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ARIES
You are a touchy one. People will rub you the wrong way today. But remember that getting needlessly annoyed will bring nothing but more complications. Contemplate in seclusion about the root cause of the problem.

TAURUS
You are likely to get extra passionate and fervent today, predicts Ganesha. If your logic prevails over your heart, things will probably change for better during the course of the day. It is high time that you set into motion the poignant side of your character, suggests Ganesha.

GEMINI
You have been aching to arrange a family reunion or get-together at your house. Well, today is the perfect day to do it. And why just family? You are also likely to invite some of your close friends and important business associates over to your place.

CANCER
Today, it is quite possible that you have a presentiment of things that are about to happen. Scarily enough, the premonition may not be too far off the mark. All your senses, especially your sixth sense, are likely to remain highly active today.

LEO
To many, you will seem to have got your senses back after a long time. Reason? You will finally have a definite career plan in mind. Although, it's not really a big deal for you when your mind races and years to achieve in two warring directions, it may seem quite jarring and unreal to the mere mortals.

VIRGO
You will spend most of today in the company of family and friends, says Ganesha. Students may focus on upcoming examinations and will learn to balance study and leisure time, in equal measure. It is a good day to buy real estate.

LIBRA
Ever heard of the phrase, 'To stick one's foot in one's mouth'? Well, today you might be doing exactly the same, albeit unwittingly. You are likely to invite trouble, especially if some of those heated discussions get out of hand.

SCORPIO
You will find yourself thinking with your heart rather than your head today, says Ganesha. You may not be able to repress your feelings, and you should not even try. But you should be careful about how you express them, particularly in public as people may judge you wrongly on the basis of it, advises Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
The day may pan out to be more challenging than you had anticipated. An independent free bird as you Archers are, you may find reality it irritating to find your hands tied up in unpleasant money matters. But, then that's a part of life; put in your best to overcome any situation you come across.

CAPRICORN
The day calls for making amends and undoing the damage done to relationships, so you will most likely focus on improving rapport with relatives and peers, says Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
You may fall in love today! If single, romance colours your day with a rainbow. If married, you may enjoy a quiet but romantic evening with your spouse. Ganesha says that if nothing else, it's a good time to pour over your photo albums and float in nostalgia.

PISCES
You will be treading new ground at work. Exciting as that sounds, it merely means you will have to do a lot of travelling today. You will also find yourself swamped with drafting new business proposals, holding meetings, or otherwise networking over the phone.



CLOUDS WAS EMOTIONALLY CHALLENGING: NEVE CAMPBELL

Actor Neve Campbell says playing the role of terminally ill teenage musician Zach Sobiech's mother in the biopic *Clouds* was an emotionally draining experience. The 47-year-old actor said as a mother of two in real-life it was a difficult task.

MEENDES HINTS AT COMEBACK

Actress Eva Mendes is hinting that she might return to acting soon. Mendes has taken a six-year-long break to raise her children with actor Ryan Gosling. In an interview with *Sydney Morning Herald*, the actress sounded as if she might be ready to return to acting, reports dailymail.co.uk.



'No digital immersion can kill loneliness'



New Delhi: Actress Genelia Deshmukh says her battle with coronavirus was difficult as no digital immersion can kill loneliness.

Asked about her fight with the illness, Genelia said: "I think it has been difficult because no amount of facetime, digital immersion can kill loneliness. I would urge everyone to keep yourselves safe, test early, eat healthy as that is the only way to fight the monster."

In August, Genelia revealed that she had tested Covid-19 positive, adding that her report came in as negative Saturday.

"Hi, I was tested Covid positive three weeks ago. I was asymptomatic for last 21 days. With God's grace I tested negative today. As much as I count my blessings that my battle with the disease has been much easier but at the same time I must admit that these last 21 days in isolation have been the most challenging to deal with," Genelia wrote on Instagram. IANS

YAMI THANKS FANS FOR ENCOURAGEMENT

Mumbai: Actress Yami Gautam has expressed her gratitude towards people for recognising her hardships and work.

"Indebted for your love, not only for #GinnywedsSunny but always recognising the hardships & resilience that it takes for someone like myself to sustain here & continue to walk ahead with my head high," Yami wrote on Twitter, along with a note.

The note read: "The amount of love you guys have showered on our work and appreciated our performances makes all the difference to us! Your constant encouragement has been one of the most influential factors in keeping us going through thick and thin of our journey in the industry and it goes on."

The actress was recently seen in romantic-comedy *Ginny Weds Sunny*, also starring Vikrant Massey. It is about Ginny, who gets set up with Sunny but the match is not that simple, and complications arise amid love, life, weddings and music. IANS

Channel launched on Om Puri's birth anniversary



Mumbai: Late actor Om Puri's wife Nandita and son Ishaan have launched a YouTube channel to mark the 70th birth anniversary of the former.

Titled *Puri Baatein*, the channel aims to impart unknown facts about the legendary actor.

The first video of the channel shows several unseen pictures of Om Puri along with his family members.

In the clip, one can also see Ishaan and Nandita remembering Om Puri. Apart from them, popular ghazal singer, Talat Aziz, and singer-actress Ila Arun also shared insights into Om Puri's

love for music.

From doing socially relevant movies to tickling audience with comedy films, Om Puri had done versatile projects.

The Mirch Masala actor had appeared in Hollywood films including City of Joy, Wolf and The Ghost and the Darkness

Aakrosh, Ardh Satya, Dharavi, Mirch Masala, Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro, Chachi 420, Hera Pheri and Malamaal Weekly are some of his memorable movies.

He had also made his name in international cinema. He had played a cameo in Richard Attenborough's iconic 1982 film *Gandhi*. Among some of his British films were *My Son the Fanatic*, *East Is East* and *The Parole Officer*.

He also appeared in Hollywood films including *City of Joy*, *Wolf* and *The Ghost and the Darkness*. IANS

Lotus India Fashion Week DAY 5

Shantanu and Nikhil, Tarun grab eyeballs with silhouettes

THEIR COLLECTION IS A FUTURISTIC SPIN ON THE NEW SCAFFOLDS OF SOCIETY AND THE REFERENDUM OF NEO-GOVERNANCE, CLAIMED MEHERA SIBLINGS



A model showcasing Tarun Tahiliani's designs

New Delhi: Veteran designers Shantanu and Nikhil and Tarun Tahiliani launched their collections virtually at the ongoing digital edition of Lotus Make-up India Fashion Week, Spring/Summer 2021.

Under their new label S&N, Shantanu and Nikhil showcased their collection 'The Declaration 2034'.

The line-up saw ensembles with military influences, pleating and layering over 'authoritarian' silhouettes of blazers, coats and kurtas with asymmetrical hemlines.

The colour palette was between navy's, off whites, olives and blacks.

"The collection transports you to an almost utopian world where gender fluidity, equality, right to privacy and evolved consciousness become the basic fundamental rights. In a harmonious narrative of science and conscience, the collection is a futuristic spin on the new scaffolds of society and the referendum of neo-governance," said the designer duo Shantanu Mehera and Nikhil Mehera.

Through this collec-

tion *The Age Of Innocence*, Tahiliani has tried to portray 'modern Indian bride'. The collection finds inspiration from minakari work one normally sees in Indian jewellery and has recreated its earlier renditions of the Jaamevaar.

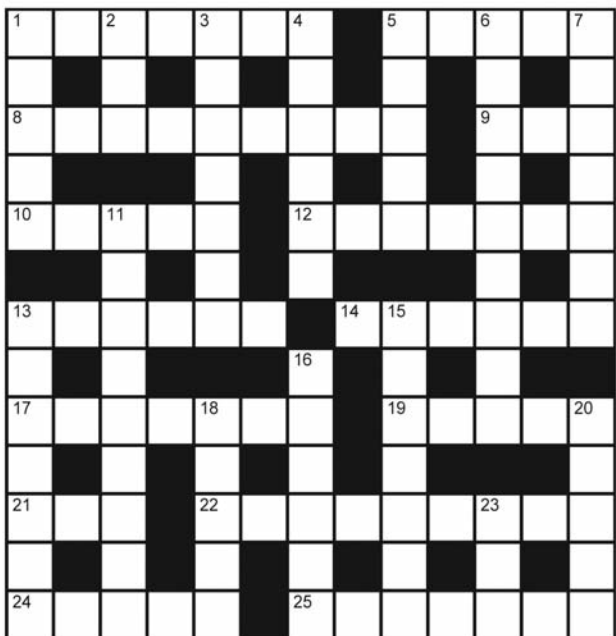
The colours are inspired by minakari-aquas, shell pinks, pale jades and tea roses. There are pieces are hand painted and then heavily hand-embroidered in brocade. Modern fits and silhouettes, lightweight lehengas with pockets form most of the collection.



A Shantanu and Nikhil's creation

FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 1 Arab domain
- 5 Well-known
- 8 Ski accident result, maybe (6,3)
- 9 Fortune
- 10 Dry, in a way
- 12 Oil source
- 13 Look up to
- 14 Aquitania locale
- 17 Improvement

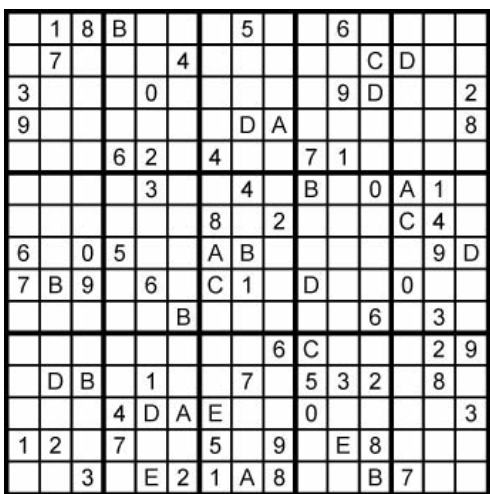
Down

- 1 Pasta shape
- 2 Nuptial agreement
- 3 Retaliator
- 19 It may get a licking
- 21 Paternity identifier
- 22 Printer type (3,6)
- 24 Sine or cosine
- 25 Stronghold

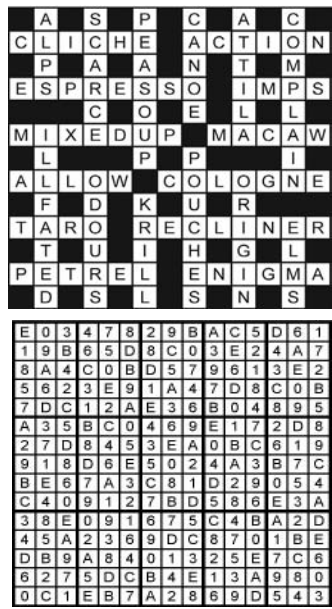
- 4 Sign up
- 5 Unclear
- 6 Centuries
- 7 Easement
- 11 Migrator
- 13 In pieces
- 15 Resume
- 16 Ulcer type
- 18 Part of a TV feed
- 20 Picture element
- 23 Reel's partner

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

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



My client, editor of a reputed news channel, wants you to stay his arrest till the TRP ratings system is suspended

SHORT TAKES

BrahMos tested from Navy's stealth destroyer

New Delhi: India successfully test fires BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from Indian Navy's stealth destroyer Sunday. "BrahMos, the supersonic cruise missile was successfully test fired today on 18th October 2020 from Indian Navy's indigenously-built stealth destroyer INS Chennai, hitting a target in the Arabian Sea," the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) said in a statement. The missile hit the target successfully with pin-point accuracy after performing high-level and extremely complex manoeuvres. BrahMos as 'prime strike weapon' will ensure the warship's invincibility by engaging naval surface targets at long ranges, thus making the destroyer another lethal platform of Indian Navy.

Double murder mystery unraveled

Brajarajnagar: Brajarajnagar police arrested five of a family in connection with a double murder, in which the arrested had killed their uncle and aunt and burnt their mortal remains to conceal the crime. The elderly couple, identified to be Giribara Das (50) and his wife Gita (46), was burnt to death in the wee hours of Friday while they were sleeping in their room at Brajarajnagar in Jharsuguda. The arrested include Deepak Das, Rahul Das, Miran Das, Sunita Das and Supriya Das, all of whom are siblings in relation. The siblings were upset for past several days over property distribution between the two families which lead to the murder, the police sources said. The siblings firstly attacked Giribara with iron rod and sharp weapons who was alone at home. Later, the accused killed Gita.

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
MAX	32.2°C	34.0°C
MIN	24.9°C	23.6°C
Humidity	97%	85%
Rainfall	4.9mm	Nil
Forecast		
Light rain likely		

SUBARNAREKHA CHANGING COURSE

THE RIVER, OFTEN CALLED THE WOE OF BALIAPAL, PLAYS HAVOC IN THIS COASTAL POCKET, BRINGING MISERIES TO THE LOCAL RESIDENTS FOR DAYS TOGETHER

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baliapal, Oct 18: The Subarnarekha river is called the woe of Baliapal in Balasore. Every monsoon, the river plays havoc in this coastal pocket, bringing miseries to the local residents for days together.

Another problem faced by people of some riparian villages is that the river has been changing its course over the years. They are scared as with every spell of rain the river devours a portion of their habitats.

Erosion of river bank is causing havoc in Chada, Kudamansigh, Manonagar, Rasalpur, Nayabali, Routraypur, Kankadapal, Kulhabada and Kulha villages where residential as well and farm lands have been devoured by the river in the past.

The Subarnarekha poses more danger to Kulhabada and Kulha in Jamkunda panchayat even as stone packing along the banks has collapsed. Large parts of villages are fast disappearing into the river, which biting off chunks of land at an alarming rate on both sides, locals said.

During the past two decades, Subarnarekha has been posing a serious threat to Bhogarai and Jaleswar blocks too. Though at some places, its bank has been reinforced with boulders and metal to prevent erosion, the river has started eating into other areas, they pointed out. This year, the river has eroded two meter along its bank at Kulhabada, while stretches of farmlands already become a part of the river.



A view of the riverbank erosion by Subarnarekha river at Baliapal in Balasore district

Locals lamented that the rate at which the river is eroding into its banks, major villages like Kulha and Kulhabada and farmlands will be gobbled up in a few years.

Locals said that these villages are slowly but steadily losing their land. The villages face the threat of getting washed away completely if no protective measure is taken urgently.

Erosion has also been a problem for other riparian villages like Baunsakhanda, Pantei, Kumbhiragadi, Adanga, Sekhabad, Gobarghata, Mankidia, Gobardhanpur, Baiganbadia, Kirtania, Kantapal, Mohammadpur, Asti, Badhapal, Bishnupur, Ramnagar, Rasulpur, Gopalpur, Pathurighata, Rajpur, Mankidia, Bagada, Talabarei,

Heavy rains forecast for next four days

BHUBANESWAR: The Bhubaneswar Meteorological Department Sunday issued warning of heavy rains in different parts of the state for the next four days in the light of development of low pressure area in the sea.

The department predicted that the impact of the low pressure could be felt between October 19 and 22.

"Likely formation of low pressure over East-central Bay of Bengal may result in squally weather (wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph) over central Bay of Bengal during October 19-22, 2020," the department said in a statement.

It said that Monday might see heavy rainfall at one or two places over the southern districts of Odisha including Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati and Ganjam. On the other hand, light to moderate rain is anticipated at many places in south coastal Odisha.

The department, however, has issued warning of heavy to very heavy rainfall Tuesday and issued an Orange Warning accordingly. Talking about Tuesday, the department said, "Heavy to very heavy rainfall very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Gajapati and Ganjam." "The department said that heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada and Puri Tuesday.



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I may have to leave the country if I lose: Trump

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Macon (US), October, Oct 18: President Donald Trump is fighting to recover from sinking election polls by campaigning with a hard-line pitch to America's right wing, claiming that his Democratic opponent Joe Biden would deliver communism and a "flood" of criminal immigrants.

He also seemed to acknowledge things might not go his way in the end. "Running against the worst candidate in the history of presidential politics puts pressure on me. Could you imagine if I lose?" Trump mused.

"What am I gonna do?," he continued. "I'm not gonna feel so good. Maybe I'll have to leave the country. I don't know."

While Trump put on a brave face, the fact that he was



fighting at all for the two southern states he won four years ago illustrated how much ground he has to make up against Biden in the 18 days left until the election. With his polls sliding and US Covid-19 infections spiking, Trump is focusing entirely on his core Republican base, in hopes that highly energized supporters will turn out in huge numbers.

In Ocala, Florida, the coronavirus was an afterthought. Instead, Trump tossed the large, loudly cheering crowd red meat on immigration, race, and his conspiracy theory that Biden is steeped in corruption.

Govt admits to community transmission of Covid-19

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 18: Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan Sunday admitted that India is in the community transmission stage.

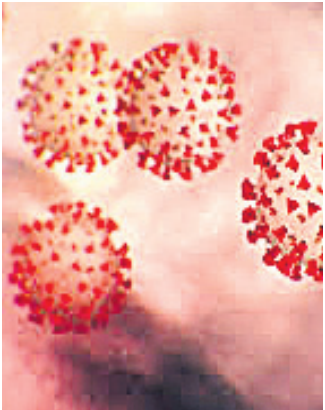
However, it is limited only to certain districts and states. The statement has come in the backdrop of West Bengal's Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's admission Monday that the community transmission of Covid-19 has started in the state.

Vardhan's statement was a response to a query made during his weekly webinar, 'Sunday Samvaad' where he interacts with his social media audience.

The query was "Mamta Banerjee has said there are instances of community transmission in the state. Are there other states with community transmission as well?"

To this, the minister responded, "In different pockets across various states, including West Bengal, community transmission is expected to occur, especially in dense areas. However, this is not happening across the country. It is limited to certain districts occurring in limited states."

The admission comes after months of denial. This is the first time that the health minister has



acknowledged the community transmission.

Earlier this week, Banerjee had urged people of West Bengal to maintain caution ahead of the upcoming Durga Puja season.

"I ask everybody to follow the Covid-19 safety protocols during the festive season. There are instances of community transmission of Covid-19 and also the contagion becoming airborne," Banerjee was quoted saying.

In July, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare had released a guidance document which had inadvertently revealed that community transmission happened in India as early as April.

'Second wave of Covid not ruled out'

NEW DELHI: The number of new coronavirus cases and deaths has declined in the last three weeks as the spread of the pandemic has stabilised in most of the states, Niti Aayog Member VK Paul said Sunday but did not rule out the possibility of a second wave of infections in the winter season. Paul, who is also the chief of an expert panel coordinating efforts to tackle the pandemic in the country, said that once the Covid-19 vaccine is available, there will be enough resources to deliver as well as make it accessible to citizens. On whether India could see a second wave of coronavirus infections in the winter, Paul said that with the onset of winter, countries across Europe are seeing resurgence of Covid-19 cases. "We cannot rule out (a second coronavirus wave this winter in India). Things can happen and we are still learning about the virus," Paul noted.

The document was later taken down from the website of the Union Health Ministry.



It's not a scene from New Delhi, but Janpath in Bhubaneswar which was blanketed with a cloud of dust from road repair works undertaken by the PWD department in the area

PIC: BIKASH NAYAK

Twitter under fire

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 18: A major controversy has erupted after Twitter India showed Jammu and Kashmir as part of Peoples Republic of China in the timelines.

The matter was raised Kanchan Gupta, Distinguished Fellow, Observer Research Foundation (ORF) after tweets showed J&K as a part of China. "So @Twitter has decided to reconfigure geography and declare Jammu & Kashmir as part of People's Republic of #China

. If this is not a violation of #India laws, what is? Citizens of India have been punished for far less. But US Big Tech is above the law?" Gupta wrote tagging Telecom and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad.

Several netizens also asked Prasad and the government to take action against Twitter India. "No @Twitter this is not a freak happenstance," Gupta said in another tweet.

"@Twitter @TwitterIndia so according to you Leh is a part of People's Republic of China," said a netizen.

PLA prepares for possible invasion of Taiwan: Report

AGENCIES

Washington, Oct 18: The presence of the People's Liberation Army is increasing in China's southeast coast as it prepares for a possible military invasion of Taiwan, according to the defense observers cited by the South China Morning Post.

According to the sources, Beijing is replacing its old DF-11s and DF-15s and deploying its most advanced hypersonic missile DF-17 in the region.

"The DF-17 hypersonic missile will gradually replace the old DF-11s and DF-15s that were deployed in the southeast region for decades," the source was quoted by SCMP.

"The new missile has a longer range and is able to hit targets more accurately."

Even though Taiwan has never been controlled by China's ruling party, Chinese authorities insist that the self-governing island is an integral part of their territory, with president Xi Jinping refusing to rule out a military force to capture it if necessary.

According to the Canada-based Kanwa Defence Review, satellite images show that both the Marine Corps and Rocket Force bases in Fujian and Guangdong have expanded.

"Every rocket force brigade in Fujian and Guangdong is now fully equipped," the report said.

No. of calls to 104 Helpline dips, query type also changes

THE FREQUENCY OF CALLS HAS COME DOWN TO ALMOST ONE THIRD OF WHAT IT USED TO RECEIVE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: After combating Covid-19 for months, the number of calls made to the 104 Helpline in the state by anxious people and patients as well as their caregivers also declined steadily.

Officials entrusted with the task of managing the calls to the Covid Helpline and tracking them claimed that the frequency of calls has come down to almost one third of what it used to receive at the beginning of the pandemic (during March and April this year).

"When Covid-19 had just started spreading in Odisha, we received up to 16,000 calls to 104 Helpline. Eight months down the line, the

numbers have dipped and now we are seeing around 6,000 calls per day," said Sabyasachi Biswal, state head of Ziqitza Healthcare Pvt Ltd, which manages the call centre for the 104 Helpline, told Orissa POST.

He said that the before the onset of Covid pandemic in state, the 104 Helpline had 40 employees, which was increased to 150 by the state government when the number of queries increased and the number of cases spiraled in the state.

Helpline executives, who have handled the phone calls during the last eight months, claimed that the types of queries have also changed with time. "In the beginning, people were anxious to know about



Covid-19 symptoms and what they should do if they came in contact

with a positive person. Now, the calls are mostly about home isola-

tion, medical advice and test reports, besides registering their grievances on Covid treatment," said Debi Prasad, a call centre executive from 104 Helpline.

The service provider told this reporter that the team has well-trained staff to answer the queries of the callers. The helpline works around the clock and also comprises 22 doctors and counselors to answer the queries and also pacify panicked patients and their relatives.

"We have counsellors who brief the patients and their caregivers about the line of treatment for people who tests positive to the virus. The counsellors also try to pacify their anxiety and boost their con-

fidence to fight the disease," Kavita Dhal, team leader of the call centre said.

The administration of the 104 Helpline said that many people call the helpline requesting vehicles to transport Covid patients to either Covid hospitals or Covid Care Centres. "Unfortunately, we do not provide patients with transport facilities."

Interestingly, most of the staffers who take the calls in the helpline had been working from home since many months to avoid being infected by the virus. The state government has allowed this and aided them by providing smartphones, laptops, dongles and cloud technology to keep them connected.

State logs 14 more nCoV deaths

WITH 2,019 FRESH CASES, ODISHA'S NOVEL CORONAVIRUS TALLY MOUNTS TO 2,68,364



Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Odisha's novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) tally mounted to 2,68,364 Sunday as 2,019 more people tested positive for the infection. Fourteen fresh fatalities pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 1,135, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

As many as 1,168 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 851 infections were detected during contact tracing, said the official.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, reported the highest number of new coronavirus cases at 283, followed by Cuttack (150), Angul (129) and Mayurbhanj (111), added the official.

Four fresh fatalities were reported in Khurda, two each in Cuttack and Jagatsinghpur, and one each in Mayurbhanj, Puri, Dhenkanal, Kandhamal, Bolangir and Sambalpur districts, said the official. Ganjam district has so far reported the highest number of coronavirus fatalities at 225, followed by Khurda (195) and Cuttack



Artists draw graffiti at BMC hospital in the Old Town area to honour Covid warriors, Sunday

(100), the official said.

As many as 53 coronavirus patients have died due to other ailments so far.

Odisha now has 22,949 active coronavirus cases, while 2,44,227 people have recovered from the disease so far, the official said.

The state has so far tested over 40.43 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 42,258 Saturday, the official pointed out.

City's caseload breaches 27k

With 233 new Covid-19 cases being detected in the last 24 hours, the total cases in the Capital city rose to 27,228, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC)

BMC seals coaching centre for violating Covid norms

Benchmark Classes, a coaching institute located at Nageswar Tangi, Sunday organised a felicitation programme for its students who have successfully cleared the NEET

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Sunday sealed a coaching institute here for violation of Covid-19 norms during an event to celebrate the success of its students in the National Eligibility-Cum-Entrance Test (NEET).

According to sources, Benchmark Classes, a coaching institute located at Nageswar Tangi, Sunday organised a felicitation programme for its students who have successfully cleared the NEET. Large number of students and others were present at the event.

Informed, BMC South East Zone authorities along with police reached the spot and came to know that the

coaching institute did not have prior permission to organise the programme. Hence, the centre was closed immediately by taking into account the safety of students as well as their parents, BMC sources said.

"More than 50 students along with their parents and teachers congregated for the felicitation programme which was being organised without prior permission from any of local authorities. Covid-19 norms were not followed at the event. The violation of Covid-19 norms put the lives of young students and their parents in danger," said Ansuman Rath, BMC Zonal Deputy

NEET RESULT CELEBRATION

CM congratulates NEET topper Soyeb

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Sunday called up NEET topper Soyeb Aftab and congratulated him on his success. Patnaik also wished him a bright future, a CMO release said.

Aftab was elated on receiving a call from the Chief Minister and thanked him. Aftab of Rourkela topped the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), results of which were declared Friday. He created history by scoring 720/720.

He is the first student from Odisha to have topped the NEET.

Patnaik also congratulated all the students from the state who succeeded in the examination and wished them a bright future.

Governor Ganeshi Lal also congratulated Aftab.

Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan also congratulated Aftab on his success and hoped he will bring laurels to the state in the future.

Irregularities alleged in sattu distribution; Vig probe sought

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Oct 18: Poor quality sattu (food supplement) is being provided to pregnant women and Anganwadi children in Puri district, alleged voluntary outfit Sachetan Nagarik Manch at a press conference here Sunday.

The outfit claimed that the authorities concerned are yet to take any step to check irregularities in the sattu distribution despite receiving repeated complaints in this regard.

Members of the outfit sought a Vigilance probe into the irregularities in sattu distribution in the district. They alleged the involvement of a clerical staffer and some other officials of the district administration in the poor quality food supplement distribution among pregnant and lactating women and Anganwadi children.

"We have lodged complaints in this regard with the Governor, Women and Child Development Minister and Vigilance SP, Bhubaneswar, but no step has been taken on the issue. We will be forced to launch an agitation and approach the court if immediate steps are not



taken to initiate a Vigilance probe into the poor sattu issue," said Sachetan Nagarik Manch president Prasanna Dash.

Dash claimed that Puri district has altogether 2,599 Anganwadi centres, including 80 in the Holy City. These Anganwadi centres usually distribute sattu and other food supplements among children up to six years and pregnant and lactating women.

"The authorities concerned are sourcing poor quality sattu from a particular women self-help group (SHG) without inviting any tender for the purpose. A clerical staffer of the district administration collects commission from the SHG and distributes the money among some dishonest officials and politicians," alleged members of the outfit.

BIRDS AREN'T JUST A THING OF BEAUTY: EXPERTS

THE WEBINAR 'BIRDS OF MAHANADI' IS PART OF THE 'HUMAN & ECOLOGY CONVERSATION SERIES' BEING ORGANISED BY MAHANADI RIVER WATERKEEPER, WATER INITIATIVES & FES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: While the beauty of birds addresses our aesthetic sensibility and creates love for them, it's important to love them for more than just their pulchritude, experts opined at a webinar conducted in view of ecology conservation.

"Everybody should nurture love for birds as it can go a long way to protect nature and ensure species diversity," said Gargi Mishra, a bird enthusiast and expert. The webinar titled 'Birds of Mahanadi'



is part of the 'Human & Ecology Conversation Series' being organised by Mahanadi River Waterkeeper, Water Initiatives & FES.

Gargi, in conversation with Ranjan Panda of Water Initiative, discussed on the importance of being a bird enthusiast in conservation of rivers and other wetlands and biodiversity.

Keeping in line with the design of this conversation series, Gargi narrated, "Being a city-dweller, I never



thought of being in an intimate relationship with birds. But, as we have planted as much trees as possible in our balcony garden in Delhi, birds started visiting it. We kept food grains and water for the winged guests and they became our regular visitors. "As a baby, my daughter fell in love with them. As she grew up, her love for the species too grew and so did mine," she added.

Scientifically speaking, birds are very important in maintaining the

health of rivers and other wetlands. While they help keep the water clean, they also keep the crop fields healthy by preying on insects that would otherwise have destroyed the crops. "Birds are also scavengers and help our surroundings clean. However, we are exposing them to serious pollution," said Ranjan Panda, an environment activist. Our wetlands are shrinking at an alarming rate and that is not at all a healthy sign, he lamented further.

Everybody should nurture love for birds as it can go a long way to protect nature and ensure species diversity

GARGI MISHRA | BIRD ENTHUSIAST, EXPERT

Birds are also scavengers and help keep our surroundings clean. However, we are exposing them to serious pollution

RANJAN PANDA | ENVIRONMENT ACTIVIST

Gargi added that if we wished to protect this avian diversity, we need to protect their habitats. "Pollution of rivers, water bodies and other areas is posing a great threat to the survival of these species." Besides industrial pollution and urban wastes, micro-plastic pollution is emerging as a huge problem for our birds, warned Gargi. She further said that about 150 bird species have gone extinct just in the last decade and that is no good news. All of us, especially the young generation need to develop the hobby of bird watching so that they can explore their values for our own survival further, added Ranjan.

Don't shut schools with low student strength: Activists

School and Mass Education minister Samir Ranjan Dash has said that no such schools would be closed and admission process will resume there

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Activists and CSOs across the state have opposed the state government's move to close schools with low student strength 'as it will increase drop-outs among children, especially in the tribal and backward regions of the state.' Children there mostly depend on government schools for their education, they said.

Due to the government's move, around 14,339 primary and upper primary schools in the state may face imminent closure, activists said. Though, the School and Mass Education minister Samir Dash had told the media that no schools would be closed and admission will resume in all the schools, media reports have raised question over the government's agenda as schools closure is going on in the state, they alleged. Activists and civil society members have urged the government to rethink on it, as it will have a high bearing on the public education system of the state and most importantly, 'it violates the spirit of ensuring free and compulsory elementary education to all children as per the Right to Education Act 2009'.

Naba Kishor Pujari, an education rights activist and a member of RTE Forum, said, "Schools are being closed administratively with-



out much publicising it." The schools closer/merger policy is also a clear violation of Sections 3 and 8 of the RTE which guarantee free and compulsory education to every child and also ensures that the children belonging to weaker sections and the children belonging to the disadvantaged group are not discriminated against and prevented from pursuing and completing elementary education on any grounds, he added.

"It will have a life-long impact on the education of children, especially from the tribal, Dalit and other marginalised communities," said Pujari. Another activist Anil Pradhan who is also the Convener of Odisha RTE Forum said that their forum opposes the government's move to close government schools in the name of low enrolment of children.

"Majority of the schools closed citing the rationalisation tag, are from tribal and backward regions such as Rayagada, Mayurbhanj, Kandhamal and Koraput. Tribal habitations generally have small hamlets spread across the village separated by natural barriers. Closure of schools without adhering to neighbourhood norm will further increase the distance between habitation and the schools," said Pradhan.

"The anecdotal evidence clearly shows that children, especially at the primary level, find it difficult to walk a longer distance and tend to be absent from the school regularly. With the school far away from their village, parents often hesitate to send off their kids to the neighbourhood school as they find it difficult to keep a tab on them," Pradhan added.

Cong gets 33 new dist heads

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Nine days after Odisha Congress in-charge A Chellakumar promised to appoint new District Congress Committee (DCC) heads within a month, the formal announcement in this regard was made Sunday.

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) Sunday issued a list of 33 names of District Congress Committee and City Congress Committees after it was dissolved earlier. The notification signed by AICC General Secretary KC Venugopal approved these 33 names. According to the list, party leader Biswajit Das has been made the new head of the Bhubaneswar Congress Committee while Manas Choudhury has been entrusted with the task of managing Cuttack.

At the same time, Sanjiv Giri has been made the DCC President

of Balasore while Puri DCC has been handed over to Ajit Mangaraj. Responsibilities for city leadership for Rourkela and Cuttack cities have also been announced in the list.

The party leaders have appreciated the new appointments and are happy that the newly-inducted in-charge of Odisha Congress has delivered on his promise.

Congress MP Saptagiri Ulaka tweeted, "As assured by Chellakumar, DCC Committees done next is OPCC and Block committees. Would appeal to every Odisha Congress workers and leaders to buckle up, as we going to form the next Govt in Odisha in 2024 and we all need to work hard. Only Performance/Results matters (sic)."



Nine days ago Odisha Congress in-charge A Chellakumar promised to appoint new District Congress Committee heads within a month

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CM’s Puri visit a political gimmick, says Congress

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: The state Congress Sunday alleged that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik’s recent visit to Puri was an effort to gain political mileage ahead of the by-polls.

Party leader Suresh Routray termed the visit as a ‘political drama.’ “The Chief Minister had been inside his home for the last eight months with his five staffers. What kind of development this leader can bring in? When the whole state was suffering due to the pandemic the CM hardly ventured out of his home,” Routray said.

“With the by-polls to two Assembly constituencies round the corner, the BJD chief thought of coming out. It was nothing but a political gimmick to visit Puri before elections. His government failed to bring in changes in the constituencies where it is fighting the elections. It was the Congress government which thought of these places and brought development for the people,” the senior Congress leader said.

The BJP state leadership, meanwhile, has accused the Chief Minister of misleading the people on the issue of aerial survey of flood



LAUNCHING A TIRADE

State Congress leader Suresh Routray termed the Puri visit of Chief Minister as a ‘political drama’ as the by-polls to two Assembly constituencies are round the corner

The BJP state leadership, meanwhile, has accused the Chief Minister of misleading the people on the issue of aerial survey of flood affected areas amid a raging controversy

affected areas amid a raging controversy. The party has now sought response from the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO) on the matter. BJP leader Prithiviraj Harichandan said, “The state government is trying to keep mum on the issue of the aerial visit of the Chief Minister to oversee the flood situation in the state recently.” “I want to know why is the government silent when the controversy erupted following an RTI

revelation. It will be like cheating the people from flood-affected region if the Chief Minister is wrong on the issue,” Harichandan said. The BJD did not respond to the issue. The Chief Minister Saturday had made a visit to Puri to review some ongoing projects in the temple town. He also is said to have directed his officials to take steps to streamline darshan of the Srimandir deities and make it hassle free when the temple reopens.

BeMC gears up to tackle rain

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Oct 18: A low pressure over Bay of Bengal from Monday is likely to trigger heavy to very heavy rainfall in the southern districts of the state, a report said.

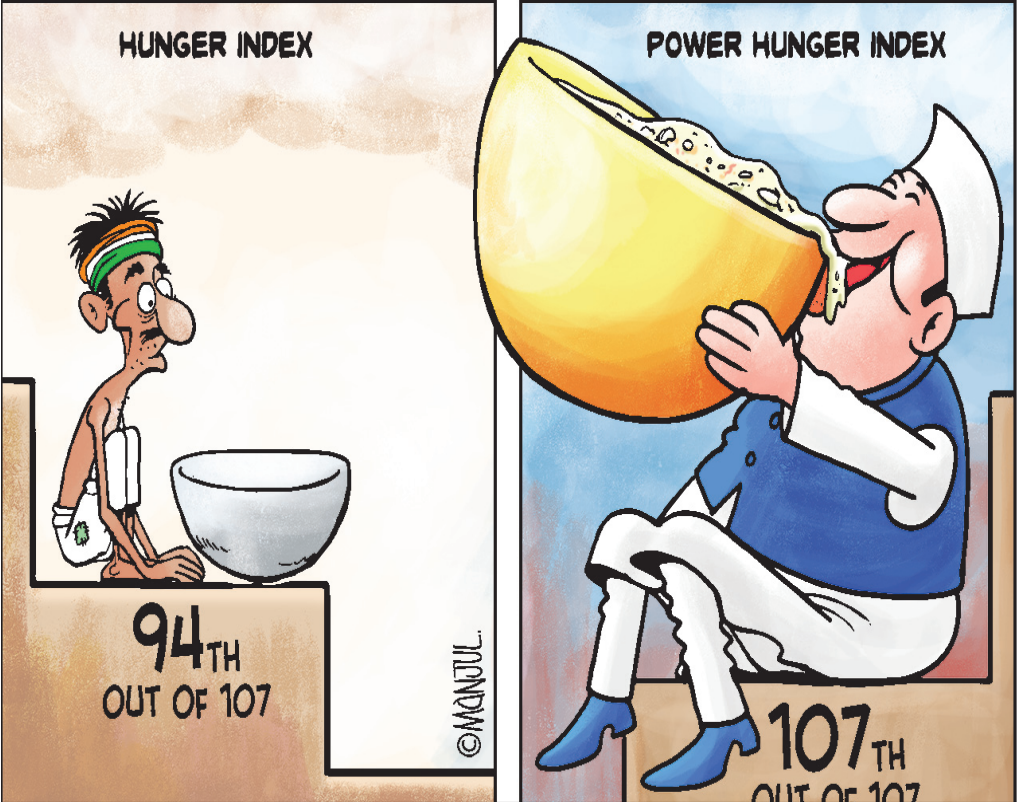
In view of the weather condition, the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) has made extensive preparations to combat any kind of eventuality. As part of its measures, the civic body has opened a 24-hour control room and formed three-member disaster management committees in each ward of the Silk City. Each committee will be managed by a nodal officer and assisted by four-member cluster nodal officers.

The Indian Metrological department has predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall in most of the state including the southern districts due to the low pressure. It is apprehended that 10 low-lying areas, 20 slums and 1308 houses are likely to be affected in the low-pressure triggered rainfall.

BeMC commissioner Siddheswar Baliram Bondar stressed on protecting the lives and properties of people living in slums and low-lying areas in the city.

The commissioner informed about the micro-plan prepared to tackle the disaster to all the officers and officials present in the meeting.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Another scribe succumbs to Covid in Keonjhar dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patana, Oct 18: Senior journalist from Keonjhar district Dhiren Kumar Rout succumbed to COVID-19 Sunday. He was 62.

Rout, a resident of Keonjhar town, breathed his last while undergoing treatment at a Cuttack-based private hospital.

Fondly called ‘Kandiri bhai’, Rout was well-known as an organiser apart from being a journalist. He was one of the founder members of Cassandra Cultural Centre and started a theatre festival in the district.

Rout was taken ill a few days back. He tested positive for COVID-19 following which he was hospitalised in Bhubaneswar and was released several days later. However, he complained of lungs related ailments. The journalist fell ill for the second



time and was admitted to a hospital in Cuttack. He breathed his last Sunday morning while under treatment.

Journalists from Keonjhar have urged the state government to give family members of the deceased Rs 15,00,000 as ‘corona warrior assistance’ as committed by the CM.

Pregnant woman carried on cot to hospital

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chandahandi, Oct 18: Yet another incident of poor road connectivity playing with the lives of people living in remote areas of the state surfaced Sunday after a pregnant woman had to be carried on a cot to avail health services in Nabarangpur district.

The incident was reported from Bhelukote village under Patakhalia panchayat. According to sources, Bodei Santa from this village experienced labour pain Sunday morning. Even though her family members attempted to get an ambulance, weak phone signal delayed their



plans for two hours to take the woman to the hospital.

Left with no options, the family members with the help of some

villagers placed the lady on a cot and carried her for nearly three kilometres to get an auto-rickshaw.

The woman was then taken to

the Chandahandi Community Health Centre where she delivered a baby boy. In a similar incident, another pregnant woman from Gaurajharia village under Patakhalia panchayat in Chandahandi block was carried on a cot to the hospital with the help of an ambulance driver. The woman gave birth to a baby in the jungle before reaching the ambulance.

Locals said that there are no motorable roads to their village. Even though they have been struggling with the same issue for decades, the administration is yet to take any measure to build an all-weather motorable road.

Micro-compost plants in Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Oct 18: The Sambalpur Municipal Corporation will establish six micro-compost plants in the town and the projects are on their last leg, a report said.

The micro-compost plants are being built as part of a waste management programme by the civic body at different places of the town. These plants will become operational from December, sources in the civic body said.

The micro-compost plants will be managed and operated by women self-help groups which will benefit from them financially. The solid wastes used in manufacturing of compost will help in fight pollution in the area.

The civic body is also constructing material recovery centre facilities (MRFs) along with the micro-compost plants. In the first phase, the micro-compost plants will be constructed at Rasanpur, Chanrpur, Balibandha, Durgapali, Burla and Hirakud while recovery centre facilities will be constructed at three places to destroy non-bio-degradable materials such as plastic, polythene, aluminium, iron and glass.

These plants will segregate wastes collected from different households in the town and use them in manufacturing of compost for use in agriculture, the civic body said.

The vegetable peelings will be segregated and put inside a separate tank for a fortnight for use in manufacturing of compost. Later,

the civic body will supply the compost to local market for sale among farmers for which arrangements have been made.

Sources said the civic body collects over 100 tonnes of solid waste from different places in the town under its jurisdiction. Over 55 tonnes of solid waste collected can be put to use in manufacturing of compost. Each plant constructed at an expenditure of Rs 79 lakh has the capacity to manufacture 5 tonnes of compost.

When contacted, Subhankar Mohanty, enforcement officer of SMC, said that construction of compost plants are on the last leg and they are expected to become operational by December after installation of machines in the plants.

TURBULENT SEA



The sea surface at Gopalpur remained rough Sunday under the influence of low-pressure in the Bay of Bengal **OP PHOTO**

Jumbo tramples man to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuagaon, Oct 18: Elephants from Jharkhand again unleashed a reign of terror in the bordering areas of Sundargarh district while an elderly person was trampled to death by an elephant near Banki village under Bisra forest range and Nuagaon block, Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Krishna Malar, 60, a native of Manhorpur in Jharkhand and a resident of Banki village. On being informed, Bisra ranger Manik Hansda and Bisra police rushed to the spot and took stock of the situation. A case was registered and the body sent for post-mortem.



Malar was staying in the house of Ganjua Oram in Banki village for the last three to four years. The incident occurred when he was returning home after relieving himself at a nearby nullah.

He came face to face with an elephant which trampled him to death. Villagers rushed to the spot and informed the police and forest officials. The locals alleged that a herd of eight to 10 elephants has unleashed a reign of terror in the villages after again straying into the area over the last few days. They demanded the forest officials to intervene and drive away the animals.

LIFE CONFINED IN A STRAITJACKET

Tribal families have been struggling over the years sans basic amenities at Marshalguda village in Kalimela block of Malkangiri district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Oct 18: Seventy-four years have passed since Independence but there are villages in Malkangiri district where development remains a distant dream.

Marshalguda village tucked away amid forests in Pusuguda panchayat under Kalimela block is a case in point. Inhabitants of this village comprising 20 tribal families have been struggling over the years sans basic amenities. For the villagers, the life has been something like being confined in a straitjacket.

The picture of neglect is quite visible from a narrow foot track, that meanders between outcrops and through dense forests up to this remote village. People carrying loads on heads and bicycles trying to negotiate with the narrow foot track between the crags is a routine scene here.

It was learnt that about 16 tribal organisations had staged protests in the past, seeking steps for the development of their areas, life, livelihood, and rights on water, forest and land, but most of them are still living in deprivation.

“Many of our basic problems have not been resolved till date, even though we have been drawing the at-



A man of Pusuguda negotiating with a foot track passing between rocks

tention of the state and central governments. We are suffering in the absence of basic facilities like road, drinking water, educational institutions,” the villagers lamented.

They alleged that the backwardness is visible everywhere in the village while welfare and social security schemes are out of their bounds.

In the monsoon, life is completely paralysed when they have to face miseries caused by two creeks that overflow out into the entire areas. Commuting goes for a toss while patients needing emergency health-care are carried on cots on slippery and muddy tracks before crossing the two creeks on way to a remote hospital, they pointed out.

“We have to come out of the village to the panchayat office and Malkangiri-Motu road for routine work,” they added.

“We have neither a school nor an Anganwadi centre for our kids. About 30 children of our village trek through forests to an Anganwadi centre and a school in another village, about 3 km away. Kids have to get education anyway. It is also risky affair for kids to go to a distant school. The government has not yet thought of set-

ting up a school in the village,” they rued.

The village doesn’t even have a tube well. Given such a situation, people are bound to consume contaminated water of creeks.

The BDO was not available for comment.

Block chairperson Mala Madhi said, “Earlier, Pusuguda was under Padia block. It was brought under the Kalimela block a few years ago. We will look into the problems of the village and take steps immediately.”



Women collecting drinking water from a creek

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, R.W.S. & S. DIVISION, GAJAPATI
PARALAKHEMUNDI, ODISHA
Email-eerwssgjp@gmail.com, Ph.No.-06815-224803
QUOTATION CALL NOTICE NO.15 OF 2020-21
No.O-464: Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Gajapati on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites sealed quotations from the registered manufacturers/authorised dealers/reputed firms for supply of ISI marked steel tubes as given below. The sealed quotations will be received in the tender box from dtd.20.10.2020 to dtd.28.10.2020 upto 2.00 P.M. during the office hours of all working days in the Office of the Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Gajapati and will be opened on dtd.28.10.2020 at 3.30 P.M. by the undersigned in presence of the bidders or their authorised representatives.
Schedule of quantity

Sl. No.	Description of item	Quantity	Unit	Rate in figure	Words
1	ISI marked steel tubes to be used in water wells of type electric resistance welder (ERW) conforming to IS-4270/2001 with subsequent amendments. If any having length of 3.05 mtrs cutting tolerance (-0.00 mtr.+0.05 mtr.) and both sides beveled. The angle of bevel shall be 15° in one end and 45° in other end. The fin must be removed through out inside the pipe. Nominal bore of 200 mm dia with wall thickness-6.40mm.				
	8" (200 mm dia) ERW MS Pipe	40.00	MT		
2	ISI marked steel tubes to be used in water wells of type electric resistance welder (ERW) conforming to IS-4270/2001 with subsequent amendments. If any having length of 3.05 mtrs. cutting tolerance (-0.00 mtr.+0.05 mtr.) and both sides beveled. The angle of bevel shall be 15° in one end and 45° in other end. The fin must be removed through out inside the pipe. Nominal bore of 125 mm dia with wall thickness- 5.40 mm.				
	5" (125 mm dia) ERW MS Pipe	10.00	MT		

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1) The bidders are required to deposit EMD & Security deposit of 1% of the bid value in the shape of NSC/KVP/PPOT/DTS of any nationalized bank pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Gajapati. 2) The bidders shall furnish true copies of the PAN Card and GST Registration Certificate along with his quotation failing which the quotations will not be accepted. The original certificates are to be produced before the Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Gajapati at the time of opening of tender paper. The sub dealers must produce the authorization from the dealer and their dealership certificate also. 3) Rates: The rate should be quoted FOR destination at Sub-Divisional store at Paralakhemundi including all charges but excluding GST as applicable. 4) Period of Delivery: The materials should be delivered to the consignee's store within 30 days from the date of issue of supply order. 5) The eligible bidders must furnish the manufacture test certificate at the time of supply of materials, failing which the materials cannot be accepted. 6) All materials must be guaranteed against any kind of manufacturing defect for a period one year from the date of receipt of materials within which all defective materials must be replaced by the agency at his own cost. The inspection of materials will be done by the supplier at his own cost. 7) The offer quoted shall be valid for three calendar months from the date of receipt of quotation. 8) The quotation received beyond the scheduled time and date will not be considered. The conditional quotation/quotation through e-mail will not be accepted, if last date of receipt & opening happens to be a holiday then the next working day shall be considered for receipt & opening of quotations at the same time and venue. Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the quotations without assigning any reason thereof. OIPR-25025/11/0014/2021
Sd./- Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Gajapati



There is no greater courage than that of recognising one's own mistakes.

THE MOTHER

Season of gloom

The season of festivals is a season of joy. This year, Covid-19 pandemic is spreading a shadow over this season – a gloom for the first time in living memory. A total curb on these festivals is unimaginable but public activities will need to be restrained in view of the social distancing norms now prevalent across the world. Other countries, most of them in Europe, have started preparations for a second wave of the virus. Urban centers of France and Italy have already restarted lockdowns while Britain has been toying with ideas of shutdowns.

An Indian government panel has cautioned against any relaxation in safety protocols during the festival season, saying this could result in a major spike. The chill of the winter itself might help the virus spread. A dire warning is that worse comes to worse, it could be some 26 lakh cases in a month's time, while infection figure so far totals at 75 lakh and deaths of 1.14 lakh. The end of the festival season and the chimes of the New Year could also signal the start of a new phase in Covid spike while control through a set of vaccines arriving in the market seems very doubtful. The Russians with their vaccine Sputnik have most probably chosen India as human trial country. The eagerness of the people to take it and the desperation of the Union government, coupled together, may spell disaster for us all.

The season starting from August spread over autumn and winter is thick with some religious spirit while devotion is far away. Principal among them, the Durga Puja and the Navratri, is spread over nine nights normally of high action. This and Kali Puja are more prominent in the eastern part of the country while the Ganesh festival set in August-September has its normal focus on the western region. All these are generally marked by massive and feverish street shows. So is Christmas, by end December, marked by Carol singing, church gatherings and midnight mass. This time, all these must be planned small-scale and it is imperative that safety aspects should triumph over these religious concerns.

This kind of caution may not seem or sound sensible to certain types of people. The US has seen No Maskers agitating against wearing of masks. Resultant high death rates in America was for the whole world to see. President Trump was seen as a champion of No Maskers by his supporters. Similarly, the Governor of Maharashtra, Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, writing to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, has expressed cynical surprise that while the leader of the Shiv Sena used to vouch in the name of Hindutva yet, as CM he is unwilling to permit re-opening of temples for prayers across the state. CM Thackeray has brilliantly replied back to the Governor saying he does not require any certificates from anyone about his beliefs and credentials but he is responsible for the well being of the citizens of his state. Like Trump confusing facts and misguiding Americans on how to handle the disease, we also have, amongst us, a constitutional post holder as a Governor who is capable of suggesting wrong actions to the government.

What Amartya studied

In the season of Nobel Prize declarations, what arouses curiosity is of a Mathematics book studied by Amartya Sen, winner of Nobel in Economics in 1998. The official handle for Nobel Prize shared a picture of Lilavati, a treatise on Mathematics in Sanskrit written in Year 1150 by Bhaskara II in the form of a book named after his daughter. A marvel in lessons, theories, and solving mathematical problems, equations and combinations, the book is often cited as an example of the depths to which knowledge in ancient India was pursued. Little attention is paid to such books by the present generations of the academic community. A reason could also be that not many know Sanskrit, a dead language primarily because of its complexity and difficulty for the ordinary person to grasp it. Its learning requires a humongous amount of time and hard work, which, for the new generation may not prove valuable in enhancing skills and abilities.

Sadly in India, researchers, scientists and students of higher studies are rarely encouraged. Education for most Indians culminates in a job where work load is negligible. It may be because of such an environment that people like Amartya Sen and Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee, among the few Nobel Laureates born in India have their academic and research base now in the West. Indian conditions rarely accord the right climate to such brains to make a mark or prove themselves.

WISDOM CORNER

- He who has a why to live can bear almost any how. **FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE**
- If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything. **MARK TWAIN**
- You can disagree without being disagreeable. **RUTH BADER GINSBURG**

WORDSWORTH

Ullage

This is most commonly encountered as a technical word of the beverage technologist, the wine merchant or publican, meaning the unfilled space in a barrel or wine bottle. The word comes ultimately from the Latin oculus, an eye, used in a figurative sense by the Romans for the bung hole of a barrel. In the medieval period, this was taken into French as oeil, from which a verb ouiller was created, to fill a barrel up to the bung hole. (When wine ferments in the barrel, there's a slow loss of liquid due to evaporation through the wood. It's important to keep the barrels full, as otherwise undesirable bacteria and yeasts can get in and cause unwanted side fermentations.) In turn, a noun ouillage was created, which was the immediate source of our word, first recorded in Norman English about 1300, at first in the sense of the amount of liquid needed to fill a barrel up to the bung hole. By an obvious extension, ullage came to refer to any amount by which a barrel is unfilled, perhaps because some of the contents have been used. The word has been transferred into the vocabulary of rocket scientists to mean much the same: the unfilled space at the top of liquid fuel tanks, left to permit the fuel to expand with changes in temperature. The space between the top of the propellant load and the top of the tank is known as ullage space.

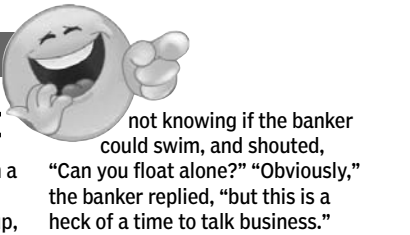
Ultimo

Ultimo means last month. Together with instant (the current month) and proximo (next month) it's an example of an outdated commercial language. Few businessmen would today begin a letter "With reference to yours of the 14th ultimo," or "yours of the 23rd instant," or "Please attend this office for interview on the 11th proximo," but it was once standard and taught in the best books. All three were commonly abbreviated, to ult, inst and prox respectively. Ultimo and proximo are both Latin, shortened forms of ultimomense, in the previous month, and proximomense, in the next month. Many reference works say inst is from Latin instantemense, in the current month. But the Oxford English Dictionary points out that it has always been expanded to the English word instant, in the specialised meaning of current.

LOL

Banker in a sailboat

The banker fell overboard from a friend's sailboat. The friend grabbed a life preserver, held it up,



not knowing if the banker could swim, and shouted, "Can you float alone?" "Obviously," the banker replied, "but this is a heck of a time to talk business."

FOCUS AFGHANISTAN

PULLS & COUNTER-PULLS



Saeed Naqvi

A SUPER POWER ENTERS A MAJOR THEATRE WITH ONE SET OF INTERESTS BUT, OVER A PERIOD OF TIME, DEVELOPS MULTIPLE COMPELLING INTERESTS

President Donald Trump and his National Security Adviser, Robert C. O'Brien are aching to announce troop withdrawal from Afghanistan as a last-minute sweetener for the American voter, rather like floral touches in an Indian wedding. General Mark A Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is probably looking at life beyond Trump, unless there is a Second Coming. He is talking of ending the Afghan war 'responsibility,' which means, "We are not in a hurry."

When President Obama had set firm deadlines for withdrawal, I made an extensive survey of the country for the Observer Research Foundation. I had concluded that the US is "not leaving Afghanistan today; it is not leaving it tomorrow." A super power enters a major theatre with one set of interests but, over a period of time, develops multiple compelling interests.

Why would a country, which is directly involved in 14 shooting wars in various parts of the globe, walk away from its longest war ever without any identifiable gain. Withdrawing empty handed would be an admission of defeat. Since this is not on the cards, the only conclusion one can draw is that a plan for the future is not being disclosed for now.

US involvement in Afghanistan has been a great tragedy, but its frequent false starts in a rush to the exit door and announce withdrawal is material for a spoof by someone like Michael Moore. Take for instance the peace agreement the US signed with Afghan Taliban on February 29 in Doha. So eager was US negotiator Zalmay Khalilzad to flourish a peace agreement just when the election campaign in the US was picking up, that he would have inserted into the agreement anything the Taliban wished. Read the title headline of that agreement: it is patently absurd.

"Agreement for bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan which is not recognised by the United States as a state and is known as the Taliban and the United States of



Why would a country, which is directly involved in 14 shooting wars in various parts of the globe, walk away from its longest war ever without any identifiable gain. Withdrawing empty handed would be an admission of defeat. Since this is not on the cards, the only conclusion one can draw is that a plan for the future is not being disclosed for now

America." The fragility of the agreement is transparent in the pulls and counter-pulls that have obviously gone into the headline. There is unbridgeable distance on Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's role, for instance. The Taliban will not talk to Ghani whom they describe quite brazenly as a US 'toady'

Ghani deludes himself if he imagines he is being 'firm.' He is coming across to the world at large as a leader with a very thick skin. New Delhi wishes to keep appearances. In the trapeze act, South Block does not wish to be seen loosening the clasp of Ghani's hand mid-air. The zero sum game with Pakistan may operate as a factor but, in deference to realism, this is not a defining one.

If New Delhi is seen to be digging in for Ghani, it will only find itself embarrassed down the line because it is clear as daylight that intra Afghan talks will not move unless Ghani steps aside. By visiting Islamabad and New Delhi, Abdullah Abdullah is positioning himself to step in as soon as the

opportunity arises. This is not a process that is likely to reach fruition before the end of the year. So, no confetti on election eve.

One of the advantages the US extracts from its position of being a superpower is to keep making mistakes almost willfully without any fear of being called to account. It is almost a forgotten story that in December 2001, NATO helped by Russia, Iran, India and the Northern Alliance headquartered in the Panjshir valley defeated Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Panjshir was also the operational headquarters for the Tajik hero Ahmad Shah Masoud. So strong was Masoud's opposition to the Taliban and Al Qaeda that he travelled extensively to acquaint various international fora of the danger that Al Qaeda and Taliban posed to Afghanistan. His address to the European Parliament in the summer of 2001, months before 9/11 was historic by any yardstick. Complete silence on this speech of Masoud is surprising. His forces had picked up chatter about a possible Al Qaeda action in the

American mainland. He was speaking in Brussels. On September 9, precisely two days before September 11 (9/11), two Arabs, disguised as journalists, visited him in his hideout near the Tajik border for an interview. Their passports, it was revealed much later, had been forged in Brussels. These 'journalists,' while saying goodbye to Masoud, detonated their vests. All three died instantly. Two days later, the twin towers came down in New York. Is there nothing here that deserves investigation?

Maybe not before the US elections, but is the curtain is about to be brought down on US involvement? Whether Trump or Joe Biden win the election, China, Russia, Iran are likely to remain America's adversarial concerns.

A little over a year ago, just when US military involvement in Syria was winding down, one common chatter was about Jabhat al Nusra and its variants being flown to newer theatres of action. Russia's deputy minister of foreign affairs Morgulov Igor Vladimirovich told a high powered conference in New Delhi, with Zalmay Khalilzad in attendance, that militants were being flown from Syria to Northern Afghanistan. "Only the Afghan government and the US control the Afghan air space." The blame cannot be placed at any other door. Khalilzad mounted a token protest but nothing more. The following Friday, Iran's Supreme leader Ali Khamenei was more specific: Daesh groups were being flown to Afghanistan. The distinguished chronicler of the West Asian scene, Robert Fisk of the Independent made similar allegations. The allegation fitted neatly into the thesis that militants, trained to kill, cannot be sent to the slaughterhouse. They have to be deployed in other theatres where they are proximate to Muslim population into which militancy has to be injected to stir up the Islamic cauldron – Xinxiang, the Caucasus and a handful of Sunni enclaves in Iran.

IANS

SPECTRUM HUMANITY

We cannot take science for granted

Lars Heikensten, Marcia McNutt, and Johan Rockström

THOUGH SCIENCE CANNOT PROVIDE ALL THE ANSWERS, IT CLEARLY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL WE HAVE

The announcement of this year's Nobel Prize laureates should remind us of the many contributions basic science has made to contemporary life. With COVID-19 ravaging much of humanity, and the world anxiously awaiting a breakthrough that can end the pandemic, we can no longer take science for granted. And the global science community, for its part, has risen to the occasion in unprecedented ways, not only to develop vaccines, therapies, and diagnostics, but also to improve our understanding of the virus and the best strategies to protect ourselves.

But the world is also afflicted by other crises that must not be ignored. Last month was the warmest September ever recorded. Tens of millions of people around the world are already experiencing the disastrous effects of human-induced climate change, from raging wildfires and rising sea levels to dangerous heat waves, droughts, and floods. There are also deepening social and economic crises. The pandemic has battered national economies, exacerbated many forms of inequality, and sown distrust and social unrest around the world. We rely ever more on technology to conduct our daily lives, educate our children, and connect with each

other, but we have yet to do enough to prevent the same technology from being used to amplify dangerous misinformation, inflame social unrest, and leave vulnerable communities even further behind. Just as scientists and researchers have come together in unprecedented ways to fight the pandemic, so must we mobilise our best and brightest minds to tackle these other global emergencies. Like COVID-19, none can be stopped anywhere until it is stopped everywhere.

Drawing lessons from the global pandemic response and recovery efforts, our organisations will host a virtual Nobel Prize Summit next spring, with the theme "Our Planet, Our Future." The event will bring together Nobel laureates, leading thinkers, policymakers, business innovators, and youth leaders to discuss how progress can be made against climate change, inequality, and the potential harms of powerful new technologies. The ultimate goal will be to build a more resilient, sustainable future for everyone.

In our Anthropocene epoch, we acknowledge that humankind has become the single most important force acting on the planet. We also should recognise that our own encroachments on nature are the common denominator underlying today's global crises. There is a

growing body of evidence to show that not only climate change, but also disease outbreaks, are linked to human development and biodiversity loss. As natural buffers between humans and disease-carrying animals erode, pandemics as bad as the current one could become even more likely. Because we live in such an interconnected world, what starts as a local public-health emergency can rapidly evolve into a global economic crisis with far-reaching repercussions.

The current crisis thus should be a transformative moment for humanity. Though science cannot provide all the answers, it clearly is the most important tool we have, not only for stopping the pandemic, but also for building resilience into our infrastructure and economy.

The pandemic also has offered many lessons that will be useful in preparing for a future marked by climate change, biodiversity loss, technological disruption, and inequality. For example, as we saw in many places, nature quickly 'bounced back' during the early stages of the pandemic, owing to society-wide lockdowns. We also saw that the virus and its broader ramifications disproportionately burdened the most vulnerable citizens, including racial minorities and the poor. We now must con-

sider what these unequal effects tell us about our current infrastructure and social arrangements.

We have also learned that public trust in science is crucial, as is a basic understanding of risk and uncertainty. Without public buy-in, there will be little chance of effective political management of future crises. Misinformation, widely disseminated with the help of today's information and communication technologies, has created an 'infodemic' within the pandemic, reducing public trust in science.

Although our celebrations of this year's Nobel laureates will be held virtually, they will be no less enthusiastic than in the past. And, despite the infodemic, most people's appreciation of science has grown during this crisis. Scientists have come together like never before. To overcome the pandemic and meet the other global challenges we face, we must follow their example – and their lead.

Lars Heikensten is Executive Director of the Nobel Foundation. Marcia McNutt is President of the US National Academy of Sciences. Johan Rockström is Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

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Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
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Odia University

Sir, A couple of years ago, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone for the proposed Odia University at 'Bakulabana'. It was done on the 141st birth anniversary of late Gopabandhu Das. The government had decided to acquire 28.74 acres of land. Since the land Bakulabana is attached with the rituals of Srimandir and Sakhi Gopal temple, the local residents did not favour this. The administration decided not to occupy any part of Bakulabana but construct the university with the remaining 9.60 acres of land. Till date the university has not materialised. The higher education department has purchased land there and invited an architectural design from the chief engineer. There stands the matter. Hope is that this will be taken forward in all seriousness.

Santosh Kumar Satapathy, PARALAKHEMUNDI

Hail Balwinder

Sir, I am saddened by the demise of Balwinder, the Shaurya Chakra awardee, who was shot dead by a gang of assailants in Punjab. It casts serious aspersions on the Punjab government which withdrew the security cover provided to him a year ago, despite knowing that he fought many valiant battles against terrorists and brought laurels to Punjab government. Sad.

Satya Behara, BOLANGIR

Career counselling

Sir, In a society where career counselling is a luxury and students have one too many options, the Strengthening of Teaching-learning And Results for States (STARS) project has come as a new hope. The Ministry of Education took to Twitter to announce the STARS project envisaged under the national education policy which aims to "revolutionise the educational kaleidoscope" by emphasising on local school governance, entrepreneurship, apprenticeship, internship and most importantly introducing a proper "career counselling programme." CBSE and ICSE had made it compulsory for its schools to appoint a full-time professional counsellor. However, students from various state boards remain deprived of professional career guidance. Students after 10th and 12th exams are confused by varying opinions of their parents, teachers and counselling portals and apps. They are unaware of admission notifications of colleges, weightage of their extra-curricular certificates, proper approach for the career of their choice and viable alternatives. Career counselling will help students make judicious career choices.

Aryaputra Parthasarathi Das, BHUBANESWAR

Sena welcomes Shah’s stand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 18: Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut Sunday welcomed Union Home Minister Amit Shahs remark that Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari could have chosen his words better while writing to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on reopening places of worship in the state.

Talking to a TV channel, Raut also said that with Shah’s statement, the Shiv Sena has put the issue to rest.

Koshyari recently wrote to Thackeray on reopening places of worship in the state and asked if the Shiv Sena president had ‘suddenly turned secular,’ ‘triggering a war of words between the governor and the chief minister.

Shah on Saturday told a news channel that “Koshyari could have chosen his words better”.

Reacting to it, Raut said Shah is the country’s Home minister and speaks with responsibility and caution. The Raj Bhavan and the office of governor is a constitutional institution and falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs, he said.



DANVE SLAMMED FOR CRITICISING MAHA CM

Jalna: A day after Union minister Raosaheb Danve asked why Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray does not step out of his house and visit rain-hit parts of the state, Shiv Sena leader Arjun Khotkar on Sunday said the BJP should stop playing politics over everything. Khotkar also said that Thackeray is on a visit to Solapur and Parbhani districts to review the situation after heavy rains. Talking to mediapersons during a programme in Paithan in Aurangabad district on Saturday, Danve had criticised Thackeray saying that those in power are supposed to meet the distressed people, but Thackeray does not step out of his house due to the pandemic.

"The governors letter followed by the chief minister's reply was an unavoidable controversy and we haven't started it. But, we are sat-

isfied with the Union Home Ministers stand and thank him for understanding the reason of our anger," said Raut.

With Shah’s statement, the Shiv Sena has put the issue to rest, the party’s chief spokesperson said.

Raut dismissed speculation that Shah was being soft on the Shiv Sena, a year it snapped its ties with the BJP.

“There is nothing political. What Shah spoke was in line with the Constitution of India,” he said.

On Shahs comments that the case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput’s death should have been handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) earlier, Raut asked, “Why should that have been done when the Mumbai Police are capable of probing it?”

“Before the investigation was completed, the case went to the CBI. What has the CBI found? Truth will come out,” the Shiv Sena leader said.

Rajput (34) was found hanging at his apartment in Bandra area of Mumbai on June 14 this year.

Raut also said he agreed with Shah’s observation that drugs and Bollywood should not be seen together.

“It (drugs) is a global menace which should be nipped in the bud,” the Sena MP said.

Maha road accidents decrease

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagpur, Oct 18: The number of road accidents in Maharashtra has come down in the last three years with the help of its ‘intelligent traffic management system’ and steps taken to check over-speeding, as per the state highway police.

Last year, the state recorded a drop of 8.47 per cent in all road accidents and fatalities also came down by 3.56 per cent, according to statistics of the highway police.

The state recorded 39,878 road accidents in 2016, and the number dropped to 36,056 in 2017, 35,717 in 2018 and 32,925 in 2019, as per the data.

The data showed that ‘without injury accidents’ also decreased in the state in the last three years.

A total of 6,271 without injury accidents were recorded in the state in 2016 and the figure came down to 3,568 in 2019, a record drop of 43.10 per cent.

The state recorded 11,787 fatal accidents last year as compared to 12,098 in 2018, a drop of 2.57 per cent. The road fatalities also came down from 13,648 in 2018 to 12,788 last year, a decrease of 3.56 per cent.



In 2016, a total of 12,935 people were killed in 11,780 fatal accidents, while 12,511 people were killed in 11,454 fatal accidents in 2017, as per the data.

A senior Maharashtra highway police official told PTI that the drop in number of road accidents was the result of efforts taken by the highway and state police over the years.

The Mumbai-Pune Expressway, and Pune, Solapur, Ahmednagar and Nashik districts have been contributing around 30 per cent of the road accidents in Maharashtra, he said.

“The highway police had introduced the intelligent traffic management system on the Mumbai-

Pune Expressway. As a result, the number fatal accidents reduced on the expressway from 96 in 2018 to 74 last year,” he said.

Similarly, fatalities on this expressway also came down to 92 last year as compared to 110 in 2018, he said.

The official further said the number of ‘black spots’ also reduced to 1,000 from 1,050 with corrective measures taken by the highway police.

“This helped the police in making roads safer for users,” he said.

‘Black spots’ are the spots where five road accidents involving fatalities and grievous injuries were reported during the last three years.

166 FROM GOVT’S PRAYAS INITIATIVE SHINE IN NEET



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, Oct 18: One hundred and sixty-six students from Prayas Kanya government-run Prayas residential schools, several of them hailing from areas affected by Naxal violence, cleared the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), results of which were declared recently, an official said on Sunday.

Shammi Abidi, director of the state Tribal Welfare Department, told PTI that 367 students from these schools had appeared for NEET.

“Of the 166 who cleared the exam, 38 are girls from Prayas Kanya Residential School Raipur; 33 students are from the facility in Durg, 26 from the one in Bastar; 24 from Bilaspur, 19 from Raipur; 17 from Ambikapur and nine from Kanker,” she said.

“Besides, 34 students from Naxal-hit Dantewada and 15 from Jashpur, who are being provided education under other initiatives of the local administration, have cleared NEET,” she said.

The Prayas programme was launched in 2010 under the Tribal Welfare Department with an aim to provide education to students from the Naxal-hit, tribal and backward districts.

At present, there are nine such schools in eight districts of the state.

Students from Naxal-hit districts who clear Class X with good marks are given admission in Class XI at Prayas where they undergo special coaching, along with regular school education, for securing entrance in medical and engineering colleges and other courses.

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel wished them a bright future.

Amit Jogi’s nomination papers found ‘invalid’

The nomination papers of Jogi’s wife Richa Jogi, who had filed nomination for the same seat, was also cancelled by the district collector on the same ground

AGENCIES

Raipur, Oct 18: Nomination papers filed by the chief of Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (JCC) Amit Jogi for the upcoming bypolls on Marwahi constituency, a traditional seat of the leader and his father and former chief minister Ajit Jogi, was rejected by the district collector recently.

Jogi’s Scheduled Tribe (ST) certificate filed with the nomination papers was found “invalid”. The nomination papers of Jogi’s wife Richa Jogi, who had filed nomination for the same seat, was also cancelled by the district collector on the same ground.

The bypolls for the Marwahi assembly seat, which was empty after the death of former CM Ajit Jogi, will be held on November 3

“After scrutiny, the nomination papers of Amit Jogi and Richa Jogi have been cancelled,” an election official of district said.

A Chhattisgarh-government constituted scrutiny committee headed by DD Singh, secretary of state’s

Scheduled Tribe and Scheduled Caste development department, in its order dated October 15, 2020, had cancelled Jogi’s tribal caste certificate.

The bypolls on the Marwahi assembly seat, which was empty after the death of former CM Ajit Jogi, will be held on November 3. The ruling Congress party has given a ticket to Dr KL Dhruve from the seat, while Dr Gambhir Singh is contesting on Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) ticket.

Amit Jogi, reacting on the rejection of his and his wife’s nomination papers, in a written statement



alleged that the district collector took the action on directions from chief minister Bhupesh Baghel. He said he challenge the decision legally.

“I have full faith in the judiciary and the people’s court, and justice will be done with Jogi family as usual,” he said.

“The high-level caste scrutiny committee had suddenly cancelled the certificate. Everyone, except me, was aware of the development. There is conspiracy going on against me at the behest of Chhattisgarh CM. The country functions according to law and constitution not by revenge. The government has finally admitted that it is impossible to defeat Jogi in people’s court,” Jogi stated.

How Ch’garh remains ‘Cleanest State’ in country

The connect from governance to delivery along with persuasive engagement of functionaries at every level yielded favourable outcome

AGENCIES

Chhattisgarh, Oct 18: The collaborative effort of the public and officials on a meticulously rolled out strategy by the Chhattisgarh government on the ‘Clean India Mission’ ensured a success story in the state.

The connect from governance to delivery along with persuasive engagement of functionaries at every level yielded favourable outcome.

Perseverance, discipline and focus made the mantra that enabled the Chhattisgarh government to remain consistent in its performance as India’s ‘Cleanest State’ for consecutive years of 2019 and 2020 in the world’s largest sanitation survey.

The spirit of cleanliness among beneficiaries virtually turned into a movement under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM).

It’s no mean feat for Chhattisgarh’s accomplishment to be rated as ‘leading’ during the evaluation done on various specifications and parameters under the extensive surveys commissioned by the ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

The encouraging community participation remains the key as citizens and self help groups (SHGs)



THE AMBIKAPUR MODEL

CHHATTISGARH HAD EARLIER LAUNCHED A ‘MISSION CLEAN CITY’ -- PILOTTED AT NORTH CHHATTISGARH’S AMBIKAPUR, THE TOWN WHICH WAS AGAIN JUDGED AS THE COUNTRY’S CLEANEST CITY

THE AMBIKAPUR MODEL, IMPLEMENTED ACROSS THE STATE, INCORPORATED LOW COST, SUSTAINABLE AND A DECENTRALISED MECHANISM BASED ON THE PROCESS OF REDUCING, REUSING AND RECYCLING (3-R) OF WASTE

helped in 100 percent source segregation and door-to-door collection of segregated waste.

The urban areas of Chhattisgarh generated around 1,650 tonnes of waste per day which are managed by urban local bodies (ULBs). In pursuance to the solid waste management rules-2016, the Mission Clean City Model has been adopted in all 164 ULBs of the state.

Chhattisgarh had earlier launched a ‘Mission Clean City’ -- piloted at north Chhattisgarh’s Ambikapur, the town which was again judged as the country’s

cleanest city.

It begins right at the primary (initial) stage when Swachta didi (SHG women) get engaged in sorting-out the waste at source (household and commercial areas) ahead of loading it in their rickshaws to be taken to the Garbage Clinic conceived at the Solid Liquid Resource Management (SLRM) centre, where secondary segregation is carried out by another SHG team.

The organic waste is then converted into compost and sold. Papers, plastics, leathers, rubbers, wooden pieces, glass, metals and others

are separated from the bulk garbage at SLRM centre. Such process offers value addition to the waste which are sold from the centre.

Plastic waste is seen as a huge problem and necessitated for a tertiary level plan where through public-private partnership it gets segregated and further processed through machines.

The remaining plastic and other waste that cannot be consumed by any process are supplied to cement industries as Refuse Derived Fuel what works like combustible coal.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 18: NCP chief Sharad Pawar Sunday said the agriculture losses due to the recent floods in parts of western Maharashtra and Marathwada were unprecedented and assured expeditious financial help to the affected farmers.

Addressing a meeting of farmers in Tuljapur-Paranda area of Osmanabad district in Marathwada, the former Union agriculture minister assured them that he would discuss the issue of financial relief with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and also seek assistance from the Centre.

Heavy rains and floods claimed at least 48 lives in Maharashtra’s Pune, Konkan and Aurangabad divisions while crops on lakhs of hectares were damaged extensively due to heavy rains in the last few days, officials said on Friday.

This is unprecedented. The land has been destroyed in such a way that crops cannot be sown again for a couple of years. Floods have destroyed the agricultural economy in this area, Pawar said.

Standing crops have been destroyed and the land has been damaged. Everything needs to be rectified. The state government cannot

do it alone. We will speak to the Centre as well regarding a long-term package and immediate assistance, said Pawar, whose party is a coalition partner in the Thackeray-led state government.

The NCP chief asked farmers not to give up hope.

It is a huge crisis and we all will tide over it unitedly, he said.

Pawar recalled how the region bravely faced the 1993 earthquake in Latur and Osmanabad, with its epicentre at Killari (in Latur), in which nearly 10,000 people



died. We overcame the problems that time and now also, we will rise to the occasion, said Pawar, who was the state’s chief minister at that time. Pawar said the CM has to stay alert on many occasions, one of them being immersion of idols during the Ganesh festival.

Until the last idol is immersed, the chief minister cannot sleep. That day, there was a problem in Panvel (Navi Mumbai) during the immersion and I was busy in discussions with the local administration for resolution of the problem.

It was 3.15 am and I went to sleep. But at 4 am, the doors and windows of my house shook and I realised it was an earthquake. I found out the epicentre was Killari, he recalled.

Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) stated Chhattisgarh's unemployment rate of 2% in Sept was much below the national rate of 6.7%

Several industrial sectors resumed operation in the state from the last week of April onwards under the process of easing lockdown restrictions

of the day quote

I do not need to exhibit my relations with the PM. From the time when my father was in the hospital to his last rites, I can never forget what he (PM) has done for me

CHIRAG PASWAN | LJP PRESIDENT

Standing crops have been destroyed and the land has been damaged. Everything needs to be rectified. The state govt cannot do it alone. We will speak to the Centre as well regarding a long-term package and immediate assistance

SHARAD PAWAR | NCP CHIEF

Fight against the coronavirus outbreak was at a decisive stage and people must adhere to all social distancing norms strictly, including wearing masks. We have to ensure there is no second wave

UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

■ AP sees more recoveries

Amaravati: Andhra Pradesh saw more recoveries than new coronavirus cases during the last 24 hours as 4,591 patients recovered and 3,986 more tested positive, health officials said Sunday. The state's COVID tally mounted to 7,83,132 while the total recoveries climbed to 7,40,229. Eighteen more COVID fatalities in last 24 hours ending 9 am Sunday pushed the death toll to 6,429. The number of active cases in the state stands at 36,474.

■ Major blast in Agra, 3 dead

Agra: A huge blast in a godown full of stockpiles of firecrackers killed three unidentified persons and injured half a dozen people in Agra. The number of casualties could go up after the debris is cleared, police said. The whole area was enveloped in a cloud of smoke and stink. The explosion was heard even two kilometres away. All three succumbed to injuries while being shifted to hospital. Shah Ganj police station officials said the blast took place in New Azam Pada godown, near Sunflower School, close to the Prithvi Nath police chowki.

■ Delhi Police ups security

New Delhi: This festive season is expected to be different for the Delhi Police as they have to ensure security at crowded markets and temples, apart from raising awareness about Covid-19 precautions such as maintaining social-distancing and wearing masks. Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava Saturday was seen holding a crime and Covid-19 review meeting through video conferencing to discuss the law and order arrangements for the festive season, and the police's responsibility in spreading awareness about the pandemic.

■ Elderly priest beaten to death

Azamgarh: An elderly priest was allegedly beaten to death by a man who was in an inebriated condition after the octogenarian refused to give him money to buy liquor, police said Sunday. They said the incident took place on Saturday night in Gulaur village when the priest, Ramchandra Das (80), was returning from a neighbouring village.



The Integrated Flood Warning Systems developed for Mumbai and Chennai are city-specific prediction systems to cater to the needs of coastal cities which will be extended to Kolkata
HARSH VARDHAN | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

'PINK PATROL' IN UP

Amid rising reports of sexual and brutal offences against women everyday, the Uttar Pradesh government has decided to further ramp up efforts to ensure their safety and security with the creation of a special women police unit that will be operational round the clock



'nCoV peak over, India can control it by Feb'

INDIA IS THE SECOND WORST HIT NATION IN TERMS OF COVID-19 CASES AFTER THE US

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, Oct 18: The Covid-19 pandemic can be controlled with minimal active symptomatic infections by February-end next year if all safety protocols are followed, a government-appointed committee has said. The committee, headed by IIT professor M Vidyasagar, was constituted to evolve a national supermodel for Covid-19 progression in order to help the government make short term and medium term plans and decisions.

As part of its study 'Progression of the Covid-19 pandemic in India: prognosis and lockdown impact' published in the Indian Journal of Medical Research, the committee had to quantify the effects of lockdown, impact of migrants returning home on spread of the infection and economic optimization. The committee concluded that India has already crossed its Covid-19 peak in mid-September and will record minimal active symptomatic infections by early next year if



safety protocols are followed.

With a spike of 61,871 cases and 1,033 fresh deaths in last 24 hours, India's tally reached 74,94,551, the Union Health Ministry data said on Sunday. The daily spike is lower than Saturday's 62,211 coronavirus cases. According to the Ministry the recovery rate stands at 88.03 per cent while the fatality rate is 1.52 per cent. India's daily spike has now dropped below that of the US while its daily toll which stopped breaching the 1,000-mark since October 4, is again on the rise.

Out of the total 74,94,552 cases, the active cases dipped by 11,776 since

Saturday taking the total number of active cases to 7,83,311. One the other hand, with over 72,614 new recoveries, the total cured/discharged patients have reached to 65,97,210. While 1,14,031 have lost the battle against the pandemic.

'Local lockdowns not recommended': No fresh lockdowns should be imposed on district or state level to contain the spread of COVID-19 unless There is an imminent danger of healthcare facilities being overwhelmed, according to a government-appointed committee chaired by IIT Hyderabad professor M Vidyasagar. The com-

mittee has also claimed that if all protocols are followed, the pandemic can be controlled by early next year with minimal active symptomatic infections by February-end. The 10-member panel which conducted a study on "Progression of the COVID-19 Pandemic in India: Prognosis and Lockdown Impacts" has pointed out that with no lockdown, the pandemic would have hit India very hard with a peak load of over 1.40 crore cases arriving in June.

'Kerala paying price for gross negligence': With Kerala witnessing a spike in coronavirus infections recently, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Sunday said the state was paying the "price for gross negligence" during Onam festivities when unlocking of services along with an increase in travel for trade and tourism led to the spread of COVID-19. The minister said this ought to serve as a good lesson for all the state governments that were being negligent in planning for the festival season.

Main accused held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ballia/Lucknow, Oct 18: The Uttar Pradesh Police on Sunday arrested three persons, including the main accused, in connection with the killing of a 46-year-old man at a meeting attended by senior administration and police officials in Ballia three days ago, officials said.

The main accused, local BJP leader Dharendra Pratap Singh, was arrested by the UP Special Task Force from state capital Lucknow, while the other two accused were nabbed in Vaishali area of Ballia city, they said.

With this, police have arrested eight people in the case, including five named and three unnamed accused. There are eight named accused and 20-25 unnamed accused in the case. "Dhirendra Pratap Singh, the main accused in the murder of a 46-year-old man in Ballia has been arrested. He was held from Lucknow on Sunday morning near Polytechnic area," IG of Special Task Force (STF) Amitabh Yash told PTI.

The family members of the de-

BALLIA FIRING



ceased Jai Prakash Pal Gama heaved a sigh of relief following the arrest of Dhirendra Pratap Singh. The deceased's brother, however, said, "His arrest came as a relief for us. But Dharendra is a 'dabaang' (strongman). We fear untoward incidents in the future as well." He demanded stringent punishment for the guilty, security for his family, Rs 50 lakh assistance and a government job.

Among the others arrested in the case are Narendra Pratap Singh, the brother of main accused Dharendra Pratap Singh, and Devendra Pratap Singh.

Reading newspapers safe, says Vardhan



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 18: Union minister Harsh Vardhan on Sunday stated that studying newspapers is "utterly safe" throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and stated there isn't a evidence to recommend that they could be a supply of transmission.

During an interplay along with his social media followers on the sixth episode 'Sunday Samvaad',

Vardhan rekindled the enjoyment of getting morning tea with the day by day newspaper in a respondent.

He reassured him that there isn't a scientific proof that proves that novel coronavirus transmission can occur by way of newspapers.

"Reading newspapers is completely safe even during the Covid-19 pandemic," the minister stated.

Earlier this 12 months, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had lauded the position of newspapers throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Prime Minister had stated that newspapers have "tremendous credibility" and by appearing as a hyperlink between the federal government and the individuals, they play a essential position in creating consciousness in regards to the outbreak at each the nationwide and regional ranges.

FESTIVE FERVOUR



A woman shops at New Market area ahead of Durga Puja festival, in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

SECOND WAVE OF FLOODS HIT PARTS OF HYDERABAD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Oct 18: A fresh spell of overnight incessant rains caused flooding Sunday in parts of the city and left a girl dead, days after it witnessed one of the worst deluges following the heaviest downpour in over a century, police and civic officials said.

The latest rains since Saturday evening led to lakes and other water bodies overflowing and triggering flooding of several low-lying areas, including places affected last week, here and on the outskirts, they said.

The Disaster Response Force personnel, the staff of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation and police swung into action since Saturday night itself, evacuating the marooned. In a near repeat of scenes witnessed last week, basements of several apartment com-



plexes were flooded by the rain waters and people were seen walking in knee deep water in some areas.

A video showed some auto-rickshaws getting washed away in a flooded street. The Met office forecast more rains in parts of the state till October 21.

Heavy rains early last week had wreaked havoc in parts of the state, including the city, claiming over

50 lives in incidents such as house collapse and drowning and leaving hundreds of houses in low-lying areas under sheets of water.

However, since Saturday night several parts of the city and neighbouring districts again were battered by torrential rains with Saroornagar in adjoining Rangareddy district recording the maximum of 16.9 cm while Hyderabad Airport 7.2 cm.

Covid-19 precipitated an education crisis: UNESCO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an education crisis, fuelled by deep and multiple forms of inequality having gender roots and implications, the Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report by UNESCO has pointed out.

Increase in gender-based violence during the period families spent at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, potential rise in teenage pregnancies or early marriages, possibility of a section of girls dropping out of schools or colleges, girls being at a disadvantage due to shift to online learning and increased responsibilities of household chores, are among the several implications pointed out by UNESCO in the report. "Uncertainty over the contagiousness and dead-



liness of COVID-19 led governments around the world to impose lockdowns, curtail economic activity and close schools and universities. In April, 91 per cent of the global student population was affected in 194 countries.

The UNSECO report has raised a red flag about the potential increase in early pregnancy likely to be a result of increased early marriages, a consequence of households being plunged deeper into poverty due to the pandemic.

NCB MUMBAI SEIZES DRUGS SENT BY POST

Mumbai: The Narcotics Control Bureau, Mumbai, has seized a parcel containing drugs at the Lonavala Post Office in Pune district and arrested two persons, an official said here Sunday. The postal parcel, sent from Canada two days ago, was opened by the NCB sleuths to reveal 1.03 kg curated marijuana and later another 74 gms of the same drug was seized from a building in Nerul, Navi Mumbai. According to investigations, the drugs consignment valued at around Rs 50-55 lakh in the international market, was destined for sale in Mumbai and Ahmedabad, said the official.

Jagan in deep mess

If Yogi Adityanath is facing rough weather in Lucknow, his counterpart in Andhra Pradesh YS Jaganmohan Reddy is in a deep mess too. Ostensibly, he is the first Chief Minister in the country to write a letter against a sitting Supreme Court judge justice NV Ramana and several judges of the AP High Court to the Chief Justice of India seeking probe. Interestingly, the charges have been leveled against the SC judge who is in line to become the next CJI in April 2021. Why did Jagan take such an unprecedented step? Insiders say that Jagan did it as he is perhaps the only sitting CM in the country who has 31 criminal cases against him. Of them 11 are being probed by the CBI and seven by the Enforcement Directorate for amassing wealth disproportionate to his known sources of income. The trial in cases is going on at a snail's pace.



BJP to select 10 RS nominees from UP

All eyes are set on the BJP high command which will pick up 10 candidates for 11 Rajya Sabha seats that fell vacant in UP and Uttarakhand. The BJP is all set to grab nearly 10 seats out of these 11 on the basis of its strength in UP and a candidate for lone seat in Uttarakhand. The BJP's three retiring MPs – Civil Aviation and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, general secretary Arun Singh and Neeraj Shekhar who

resigned from the SP to join the BJP are looking for being re-nominated. Adityanath is also keen to send some of his favourites to the Rajya Sabha. The Samajwadi Party will win the lone seat in UP and it has nominated Ram Gopal Yadav, brother of Mulayam Singh Yadav. But the SP will suffer a loss as its strength will come down from eight to five. The BSP will be left with just two MPs in the Rajya Sabha and cannot get any of its nominees elected as it has just 19 MLAs.

CBI refuses to bow to Yogi

Strange are the ways of the CBI. While it took up the Sushant Singh Rajput's case immediately after the Bihar government recommended it, it refused to accept the recommendation of Yogi Adityanath government to investigate the "conspiracy" angle in the Hathras case. Adityanath's

government had filed 19 FIRs alleging an "international" conspiracy by political groups and other organisations to incite caste violence October. The CBI refused to take over the conspiracy issue but said it will only probe the alleged gang-rape and murder of a 19-year-old Dalit girl in Hathras and not the related cases lodged by the state administration.

Guj cadre officials in Modi sarkar

With the advent of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Centre in May 2014, the domination of Gujarat cadre officers has been gaining ground in the entire bureaucracy. In the last six years, Gujarat officials have been appointed from the Prime Minister's Office to TRAI, BSF, NCB, CBI, FSSAI and you name it and have it. You may miss them as secretaries in the ministries of

Home Affairs, Defense, Finance and External Affairs. But look elsewhere and you will find Gujarat everywhere. Recently, Gujarat cadre officer PD Waghele was appointed as the chairman of TRAI. Waghele is rumored to have been brought to Delhi for effective implementation of GST in Gujarat. Apart from this, GC Murmu was appointed CAG, PK Priest in Central Electricity Authority, Food Safety & Security Authority (Rita Titotiya). In particular, Modi replaced Rajiv Topane, a retired Gujarat cadre officer at the end of his tenure in the PM's Office, with Hardik Shah as the private secretary.

Drug case: Centre cautions NCB

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) is understood to have been cautioned in the infamous Mumbai drug case to go after the peddlers and drug syndicates rather than film stars. The NCB

had arrested more than a dozen persons including Rhea Chakraborty and some associates of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput. It now transpires that the Union Home Ministry has cautioned the NCB to exercise extreme caution and it should go after drug syndicates and peddlers. But individual consumers should not be harassed if they are not part of the "drug syndicate". If sources in the Union Home Ministry are to be believed, it had only directed that the SSR case be handed over to the CBI for probe instead of Mumbai Police. CBI Director RK Shukla, on his part did not play the role of an "over-enthusiastic" officer. Even the AIMS forensic team headed by Dr Sudhir Gupta ruled out the possibility of death by strangulation. Many in the BJP also told the leadership that dragging the drug consumption case to a battery of film stars will not give any political mileage to the party.

of the day quote

The BJP has always responded to substance and pointed facts with 'jumlebaazi'. The BJP has always believed in rhetoric, not substance

ABHISHEK SINGHVI | CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON

If the Narendra Modi government dismisses our government, they are free to do so. The MLAs were of the opinion, to which the Chief Minister also agreed, that if the Centre has to take such a step they can, but we will do whatever we can to protect interests of farmers

SUNIL JAKHAR | PUNJAB CONGRESS CHIEF

No death has been reported in the union territory today and the number of positive cases has also come down projecting a picture of incidence of pandemic declining in a phased manner

V NARAYANASAMY | PONDICHERRY CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Dalit woman gang-raped

Kanpur: A Dalit woman was allegedly raped at gunpoint by two men, including a former village head, in Kanpur Dehat district of Uttar Pradesh, police said Sunday. "The incident took place a week back, but the police were informed about the alleged gang-rape Sunday," Superintendent of Police (Kanpur Dehat) Keshav Kumar Choudhary said. According to a complaint filed by the victim's parents, the accused duo barged into their house when the 22-year-old woman was alone and raped her one by one at gunpoint.

Nitish, Sushil's poll campaign

Buxar/Jagdishpur (Bihar): Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and his deputy Sushil Kumar Modi held joint election campaign on Sunday and launched a blistering attack on rival Lalu Prasad highlighting the crime situation and lack of development during his RJD rule in the past. Reeling out comparative data during 15 years under the RJD and an equal period under the NDA now, the two leaders sought another chance from voters to speed up development work in the state in the next five years.

Campaign against drug abuse in Delhi

New Delhi: The Delhi government Sunday launched a campaign against drug and substance abuse in the national capital to ensure sustained and focused effort to combat the menace. For the purpose, Delhi Women and Child Department (WCD) Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam suggested the department Secretary and Director to constitute an expert committee to deal with the problem. Services for de-addiction and counselling will be provided to the affected people at their place of stay under the campaign.

Lion dies

Jaipur: A lion died due to health complications in Nahargarh Biological Park here Sunday, an official said. The four-year-old Kailash developed health issues after having food Saturday evening, following which he was given treatment, Deputy Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) Upkar Borana said. He said the post-mortem was conducted by a medical board comprising three veterinarians and the samples have been sent to the Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Bareilly.



Pakistan is not happy with the normalcy. They are propagating the narrative that there is violence, mishandling and the security forces in the Valley have gone berserk

LT GEN BS RAJU | ARMY'S TOP COMMANDER IN KASHMIR

INDIA, SL NAVIES TO CARRY JOINT EXERCISE

The Indian and Sri Lankan navies will carry out a three day joint exercise off Trincomalee on the northeast coast of Sri Lanka, to enhance inter-operability and improve mutual understanding



PAK FAILS TO FULFIL 6 KEY MANDATES OF FATF



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: Pakistan's failure to fulfil six key obligations of the FATF, including action against two of India's most wanted terrorists Maulana Masood Azhar and Hafiz Saeed, and the sudden disappearance of more than 4,000 terrorists from its official list will most likely lead to its continuation in the 'grey list' of the Global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog, officials said Sunday.

The virtual plenary of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), to be held October 21-23, will take the final call on Pakistan's continuation on its grey list after a thorough review of Islamabad's performance in fulfilling the global commitments and standards in the fight against money laundering and terror financing.

The FATF had given Pakistan a total of 27 action plan obligations for completely checking terror financing of which so far it has cleared 21 but has failed in some of the key tasks, an official privy to the developments said. The mandates which Pakistan has failed include action against all UN-designated terrorists like Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Azhar, Lashker-e-Taiba (LeT) founder Seed and the outfit's operational commander Zakir Rehman Lakhvi.

Besides, FATF has strongly noted the fact that there was sudden disappearance of the names of more

The FATF is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 to combat money laundering, terror financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system

India is a member of the FATF consultations and its Asia Pacific Group

Azhar, Saeed and Lakhvi are most wanted terrorists in India for their involvement in numerous terrorist acts, including the 26/11 Mumbai terror strikes and the bombing of a CRPF bus at Pulwama in Jammu and Kashmir last year

than 4,000 terrorists from its original list of 7,600 under Schedule IV of its Anti Terrorism Act. "Under these circumstances, it is almost certain that Pakistan will continue in the FATF grey list," the official said. Also, the four nominating countries — the United States, Britain, France and Germany — are also not satisfied with Islamabad's commitment to taking strong action against the terror groups operating from its soil. With Pakistan's continuation in the grey list, it is increasingly becoming difficult for Islamabad to get financial aid from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the European Union, thus further enhancing problems for the neighbouring country which is in a precarious financial situation.

Violent clash at Assam-Mizoram border, many hurt



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aizawl/ Silchar, Oct 18: Simmering tension prevailed on the Assam-Mizoram border after a violent clash took place between the people of the two states, injuring several, a police officer in Aizawl said.

The situation is now under control in the area, which is in Kolasib district of Mizoram and Cachar district of Assam, he said. The Mizoram government has deployed personnel of the Indian Reserve Battalion in the violence-hit areas near the Vairengte village in Mizoram and Assam's Lailapur, he said.

Vairengte in Mizorams Kolasib district is the northern fringe of the state through which the National Highway 306 (formerly 54) passes, linking the state to Assam.

The nearest village in Assam is Lailapur, which is in the Cachar district. Kolasib district deputy commissioner H Lalthlangliana told PTI that a large number of Vairengte residents assembled when some people from Assam, armed with sticks and dao, pelted stones at a group near the autorickshaw stand on the outskirts of the border village on Saturday evening.

The irate mob from Vairengte retaliated and set on fire about 20 temporary bamboo huts and stalls built along the national highway by residents of Lailapur despite a prohibitory order being in place, he said.

In the violent clash that lasted for several hours, many people including four from Mizoram, were injured, Lalthlangliana said.

Punjab Cabinet authorises CM to take decision on farm laws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Oct 18: Ahead of a two-day special assembly session to counter the Centre's farm laws, Punjab Cabinet on Sunday authorised Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to take any legislative or legal decision he may deem fit to protect farmers' interests.

The decision came after a meeting of the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) in which party MLAs unanimously stressed the need to reject the farm laws outright and not to implement these in the state. Amarinder Singh too called for a frontal attack against the legislations.

After the MLAs' meeting, state Congress chief Sunil Jakhar said the Centre may "dismiss" the Congress government if it wants but they will do everything possible to protect farmers.

According to an official statement, the state Cabinet authorised the CM "to take any legislative/legal



decision he may deem fit to protect interests of farmers". The Cabinet decided that a strategy to counter the "black farm laws" will be finalised ahead of the special session beginning here on Monday.

"This fight will go on. We will fight this till the Supreme Court," the chief minister earlier said at the Congress Legislative Party meeting. Referring to the demand raised by many farmers' unions for

an immediate session of the assembly, the chief minister said this could not be done earlier as all legal implications had to be examined thoroughly before taking any step.

Amarinder Singh said views of the MLAs would be taken into account while finalising the strategy to battle the farm laws, in consultation with legal and independent experts, including Congress leader and former Union minister P Chidambaram.

He said the whole world was watching Punjab with a lot of expectation and the views of the MLAs were extremely important for drafting a comprehensive strategy to protect the state's farmers and agriculture.

The CM said contrary to what the BJP and its leaders had been claiming, Punjab was never consulted on farm legislations. Taking a dig at the SAD, the chief minister said the Congress was not "double faced" and had a clear stand on the issue.



"Transmission apart, the presentation of COVID-19 like other viral respiratory illnesses will be more severe in high-pollution areas. This will burden hospitals as more patients become symptomatic, requiring admission," Dr Nischal said.

According to Dr Neeraj Gupta, a professor in the Department of Pulmonary, Critical care and Sleep medicine at Safdarjung

Hospital, mortality has been linked with population density, the proximity of people and heavily industrialized or urbanised areas which have higher pollution levels.

These factors are likely to become more effective during the festive season and winters, particularly in north India where stubble burning is common and this affects air quality severely, he said.

'60-70 pollution causing power plants to be closed'

JAVADEKAR SAID THE CAUSE OF POLLUTION IN DELHI-NCR IS ALSO DUE TO GEOGRAPHICAL FACTORS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 18: Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar Sunday connected with the people through Facebook Live and held a Q&A session while discussing the steps taken by the Narendra Modi-led Central government to tackle pollution.

He said that 60-70 pollution-causing power plants would be identified and closed in the next two years. The minister said that power plants of Badarpur and Sonipat in Delhi-NCR have already been shut down. Javadekar said mainly 5-6 aspects contribute to the pollution — traffic, industry, garbage, dust, stubble



burning and geographical factors. Talking about the steps taken by the Modi government, the environment minister said that the use of BS-VI fuel reduces pollution by 25-60 per cent. He said a key step has been

taken to promote BS-VI fuel at a cost of Rs 62,000 crore.

He also referred to the efforts to tackle the problem of pollution in the national capital through public transport services. "In 2014, while

25-30 lakh people used to travel by Metro in Delhi and NCR, today 45-50 lakh people commute by Metro. This is a big achievement. The construction of Eastern-Western Peripheral Expressway has also taken care of around 60,000 pollution causing vehicles that used to pass through Delhi. Now, the metro and e-buses facilities are being increased in all cities."

The Union Minister said during the Facebook Live interaction that in 2015, the Modi government launched the National Air Quality Index for the first time. From 2016, the monitoring of air quality began. "In the year 2016, while there were 250 days of bad air, the count today has come down to 180."

Sonia asks Cong leaders to fight for people's issues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Sunday exhorted party leaders to wage a struggle for people's issues while noting that democracy was passing through "most difficult times".

Sonia Gandhi's assertion came at a meeting of AICC General Secretaries and state-incharges which was presided over by her. Tweeting about the meeting which began at 4 pm, the Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, "Sonia ji exhorted everyone to wage a struggle for people's issues and ameliorating their sufferings as our democracy is passing through most difficult times."

The meeting assumes significance as it comes ahead of the crucial Bihar polls and key bypolls in various states, including in 28 Assembly seats in Madhya Pradesh.



TECTONIC FAULT LINE IN LADAKH ACTIVE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: The fault line in Ladakh region, where India and Asian Plates are joined, has been found to be tectonically active, according to a new study.

The new findings, which suggest a more remote fault at the suture zone or the Indus Suture Zone (ISZ) being neo-tectonically active, could call for a serious relook into the existing evolutionary models, using new techniques and a larger geological database.

The findings can also have major implications in terms of earthquake study, prediction and understanding the seismic structure of the mountain chains. The Indus-Tsangpo suture zone marks the limit of the Indian plate where it collided with the Asian plate.

A group of scientists from Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), Dehradun, an institute under the Department of Science and Technology, have



found that the suture zone which was conventionally thought to be locked is tectonically active. The scientists carried out the mapping of the remote regions of Ladakh that forms the most hinterland part of the Himalaya. The study was published recently in the journal 'Technophysic'.

"Since we have shown that fault in this area (Ladakh) is also active, the rocks along the fault zones are very weak and fragile. So, in terms of landslides it has much more implications. Seismically, this area is also active, but the activity is very low to moderate. "If there is any major rainfall event along the Indus river fault, it is more prone to landslides," said Koushik Sen, one of the co-authors of the paper.

Air pollution can heighten pandemic risk: Experts

Air pollution may increase transmissibility of the coronavirus making people more vulnerable to the disease and aggravating the nCoV situation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: Air pollution may increase transmissibility of the novel coronavirus making people more vulnerable to the disease and aggravating the COVID-19 situation, experts have said, while warning that those who have had the infection in the past may also have to face new challenges.

According to doctors, respiratory illnesses like viral influenza increase with a spike in pollution levels as poor air quality leads to inflammation in the lungs making it more vulnerable for the virus to penetrate. Experts feel the worst-affected would be people in the lower socioeconomic class with no access to masks and also vulnerable to additional risk factors such as chulla smoke.

During smog, particulate matters remain suspended in the air near the earth's surface for a longer period making it conducive for the transmission of the virus, he elaborated. Dr Suranjit Chatterjee, senior consultant of Internal Medicine at Apollo Hospitals, said, "We really don't know how this virus is going to behave. But, we need to prepare ourselves for the worst, as pollution level increases and with winter setting in. It will be a dangerous combination."

Doctors warn that even those who have had COVID-19 in the past are not out of the woods. According to Dr Gupta, with the cohort of survivors of COVID-19 increasing, a significant number is noted to be symptomatic — 43 per cent with respiratory complaints — even after two months. These individuals are particularly

vulnerable to air pollution, which is known to cause chronic airway irritation and inflammation, affects mucus clearing, impairs immunity and acutely precipitates airway disorders like asthma, COPD, lung fibrosis or even cancer-related conditions.

Dr Vivek Nangia, principal director and head of pulmonology, Max Super Speciality Hospital in Delhi's Saket said that for individuals belonging to the high-risk groups who are at extremes of ages and suffering from chronic disease are advised to stay indoors or at least restrict their movement to bare essential activities outdoors. "While outdoors, wear a mask at all times and stay away from firecrackers during Diwali. Keep inhaler handy and consult a doctor at the earliest.



We are playing a constructive role in enriching the agenda of the SCO and many initiatives proposed by India in the fields of economics and trade
VIKRAM MISRI | INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO CHINA

US, ISRAELI ENVOYS FLY TO BAHRAIN TO ADVANCE TIES

An American-Israeli delegation flew to Bahrain on the first direct Israeli commercial flight to the Gulf Arab state, where they'll be signing a number of bilateral agreements following an announcement to normalise relations.



of the day quote

One vote less is a loss for my candidate. That's why all six of my children and my two wives are here to vote — I demanded it



ALPHA CONDE | GUINEAN PRESIDENT

I believe there are multiple learning avenues that exist between both countries to collaborate. Going forward, I can see India and the UAE working closely



INDU BHUSHAN | CEO, NATIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Today's normalisation of Iran's defense cooperation with the world is a win for the cause of multilateralism and peace and security in our region



MOHAMMAD JAVAD ZARIF | FOREIGN MINISTER, IRAN

SHORT TAKES

Hundreds protest against PM again

Jerusalem: Thousands of Israelis demonstrated outside the official residence of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday night, resuming the weekly protest against the Israeli leader after emergency restrictions imposed as part of a coronavirus lockdown were lifted. The protests were curtailed last month after Israel imposed new lockdown measures in response to a new virus outbreak. The emergency regulations blocked Israelis from traveling to Jerusalem to protest and allowed people only to attend smaller demonstrations within one kilometer (half a mile) of their home.

Five injured in US mall blast

Harrisonburg: An investigation was underway into the cause of an explosion and large fire at a shopping center in Harrisonburg, Virginia, that injured at least five people Saturday morning. Three people were taken to hospitals after the incident that was reported around 8:30 a.m., and two others were treated on the scene for minor injuries, the city said in an update Saturday evening. Gov. Ralph Northam tweeted that state emergency personnel had been deployed to the area.

Politics leads to HK bar closure

Hong Kong: Nearly 15 years ago, Grace Ma decided to name her bar Club 71, in commemoration of a July 1, 2003 rally where hundreds of thousands of Hong Kongers protested a proposed national security law for the semi-autonomous Chinese city. "I took the name Club 71, because somehow it is more hopeful, with half a million Hong Kong people having a demonstration, a rally, to stand for themselves, not to ignore what's going on in Hong Kong," said Ma.

Melbourne eases certain restrictions

Melbourne: Australia's second-largest city, Melbourne, has loosened lockdown restrictions as new and active COVID-19 continue to decline. From midnight Sunday, Melbourne residents will no longer face limits on the time they can spend away from their homes for education or recreation. Previous restrictions allowing Melbourne residents to travel only 5 kilometers (3 miles) from home will increase at midnight to 25 kilometers (15 miles).

Protesters take over Thai streets

REUTERS

Bangkok, Oct 18: Thousands of anti-government protesters took over key intersections in Bangkok on Sunday defying a ban on protests for the fourth day with chants of "down with dictatorship" and "reform the monarchy."

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former junta leader the protesters seek to oust, is concerned about the spreading protests and the government wants to talk, his spokesman said.

Demonstrations have persisted despite the arrest of dozens of protesters and their leaders, the use of water cannon and shutdowns on much of Bangkok's metro rail system in a bid to quell over three months of street action.

"Free our friends", the protesters called out as they stood in a rain, a mass of colourful ponchos and umbrellas. Some held up pictures of detained protest leaders. Thai Lawyers for Human Rights said at least 80 protesters had been arrested since Oct. 13 with 27 still being held.

Police have not given an overall number. Prayuth's spokesman said the prime minister feared the



protests, which have spread across the country of 70 million, could be used by troublemakers seeking to instigate violence.

"The government wants to talk to find a way out together," spokesman Anucha Burapachaisri told Reuters. He did not specify with whom the government hoped to speak. After the arrest of many of the protest leaders, previously unknown figures have emerged to lead crowds which organise by themselves.

Thai protests grow in defiance of ban Police made no immediate steps to intervene as protesters took over

Victory Monument and Asok, two of Bangkok's most important transport hubs. Police said there were around 10,000 people at Victory Monument alone. A spokesman said there was no plan to suppress the protest there.

Protesters say Prayuth engineered last year's election to keep power he seized in a 2014 coup - an accusation he denies. The demonstrations have also become more openly critical of King Maha Vajiralongkorn's monarchy, breaking a longstanding taboo, demanding curbs to its powers despite potential jail terms of up to 15 years for

anyone insulting the king.

During demonstrations by tens of thousands of people at multiple points across Bangkok, protesters painted a flag on the road with "Republic of Thailand" written across it. The writing was painted out overnight. The Royal Palace has made no comment on the protests.

The government banned demonstrations in Bangkok Thursday. Across Thailand, demonstrations were being organised in at least 19 other provinces on Sunday. Solidarity protests were also being held or planned in Taiwan, Denmark, Sweden, France, the United States and Canada.

Protesters, who have adopted the fast moving tactics of Hong Kong activists, kept police guessing about where demonstrations would be held with a slew of social media posts.

Links have grown between protesters in Thailand and Hong Kong in a so-called Milk Tea Alliance referring to drinks popular in both places. Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong tweeted in support of Thai protesters. "Their determination for #Thailanddemocracy cannot be deterred," he said

Afghan car bombing kills 13, wounds 120



AGENCIES

Kabul, Oct 18: A suicide car bombing Sunday killed at least 13 people and wounded around 120 others in Afghanistan's western Ghor province, officials said.

The head of a hospital in Ghor, Mohammad Omer Lalzad, said emergency staff were treating dozens of people with both serious and light injuries from the bombing. He expected the death toll to rise.

Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Aran said the car bombing struck near the entrance of the provincial police chief's office and other nearby government buildings in the area.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack in Ghor, which comes amid an uptick in attacks by the Taliban as representatives of the group and Afghan government officials hold their first-ever face-to-face talks in Qatar, where the Taliban have had a political office for many years. The negotiations are meant to end

the country's decades-long war.

Arif Aber, spokesman for the provincial governor in Ghor, said the blast was so strong that its sound could be heard across Feroz Koh, the capital city of the province.

"It damaged and partially destroyed a few government buildings, including the police chief's office, the women's affairs department and the provincial office for refugees," Aber said.

Friday, the Taliban agreed to suspend attacks in southern Afghanistan that had displaced thousands of residents in recent days. It came after the U.S. vowed to halt all strikes and night raids in keeping with the peace agreement the U.S. signed with the Taliban in February.

The U.S. had been conducting air strikes in support of Afghan forces trying to repel Taliban assaults in Helmand province, which threatened to derail efforts to end Afghanistan's war.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack in Ghor, which comes amid an uptick in attacks by the Taliban

New Congress may see more Indo-Americans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Oct 18: The upcoming US elections on November 3 could very well see the expansion of the so called "Samosa Caucus", a termed coined by Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi for informal grouping of Indian-American lawmakers, according to the latest Congressional polls coming from states.

The "Samosa caucus" comprises of five Indian-American lawmakers, including four members of the House of Representatives and Senator and Democratic vice presidential nominee Kamala Harris.



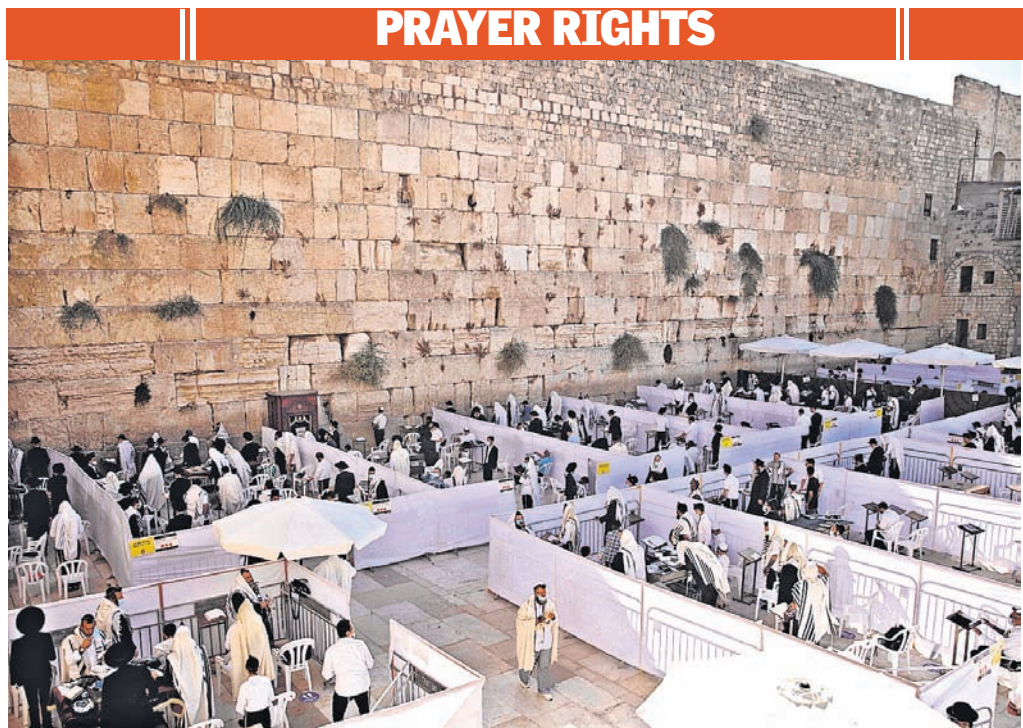
In the House of Representatives, senior most Dr Ami Bera, Congressmen Ro Khanna and Krishnamoorthi along with Pramila Jayapal, who is the first and the only Indian American woman in the House, are projected to be re-elected on November 3.

Ms Jayapal, 55, in the new Congress next year is likely to have company from Dr Hiral Tipirneni.

Ms Tipirneni, the emergency room physician is leading, though by a narrow margin, against Republican incumbent David Schweikert in the sixth Congressional District of Arizona.

He has been endorsed by top leaders of the Democratic party, including former vice president Joe Biden, the presidential candidate.

Mr Kulkarni, 42, had narrowly lost the 2018 Congressional elections. Local media and political pundits are giving him a greater chance to enter the House of Representatives. He hopes to be the first Indian American to be elected to the House from Texas.



Ultra-Orthodox Jewish men pray in divided sections which allow a maximum of twenty worshipers, at the Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray in the Old City of Jerusalem, Sunday

OP PHOTO

China mulls restricting exports

AGENCIES

Beijing, Oct 18: China has passed a new law restricting sensitive exports to protect national security, allowing Beijing to reciprocate against the US as tensions mount between the sides over trade and technology.

The law, which will apply to all companies in China, was passed on Saturday by the National People's Congress Standing Committee and will take effect on December 1.

Under the law, China can take "reciprocal measures" toward countries or regions that abuse export controls and threaten its national security and interests.

Export controls under the law will apply to civilian, military and nuclear products, as well as goods, technologies and services related to national security. A list of controlled items will be published "in a timely manner" in conjunction with relevant departments, according to the law.

The new law allows Beijing to retaliate against the US, which in recent months has attempted to block



Chinese technology firms such as telecommunications gear supplier Huawei, Bytedance's TikTok app and Tencent's messaging app WeChat on grounds of posing a national security threat, including the data they may possess from operating in the country.

Companies and individuals who endanger national security by breaching the new export control law, including those outside of China, could face criminal charges. Violations of the law, such as exporting items without a permit, could result in fines of 5 million yuan (\$746,500), or up to 20 times the business value of the illegal

transaction.

The new law adds to the growing uncertainty of Bytedance's deal to sell its video app TikTok to US firm Oracle Corp. In August, China added technologies including voice recognition, text analysis and content recommendation to its list of regulated exports.

President Donald Trump had earlier ordered Bytedance to sell its US operations of TikTok to an American firm or face a block in the country.

The new export control laws adds to China's growing regulatory toolkit that allows it to take action against countries such as the US.

Hope of Covid vax in UK by New Year

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Oct 18: One of the UK's senior-most medical chiefs has indicated that a vaccine against COVID-19 could be ready to be deployed by the start of the New Year, according to a media report Sunday.

Jonathan Van-Tam, England's Deputy Chief Medical Officer and one of the government's advisers on the coronavirus pandemic, has reportedly told members of Parliament (MPs) that the vaccine created at Oxford University and being manufactured by AstraZeneca could be ready for rollout soon after Christmas in December.

In India, the vaccine has a Serum Institute of India tie-up as it undergoes trials.

We aren't light years away from it. It isn't a totally unrealistic suggestion that we could deploy a vaccine soon after Christmas. That would have a significant impact on hospital

admissions and deaths, The Sunday Times' quoted Van Tam as telling the MPs during a briefing last week.

An MP who attended another briefing with Van-Tam told the newspaper that the medic was very bullish about the third stage AstraZeneca results, which he expects between the end of this month and the end of next.

Van-Tam expects it to protect the elderly and vulnerable. He gave us to understand that it stopped the virus 'shedding' in the young. He said he would expect vaccination to start in January, the MP was quoted as saying.

It comes as the UK government introduced new laws on Friday that would allow larger numbers of healthcare workers to administer flu and potential COVID-19 vaccines.

COVID-19 vaccines are being developed at speed which, if successful, will save lives, said Van-Tam, in reference to the new rules.



ByteDance to reallocate resources if Pak unblocks Tik Tok

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Oct 18: Chinese video sharing app TikTok has promised to put more resources in Pakistan to improve its services after the authorities here blocked it over indecent content, a media report said Sunday.

ByteDance, the Chinese company that owns TikTok, regretted that its services remain suspended in Pakistan more than a week after the country's telecommunication authority banned it over its contents, the Express Tribune reported.

TikTok's mission is to inspire creativity and joy, and that's just what we've done in Pakistan. We've

built a community whose creativity and passion has brought joy to households across Pakistan and opened vital economic opportunities to incredibly talented creators," the company said on Saturday.

It said that though the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) acknowledged and appreciated these efforts, Tik Tok's services remain blocked in the country and the PTA had not communicated with the company about how to resolve the issue.

We continue to hope that our productive dialogue with the PTA can bring assurance of the government's commitment to a stable, enabling environment whereby we can explore investing further in



the market, including in the inspiring talent we've seen thrive on TikTok," it said.

It promised to reallocate resources to improve its system. If the government of Pakistan decides to re-open access to our services in the

future, we can assess our allocation of resources to this market," the company said.

The company said its users and creators in Pakistan are still unable to access TikTok, more than one week after our services were blocked

ADDRESSING CONCERNS

The company said its users and creators in Pakistan are still unable to access TikTok, more than one week after our services were blocked by the PTA

ByteDance officials said they made concerted efforts over the last one year to address questions from the government of Pakistan

by the PTA. After TikTok was blocked in Pakistan, we continued to engage with the PTA to demonstrate our commitment to comply with local laws and further enhance our content moderation capacity," ByteDance further said.

The company said it made concerted efforts over the last one year to address questions from the government of Pakistan around the content moderation process, including significantly increasing the capacity of the local language content moderation team.

ByteDance regretted that it's unfortunate that Pakistan's vibrant online community is still unable to showcase their talent and creativity to our hundreds of millions of users worldwide.

The popular platform allows users to create short music, lip-sync, dance, comedy and talent videos of 3 to 15 seconds, and short looping videos of 3 to 60 seconds.

business

of the day quote

After suffering from a decline of 6-7% in sales during the year, the sector is facing some challenges in the area of demand and supply because of the pandemic but fortunately there is recovery in sight due to the festive sales

RAJEEV SHARMA | CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC INDIA

In the first quarter, we didn't do much business. Despite that, in FY21, we will do about 50-60% more business than what we did in FY20. We will end this year with a disbursement of ₹1,800 crore

RAVI SUBRAMANIAN | MD AND CEO, SHIRAM HOUSING FINANCE

A delicate balance was needed to meet the needs (success of Labour Codes) of both employers and employees and the provisions in the Codes appear to have met that balance

VISHAL GROVER | PRACTICE LEADER, RETIREMENT SOLUTIONS, AON INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Adani, Piramal among bidders

New Delhi: Adani Group and Piramal Enterprises are among the four entities that have placed bids for DHFL, the first financial services player undergoing insolvency process, according to sources. Besides, sources said, the US-based Oaktree and Hong Kong-based SC Lowy submitted bids for DHFL on October 17, the last date to submit final bids. In November, the Reserve Bank referred DHFL, the third largest pure-play mortgage lender, to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for insolvency proceedings.

Sellers witness jump in orders

New Delhi: Walmart-owned Flipkart and Amazon India Sunday said lakhs of sellers, including a significant chunk from tier II cities and beyond, have received orders during the initial days of festive sale on their platforms. The festive season sees Amazon India and Flipkart compete head on and roll out a number of offers and schemes to woo customers to shop on their platforms. Amazon India Sunday said over 1.1 lakh sellers on its platform received orders during the first 48 hours of its 'Great Indian Festival' sale.

DLF raises ₹2,400 cr

New Delhi: Realty major DLF's rental arm DCCDL has raised ₹2,400 crore debt from India's largest lender SBI to refinance its existing debt and fund future expansion plans, a senior company official said. DLF's group CFO Vivek Anand said the debt has been raised at a very attractive interest rate of 7.35%, enabling the company to reduce interest cost.

Maruti unveils special offers

New Delhi: The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India Sunday announced special offers for government employees with benefits up to ₹11,000 over and above the ongoing festival consumer offers across its models. The company is seeking to further boost demand with its offer after the recent leave travel concession (LTC) cash voucher scheme announced by FM Nirmala Sitharaman.



Our startup was conceptualized this year during the pandemic with the idea to provide critical business solutions easily with the help of technology even to a manufacturer in any remote place in the country to carry out their cross-border trade

AMBRISH KUMAR | CEO, ZIPAWORLD

'INDIA CAN BECOME GLOBAL PPE HUB'

Within 6-7 months, India has become a major manufacturer of personal protective equipment (PPE) kits and even started catering to the global demand, a report said and suggested that India holds the potential to become a global hub for PPE kits



RBI's loan recast scheme to support Covid-hit realty projects

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 18: The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) framework for loan recast or stress resolution for the Covid-19 related stress which allows banks to restructure loans of real estate companies at the project level rather than the entity level is "indeed a good move".

According to Anuj Puri, Chairman of Anarock Property Consultants, the RBI's move to permit banks for restructuring of loans of real estate companies at the project level rather than the entity level is "indeed a good move".

which have been stuck due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Both buyers and developers will stand to gain when stuck projects will eventually see the light of the day," he said.

He noted that from a buyers' standpoint, they will no longer have to wait for an indefinite period for their homes. As for developers, they will get the requisite liquidity to eventually complete their projects.

Overall, it will ease liquidity within the cash-strapped real estate sector which was already struggling even before the pandemic set in. COVID-19 had only worsened its woes further, Puri noted.

He, however, said that, although the RBI has given its nod to the banks, it will have to be seen how



different banks carry this forward.

According to RBI, the requirement of an inter-creditor agreement (ICA) in respect of the entity to which lending institutions have exposure is a basic feature of Prudential Framework for Resolution of Stressed Assets dated

June 7, 2019, and consequently that of the resolution framework for covid-related stress.

"There is sufficient flexibility to the lending institutions to formulate ICAs in respect of a legal entity to which they have exposure that address the specific requirements of

each borrowers on a case to case basis, including designing different resolution approaches for different projects under the same borrower within an ICA," RBI said in its FAQs on Resolution Framework for Covid-19 related stress.

Similarly, apart from the escrow account required to be set up at the legal entity level as required by the resolution framework, there is no prohibition in setting up additional separate escrow accounts at each project level, if the lenders desire so.

"Only in respect of borrowers belonging to real estate sector, and have both residential and commercial real estate business, the prescribed thresholds for the financial parameters may be applied at the project level," RBI said.

Govt may not extend ₹3L cr ECLGS for MSMEs beyond Oct

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: The government is unlikely to extend the ₹3 lakh crore-Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) for MSME sector beyond October even though the sanctioned amount so far is only nearly 65% of the target, sources said. The scheme is meant to provide financial support to businesses, primarily Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), impacted by slowdown triggered by the coronavirus pandemic.

The sources said the objective is to provide support to all those affected and if there are no takers for the scheme, there is no need to extend the scheme even though there is some room left.

On August 1, the government widened the scope of the ₹3 lakh crore-scheme by doubling the upper ceiling of loans outstanding and including certain loans given to professionals like doctors, lawyers and chartered accountants for business purposes under its ambit.

To ensure more companies can benefit from the scheme, it was decided to increase the upper ceiling of loans outstanding as on February 29 for being eligible under the scheme from ₹25 crore to ₹50 crore.

The maximum amount of Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line



(GECL) funding under the scheme was correspondingly increased from ₹5 crore to ₹10 crore.

Announced as part of the government's ₹20.97 lakh crore-economic package in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, the scheme was later tweaked to be made applicable for companies with an annual turnover of ₹250 crore as against the earlier threshold of ₹100 crore.

Banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) have approved loans worth about ₹1,87,579 lakh crore while disbursement stood at ₹1,36,140 crore as on October 5.

On May 20, the Cabinet approved additional funding of up to ₹3 lakh

crore at a concessional rate of 9.25% through ECLGS for MSME sector.

Under the scheme, 100% guarantee coverage will be provided by the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC) for additional funding of up to ₹3 lakh crore to eligible MSMEs and interested Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA) borrowers in the form of GECL facility.

The scheme will be applicable to all loans sanctioned under GECL facility during the period from the date of announcement of the scheme to October 31 or till the amount of ₹3 lakh crore is sanctioned under GECL, whichever is earlier.

NPAs impact banks' rate cut transmission, loan growth: Study

The study finds evidence on the existence of the bank capital channel of monetary policy transmission for India. It said that that there is a positive association between bank equity and credit growth

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 18: Non-performing assets (NPA) of a bank weakens the monetary policy transmission and loan growth rate, said a recent working paper prepared by the staff members of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The paper titled, 'Bank Capital and Monetary Policy Transmission in India' shows the requirement of bank capital regulation in India.

The study finds evidence on the existence of the bank capital channel of monetary policy transmission for India. It said that that there is a positive association between bank equity and credit growth.

"This finding calls for the need for countercyclical capital buffer for the Indian banks to protect their balance sheet against losses from



changes in economic conditions during the recessionary phase," it said. The paper mentioned that the views expressed are those of authors and not that of RBI.

The study revealed that banks with higher Capital-to-Risk (Weighted) Assets Ratio (CRAR) face a lower cost of funds. The procyclical nature of leverage shows that banks lend during economic boom by raising debt funds - through deposits, borrowings - rather than using their excess capital.

"Higher CRAR unlocks the bank lending channel and helps in smooth transmission of monetary policy. However, the magnitude of transmission of monetary policy was found to be weak for banks with CRAR higher than a certain threshold level," it added.

It noted that low level of CRAR not only hampers bank health but also restricts smooth transmission of monetary policy.

OLA TO SET UP NEW TECH CENTRE IN PUNE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 18: Ride hailing platform Ola plans to set up a new technology centre in Pune and hire about 1,000 engineers over the next few years, sources said. According to sources close to the development, the tech centre in Pune will be the second such centre for the company in India after Bangalore, and will cater to global and local solutions for all businesses of Ola across the group.

When contacted, an Ola spokesperson confirmed the development but declined to offer more details.

One of the persons privy to the de-

velopment said the Pune facility - which will be operational by the end of this quarter - will help create jobs for 1,000 skilled technology professionals over the next three years.

In June last year, Ola had opened an Advanced Technology Centre in San Francisco Bay to accelerate its work across electric and connected vehicles.

Pune is well-known for its tech talent and IT infrastructure, making it a favoured destination for many tech-led companies like Ola.

Ola has over 4,000 employees with about 1,500 of them in engineering roles. Ola's rival Uber had also recently announced strengthening its engineering team in India.

State's schemes to boost electronic manufacturing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: The schemes of Odisha government will boost electronic manufacturing in the country where electronic system designs shall play an instrumental role in meeting goal-oriented objectives, said Omkar Rai, Director General of Software Technology Parks of India (STPI).

"The Government's incentive schemes like, production linked incentive scheme (PLI) for large scale electronics manufacturing, scheme for promotion of manufacturing of electronic components and semiconductors (specs), mod-



ified electronic manufacturing cluster schemes, modified special incentive package schemes (m-sips), electronics development fund will boost the electronic manufacturing in the country," said Rai.

He said this during a webinar fireside chat on "Odisha: Unravelling the treasures and potential for IT

& ESDM."

The Objective of the fireside chat to propagate the mission of Electropreneur Park-Bhubaneswar which is mandated to build leadership and next wave of budding entrepreneurs in the emerging and niche sectors of technology as well as creating a buzz among the investors, entrepreneurs, startups, innovators & enthusiasts and keeping them abreast on the 'Potential & Advantage of Odisha' for ESDM & Electronics Industries as well as technological innovation taking place particularly in Electronics System Design & Manufacturing (ESDM) domain.

Coking coal imports at major ports dip 25% in Apr-Sept: IPA

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 18: Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact cargo movement in India, with thermal and coking coal imports at 12 major ports falling 25.13% year-on-year to 55.41 million tonnes (MT) in April-September, according to the apex ports' body IPA.



Coal volumes at the 12 major ports declined for the sixth straight month in September 2020, as per the Indian Ports Association (IPA).

Thermal coal imports dropped 23.24 per cent to 34.52 MT during April-September, while coking coal shipments fell 28.04 per cent to 20.89 MT, IPA said.

These ports had handled 44.98 MT of thermal coal and 29.03 MT of coking coal in April-September period of the previous financial year.

Covid prompts workers, corporates to adopt gig economy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the job landscape, gig employment is gaining ground and is offering huge potential for both blue-collar as well as white-collar workers, according to experts.

Gig workers are independent contractual workers who are into flexible agreements with companies or through platforms for on-demand work completion. In a gig economy, temporary, flexible jobs are preferred by companies rather than hiring full-time employees.

Experts believe that gig economy provides a win-win situation for both parties and its reach is slowly expanding from less-skilled services to high-skilled jobs.

"Gig economy has been there for a long time. It's being embraced like never before, that too in India,

due to both economic conditions and COVID-19 situation," said Kaushik Banerjee, Vice President and Business Head of Teamlease.com and Freshersworld.com.

According to TeamLease.com, a group company of TeamLease Services, the demand for gig workers is higher this year than last year. "On TeamLease.com alone we have more than 11,871 job vacancies for gig profiles. In fact, there is a 2.5X jump in demand compared to last year," Banerjee said.

"Corporate workforce is making space to accommodate gig workers. We have already seen a good 12% rise from pre-COVID times," he added.

While delivery agents command the biggest slice of the pie, the other profiles which are in demand include warehouse helpers and assembly line operators.



In white-collar gigs, designers, content writers and digital marketers are in demand as e-commerce sites require increased activity, Banerjee said.

"We have noticed that companies have now started shifting full-time entry-level roles to a gig model,"

GigIndia co-founder and CEO Sahil Sharma said, adding that after the lockdown, "we at GigIndia have up-loaded around 3,500-plus job opportunities for giggers on our platform within six months".

There has been a 115% increase in work-from-home gigs during

Gig economy has been there for a long time. It's being embraced like never before, that too in India, due to both economic conditions and COVID-19 situation

KAUSHIK BANERJEE | VP AND BUSINESS HEAD, TEAMLEASE.COM

the women giggers grew from 12.07% to 29.34% within six months of the pre/post-lockdown period, Sharma said.

However, in the absence of a steady salary, paid sick leave and other benefits, the chances of financial insecurity are much higher.

"Gig, being a new form of workforce engagement, remains untested in Indian courts, and with the absence of specific legislations, gig

workers cannot claim consequential benefits such as minimum wages, hours of work, overtime, leave, etc as compared to most traditional long-term employees," said Nishith Upadhyaya, Director - Advisory Services, SHRM (APAC & MENA).

"In our view, the government should aim to offer a reasonable amount of social security to gig workers as well as protection under employment laws while retaining the inherent flexible nature of the gig work arrangement," Upadhyaya further added.

According to Abhay Mathur, Senior Vice President, Finance, Urban Company, "a flexible workforce helps organisations manage costs well with the peaks and troughs of demand. It also enables rapid scale up when exponential growth happens and helps provide specialist skills for one time/occasional use."

SENSATIONAL SPELL BY PACER FERGUSON SEALS 2 POINTS FOR KKR

Lockie's 'Knight' out in Abu Dhabi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Abu Dhabi, Oct 18: A fast and furious Lockie Ferguson produced one of the most incredible bowling performances in the IPL this season as he led Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) to a thrilling 'Super Over' win over Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH), here Sunday.

Ferguson proved to be the 'Knight in Shining Armour' with his storehouse of variation as he dismissed David Warner and Abdul Samad in the 'Super Over', leaving KKR with only a three run-target to chase. This was after Warner's unbeaten 47 (33b, 5x4) had helped SRH tie the score at 163 for six. Warner took 18 runs off the final Andre Russell over to level the total put up by KKR.

Ferguson (3/15) was magnificent during the regulation 20 overs also as his 3/15 in 4 overs had SRH in all sorts of trouble. He bowled a first spell in which he dismissed Kane Williamson (29) with a short ball, got rid of Priyam Garg (four) with a slower one and saw the back of Manish Pandey (six) with a yorker.

Ferguson's five wickets in the game got KKR the much-needed

two points to take their tally to 10 while SRH stayed put on six points and are in serious danger of missing the play-offs.

Earlier, ex-captain Dinesh Karthik's (29 n o, 14b, 2x4, 2x6) care-free approach was well complemented by skipper Eoin Morgan's (34, 23b, 3x4, 1x6) as KKR managed managed a par 163 for five after being put into bat. Morgan and Karthik put on



TIMELY KNOCKS: Eoin Morgan (left) and Dinesh Karthik saved the KKR innings with a timely partnership



SENSATIONAL SPELL: Lockie Ferguson (centre) celebrates with teammates after the dismissal of Kane Williamson

58 runs for the fifth wicket in five overs to rescue the Knights.

T Natarajan (2/40) was the most successful bowler for SRH but it was Vijay Shankar (1/20) who was the most economical.

Rahul Tripathi (23) gave the first charge in the power play as he hit Natarajan for a straight six and a pulled boundary. However, Shubman Gill (36, 37b, 5x4) struggled to time

the ball, save an over from Thampi again it was left to Morgan and Karthik to necessitate the turn-around and they did it with ease.

Brief Scores: KKR 163 for 5 (Shubman Gill 36, Eoin Morgan 34, Dinesh Karthik 29 n o, T Natarajan 2/40); SRH 163 for 6 (David Warner 47 n o, Jonny Bairstow 36, Lockie Ferguson 3/15).

With Andre Russell (nine) failing again it was left to Morgan and Karthik to necessitate the turn-around and they did it with ease. **Brief Scores:** KKR 163 for 5 (Shubman Gill 36, Eoin Morgan 34, Dinesh Karthik 29 n o, T Natarajan 2/40); SRH 163 for 6 (David Warner 47 n o, Jonny Bairstow 36, Lockie Ferguson 3/15). KKR won in Super Over.

DOUBLE 'SUPER OVER' THRILLER

Punjab hold nerves to overcome Mumbai

AGENCIES

Dubai, Oct 18: High drama here Sunday. Last bowl run outs in the main game and the Super Over took the Mumbai Indians (MI) game against Kings XI Punjab (KXIP) to the 2nd Super Over: This is the first time that an IPL game has been decided in two 'Super Overs'. Ultimately KXIP held their nerves to win the game with two balls to spare.

In the first 'Super Over' both Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami just conceded five runs each to take the game to the second 'Super Over'. Chris Jordan conceded 11 runs bowling for KXIP. However, Trent Boult went for 15 runs in four balls and KXIP had won.

In the main game a Kieron Pollard throw took the game to the 'Super Over: Then defending only five runs, KXIP skipper KL Rahul conjured a brilliant run out to dismiss Quinton de Kock to keep the scores level in the 'Super Over'. It couldn't have been more nerve tangling.

Chasing a target of 177, KXIP were on course for a win when



Jasprit Bumrah

Jasprit Bumrah (3/24) changed the complexion of the game by casting skipper KL Rahul (77, 51b, 7x4, 3x6). However, Deepak Hooda (23 n o, 1x4, 1x6) and Chris Jordan (nine) took the game to the 'Super Over'.

Earlier opener De Kock (53, 43b, 3x4, 3x6) continued his rich vein of form, However, it was the 57-run partnership in 21 balls between Pollard (34 n o, 1x4, 4x6) and Nathan Coulter-Nile (24 n o 12b, 4x4) that took MI to a fighting total. **Brief scores:** MI 176 for 6 (Quinton de Kock 53, Kieron Pollard 34 n o, Mohammed Shami 2/30). KXIP 176 for 6 (KL Rahul 77, Jasprit Bumrah 3/24). Match tied.

OPPORTUNITY FOR DOMESTIC PLAYERS

Ranji Trophy may be played in bio-bubble

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 18: The 2020-21 Indian domestic cricket season which is expected to comprise only the Ranji Trophy and possibly the senior women's tournament, will be played in bio-bubble due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The games will be organised in cities that have a minimum of three grounds, sufficient hotels, and good hospitals for emergency. No spectators will be allowed at the grounds.

The format of the Ranji Trophy will change from four groups, which was in use in the last season, to a zonal basis. This means teams falling under each of the six zones will gather in one city for the league matches before the knockout round begins. This was decided Saturday at a virtual meeting of the apex council of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), said a source.

"The change in 2020-21 domestic season has been proposed due to COVID-19 because no one knows what is store for all of us. Still, we have decided tentatively to have only the Ranji Trophy, starting in January. No starting date has been finalised but it will be played early next year. This will, however, depend

Kolkata or Bhubaneswar may be the venue for East Zone games

Hosting cities must have good numbers of COVID-19 hospital

Event to be played in the old format on zonal basis

on the prevailing COVID-19 situation in January," a reliable BCCI source told this agency.

"The format of the Ranji Trophy will revert to an old one, and matches will now be played in bio-bubble and in one city in each zone, so that teams and match officials have to travel minimal distances, between hotels and grounds. The condition for choosing cities is that they should have a minimum of three grounds and good COVID-19 hospitals for emergency," the source added.

The source said that India's international cricket schedule and the 2021 IPL were taken into account while discussing the domestic season. "Since there is ICC T20 World Cup next year and a series against England, we will have to see players in action in Ranji Trophy.

In east zonn, Kolkata and Bhubaneshwar are the options to host the games, said another source.

Barca, Madrid suffer losses

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, Oct 18: La Liga giants Barcelona and Real Madrid lost for the first time this season against modest Spanish league opposition, increasing the doubts over their stalled attacks ahead of Champions League openers and their own Clásico clash.

Barcelona suffered their first defeat under Ronald Koeman when they lost Saturday 0-1 at Getafe. This came right after Real Madrid were beaten 0-1 at home by recently promoted Cádiz.

The star-powered attacks of the European powerhouses appeared shackled by their opponents. Getafe lived up to their reputation as one of Spain's top defensive sides by shutting down Barcelona. On the other hand Madrid were sloppy and sluggish against an inspired Cádiz who are back in the top flight after 15 seasons.

Barcelona didn't have many chances, but they were good ones. Lionel Messi hit the upright in the 20th and Antoine Griezmann wasted a great opportunity on the half-hour mark. After that, Getafe tightened their marking and Barcelona failed to threaten again.

Jaime Mata then converted a penalty kick for Getafe in the 56th minute after Frenkie de Jong fouled Dakonam on the edge of the area while trying to clear a loose ball.

"We knew it was going to be a hard match," Barcelona midfielder



COMPLETELY SHACKLED: Lionel Messi (with ball) did not find any space to operate as he was always hemmed in by Getafe players (in blue)

Sergio Busquets said. "We wanted to play at a faster pace, and we tried, but once they went ahead it became even tougher. We have to keep working to improve. This (league) has just started," he added.

Led by 35-year-old striker Alvaro Negredo, Cádiz proved more dangerous than Real. He set up Anthony Lozano to chip the game's only goal over Thibaut Courtois in the 16th minute. Sergio Ramos had already stopped a shot from Negredo, and Courtois made several more saves before half time.

"There is no explanation for what we did today (Saturday)," Zidane said. "We played a bad match, above all at the start, but it was bad in every way. We weren't hustling, we had difficulties from start to finish... Our rivals deserved to win. If they had scored two or three in the first half it wouldn't have been a surprise," he added.

Benzema had Madrid's only proper chance to equalise when he hit the crossbar with eight minutes remaining off a through ball from Ramos.

CRUCIAL GAME FOR BOTH SIDES

Last chance for Kings and Royals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Abu Dhabi, Oct-18: Sailing in the same boat, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Rajasthan Royals (RR) lock horns in the IPL here Monday with the knowledge that any more slip-up could dash their slim play-off hopes. Both CSK and RR have



failed to live up to the expectations so far and are placed sixth and seventh on the points table in the eight-team competition. The two struggling teams have six points from nine games, but CSK are placed above on the net run rate.

With just five matches each remaining for both teams, the road ahead is definitely going to be a tough and tricky one. They know that they cannot afford any more lapses from here on. Both teams lost their respective matches played Saturday.

CSK were done in by sloppy fielding and Shikhar Dhawan's scintillating 101-run knock while chas-

Bravo doubtful

Sharjah: CSK's death bowling expert Dwayne Bravo could be 'out for a few days or a couple of weeks' due to a groin injury, according to head coach Stephen Fleming. "He (Bravo) seems to have a right groin injury, obviously it was serious enough to keep him from coming back to the field, he is just really disappointed that he was not able to bowl the final over," Fleming said. "He would have to be reassessed going forward, at this stage, you would imagine that it would take a few days or a couple of weeks," Fleming added after CSK's five-wicket loss.

ing a competitive 180-run target. However, Dhawan was dropped a number of times. Then Axar Patel smashed three sixes in the final over bowled by Ravindra Jadeja, to complete CSK's misery.

It was a nightmarish outing for CSK fielders as they dropped Dhawan on 25 and 79, apart from failing to latch on to a half chance and a run-out opportunity. Dhoni would certainly seek improvement in that department.

RR also find themselves in a very difficult situation and desperately need to explore ways to close down games.

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