victory.

Because America is a democratic country and believes strongly in democratic principles, the candidate who received the most votes was declared the loser.

After receiving almost three million fewer votes than Clinton, Trump got to celebrate at a huge victory party. At his inauguration, quite aptly, there were three million fewer supporters than he expected.

In the upcoming presidential election, Trump is almost guaranteed to receive fewer votes than Biden. But the big question on everyone’s mind is this: Will Trump celebrate victory again?

Nobody really knows for sure, except MK Damodaran, a 68-year-old Kerala numerologist. According to him, Trump supporters can begin planning their victory parties.

As Damodaran told a news agency, “November 3, 2020 is the day of the US presidential election,



which is strongly lucky for incumbent President Trump. His date of birth is June 14, 1946. As such, his birth number is 5 (1 + 4). Besides, he was born in the Sun sign Gemini that is ruled by planet Mercury. Number 5 is represented by planet Mercury.”

What about Biden’s numbers? Domadaran has also analysed them, deeming the former vice-president’s chances of winning the top office as “very remote.”

Someone needs to inform Biden of this, because the poor man is spending millions of dollars on a presidential campaign that is doomed to fail. It would be wise for him to concede early and save everyone a lot of trouble.

Perhaps you’re skeptical about a numerologist’s ability to predict the outcome of an election. If so, I’d like to know whom we should rely upon instead. Achilles the Cat?

Achilles is a deaf Russian cat that correctly predicted the winner of several matches at the 2018 FIFA World Cup. All we have to do is put two bowls of food in front of the cat, one with a photo of Trump stuck to it and the other with Biden.

But Achilles, unfortunately, is not perfect. It incorrectly predicted that Nigeria would upset Argentina at the World Cup, causing premature dancing in the African country.

It would make more sense, perhaps, to rely on public polls – telephone surveys that ask a random sample of people about their election preferences. The problem with polls is that people don’t always do what they say they will. A voter named John Smith may tell the pollster that he likes Biden and strongly believes in exercising his right to vote. But on Election Day, Smith may decide that he strongly

believes in exercising his right to watch football all day.

Another voter, Rohit Sharma, may tell a pollster that he’s unlikely to vote. But on Election Day, he may decide that voting is an important duty for every citizen, especially since his wife has put a sign on the couch: “Non-voters sleep here.”

Even if a pollster can predict which candidate will win more votes, predicting who will win the Electoral College is much harder: The Electoral College is the reason why Hillary Clinton lost the 2016 election despite gaining more votes than Trump.

Here’s how it works: each state is given a certain number of electoral votes, depending on its population. Pennsylvania, for example, has 20 electoral votes and neighbouring Ohio has 18. The electoral votes are allocated to each candidate in a winner-takes-all system. So if Biden wins Ohio by three million votes, but loses Pennsylvania by just 3 votes, Trump will be ahead in the Electoral College by 20 to 18 — and true democracy will be a loser again.

Will America ever get rid of the Electoral College? I’m not sure, but I hope MK Damodaran will be able to tell me.

## WISDOM CORNER

- Two roads diverged in a wood and I - I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.

ROBERT FROST
- Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago

WARREN BUFFETT
- Love is a fruit in season at all times, and within reach of every hand.

MOTHER TERESA

## WORDSWORTH

### To wit

To wit is now just a fixed expression. It’s a shortened form of that is to wit meaning “that is to know; that is to say; namely,” from the English verb wit “to know.” This was a strong verb with past tense wot, as in “A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot.” In Old English it was spelt witan, and even further back it was linked with a Germanic verb meaning “to see.” In the first of these senses, it’s closely connected with the modern German verb wissen; in the second it’s the origin of our witness. It developed further to refer to a person’s understanding or judgement or mind (hence “keep your wits about you”).

### LOL

### SIGHT

A man goes to an eye doctor and complains that his eyesight is weakening. The doctor goes near him and asks, “Please look out through the



window.”

The man obliges the doctor. “What do you see,” the doctor asks him. “The Sun,” replies the man. Doctor smiles, and asks him, “Well, how much further do you want to see?”

# Letters

## TO THE EDITOR

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

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

### Defying Covid rules

Sir, With no sign of the Covid-19 pandemic abating even six months after its outbreak, people are getting tired of the restrictions and are more in a mood to defy them. They now tend to ignore norms such as wearing of face masks, maintaining physical distance and use of hand sanitizers. Hence, there is little surprise that, of late, Khurda district has been recording an average of 600 positive cases and five-to-ten Covid deaths per day. While the government has relaxed the regulations gradually and with the Unilock 4.0 in place, people seem to be taking the Covid precautions lightly. Although the Odisha government has issued guidelines on following the Covid-19 precautions and safety measures, it is business as usual at market places, with people caring little for safety norms. This is more so at market places, commercial establishments, malls, supermarkets and such other business areas. Although safety measures were followed in the initial days of the relaxations, the rules are being increasingly ignored. People can be seen standing close to each other at provision stores, garment shops and vegetable markets. The situation is no different at hotels, bars, restaurants and wine shops. Many are not wearing masks in a proper manner; thus defeating the very purpose. With the number of infections rising alarmingly, the district administrations must make sure the people strictly adhered to the rules and regulations.

K Ravi, BHUBANESWAR

### Bhushan’s case

Sir, Senior lawyer in the Supreme Court, Prashant Bhushan, says, “Paying the fine doesn’t mean I have accepted the verdict,” vis-à-vis the tweets he posted on social media on two different occasions. He should have refused to pay the fine of Re.1 if he had indeed not accepted the verdict. There is no need for arguments in courts if a party to a dispute gracefully accepts the guilt. In the case of Bhushan, there was a choice for him either to accept the token fine or undergo imprisonment for three months. He exercised the choice given to him and opted to avoid a jail life. Now, it is for the people to say whether he accepted the punishment or not. Bhushan might be again trying to provoke the top court. This issue must be treated as closed by the SC when lakhs of other petitions are vying for its attention.

KV Seetharamaiah, HASSAN



# NEET HEAT IN TN ASSEMBLY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Sept 15:** The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) - the entrance exam for medical colleges - generated heated debate in the Tamil Nadu Assembly Tuesday.

Chief Minister K. Palaniswami replying to a Special Call Attention motion said NEET was brought by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in which DMK was a partner.

Palaniswami said it was late Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa who had moved the apex court to get NEET cancelled. But it was the UPA government which brought it back.

He also said it was the DMK which is responsible for the death of 13 medical college aspirants in the state.

Members of Congress objected when AIADMK lawmaker Inbadurai said it was advocate Nalini Chidambaram, wife of former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, who had argued in favour of NEET in the court.



Inbadurai also said DMK was part of the UPA when NEET was introduced. Palaniswami said it was not wrong information.

Congress members demanded the Speaker expunge Inbadurai's remarks which the latter refused.

With the Congress lawmakers



continuing to disrupt proceedings, Speaker P. Dhanapal ordered the marshals to evict them.

On his part DMK President and Leader of the Opposition MK Stalin, speaking on the motion, said NEET was not there in the state till late M

Karunanidhi was Chief Minister of

Tamil Nadu.

Stalin said the central government was silent on the two resolutions unanimously passed by the Assembly to exempt Tamil Nadu from NEET.

Stalin assured of DMK's support for the government to take neces-

BLAME GAME

Chief Minister K. Palaniswami said NEET was brought by the Congress-led UPA government in which DMK was a partner

The CM said it was the DMK which is responsible for the death of 13 medical college aspirants in the state

Leader of Opposition MK Stalin urged the state government to pass a resolution condemning the central government for not scrapping NEET and not respecting the students' sentiments

sary action so that admissions of medical colleges are made based on the marks secured by the students in their plus two exams.

He also urged the state government to pass a resolution condemning the central government for not scrapping NEET and not respecting the students' sentiments.

# Differing appeals on contempt of court action against Surya



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Chennai, Sept 15:** The issue of initiating contempt of court proceedings against actor S. Surya following his statements on the judiciary has evoked differing appeals, both for and against such action.

Sitting Madras High Court judge, Justice SM Subramaniam has written to Chief Justice AP Sahi to take contempt of court action against the actor for criticising the judiciary and for undermining the integrity of judges as well as the judicial system.

On the other hand, six retired High Court judges - K Chandru, KN Basha, T Sudanthiram, D Hariparanthaman, K Kannan and GM Akbar Ali - and Manithaneya Makkal Katchi (MMK) leader MH Jawahirullah Monday requested Chief Justice Sahi not to take contempt of court action against the actor as it would impact freedom of expression.

The six retired judges said that the matter should be left as it is.

"It is our duty to make this appeal to your good selves so that the court is rid of any unnecessary controversies," said a letter signed by Justice Chandru (ret'd) on behalf of all other five retired judges.

MMK leader Jawahirullah said Surya, citing the virtual hearing of the cases by the courts due to the Covid-19 pandemic, had wondered if it was right on the part of judges to order students to write the NEET exams, and if Surya's views are taken as contempt of court, it goes against the freedom of expression guaranteed in the Constitution.

In a letter to Chief Justice Sahi, objecting to the actor's statement, Justice Subramaniam said, in his view, Surya's statement amounts to contempt of court as the judiciary has been criticised and the integrity and devotion of the judges as well as judicial system have been undermined.

He contended that Surya's statement "... reveals that the Hon'ble Judges are afraid of their own life and rendering justice through video conferencing. While so, they have no moral (right) to pass orders directing the students to appear for NEET Exam without fear."

"The said statement, in my considered opinion, amounts to contempt of court as the integrity and devotion of the Hon'ble Judges as well as the Judicial System of our Great Nation are not only undermined but criticised in a bad shape, wherein there is threat for the public confidence on the Judiciary. Thus, Cine Actor Mr Surya has committed contempt, warranting contempt proceedings to uphold the majesty of our Indian Judicial System," Justice Subramaniam said.

Differing with Justice Subramaniam, the six retired judges, in their letter to the Chief Justice, said "such a construction made on the statement of Surya will be slightly off the mark and it does not require any action as requested by the learned Judge."

"When four students had committed suicide in the state fearing the NEET exam, an artistic person's over-reaction should not be taken seriously and out of context, they said. However, supporting Justice Subramaniam's views, the Tamil Nadu Advocates' Association (TNAA) in a letter to the Chief Justice condemned Surya's statement.

According to the TNAA letter written by its president S Prabhakaran, the actor, by criticising the administration and judicial functioning, has brought down the reputation of the judiciary.

Prabhakaran said Surya had issued the statement with an intention to ban NEET which is a matter before the apex court.

He said the apex court is issuing guidelines on the conduct of the NEET and had rejected the plea for online exams.

# Court restrains media from publishing trial of rape accused bishop

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kottayam, Sept 15:** A local court has restrained the print and electronic media from publishing any matter relating to the trial in the alleged rape of a nun by Bishop Franco Mulakkal, without its permission.

Additional Sessions Judge Gopakumar G issued the order, restraining the media from publishing any matter relating to the trial and procedures of the case, including discussions about the evidence tendered by the witnesses, without the court's previous permission.

The order was passed on a petition by Mulakkal, seeking in camera trial, alleging that the prosecution had leaked to the media a part of the 161 Statement of a witness before the preliminary start of the case and the media had started a discussion pertaining to various aspects of it.

The Judge said there was nothing on record to show that the prosecution had shared the 161 Statement (statement of witness recorded by police) to the media.

"The statements of the witnesses are information falling within the public domain. Such statements have to be distinguished with the statement given by a victim. The bar is only in revealing the identity of the victim. There is no law that absolutely prohibits publication and discussion about the statement made by a witness other than the victim," the court held, adding the part of the prayer seeking action against the prosecution cannot be allowed.

The court had framed charges against the accused August 18 this year and the trial of the case has commenced.

Since an allegation of rape is involved, the trial has to be conducted in camera, the court ob-



served.

Pointing out that proliferation of the media and the increased competition among the visual media had accelerated coverage of the news, but often at the risk of its accuracy and quality, the court said the opportunity afforded through the visual media to make lengthy discussions about matters over which the panellist and moderators have no direct knowledge, has made the situation 'more grim.'

"The common man often misapprehends their comments as true words. Even before the commencement of the trial, a strong public opinion is created against a person, which severely affects the presumption of innocence available to him," the court held.

The rape case against the Bishop was registered by police in Kottayam district. In her complaint to the police in June 2018, the nun had alleged that she was subjected to sexual abuse by the bishop between 2014 and 2016.

The Special Investigation team which probed the case, arrested the bishop and charged him with wrongful confinement, rape, unnatural sex and criminal intimidation.

*A study says that family disputes, troubled love affairs, failure in examinations, issues over mobile phones, two-wheelers were among the major reasons for the suicides*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 15:** At least 140 teenagers killed themselves in Kerala for trivial reasons in the last six months, a study said, prompting the state Human Rights Commission (SHRC) to direct the Social Justice Department to examine the effectiveness of its suicide prevention measures.

In his direction to the Director of the department Monday, SHRC chairman Antony Dominic also sought a report on the initiatives taken to prevent suicide by youngsters.

"As per a complaint received by the panel, a study conducted by DISHA, an NGO, shows that at least 140 youngsters in the age group of 13 to 18 had committed suicide during the period of January 2020 to June 2020," a commission release said.



**CM Pinarayi Vijayan had in July said instances of suicidal tendencies were being witnessed among children and termed it as an 'extremely serious social issue'**

The study said that family disputes, troubled love affairs, failure in examinations, issues over mobile phones, two-wheelers were among the major reasons for the suicides.

"Thiruvananthapuram district has the highest number of suicides with 22 youngsters having taken the extreme step, followed by Malappuram with 20 suicides," the

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** Widening its probe into the Kerala gold smuggling case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) is all set to question Kerala Minister KT Jaleel in the next two days, officials said Tuesday.

"We will record the statement of Jaleel in the Kerala gold smuggling case," a senior NIA official told IANS.

The official clarified that he is not

named in the case, but the agency wants to question him to know if there was any gold smuggling activity under the guise of distribution of religious texts.

Jaleel, who is the state Higher Education Minister, was questioned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) last Friday. Following this, the opposition Congress and the BJP had demanded his resignation.

The NIA official also said that the anti-terror probe agency is going



through the digital evidence it collected so far from the possession of Swapna Suresh, the kingpin in the case, which points fingers to

# NIA set to quiz minister in gold smuggling case

VIPs with whom she was associated with. Earlier, a team of NIA led by Superintendent of Police travelled to United Arab Emirates (UAE) to question several other accused named in the case. The official said that a team of NIA officials will once again visit the UAE as part of its probe in the coming days.

The gold smuggling case was unearthed when P.S. Sarith, a former employee of the UAE Consulate in Thiruvananthapuram, was arrested

by the Customs July 5 when he was facilitating smuggling of 30 kg gold in diplomatic baggage to the state capital from Dubai. Things turned murkier when the name of Swapna Suresh, a former employee of the Consulate and later employed with the IT Department, surfaced. Later, her links with now-suspended IAS officer M. Sivasankar, then posted as Principal secretary to Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan and also the IT Secretary, came to light.

# UK restores idols stolen from TN temple back to India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Sept 15:** A set of three idols of Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana, stolen from a temple in Tamil Nadu decades ago, were restored to the Indian government Tuesday after a collector voluntarily offered to hand it back on discovering their true history.

The theft dates back to 1978 and led to an investigation by the Idol Wing of the Tamil Nadu Police working along with colleagues in the Metropolitan Police in London.

The unnamed collector, who had acquired the statues in good faith, was informed about their dubious provenance by the Met Police.

After matching them up with archival photographs from the 1950s held at the French School in Pondicherry, it was proved that the idols in his possession were those belonging to the Vijayanagara period and stolen from Sri Rajagopalaswami Temple at Ananthamangalam in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu.



In a ceremony streamed from India House in London in keeping with the limit on gatherings due to the COVID-19 restrictions, priests from Sri Murugan Temple in London conducted a short religious ceremony for their handover to India.

"Today marks the successful completion of the search and rescue operation of these very beautiful

idols, which were consecrated and worshipped side by side for years. We wanted to ensure these deities were handled with due reverence and propriety before they are shipped back to India," said Indian High Commissioner to the UK Gaitri Issar Kumar.

"On behalf of the government of India, I hope this will inspire museums and collectors to carefully

look and check their collections and help us restore deities that belong to the people of India and have been worshipped for centuries," she said.

The UK-based collector behind the handover, who has chosen to stay anonymous, was described as a lover of Indian art and culture.

Addressing the virtual event, officials from the state government of

Tamil Nadu praised his voluntary intervention and expressed the hope that no further action will be taken against him.

"The voluntary handover of these idols highlight two enforcement issues: the need for effective communication and dialogue, and the proper documentation of all cultural heritage, which would not only act as a deterrent to thefts but also help as evidence without which the outcome of this case may have been very different," said Tim Wright, from the Metropolitan Police.

Minister of Culture and Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel, connecting virtually to the event from Delhi, welcomed the repatriation of the statues, which he said was among over 40 "priceless" stolen artefacts restored to India since 2014.

He also revealed that documentation from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and other experts has been collated for the British Museum as part of efforts to seek the repatriation of another idol which belongs in India.

# Kerala police version of 'George Floyd' attack keeps Twitter abuzz

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kochi, Sept 15:** Social media has been abuzz with activity ever since picture of a police official squatting over a young Congress worker pinning him to the ground to allow Kerala Higher Education Minister KT Jaleel's convoy to pass through, surfaced.

It was Sunday evening, when the picture became public. The social media users immediately equated it with the unfortunate incident of George Floyd, a black American, who was killed in Minneapolis, US, when Derek Chauvin, a white policeman, knelt on the 46-year-old's neck for several minutes leading to his death eventually.

Floyd was handcuffed as he was pinned face down, calling for his mother and repeatedly saying 'please' and 'I can't breathe.'

State Congress vice-president and two time former legislator PC Vishnunadh said it was indeed shameful for the Kerala Police, for what happened. "Just see the cru-



elty that was shown to one of our young activist Antony, who turned into victim of police high-handedness, as literally a replay of what happened in the US was played out," said Vishnunadh. Antony and Youth Congress workers took to the streets Sunday evening and protested against Jaleel demanding his resignation after he was questioned by the Enforcement Directorate.

While some protesters were chased away by the police manning the roads, Antony fell down when he was trying to get up, a police official saw to it, he was pinned to the ground, till Jaleel's convoy passed.



## of the day quote

Kamal Nath gave fake certificates to the farmers that their loan was waived off. Kamal Nath, you have distributed fake certificates. And, don't even talk about Digvijay Singh. He is also fake



Organising Durga Puja festivities this year as a "big challenge" amid the COVID-19 crisis



Jaya ji would you say the same thing if in my place it was your daughter Shweta beaten, drugged and molested as a teenager, would you say the same thing if Abhishek complained about bullying and harassment constantly and found hanging one day?



KANGANA RANAUT | HINDI FILM ACTOR

## SHORT TAKES

### Pro-Khalistan terror module busted

**Chandigarh:** A "major terror attack" has been averted in Punjab, the state police said after they claimed to have busted a "Pakistan-backed" pro-Khalistan terrorist module with the arrest of two criminals who were picked up on the basis of "intelligence inputs". According to the state's top cop, initial questioning of the arrested men revealed that they were operating in connivance with five other criminals, including an active member of the terrorist organization Khalistan Zindabad Force (KZF) Shubhdeep Singh, who is currently lodged in the Amritsar jail.

### Minor gangraped in Ballia, 2 held

**Ballia (UP):** A 17-year-old girl was allegedly abducted, beaten up and raped by two youths in a village under Phephna police station area here in the district, police said Tuesday. An FIR was lodged in the case on the victim's mother complaint and two people were arrested on Tuesday, said SHO Rajiv Mishra of Phephna. The incident took place September 9 but came to light Monday when Lucknow Deputy Inspector General of Police Amitabh Thakur took note of a Facebook post of a social activist, Rajat Singh, on the gangrape, said police.

### 2 booked for insulting Tricolour

**Aligarh (UP):** Two persons have been booked by the Aligarh Police for allegedly insulting the national flag by putting eight spokes in the 'chakra' instead of 24. The two are also alleged to have inscribed an inscription in Arabic on the platform built around a hand pump. The inscription has the Indian flag and a Kuwaiti flag. The incident took place in Dubhia village and was reported Sunday.

### Former AP AG booked by ACB

**Amaravati:** The Anti-Corruption Bureau of Andhra Pradesh Tuesday registered a case against former state Advocate General Dammala-pati Srinivas and 12 others in connection with the alleged Amaravati land scam. The development came a day after Srinivas filed a petition in the high court seeking a direction to the government not to take coercive actions, like arrest, against him in relation to any inquiry or investigation being conducted.



In 1962 war, Atal Bihari Vajpayee had demanded a discussion on the war. Then-PM Jawahar Lal Nehru had agreed to two days of discussion in Parliament. We wanted the same tradition to be followed

ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY | CONGRESS LEADER

### NOVAVAX AIMS FOR 2BN COVID-19 VAX DOSES

Novavax Inc is doubling its COVID-19 vaccine manufacturing capacity to two billion doses under an agreement with Serum Institute of India, the US company said Tuesday

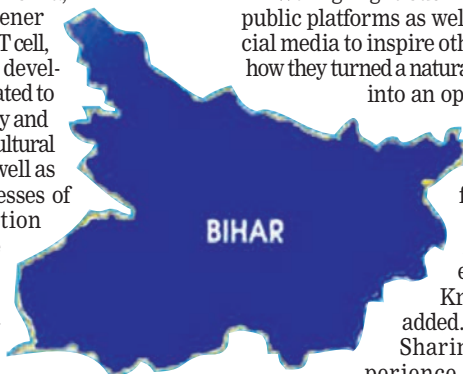


## BIHAR POLLS

# 9,800 block observers are 'eyes & ears' of BJP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Patna, Sept 15:** Ahead of the upcoming assembly elections in Bihar, the Bharatiya Janata Party's IT cell has been playing a pivotal role in its election campaign. Nearly 9,800 observers at the ground level are turning out to be the 'eyes and ears' of the party. Manan Krishna, state Convener of the BJP IT cell, said every development related to the economy and social and cultural aspects as well as the weaknesses of the opposition parties were minutely observed by party workers at the block level and accordingly strategies were being formulated at the state headquarters in Patna. "We have 9,800 block-level observers spread across 38 districts in Bihar. They are associated with us and are non-paid workers. They keep an eye on every activity, including development work as well as aggressive statements or incidents involving slip-of-tongue by the opposition leaders. They send feedback to us, we filter it and follow it up by selection of important stories of individuals, groups and incidents having a political impact. The news points are also sent to leaders concerned of the respective constituencies apart from the top



state and Central leadership at Patna and Delhi," Krishna said.

One such example emerged in the Kati Assembly constituency when a group of four or five men returned during the corona lockdown and started a dairy project. They were now claiming that their earnings had increased manifold and reached a stage of self-reliance.

"We highlight such stories on public platforms as well as on social media to inspire others about how they turned a natural calamity into an opportunity.

It is also our core mantra for the Bihar Assembly elections," Krishna added.

Sharing his experience, Krishna said besides the feedback of the block observers we also monitor newspapers, news channels and different social networking sites. We have an efficient and qualified team which comprises 20 members who continuously monitor developments round the clock at the state headquarters in Patna.

Apart from them, some professionals contribute their services part-time during the morning and evening sessions. All of them are non-paid workers inspired by the ideology of the BJP. Some of the team members belong to technical fields like software engineering and call centres, which returned during the pandemic.

# Fake news on lockdown duration set off large scale migration: MHA



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** The Union Home Ministry Tuesday told Parliament that migration of a large number of migrant workers during lockdown was triggered by panic created by fake news. This was stated by MoS Home G Kishan Reddy in a reply to an unstarred question by TMC MP Mala Roy. She had asked the reasons why thousands of these labourers ended up walking home post lockdown.

In his reply, Reddy stated, "The migration of a large number of migrant workers was triggered

by panic created by fake news regarding the duration of lockdown. And people, especially migrant labourers, were worried about an adequate supply of basic necessities like food, drinking water, health services and shelter. However, the central government was fully conscious of this, and took all necessary measures to ensure that during the period of the inevitable lockdown, no citizen should be deprived of basic amenities of food, drinking water, medical facilities etc."

However, in reply to MP Mala Roy's another question regarding

the number of people who died during the said migration, the minister said the Centre does not have the data as it is not maintained centrally.

During the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic, there were several deaths reported causing a countrywide outcry, forcing even the Human Rights Commission to sit up and take notice, demanding action by the Centre.

The MHA further stated that to contain the spread of Covid-19 in the country, the central government took various measures, considered essential for the safety of people including migrant workers.

"From March 21, 2020 onwards, control room operations in the Ministry of Home Affairs were expanded by making their functioning 24x7 under the supervision of senior officers of the level of joint secretaries along with the representatives of key Central ministries. These control rooms, inter alia, attended to the grievances of stranded persons, including migrant workers and promptly resolved these grievances relating to food, transport, shelter, etc. States and Union territories were also advised to set up control rooms with helplines and to appoint nodal officers," the ministry said.

# Film personalities appeal for end to Rhea's media 'witch-hunt'

*The open letter, addressed to "the dear news media of India" is published on a blog called Feminist Voices and it has over 2,500 signatories from all walks of life*

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Sept 15:** Over two thousand people have signed an open letter condemning the media's "witch-hunt" of Rhea Chakraborty in the coverage of Sushant Singh Rajput's death investigation.

Film personalities including Frieda Pinto, Zoya Akhtar, Farhan Akhtar, Alankrita Shrivastava, Gauri Shinde, Reema Kagti, Ruchi Narain, Rasika Dugal, Nitya Mehra, Amruta Subhash, Mini Mathur, Dia Mirza, Kubbra Sait and others have also signed the letter that asks the media to "hunt news, not women".

Chakraborty has been arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in connection with drugs-related allegations in the death case of Rajput. The 34-year-old actor was found dead at his Bandra res-

idence June 14. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the NCB is probing the drug case in which 18 people including Chakraborty, her brother Showik Chakraborty, Rajput's manager Samuel Miranda, domestic help Dipesh Sawant and others have been arrested.

The open letter, addressed to "the dear news media of India" is published on a blog called Feminist Voices and it has over 2,500 signatories from all walks of life.

"Dear news media of India. We are worried about you. Are you feeling ok?"

"Because, as we watch your witch-hunt of Rhea Chakraborty, we cannot understand why you have abandoned every professional ethic of journalism, every tenet of human decency and dignity and chosen instead to physically assault a young



woman with your camera crews, endlessly violate her privacy and work overtime on false accusations and moralistic innuendo for a drama

of 'Rhea ko phasao'," the letter reads.

The letter calls out the media for being "obsessed" with creating the

## SINO-INDIAN BORDER ROW



The Defence Minister said that China has tried to disrupt the ground situation in May and June and it led to India's response

China continues to be in illegal occupation of approximately 38,000 sq km in the Union Territory of Ladakh

In addition, under the so-called Sino-Pakistan 'Boundary Agreement' of 1963, Pakistan illegally ceded 5,180 sq km of Indian territory in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to China

question is a complex issue which requires patience and have committed to seeking a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution through dialogue and peaceful negotiations. In the interim, the two sides also agree that maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the border areas is an essential basis for the further development of bilateral relations.

The Defence Minister said as yet there is no commonly delineated Line of Actual Control in the border areas between India and China and there is no common perception of the entire LAC.

Therefore, in order to ensure peace and tranquillity in the border areas, especially along the LAC, the two countries have concluded a number of agreements and protocols. Under these agreements, the two sides have agreed to maintain peace and tranquillity along the LAC without prejudice to their respective positions on the alignment of the LAC as well

as on the boundary question.

"It is on this basis, that our overall relations also saw considerable progress since 1988. India's position is that while bilateral relations can continue to develop in parallel with discussions on resolving the boundary question, any serious disturbance in peace and tranquillity along the LAC in the border areas is bound to have implications for the positive direction of our ties."

A key element of both the 1993 and the 1996 agreements is that the two sides will keep their military forces in the areas along the Line of Actual Control to a minimum level. These agreements also mandate that pending an ultimate solution to the boundary question, the two sides shall strictly respect and observe the LAC.

Furthermore in these agreements, India and China also committed to clarification and confirmation of the Line of Actual Control to reach a common understanding of the alignment.

## FARMERS' IRE



Police stand guard near barricades as Bhartiya Kisan Union activists protest against three ordinances passed by the Centre, amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, at Badal village in Sri Muktsar Sahib, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

## Three lynched after wife kills husband with lover

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ranchi, Sept 15:** Three persons, including one woman, were lynched after the woman allegedly killed her husband along with his lover in Jharkhand's Gumla district Tuesday, the police said.

According to the police, Marianus Kujur, a resident of Dengardih village in Gumla district, was killed

by her wife Neelam Kujur and her lover Sudeep Dundung, a resident of another village, Monday night.

Sudeep, a resident of Nongha, had reached Dengardih village to meet Neelam along with his friend Paki Kullu Monday night.

"On Monday night, I heard some noise. When I reached my brother's house, I found him dead. Sudeep, his friend Paki Kullu and Neelam were

present on the spot. They killed my brother with the help of my sister-in-law," Abram Kujur, the brother of Marianus, told reporters.

The villagers reached the spot as soon as Abram raised an alarm. They first tied both the youth and started beating them up. They were brutally thrashed along with Neelam. All three died on the spot Tuesday morning.

narrative of a young woman as a "morally dubious character" because she speaks up for herself instead of "acting like a damsel in distress".

Drawing parallels about the coverage of cases of actors Salman Khan and Sanjay Dutt, the letter urged the media to show the same kindness and respect to Chakraborty that it had shown to these actors.

"We know you can be different – because we have seen you be kind and respectful to the Salman Khans and Sanjay Dutt of this world, urging us to think of their families, fans and careers," the letter said asking why the media had "assassinated" Chakraborty's character and egged an online mob against her and her family.

"It is easy to victimise a young woman because there are so many people who already disbelieve, slut-

shame and abuse women, for their smallest freedoms. It is certainly cheaper than doing actual stories about a host of issues from GDP to health, currently confronting us," the letter further said.

Citing the disturbing rise in domestic violence during the pandemic, the letter condemned the media for promoting damaging stereotypes of "vishkanyas" and "dayans" while trivialising depression and perpetuating regressive stereotypes about mental health. "We write to ask you, the news media, to stop this unfair witch-hunt of Rhea Chakraborty and to stop fuelling moral polarities of good women to be deified and bad women to be crucified which endangers all women. We write to ask you to do the right and responsible thing. Your jobs. Hunt news, not women," the letter added.



of the day quote

Agra's under-construction museum will be known by the name of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. In your new Uttar Pradesh, there is no space for the symbols of "the mentality of slavery"

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CHIEF MINISTER

The situation in Bihar is even worse as farmers are struggling to fight the Corona pandemic as well as the floods

DIGVIJAYA SINGH | SR CONGRESS LEADER

Just because of a few people, you cannot tarnish the whole industry... I was really embarrassed and ashamed that yesterday one our members in the Lok Sabha, who is from the industry, spoke against the film industry. Jis thaali me khaate hain usi me chhed karte hain

JAYA BACHCHAN | SAMAJWADI PARTY LEADER

SHORT TAKES

2 Al-Badr militant associates held

**Srinagar:** Security forces Tuesday arrested two underground workers of militants from Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir and seized Rs 6 lakh from their possession meant for funding the Al-Badr militant outfit, police said. "Acting on a specific information, police and security forces today morning arrested two militant associates at Ladhoo Crossing when the duo was travelling on a scooter from Shopian district to Khrew area in Pulwama," a police official said.

Trucker arrested with 42 kg poppy

**Jammu:** Police Tuesday arrested a truck driver and seized 42 kilogram of poppy from his possession in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. A police team stopped a Punjab-bound truck coming from Kashmir during a routine checking at the Jakhani area on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway. During the Search, 42 kg of poppy was found in it, they said.

Three skeletons unearthed

**Muzaffarnagar (UP):** Three skeletons were found in a grave during construction work of widening a highway in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district, officials said Tuesday. The skeletons were found on Monday in Thana Bhawan town while workers were digging an area to widen the Delhi-Saharanpur highway according to officials of the National Highways Authority of India. Local people believe that the skeletons date back to the time of the 1857 revolt.

Woman, daughter killed for dowry

**Bhadohi (UP):** A woman and her three-year-old daughter died here in a suspected case of dowry death, police said Tuesday. Four people, including the woman's husband Vinod Chauhan, have been arrested in this connection, they said. According to police, Sulekha (26) and her daughter Sonali were found dead in a pond Monday night. The bodies were fished out by the villagers. An FIR was registered against the woman's husband, father-in-law, mother-in-law and brother-in-law following a complaint by her father, Superintendent of Police of Bhadohi Ram Badan Singh said.



Today is International Day for Democracy but what we are seeing in the Parliament is total murder, a mockery of democracy. This is the first time in the history of a regular session that such a thing has happened

DEREK O'BRIEN | TRINAMOL CONGRESS MP

DELHI RIOTS: FACEBOOK IGNORES DELHI ASSEMBLY SUMMONS

Facebook India officials Tuesday skipped a hearing of the Delhi Assembly's "Peace and Harmony" committee, saying they have already given testimony before a Parliamentary Standing Committee earlier this month



TRADITIONAL OUTFIT



Participants in traditional costumes wearing face masks pose for a picture during rehearsals for Garba, a folk dance, ahead of Navratri, a festival during which devotees worship the Hindu goddess Durga and youths dance in traditional costumes, amidst the coronavirus disease outbreak, in Ahmedabad

REUTERS PHOTO

38 wilful defaulters fled India in last 5 years

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** As many as 38 economic offenders who defaulted on repaying borrowed amounts to banks fled the country in a span of five years, starting January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2019, under the government's watch.

The government informed Parliament that the 38 wilful defaulters include Vijay Mallia, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi. Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur provided the reply in response to a query on whether the Centre has any data on businessmen including those who migrated to other countries after obtaining loans fraudulently during last 5 years.

Thakur said, "Central Bureau of



Investigation (CBI) has apprised that 38 persons involved in the cases registered by CBI related to financial irregularities with banks fled the country during 1.1.2015 to 31.12.2019."

Thakur submitted a written reply

in the Lok Sabha that stated "action is taken as per law in such cases".

The ministry informed the house that Enforcement Directorate had earlier appraised that under the Prevention of Money Laundering

VIZAG ESPIONAGE CASE NIA arrests key Indian link of ISI

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** In a major breakthrough in the Visakhapatnam espionage case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Tuesday said it has arrested the key accused Giteli Imran from Gujarat for his involvement in the espionage activities and working for the Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

An NIA spokesperson in Delhi said that the agency arrested Imran, 37, on Monday under several sections of the IPC, the Unlawful Activities Prevention act and the Official Secrets Act.

The official said that during the investigation, it was found that Imran was associated with Pakistani spies/agents under the guise of cross-border "cloth trade". "As per the directions of the Pakistan-based spies, he deposited money into the bank accounts of Indian Navy personnel at regular intervals in lieu of sensitive and classified data provided by them."

Act, 2002, application for Red Corner notices were filed against 20 economic offenders and extradition requests were sent out in 14 cases to several countries. It added that proceedings were on against 11 persons under the tough Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018.

Government data indicates that between January 2019 and December 2019, 11 economic offenders fled the country while 27 have managed to slip out till January 2019. These 27 individuals face charges of economic offences and loan default.

Ministry of Finance also informed that a slew of policy measures have now been implemented for preventing businessmen and individuals from fraudulently obtaining loans and then fleeing the country.

SIT to probe multiple cases of 'love jihad'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kanpur, Sept 15:** The Kanpur police has set up an eight-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe allegations into several cases of forced conversion on the pretext of marriage.

The decision was taken after about 11 cases of 'love jihad' were reported in the past one month from the same district and Hindu organisations met IG Kanpur Mohit Agarwal demanding probe into the matter. The issue surfaced after a Kanpur woman, Shalini Yadav, married a Muslim man, Faisal, in July.

The girl's family alleged was of love jihad though the couple approached a Delhi court, denying allegations of forced conversion. Shalini even uploaded a video on the social media, claiming that she had married and converted out of her own free will. The SIT led by Deepak Bhuker, superintendent of police, Kanpur (South), has been told to look into any fixed pattern or modus operandi behind the alleged incidents, the official said.

The special investigation team (SIT) will also investigate the alleged role of Islamic organisations in such cases.

Interestingly, most of the cases of alleged love jihad are being reported from Juhi area. The SIT will investigate if any Islamic organisation has a role in funding the 'love jihad' racket in Kanpur, an official said.

"There is a strong possibility that some Islamic outfits may be providing financial assistance to a handful of organisations involved in such anti-national acts," the official claimed. Police are looking into the conspiracy angle to ascertain if youths involved in this are being funded from abroad.

SP Deepak Bhuker said the help of a special SWAT team has been sought for surveillance.

The SIT has contacted local police stations and sought details of all alleged "love jihad" cases reported in the past two years, he said. Bhuker said the probe team has been extracting records related to a dozen phone numbers to establish links.

Water in Venus: Shukrayaan-1 mission in race to fiery planet

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** Astronomers said they have found a potential sign of life high in the atmosphere of neighboring Venus.

Scientists said the atmosphere of Venus contains a gas that on Earth can be attributed to living organisms – a discovery the head of NASA called "the most significant development yet" in the hunt for extraterrestrial life. With new signs of potential life beyond Earth, many missions to Venus have been proposed, but only time will tell if they make the trip.

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has already proposed a mission to Venus dubbed 'Shukrayaan-1', which will orbit the planet and focus on the chemistry of its atmosphere.

"The mission will launch in 2023 or after," Isro chairman K Sivan had said earlier this year.

A private company in New Zealand, which has launched about a dozen rockets to space, has also



spoken about sending a small satellite to Venus, stated The New York Times in a report on Venus.

The report added that NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) had also considered a number of Venus proposals in the past decade, including two in 2017 that were finalists of NASA's Discovery program. But the agency instead selected a pair of asteroid missions, the NYT report added. The Discovery programme previously sent explorers to the moon, Mars, Mercury.

In 2017, NASA for the New

Disastrous for any democracy to control press: SG

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** Solicitor General Tushar Mehta Tuesday told the Supreme Court that the freedom of the journalist is supreme and it would be disastrous for any democracy to control the press.

Mehta made this argument during the hearing of a plea – by a bench comprising Justices DY Chandrachud, Indu Malhotra and KM Joseph – against Sudarshan TV for its show 'UPSC Jihad', which focuses on how Muslims have "infiltrated" the Civil Service. During the hearing Justice Chandrachud queried Mehta, can this (citing TV show) be tolerated in a free society and perhaps whether self-regulation can be put forth?

Mehta replied that it would be disastrous for any democracy to control the Press. Justice Chandrachud queried, is this truly an exercise of Article 19 (1) (a). Mehta replied perhaps the court may not have had the chance to look at the rabid things being put out through various mediums. "But the question is, can it be regulated," queried Mehta, citing if something nasty has been written about him, could anything be done about it. "It is Press freedom after all", emphasised Mehta.

Justice Joseph said no freedom is absolute, not even journalistic freedom. Mehta replied the ownership of a media platform often reflects the views expressed on the portals. In the post-lunch hearing, Mehta argued that there are various platforms, including blogs, which churn out all kinds of opinions. Justice Chandrachud said electronic media



houses should be differentiated from individual blogs. Mehta argued that some channels were raising the bogey of "Hindu Terror", some time ago. "The question is to what extent the content can be controlled?" queried Mehta. Justice Chandrachud said the Act says communal reporting cannot be done.

At the end of the hearing, Mehta reiterated that there are statutory authorities to deal with violations. After the September 9 order of the Centre, the broadcast took place between September 11 and 14. The Bench asked, "Did anybody in the ministry apply their mind on the broadcast which happened?" Mehta replied, he would have to take instructions on it.

The top court noted that the SG submitted that wider issues would have to be addressed from, not just the electronic media point of view but from other media too, from which objectionable content is shared.

The apex court stayed the broadcast of the remaining five shows of the programme, and added that it is inclined to have a committee of five distinguished citizens to suggest certain standards for electronic media.

India's Covid-19 recovery rate rises to 78.28%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** India's COVID-19 recovery rate has risen to 78.28 per cent as a total of 38,59,399 people have recuperated, exceeding the active cases of coronavirus by 28,69,338 as on date, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

There are 9,90,061 active cases of COVID-19 in the country which comprise 20.08 per cent of the total caseload, according to the Health Ministry data updated at 8 am.

Close to half (48.8 per cent) of the active cases are concentrated in three states – Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Kerala and Telangana contribute close to a quarter (24.4 per cent) of the active cases, the ministry said.



"Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu contribute 60.35 per cent of the total active cases and are also reporting close to 60 per cent (59.42 pc) of the total recovered cases," it highlighted.

Of the 1,054 fatalities reported in 24 hours, nearly 69 per cent are concentrated in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Delhi.

More than 37 per cent of cumulative deaths reported so far in the country are from Maharashtra (29,894 deaths). The state reported 34.44 per cent of the deaths in the last 24 hours (363 deaths), the ministry said.

India's COVID-19 caseload mounted to 49,30,236 with 83,809 people testing positive in a day, while the death toll climbed to 80,776 with 1,054 people succumbing to the disease in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

India's role in Covid vax production vital: Gates

BILL GATES CALLED THE PANDEMIC THE "NEXT BIGGEST THING" THE WORLD HAS BEEN CONFRONTED WITH AFTER THE WORLD WAR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** Billionaire philanthropist Bill Gates has said India's willingness to play a "big role" in manufacturing COVID-19 vaccine and allow it to supply to other developing countries will be a critical part in containing the pandemic globally.

In an exclusive interview, Gates, whose foundation is focusing on fighting the pandemic, called it the "next biggest thing" the world has been confronted with after the World War.

The Microsoft co-founder said the world is looking to India for large scale production of COVID-19 vaccine once it is rolled out.

"Obviously, all of us want to get a vaccine out in India as fast as we can, once we know that it's very effective and very safe, and the plans are coming into focus that

sometime next year, it's very likely that roll-out will take place and take place in fairly big volume," he said.

"The world is also looking to India for some of that capacity to be available to other developing countries. Exactly what that allocation formula looks like will have to be figured out," Gates added.

Scientists and pharmaceutical companies globally are racing

against time to find a vaccine for the coronavirus pandemic which has killed about 9,32,000 people and infected around 24 million. Some of the vaccine candidates have entered the third and final phase of testing.

"This is not like a world war, but it's the next biggest thing after that that we've ever had," he said.

In India, the foundation has entered into a partnership with the Serum Institute to accelerate the manufacturing and delivery of





of the day quote

I call on the Palestinian leadership to recognise reality and show responsibility and leadership as did the UAE leaders, by returning to the negotiating table

GABI ASHKENAZI | ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER

Donald Trump loves putting people down, not lifting them up

HILLARY CLINTON | 2016 US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

The United States has assumed its responsibility and we will stop Iran buying Chinese tanks and Russian air defence systems and then selling weapons to Hezbollah (and) torpedoing President Macron's efforts in Lebanon

MIKE POMPEO | US SECRETARY OF STATE

SHORT TAKES

Boat capsizes near Libya

**Cairo:** The UN migration agency said Tuesday that a boat carrying migrants bound for Europe capsized in the Mediterranean Sea off Libya, leaving at least two dozen people drowned or missing and presumed dead, the latest shipwreck off the North African country. Safa Msehli, a spokesperson for the International Organisation for Migration, told *The Associated Press* that Libya's coast guard intercepted three boats Monday, and one of them had capsized.

HK to relax Covid curbs

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong will further ease social distancing measures from Friday onwards, allowing more entertainment venues to reopen as the number of new local Covid-19 cases dropped to zero for the first time since early July.

Brexit bill clears first hurdle

**London:** UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson's controversial bill that aims to override parts of the Brexit divorce agreement struck with the European Union (EU) cleared its first parliamentary hurdle by winning the first House of Commons vote by 340 to 263 votes. The Internal Market Bill, which has faced strong criticism from the Opposition parties and senior members of Johnson's own Conservative Party, is set for rebellions as it progresses through further stages in its parliamentary process despite Johnson's 80-seat majority in the Commons.

US to block some exports from China

**Beijing:** The US will block some exports from China's Xinjiang region, over alleged human rights abuses against the Muslim Uighur minority, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced. The orders announced on Monday that "forced labour" was used to make the products, including a "vocational" centre it called a "concentration camp", reports the BBC.

Iran warns US

**Tehran:** Iran warned the US Tuesday against making a "strategic mistake" after President Donald Trump threatened Tehran over reports it planned to avenge the killing of top general Qasem Soleimani. "We hope that they do not make a new strategic mistake and certainly in the case of any strategic mistake, they will witness Iran's decisive response," government spokesman Ali Rabiei told a televised news conference.

Trump, Biden battle over climate change, wildfires

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, Sept 15:** US President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden presented a different pathway to address the issue of climate change, amidst the devastating wildfires that have engulfed parts of California.

Travelling to the region, Trump asserted on Monday he does not think that science knows actually Biden accused the president in a policy address in Delaware of being a climate arsonist.

"Well, I don't think science knows actually," Trump told California Natural Resources Agency Secretary Wade Crowfoot during a briefing with State Gavin Newsom and other officials to get an update on the efforts to combat the devastating wildfires. Biden slammed Trump on his policy on climate change. "If you give a climate arsonist four more years in the White House, why would anyone be surprised if we have more of America ablaze?" Biden, 77, said as he hammered Trump for allegedly ignoring science. "If you give a climate denier four more years in the White House, why would anyone be surprised when more of America is underwater? We need a president who respects science, who understands that the damage from climate change is already here. Unless we take urgent action, it will soon be more catastrophic," he said. "The presi-



dent recognizes, understands, and cares that Americans are dying, which makes president Trump's climate denialism, his disdain for science and facts all the more unconscionable. Once again, he fails the most basic duty to a nation. He fails to protect us from the pandemic, from an economic freefall, from racial unrest, from the ravages of climate change. It's clear that we are not safe in Donald Trump's America," Biden said.

This is Trump's America, he said. "He's in charge. What he doesn't get is that even in a crisis, there's nothing beyond the capacity of the American people when we stand up and act together. And while so many are hurting right now, I want you to know that if you give me the honour of serving as your president, we can and we will meet this moment with urgency and purpose,"

he said. "You know, when Donald Trump thinks about climate change, he thinks hoax. When I think about it, I think jobs. Good paying unions jobs that put Americans to work building a stronger, more climate resilient nation, a nation modernized. We have modernized water and transportation systems, and energy infrastructure to withstand the impact of extreme weather and changing climate," Biden said.

On the other hand, Trump, 74, blamed poor forest management for the fires.

"With regard to the forest, when trees fall down after a short period of time, about 18 months, they become very dry. They become really like a matchstick and they get up. There's no more water pouring through and they become very, they just explode. They can plode," he said.

Navalny posts hosp photo of himself

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Berlin, Sept 15:** Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny posted a picture of himself from his hospital bed in Germany Tuesday, looking gaunt but joking wryly about his condition and saying that he was enjoying the ability to finally breathe on his own after being poisoned with a nerve agent.

The Instagram post was the first image of the 44-year-old released since he was taken to Berlin's Charite hospital two days after falling ill on a domestic flight in Russia August 20.

"Hi, this is Navalny," he wrote in the Russian-language post. "I have been missing you. I still can't do almost anything on my own, but yesterday I managed to breathe on my own for the entire day." Navalny had been kept in an induced coma for more than two weeks as he was treated with an antidote before hospital officials said on Sept. 7 that his condition had improved enough for him to be brought out of it.



Navalny's spokeswoman, Kira Yarmysh, tweeted that once he had recovered, Navalny plans to return to Russia.

BREAKING LONGTIME TABOO

Israel set to sign normalisation deal with UAE, Bahrain

REUTERS

**Washington, Sept 15:** The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain Tuesday will become the latest Arab states to break a long-standing taboo when they sign agreements toward normalising relations with Israel in a strategic realignment of Middle Eastern countries against Iran.

US President Donald Trump will host the White House ceremony at noon EDT (1600 GMT), capping a dramatic month when first the UAE and then Bahrain agreed to reverse decades of ill will without a resolution of Israel's decades-old dispute with the Palestinians.

At the US-brokered ceremony, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will sign agreements with Emirati Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan and Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdulatif Al Zayani.

The deals make them the third and fourth Arab states to take such steps to normalise ties since Israel signed peace treaties with Egypt in 1979 and Jordan in 1994.

The UAE's minister of state for foreign affairs, Anwar Gargash, said Tuesday his country's decision to normalise relations with

Israel had "broken the psychological barrier" and was "the way forward" for the region, creating more leverage.

The back-to-back agreements, which have drawn bitter condemnation from the Palestinians, mark an improbable diplomatic victory for Trump. He has spent his presidency forecasting deals on such intractable problems as North Korea's nuclear program only to find actual achievements elusive.

With Trump up for re-election November 3, the accords could help shore up support among pro-Israel Christian evangelical voters, an important part of his political base.

Speaking to Fox News hours before the ceremony, Trump said he expected more Arab countries to normalize tie with Israel and predicted the Palestinians would eventually join as well or else be "left out in the cold." Bringing Israel, the UAE and Bahrain together reflects their shared concern about Iran's rising influence in the region and development of ballistic missiles. Iran has been critical of both deals. One target of White House appeals is Saudi Arabia, the biggest Gulf Arab power.

Brazil wildfires spark environmental emergency declaration

AGENCIES

**Brasilia, Sept 15:** Brazil's southern state of Mato Grosso do Sul has declared a state of environmental emergency after raging wildfires destroyed 1.4 million hectares of vegetation since the beginning of the year.

On Monday, state Governor Reinaldo Azambuja signed the decree during a meeting with the National Secretary for Civil Protection and Defense, Alexandre Lucas Alves, who travelled to Campo Grande, the state capital, a day earlier, reports Xinhua news agency.

The 79 municipalities of the state are suffering from a severe drought affecting the central region of the country, and fires have also spread through the states of Mato Grosso and Tocantins.

The drought has been described as the worst in 47 years in the country. However, the Mato Grosso do Sul state government also blamed man-made blazes for having "caused forest and urban fires in much of the state". The fires have also surrounded the Encontro das Aguas park in the Pantanal, located at the Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul states' border, threatening both flora and fauna in the region.



CRAZY FIGHT



A crow attacks a bat in central Kyiv, Ukraine

REUTERS

'nCoV WILL LIKELY BECOME SEASONAL'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dubai, Sept 15:** Once herd immunity is attained, the novel coronavirus may follow suit and become a seasonal virus in countries with temperate climates, but until that time, COVID-19 will continue to spread across the seasons, a new study says.

According to the review research, published in the journal *Frontiers in Public Health*, when a significant section of the population becomes immune to the novel coronavirus and achieves herd immunity, the effective transmission of the virus may drop

substantially making it more prone to seasonal fluctuations.

"COVID-19 is here to stay and it will continue to cause outbreaks year-round until herd immunity is achieved," warned study senior author Hassan Zaraket from the American University of Beirut in Lebanon. According to the scientists, there could be multiple waves of COVID-19 before herd immunity is achieved. Citing earlier research, they said other respiratory viruses similar to the novel coronavirus - SARS-CoV-2 - follow seasonal patterns, especially in temperate regions. They said influenza and several types

of coronaviruses that cause common cold are known to peak in winter in temperate regions but circulate year-round in tropical regions. In the research, the scientists reviewed these seasonal viruses, examining the viral and host factors that control their seasonality as well as the latest knowledge on the stability and transmission of SARS-CoV-2.

They explained that virus survival in the air and on surfaces, people's susceptibility to infections, and human behaviours, such as indoor crowding, differ across the seasons due to changes in temperature and humidity.

2020 Hurricane season is running out of names for storms

AGENCIES

**Geneva, Switzerland, Sept 15:** There have been so many Atlantic hurricanes and tropical storms this year that the world is running out of names for them, the United Nations said Tuesday.

"The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season is so active that it is expected to exhaust the regular list of storm names," Clare Nullis, spokeswoman for the UN's Geneva-based World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), told a media briefing.

"If this happens, the Greek alphabet will be used for only the second time on record."

Throughout the annual hurricane season which runs from June 1 to November 30, storms are as-

signed alternating male and female names, this year beginning with Arthur and Bertha.

The names are overseen by the WMO. They are reused every six years, though if the hurricanes are particularly devastating, the name is retired and replaced.

The name lists use 21 of the 26 letters of the alphabet due to the difficulty in finding a balance of six easily recognisable English, Spanish,



French and Dutch names starting with Q, U, X, Y and Z -- the languages spoken in the Atlantic and Caribbean regions affected.

This year, only the name Wilfred

remains unused, meaning a switch to the Greek alphabet is looming.

**Joint record**  
In the latest state of play, Hurricane Paulette had its eye over

Bermuda on Monday; Tropical Depression Rene has now dissipated; Hurricane Sally is likely to cause flash flooding on the US Gulf coast Tuesday. Tropical Storm Teddy is expected to become a hurricane Tuesday, while Tropical Storm Vicky is over the Atlantic.

To have five tropical cyclones over the Atlantic basin at the same time ties a record set in September 1971, said Nullis.

And according to the US National Hurricane Center, an area of low pressure has formed near Cape Verde and has a 50 percent chance of tropical cyclone formation in the next 48 hours. The Greek alphabet was only ever used once before in 2005, when the first six letters were used as names for storms: Alpha, Beta,

Gamma, Delta, Epsilon and Zeta. That exceptional year saw the devastating hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, whose names were all retired.

A number of factors caused an active hurricane season in 2020, explained National Weather Service meteorologist Rodney Wynn. There have been weaker tropical trade winds and warmer than average sea surface temperatures in the tropical Atlantic, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico. The region has experienced reduced vertical wind shear, which allows more hurricanes to develop. Not only has 2020 experienced more named storms than usual -- the naming is happening earlier: records for being formed so early in the season.



## of the day quote

With the vision of 'Make in India', we reiterate our commitment to producing quality products and are confident that we can achieve several industry firsts

**JAWAHAR GOEL** | CHAIRMAN & MD, DISH TV INDIA

Out of total cane dues payable of ₹75,585 crore for sugar season 2019-20 as on September 11, 2020, about ₹62,591 crore have been paid to the sugarcane farmers

**DANVE RAOSAHEB DADARAO** | MINISTER OF STATE, FOOD & CONSUMER AFFAIRS

OTTs have enabled accessibility of digital tools and amenities for the people, thereby enriching lives and empowering them by helping to enhance their productivity

**T V RAMACHANDRAN** | PRESIDENT, BIF

## SHORT TAKES

### Agri Infra Fund plans sanctioned

**New Delhi:** The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has given in-principle sanction for ₹1,568 crore worth of proposals received from agri-credit societies in 22 states under the recently launched ₹1 lakh crore Agri Infrastructure Fund, the Parliament was informed Tuesday. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, in a written reply to the Lower House, said the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund was launched last month for developing farm gate infrastructure facilities.

### 59k MW thermal power coming up

**New Delhi:** As much as 59,810 MW of thermal power generation capacity is under construction in the country which includes 23,730 MW to be developed by private players, Parliament was on informed Tuesday. While the under construction projects under the central sector totalled 18,320 MW, those under the state sector stood at 17,760 MW, Power Minister R K Singh said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha. The capacity of under construction large hydro (above 25 MW) projects stood at around 14,014 MW.

### YouTube launches 'Shorts' in country

**New Delhi:** Competition in the short-video space in the country continues to intensify with YouTube being the latest entrant in the segment with its 'Shorts' offering as the Google-owned platform attempts to fill the void created after the ban of TikTok in India. In a blogpost, YouTube said it is building YouTube Shorts, a new short-form video experience (15 seconds or less), for creators and artists who want to shoot short, catchy videos using their mobile phones.

### SpiceJet reports ₹600 cr losses

**New Delhi:** Budget carrier SpiceJet on Tuesday reported a net loss of ₹600.5 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, owing to the suspension of flight operations due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown. It had posted a net profit of ₹262.8 crore in the corresponding period of the previous financial year. The airline's operating revenue stood at ₹521 crore in the first quarter of 2020-21, significantly lower as against ₹3,002.8 crore a year ago, it said in a statement.



**The Serious Fraud Investigation Office completed probes in 12 cases involving 361 companies in the last financial year**  
**ANURAG SINGH THAKUR** | MINISTER OF STATE, CORPORATE AFFAIRS

### STOCKS TICK HIGHER ON GLOBAL CUES

Equity indices found firmer ground Tuesday as investors poured money into banking and finance counters amid a positive trend in global markets.



# ASIA'S ECONOMY TO SHRINK

AGENCIES

**Manila, Sept 15:** Developing Asia's coronavirus-battered economy will shrink for the first time since the early 1960s, with the level of output next year still seen below pre-pandemic projections even as growth recovers, according to the Asian Development Bank.

The region's gross domestic product will decline by 0.7% in 2020, down from June's projection of an increase of 0.1%, the Manila-based bank said in a report Tuesday. A contraction this year would be the first since 1962, Yasuyuki Sawada, the ADB's chief economist, said in a live-streamed briefing.

"The economic threat posed by the Covid-19 pandemic remains potent, as extended first waves or recurring outbreaks could prompt further containment measures," Sawada said. Downturns across developing Asia are more widespread than previous crises, with three-quarters of economies in the region tipped to shrink this year, he said.

China will buck the trend and is forecast to expand 1.8% this year -- unchanged from June's projection -- as successful public health measures provide a springboard for growth, according to the ADB. Growth is forecast to accelerate to 7.7% in 2021, up from a previous fore-



## ECONOMIC THREAT

The region's gross domestic product will decline by 0.7% in 2020, down from June's projection of an increase of 0.1%

China will buck the trend and is forecast to expand 1.8% this year -- unchanged from June's projection -- as successful public health measures provide a springboard for growth

6.8% in 2021, in part because it will be measured against a weak 2020, Sawada said.

That will still leave next year's level of GDP below pre-coronavirus projections, implying that the recovery is only "partial" and "not full." Virus containment "seems to be translated into growth performance," and a prolonged pandemic remains the biggest downside risk this year and the next, he said. U.S.-China trade tensions and technology conflicts and financial vulnerabilities amid the pandemic also weigh on growth, Sawada said.

Policies focused on protecting lives and livelihoods, and ensuring a safe return to work and restart of businesses, are crucial to ensuring a sustained recovery for the region, he said.

cast of 7.4%.

There were also big downgrades for the Philippines and Thailand, which are now projected to contract 7.3% and 8% respectively. The downgrades took into account that the pandemic has been "more serious" than initially anticipated, Sawada said in an interview Tuesday with Bloomberg TV's Haslinda Amin and Yvonne Man. "Having said that, our baseline

The economic threat posed by the Covid-19 pandemic remains potent, as extended first waves or recurring outbreaks could prompt further containment measures

**YASUYUKI SAWADA** | CHIEF ECONOMIST, ADB

assumption is that health risks will be basically contained within this year." "Large-scale" fiscal stimulus has helped cushion the blow and provides a base for a rebound, Sawada said.

Growth in Developing Asia -- a region that excludes advanced nations like Japan, Australia and New Zealand -- will rebound to

# Flipkart to hire 70,000 in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** Walmart-owned Flipkart Tuesday said it will help generate over 70,000 direct and lakhs of indirect seasonal jobs in the country ahead of the festive season and its Big Billion Days (BBD) sale.

The Bengaluru-based company said while direct job opportunities will be created across Flipkart's supply chain, including roles like delivery executives, pickers, packers and sorters, there will also be additional indirect jobs created at Flipkart's seller partner locations and kiranas.

This will be further supplemented by job creation in ancillary industries including vendor locations, and freight partners, as the entire ecosystem scales up for the festive season, a statement said.

"The expansion and strengthening of the supply chain will help create a robust system enabling millions of new e-commerce users to shop online seamlessly as lakhs of ecosystem players gear up for the festive season," it added.

E-commerce companies see a large chunk of their business coming in during the festive sales and they make significant investments



This will be further supplemented by job creation in ancillary industries including vendor locations, and freight partners

ahead of time to ramp up their capacity to be able to handle the spike in orders. Last year, Flipkart and its rival Amazon had announced creation of over 1.4 lakh temporary jobs across supply chain, last-mile connectivity and customer support in preparation for their festive sales.

Flipkart said the "complexity and scale" of its BBD sale requires investments for capacity, storage, sorting, packaging, human resources, training and delivery that helps generate additional employment during the festive season.

# Some states against borrowing option

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** Some states have objected to the proposed borrowing plan of the Centre to fund the GST revenue shortfall and they are being requested to exercise either of the two options, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur said Tuesday.

The Centre late last month gave two options to states to borrow either ₹97,000 crore from a special window facilitated by the RBI or ₹2.35 lakh crore from market and also

proposed extending the compensation cess levied on luxury, demerit and sin goods beyond 2022 to repay the borrowing.

Some states have objected to the proposed two options. They are being requested to exercise one of the two options, Thakur said in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

In reply to a separate question, Thakur said the provisional Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation due to the 31 states and UTs stands at ₹1,51,365 crore in the April-



July period.

GST compensation cess collected in current FY 2020-21 is not sufficient to release the admissible GST compensation for period April-July, 2020. Moreover, the GST compensation cess collected till July 2020 has been partly utilized for the purpose of GST compensation released to states for the period till March 2020, he added.

In the current fiscal year, states are staring at a staggering ₹2.35 lakh crore GST revenue shortfall.

## INVESTMENTS IN STARTUPS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** The Standing Committee on Finance (2019-20) has recommended to the Centre to abolish tax on Long Term Capital Gains for all investments in startups which are made through collective investment vehicles (CIVs) such as angel funds, alternate investment funds (AIF), and investment LLPs.

The committee in its report on "Financing The Startup Ecosystem" said the tax should be removed at least for the next two years to encourage investments amid the pandemic.

"The Committee would like to strongly recommend that tax on Long Term Capital Gains be abolished for all investments in startup companies (as designated by DPIIT) which are made through collective investment vehicles (CIVs) such as angel funds, AIFs, and investment LLPs," it said.

It suggested that after this 2 year period, the Securities Transaction Tax (STT) may be applied to collective investment vehicles (CIV) so



A Parliament committee has said that the tax should be removed at least for the next 2 years to encourage investments

that revenue neutrality is maintained.

Investments by CIVs are transparently done and have to be done at fair market value, the Standing Committee said, adding that it is easy to calculate the STT associated with these investments.

## Low solar tariff could boost output competitiveness

**New Delhi:** Solar energy could contribute to manufacturing competitiveness due to its low tariff, which would ultimately help achieve the goal of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, Parliament was informed Tuesday. "Low cost power is an essential requirement for competitive manufacturing. Since solar tariffs have been declining, use of solar energy could contribute to manufacturing competitiveness, and thus to achieving the goal of Aatmanirbhar Bharat," Renewable Energy Minister R K Singh said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.



India has set an ambitious target of having 100GW of solar energy by 2022. As of August 31, 2020, the total installed solar power generation capacity stood at 35.73 GW in the country out of the total renewable energy of 88.79 GW.

## Facebook offers USD 4.3 mn in grants to Indian SMEs

**New Delhi:** Social media giant Facebook on Tuesday said it will offer grants totalling USD 4.3 million (Rs 32 crore) to more than 3,000 small businesses across five Indian cities, including Delhi and Mumbai, to help them grow their operations amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This is part of Facebook's USD 100 million grant, announced in March, to help small businesses in 30 countries cope with the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. "We are announcing a grant of USD 4.3 million (Rs 32 crore) for more than 3,000 small businesses across Delhi, Gurgaon, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru, where Facebook has offices," Facebook India MD and Vice-President Ajit Mohan said in a blogpost.



# Billionaires are now lining up to take their cos private

COMPANIES HAVE ALREADY ANNOUNCED \$26 BILLION OF TRANSACTIONS TO BE TAKEN PRIVATE BY A RELATED PARTY THIS YEAR, UP ABOUT 2,500% FROM THE SAME PERIOD IN 2019

AGENCIES

**Tokyo, Sept 15:** Move over private equity, there are some new buyers in town, and they know their targets better than anyone. Billionaire owners from Japanese tycoon Masayoshi Son to French media magnate Patrick Drahi are looking at removing their crown jewels from the spotlight of public markets.

The potential moves to take their firms private mean they won't have to deal with volatile markets and increasingly vocal shareholders. Companies have already announced \$26 billion of transactions to be taken private by a related party this year, up about 2,500% from the same period in 2019, according to

data compiled by Bloomberg.

Many of the deals involve ultra-rich founders who have been helped by cheap financing and the sluggish share performance of their businesses at a time when the broader market is surging. "While we have seen more companies deciding to stay private for longer in the last couple of years, we are also witnessing a trend where public companies are looking to go private," said Isabelle Toledano-Koutsouris, head of private capital markets for Europe, the Middle East and Africa at UBS Group AG.

"This has been in the making in the last few months given the market volatility resulting from the pandemic." Son, the chairman of



ANIL AGARWAL

INDIAN BILLIONAIRE ANIL AGARWAL PROPOSED IN MAY TO BUY OUT MINORITY SHAREHOLDERS OF HIS FLAGSHIP COMMODITIES FIRM VEDANTA LTD

HONG KONG PROPERTY MAGNATE PETER WOO COMPLETED A PRIVATIZATION OF WHEELLOCK & CO., ONE OF THE CITY'S LARGEST DEVELOPERS, AFTER OFFERING INVESTORS A 52% PREMIUM

Century-old Li & Fung Ltd., the world's biggest consumer-goods supplier, was also delisted following a buyout bid from its founding family

SoftBank Group Corp, is revisiting the idea of a management buyout of the Japanese conglomerate, according to people with knowledge

of the matter.

The deliberations reflect continued frustration at the gap between the company's \$126 billion

market capitalization and the value of its sprawling investment portfolio. Friday, Drahi offered 2.5 billion euros (\$3 billion) to buy the

shares he doesn't already own in telecommunications provider Altice Europe NV.

The activity comes less than two weeks after German startup factory Rocket Internet SE announced plans to withdraw its shares from the Frankfurt and Luxembourg bourses. The company, backed by the billionaire Samwer brothers, said a stock-market listing is no longer the best way to raise money and it can rely on private funding for future expansion.

Wealthy individuals are pursuing these deals at a time when overall dealmaking activity remains in the doldrums, with the value of mergers and acquisitions down 33% in 2020, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.



# Winning start for Blues in PL



Chelsea players celebrate one of their goals against Brighton, Monday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Brighton, Sept 15:** A Chelsea team featuring just two of their slew of high-profile and expensive signings got off to a winning start in the English Premier League (EPL) by beating Brighton 3-1.

Timo Werner and Kai Havertz — signed for a combined USD 160 million — didn't manage to score at Amex Stadium, either, with Chelsea's goals coming from Jorginho, Reece James and Kurt Zouma.

James' was the most spectacular and the most crucial, the right back's swerving piledriver from 30 meters regaining the lead for Chelsea at 2-1 in the 56th minute, just two minutes after Brighton restored parity through Leandro Trossard.

Zouma's deflected volley from a corner in the 66th then gave Chelsea some breathing space. "I thought we

were OK," Chelsea manager Frank Lampard said. "I liked the work ethic and discipline of the team. We have been together for four days. To expect everything to click on day one would have been difficult."

While Havertz was fairly ineffective in his position on the right of midfield, fellow German international Werner — the lone striker — was more impressive and earned the penalty that was converted by Jorginho to break the deadlock in the 21st minute.

Brighton midfielder Steven Alzate lost possession in central midfield as the hosts tried to play the ball out from the back, Werner was played through and was brought down by goalkeeper Mat Ryan. Jorginho sent Ryan the wrong way.

Much-criticised goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga was handed a start by Chelsea manager Frank Lampard but his failure to keep out Trossard's

54th-minute shot from outside the area will likely keep the scrutiny on him. Kepa seemed slow to get down as the ball squirmed beyond his outstretched right hand.

James quickly put Chelsea back in front with a stunning strike that flew into the roof of the net, and the right back sent in the corner that Zouma met with a volley which ricocheted in off Brighton defender Adam Webster's right foot.

Of Chelsea's other offseason signings that combined to cost USD 250 million, left back Ben Chilwell and playmaker Hakim Ziyech were injured and center back Thiago Silva wasn't ready after only recently joining up with the squad.

"The players are still working each other out a little bit," Lampard said. "Today (Monday) we weren't as fluid as we could be... I want us to have a lot more movement up front than we did today."

# THOMAS & UBER CUP POSTPONED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** The Thomas and Uber Cup Finals in Denmark was Tuesday postponed to next year by the Badminton World Federation (BWF) following a wave of withdrawals by top teams due to the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

India had announced both the men's and women's squads for the prestigious event which was scheduled to be played in Aarhus, Denmark from October 3 to 11.

However, after Indonesia and South Korea Friday joined Thailand, Australia, Chinese Taipei and Algeria in pulling out due to the dreaded disease, the sport's governing body held a virtual emergency council meeting Sunday.

"The Badminton World Federation (BWF), in full consultation and agreement with local host Badminton Denmark, has made the tough decision to postpone the TOTAL BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2020 in Aarhus, Denmark," BWF said in a statement.

"The decision comes following the withdrawal of a number of participating teams from the TOTAL



BWF Thomas and Uber Cup Finals and the European leg of the adjutted HSBC BWF World Tour.

"BWF is looking into possible alternative dates to reschedule the World Men's and Women's Team Championships, but on dates not before into 2021," it added.

BWF had tried to rope in Singapore and Hong Kong as replacements but they declined the invitation. There were also reports that Japan was contemplating with drawing from the event, while China too was awaiting government's approval. September 18 was the last date for confirmation.

Among top players, India's Saina Nehwal had Sunday raised concerns about the timing of the event,

asking whether it would be safe to go ahead with it in the middle of the pandemic.

Saina, along with Olympic silver medalist PV Sindhu, were supposed to lead the 10-member women's team in Uber Cup, while former World No.1 Kidambi Srikanth would have spearheaded the Indian men's campaign in Thomas Cup.

However, the team's preparations were not progressing smoothly with a proposed camp cancelled a few days ago due to the players' refusal to accept the quarantine norms set by the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

In another decision, the BWF has decided to proceed with the

Denmark Open in Odense, a World Tour Event, as originally planned from October 13 to 18.

"The second tournament scheduled for Odense — the VICTOR Denmark Masters 2020 — slated for 20-25 October has been cancelled as it is no longer feasible to conduct this additional event."

In its rescheduled calendar, BWF had also decided to conduct two Super 1000 events in Asia besides the HSBC World Tour Finals in November.

According to reports, the apex body had considered Indonesia as the host for the three events but the country has decided to cancel its application due to the global health crisis. "...BWF will make further announcements as soon as details are clarified," the world body said.

The Thomas and Uber Cup Final was supposed to mark the resumption of international badminton after it came to a halt in March because of the dreaded virus.

BWF said it had planned to put in place a bio-bubble for the safe return of the sport but it respects the concerns of players and member nations.

## Murray given wild card for French Open

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Paris, Sept 15:** Andy Murray received a wild card into the French Open. The former World No.1 was the only non-Frenchman of eight players to be given a free pass into the main draw of the clay grand slam which starts in 13 days.

Murray was also awarded a wild card into the US Open, after his struggles with pelvic and shin injuries dropped his ranking to 129th. He went two rounds in New York, and improved to 110th, but still too low for the French Open when it published its main draw entry list. Murray's best French Open result was the final in 2016.

Tsvetana Pironkova and Eugenie Bouchard were the only non-Frenchwomen to receive wild cards.

Pironkova achieved an impressive first-time run to the US Open quarterfinals. Pironkova's best result at Roland Garros was the quarterfinals in 2016.

Bouchard reached her first final in more than four years in Istanbul Sunday. She had lost to eventual champion Maria Sharapova in 2014 French Open semifinals.

## BCCI requested to reduce quarantine period for IPL-bound ENG, Oz players



BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on a visit to the Sharjah cricket stadium ahead of IPL, Monday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** Australia and England's IPL-bound stars, who are supposed to undergo a six-day quarantine after arriving in the UAE, have requested the BCCI to reduce the duration to three days to ensure their availability from the start of the tournament.

Around 21 players, currently part of an England-Australia white-ball series, will be boarding a chartered flight from Manchester to Dubai, touching base September 17. They can only be available from

September 23, while tournament gets underway from September 19.

Desperate to not miss a single game, a big-hitting star has requested BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, on behalf of the players from both countries, to lessen the quarantine period to three days.

Ganguly, who is in the UAE along with other office-bearers to oversee the tournament's preparations, wasn't available for a comment but a senior IPL source admitted that a plea has been made.

"Yes, the BCCI president has received a request. It may have been

written by one of the players but it is something that all the English and Australian players, who are coming from the UK, feel," a senior IPL source told this agency on conditions of anonymity.

The players feel that since they are already in a bio-bubble — first in Australia and then in UK, it's only logical that 'they be allowed to enter from one bio-bubble to another' as they haven't been in contact with the outside world.

"They have stayed at the Hilton hotel both in Southampton and Manchester, which is a part of the stadium. They have been tested every fifth day and even on the day of their departure from UK, they will be tested and also on first and third day of arrival.

"If you go through safety bubble that the ECB created, not even housekeeping was allowed in the rooms of the players. Also they are taking a chartered flight and not a commercial one.

"So they do have a point when they talk about entering from one bio-bubble to another," said the IPL official but did not comment on whether the request would be accepted.

# COVID saga made Manpreet stronger



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, Sept 15:** India hockey skipper Manpreet Singh says going through a stressful isolation period while recovery from coronavirus has made him a mentally strong player who is now equipped to tackle any situation on the field.

Manpreet was one of the six hockey players to test positive for COVID-19 at the team's training base here last month after they arrived for the national camp.

Having started their individual sessions after recovering, Manpreet said they still miss being part of the rest of the squad, even though Hockey India, Sports Authority of India and support staffs are doing their best to keep them upbeat.

"Hockey India officials would check on us almost every day if the food being provided is good, if our tele-treatment was done regularly, if we are monitoring our oxygen levels regularly and so on.

"Coaching Staff and teammates too would check on us through video calls. These things really

helped us remain upbeat. Though it did sting a little to know all our teammates were back on the pitch while we were still in isolation, I feel this experience has made me mentally tougher to face any situation," the skipper said.

Recollecting the time spent at the hospital, the star midfielder said it was mentally tough for him and rest of the infected players to remain in isolation.

"It was not easy, especially mentally. I have not done anything for a month and that's a long time in a sportsperson's career especially when every day is about improving and being the best," Manpreet said.

"To be honest, initially when the results came out, we were slightly stressed. (But) we received best facilities in the hospital with SAI constantly checking with the medical team there of our well-being."

"While SAI is putting together a post-recovery action plan to ensure smooth return to sports activities, chief coach (Graham Reid) engages in one-on-one pep talk with us that gives us confidence of returning to old form soon," he said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Messi eclipses CR7 in wealth league

**London:** Lionel Messi was denied a potentially money-spinning move away from Barcelona this month after a contract-dispute but the Argentine maestro remains the world's richest footballer. According to a list compiled by Forbes, Messi's total earnings this year are USD 126 million — USD 92 million from his salary and USD 34 million in endorsements. Not surprisingly Cristiano Ronaldo comes in second although earnings of USD 117 million will soften the blow for the Juventus forward, as will his status as the most followed footballer in the world on social media. Neymar comes in third on the Forbes list (USD 96 million) with his PSG teammate Kylian Mbappe, up in fourth spot (USD 42 million).

### Bellingham, Reus score as Dortmund rout Duisburg

Berlin: Jude Bellingham scored on his Borussia Dortmund debut to help his side reach the second round of the German Cup after routing third-division MSV Duisburg 5-0. Dortmund's task was made easier when Duisburg defender Dominic Volkmer was sent off for chopping down Erling Haaland in the 38th minute. Jadon Sancho opened the scoring with a penalty in the 14th minute, and Thorgan Hazard set up Bellingham in the 30th as the 17-year-old Bellingham was fortunate to see his shot rebound in off Duisburg goalkeeper Leo Weinkauf. Volkmer brought down Haaland and Hazard made it 3-0 from the free-kick. In the 50th minute, American midfielder Giovanni Reyna, also 17, struck. Marco Reus, returned after seven months, scored soon after his introduction.

### Neymar's racially abused claims supported by PSG

Paris: PSG 'strongly supports' Neymar's claim to being racially abused by a Marseille player during their feisty match, the French champion said. Neymar was one of five players sent off after an injury-time brawl involving punching and kicking at Parc des Princes. The Brazil forward was caught by VAR jabbing the back of Alvaro Gonzalez's head. Neymar told officials as he went off he was racially abused, and went on social media to say his only regret was that he didn't punch Gonzalez in the face. Marseille, in a statement, said Gonzalez 'is not racist' and he has 'demonstrated it to us by his daily behavior since joining the club, as his teammates have already testified'. "This controversy is serious and already has serious consequences," Marseille said.

### Tour de France riders pass COVID-19 tests

**La Tour-Du-Pin (France):** The remaining 156 Tour de France riders were authorized to keep racing on Tuesday after the latest coronavirus tests. All 785 tests Sunday and Monday of riders and staff members of the 22 teams returned negative. Tour organizers and cycling governing body the UCI announced before Stage 16 in the Alps. No rider has tested positive since the race started August 29 in Nice. The latest screening around the race's second rest day was the fourth since the beginning of the Tour, and the last one before the peloton reaches the Champs Elysees Sunday.

# 'Bio-bubble' mentally challenging

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Manchester, Sept 15:** England pacer Jofra Archer has said staying in a bio-secure bubble can be mentally taxing at times, pointing that lack of time with family for such long spells is not good.

Archer is currently with the England team who are playing Australia in an ODI series. The three-match series is tied at 1-1 with the decider to be played at the Old Trafford Wednesday.

The fast bowler has become attuned to life in the bubble having spent 87 days in the bio-secure environment this summer; more than any other England player; with only four days off between the West Indies and Pakistan Test series and five during the T20I series against Pakistan.

"At times it can be mentally challenging — it's going to (feel strange) going home and being normal again as this has become the new normal," Archer was quoted as saying by 'Sky Sports'.

"I'm not sure I've got much more bubble left in me for the rest of the year. I haven't seen my family really since February and we're in



Jofra Archer (R) bowls at England's net session

September now. The IPL will be most of October and November. Then we're hopefully going to South Africa (with England)," he said.

Archer will link up with the Rajasthan Royals for the Indian Premier League (IPL) starting Saturday in the UAE.

"That only leaves me with a few weeks in December for the rest of the year. When the year turns, I

think (England) will then be in the UAE or India. Family time is really important, especially when you physically cannot see them. Any time I have I'm going to spend with them," he continued.

"It is what we set out to do. I remember when we first came into the bubble, we said we wanted a clean sweep of the summer and we have it in sight."

## SAI UPGRADES CORONAVIRUS SOP

# Athletes to undergo 15-day quarantine ahead of camp

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 15:** Athletes who get the nod to train at the restarted national camps will have to undergo 15-day self-isolation before joining in, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) announced Tuesday, 'upgrading' the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to tackle the COVID-19 threat at its facilities.

A six-member committee, headed by SAI secretary Rohit Bhargava, had in May formulated the original SOP for resumption of sporting activities across the country. National camps have resumed for boxing, athletics, and badminton among others after over five months of a shutdown.

"The (upgraded) SOP is in continuation of the SOP released by SAI earlier, and includes procedural changes with regard to new trainees

joining the training camps," a SAI statement read.

The upgraded SOP will apply to the ones who will join now or for the camps which will begin later. Elimination of low-ventilation change rooms, disinfection of training equipment after every use, a bar on sparring in contact sports for now, and usage of gyms in shifts were some of the measures that SAI had formulated to tackle the virus threat earlier.

The key aspects of the upgraded SOP are related to testing and self-isolation. The SAI said it will bear the expense of all the COVID-19 tests to be undertaken by athletes, coaches and support staff before joining the training camps.

All camp-bound athletes will be told to self-isolate 15 days prior to travelling and would also be required to produce a self-declaration in this regard.