

EXCITING OPPORTUNITY

Actor Manushi Chhillar is excited to work with Akshay Kumar in the upcoming historical drama, *Prithviraj*

LEISURE P2

OUTFIT DEMANDS APOLOGY

Activists protest outside three Tanishq stores demanding apology for controversial Tanishq advertisement

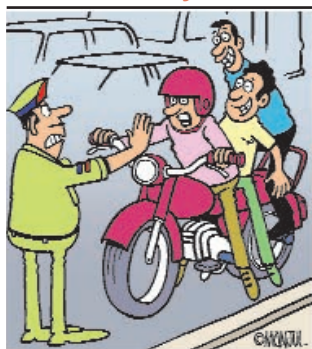
TWO STATES P7

PAK ULTRAS KILL 14

Militants ambushed a convoy of oil and gas workers in Pak's Baluchistan province killing 14 people

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Only three because we're following social distancing. Else, this can carry minimum five!

Stone quarry blast claims three lives

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: At least three labourers, including two women, were killed and six others sustained critical injuries during a blast at a stone quarry in Rayagada district, sources said Friday.

Sources said that the mishap occurred during blasting in the quarry at Okilaguda in Gunupur block of the district. As many as nine labourers were working in the quarry when the mishap occurred.

The three died on the spot after being hit by stone pieces following the explosion. All the injured were admitted to a healthcare facility in Gunupur, added the source.

Thrust on state MSMEs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: In order to promote local start-ups, the state government Friday spelled out norms for procurement of goods from local Micro & Small Enterprises (MSEs).

The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) department has been empowered to notify list of goods and services reserved for exclusive purchase from MSEs/Start-ups located within the state.

"State government departments and its attached offices, state PSUs, autonomous bodies, local bodies, co-operatives etc. are required to procure the items indicated in the exclusive list from the local MSEs/Start-ups as per the procedure prescribed in these guidelines," read the memorandum.

Director of Export Promotion and Marketing (EPM) has been asked to enter into contracts with local MSEs/Start-ups with respect to goods included in the exclusive list as notified by MSME department and purchase of such goods by state government departments and its attached offices.

If any government agency is unable to get the items listed by the MSME department in desired quality and quantity, it has to seek permission from the next higher authority with justification.

To promote Make in Odisha brands, the order said, "The state government may, by notification,



provide for mandatory procurement of any goods or services from any category of bidders, or provide for preference to bidders on the ground of promotion of locally manufactured goods or locally provided services under Make in Odisha initiatives."

The MSME department will act as the nodal department for issue of necessary order for special provisions for local suppliers under Make in Odisha initiative.

The amount of bid security for MSEs and Start-ups will be in between 2 to 5 per cent of the estimated value of the goods or services to be procured while performance security would be 5 to 10 per cent of the contract.

Similarly, the government has relaxed prior turnover and experience criteria while bidding. "The condition of prior turnover and prior experience may be relaxed/waived for local MSEs /Start-ups subject to meeting of quality & technical specifications and making suitable provisions in the bidding document as per the guide-

Bidders from select countries restricted

Following the amendment of General Financial Rules by Centre, state government Friday issued a formal notification restricting public procurement from countries which share a land border with India on grounds of national security. However, it provided relaxation in case of medical supplies in light of Covid-19. And keeping in mind some other neighbouring countries, nations with which India has a line of credit or provides development assistance were also exempted. According to the new notification, any bidder from countries sharing a land border with India will be eligible to bid in any procurement whether of goods, services or works only if the bidder is registered with the 'Competent Authority'.

MORE P3

lines issued by MSME department from time to time," it said.

An additional secretary rank officer of the MSME department will be appointed as chairman of the 'Competent Authority' committee while officers from Home, Finance and concerned department whose sectors are covered will be other members of the panel.

Besides, the local MSE units will continue to get benefits under Odisha MSME Development Policy, 2016 and Odisha Start-up Policy, 2016.

NEET: Shoyeb 1st ever to score 720

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Oct 16: With the National Testing Agency (NTA) declaring National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) 2020 results Friday, 18-year-old Shoyeb Aftab from Rourkela topped the entrance exam with 720 marks, a feat achieved by none before.



By securing full marks in the entrance exam, Shoyeb became the first ever student from Odisha to secure All India Rank 1.

Candidates who appeared for the NEET 2020 examination this year can check their results on the official website of NTA NEET i.e. nta-neet.nic.in or download the DigiLocker app on their mobile phones to download their scores.

Shoyeb, who took coaching from a Kota institute, knew he had secured full marks even before the final results had been declared by NTA. According to media reports, topper Shoyeb Aftab already speculated that he might be securing the first rank. After tallying his answer with the NEET 2020 Answer Key, which was released by NTA just moments before the result was declared, Shoyeb claimed that he had scored full marks in the undergraduate medical test.

According to reports, Shoyeb is aiming to get admission to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi in the undergraduate programme. Speaking to the media, he said, "My marks in Class 11 were just ok and not great and I was not able to put in a lot of hours in my studies either." "I was not happy with the 3 hours of self-study and would devote the holidays and Sundays for self-study. On those days I put in 13-14 hours uninterrupted. For my Class 12 boards, I only started to study in the month of January," he added.

SC asks Anubhav, Varsha to settle marital discord

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Oct 16: The Supreme Court Friday asked BJD Lok Sabha MP Anubhav Mohanty and his wife Varsha Priyadarshini to explore the possibility of an amicable settlement of their marital discord.

A bench headed by Justice Hrishikesh Roy heard the transfer petition filed by Varsha Priyadarshini and asked the couple to appear before the Supreme Court's mediation centre here.

During the hearing, counsel for Mohanty advocate Ashwani Dubey opposed the plea saying it was premature. He submitted that Varsha is entitled for business class ticket and she has independent source of income and hence, can travel to Delhi. He also submitted that the aged parents of

"These are two high profile personalities. It will be better if possibility of settlement is explored," the bench said

Anubhav Mohanty are critically ill and the transfer would affect their health.

Earlier, Varsha had cited in the transfer plea that it is difficult for her to travel to Delhi's Patiala House court to attend the hearing of the case. Meanwhile, the proceedings in the divorce petition at Patiala House court have also been stayed. The Patiala House court here had earlier asked Varsha to appear before December 10.



25th Sept - 18th Oct

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Chandrashekharpur

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ARIES

Today, you may set out to please your beloved, and maybe even woo him/her all over again. There may be a bit of dissatisfaction regarding friends and relatives, but you can look forward to partying and new friendships this evening, says Ganesh.

TAURUS

You may have a tendency to feel frustrated when the results are not the way you expected, feels Ganesh. You must still work hard and finish whatever you undertake today. You will discuss some vital issues with a close friend and relive cherished secrets with your life partner.

GEMINI

You will lend your innovative and imaginative spark to your initiatives, which will be quite a few, says Ganesh. Love will bring you immense satisfaction. And you will develop a special bond with your spouse or beloved. You, however, are likely to be dragged into a conflict and will be forced to pick a side.

CANCER

Today, every word coming out of your sweet-heart's lips will be music to your ears. Your relationship with your relatives will be harmonious. You may steer clear of your troubles, if you learn to restrain. The best way to deal with criticism is to take them constructively.

LEO

The oath of friendship that you once took as a bunch of raggedy misfits still holds true, and your best buddies are the ones who will stand by your side through hell or high water. Ganesh sees in you the desire to cherish such friends and prove your appreciation by treating them with graceful munificence.

VIRGO

Today, you shall balance business and entertainment equally well. The day will be like an endless party, says Ganesh. The emptying of pockets will be proportional to the amount of time you spend doing nothing. But spend prudently, advises Ganesh, and let it not worry you.

LIBRA

Connect and Express — these are the two things you must aim for at work today. You tend to do both things supremely well, be it in a business dialogue on phone, in writing, or in meetings.

SCORPIO

Try adding an entirely new dimension to the way you approach relationships today, advises Ganesh. Being tractable will help iron out the creases in relationships with closed ones. But be wary of complete subjugation, warns Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS

Confidence-building measures will need to be taken up. Be the herald, and usher in new vigour and confidence in people around you. Your business is set to sky-rocket and a fair share of profits are in the offing, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN

It may seem to be an unusual combination, but you will experience pain and pleasure in equal measure today, says Ganesh. The errands you may have to run for at home will leave you exhausted, so conserve some energy for the rest of the day.

AQUARIUS

Good news may hit home today. Promotion, profit, scholarship, anything you've been working for will probably materialise. You are ingenious, and will crack the toughest of problems with consummate ease. Ganesh sees money lenders and brokers doing well.

PISCES

A day filled with socialising awaits you, says Ganesh. You will likely make contact with near and dear ones you haven't met in a while. New associations and friendships could also occur. It is a pleasant and joyous day, so make the most of it.



CHRISTOPHER CROSS RECALLS HIS BATTLE WITH COVID-19

Grammy award winning singer-songwriter Christopher Cross says his battle with Covid left him temporarily paralysed. The 69-year-old singer, best known for *Sailing* and *Arthur's theme* (best that you can do), opened up about his battle with the virus in an interview with CBS recently.

TATIANA MASLANY DENIES BEING CAST AS SHE-HULK

Canadian actress Tatiana Maslany says the reports of her being cast as She-Hulk are not true. Last month, it was reported that Maslany, popular for her starring role in the sci-fi thriller series *Orphan Black*, will portray She-Hulk in an upcoming series for a streaming platform.



'I would love to work with Preity Zinta again'

New Delhi: Actor Bobby Deol says he would love to reunite with former co-star Preity Zinta on the big screen. The two had worked together in films such as *Soldier*, *Jhoom Barabar Jhoom* and *Heroes*, and Bobby would love to share screen space with her again.

"I would love to work with Preity. She is more of a friend and not just a co-actor. She has amazing energy and charm. I wish I get a chance to do something that suits our age, and I am sure we will get that opportunity in the future," Bobby said.

Bobby recently completed 25 years in Bollywood.

Talking about his debut film *Barsaat*, Bobby said: "Those days, every time a star child came on screen, when his first film was being made, it was more like a showcase of his talent. So when *Barsaat* was being written, it was about my character being able to do action, dance, romance and emote. That's how the story was written, with all these points in mind. It took a while before the subject got ready because it's not easy to get the right kind of subject."

Back in the nineties, he was the audience's crush, especially because of his curly long hair: "I always loved long hair. I never thought that it would make such an impact on the audience," he said.



Kareena's mushy note for hubby Saif on 8th wedding anniversary

Mumbai: Bollywood couple Kareena Kapoor and Saif Ali Khan got married on this day eight years ago, and the actress dropped a mushy message for hubby dearest on social media Friday.

"Once upon a time there was a girl named Beboo and a boy named Saifu. They both loved spaghetti (spaghetti) and wine... and lived happily ever after. Now you guys know the key to a happy marriage... On that note, happy anniversary SAKP... here's to eternity and beyond," Kareena wrote on Instagram.

The couple came close while working together in the 2008 release, *Tashan*. Although the film failed to create fireworks at the box office, it ignited the sparks for Saif and Kareena, who would eventually get married in 2012 after a period of courtship.

They have a son Taimur, who was born on December 20, 2016, and Kareena is currently expecting their second child. She recently wrapped up the shoot of the upcoming Aamir Khan-starrer *Lal Singh Chaddha*.



Manushi: Was excited to be on sets with Akshay sir

Mumbai: Former beauty queen and Bollywood debutante Manushi Chhillar says she was excited to be on a film sets with superstar Akshay Kumar.

Manushi makes her Bollywood debut opposite Akshay in the upcoming historical drama, *Prithviraj*.

"I'm thrilled to be back on the sets of *Prithviraj* as I awfully missed the set life. I look forward to be on shoot every day because I'm absorbing a lot and I'm loving it. I was excited to be on sets with Akshay sir because I've learnt so much from him and there is so much more to learn," Manushi said.

Manushi revealed that Akshay

is very encouraging of her work and she is grateful for it. "I consider myself fortunate to be working with the team and everyone has been wonderful. It is daunting when you debut and you want to do your best and give it your all. Everyone including Akshay sir is very supportive and encouraging," she said.

Prithviraj, based on the life and heroism of Prithviraj Chauhan. The film had completed a major chunk of its filming before the coronavirus pandemic hit the nation.

Prithviraj is directed Dr. Chandraprakash Dwivedi, who helmed television epic *Chanakya* and the period drama *Pinjar*.



'Dream girl' Hema Malini turns 72

Mumbai: Veteran actress and politician Hema Malini celebrates her 72nd birthday Friday, and her daughters Esha and Ahana Deol took to social media to wish her on the occasion.

"Happy birthday mamma. God bless you. Stay happy and healthy. Love u my super woman, my tinkerbell... my beautiful mother!@dreamgirlhemamalini," Esha wrote on Instagram, with a picture of her with her mother.

Hema Malini's younger daughter Ahana, too, posted a birthday wish on social media.

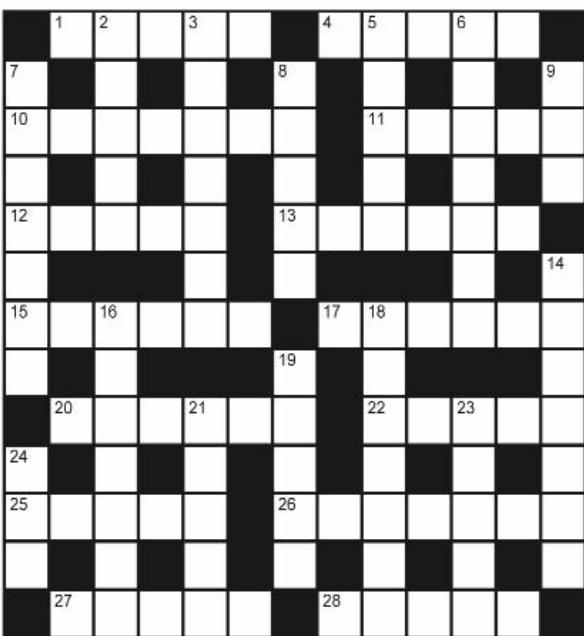
"Happy birthday to the most special person in my life. My mama bear you are deeply loved. Have a wonderful day," Ahana wished. Fans wished Bollywood's Dream Girl, too. From posting Hema Malini's pictures to sharing scenes from her iconic movies, netizens showered the actress with a lot of love. "A timeless beauty. Wishing Dreamgirl Hema Malini a very Happy Birthday! @dreamgirlhema," a user tweeted.

"Wishing a very happy birthday to the veteran actress and the Member of Parliament from Mathura Mrs. Hema Malini. May God bless our forever dreamgirl with healthy and long life so that she continues to serve the country. @dreamgirlhema," another user wrote on the microblogging site.

Hema Malini has been regaling fans with her dancing skills and acting for over 50 years now. *Seeta Aur Geeta*, *Sholay*, *Dream Girl* and *Satte Pe Satta* are some of her memorable movies. A BJP politician, she is also currently the MP of Mathura.

FUN post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Spear
- 4 King with a golden touch
- 10 Perfect
- 11 Birthplace of Columbus
- 12 Bored
- 13 Dense
- 15 Fireman's tool
- 17 Canadian capital
- 20 Tristan's love

- 22 Goes for the gold?
- 25 Sign after Pisces
- 26 Israeli city (3,4)
- 27 Units of force
- 28 Dentist's tool

Down

- 2 Maui greeting
- 3 Checkers type
- 5 Bullion unit
- 6 Memory loss
- 7 Billiards item (3,4)
- 8 Tick off
- 9 Careless
- 14 Imposing in size
- 16 Fate
- 18 Drinking glass
- 19 Breakwater
- 21 Fine thread
- 23 Book of fiction
- 24 Spigot

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

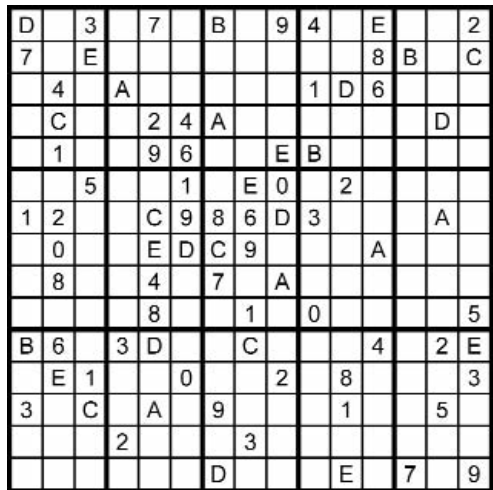


BREVITY



SUDOKU

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

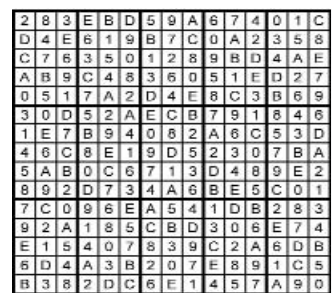


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

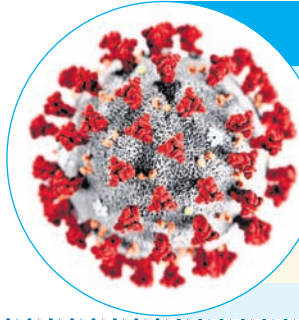


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



PESTS AREN'T GUESTS

A worker sprays pesticide on a paddy field at OUAT in Bhubaneswar, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	3,93,82,641	2,95,07,880	11,05,831
India	73,70,129	64,52,876	1,12,706
Odisha	2,64,149	2,41,385	1,104

State bans bidders from select nations

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: Following amendment of General Financial Rules-2020 by the Centre, the state government Friday issued a formal notification restricting public procurement from countries which share a land border with India on the grounds of national security.

“Given the fact that national security is paramount for the state and keeping in view the circumstances, the state government has decided to amend Para-3 of Finance Department Office Memorandum dated 13.02.2012 by inserting sub-para,” read the notification.

However, it provided relaxation in case of medical supplies in light of Covid-19. And keeping in mind some other neighbouring countries, nations with which India has a line of credit or provides development assistance were also exempted.

According to the new notification, any bidder from countries sharing a land border with India will be eligible to bid in any procurement whether of goods, services or works only if the bidder is registered with

NATIONAL SECURITY FIRST



The state govt has decided to amend Para-3 of Finance Department Office Memorandum to restrict public procurement from countries which share a land border with India

However, it provided relaxation in case of medical supplies in light of Covid-19

Competent Authority led by MSME additional secy would provide registration to the bidders

the ‘Competent Authority’

The Competent Authority, in this case, is the Registration Committee to be constituted by the MSME department of the Odisha government. An additional secretary rank officer of the department will be appointed as chairman of the Committee while officers from Home, Finance and concerned department whose sectors are covered will be other members of the panel. MSME department will issue

detailed guidelines for method of application and format for the bidders. On receipt of an application seeking registration from a bidder from a bordering country, the Competent Authority will first seek political and security clearances from the Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Home Affairs. No registration will be made without the political and security clearances, it said.

If any bidder is aggrieved by the

decision of the Registration Committee, he may file an appeal before the MSME secretary, the Appellate Authority, within 30 days. The decision of the Appellate Authority in this matter will be final. The registration granted by the Centre will also remain valid for procurement by the state government and its agencies.

The Competent Authority has been empowered to cancel the registration already given, if it found sufficient cause for such move.

In case of tenders already invited, if the first stage of evaluation of qualification has not been completed, bidders, who are not registered under the new order, will be barred.

If this stage has been crossed, ordinarily the tenders will be cancelled and the process started de novo. The order will also apply to other forms of public procurement,” it said.

The registration granted by the state government will be valid only for procurement by state departments and agencies. It will not be applicable for other states and Centre.

President, VP, PM greet Naveen on his 75th b’day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: Birthday wishes poured in from across the country as state’s five-time Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik turned 75 Friday.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi wished Patnaik over phone on the occasion.

Leaders cutting across party lines, including Union Minister Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari and Dharmendra Pradhan, extended their greetings to Naveen

The PM also took to Twitter to greet the BJD chief.

“Birthday greetings to Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik Ji. Praying for his long and healthy life,” he tweeted.

Patnaik had said Thursday that he would skip celebrations this year, in view of the COVID-19 crisis. He advised his party members, supporters and well-wishers to help those in need to mark his birthday.

Leaders cutting across party lines, including Union Minister Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari and Dharmendra Pradhan, extended



Members of Biju Chhatra Janata Dal take out an awareness rally on Covid-19 in Bhubaneswar to mark the 75th birthday of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik

their greetings to the Chief Minister Friday.

His counterparts in Tripura, Nagaland and Madhya Pradesh also prayed for his health and long life. Sand artist Sudarsan Patnaik created a sand sculpture of the CM to wish him on his birthday.

Earlier, too, Patnaik had skipped birthday celebrations of multiple

occasions, including last year, when Cyclone Fani had struck the state, leaving behind a trail of destruction.

Patnaik had joined politics in 1997 after the demise of his father and former CM Biju Patnaik.

He took over the reins of Odisha in 2000 and had since held the post of the chief minister.

4,174 units of blood collected

Bhubaneswar: On the occasion of 75th birthday of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, BJD’s Odisha-Mo Parivar wing organised special blood donation camps at various places across the state and collected 4,174 units of blood. The blood donation camps were organised in 52 places across the state. In view of Covid pandemic, the blood donation camps were organised by following the Covid guidelines and norms. Odisha-Mo Parivar expresses its gratitude to all the donors who voluntarily donated their blood amidst such challenging situation and expects such cooperation of the public in future as well.

Two SPCB regional offices on the anvil

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: The state government will set up two regional offices of State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) in Bolangir and Koraput soon, said Forest and Environment Minister BK Arukha, Friday.

The minister said that Bolangir, Sonapur, Boudh and Nuapada would come under the jurisdiction of Bolangir SPCB regional office while Koraput, Nabarangpur and Malkangiri districts will be managed by the office at Koraput.

The expenses that would be incurred for establishment of the two units would be borne by the Board only, the minister said.

Besides, Arukha said, a proposal had been moved to set up SPCB’s regional office at Paralakhemundi in Gajapati district which would monitor Gajapati and Kandhamal districts. However, it was rejected and decided that Gajapati district will come under the Rayagada regional office while Kandhamal district will be supervised by the pollution watchdog’s regional office at Berhampur.



The state government has already approved the proposals to set up Board’s regional offices at Paradip, Kalinganagar and Jharsuguda. At present, the offices are located at Rourkela, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Angul, Balasore, Berhampur, Bhubaneswar, Keonjhar and Rayagada. With the addition of two new units, the total number of pollution board’s regional offices would be 14.

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX			VIATION
CURRENCY BOURSES	SENSEX	39982.98	▲ 254.57
	NIFTY	11762.50	▲ 82.10
	DOLLAR	73.6275	▼ ₹0.07
	EURO	86.1125	▼ ₹0.02
	GOLD	₹50,542	▼ ₹170
BULLION	SILVER	₹61,710	▲ ₹175

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP	31.2°C	33.5°C	
MAX	31.2°C	33.5°C	
MIN	24.9°C	23.0°C	
Humidity	98%	95%	Forecast
Rainfall	0.6	Nil	Generally cloudy sky

DUSSEHRA AHEAD



An artisan decorates the clay idol of Goddess Durga at Choudhury Bazar puja mandap in Cuttack, Friday

OP PHOTO

STF busts illegal Puja ahead, CP launches anti-extortion drive

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: The Special Task Force (STF) of state Crime Branch Friday busted a racket involved in illegal trade of firearms in the Capital city and adjoining areas.

The STF arrested two gunrunners during a raid at Daspur Bridge under Chandaka police limits here. Huge quantities of country-made firearms and live ammunition have been seized from their possession.

The accused arms dealers were identified as Rakesh Chandra Jena and Bikash Behera. Following a tip-off, the STF intercepted the duo at Chandaka and seized the fire arms from their possession.

Speaking on the issue, ADGP of Crime Branch, Soumendra Priyadarshi Friday told the media that the seizure of firearms is a major achievement for the STF sleuths keeping in view the state government’s resolve to root out organised crime.

He also revealed that the STF officials seized eight illegal firearms,

comprising 2 pistols, five country-made revolvers and one metal gun, from various places of Chandaka area on the outskirts of the City during the last 24 hours. The sleuths have seized 12 live ammunition from the accused.

Priyadarshi informed the media that Rakesh and Bikash used to supply illegal firearms to various anti social elements in city and other areas. They usually procure the guns and revolvers from Bihar. The duo also procured some firearms from local traders.

Sources revealed about the seizure of one foreign-made firearm from Bikash and Rakesh. Priyadarshi revealed that another aide of the duo is under STF radar and he would be arrested soon. The STF had earlier seized illegal firearms and ammunition from Bhadrak October 14.

Further investigations will reveal the actual sources of the seized arms and reasons behind procuring such a huge cache of fire arms by the accused, he added.

The STF will bring the duo on remand for interrogation soon.



The seized firearms

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: The Commissionerate Police seems to have pulled up its socks to root out extortion menace in twin city as it has set up an ‘anti-extortion task force’ headed by additional commissioner of police, Rekha Lohani.

Informing this at a presser, Police Commissioner, Sudhanshu Sarangi, said, “The Quick Action Team (QAT) of Commissionerate Police, the deputy commissioners of police and all other police officials will assist the task force in ending the extortion gangs active in the commissionerate area.

People will be urged not to give extortion money buckling under the pressure of antisocial elements

Sarangi said the police officials will hold meetings with vulnerable groups at DCP and police station levels. Such groups, like the business establishments, will be urged not to give extortion money buckling under the pressure of the antisocial elements. They will be requested to contact police in case of receipt of extortion calls from miscreants.

The DCPs will review the progress in this regard every week while Lohani will take stock of the

Odisha got ₹ 22,267Cr for Covid crisis: Pradhan

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Oct 16: Union Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Friday, said that the Union government has given Rs 22,267.66-crore package to Odisha to tackle the Covid-19 crisis.

Pradhan said the Union government has provided Rs 19,042 crore financial assistance to the state. This apart, 7,51,930 tonne rice, 44,130 tonne pulses and 68.79 lakh LPG cylinders were provided to Odisha under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana in Covid-19 stimulus and support package.

“Around 3.17 crore beneficiaries were allotted 5 kg rice per month and 92.85 lakh beneficiaries allotted 1 kg pulses per family per month,” said Pradhan.

He also said that financial assistance of Rs 1,500 has been transferred to 85.20 lakh women Jan

Dhan account holders in the state and Rs 2,000 each to 20.3 lakh PM Kisan beneficiaries in the state.

The Centre, he said, has also given Rs 1,500 each to 20.83 lakh construction workers in the state as Covid assistance.

In order to support the state government, the minister said that the Centre has released Rs 5,122 crore as Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation for financial year (FY) 2019-20 and earmarked Rs 2,258 crore as GST compensation for FY 2020-21 out of which Rs 1,129 has been released.

Significantly, the minister said 4.51 lakh job cards were issued from April to September 2020 generating 9.25 crore man-days. He added that 74.42 lakh man-days were generated in Odisha under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Rozgar Yojana.

The Centre also released Rs 102 crore as central assistance to Odisha for managing Covid-19.



Commissioner of Police Bhubaneswar-Cuttack

Beef up security at ATMs, banks told

Bhubaneswar: In a bid to curb the rising ATM loots in the twin cities, the Commissionerate Police Friday asked the private as well as public sector banks (PSBs) to beef up security arrangements at the ATM kiosks. Holding discussions with the representatives of various private and PSBs at the Police Seva Bhawan here, police commissioner Subhanshu Sarangi asked the banks to deploy security guards, install CCTV cameras and ensure prompt repairing of the existing CCTV cameras at the ATM kiosks as it would go a long way in deterring the loots. These apart, the financial institutions were also advised to keep their alarm system in working condition. The bankers also presented various suggestions before the police to secure the financial institutions and ATMs. Sources said another meeting would be held after three months to discuss the progress in this regard. Additional commissioner of police (ACP) Rekha Lohani, Cuttack DCP Prateek Singh, Bhubaneswar DCP Umashankar Dash and senior officials from State Bank of India, Bank of India and Bank of Baroda among others attended the meeting.



Commissioner of Police Bhubaneswar-Cuttack

progress in every 15 days.

Commissionerate Police will also launch an anti-extortion helpline on which anyone can register an extortion complaint through SMSes, WhatsApp and Telegram. Their identity will be kept secret.

The complainants, informants will be rewarded for their assistance in the drive. The cops will also be awarded according to their

achievements in thwarting the extortion attempts.

The IICs will check the list of miscreants earlier held for extortion bids and keep strict vigil on their current movements. Sarangi warned such miscreants that they would be booked under Section 110 of CrPC or even under NSA Act.

Sarangi said that special public persecutors have been appointed to conduct the trial against Dhalasamanta brothers. Similarly, the police will hold meetings with other government pleaders to achieve conviction against such gang leaders.

The police commissioner requested the denizens to help police in the drive and report extortion demands without any fear.

Lockdown norms tweaked to allow skill training

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: The state government Friday amended the existing lockdown norms for the month of October to allow skill development training in the state.

A notification issued by the office of the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Friday said that skill development and entrepreneurship training centres would be permitted to operate as per the protocols set by the government.

The amendment has added a new clause to the lockdown norms in state. With the amendment, skill development training can now be provided in the state amid the prevailing situation.



“Skill or entrepreneurship training will be permitted in National Skill Training Institutes, Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), Short Term Training Centres registered with National Skill Development Corporation or State Skill Development Missions or other ministries of Central government of state governments,” said the notification.

It also added that the National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIR) and their training providers will also be permitted to impart training.

The SRC notification said that the Skill Development and Technical Education department will issue necessary order/guidelines in this regard.

The department had earlier allowed teaching and non-teaching staff to be called to schools and colleges for official works. It also allowed higher education institutes to conduct research.

It also allowed reopening of higher education institutions only for research scholars (PhD) and PG students of technical and professional programmes requiring laboratory/experimental works. However, the reopening of institutes was subject to approval from the department of Higher Education in consultation with the Home Ministry.

As per the earlier order of the state government, these activities could be undertaken only in areas which are outside the containment zones.

Srimandir managing panel against reopening of shrine

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, Oct 16: Srimandir chief administrator Krishan Kumar Friday held discussions with hoteliers, lawyers and academicians seeking their views on reopening of the 12th century temple for devotees. The shrine has remained out of the bounds for devotees since March 20 last to curb spread of the coronavirus.

Madhab Mahapatra and Ramchandra Dasmahapatra, both Srimandir managing committee members, opined not to reopen the temple for devotees now as the Covid situation is grim and over 500 servitors have already been infected with the killer virus.

Over a dozen servitors have died of the virus attack, they said, adding that it would be difficult to maintain social distancing norms and servitors would be victims.

If the temple opens for devotees in the holy month of Kartik, hundreds of devotees would come to Puri to observe Kartika rituals besides to witness Nagarjuna Vesha of Trinity which falls after a gap of 23 years, they said in the meeting held through virtual conference.

Rajat Kumar Priithary, a senior servitor, and others opposed the proposal to install CCTV in the



Many opposed the proposal to install CCTV in sanctum sanctorum to facilitate devotees to have darshan from outside the shrine

'Garbhagriha' to facilitate devotees to have darshan of deities from outside the temple.

They said that many secret services like Banaklagi, pooja, offering of bhog were performed in the sanctum sanctorum on a daily basis which outsiders should not witness. It would be considered encroachment into the privacy of the deities, they argued.

The chief administrator would place his report before the temple

managing committee and Chhattisha Niyog for a detailed discussion.

The resolution of the temple body would be sent to the state government for its approval.

This entire exercise by Kumar was conducted after the Chief Secretary asked the chief administrator and the district Collector to get the opinion of servitor bodies and all stakeholders over reopening of the temple for devotees.

15 fresh deaths push Covid toll past 1,100

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: State's novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) tally Friday mounted to 2,64,149 with 2,138 more people testing positive for the infection, while 15 more fatalities pushed the toll to 1,104, an official of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.


Of the 2,138 fresh cases, 1,251 were reported from various quarantine centres, and the remaining infections were detected during contact tracing, said the official.

Khurda district, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, recorded the maximum number of new cases at 361, followed by Cuttack at 156 and Angul at 151. Five of the state's 30 districts accounted for over 100 fresh cases each.

Taking to the Twitter, the H&FW department said, "Regret to inform the demise of fifteen #COVID19 positive patients while under treatment in hospitals."

Two deaths each were registered in Khurda, Cuttack, Nabarangpur and Sambalpur, and one each in

VITAL STATS



Two deaths each were registered in Khurda, Cuttack, Nabarangpur and Sambalpur, and one each in Bhadrak, Bargarh, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Kendrapara, Puri and Sundargarh	Khurda recorded the maximum number of new cases at 361, followed by Cuttack 156	Khurda continued to report the highest number of 45,002 Covid cases followed by Cuttack (23,957), Ganjam (20,779), Puri (11,664) and Mayurbhanj (10,022)
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OF THE 1,104 FATALITIES REPORTED SO FAR, GANJAM ALONE ACCOUNTED FOR 225 DEATHS FOLLOWED BY KHURDA (186), CUTTACK (96), PURI (73), BALASORE (61) AND SUNDARGARH (54)

Bhadrak, Bargarh, Jagatsinghpur, Jharsuguda, Kendrapara, Puri and Sundargarh.

Over 39.59 lakh sample tests have been conducted in the state thus far, including 38,572 Thursday.

Khurda continued to report the highest number of 45,002 Covid

cases followed by Cuttack (23,957), Ganjam (20,779), Puri (11,664) and Mayurbhanj (10,022).

On the other hand, of the 1,104 fatalities reported so far, Ganjam alone accounted for 225 deaths followed by Khurda (186), Cuttack (96), Puri (73), Balasore (61) and

Sundargarh (54).

This apart, 53 other Covid-19 positive patients have died due to comorbidities, the official pointed out. Meanwhile, 2,850 Covid patients recovered in state, taking the total recoveries to 24,1385. The recoveries include 563 from Khurda, 184 from Cuttack, 147 from Puri, 138 from Angul, 137 from Sambalpur and 133 from Kendrapara.

CITY'S CASELOAD 26,779

With 243 persons testing positive for Covid-19 in the Capital city in the last 24 hours, the total number of infected persons in the Temple city climbed to 26,779, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation said, Friday.

Of the fresh infections, 175 were local contact cases while 68 were quarantine cases.

The City also recorded 357 recoveries Friday, taking the total number of cured persons to 23,523.

Bhubaneswar has 3,106 active cases of the coronavirus while 129 people have so far succumbed to the viral infection.

Sealed shops can reopen: BMC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: With the festive season fast approaching, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Friday, decided to allow reopening of the shops which were earlier closed for violating Covid-19 norms.

In a tweet, BMC stated that as a goodwill gesture it has decided to de-seal all such shops and business establishments in view of the upcoming festive season. It needs to be mentioned that earlier about 70 shops, establishments, restaurants and eateries were sealed after BMC observed COVID violations. However, the reopened establishments have been directed to sanitise their premises before allowing the public. Moreover, the institutions shall ensure social distancing norms and other guidelines are followed to prevent the Covid-19 outbreak.

"No shops, counters or kiosks will be allowed to operate near pandal this year. This has been done to avoid any overcrowding, violation of any COVID norm," said a senior BMC official.

BMC starts drive to make cycle tracks encroachment free

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: With an aim to upgrade cycling infrastructure in city, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Friday, started a massive enforcement activity on some of the busy thoroughfares to make cycle tracks encroachment free.



The Central Joint Enforcement Squad comprising the BMC, Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) and Commissionerate Police carried out drives at AG Square, Sishu Bhawan, Rajmahal Square and roads near Indira Gandhi Park to create space for cycling.

The first day of the drive saw removal of about 10 unauthorised vendors (trolleys), roadside cabins, tiffin centers which attracted huge crowd resulting in movement restriction of pedestrians and cyclists. Moreover, the squads also

imposed fines of about Rs 5,200 on some shop keepers for occupying and dumping construction materials on cycle tracks at Bapuji Nagar in South East Zone of the Civic Body.

Similarly, South West Zone, the enforcement squad also cracked down on five fruit selling trolleys, one car and one pollution testing vehicle occupying footpath and cycle tracks. Penalty of Rs 5,000 was collected from people for dumping construction debris on the cycle tracks.

"Eviction drive will be continued to free the cycle tracks and footpath to make ensure that pedestrians and cyclists don't face any difficulties while using the roads," said BMC Commissioner-cum-BSCCL Chief Executive Officer, Prem Chandra Chaudhary.

Auto drivers vow to respect cyclists

In one-of-its-kind endeavour, the Bhubaneswar Smart City Ltd (BSCL) organised an oath-taking event for auto drivers here to make them aware, sensible and respectful towards cyclists in the city.

Over 70 auto drivers from Zone-1 (Patia) of Smart City Online Auto Group took pledge in presence of BMC and BSCL officials at Niladri Vihar today morning on obeying traffic rules and maintaining proper road etiquettes.



Students queue up at Rama Devi Women's University in Bhubaneswar, Friday, to participate in spot admissions into Plus II and III courses

Cong wants AIIMS satellite centre in Balasore

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Oct 16: A delegation of Congress party comprising Lok Sabha MPs A Chellakumar and Saptagiri Ulaka, Friday, urged the Union Health Minister Harshvardhan to establish the AIIMS satellite centre and super specialty hospital in Balasore.

The Congress MPs said that the UPA government had sanctioned Rs 450 crore for construction of a satellite centre of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) with 350-bed super specialty hospital and a world-class public health and nursing school at Balasore in 2013-14.

AICC In-charge for Odisha Chellakumar said that the UPA government had approved the cen-

tre to address dire need of the healthcare services, health education and training and research of the people of Balasore and norther part of the state. He also added that the state government had also allotted 25 acre land for the project.

"But unfortunately in 2016, the then health minister, JP Nadda, stalled the project and said that this project will be constructed within the radius of 10km from Bhubaneswar," Chellakumar said.

The Congress MP said the proj-

ect was supposed to be completed by 2017. He also said that only a boundary wall and a temporary OPD centre has been built there.

"In the meantime, six years have been elapsed and the project has been stalled within the construction of boundary wall and a temporary OPD centre which is now closed. The long standing demand

of people of Balasore and north Odisha has been belied. This part of Odisha is home to tribal people and healthcare facilities in this region are also in dismal state. So, the then UPA government had ap-

proved the project" said Chellakumar. But it's a matter of concern that the project is stalled and the Centre is not taking any step to commence it, he added.

The Congress MP urged the Union health minister to look into the matter and expedite the commencement and completion of AIIMS satellite centre, super specialty hospital and nursing school at Balasore. He also urged the minister to release sanctioned amount of Rs 450 crore immediately for commencement of the project.

Taking a jibe at Chief Minister Naven Patnaik, he said, "The Chief Minister is simply asking people 'are you happy are you happy' but he hasn't done anything to establish a proper hospital in northern part of the state."

ECoR to set up land record task force to improve accessibility

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: The East Coast Railway (ECoR) has decided to set up a land record task force to consolidate the land records so as to ensure hassle-free access to the land records under its jurisdiction.

In a review meeting on land issues under ECoR jurisdiction, General Manager Vidya Bhushan has advised officials to form a land record task force under the chairmanship of Chief General Engineer.

Estate officers of all the three divisions, i.e. from Khurda Road, Waltair and Sambalpur will be the members of the task force including member of Mancheswar Carriage Repair Workshop and Deputy General Manager (General). The task force will take stock of



total land estate of ECoR, state wise and district wise, will arrange authentication of the title deeds/RoRs in possession, to pursue swift acquisition of title deeds/RoRs for every land or plot not available and will plan, coordinate, monitor and ensure effective demarcation of railway land boundaries at site on each land/plot.

This would pursue settlement of disputes/disagreements regarding ownership of land in possession of ECoR, pursue and monitor signing of land licensing agree-

The task force will take stock of total land estate of ECoR, state wise and district wise, will arrange authentication of the title deeds/RoRs in possession

achieving its objectives. Bhushan also directed officials to sort out and complete the task by March 31, 2021.

The ECoR GM advised for a comprehensive estate management policy for effective estate management and uniform implementation. He stressed on assessing quarters which do not have a nominated garage.

Efficient garage management should be done for preventing unauthorised parking. He also issued guidelines for management of activity centres and public spaces.

On social forestry, the GM said open spaces should have small area of soft soil space so that different types of plants could be arranged in a better manner.

He advised that areas that have scarce soft soil, trees with large canopy and large girth should not be planted as those will create shadows on buildings and roots will not spread deep and wide threatening the existing buildings and structures.

Such areas should be planted with fruit and flower trees. Bhushan has also directed officials not to plant trees by drilling a narrow hole through concrete as this will not allow enough space for roots to grow and also threatens built up spaces.

The GM also instructed officials to create soft soil kerb at both side of roads to plant trees. He directed that all trees planted after Cyclone Fani should be relocated as per new directions.

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Forest land acquistion triggers row

Admin is accused of holding no Pallisabha before giving go-ahead to mega irrigation project in Joda block

POST NEWS NETWORK

Joda, Oct 16: Land acquisition for a mega lift irrigation project being constructed at Chamakpur panchayat under Joda block has plunged into controversy. Forest land is being acquired even without the approval of Pallisabha, which allegedly violates existing laws. Even the sarpanch has not given NOC to the land acquisition. But the forest department has given permission, a report said.

According to the report, work of a mega lift irrigation project has started six months ago. The project requires acquisition of forest land. The land is being acquired while the sarpanch has not given his consent, locals alleged.

They pointed out that whenever any project or work is started on the forest land, there is a need for approval of the Pallisabha first and then the sarpanch should give his stamp of approval. But this is not being done, they lamented.

It was leant that Megha Engineering and Industries has been awarded the construction work of the irrigation project at Basudevpur. Carrying out work on the forest land only on the permission of the forest department is illegal, they said.

“The administration should have organized Pallisabha for approval



Chamakpur sarpanch Narahari Nayak said: Land acquisition for the project started six months ago, but Pallisabha was not held to give green signal. The construction company has sent a letter to him for Pallisabha, but it was not held. Surprisingly, the forest department gave permission for land acquisition even without an NOC

Locals pointed out that whenever any project or work is started on forest land, there is a need for approval of the Pallisabha first and then the sarpanch should give his stamp of approval. But this is not being done, they lamented

Megha Engineering and Industries after bagging contract for construction work for the project at Basudevpur is carrying out the work on the forest land only on the permission of the forest department

of the project before awarding the work to the company. Without this, trees are being cleared for land acquisition. Locals used to depend on the forest for their livelihood. It has affected their livelihood,” said Prabhakar Nayak, former sarpanch of Kandara panchayat.

Locals also pointed out that the construction company has engaged people from outside while local labourers have been neglected at the time of Covid difficulties.

On the other hand, due to construction work, the entire region has been experiencing dust-induced pollution while the company has not

taken pollution control measures, they added. Labourers are working in hazardous condition at high altitude without safety gears.

Locals have apprised the Balibandh forester about the alleged illegality.

Chamakpur sarpanch Narahari Nayak said, “Land acquisition for the project has started six months ago, but Pallisabha was not held to give green signal. The construction company has sent a letter to him for Pallisabha, but it was not held. I wonder how the forest department gave permission to the company for land acquisition even

without my NOC.”

However, deputy project manager of the Megha Engineering Company Sriram said, “The area is under the Kanpur major irrigation project. It is a submergence prone area. The work is being done here in adherence with all norms.”

Champur ranger Ghasinath Patra said he is unaware if the project has been approved by the Palisabha or not. But the forest department has given permission for the land acquisition, he added. Locals demanded an impartial investigation into the alleged illegalities.

Bus with OJEE aspirants overturns in Ganjam, 25 hurt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Oct 16: Twenty five OJEE aspirants suffered severe injuries after a bus carrying them overturned at Taptapani Ghat on national highway (NH-326) under Patapur police limits in Ganjam district Thursday, police said. Five of those injured are in critical condition, they added.

Sources said while taking a sharp turn near Palukhola area, the driver lost control over the ill-fated vehicle and it turned turtle.

Sixty OJEE aspirants from Ramagiri, Udayagiri, Jiranga and Chandiput localities in Gajapati district were travelling in the bus for appearing in the entrance test Friday morning. The bus was going to Bhubaneswar via Berhampur city.



On being informed, Patapur police as well as Sanakhemundi fire brigade personnel rushed to the spot and rescued the injured. The injured were sent to Digapahandi hospital for treatment.

Chilika’s 2nd ‘floating bridge’ partly capsizes



POST NEWS NETWORK

Krushnaprasad, Oct 16: The second Bhasa Pola (floating bridge) which had been shuttling between the Janhikuda under Krushnaprasad block and Satapada in Puri district partly capsized Friday morning.

Hundreds of local commuters from Janhikuda, Satapada and Chilika areas including tourists had been using this ferry service every day. Similarly, villagers of Krushnaprasad block and visitors from southern Odisha had been largely depending on the floating bridge.

Worthy to note, the Chilika Development Authority (CDA) had made provision for the watercraft September 16 this year in order to facilitate movement

of local people from Janhikuda to Satapada.

However, when local commuters reached Janhikuda to board the vessel this morning, it was found to have partly drowned. Left with no other choices, the commuters availed local ferry service here.

The ferryboat service had resumed Wednesday after remaining out of order for over eight months following COVID-19 outbreak. In the meanwhile, the floating bridge has developed large cracks due to poor maintenance by the CDA, some local villagers alleged.

The disruption of service after a month of operation has snapped waterway communication leaving the residents of Janhikuda, Satapada and several other islands in despair.

Sisters who jumped into Tel river remain untraced

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Oct 16: The two sisters who had jumped into the Tel river and went missing Thursday remained untraced till Friday morning. Fire brigade personnel and a team of Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) resumed search operations in the wee hours of Friday. The two sisters have been identified as Anmol Agrawal and Anchal Agrawal, daughters of a businessman in this district.

The fire personnel and ODRAF team have already searched 20 kilometres from the spot where the two sisters took the plunge. However, they have not been able to locate the bodies of the two sisters.

The siblings had left home Thursday informing family members that they were going on a joy ride. Later, the scooter they were riding on and two pairs of slippers were found on the bridge.

Earlier, police and fire brigade personnel had launched a rescue operation till the evening. An ODRAF team joined them, Friday.

The police, however, are yet to reach a conclusion regarding the disappearance of the siblings. They have launched a probe to figure out whether the sisters jumped into the river or something else happened to them.



Amid increasing cases of Covid infections, folk artistes create awareness on safety measures and social distancing at Singhmunda panchayat under Deogan block of Bolangir district, Friday

OP PHOTO

Ayurvedic garden opens in Kalahandi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kesinga, Oct 16: Sarpanch of Bansi Gram Panchayat Chudamani Majhi under Kesinga block in Kalahandi district inaugurated an Ayurvedic Garden at Jawahar High School, Friday.

Sources said headmaster of the school Abhya Kumar Debata with the help of Youth Endo Eco Club has planted many medicinal plants in the Ayurvedic Garden.

Speaking on the occasion, Debata stressed the need to preserve, protect, promote and document the knowledge of indigenous medicinal plants. He also said among 18 schools of Kesinga, Jawahar High School is the only school which has a medicinal plant garden.

Medicinal plants like Aloe Vera, Neem, Tulasi, Nelikka (Amla),



Medicinal plants like Aloe Vera, Neem, Tulasi, Nelikka (Amla), Dandelion, Rosemary, Lavender, Mint and Basil are increasing the beauty of the Ayurvedic Garden. With this the school also has a beautiful flower garden

Dandelion, Rosemary, Lavender, Mint and Basil are increasing the beauty of the Ayurvedic Garden. With this the school also has a beautiful flower garden.

Among others, assistant teacher Hemnata Kumar Palai, Covid-19 ANM Pragnya Paramita Suna and other staff were present at the inauguration ceremony.

Palai said like in ancient time people can get cure from many types of diseases from the medicinal plants which is part of Ayurvedic treatment. The medicinal plants in the school premises will help people get cure from the diseases.

Elderly couple burnt to death in Brajarajnagar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharsuguda, Oct 16: An elderly couple was burnt to death in the wee hours of Friday while they were sleeping in their room at Brajarajnagar area in Jharsuguda district. The tragedy took place at Punjabi Dhaba locality under Brajarajnagar police limits. The deceased have been identified as Giribara Dash (50) and his wife Gita (46).

Brajarajnagar IIC and other police officials launched a probe and sent the bodies for post-mortem. Although the actual reason behind the incident is yet to be ascertained, it was suspected that the blaze might have originated from a coal stove which was kept in the kitchen in the house.

Landslide hits communication in Gajapati

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, Oct 16: All communications to three panchayats under Gumma block in Gajapati district were disrupted following another landslide due to low-pressure triggered rainfall, Thursday.

The landslide occurred at Ajaygad ghat road near Namangad panchayat under the block as rain continues to lash the area Thursday. As a result, communication to three panchayats was disrupted. Hundreds of villages in Ajaygad, Bhubani and Namangad have been

cut off from the rest of the world due to the landslide. People demanded resumption of communication by clearing the debris on ghat road.

On being informed, Collector Anupam Saha directed the officials to clear the debris from the area and take urgent steps for repairing of the ghat road.

The low pressure triggered rainfall has caused much havoc in the district and disrupted communication at many places. Farmlands got submerged while landslides and flood like situation occurred at some places.

Parties release lists of star-campaigners

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure/Jagatsinghpur, Oct 16: In a bid to win confidence of voters ahead of Balasure Sadar and Tirtol by-polls, BJD, BJP and CPI Friday released their star-campaigner lists.

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) has named 30-star campaigners for the polls. The list included BJD presi-

dent Naveen Patnaik, Pranab Prakash Das, Ananta Das, Debi Prasad Das, Satyabrata Tripath (Kuna Tripathy) among others.

Similarly, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) named Samir Mohanty, Jual Oram, Dharmendra Pradhan, Pratap Chandra Sarangi, Baijyanta Jay Panda, Suresh Pujari and Raghunath Mohanty among oth-

ers as star campaigners who will campaign for their candidates.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) has also released the star campaigners who will campaign for their candidates in both the constituencies. They include Ashis Kanungo, Dibakar Nayak, Ramakrushna Panda, Prasant Mishra and Sura Jena among oth-

Pradhan to campaign in Balasure, Tirtol

NEW DELHI: Union Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan will start campaigning for by-elections to the two Assembly constituencies, Balasure and Tirtol, in the state from Saturday. The minister will start his two-day campaigning from Balasure. Pradhan said people are liking the work of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and they will vote for BJP candidates in both the constituencies.

“I hope ex-MLA Madan Dutt had done good work for Balasure and his son will be able to win the elections. Pratap Sarangi is also campaigning for him. We are hopeful that Manas Dutta will win the confidence of people and register win in the area,” Pradhan said.

Speaking about BJP’s strategy in Tirtol constituency, Pradhan said there is a change in the po-

BYPOLLS

litical paradigm and he is hoping that the saffron party will be the beneficiary of these changes. Pradhan will also go for campaigning in Bihar Assembly elections and Madhya Pradesh by-polls. It is to be mentioned here that the by-elections for the two assembly constituencies in the state will be held November 3 and the results will be declared November 10.



BJD senior leaders hold Mahamishrana Parba in Balasure, Friday

joined BJD at a Mahamishrana Parba here Friday in the presence of Health Minister Pratap jena, state BJD vice president Devi Mishra and former MP Rabindra Jena.

This has brought to the fore fissures in the BJP organization in the Balasure constituency. Political pundits say, though the sadar constituency was won by the BJP in 2019, the party has to face a stiff contest in the bypoll. The BJD has fielded a new face like Swarup Das whose candidature has not been

accepted by a group of supporters of former MP Rabindra Jena. His supporters came out in the open strongly opposing the candidature of Das in the presence of party observer Pratap Dey when his name was announced.

Given factionalism, both the parties have to work hard to iron out the differences ahead of the bypoll. Congress has fielded Mamata Kundu. How far the new candidate will draw political mileage remains to be seen, political observer said.

ers. Notably, the BJD has declared sitting MLA Bishnu Charan Das’s son Bijaya Shankar Das as its candidate in Tirtol seat for the November 3 by-elections. The ruling party also named Swarup Kumar Das as its candidate for the by-poll to Balasure Sadar Assembly seat.

The saffron party has selected Manas Kumar Dutta for the by-election to Balasure Assembly constituency and Raj Kishore Behera for Tirtol Assembly by-poll in Jagatsinghpur district.

On the other hand, Congress has fielded Mamata Kundu for Balasure Sadar and Himanshu Bhusan

Mallick for Tirtol Assembly seat.

Earlier, a gazette notification was issued for the by-polls October 9. Election Commission of India (ECI) has set October 16 as the last date for filing of nominations. The scrutiny of nominations will take place October 17. Candidates will be allowed to withdraw their candidatures by October 19. Votes will be counted November 10.

It may be mentioned here that, the by-elections for the two Assembly seats were needed after the demise of former Balasure MLA Madan Mohan Dutta and Tirtol ex-MLA Bishnu Charan Das.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
No. O-469

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, BOLANGIR

E-mail ID: eerw_blgrr@yahoo.co.in

e-Procurement Notice
IFB IDENTIFICATION NO. EEBLGR-Online-03/2020-21

1. Name of Work	: Road Works
2. Total No. of Works	: 22 (Twenty Two) Nos.
3. Approximate Estimated Cost	: Varies from Rs.4.42 lakhs to 17.68 lakhs
4. EMD @ 1% of the Estimated Cost	: Rs.4500/- to Rs.17700/-
5. Cost of Tender Paper	: Rs.2000/- to Rs.6000/-
6. Time for Completion	: 3 (Three) Months
7. Mode of Submission of Tender	: Tender should be submitted online in www.tenders.or.nic.in
8. Other details are as follow	: As per TCN No. EEBLGR-Online-03/2020-21

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for Bidding	Last date and time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of opening of tender
Executive Engineer, R.W. Divn., Bolangir	Online Tender-03/BLGR	From	To	
		05.11.2020 at 11.00 A.M.	12.11.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.	11.11.2020 upto 1.00 P.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tenders.or.nic.in.
Any Corrigendum/Addendum will be displayed in the above e-tender website only.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Bolangir
OIPR-25068/11/0004/2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
No. b-15

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
N.H. DIVISION, PARALAKHEMUNDI

e-mail: ee.nhdgajapati@gmail.com

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB) (e-Procurement)

Bid Identification No. 04/2020-21 of EE, NH PKD

No. 947
Dated: 13.10.2020

- The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, N.H. DIVISION, Paralakhemundi on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites **percentage rate bid** in double cover system in **ONLINE MODE** from eligible contractors for construction of **Road Works** as detailed in the table below.
- Nature of Work : Road
- No. of Work : 1 No.
- Tender Cost : Rs.10,000/-
- Class of Contractor : "A" Class & "B" Class
- Availability of Bid document : From 21.10.2020, 10.00 A.M. to 03.11.2020, 10.00 A.M.
- Date of Opening of Bid : 03.11.2020 at 11.00 A.M.
- The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>.
- Any Corrigendum/Addendum/Cancellation of will be displayed in the e-tender website only.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
NH Division, Paralakhemundi
OIPR-34150/11/0002/2021



RTI, rudderless ride

Fifteen years after the Right to Information (RTI) Act came into force, does the nation have more transparency, or less? The story is quite sombre. More than 2.2 lakh cases are pending at the Central and State Information Commissions. Nine out of 29 information commissions are functioning without a chief, one-fourth of information commissioner posts are vacant and the state commissions in Jharkhand and Tripura are defunct. No new commissioners have been appointed.

This apart, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has "refused to disclose details on the PM CARES Fund, stating that the fund is "not a public authority" under the ambit of the RTI Act! The absence of a commissioner has serious ramifications for the effective functioning of the information commissions. But even the Central Information Commissioner, which hears second appeals against all central government departments and UTs, has been without a chief since August this year: Bimal Julka, who headed the CIC for barely six months, demitted office in August, upon reaching the age limit stipulated in the Act.

During the Covid pandemic, only 10 of the 28 information commissions worked and even these hardly heard any appeals. Yet, it is not just the transparency law that has suffered. There are other vacancies in key organisations that indicate a drift not usually associated with the Modi *sarkar*.

Sources say that the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PSEB) has been headless for more than a month after Rajiv Kumar, a former Finance Secretary, demitted office at the end of August and was appointed Election Commissioner in place of Ashok Lavasa. Similarly, the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal has been headless for more than seven months. Apparently, as many as six ministries and departments are awaiting regular secretaries. Some estimate that dozens of board-level positions in several central PSUs are lying vacant with no sign of when these will be filled.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

The 360-degree method of empanelment of officers has been a major administrative "reform" introduced by the Modi *sarkar* to judge the performance of officers. However, not all officials have been happy with it, since it allows retired officers to influence their careers. Many careers have been marred as a result, say sources. But that may have changed, with the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) deciding not necessarily to act on the advice of the 360-degree committees, and even rejecting their recommendations as and when required. The case of UT cadre IAS officer G Narendra Kumar is often cited as an example of the subjectivity behind recommendations of these committees.

In September 2017, Kumar, who was posted in Puducherry, was booked by the CBI for alleged irregularities in admission to postgraduate medical courses in private colleges. Though the allegations turned out to be false, Kumar's career was affected. It is only now that his name has finally been put on the list of the review empanelment order issued last month, after missing the opportunity for empanelment in 2018 due to the case against him.

The consensus among *babus* is that Kumar is among the best officials but suffers from his "disability" to network. Kumar had got caught in the political battle between the Chief Minister and then Lt Governor of Puducherry and paid a price. Some retired senior officers are said to have played a part in this episode and their advice proved costly to Kumar, in career terms.

The damage may have been done, but observers say that the government's belated move does send out a message that fair dealings may be delayed for a while, but not forever.

RBI'S DEPUTY GOVERNORS

The recent appointment of RBI's senior-most executive director M Rajeshwar Rao as the deputy governor of the bank has now led to a reallocation of portfolios of the four deputy governors. Rao replaced NS Vishwanathan who stepped down three months ahead of the end of his tenure on health grounds. Rao will oversee the Department of Regulations and also the departments of Communication, Enforcement, Inspection, Legal and Risk Monitoring. RBI's other three deputy governors are BP Kanungo, MK Jain and Michael Debabrata Patra. While Patra will continue to look after the Monetary Policy department, Jain will be in charge of Central Security Cell, Corporate Strategy and Budget departments, while Kanungo will oversee Coordination, Currency Management and External Investments and Operations. In April this year, the government had extended Kanungo's tenure by a year.

Deputy governors of RBI are initially appointed for a period of three years and can be reappointed.

*Share a babu experience!
Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.*

WISDOM CORNER

When written in Chinese, the word 'crisis' is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity. **JOHN F KENNEDY**

Giving your son a skill is better than giving him one thousand pieces of gold. **PROVERB**

Every neighboring state is an enemy and the enemy's enemy is a friend. **ARTHASASTRA**

WORDSWORTH

Two-car funeral

Here's an example from the Fresno Bee of February 2004: "When is the school board going to face the reality that the administration is incapable of organizing a two-car funeral?" Sometimes the verb is manage, as here in an issue of the Cincinnati Post in January 2005: "If Bill Frist's performance as Senate majority leader the last few weeks is any indication, he would have trouble managing a two-car funeral let alone the vast U.S. government." Like most such slangy expressions, trying to tie down its origins is next to impossible. It became well enough known that it began to appear in newspapers around 1971; the earliest example appeared in a syndicated article in several US newspapers in February 1971: "The Saigon government at that point could not organize a two-car funeral." The expression was in fact a less serious accusation of incompetence than couldn't organise a one-car funeral. The earliest example of that version is from 1968: "Alas, the world is full of bunglers. Some of them are so good they can even mess up a one-car funeral." That's older than the first recorded example of two-car funeral and so may be the original.

LOL WHO'S STUPID

Story goes that a Surd prime minister visited the president of a neighbouring country and complained about all the jokes about surds that others keep telling. "This leads to the impression that all surds are stupid", he said.

"You should not take this so earnestly", answered the neighbouring minister, and added, "These are only jokes and not true stories. And there are also stupid people in our country. I will prove it to you."

Saying so, he went to his driver and said: "Please drive to my home and find out whether I am at home." The driver immediately went on his way.

The surd prime minister was satisfied: "He is very stupid indeed. There is a public phone just at the corner. It would have been easier to call and check!"

FOCUS NATION

STATES, GST, AUTONOMY



On GST, we must give (some kind of) autonomy to our states. This will eliminate the pressure on the Union government to continue compensating the states for any shortfall in GST beyond the five years committed earlier. It will restore the ability of the states to raise revenues to make water recharging structures, highways and metros

INTER-state movement of goods was troublesome before the implementation of Goods and Services Tax (GST). Every state used to classify goods according to its understanding and collected Sales Tax at different rates. For example, kraft paper could be classified as "packing material" and taxed at 20 per cent by one state, while it could be classified as "paper" in another state and taxed at 25 per cent. These variations led to a number of disputes at the borders and hampered inter-state trade.

The Union government implemented a GST system which classified all goods in the same category and imposed the same rate of tax across the country. Businessmen no longer had to calculate the different rates of Sales Tax applicable in different states while making a sale.

However, the states were not willing to give up their autonomous power to levy Sales Tax as per their requirements. In order to overcome their resistance, the Union government assured them that it will compensate them for any shortfall in GST during the next five years. This compensation was to be calculated assuming a 14 percent increase in GST per year. The present problem is that the economy has been slowing for the last four years since the implementation of GST and thus the collections are less, while the Union government is committed to compensate the states at the rate of 14 per cent increase.

The Covid pandemic has pushed the matter to the brink. The Union government is unable to compensate the states as they were promised. A huge amount of ₹2.35 lakh crore has become due to the states. The Union government has made a scheme that it will borrow ₹1.1 lakh crore and pass on the loan to the states to help them meet their expenses during the delayed payment of compensation. However, the states will have to bear the interest burden on this loan.

This GST system has taken away the autonomy of the states.

Previously every state had the authority to change the rate of Sales Tax. For example, Himachal Pradesh could collect higher rates on room heaters and Tamil Nadu on air conditioners which are bought more in the two states respectively. As a consequence, the states are caught in a bind. They cannot increase the GST rates in case they want to raise money, for example, to make a highway or a Metro.

The situation will become catastrophic for a number of states after the end of the five years when the Union government's assurance to compensate for loss of revenue will come to an end. Reportedly, some states will see a sudden decline in their revenues by up to 40 per cent. They will not be able to even pay the salaries of their police and revenue personnel. The entire law and order situation in these states can crumble.

We should consider giving autonomy to states to fix the rates of GST. Several large countries provide such autonomy. Canada, for example, has three types of GST. Only 5 per cent "Federal" GST is collected on goods sold in Alberta. Five per cent "Federal" GST and 7 per cent Provincial States Tax (PST) are collected in British Columbia. The two taxes are combined and a 13 per cent Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) is collected in Ontario which includes a 5 per cent share of the federal government.

The movement of goods from one state to other remains seamless despite this multiplicity of GST rates. There are no border checks. The seller collects GST as applicable in the state of the buyer. For example, seller "A" in Alberta will collect only 5 per cent "Federal" GST on goods sold to a buyer within the state. The same

seller "A" in Alberta will collect 5 percent "Federal" GST and 7 percent PST, a total of 12 per cent, on goods sold to a buyer "B" in British Columbia.

We can modify the present GST into such a system. A seller "X" in Maharashtra may collect 18 per cent GST on goods sold to a buyer within the state if Maharashtra does not impose a PST. The same seller "X" in Maharashtra will collect 18 per cent GST and, say, 2 per cent PST, a total of 20 per cent, on goods sold to a buyer "Y" in Andhra Pradesh if that state has a 2 per cent PST.

Now, let us say, the buyer "Y" in Andhra Pradesh sells those goods to a buyer "Z" in Odisha. In this situation, "Y" will take a setoff of 20 per cent GST (18 per cent GST and 2 per cent PST) and collect 18 per cent GST and 7 per cent PST, a total 25 per cent from the buyer "Z" in Odisha if the PST in Odisha is 7 percent. Such a system will restore the autonomy of the states to impose additional PST as per their requirement. At the end of five years, Punjab can impose, say, a five percent PST and save itself from bankruptcy.

Canada has gone beyond GST and provided autonomy to the states to levy Provincial Income Tax. Every state in Canada has autonomy to collect both GST and Income Tax as per its requirement. A similar system is in place in the United States. I know of a person who has changed her domicile from New Jersey to Florida to take advantage of lower rates of Provincial Income Tax in that state.

We must soon provide a similar autonomy to our states. This will eliminate the pressure on the Union government to continue compensating the states for any shortfall in GST beyond the five years committed earlier. It will restore the ability of the states to raise revenues to make water recharging structures, highways and metros.

The writer is a former professor of Economics at IIM, Bangalore.

SPECTRUM HISTORY-II

Brutal Maratha invasions and plunder



Dr Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

BEING JADED AND DISCONTENTED BY THE EXPLOITATIVE AND REPRESSIVE NATURE OF THE MARATHAS, PEOPLE SUPPORTED THE BRITISH, UNMINDFUL OF THEIR SURREPTITIOUS IMPERIALISTIC DESIGNS

The Maratha invasions were a series of conquests in the Indian subcontinent which led to formation of the Maratha Empire. These conquests were started by Shivaji Bhosale on 10 November, 1659, and had his first victory at the Battle of Pratapgad against the Adilshahi forces of Bijapur. The empire formally came into being from 1674 with the coronation of Shivaji as the Chhatrapati.

The expansion of the Maratha Empire was limited and interrupted by the Mughal conquests of south India by Emperor Aurangzeb. However, after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, Marathas revived their strength and reversed the territorial loss they had suffered in Deccan wars. Thereafter, they started spreading their suzerainty and conquered different provinces/regions through war.

With passage of times, the Maratha Empire consisted of a confederacy of five major chiefs: the Peshwa (Prime Minister) at the capital city of Poona, Gaekwad as chief of Baroda, the Scindia in Gwalior, Holkar as chief of Indore, and Bhonsale in Nagpur.

Odisha had been under the rule of the virtually independent Nawabs of Bengal in 1707 following the death of Aurangzeb. Marathas had a penchant for guerilla warfare and taste for plunder. After establishing their control in excess of central India, the Marathas were trying to extend their control to more areas. They were forcefully collecting Chauth (an annual tax nominally levied at 25 per cent on revenue or produce) from the neighbouring states.

Goaded by the dream of a Maratha Empire and the desire for wealth, the Marathas led by Raghuji Bhonsale of Nagpur invaded Bengal six times between 1741 and 1751. Bengal, Bihar, and Odisha were subjected to predatory incursions, much to the embarrassment of the provincial government and causing hardships to the local people. These incursions resulted in heavy civilian casualties and widespread economic losses.

Alivardi Khan, the then Nawab of Bengal, had to face formidable threat not only from the Marathas but also from rebel Afghan troops. The wars that Alivardi had to fight against the Marathas and the Afghans put a severe strain on the finances of the government. In June, 1751, owing to old age and ill-health, Alivardi Khan ceded Odisha to the Marathas for respite

from warfare and incursion.

The terms of the treaty were: First, the Nawab will pay the Chauth regularly to Raghuji Bhonsale for the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Odisha. Second, Nawab will appoint the nominee of Bhonsale, Mir Habib, as the Naib Nazim of Odisha but the entire revenue of that province will be paid to Bhonsale. As high as 12 lakh rupees were to be paid annually to Raghuji on condition the Marathas would not set their foot within the dominions of Alivardi. Thus, Odisha became a province under the Marathas in 1751. The province that was ceded to the Marathas extended from River Sonamukhi (Suvarnarekha) in the north to the Chilika Lake in the south.

Odisha was sandwiched between the already occupied British territories of Bengal and Madras Presidencies. The Bhonsle chief of Nagpur thought it prudent not to have a clash with the British power. Accordingly, he extracted Chauth, huge money and loans from the British for allowing passage of the British troops through Odisha.

Sadashiv Rao, the last Maratha governor who was Naib Subahdar of Odisha, courted the British in

stead of confronting them. With the abolition of the British Residency at Balasore, Barabati slipped away from the clutches of the British East India Company.

In 1761, the Maratha Army lost the "Third Battle of Panipat" against Ahmad Shah Abdali of the Afghan Durrani Empire. This marked the beginning of the end of the Maratha supremacy in India.

On 17 December 1803, Raghoji II Bhonsale of Nagpur signed the Treaty of Deogaon (in Odisha) with the British after the Battle of Argaon and gave up the province of Cuttack (which included the Mughal and the coastal part of Odisha, Garjat/the princely states of Odisha, Balasore Port, and parts of Midnapore district of West Bengal).

The Maratha Empire collapsed in 1818 with the defeat of Peshwa Bajirao II at the hands of the East India Company in the third Anglo-Maratha War. The reason for the defeat was that the Maratha chiefs were not united and were engaged in internal squabbles.

(Concluded)

The writer is an Odisha-based columnist.

Pollution free transport

Sir, Pollution and noise are eating into the vitals of our society. These pose serious health hazards. Comparatively, bicycles are not a pollutant and are smoke-free. It is cost effective, economical, life-giving and makes one fit-and-fine. Bicycle riders were looked down upon as those with no 'class'. Does class come only with wealth? But, in Corona times, this perception has changed. Now, we all want to avoid public transport. Bicycle riders are the toast of the season. Every Friday is being celebrated by BMC and Smart City Ltd as "Cycle Day". Well-done, BMC! The day emphasizes the importance of bicycle-riding and its manifold benefits. This is a good exercise for the heart and the muscles. This is both sustainable and healthy. Let us promote this life-changing habit and make it a regular practice, Covid or no Covid.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

Safety during Durga Puja

Sir, With the Covid-19 pandemic spreading in Odisha, it is unjustified that the state government and the district administrations are keen on allowing Durga Puja celebrations even in low-key mode. In Bhubaneswar, the Corona positive cases' rate of spread is 10 per cent. Bhubaneswar that had witnessed a double-digit growth in coronavirus infections in April, May and June, has touched the 3-digit mark now. Durga Puja is part of religious belief, and it cannot be wished away, but maximum restraint is advised in public interest. Faith and health must walk together.

K RAVI, BHUBANESWAR

Our Kashmir

Sir, The regional parties of Kashmir are trying to mislead the people of the Valley and demanding restoration of the special status for the erstwhile state. National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah has shown the temerity to say China will help get the special status for Kashmiris. This is an anti-national stand and must be condemned. The people of Kashmir appear to have accepted the Central government's decision and appear to be happy to be an integral part of India. But, some leaders want to fish in troubled waters and promote their personal interests. Leaders in Kashmir are well-advised to stop misleading the people and instead help boost development, peace and harmony there. They must allow the people to breathe easy after long years of Pakistan-inspired tumult there.

Amit Singh Kushwaha, SATNA

Kamal Nath is Cong's lone ranger in MP by-polls

All 28 seats to which by-polls are being held were in the Congress' kitty, but slipped out of its hands after party MLAs resigned to support Jyotiraditya Scindia in March

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Bhopal, Oct 16: Ahead of the MP by-polls Kamal Nath is fighting a lonely battle as the focus of the Congress has shifted to Bihar where the party hopes to defeat the BJP-JD(U) combine.

In Bhopal, it's the former CM who is taking the fight to the BJP. The Congress leader is in a do-or-die situation to make a comeback as Chief Minister; after the Congress government fell due to the revolt of Jyotiraditya Scindia.

Whether it is meeting people for campaigning or pacifying dissenters, or even asking people to get trained about electronic voting machines, sources close to Kamal Nath say he is working tirelessly to win the elections.

While the BJP has released names of star campaigners in the state in which both national and state leaders have found place,

Congress leaders say that in by-polls national leaders do not campaign and the party is serious about Madhya Pradesh and leaders like Kamal Nath and Digvijaya Singh are capable of cornering and exposing the BJP. But former two-time Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh has kept away from the campaign so far. Sources say this is a

strategy so that the focus stays on the loan waiver and welfare work done by Kamal Nath and preventing the focus from shifting to individuals which may prove counterproductive. In his speeches, Kamal Nath is saying the public knows why the election is happening and has been highlighting the work he has done during his tenure as Chief Minister.

From Ujjain to Chambal, it is Kamal Nath who has hit the campaign trail accompanied by former leader of opposition Ajay Singh Rahul, former state president Arun Yadav and former minister Jitu Patwari.

All the 28 seats to which by-polls are being held were in the Congress' kitty after the Assembly elections, but slipped out of its hands after the party MLAs resigned to support Jyotiraditya Scindia in March 2020 and walked into the BJP camp to ensure the fall of the then government led by Kamal Nath.

The Congress will need to bag all the 28 seats in Madhya Pradesh to again get a majority in the Assembly, which is a tough task. On the other hand, the ruling BJP needs only nine seats to reach the magic figure of 116. In case the Congress wins less than 28 seats but manages around 24, it will still be in the



Madhya Pradesh state Congress president Kamal Nath flags off Samvidhan Bachao Janjagran Yatra at his residence in Bhopal, Friday

PTI PHOTO

game. Otherwise, it will have to depend on Independents, two MLAs of Bahujan Samaj Party and the lone Samajwadi Party MLA.

In the 230-member Madhya Pradesh Assembly, the BJP has 107 MLAs, Congress 88, BSP 2, SP 1, while 4 are Independents.

"The Congress will come back to power again. We will defeat the BJP on these seats. The people will

give a befitting reply to those who dishonoured the public mandate and murdered democratic values," Kamal Nath said Thursday, during one of the meetings in the election campaign.

The tough battle lies at Chambal-Gwalior belt the stronghold of Scindia. The majority of the MLAs who resigned from the Congress belong to this region and are strong

supporters of Scindia.

However, the Congress is banking on the fact that the belt has a sizeable population of SCs and OBCs.

The party is also hopeful of reaping the public goodwill due to waiver of farm loans announced by then CM Kamal Nath and the ongoing agitation by farmers over the new farm laws.

Hindu outfit members protest outside Indore Tanishq stores

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, Oct 16: Hindu Jagran Manch (HJM) activists staged demonstrations outside three Tanishq stores here and demanded that they display apology for the next six months for their controversial advertisement featuring an inter-faith couple.

The leading jewellery brand, a Tata product, withdrew the advertisement after a backlash on social media. The HJM workers held demonstrations Thursday outside the three Tanishq stores in the city.

"The controversial advertisement of Tanishq has deeply hurt the Hindu community. Therefore, we have requested employees of the three showrooms of the brand to display their apology (outside stores) to the Hindu community for the next six months. They should also assure us that such acts will not be repeated in the future," HJM Malwa regions publicity head, Rajpal Joshi, said Friday.

He said the HJM members staged



We have received the HJM memorandum. But no ground is found in the advertisement on the basis of which an FIR can be registered by the local police

MAHESH CHANDRA JAIN | SP

peaceful demonstrations and presented saffron stoles to the staffers of these showrooms located in different parts of the city.

The HJM has also submitted a memorandum to the police demanding registration of an FIR against those responsible for the 43-second commercial promoting a

new jewellery line called 'Ekatvam' (oneness).

Superintendent of Police (West) Mahesh Chandra Jain said, "We have received the HJM memorandum. But no ground is found in the advertisement on the basis of which an FIR can be registered by the local police."

Gadkari lauds TN's efforts at reducing road mishaps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Amaravati, Oct 16: Lauding the Tamil Nadu government's efforts at reducing road accidents and related fatalities, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari Friday asked other states to take it as an example and work on a mission mode to decrease the mishaps and deaths.

Gadkari said five lakh road accidents were happening in the country, resulting in the death of at least 1.5 lakh people every year.

"Give highest priority to saving the lives of people. We have to reduce the number of accidents. This is very important," he said, addressing a virtual event from New Delhi wherein he dedicated several road development projects in Andhra Pradesh to the nation.

"I am personally very much sensitive and will support you in this mission," Gadkari observed.

The Union Minister pointed out that the Tamil Nadu government successfully reduced the road accidents and deaths by 25 per cent. "If you plan and take meas-



ures...there is a good example of Tamil Nadu. At the same time, World Bank and Asian Development Bank are helping us. They are ready to sanction Rs 14,000 crore for improving road engineering for black spots," Gadkari said.

He said 435 black spots have been identified on National Highways in AP. Temporary rectification measures have been completed for 295 black spots and permanent measures for 150.

Temporary measures for the remaining black spots were targeted for completion this year while permanent measures would be completed by December 2021.

'Govt officials supporting BJP'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, Oct 16: Ahead of by-polls to 28 Assembly seats in Madhya Pradesh November 3, senior Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Digvijaya Singh Friday met poll officials alleging some government officials were supporting the ruling BJP.

He said the by-polls were very important as the fate of the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government, which came to power in March, depends on how many of the 28 seats the BJP can win.

"These by-polls will decide whether the current government remains in power or not. Shivraj Singh Chouhan himself is claiming he is a temporary CM and is exhorting people to ensure permanency to his government," Singh

These by-polls will decide whether the current government remains in power or not. Shivraj Singh Chouhan himself is claiming he is a temporary CM and is exhorting people to ensure permanency to his government

DIGVIJAYA SINGH | RAJYA SABHA MP

said after meeting the state's chief electoral officer along with his colleague JP Dhanopia.

Singh said 26 out of 28 BJP candidates in the by-polls were part of the Congress previously and the saffron party had even put up posters about their 'dishonesty' in the 2018 Assembly polls.

In such a scenario, Chouhan and the BJP are wary if the people and party workers will vote for them.

"Therefore, the MP government has handed over campaign responsibilities to officials, espe-

cially police," Singh claimed, adding that complaints along with proof about several such officials had been given to poll authorities.

"In Dimni, the Congress candidate's brother was beaten up. In Sumavali, a party worker's vehicle was damaged. Dinara police station is registering cases against Congress workers. A Sahrai police station official is openly telling people to vote for the BJP," Singh claimed.

The chief electoral officer has appointed an IAS officer to probe complaints within 24 hours, Singh told reporters after meeting poll officials.

He said the Congress had objected to the Indore civic chief being asked to probe one such complaint against herself, "which is a mockery of the system."

"We have also complained about a BJP MLA distributing cash in Sanwer, and another asking people to vote for BJP in return for Rs 10,000," Singh alleged.

MP BJP spokesperson Rajnish Agrawal termed these allegations as baseless and said Singh should allow government officials to work and not 'terrorise' them.

"Government officials are working as per rules and will continue to do so. Election Commission officials must not come under pressure from the Congress. They must conduct polls in a free and fair manner," Agrawal said.



Badagas now in UN database of world's indigenous peoples

THE LARGEST INDIGENOUS SOCIAL GROUP IN THE NILGIRIS DISTRICT OF TAMIL NADU, THE COMMUNITY HAS A POPULATION OF OVER 5 LAKH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Udhagamandalam, Oct 16: Indigenous Badagar Alliance (IBA) Friday expressed happiness over including the 'Badagas', the largest indigenous social group in the Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu, in the database of World's Indigenous Peoples by the United Nations Mountain Partnership.

The inscription on the Badagas says, "Traditionally buffalo herders, recently there is a strong trend back to farming with particular attention to organic farming."

On the Badaga language, the inscription says, "Badaga language (Badaga) is part of the Dravidian language family." One of world's primary language families spoken by over 200 million people in south, central and north India, IBA president Ayyaru told reporters here.

Welcoming the inclusion of the community in the UN Mountain Partnership, he said it was a big international-level recognition for Badagas, which has more than five lakh population in the district.

Mountain Partnership is a United Nations alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain peoples and protecting mountain environments around the world.



Founded in 2002, it has more than 400 members, including international organisations, major private sector organisations and NGOs and 60 governments, including India, and is currently preparing an international database of indigenous peoples and a detailed global map to identify who are the indigenous and local mountain communities and where such communities live.

Indigenous Mountain Peoples are defined by the UN on the following criteria: How long they have been living in a specific territory, their cultural distinctiveness, including exclusive language,

Political row over Sethupathi playing Muralitharan's role

The opposition is due to the cricket legend's statements in favour of Sri Lanka's ruling regime



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, Oct 16: Political parties and others in Tamil Nadu are demanding actor Vijay Sethupathi to decline the opportunity to play lead role in Sri Lankan cricketer Muttiah Muralitharan's biopic '800'.

The Sri Lankan spinner, a Tamil by birth has taken 800 test wickets and hence the movie is named as '800'. He is married to a Chennai woman. The recent announcement of the movie project has created a controversy with political parties and others like Tamil movie director Bharathirajaa asking Sethupathi to refuse to play the lead role.

The opposition is due to Muralitharan's utterings which are in favour of Sri Lanka's ruling regime. The founder of Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) S. Ramadoss in a statement said Sethupathi will become part of Tamil Eelam history if he drops out of the movie or else will be seen as a betrayer.

Similarly, MDMK General Secretary Vaiko has also asked Sethupathi not to accept the role.

The leader of Naam Tamilar Katchi Seeman while urging Sethupathi to drop the movie added that the '800' may be released in Colombo but not in Tamil Nadu.

Seeman said Muralitharan supported the Sinhalese in the Lankan elections. Noted Tamil movie director Bharathirajaa terming Muralitharan as betrayer of Lankan Tamils urged Sethupathi not to play the Lankan spinner in his biopic and decline the role.

Bharathirajaa said when Tamils were being killed by the Sinhalese regime, Muralitharan supported that. Even though the movie producers -- Dar Motion Pictures -- have said the biopic would focus on Muralitharan's cricketing life and achievements, it cannot avoid the

Wrong to bully actor: Karti

Chennai: Congress party's Lok Sabha member Karti P Chidambaram Friday said it is wrong to bully Tamil movie actor Vijay Sethupathi not to act in Sri Lankan cricketer Muttiah Muralitharan's biopic '800'. "I condemn the brutality of the Sri Lankan army against the Tamils. The Sri Lankan Tamils should get their rights in Sri Lanka. And the Sri Lankan Tamil issue should also be divorced of LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam)," Karti told IANS. Continuing further he said: "It is wrong to bully an actor not to play a particular role." In a tweet Karti said: "Will the fringe, of all spectrums, start deciding which actor can act as which character in any movie? Will they also decide on whom movies can be made? Perhaps they should issue an 'advisory' on historic and mythological characters that can and cannot be portrayed and by whom."

internal strife and the upheavals the island nation witnessed during his early days and how the cricketer survived and came up, a senior journalist, not wanting to be quoted, told IANS.

Sri Lanka is a democracy like India and regime changes have happened in last several decades through ballot boxes. The country is basically democracy oriented and hence there should be space to hear the views of others, the journalist added. The shooting for the movie is expected to begin in March 2021. The movie would be shot in India, Sri Lanka, England, Australia and others. Given Muralitharan's popularity as an international spinner, the producers are planning to dub the movie in Hindi, Bengali, Sinhalese and also have English sub-titles.

of the day quote

In the last one week, 13 horrific incidents of crime against women have occurred in UP. As per reports, victims have been killed or the victims committed suicide in four such incidents. This poor condition of women safety is disturbing. The Chief Minister has no time to convene a special session but his photo session is on

PRİYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

Political culture has undergone a drastic change under PM Modi, with parties and governments presenting their report cards during elections instead of leaders promoting casteism and hatred through their speeches

J P NADDA | BJP CHIEF

In the next four years, the state government decided to build over 5,000 godowns at the grassroots level to store farm produce

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Pak continues ceasefire on LoC

Jammu: Continuing unprovoked ceasefire violation on the line of control (LoC), Pakistan resorted to heavy shelling to target Indian positions on Friday in J&K's Poonch district. Defence Ministry spokesperson Colonel Devender Anand said, "At about 5.15 a.m. today Pakistan initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms and shelling with mortars along the LoC in Mankote sector of Poonch district. The Indian army retaliated befittingly."

Naxals set dumpers on fire

Chatra(Jharkhand): Armed Naxalites set a loader and two dumpers on fire at Bachra railway siding of Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) in the district, police said Friday. Tandwa Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Ashutosh Satyam said around 15 Naxalites entered the Bachra railway siding Thursday night and to scare away the workers engaged in coal loading fired in the air.

Four killed in road mishap

Malda (WB): Four persons have been killed and three others injured in a head-on collision between an autorickshaw and a motorcycle on National Highway 81 in West Bengal's Malda district, police said Friday. The accident took place in Sreepur Milanpally area in Chanchol subdivision Thursday night, a police officer said. The deceased include the motorbike rider and three passengers of the autorickshaw, he said.

Three held for human trafficking

Sambhal (Uttar Pradesh): The Sambhal Police have busted a gang of human traffickers and arrested three persons while rescuing two women. Sambhal Superintendent of Police (SP) Yamuna Prasad said that the members of the gang were arrested from the Bahjoi police station area while negotiating to sell the women. He said the gang used to sell women for Rs 50,000 to Rs two lakh and was operating in many areas of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

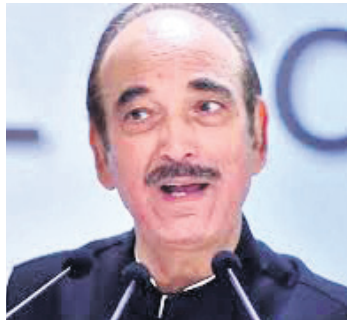


Directions have been issued to impose a fine of Rs 1 crore on North Delhi civic body for not controlling garbage burning in the area

GOPAL RAI | DELHI ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

GHULAM NABI AZAD TESTS nCoV+VE

Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad has tested positive for Covid-19. "I have tested positive for Covid-19. I am in home quarantine. Those who came in contact with me in the last few days may kindly follow the protocol," Azad tweeted Friday



'Govt to decide on right age of marriage for girls'

CURRENTLY, THE MINIMUM AGE OF MARRIAGE IS 18 YEARS FOR WOMEN AND 21 FOR MEN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday said the government will soon take a decision on revising the minimum age of marriage for girls after it receives report from the committee set up for this.

The Prime Minister said the girls' gross enrolment ratio in education has turned higher than that of boys for the first time in the country because of several efforts taken by the government in the last six years.

Modi was addressing a video conference after releasing a commemorative coin of Rs 75 denomination on the 75th anniversary of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

"There is an important deliberation going on to decide what should be the ideal age of marriage for daughters," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said he has been receiving letters from women from across the country, asking about the report of the committee and when the government will take a decision on it.

"I want to assure them, the government will soon take its decision after the submission of the report," Modi said. In his Independence Day speech, the Prime Minister had announced that the government was deliberating on what should be the minimum age of marriage for women and has set up a committee to look into the matter.

Currently, the minimum age of marriage is 18 years for women



and 21 for men.

Modi highlighted the efforts taken by his government in the last six years to fight against malnutrition.

The prime minister said his government has taken an integrated and holistic approach to deal with the challenge of malnutrition.

The government has adopted a multi-dimensional strategy to work on all those factors responsible for high malnutrition, he added.

The government has started National Nutrition Mission, Modi informed.

Highlighting other achievements, the Prime Minister said the government has built 11 crore toilets across the country under the Swachh Bharat Mission and has launched Jal Jeevan Mission to provide piped drinking water.

The government is also provid-

ing sanitary pads at Re 1 to poor women, he further said.

On malnutrition, the prime minister said the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has closely followed India's fight against this problem in past decades.

Modi said pregnancy at tender age, lack of education and awareness, inadequate availability of pure drinking water and lack of cleanliness were some of the factors due to which the desired results against malnutrition could not be achieved earlier.

Modi said he had started various programmes to tackle malnutrition in Gujarat when he was the chief minister of the state.

After becoming the Prime Minister in 2014, Modi had said he started new programmes with fresh and holistic approach, based on his experience as a chief minister.

SC rejects PIL seeking dismissal of Maha govt

The plea had referred to the examples of actor SSR's death and the demolition of part of Kangana Ranaut's property as examples of poor law and order in the state

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 16: The Supreme Court on Friday junked a plea that sought President's rule in Maharashtra, while pointing out that such prayers cannot be entertained by the top court and asking the petitioner if he knew how big the state was.

A bench of the apex court, headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde, and comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian refused to entertain the plea filed by Delhi residents Vikram Gehlot, Rishab Jain and Gautam Sharma.

"As a petitioner, you are at liberty to approach the President, but do not come here," the top court said while hearing the matter through video conference.

Vikram Gehlot claimed in his plea that the state was not carrying out its affairs in line with constitutional and legal provisions, and therefore should be dismissed.



The plea cited, as poor examples of law and order, the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput and demolition of a part of a property belonging to actress Kangana Ranaut.

The Chief Justice remarked: "Is the petitioner implying that just because a Bollywood actor has died, the state is not following the Constitution? You know how big Maharashtra is?"

The bench questioned how the petitioner could say that in the backdrop of some incidents the Constitution was not followed in the state.

The petitioner argued that if not the whole state, at least Mumbai and neighbouring districts should be brought under the control of the armed forces. The petitioner insisted that a state of emergency should be declared in Maharashtra.

FESTIVE FERVOR



Women shower flower petals on the arrival of Goddess Durga idol at their community Puja Pandal ahead of Durga Puja festival, in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

India's COVID-19 fatality rate lowest since March 22: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 16: India has one of the lowest 81 COVID-19 deaths per million population in the world with less than 1,000 fatalities registered daily since October 4, while the fatality rate of 1.52 per cent on Friday was the lowest since March 22, the Union Health Ministry said.

These results have been boosted by 22 states and Union Territories which have demonstrated better performance and are reporting even lower deaths per million population compared to the national average, it said.

"The COVID-19 case fatality rate has been on the slide continuously. At the current figure of 1.52 per cent, it is the lowest since March 22," it highlighted. Thirteen states and Union Territories, including Puducherry (403), Maharashtra (335), Goa (331), Delhi (317), Karnataka (152), Tamil Nadu (135) and Punjab (131), had deaths per million population more than the national average. As part of COVID-19 management and response policy, the Centre's sharp focus has been not only on containing the spread of the disease but also to reduce



deaths and save lives by providing quality clinical care to the critical and severe patients, the ministry said. Collaborative efforts of the Centre, states and Union Territories have resulted in the strengthening of health facilities across the country. A total of 2,212 dedicated Covid hospitals have been providing quality medical care. The Centre has also issued a standard of care guidelines thus ensuring the standardised quality of medical care for all coronavirus patients in government and private settings.

India Friday too maintained the trend of registering more recoveries than the new cases, with 70,338 people having recuperated in 24 hours as against 63,371 fresh instances of the infection being reported.

Political campaigns a major concern for Patna residents

The city is facing high risk of COVID infection

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Oct 16: As campaigning for upcoming Bihar Assembly elections gains steam, spread of the pandemic is a big concern among the Patna residents. Another 1,276 fresh cases were added in last 24 hours, and the maximum were reported from here.

Most visiting political crowd has been making a beeline for the state capital over the last two months with large numbers of supporters and workers of different political parties assembling here to claim tickets of different political parties.

Among 1,276 cases reported last, 300 cases were in Patna. Compared to Jahanabad (46), Muzaffarpur (48), Purnea (60) and Saharsa with 66 cases.



Pandemic renewed focus on nutrition: Vardhan

New Delhi: Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan Friday said that due to the unprecedented challenges faced by the world on account of the coronavirus pandemic, there has been a renewed focus on food, nutrition, health, immunity and sustainability. Presided over an event organised by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to celebrate World Food Day, he said: "The FSSAI's Eat Right India movement targets to promote safe and healthy food for everyone in an environmentally sustainable way. It is a part of its mandate to provide safe and wholesome food for all citizens. This will improve the food safety ecosystems and lift the hygiene and health of our citizens." Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Ashwini Kumar Choubey also joined, via video conferencing, the event, whose theme this year's event is "Grow, Nourish, Sustain. Together".

Pollution could worsen nCoV impact in winter: Experts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 16: As smoky and hazy skies are back to haunt Delhi-NCR after a few months of blue skies and clean air, experts have cautioned people to brace for the winter season saying higher pollution level may worsen the impact of COVID-19.

Environment and health experts have asked people, especially those vulnerable to COVID-19 attack, to be more careful as the chronic exposure to air pollutants is associated with severe infections and higher mortality. They feel that lungs compromised due to pollu-

tion could lead to complications like pneumonia during COVID-19.

"There is abundant evidence that exposure to air pollution increases our vulnerability to respiratory viral infections both in terms of transmission and the severity of the infection," said Avinash Chanchal, climate campaigner, Greenpeace India. "Researchers have linked air pollution with mechanisms that may reduce our immune defenses such as damage to human airways, cilia and epithelial barriers. In the case of COVID-19, current evidence indicates that chronic exposure to air pollutants is associated with more



severe infections and higher mortality," he said.

A layer of smoky haze lingered over Delhi-NCR on October 15 with the air quality in the region hitting 'very poor' levels, even as stricter

NEW CHALLENGE

Every year the winter season brings with it cold, polluted air in northern India and the problem this year can worsen due to the pandemic

Experts advise that wearing mask is the most effective way to protect oneself from pollution as well as COVID-19

anti-air pollution measures, including a ban on electricity generators, came into force under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP).

Doctor Shuchin Bajaj from Ujala

Cygnus Group of Hospitals in Delhi, said at the onset of winter and stubble burning, cases of Asthma and COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) rise but one needs to be more careful this year because of the pandemic.

NASA's satellite imagery showed a large cluster of farm fires near Amritsar, Patiala, Tarn Taran, and Firozpur in Punjab, and Ambala and Rajpura in Haryana.

The Environment Ministry recently held a meeting with the CPCB and officials of Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh on stubble burning.

Piyush Goel, a doctor from Columbia Asia Hospital, Gurgaon, said while people need to follow basic principles of wearing masks, sanitising hands and maintaining distance, the government should ensure policy measures to prevent pollution.

"The government should ensure policy measures to prevent pollution. No stubble burning should be allowed, vehicular pollution should be avoided, and construction protocols should be followed. Besides, we must recognise that it is a collective responsibility of people to work together to defeat both COVID-19 and pollution," Goel said.

of the day quote

Now, leaders of Mahagathabandhan (Grand Alliance) will have to answer to the people of the country whether they also support the ideology of Pakistan's founder

30% fund of the North Eastern Council (NEC) for new projects will be dedicated to focus development of deprived areas and neglected sections of the society and emerging sectors

The next two-and-a-half months are going to be very crucial for us in our fight against corona because of the winter season and the festival season. It becomes the responsibility of every citizen to not let our guard down and follow COVID-19 appropriate behaviour to curb the spread of the infection

SHORT TAKES

Man held by CISF with eight bullets

New Delhi: A 32-year-old man was apprehended by the CISF Friday for allegedly carrying eight bullets inside a Delhi Metro station, officials said. They said the man, a private company employee who works in Gokulpuri, was intercepted by its personnel while entering the Trilokpuri station at 11 AM. Eight live rounds were recovered from the bag of the man.

Central team to visit Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: Even as coronavirus cases spiked in Kerala with more new patients than recoveries Friday, a high-level central team is set to visit the southern state to help strengthen the steps taken to tackle the virus. The test positivity rate Friday stood at a high of over 14 per cent, as 7,283 new cases were reported after tests on 51,836 samples. Health Minister KK Shailaja said 6,767 patients tested negative.

Hong Kong bars AI, Vistara flights

New Delhi: Hong Kong has banned Air India and Vistara flights from October 17 to 30 after a few passengers on their flights tested positive for COVID-19 post arrival, a senior government official said Friday. This is the third time that Air India flights from India have been banned by the Hong Kong government for bringing passengers who tested positive for the infection after arrival. Previous bans were during September 20-October 3 and August 18-August 31.

Soumitra Chatterjee's condition improves

Kolkata: Veteran Bengali actor Soumitra Chatterjee's condition improved Friday as he was responding well to treatment. Chatterjee was battling Covid-19 and was admitted to Kolkata's Belle Vue Hospital last week. According to hospital sources, he is undergoing music therapy through Rabinindra sangeet and music from his films. The actor has become responsive now, sources said. His coronavirus test result came negative Wednesday night, after which the octogenarian actor was shifted out of Covid ICU ward, hospital sources said. According to hospital sources, Chatterjee's consciousness level has improved substantially.



Tributes to the brave Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Ji on his 350th Jayanti. He lives in the hearts of millions. He is remembered for his sense of justice. He made many efforts to empower the poor. Sharing an earlier speech in which I spoke about his greatness

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

HORRIFIC ACT

A man in Telangana decapitated his wife and placed her severed head at the doorstep of a man she was allegedly having an affair with



SC's big move on stubble burning

THE SC APPOINTED ONE MAN PANEL OF RETIRED APEX COURT JUDGE JUSTICE M B LOKUR TO MONITOR THE STEPS TAKEN BY THE NEIGHBOURING STATES TO PREVENT STUBBLE BURNING

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 16: Concerned over worsening air quality in Delhi-NCR, the Supreme Court Friday appointed one man panel of retired apex court judge Justice M B Lokur to monitor the steps taken by the neighbouring states to prevent stubble burning, while brushing aside objections of the Centre, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde directed the court-appointed Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA) and chief secretaries of Delhi and the three states to assist the Lokur panel to enable physical surveillance of fields where stubble is burnt. The bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian accepted the suggestion of senior advocate Vikas



Singh, representing petitioner Aditya Dubey (minor) who has raised concern over rising pollution level, that a former Judge of this Court who is aware of the problem be appointed to monitor the situation in Delhi-NCR and these neighbouring states. "We, accordingly, accept the suggestion and appoint Justice Madan Lokur, a former Judge of this Court to act as the one man Monitoring

Committee to monitor the measures taken by the States to prevent stubble burning. The bench also directed the Chief Secretaries of the concerned states to assist the Justice Lokur panel in devising additional means and methods for preventing the burning of stubble. "We trust that the authorities in-charge of these forces shall enlist their services to the extent possible, to assist the one man Justice

Lokur Committee for this purpose," it said. The top court also clarified that the existing state-level teams for preventing stubble burning shall report to and take instructions from the committee. The states shall provide adequate transportation to those whose services are enlisted by the Committee for patrolling the highways and surveying the stubble burning in the fields, it said.

Directing that the committee submit its fortnightly report to the top court at the initial stages or as and when found necessary, the bench said the authorities such as EPCA shall also render assistance to the panel and provide information sought by it. While directing that Uttar Pradesh government be also made party in the case, the bench posted the matter for further hearing October 26.

RAINS CLAIM 47 LIVES IN MAHA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Oct 16: Heavy rains and floods have claimed at least 47 lives in Maharashtra's Pune, Aurangabad and Konkan divisions in the last three days while crops on lakhs of hectares were damaged extensively, officials said Friday.

Twenty-eight persons have died in rain-related incidents in western Maharashtra which comes under Pune division, sixteen in central Maharashtra's Aurangabad division and three in coastal Konkan, they said.

Over 2,300 houses were damaged in heavy rains and floods in Western Maharashtra where more than 21,000 people were moved to safer places, as per the Pune Divisional Commissioner's office. Crops over 1,36,176 hectares were damaged in Osmanabad district and 1,10,685 hectares in Nanded district between October 12 and 15, the official said.

Bihar polls: BJP slams Chirag, accuses LJP of spreading lies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 16: In its most direct attack on the Lok Janshakti Party, the BJP Friday accused its president Chirag Paswan of trying to create confusion by harping on his relations with senior leaders of the saffron party, and asserted that it had no ties with the LJP.

Paswan has been lauding the BJP and its top leaders like Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, while attacking JD(U) president and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, giving rise to speculation that he has some tacit understanding with the saffron party. "We want to make it clear that we have no relations (with LJP), and we do not like this politics of spreading confusion," BJP leader and Union minister Prakash Javadekar said. He and other BJP leaders also



mocked the LJP as a "vote katua" (eating into votes of others) party which will not be able to make much impact in the elections. Seeking to dispel any impression of a behind-the-scenes pact with LJP, which walked out of the ruling National Democratic Alliance in Bihar and is contesting the assembly polls on its own, Javadekar asserted that the saffron party has no "B, C or D team".

The BJP's attack on the LJP came amid Paswan's continuous criticism of Kumar and effusive praise for Modi. He has also been claiming that a BJP-LJP alliance will form government in the state after the polls.

The LJP also released videos of its founder Ram Vilas Paswan, who was a minister in the Modi government and died recently, as it stepped up its call to oust the Kumar dispensation in Bihar.

There is a view that the LJP, which has been contesting on seats where the JD(U) is in fray, may end up damaging Kumar's party by attracting a section of NDA supporters. And the BJP's unambiguous statement on Friday seems to be aimed at assuaging its main ally and send out a clear message to voters. Some LJP candidates in the state have also used Modi's photographs in their campaign.

'25L cases heard virtually in courts during COVID-19'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 16: As many as 25 lakh cases were heard virtually in courts across the country, including 9,000 by the Supreme Court, during the coronavirus-triggered restrictions, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said Friday.

Prasad was hosting a virtual summit of ministers of justice of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) countries. He apprised the gathering of the high priority the government has given to framing business facilitating laws and rules, including Commercial Courts Act and arbitration laws, with a view to make India a preferred destination for investment and business.

Besides Prasad, ministers from Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and an "authorised representative" of Pakistan's Ministry of Law and Justice attended the meet. He referred to pro bono legal services provided to the marginalised sections of the society. Through Tele-Law services initiated in 2017, so far 3.44 lakh free legal consultations have been given to poor people through video conference, he said.

Prasad also highlighted e-Courts projects with video conferencing facility and the rolling out of virtual courts as part of the government's transformative change in process automation from the conventional brick and mortar court architecture.

According to a Law Ministry statement, Prasad highlighted the initiatives taken by the government for providing affordable and easy access to justice for all

STEPS TO STOP VIRUS



Students get their hands sanitised as they arrive at a school in Patiala, that was reopened after remaining closed for months due to pandemic

PTI PHOTO

India's life expectancy up by a decade since 1990

HOWEVER, THE INCREASE IN 'HEALTHY LIFE EXPECTANCY' IN INDIA HAS NOT BEEN AS DRAMATIC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 16: India has gained more than a decade of life expectancy since 1990, but there are wide inequalities between states, according to a new study which assessed more than 286 causes of death and 369 diseases and injuries in more than 200 countries and territories across the world.

The study, published in the Lancet journal, noted that life expectancy in India has risen from 59.6 years in 1990 to 70.8 years in 2019, ranging from 77.3 years in Kerala to 66.9 years in Uttar Pradesh.

However, the researchers, including Srinivas Goli from the Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar, said the increase in 'healthy life expectancy' in India has not been as dramatic as the growth of life expectancy since people are living more years with ill-



ness and disability.

According to the international team of scientists, the current global crisis of chronic diseases and failure of public health to stem the rise in highly preventable risk factors such as high blood pressure, tobacco use, and air pollution have left pop-

ulations vulnerable to acute health emergencies such as COVID-19.

The main improvement we see in almost every country, including in India, is a decline in infectious diseases and rise in chronic diseases, study co-author Ali Mokdad from the University of Washington in the

LANCET STUDY

- 58 per cent of the total disease burden in India is now due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), up from 29 per cent in 1990
- In the South Asia region, NCDs now contribute to more than half of the years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death

US told PTI. In India maternal mortality used to be very high, but now it is coming down. Cardiovascular diseases used to be number five, and now it is number one, and cancer rates are increasing, Mokdad, Professor of Global Health at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), said.

While many parts of the world have also controlled infectious diseases through immunisation and bet-

ter medical care, he said some countries still struggle to manage these epidemics.

The interaction of COVID-19 with the continued global rise in chronic illness and related risk factors, including obesity, high blood sugar, and outdoor air pollution, over the past 30 years has created a perfect storm, fuelling COVID-19 deaths, the scientists noted in a statement.

In the South Asia region, they said non-communicable diseases (NCDs) now contribute to more than half of the years lost due to ill-health, disability or early death, which was dominated by infectious, maternal, neonatal, and nutritional diseases 30 years ago.

The study found that the largest contributors to increasing health loss in India over the last 30 years were NCDs like ischaemic heart disease, COPD, diabetes, stroke, and a group of musculoskeletal disorders.

UP SHOCKER

Another Dalit girl raped, murdered



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Barabanki (UP), Oct 16: An 18-year-old Dalit girl, who was found dead in an agricultural field in Barabanki district in Uttar Pradesh, was raped before being strangled, police said Friday citing post-mortem report.

Additional Superintendent of Police R S Gautam said the post-mortem examination has confirmed that the woman was raped before she was strangled. Charges related to rape will be included in the FIR registered at Satrikh police station, he said, adding that some suspects have been taken into custody for questioning. The father of the girl had informed police Wednesday evening

that she had gone to the fields but did not return home. Later, family members found her dead. A police team visited the village and collected evidence before lodging an FIR, the police officer said.

The rape and murder of the girl in Barabanki came days after a 19-year-old Dalit woman died after she was assaulted and allegedly gang-raped in Hathras district.

The Hathras woman died at a hospital in Delhi September 29, a fortnight after her assault allegedly by four upper caste men of her village.

The assault and death of the Hathras woman, and her cremation by the authorities in the dead of the night, triggered an outrage and protests in parts of the country.

Tribal girl, set on fire, dies

HYDERABAD: A 13-year-old tribal girl, who was set on fire, allegedly by her employer at his home for resisting a rape attempt, died here Thursday night while undergoing treatment for nearly a month, police said. The incident occurred in Khammam town September 18 after the girl, a domestic help in the man's house, warded off his attempt to rape her.

Minor gang-raped, killed

RANCHI: A minor girl was gang-raped and killed in Jharkhand's second capital Dumka Friday, the second such incident in the Santhal Pargana region of the state in the past one week. According to the police, a 12-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped and murdered in Thadi village under the Ramgarh police station in Dumka district Friday.

Cong welcomes coming together of J&K parties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 16: The Congress Friday demanded restoration of Article 370 and the "rights of people of Jammu and Kashmir" and welcomed the coming together of mainstream regional parties of the Union Territory.

Senior Congress spokesperson P Chidambaram said the Centre must also stop looking at the mainstream political parties and the people of Jammu and Kashmir as "anti-national". The assertion comes a day after mainstream political parties in Jammu and Kashmir held a meeting and formed an alliance for restoration of the special status of the erstwhile state as it existed before August 5 last year and also to initiate a dialogue between all stakeholders on the issue.

"The coming together of mainstream regional parties of J&K to fight a constitutional battle to restore the rights of the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh is a development that must be welcomed by all the people of India," he said on Twitter.

"The Congress also resolutely stands for restoration of the status and rights of the people of J&K. The arbitrary and unconstitutional decisions of the Modi government of August 5, 2019 must be rescinded," the former Home Minister said. "The central government must stop looking at the mainstream parties and the people of J&K as secessionist or anti-national," he said.

After a meeting Thursday at the residence of National Conference president Farooq Abdullah which was attended by PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, Peoples Conference chairman Sajad Lone, Peoples Movement leader Javid Mir and CPIM leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami, the NC chief said they decided to formalise the alliance and it was named 'Peoples' Alliance for Gupkar Declaration'.

of the day quote

The response to the virus is creating new opportunities to exploit weak oversight and inadequate transparency, diverting funds away from people in their hour of greatest need



ANTONIO GUTERRES | UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL

We have the best environmental numbers, ozone numbers, and so many other numbers. In the meantime, China, Russia, India all these countries they're spewing stuff into the air



DONALD TRUMP | US PRESIDENT

The pandemic has highlighted the critical role of hand hygiene in disease prevention but 40 cent of the world's population, or 3 billion people, do not have access to it



KELLY ANN NAYLOR | UNICEF OFFICIAL

SHORT TAKES

Israeli parl's nod to peace deal

Jerusalem: Israel's parliament approved the normalization deal signed last month between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The peace agreement was approved in an 80-13 vote in a special session of the Knesset, or the parliament on Thursday, Xinhua news agency reported. During speeches ahead of the vote, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called for peace with Lebanon, Israel's neighbour in the north. The two countries have recently launched US-brokered negotiations to end a long-time dispute over their maritime border.

Global Covid-19 cases top 38.8mn

Washington: The overall number of global coronavirus cases has topped 38.8 million, while the deaths have soared to more than 1,097,180, according to the Johns Hopkins University. As of Friday morning, the total number of cases stood at 38,833,032 and the fatalities increased to 1,097,189, the University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) revealed in its latest update. The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 7,977,097 and 217,754, respectively, according to the CSSE.

Ex-defence secy arrested

Mexico City: Mexico's top diplomat has said that the country's former defence secretary, Gen. Salvador Cienfuegos, has been arrested in Los Angeles. Foreign Relations Secretary Marcelo Ebrard wrote Thursday in his Twitter account that US Ambassador Christopher Landau had informed him of Cienfuegos' arrest. The general served from 2012 to 2018 as secretary of defence under President Enrique Pena Nieto.

Warrants issued for ex-Pak Prez

Islamabad: Pakistan's National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has informed the Islamabad High Court (IHC) that arrest warrants for former President Asif Ali Zardari have been issued in connection with the fake bank accounts case. The IHC, however, exempted Zardari from personal appearance in the case for medical reasons, Dawn news reported.

CBI, US authorities crack down on call centre fraud scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Oct 16: In "an unprecedented coordinated effort", India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the US Department of Justice took simultaneous actions against a technical support fraud scheme, which was allegedly masterminded by an American citizen and operated from call centres in India to defraud hundreds of elderly and vulnerable people in the US, officials said.

The fraud masterminded by an American citizen and operated from call centres in India defrauded elderly and vulnerable people in the US

Michael Brian Cotter, 59, of Glendale, California, provided support to his accomplices in India in furtherance of the scheme, the US Justice Department said in a statement Thursday.

In response to a complaint filed in the US, a federal court has ordered Cotter and five companies to stop engaging in the technical support fraud scheme, which allegedly defrauded hundreds of elderly and vulnerable American victims, it said. The complaint was filed by the civil division's consumer protection branch and the US attorney's office for the southern district of Florida and the action was coordinated by the Transnational Elder Fraud Strike Force established last year to combat foreign fraud schemes targeting American senior citizens.

The complaint sought both preliminary and permanent injunctions to prevent the defendants from further victimising consumers.

According to the complaint, the defendants' scheme contacted US consumers via internet pop-up messages that falsely appeared to be security alerts from Microsoft or another well-known company.

The pop-up messages fraudulently claimed that the consumer's computer was infected by a virus, purported to run a scan of the consumer's computer, falsely confirmed the presence of a virus and malware, and then provided a toll-free number to call for assistance.

When victims called the toll-free number, they were connected to India-based call centres participating in the fraud scheme. Call centre employees asked victims to give them remote access to their computers and told them that they detected viruses or other malware. Then, the employees falsely diagnosed non-existent problems and allegedly asked the victims to pay hundreds of dollars for unnecessary services and software.

Michael Cotter allegedly facilitated the scheme through several companies, including Singapore-registered Global Digital Concierge Pte Ltd, formerly known as Tech Live Connect Pte Ltd, Nevada-registered companies Sensei Ventures Incorporated and NE Labs Inc, New York-registered Kevisoft LLC, and UK-registered Kevisoft UK Ltd.

The restraining order issued by the court dismantled the US-based infrastructure, including websites and payment processing relationships.

Taking note of the international fraud being perpetrated by these companies operating from various locations in India, the CBI registered a criminal case against five companies involved in the scheme and conducted an investigation to identify and locate the perpetrators of the crime, the Department of Justice said in the statement.

Brazil senator caught hiding money 'between buttocks'



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Rio de Janeiro, Oct 16: A Brazilian senator allied to far-right President Jair Bolsonaro was caught hiding money in his underwear during a police investigation into the diversion of public funds for fighting the coronavirus, local media reported Thursday.

Federal officers raided the home of Chico Rodrigues in the northern state of Roraima Wednesday as part of a corruption probe.

They found 30,000 reals (\$5,300) in cash, part of which was discovered in Rodrigues' underwear, including "between his buttocks," said major outlets including O Globo, Folha de S

Paulo and Estadao, quoting sources from the investigation.

The federal police confirmed to AFP they were trying to dismantle a "possible criminal scheme diverting public funds" set aside to combat the outbreak in Roraima state. Rodrigues, meanwhile, issued a statement saying the police "did their job carrying out a search as part of an investigation in which I'm cited," although he made no mention of the cash nor where it was allegedly found.

He complained that he'd had his "home invaded just for doing my job as a legislator" and insisted he had done nothing wrong.

Bolsonaro accused the media of using the story to portray his government as corrupt.

"This operation is a typical example that there's no corruption in my government, that we're tackling corruption no matter who it is," he said.

Bolsonaro was elected in 2018 partly on the back of promise to fight corruption, but since he took office he's faced several scandals.



The UK must prepare for a no-deal break with the European Union unless there is a "fundamental" change of position from the bloc

BORIS JOHNSON | UK PRIME MINISTER

Biden, Trump return to campaign trail



AGENCIES

Wilimington, Del./Doral, Fla., Oct 16: President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden hit the campaign trail again Friday with visits to three battleground states, after displaying their sharply contrasting styles in dueling televised town halls.

Trump is lagging in opinion polls and latest figures from his campaign showed he is also behind in fundraising in the final weeks before the November 3 election.

Trump's campaign and the Republican National Committee



raised some \$247.8 million in September, his campaign manager said on Twitter, well behind the \$383 million haul of Biden and the Democratic Party.

Thursday night's split-screen events replaced a presidential debate that was canceled after Trump's bout with coronavirus.

A combative Trump, sparring with moderator Savannah Guthrie on NBC, refused to condemn the bizarre conspiracy theory QAnon, reiterated his unsubstantiated assertion that the 2020 election is rife with fraud and questioned whether masks can help combat the spread of Covid-19.

HOPE & HAPPINESS



A health worker makes a heart sign while she and her fellow workers celebrate as the last three patients are released from a field hospital at the National Stadium Mane Garrincha after recuperating from Covid-19, in Brasilia, Brazil

14 killed in Pak oil convoy ambush



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, Oct 16: Militants ambushed a convoy of oil and gas workers escorted by paramilitary troops in Pakistan's restive southwestern province of Baluchistan, killing 14 people, including 7 soldiers.

The attack was carried out Thursday on the state-run Oil & Gas Development Company Ltd (OGDCL) workers in Ormara town in Gwadar district.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the Pakistan Army, confirmed that

the militants had also sustained heavy losses in the exchange of fire and seven Frontier Corps (FC) soldiers and seven private security guards were killed in the attack.

"The terrorists attacked the convoy from the mountains near Ormara on the Balochistan-Hub-Karachi coastal highway and heavy exchange of fire took place. The convoy was returning to Karachi from Gwadar," a top police official in Gwadar said.

He said it was a planned attack and the militants had prior information about the convoy going to Karachi.

TWITTER UNBLOCKS TRUMP CAMPAIGN ACCOUNT

US President Donald Trump's Twitter election campaign account was unblocked after the social media campaign temporarily restricted it saying a video from the account about Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's son violated its rules



Biden delivered policy-heavy answers and focused his attacks on Trump's handling of the pandemic, which has killed 216,000 people in the United States and hammered the economy.

National opinion polls have shown Biden ahead for months and it was not clear whether Trump's aggressive posture would alter what has been a stable race despite a whirlwind of news.

More than 18.6 million Americans have already cast ballots, far more than at a similar juncture in 2016, according to a tracker at the US Elections Project at the University of Florida.

Louisiana began voting Friday,

following record turnout in competitive states Georgia, Texas and North Carolina this week.

Trump will travel to Florida and Georgia, two states that are seen as crucial to his chances of victory, while Biden will visit two cities in Michigan, another battleground state.

The second presidential debate had been scheduled for Thursday, but Trump pulled out after organizers said it would be virtual to lessen the risk of infection. The President, who spent several days at a military hospital after contracting the virus two weeks ago, has since returned to headlining campaign rallies.

BIDEN LEADS BY 7 POINTS NATIONWIDE

Washington: A new poll has revealed that Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden was currently leading US President Donald Trump by seven points nationwide, with just 18 days remaining for the November 3 election. According to the new national Hill-HarrisX poll released Thursday, 47 per cent of registered voters have said that they would cast their ballots for Biden if the election was held today, a 2-point spike from an October 3-6 survey, while 40 per cent said they would vote for Trump. Three per cent of the voters said they would prefer someone else as their candidate for President and another 3 per cent do not plan to vote. Seven per cent of the surveyed remains unsure. The former Vice President was also leading Trump among independents, at 40 per cent versus 32 per cent.

Kiwis to vote on legalising marijuana and euthanasia

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Auckland, Oct 16: New Zealanders are poised to decide on two landmark social issues during an election Saturday: whether to legalise recreational marijuana and whether to legalise euthanasia.

A yes vote on both referendums would arguably make the nation of 5 million one of the more liberal countries in the world. Polls indicate the euthanasia referendum is likely to pass while the result of the marijuana measure remains uncertain.

The two referendums are being held at the same time as people cast votes for lawmakers and political parties. As a result, the referendums have been somewhat overshadowed both by the political campaigns and this year's coronavirus outbreak.



In the political race, popular Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern appears set to win a second term in office, with her liberal Labour Party polling far ahead of the conservative National Party led by Judith Collins.

The euthanasia measure, which would also allow assisted suicide, would apply to people who have terminal illnesses, are likely to die within six months, and are enduring unbearable suffering.

Countries that allow some form of euthanasia include The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Canada, Belgium and Colombia.

The marijuana measure would allow people to buy up to 14 grams (0.5 ounce) a day and grow two plants. Other countries that have legalised recreational marijuana include Canada, South Africa, Uruguay and Georgia plus a number of US states.

Record-low snow accumulation on biggest Alpine glacier: Study

Although 2020 has not been a year of extremes, the glaciers in the Swiss Alps are still in steady decline, losing a full two per cent of their volume this year alone

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Geneva, Oct 16: Swiss glaciers have continued to shrink at an alarming rate this year, while snow accumulation on the largest glacier in the Alps reached a record low, a study showed Friday.

Although 2020 has not been a year of extremes, the glaciers in the Swiss Alps are still in steady decline, losing a full two percent of their volume this year alone, according to an annual study on the state of the glaciers published by the Swiss Academies of Science.

That is in line with the average over the past 10 years, but the numbers are still "very concerning", report author Matthias Huss, in charge



In the past 60 years, Swiss glaciers have lost enough water to fill the massive Lake Constance

of the Glacier Monitoring Network (GLAMOS), told this news agency.

"They are a bit lower than the last three years, when we had extremely high temperatures... but still the glaciers lost a lot of mass," he said, adding that a two per cent loss per year "is really a lot."

In the past 60 years, Swiss glaciers have lost enough water to fill the massive Lake Constance, which straddles the Swiss-German-Austrian borders across 63 kilometres, the report said. The most concerning finding this year was perhaps that snow accumulation on the mighty Aletsch – the largest glacier in the Alps – hit its lowest level on record.

The measurement point, near the Jungfrauoch peak 3,466 me-

tres above sea level, is so high up that it consistently shows the glacier gaining mass.

'A BAD SIGN'

But since measurements began there more than a century ago, "this year it was the smallest ever snow accumulation," Huss said.

"It is cold up there, but there was very little snow that was retained even at this elevation, and this is of course a bad sign for the biggest glacier in the Alps."

The glacier, which covers 86 square kilometres and is estimated to hold around 11 billion tonnes of ice, has already seen its tongue recede by about one kilometre since the turn of the century.

Aletsch is one of more than 4,000

glaciers – vast, ancient reserves of ice – dotted throughout the Alps, providing seasonal water to millions and forming some of Europe's most stunning landscapes.

In a study last year, the ETH technical university in Zurich published a study indicating that around 95 per cent of those glaciers will disappear by 2100 if greenhouse gas emissions are left unchecked.

Even if the world were to step up and fully implement the 2015 Paris Agreement, which calls for capping global warming at well below 2°C, two-thirds of the Alpine glaciers will likely be lost, according to that forecast.

"But at least we would still have some glaciers left to admire," Huss said.

of the day quote

The luxury car segment will witness a decline of over 40% in the current financial year. Its penetration in India is the lowest among large economies, thereby providing long-term growth visibility

ASHISH MODANI | VICE-PRESIDENT, ICRA

The ban would have a minimal impact on the domestic companies. The intent of the government was to put a curb on duty-free import of air conditioner units from FTA countries such as Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam

B THIAGARAJAN | MD, BLUE STAR

Our endeavour is to bring India on the global smartphone map again with India-made mobile phones. A bulk of the smartphones that we bring will be priced between ₹7,000-20,000 and we could go beyond that as well

RAHUL SHARMA | CO-FOUNDER, MICROMAX

SHORT TAKES

Hy'bad Metro suffers ₹916cr loss

Hyderabad: L&T Metro Rail (Hyderabad) suffered ₹916 crore loss during the first six months of the current fiscal following a prolonged lockdown to contain coronavirus, the company that operates the elevated rail corridor here, has said in a disclosure. The total income from operations plunged to just ₹60 crore during the period under discussion. "The operations of the company were suspended for significant part of the period in the current financial year due to lockdown imposed by Government on account of COVID 19," it said.

Religare Finvest settles case

New Delhi: Religare Finvest has settled with markets regulator Sebi a case of alleged violation of takeover as well as prohibition of insider trading norms in the matter of Deccan Chronicle Holdings back in 2012. The company has paid ₹13.80 lakh as settlement charges. The case relates to alleged violation of SAST (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) or takeover norms and PIT (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations.

Toyota dispatches SUV Urban Cruiser

Mumbai: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) Friday said it has dispatched the first batch of its all-new sports utility vehicle, Urban Cruiser, ahead of the festive season. Based on Maruti Suzuki India's Vitara Brezza, the compact SUV Urban Cruiser was launched last month. Toyota Kirloskar Motor has begun dispatching its much-awaited compact SUV, the all-new Toyota Urban Cruiser before the onset of the festive season as promised earlier, the company said in a release.

New versions of Pulsar launched

Mumbai: Bajaj Auto Friday launched the refreshed versions of its Pulsar NS and Pulsar RS series motorcycles with new looks and fresh colours ahead of the festival season. The Pulsar ₹200 with dual channel ABS (anti-lock braking system) is priced at ₹1,52,179, while the NS 200 is priced at ₹1,31,219, Bajaj Auto Ltd said in a release. The refreshed version of Pulsar NS 160 is priced at ₹1,08,589, it said.



Foodgrain production will be better than last year. As per the initial estimates, it is projected to be 144.52 million tonnes in the 2020-21 kharif season

NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR | AGRICULTURE MINISTER

SPICEJET OPERATES OVER 1K CHARTER FLIGHTS

Airline major SpiceJet has operated 1,019 charter flights and repatriated 1.75 lakh people since May 2020. According to the airline, it has operated 722 charter flights repatriating more than 1.3 lakh Indians from the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar



Forex reserves rise to lifetime high of \$551.505 bn



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 16: The country's foreign exchange reserves surged by \$5.867 billion to touch a record high of \$551.505 billion in the week to October 9, according to the RBI data. In the previous week ended October 2, 2020, the reserves had increased by \$3.618 billion to \$545.638 billion.

During the reporting week, the increase in forex kitty was on account of rise in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves. FCA rose by \$5.737 billion to \$508.783 billion.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

The gold reserves were up by \$113 million in the reporting week to \$36.598 billion, the RBI data showed. The special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) rose by \$4 million to \$1.480 billion during the week.

The country's reserve position with the IMF was also up by \$13 million to \$4.644 billion during the reporting week, the data showed.

YANDEX, TCS TERMINATE \$5.48 BN TINKOFF TALKS



REUTERS

Moscow, Oct 16: Plans for Russia's biggest corporate deal of 2020 collapsed on Friday after talks over a \$5.48 billion cash-and-share sale of online bank Tinkoff to internet giant Yandex ended.

Discussions over the potential tie-up, which would have increased competition for Russia's largest lender Sberbank and smaller rivals in technology and banking, stalled less than four weeks after they were announced by Tinkoff parent TCS Group Holding.

TCS said in a statement it had agreed with Yandex not to proceed with the transaction, but Tinkoff would continue to partner with it on existing and future projects.

"Today I decided to break the possible deal with Yandex," TCS founder Oleg Tinkov said in an internal email which was seen by Reuters Friday.

Tinkov, a major TCS shareholder, could not be reached for comment and the online bank's press office declined to comment. Yandex shares fell 2.2% in Moscow to 4,652.0 rubles (\$59.64) at 1451 GMT, while TCS Group's London-listed shares were 1.3% lower, after earlier hitting a three-month low.

TCS and Yandex announced they were in talks September 22, a few months after Yandex said it was ending its partnership with Sberbank, Russia's largest lender.

'Raw material availability vital for industries'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: India has several advantages for making steel. To become AatmaNirbhar in steel, uninterrupted availability of key raw material and a conducive environment for steel business is highly important, said Naveen Jindal, Chairman of Jindal Steel & Power Ltd (JSPL).

Jindal said during an e-conference hosted by Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) in association with the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Ministry of Steel on AatmaNirbhar Bharat: Special Focus on Chemical & Petro-Chemical

AATMANIRBHAR IN STEEL

Coal can be a key raw material for the petrochemical sector. JSPL has already set up a Coal Gasification Plant that has been producing synthesis gas using indigenous high-ash coal

NAVEEN JINDAL | CHAIRMAN, JINDAL STEEL & POWER LTD



and Steel Sector.

Jindal said steel making is complex, but not complicated and easy availability of raw material plays a key role for the operation and ex-

pansion of the steel projects. He emphasised on more coal blocks auction and iron ore auction which would enable industries for their capacity expansion and would be the

REAL ESTATE SECTOR

RBI announces steps to boost credit flow

This measure, according to the RBI, is expected to give a fillip to bank lending to the real estate sector which is critical for economic recovery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 16: In a bid to increase flow of credit to the real estate sector, the Reserve Bank on Friday rationalised the risk weightage to LTV (loan to value) ratio for all new housing loans sanctioned up to March 31, 2022.

As per a notification issued by the RBI, new housing loans will attract a risk weight of 35% where LTV is less than 80% and a risk weight of 50% where LTV is more than 80% but less than 90%.

This measure, according to the RBI, is expected to give a fillip to bank lending to the real estate sector which is critical for economic recovery, given its role in employment generation and the inter linkages with other industries.

"As a countercyclical measure, it has been decided to rationalise the risk weights, irrespective of the amount. The risk weights for all new housing loans to be sanctioned on or after the date of this circular and up to March 31, 2022," the notification said.



The requirement of standard asset provision of 0.25% will continue to apply on all such loans, the notification added.

Commenting on the RBI's move, Square Yards CEO Tanuj Shori said, "The linking of risk weightage only to LTV ratio vis-a-vis the earlier practice of risk weightage with both pricing and LTV augurs well for the sector particularly for high end properties which have been facing severe downward demand pressures."

Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said the LTV ratio is calculated by dividing the amount

borrowed by the value of the property in percentage terms.

For instance, if one purchases a home valued at ₹80 lakh and for this makes a down payment of ₹10 lakh, ₹70 lakh will need to be borrowed.

"The risk weightage assigned to LTV will free up banks' capital for additional lending. It will also help them to bring down the lending rates because they will have spare capital to lend," Puri said.

Since banks will have additional capital to lend, availing home loans at attractive interest rates will be possible, he added.

FINMIN KICK-STARTS CREDIT-SUPPORT PLAN FOR NBFCs

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 16: The finance ministry Friday kicked off the exercise to prepare the annual Budget for 2021-22 amid the urgency to push economic growth hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The upcoming Budget will be crucial for the country as it will have to deal with impact of pandemic which has affected all segments of the economy, including revenue collection, disinvestment, expenditure, exports and food prices.

The economy is projected to contract by a massive 10.3 per cent this year, according to an IMF forecast. Even the Reserve Bank of India expects the economy to shrink by 9.5% in the current financial year.

As per the finance ministry schedule, the nearly one-month long exercise to finalise the Revised Estimate (RE) for 2020-21 and Budget Estimate (BE) for 2021-22 began on Friday. The meetings will conclude November 12.

Portal of Oil PSUs to boost self-reliant India

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 16: In a bid to promote Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-reliant India), a reliable and scalable portal has been envisaged for all Oil Companies. Based on the theme "Delivering excellence through people", this initiative, taken under the guidance of Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan, aims to highlight the Capital goods requirement of Oil & Gas majors besides the items related to Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO).

This web-based-portal will provide opportunities to new entrepreneurs and existing manufacturers to invest and expand their manufacturing base in India. This portal shall also provide real-time data, along with visual indicators in the form of graphs and charts, to facilitate decision making for the

apex management and other stakeholders.

To achieve this objective, a special taskforce, under the leadership of Secretary, MoP&NG, has been formed. This Taskforce comprises of the chairpersons of various Oil & Gas PSUs (like Indian Oil, EIL, ONGC, GAIL, BPCL, HPCL) and private refiners. Engineers India Limited will be leading the development of this portal from concept to commissioning under the guidance of this task force.

The development of the portal is being monitored and reviewed regularly by the Petroleum Minister. Pradhan advised, "The proposed portal should provide information on procurements made from Micro/Small Enterprises or from SC/ST/Women entrepreneurs". He further emphasised the need to develop the portal on a war footing basis to further the cause of self-reliant India.

e-Comm firms get notice for flouting product norms



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 16: The Centre has issued notices to e-commerce majors Amazon and Flipkart for non-declaration of mandatory disclosure, including the 'Country of Origin' on specific products. In its notices to both the companies, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs said that on examining the concerned advertisements, it was found that the mandatory declarations were not mentioned as per the norms under the Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodity) Rules.

Besides, the ministry asked both the companies to the furnish the required information and response to the notice within 15 days else action will be initiated against them.

All e-commerce firms needed to comply with the norm to tag the 'Country of Origin' on all items being sold on their platforms by September 30.

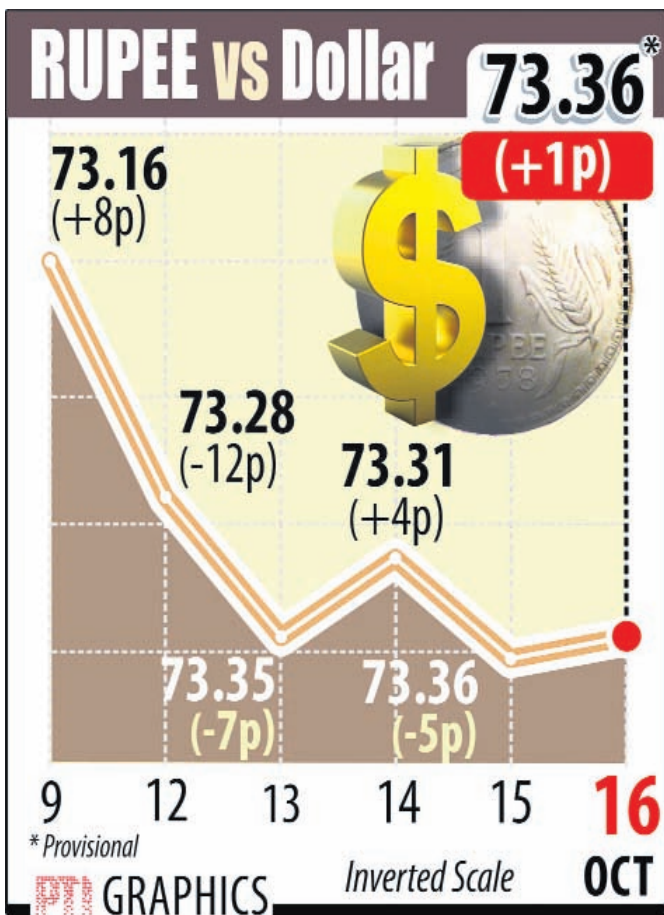
Recently, the call for such norms

The CAIT, which has been on the forefront of the campaign to mandate disclosure of 'Country of Origin', applauded the government's move

gained momentum due to the India-China border tussle.

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), which has been on the forefront of the campaign to mandate disclosure of 'Country of Origin', applauded the government's move.

CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal called the decision a bold move, and asked the Centre to investigate immediately the festive sales of both Amazon and Flipkart, where he alleged that no product is in compliance with the obligation to mention the 'Country of Origin'.



'80% CONSUMERS LOOK FORWARD TOW FESTIVE SHOPPING'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 16: The upcoming festive season comes with a hope for the retailers as they have been severely hit by the pandemic. A survey by the Retailers Association of India (RAI) and LitmusWorld shows that around 80% Indian consumers are looking forward to buy products during the upcoming festive season.

The Festive Shopping Index 2020 shows that around 75% of the consumers would be shopping online and around 66% would also consider shopping at stand-alone stores and 37% want to visit malls. The survey

observed that the trend reflects the rise of omni-channel shopping.

"While online is the primary mode of discovery, consumers are looking forward to purchasing at physical stores," said a joint statement by RAI and LitmusWorld.

Commenting on the festive shopping sentiments, Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO of RAI, said: "Retailers are looking at the festive season with some amount of cautious optimism. We believe that all formats of retail will see resurgence but on an omni-channel basis."

He said that customers do feel



REIGNITED OPTIMISM

The 'Festive Shopping Index 2020' shows that around 75% of the consumers would be shopping online and around 66% would also consider shopping at stand-alone stores

About 23% respondents expressed their intent to purchase gifts along with items for their personal use

The customers would prefer paying through digital modes of payment such as credit cards, debit cards, mobile wallets and UPI

the need to reconnect with a sense of cheer and are slowly coming out to shop.

"However, they may not shop in the same way they have been shopping all these years. There is a lot of reliance on what is being shown to them digitally," he added.

The survey found that having been confined to their homes for so long away from relatives and friends, there seems to be some excitement around gifting, highlighting the need to rekindle relationships and reconnect.

About 23% respondents expressed their intent to purchase

gifts along with items for their personal use. It revealed that 53% of the respondents wanted to buy apparels and about 47% wanted to get home appliances and electronics.

The customers would prefer paying through digital modes of payment such as credit cards, debit cards, mobile wallets and UPI.

"In spite of the pandemic, the Indian consumer is still very excited for the festive shopping season and that's a big positive for retailers," said Khushaal Talreja, Head of Marketing & Partnerships, LitmusWorld.

A ROYAL BATTLE ON CARDS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Oct 16: Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) would aim to get their strategy right after some inexplicable decisions during the loss to Kings XI Punjab when they take on an erratic Rajasthan Royals (RR) in an IPL match here Saturday.

The Virat Kohli-led RCB has won five of their eight games on the back of all-round performances but seemingly blundered in the eight-wicket defeat to laggards KXIP Thursday.

On the other hand, the Royals' campaign this season has been marred by numerous top order collapses, forcing the lower half to pull them across the finish line.

RCB's five wins so far include a Super Over triumph over Mumbai Indians here at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. The Royals, on the other hand, lie at the seventh spot in the points table with just three wins from eight outings.

While defending the total against KXIP, Kohli decided to save

the in-form Washington Sundar for the big-hitting Chris Gayle, who came to bat in the eighth over. That gamble didn't pay off either as the 41-year-old Jamaican smashed the young off-spinner for four sixes. However, Kohli and his men will look to shrug off the defeat.

Meanwhile, the Royals boast of a strong batting line-up. But the likes of Steve Smith, and Sanju Samson have failed to score since the two victories in Sharjah at the beginning of the tournament.

Jos Buttler too has been unable to capitalise on his starts, scoring just one half-century in seven innings. After failing in his first match of the season, Ben Stokes, who has

been elevated to the role of an opener, hit 41 before he was run out against the Delhi Capitals.

The inaugural season champions have relied on Rahul Tewatia to rescue them from precarious positions and the all-rounder managed to do that twice against KXIP and Sunrisers Hyderabad respectively. But he failed against the Capitals when yet again the top-order botched an easy run-chase.

Jofra Archer spearheads the Rajasthan bowling unit, along with the spin duo of Tewatia and Shreyas Gopal, who have consistently figured in an XI that has gone through a lot of chopping and changing.



CSK brace up for DC challenge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sharjah, Oct 16: Their campaign is back on track, courtesy MS Dhoni's smart captaincy but a stiff test awaits Chennai Super Kings (CSK) when they face a dominant Delhi Capitals (DC) in their next IPL match, here Saturday.

Every tactic that Dhoni employed against Sunrisers

Hyderabad (SRH), worked, and they are expected to continue in the same vein as they battle to salvage the season.

Whether it was promoting Sam Curran to the opener's slot or finishing pacer Deepak Chahar's quota upfront while using seven bowlers to dry up runs, every move produced desired result.

Dhoni used leg spinner Piyush Chawla for only one over and that too as late as in the 16th over, leaving it largely on Ravindra Jadeja and Karn Sharma but CSK are likely to continue with three spinners considering that the Sharjah wickets are now getting slower.

That spinners hold the key in Sharjah



was evident in the last two games where RCB and Kings XI Punjab slow bowlers were instrumental in their respective team's wins.

The three-time champions will look to build on the win over SRH as the league phase moves towards the business end.

However, they are up against a team which is high on confidence and well-served by the South African pace duo of Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje, who bowled a 156.2 kmph delivery during his spell against Rajasthan Royals.

Add the wily R Ashwin and Axar Patel

to the mix and DC has a rather impressive bowling unit. Pacer Tushar Deshpande, who made a memorable debut in the win over the Royals Wednesday, adds teeth to the attack and the focus will be on how he follows up that performance.

The Capitals side would be a tad worried about fitness status of

Shreyas Iyer, who hurt his left shoulder in the previous game. The skipper has been in good form with the bat and has led well too.

If he is ruled out of the match, DC will be deprived of his classy batting and calm leadership which would be a blow for a side already missing the services of Rishabh Pant, sidelined by hamstring issues.

The team will also be expecting the talented Prithvi Shaw to show consistency while the senior pro Shikhar Dhawan has weighed in with crucial runs at the top as has Marcus Stoinis.

MUMBAI MAUL KOLKATA

Morgan takes KKR's charge from Karthik



QUINTON DE KOCK



Rahul Chahar (2nd from L) is congratulated by his teammates after dismissing a KKR batsman in Abu Dhabi, Friday

AGENCIES

Abu Dhabi, Oct 16: Mumbai Indians (MI) were at their very best with both bat and ball as they decimated Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) in their IPL encounter sealing a comprehensive eight-wicket victory here, Friday.

Chasing 149, openers – Quinton de Kock (78 n o, 44b, 9x4, 3x6) and skipper Rohit Sharma (35, 36b, 5x4, 1x6) – provided the four-time champions a splendid start. The duo added 94 runs before Shivam Mavi (1/24) got rid of Rohit with a gem of a delivery in the third ball of the 11th over.

Varun Chakravathy (1/23) then dismissed Suryakumar Yadav (10) three overs later to reduce Mumbai to 111/2. After then it was a one-way traffic for Mumbai as De Kock and Hardik Pandya, who played an 11-ball 21-run cameo including three fours and a six, completed the task with more than three overs to spare.

Earlier, pace spearhead Pat Cummins (53 n o, 36b, 5x4, 2x6) struck an invaluable half century to lift KKR from a hopeless situation to a respectable 148/5.

After a top order failure, it was Cummins and new skipper Eoin Morgan (39 n o, 29b, 2x4, 2x6), who conjured 87 runs for the un-

broken sixth wicket, to pull the team out of trouble.

Opting to bat, Kolkata lost opener Rahul Tripathi (7) early, courtesy a sensational catch by Suryakumar Yadav at point, in the third over off Trent Boult (1/32).

It became 33/2 as Nitish Rana (5) perished cheaply after he was caught by De Kock off Nathan Coulter-Nile (1/51) as a short ball worked for the Australian pacer in the sixth over.

Leg-spinner Rahul Chahar (2/18) struck twice in the eight over, removing the young Shubham Gill (21) and Dinesh Karthik (4) off successive balls and reduced Kolkata to 42/4.

KKR lost half their side for 61 as Andre Russell perished for 12. A bouncer from Jasprit Bumrah (1/22) did the trick as Russell lobbed off a sitter to De Kock, who later dropped a sitter to give a lifeline to Cummins. The scoreboard was reading 113/5 back then.

Cummins smashed Nathan Coulter-Nile for two fours and a maximum in the 13th over, which fetched KKR 16 runs and then made optimum use of a life he got. Cummins and Morgan added 53 in the last five overs.

BRIEF SCORES

Kolkata Knight Riders 148/5 (Pat Cummins 53 n o, Eoin Morgan 39 n o; Rahul Chahar 2/18, Jasprit Bumrah 1/22) **lost to Mumbai Indians 149/2** (Quinton de Kock 78 n o, Rohit Sharma 35, Hardik Pandya 21 n o; Varun Chakravathy 1/23) **by eight wickets.**

Wimbledon plans return in 2021, with or without fans

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wimbledon, Oct 16: The Wimbledon tennis tournament is planning its comeback in 2021. Wimbledon was the only Grand Slam tournament cancelled this year because of the coronavirus pandemic, but the All England Club announced plans Friday for its return next year.

“Staging The Championships in 2021 is our number one priority and we are actively engaged in scenario planning in order to deliver on that priority,” All England Club chief executive Sally Bolton said.

The tournament, canceled this year for the first time since 1945, is scheduled to run next year from June 28-July 11. It could be held at full capacity, reduced capacity or without fans, the club said.

All of the options are dependent on the status of government and public health guidelines, the club said.

The US Open and French Open were held this year but with strict protocols to reduce the possibility of spreading the virus. No fans were allowed at Flushing Meadows, while Roland Garros was limited to 1,000 fans per day.

“Our overriding priority will continue to be the health and safety of all of our stakeholders, in particular our guests, our staff, and



our competitors,” the All England Club said.

“We are working closely with the relevant government and public health authorities, alongside the rest of the sports industry, to understand the varying challenges and opportunities presented by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.”

The Australian Open was held this year before the coronavirus pandemic spread around the world,

but the 2021 tournament could be affected. Next year's tournament at Melbourne Park is scheduled to run from January 18-31.

Australian Open chief executive Craig Tiley has said he wants international tennis players arriving for the tournament to be exempt from the 14-day hotel quarantines that are mandatory for inbound travelers.

IWF appoints third leader in as many days

REUTERS

London, Oct 16: The troubled International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) has appointed its third interim president in as many days, with Britain's Michael Irani taking over from Thailand's Intarat Yodbangtoey.

Yodbangtoey had replaced American Ursula Papandrea in the role after an emergency meeting of the executive board Tuesday.

The IWF, whose future as an Olympic sport is at risk, said Irani, chair of the medical committee and former chair of the anti-doping commission, was appointed interim president Thursday.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) said on Wednesday it was ‘very worried’ by the replacement of Papandrea, the way the decision had been taken and the chosen replacement.

USA Weightlifting and Britain's BWL governing body issued strong statements after Yodbangtoey's appointment, accusing the IWF board of blocking reform.

The sport, rocked by revelations of doping cover-ups and decades of corruption, was warned by the IOC in June that it risks being cut from the Paris 2024 Olympics and subsequent Games.

The IWF board elected Papandrea in January after 81-year-old president Tamas Ajan, a Hungarian, stepped aside during a corruption probe.

Indian men in 4th position

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Oct 16: India enjoyed an unbeaten day with a win and two draws to move up to fourth place after six rounds in the Asian Online Nations (Regions) Cup Team Championship for men Friday.

The top-seeded Indians, who were sixth after three rounds, were held to a 2-2 draw by a strong Kazakhstan team, seeded second, in the sixth round after having shared points with Iran in round four before beating Jordan 3.5-0.5.

In the India-Kazakhstan match, the talented 16-year-old Nihal Sarin and the experienced K Sasikiran scored wins over Rustam Khushnutdiov and Denis Makhnev respectively. B Adhiban and captain Surya Shekhar Ganguly lost their games.

Sasikiran has been a top performer for India, having won all his six matches so far while Ganguly has four victories from five games.

After the conclusion of six rounds, India is on nine match points (two points for winning a match and one for a draw). The team has so far won three matches and drawn three. The country's top two players – former World Champion Viswanathan Anand and Vidit Gujrathi – are not part of the squad.

After being forced to share points by Indonesia, the Indians bounced back strongly to thrash Jordan 3.5-0.5 with Sarin, captain Ganguly and Sasikiran posting victories. Sameer Mansour held B Adhiban



to a draw to prevent an Indian sweep.

In the match against Indonesia, Adhiban drew on top board against Yoseph Theofilus Taher while Sarin and Susanto Megaranto shared honours. Sasikiran posted India's only win, beating Muhammad Agus Kurniawan while SP Sethuraman slipped to defeat against Novendra Priasmoro from a good position as the teams settled for the 2-2 result.

Iran lead the field with 11 match points with Australia and Kazakhstan in second and third place with 10 match points each.

The tournament is being played on nine-round Swiss System pre-

are respectful of his wishes.” Midway into the ongoing season, KKR find themselves at fourth place in the points table with four wins and three losses.

“...DK and Eoin have worked brilliantly together during this tournament and although Eoin takes over as captain, this is effectively a role swap and we expect that this transition will work in a seamless manner,” Mysore said.

“On behalf of everyone at KKR, we thank DK for all his contributions as the captain over the past two and a half years and wish Eoin the very best going forward.”

The veteran Indian wicketkeeper-batsman's captaincy had come under intense criticism due to the team's erratic campaign so far.

liminaries in both men's and women's division with a time control of 15 minutes plus five second increment.

The top eight teams will qualify for the knockout stage of quarter-finals, semifinals and finals. Each stage will be a duel of two matches. Cash prizes worth USD 20,000 and gold, silver and bronze certificates as individual board prizes in the preliminary stage are up for grabs.

The women's event resumes Saturday for rounds four to six with the top-seeded Indians in eighth spot. The tournament will conclude with the finals October 25.