



KRITI'S DESIRE

Actor Kriti Kharbanda says that she would like to star in a female-centric action film

LEISURE P2



BSP WOOS BRAHMINS

BSP holds 'Brahmin Samvads', a move designed to woo Brahmins, who are reportedly disgruntled with the BJP

TWO STATES P7



NO RELIEF FOR PAK

FTAF, a global watchdog for terror-funding decided to keep Pak on its 'grey list'

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



See, people listen to you. You asked them not to gather in crowd.

SHORT TAKES

Kapil Dev stable after angioplasty

New Delhi: Cricket great Kapil Dev, who captained India to their 1983 World Cup triumph, is stable after undergoing an emergency coronary angioplasty having suffered chest pain, according to a hospital statement Friday. The 61-year-old former India captain was admitted after midnight at the Delhi hospital and underwent the procedure in the early hours Friday. "Currently, he is admitted in ICU and under close supervision..." the hospital said. "Kapil Dev is stable now and he is expected to get discharged in couple of days." P12

'Poacher' allegedly beaten to death

Baripada: Locals of Nachhipur village under Kaptipada police limits in Mayurbhanj district staged protest in front of the forest office Friday after death of a villager under mysterious circumstances. The family members of deceased alleged that he was beaten to death by forest employees on suspicion of being a poacher. Keeping the body in front of the forest office, the villagers organized a sit-in at the office seeking justice to the deceased's family.

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	40685.50	▲ 127.01
NIFTY	11930.40	▲ 33.90
DOLLAR	73.84	▼ ₹0.02
EURO	87.46	▲ ₹0.14
GOLD	₹50,675	▼ ₹91
SILVER	₹62,295	▼ ₹320

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP		
MAX	29.6°C	31.5°C
MIN	22.7°C	21.5°C
Humidity	98%	82%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	

Govt plans agenda for Covid vaccination

THE CENTRE WILL PROCURE THE VACCINE DIRECTLY TO MAKE IT AVAILABLE TO PRIORITY GROUPS FREE-OF-CHARGE THROUGH THE EXISTING NETWORK OF STATES AND DISTRICTS

POST NEWS SERVICE & AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 23: The coronavirus vaccine, once available, will be distributed under a special Covid-19 immunisation programme with the Centre procuring the doses directly and making it available for priority groups, official sources said.

According to them, the Centre will procure the vaccine directly to make it available to the priority groups free-of-charge through the existing network of states and districts. States have been asked not to chart separate pathways of procurement, they said.

The Centre, with the help of state and union territory governments, has started the process of identifying around 30 crore priority beneficiaries who would be given vaccine dose in the initial phase.

This special Covid-19 immunisation programme would run in parallel with the Universal Immunisation Programme, but will use its processes, technology and network of the existing vaccine distribution framework.

The government has demarcated four categories of people for vaccination in the initial phase – around one crore healthcare professionals including doctors, MBBS students, nurses and ASHA workers, etc.; around two crore frontline workers including municipal corporation workers, personnel of the police and armed forces; about 26 crore people aged above 50; and a special group of those below 50 years of age



SPUTNIK V TO BE TESTED ON 100 INDIANS

MOSCOW: The Russian Sputnik V vaccine against COVID-19 will be tested in India on 100 volunteers, the Indian Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation's Drug Controller General (DCGI) told the Russian news agency Sputnik. DCGI has granted permission to pharmaceutical giant Dr Reddy's Laboratories for conducting the tests. However, the date and time of the test will be determined by the company. News agency Sputnik quoted the organisation as saying that the vaccine will be tested in the second phase of its clinical trials before moving on to Phase II. Last week, the expert committee of DCGI had recommended granting permission to Dr Reddy's Laboratories for conducting Phase 2 clinical trials of Russian Covid-19 vaccine candidate, Sputnik V, in India.

with co-morbidities and requiring specialised care.

"States have been asked to enlist by mid-November the priority population groups... Each person in the immunisation list will be linked with their Aadhaar cards so as to track them," a source said. The existing digital platform and processes used for the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) are being enhanced to track Covid-19 vaccine administration and movement – from procurement to stor-

age to distribution to individual beneficiaries – as and when the vaccine becomes available, Health Ministry officials have said.

Also, online training modules are being developed for vaccinators. The digital platform that is being enhanced is Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN), which provides real-time information on vaccine stocks and storage temperatures across all cold chain points in the country under UIP. Under UIP, children, adolescents and preg-

State gears up for Covid-19 vaccination

BHUBANESWAR: Close on the heels of the Centre's initiative to draft a priority list for Covid-19 vaccination, the state government has started working on a data base of healthcare workers, who are likely to get the vaccine first. The state government has asked all concerned officials to enroll all healthcare and Anganwadi workers for vaccination. Additional Chief Secretary (Health & Family Welfare Department), Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra has written to the Indian Medical Association (Odisha State Branch), AYUSH Association, Nursing Association, Paramedic Workers' Association, and Private Hospital Owners' Association in this regard. Mohapatra asked the associations to contact the district Collectors /municipal commissioners/ chief district medical officer of their respective districts for enrolling all healthcare workers in the database by October 29. Meanwhile, former director of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar Dr Ashok Mohapatra Friday claimed that the vaccines against Covid-19 are likely to come by March, keeping in mind the current pace of researches and trials.

nant women are currently vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases free-of-cost by the state.

The National Expert Committee on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 has already mapped the existing cold chain being utilised under the government's immunisation programme.

Misuse of potable water now punishable

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 23: In a landmark development in the history of groundwater preservation in the country, wastage and misuse of potable water or groundwater will, henceforth, be a punishable offence, with the Central Ground Water Authority issuing a notification directing civic bodies to evolve a compliance mechanism with coercive measures for violations.

The notification issued by the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act came in pursuance to the directions passed by the National Green Tribunal on October 15, 2019 in the Rajendra Tyagi vs Union of India case, in which the petitioner had sought to make water wastage and misuse a punishable offence in the country.

The notification by the authority stated, "The civic bodies dealing with water supply in all states and UTs, whether it is the Jal Board, Jal Nigam, Water Works Department, Municipal Corporation, Municipal Council, Development Authority or Panchayat, shall be duty-bound to ensure that there is no waste or misuse of potable water tapped from underground and evolve a compliance mechanism with coercive measures for violations."

The notification, issued October

8, further stated that no person in the country shall waste or misuse potable water resources tapped from underground.

Advocate Akash Vashishtha, who had represented Rajendra Tyagi in the green tribunal, said, "Wastage and misuse of potable water and groundwater will, henceforth, be a punishable offence in India."

He added, "Failure to comply with the notification will be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years or with a fine which may extend to ₹1 lakh, or with both. In case the failure or contravention continues, an additional fine can be slapped, which may extend to ₹5,000 for every day during which such failure or contravention continues after the conviction for the first such failure or contravention, under Section 15 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986."

"Section 15 of the Environment (Protection) Act deals with the penalty in case of contravention or if anyone fails to comply with any orders or directions issued under the act. We had sought from the NGT to ask the government to issue directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act so that any violation of contravention or directions thereof is punishable under Section 15," Vashishtha added.

Centre imposes stock limits on onion traders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: To boost domestic supply and provide relief to consumers from rising onion prices, the Centre Friday imposed stock limits on both retailers and wholesalers with immediate effect till December 31.

Now, retailers can stock onion only up to 2 tonnes, whereas wholesale traders are allowed to keep up to 25 tonnes. This will check hoarding and black-marketing, it said.

Onion prices have shot up sharply to over ₹75 per kg in the past few weeks in the wake of damage to the standing kharif crop in producing areas due to heavy rainfall as well as hoarding.

Addressing media, Consumer Affairs Secretary Leena Nandan said, "This is a decisive step. We have imposed stock limits on onion traders with an immediate effect till December 31 after concerns that traders were releasing their stored stocks slowly, creating artificial price rise situation."

She said the government had to invoke the recently passed Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, which provides regulation of agri-commodities "only" in the times of extraordinary price rise situation.

TEARJERKER

Onion price (per kg)	
Bhubaneswar	₹80
Cuttack	₹70
Rayagada	₹80
Malkangiri	₹80
Koraput	₹80
Nabarangpur	₹60
Jajpur Road	₹80
Kendrapara	₹60
Nayagarh	₹70
Berhampur	₹80
Angul	₹75
Jharsuguda	₹80
Jagatsinghpur	₹80
Baripada	₹80
Puri	₹80
Sambalpur	₹80



"Under this law, normally, we would not be regulating agri-food stuff like cereals and onion. But, in times of extraordinary price rise, we can regulate if the retail price breaches the trigger levels specified in the law," she said.

In case of onion, the average all-India retail price of onion of ₹55.60 per kg that prevailed on October 21 breached the trigger level as per the formula specified under the EC Amendment Act, she said. The all-India average retail price of ₹55.60 per kg was higher by 22.12 per cent compared with last year's rates of ₹45.33 per kg and by 114.96 per cent

as against average rate that prevailed in past five years. So, the retail price had actually more than doubled and, therefore, decided to impose the stock limits on the commodity, she added.

Later, Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal tweeted that the Modi government has taken steps to curb hoarding and check prices. Stock limits have been imposed on retailers and wholesale traders of onion. The government said action under the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, would be taken to prevent any hoarding.

Look at India, it's filthy, it's air is filthy: Trump

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, Oct 23: US President Donald Trump has described India and its air as "filthy" during the last presidential debate with his Democratic challenger Joe Biden while discussing the environment and the Paris climate change agreement.

"Look at India, it's filthy, it's air is filthy," Trump said Thursday night in Nashville, Tennessee, while comparing it to China and Russia to what he said was the condition of the US environment.

"We have the best carbon emission numbers that we've had in 35 years under this administration, we are working so well with industry," he said before lunging at India and the other two countries.

That was the only mention of India during a debate that mostly stayed clear of foreign policy and strategic interests.



North Korea's nuclear and missile programme came up with Trump pointing out that it had not conducted any nuclear tests during his time in office, unlike when Biden was the Vice President. He said that he had prevented a war with Pyongyang that former President Barack Obama had expected.

Trump asserted that he will make China pay for spreading the Covid-19 pandemic and that he was already making it pay for the trade problems and sending \$20 billion to US farmers, which Biden disputed.

Amazon refuses to meet Lok Sabha panel

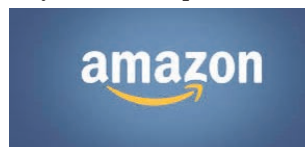
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: Amazon has refused to appear before a joint Parliament committee looking into the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, and this amounts to "breach of privilege of Parliament", Parliament sources said.

If Amazon does not appear before the panel October 28, "coercive action will be initiated" against Amazon, sources said. The US e-commerce giant said their "subject matter experts are overseas" and cited travel risks due to which they cannot appear.

The committee, which is looking into the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, following concerns expressed by the Congress, had called all stakeholders, including Facebook and Twitter, to get an overview.

"Amazon has refused to appear before the panel October 28 and if no one on behalf of the e-commerce company appears before the panel it amounts to breach of privilege," BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi, who heads the panel, told this news agency. The panel has decided to send a privilege notice if they do not turn up.



Meanwhile, top Facebook India officials appeared before the parliamentary panel today and were questioned for nearly two hours, parliament sources said. Facebook India was represented by its public policy director Ankhi Das.

The presentation of Twitter officials before the panel will take place October 28, according to a notice issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat. Google and PayTM have been asked to appear before the panel October 29. While introducing the draft Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, in parliament last year, Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said it empowers the government to ask companies - Facebook, Google and others - for anonymous personal and non-personal data.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: In a bid to save the life of a critically ill patient, the Commissionerate Police Friday created a 'green corridor' from a private hospital in the city to the Biju Patnaik International Airport.

The 'green corridor' was created to facilitate shifting of Abhay Kumar Jena, a critically ill patient from Puri district. Police personnel turned all the traffic signals green on the route from the hospital to the airport so that the ambulance could move unhindered and speedily enabling it to reach at the airport in less than eight minutes. Two police ve-



The patient being taken to Hyderabad in an air ambulance, Friday

hicles escorted the ambulance.

From the airport an air ambulance took the patient to Hyderabad in one-and-a-half hours. This was the fourth 'green corridor' created by the police in city to ensure unhindered passage to critically ill patients. Earlier 'green corridors' were created thrice to take patients from hospitals to the airport.

Abhay had undergone a lung surgery and also tested positive for Covid-19. He was recovering well, but complications set in and his condition became critical. Doctors attending to him here decided to shift him to Hyderabad. Notably, 'green corridor' is an escorted and traffic-free path which helps the

harvested body parts as well as critical patients to reach hospitals for further treatment in a short notice.

Commissioner of Police Sudhanshu Sarangi had earlier informed about providing 'green corridor' for ferrying critical patients and body organs on the request of the patient's relatives or the hospital authorities in the twin cities.

"We provide green corridor facility for ambulance movement, as a standard policy, for transplant or other critical medical procedures on request from hospitals/family members of patients," tweeted Sarangi, October 10. The Commissionerate Police started implementing 'green

corridor' facility for patients following widespread resentment over the death of a five-year-old, February 11. In that case, the ambulance carrying the ailing child to a private medical college and hospital at Patia got stuck in traffic jam which allegedly led to the child's death.

Speaking on the issue, DCP traffic Soumya Mishra told Orissa POST, "The state government has specially instructed us to provide traffic-free passage for all seriously ailing patients, especially people suffering from organ failure, and in emergency need for organ transplantations. The hospitals contact the DCP traffic who is the nodal officer for green corridor facility."

FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES

You will be very logical and rational today, as creativity is put on the back-burner. The situation at your work-place will be full of challenges, but you will take them head-on. Later, all the stress will be mitigated by the soothing touch of your loved ones, says Ganesha.

TAURUS

You will manage to achieve all short-term goals that you had set today and your focus will now shift to setting long-term ones. Work pressure will continue but you will make it a point to find some time to renew your leisure activities.

GEMINI

You will meet all kinds of people in matters related to work. You will need to understand their demands and needs and will have to strive to fulfill them. Your courteous nature will endear you to people. You will receive praise for your intelligence as well, says Ganesha.

CANCER

Chances are that your inquisitive nature will put in a difficulty. Others will be angry with you for keeping a secret a vital information. Ganesha counsels you to strengthen ties with friends and give up present attitude.

LEO

The complete family man that you are, it is your near and dear ones who have always laid the foundation of your success. So why should today be any different. The auspicious tides of the day begin from your home and follow you everywhere. Be it work or play, you have a tempo that is undiminished.

VIRGO

The remarkable manner in which you function at work will earn you a lot of accolades and supporters. Your seniors will appreciate your dedication to work. There will be fun and entertainment in the evening. Ganesha says you can look forward to relaxing with some soft music.

LIBRA

Ganesha says you will stay in accordance with your prestige or social status. Your innovative ideas will help you progress in your work field. Now is a good time to put into completion those ideas, which had taken a back seat.

SCORPIO

It's business time and shock your competitors with the launch of the new product. However, stars are not aligned in a favourable way, which indicates that you may come across some hurdles. Take your time, sort out the troubles and go ahead with your launch with much fanfare and celebrations.

SAGITTARIUS

Zoom in on complicated problems and solve them with style, says Ganesha. Don't fret over problems; instead concentrate on ways to solve them. Your day will get even better when perhaps, news from an overseas friend reaches you.

CAPRICORN

You are witty and wise. With your extraordinary vision and intelligence you will help many their career and later, thanks to you, they will be near to their goals. Whenever some dark clouds of reality hover above your head, you know how to find the silver lining and get out of a problem.

AQUARIUS

The cupid may strike you today. You don't want make a wrong first impression, so wear something nice and be presentable all the time. Professionally, the day will be favourable for you to make some important decisions.

PISCES

Organized and sorted as you are, you will still find yourself clouded with emotions today. Those you are thoughtful and calculative as a person, you will discover the joy of emotions and the warmth that accompanies them. You will take the time to feel things instead of thinking of them and this change in your behaviour will either be the cause of worry or amusement for those who are close to you, says Ganesha.



RYAN REYNOLDS ON CASTING HIS VOTE FOR FIRST TIME

Hollywood star Ryan Reynolds confessed on social media that he has cast his vote in the US for the first time. "This is my first time voting in America. I'd like to thank my wife Blake for making my first time so gentle and loving," Reynolds wrote.

MILEY CYRUS TO RELEASE SEVENTH ALBUM NOVEMBER 27

Pop star Miley Cyrus will unveil her seventh album, *Plastic Hearts*, November 27. The singer made the announcement on Instagram. The album will feature 12 original tracks including her latest hit *Midnight sky*, and live covers of *Heart of glass* (Blondie) and *Zombie* (The Cranberries).



KANGANA takes a jibe at Aamir Khan

Mumbai: Days after a complaint was filed against her for spreading hate, actress Kangana Ranaut Friday said she is ready to go to jail. She also revived the intolerance row, this time targeting actor Aamir Khan.

Earlier this week, the Mumbai Police issued summons to Kangana and her sister Rangoli Chandel following an FIR lodged against them with sedition charges included.

"I worship people like Savarkar; Neta Bose and Rani of Jhansi. Today the government, trying to put me in jail that makes me feel confident of my choices, waiting to be in jail soon n go through the same miseries my idols were subjected to, it will give a meaning to my life, Jai Hind," she tweeted.

She also tagged actor Aamir for his silence on the matter, in a separate

tweet she wrote in Hindi. She wrote: "The way Rani Lakshmbai's fort was broken, my house was also broken; the way Savarkarji was put in jail for rebellion, they are trying their best to send me to jail as well. Someone should go and ask the intolerance gang about how much pain they have gone through in this intolerant nation? @aamir_khan." Back in 2015, Aamir had made headlines when he had said that he was 'alarmed' over rising intolerance in the country and that his wife Kiran Rao had even suggested they leave India because she feared for the safety of their child.

In the fresh complaint, Munawwarali Sahil A. Sayyed has accused Kangana and her sister for spreading communal hatred and falsehoods.

IAN S

Radhika hits Shaktiman mode

Mumbai: Actress Radhika Madan, who is known for the funny captions she gives to her social media posts, has made a hilarious revelation.

In a new Instagram picture, Radhika sits dressed in a sports bra and ripped pants. For the caption, she borrowed a dialogue from the popular nineties tele-series *Shaktimaan*.

"Gangadhar hi Shaktiman hai," she wrote. *Shaktimaan* narrates the adventures of the fictional superhero of the same name that Mukesh Khanna essayed in the blockbuster series that aired on Doordarshan from 1997 and 2005. On the acting front, Radhika was last seen in *Angrezi Medium* and will

next be seen in Kunal Deshmukh's *Shiddat*, co-starring Mohit Raina, Diana Penty and Sunny Kaushal.

IAN S

Kriti would love to do a female-centric action film

New Delhi: Actress Kriti Kharbanda enjoys watching action sequences on screen, and says that she would like to star in a female-centric action film.

"I would love to do a female action film. Action sequences are something I not only like watching, but also taking part in. I have been an outdoors person for as long as I can remember. I have dabbled in many kinds of sports. I play tennis, basketball and I played kho-kho back in school," Kriti told IANS.

When she learnt pole dancing, and trained in sword fighting for *Housefull 4*, she realised these were things she enjoyed.

"Action is something I enjoy. I think there is something about a petite little girl kicking some a** and I can't wait to show that to the world," she added.

She got to perform some action in the upcoming revenge drama *Taish*.

"I have been lucky. I wasn't supposed to be a part of the action sequences in the first draft. It was after we reached London and we started shooting that (director) Bejoy Nambiar told me I would be in that part of the film as well. It felt really good. Go-karting is something I have enjoyed from a young age. It is one of my biggest stressbusters. I got a chance to drive in many sequences of this film. I have dabbled in the thrill part of the film," she said.

IAN S

Prabhas turns 41: Wishes pour in from fans & friends

Chennai: Telugu superstar Prabhas turned 41 Friday, and wishes poured in from industry colleagues, friends and fans alike.

Maresh Babu tweeted: "Happy birthday, Prabhas! Wishing you infinite success, happiness and peace always."

"Wishing the sweetest #Prabhas brother a very happy birthday!! May this year be filled with lots of happiness and success...God bless! #HappyBirthdayDarling," wrote on Arun VijayTwitter.

Rakul Preet Singh wrote: "Wishing you a super duper year .. great health and lots of happiness ...may your stardom keep growing infinitely," she wrote.

Filmmaker Om Raut, who directs Prabhas in the upcoming biggie *Adipurush*, tweeted: "Dear Darling #Prabhas, wishing you a very happy birthday. Have a rocking day and a fabulous year ahead."

"Wishing #Prabhas sir a very happy birthday.#ennisoni will be forever special," tweeted Punjabi singer Guru Randhawa.

Rana Daggubati, who played Bhallaladeva opposite Prabhas in *Baahubali* shared a collage of their pictures on Instagram. Happy Happy brother @actorprabhas Wish you only the best," Rana captioned the post.

Prabhas started his acting career with the Telugu film *Eeshwar* in 2002, and went on to go to films like *Raghavendra*, *Barish: The Season Of Love*, *Varsham*, *Jeene Nahin Doonga*, *Chatrapathi*, *Yogi*, *Rebel* and *Pournami*.

His roles in the blockbuster *Baahubali* franchise made him popular across the globe.

He will be next seen in *Radhe Shyam* and *Adipurush*

IAN S

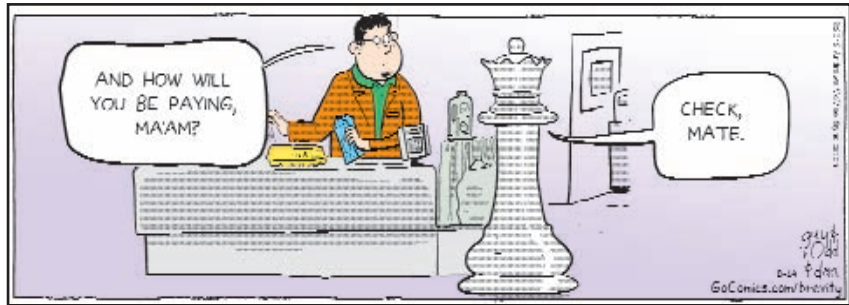
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

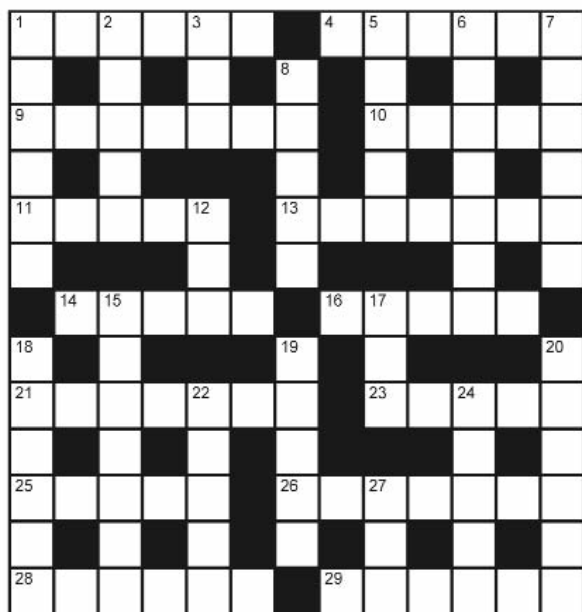


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



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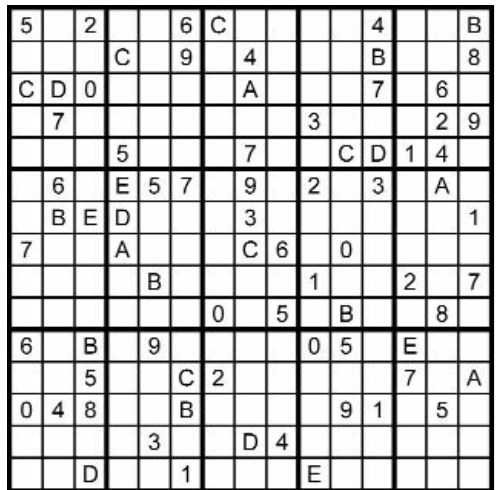
Across
1 Deadly snakes
4 Sailing ship with 3 or more masts
9 Old stone tool
10 Small terrestrial lizard
11 Drop-off spot?
13 Liberate (3,4)
14 Brainy
16 Fancy home
21 Small villages
23 Bakery supply
25 Dirigible

26 Make a list
28 Analyses
29 Giant pigfish
Down
1 French Riviera stop
2 New Zealand native
3 French friend (4,3)
5 Show flexibility
6 Spat
7 Nail polish
8 Pursue

12 Evergreen
15 Ancient Egyptian cadavers
17 Frigid
18 Anxiety disorder
19 Port of old Rome
20 Flammable alkene
22 Void
24 Diva's deliveries
27 Cup handle

SUDOKU

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

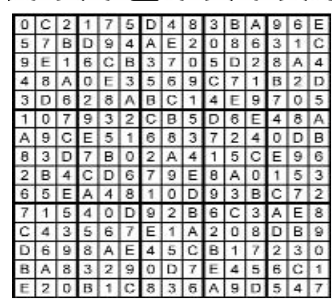


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

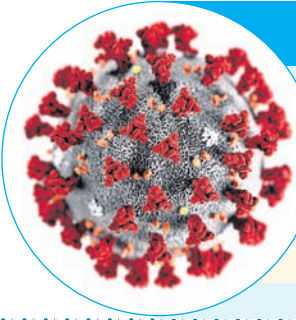


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



MOTHER WORSHIP

Goddess Shyamakali in Singhabahini Besha as part of Dussehra celebrations at Balisahi in Puri, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	4,22,12,524	3,12,82,766	11,45,366
India	77,61,312	69,48,497	1,17,306
Odisha	2,77,887	2,59,418	1,214

Digital IDs still elude 50% eligible differently-abled

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: More than half of the differently-abled population in the state is still out of the ambit of the digital Unique Disability Identity Card (UDID) despite the Ministry of Social Justice rolling out the cards around three year ago.

The UDID project was started by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities envisioning a holistic end-to-end integrated system for facilitating easy application of different schemes and reduce chances of duplication of data.

The latest information accessed from the state Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) Department claim that out of around 6 lakh differently-abled who had applied for this, nearly 3 lakh have got it, leaving the remaining without the digital IDs.

However, most of the beneficiaries, as per the department's own

REPORT CARD



■ The UDID project was started by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities envisioning a holistic end-to-end integrated system for issuing such digital cards

■ Most of the beneficiaries, as per the department's admission, have not received their UDID cards as it is to be issued with State Identity cards to make them eligible for availing several government schemes

admission, have not received their UDID cards as it is to be issued with State Identity cards to make them eligible for availing several government schemes.

The department has now asked all the Collectors to work on the issue and expedite the entire process. In a formal communication to the Collectors, the department has asked them continue their work with a view to ensure disbursement of the UDID cards.

SSEPD secretary Bhaskar Sarma

told **Orissa POST**, "These certificates are given to the PwDs with more than 40 per cent disability. There is a Medical Board which certifies the disability levels. The cards are issued in phases. Recently, due to COVID outbreak, the medical board meeting also suffered a bit."

The department officials claim that checks and balances have been planned in the issue of disability certificates to weed out fake beneficiaries.

GOAIR FLIGHTS TO CHENNAI FROM NOV 17

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: In view of increasing passenger flow at Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here, domestic carrier GoAir has decided to resume direct flight services between Bhubaneswar and Chennai from November 17.

As per sources, GoAir flight G8-921 will take off from Chennai at 11:05am and reach Bhubaneswar at 12:50pm. The return flight G8-922 will depart from Bhubaneswar at 1:20pm and land in Chennai at 3:05pm. The booking for the flights began Thursday.



With this, the number of flights operating from BPIA has reached 25.

As opposed to normal functioning of about 45 flights, the BPIA authorities had decided to resume services to different cities in a phased manner. "This has been done observing increased passenger flow. Only 9,721 domestic passengers had arrived in May which reached around 80,000 in September," said a senior BPIA official.

Monsoon to retreat in 4 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: The weather condition has become conducive to withdrawal of southwest monsoon from entire Odisha within next four days. The monsoon had arrived in the state June 11 this year.

Conditions continue to be favourable for further withdrawal of southwest monsoon from some parts of the state during next two days and from remaining parts during subsequent two days, Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said in a bulletin Friday.

"This year the state experienced normal rainfall so far. The state has recorded 5 per cent excess rainfall till today, which is normal," said Met Centre director HR Biswas.

Usually, the monsoon season extends from June to September, and the state had recorded 1 per cent ex-



cess rainfall during this period, he said.

Due to back-to-back low pressures triggering heavy rainfall, the average rainfall in the state increased in the month of October. Not a single district in the state has recorded deficit rain during this month, the director stated.

Meanwhile, the depression over northwest Bay of Bengal off Odisha

coast has moved north-northeast wards with a speed of 22 kmph during past six hours and lay centered over northwest Bay of Bengal off West Bengal and Bangladesh coasts.

The intensity of depression would weaken in next 12 hours into a well-marked low pressure area over Bangladesh. No rainfall warning has been issued for the state.

Oppn slams govt over development of Tirtol

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: The opposition Congress and BJP, Friday, attacked the ruling BJD in the state for not developing Tirtol constituency despite holding the seat for long.

Congress Odisha in-charge A Chellakumar and BJP spokesperson Prithivraj Harichandan accused the BJD of failing to live upto the expectations of the people of Tirtol.

Harichandan said, "Tirtol is one of the undeveloped areas of Odisha. The ruling BJD MLAs had been elected from the region often but the development work in the area is not very encouraging. The region had been lacking basic infrastructure like bridges, roads and others. Was the government unaware of the problem there earlier?"

He also said, "They are promising the very basic development work now. This indicates their per-



Congress leader A Chellakumar speaks at a meeting in Tirtol constituency, Friday

formance and care for the region. The BJP is standing with the people of the area to usher in development. We are confident that we will win from the region and bring development in the area."

Chellakumar said the development work in the state at large was undertaken mostly by the Congress government in the past. "Today is the 10th day of my visit to Odisha. Wherever I have gone, the works there were done by the Congress government. The Paradip port and a spinning mill at Jaisinghpur were developed by the Congress government," he added.

CEO seeks report on postal ballot

Bhubaneswar: Expressing concern over the allegation in issuance of postal ballot in Balasore for bypoll, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) SK Lohani Friday asked the district Collectors to submit a detailed report by Saturday morning. Action will be taken as per law after receiving the report from the Collector, he said.

According to reports, a 40-year-old woman's vote was taken through postal ballot system for the byelection to the Balasore Sadar Assembly constituency. Locals opposed her postal ballot alleging that the woman voter from Ward No.1 is neither a divyang, nor pregnant nor a Covid patient to qualify for inclusion in the list. It has been alleged that such goof-up is a deliberate attempt to favour a particularly party in the byelection.

BMC forms team to monitor idol immersions

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Friday, discussed preventive measures to void water pollution during immersion of idols, apparently to comply with the guidelines issued by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

The meeting, chaired by BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary took recommendations from members of State Pollution

Control Board, deputy commissioner of police, Zonal Deputy Commissioners, Puja committees and NGO representatives.

Chaudhury directed the members of the committee to scrupulously implement the order of the High Court and to take appropriate preventive measure for abatement of surface water pollution due to immersion of idols in different water bodies during the festivities in Bhubaneswar.

"All officers of the BMC

Engineering Division need to stay prepared with adequate number of temporary ponds having synthetic liner and earthen closings. Spot visit for the temporary ponds will be completed soon to ensure timely immersion," the BMC Commissioner maintained.

Furthermore, he also directed the committee to form a team of environmental scientists of SPCB, ZDCs, the member NGOs and the member of Puja committees responsible for monitoring water

quality parameter, toxic contents if any, and the colour used in Puja pandals. The committee has been asked to submit the information in this connection. List of violators of CPCB guidelines will also be informed by the committee for initiation of action.

Moreover, an order has been passed for intensive awareness and IEC (Information Education and Communication) activities have to be continued during the festivities and around the mandaps.

FESTIVAL AMID PANDEMIC

THIS YEAR, PUJA COMMITTEES IN THE TWIN CITIES OF CUTTACK AND BHUBANESWAR ARE CELEBRATING DUSSEHRA WITH STRICT ADHERENCE TO COVID-19 GUIDELINES. AS PART OF THE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AGAINST THE DEADLY VIRUS, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ADVISED NOT TO VISIT THE PUJA PANDALS



MANGALABAG



RANIHAAT



COLLEGE SQUARE

Festivities go online on Maha Saptami

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: Durga Puja in the capital this year has a different flavour to it as devotees seek blessings of the Goddess and prasad online. The unique celebration arose as puja mandaps remain out of bounds due to the ongoing pandemic.

On the occasion of Mahasaptami, Kola Bou Snan, the main ritual of the day, is conducted by priests early morning.

Many pandals and puja mandaps in the city including Sahid Nagar puja committee's made special arrangements for worship, arati and puspajali (ritualistic practices) through various social media platforms.

Secretary of Sahid Nagar puja committee Narayan Mohapatra said, "From shasthi to maha dashami,

we are providing online puja services at different times. We upload details about the same in our social media page. Devotees can avail these services from the comfort of their homes. We are also providing prasad within a two kilometer radius for which people have to apply online."

On similar lines, Old Station Durga puja committee also provided online puja services and doorstep delivery of Prasad in the capital city.

Secretary of the committee Deepak Jena said, "This year is tough for everybody but we have to understand the seriousness of this pandemic and thus request people to not come to pandals for darshan."

Sangeeta Sahoo, a resident of VSS Nagar, said, "Devotion can be shown from any place. It's not necessary to visit a pandal when they are providing darshan online."



SAHID NAGAR



RASULGARH



BARAMUNDA



NAYAPALLI

OP PHOTOS

Covid-19 toll breaches 1,200

ODISHA'S
CORONAVIRUS TALLY
ROSE TO 2,77,887 WITH
1,793 PEOPLE TESTING
POSITIVE FOR THE
INFECTION

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: State's novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) tally rose to 2,77,887 Friday, with 1,793 people testing positive for the viral infection, while 18 more fatalities pushed the toll to 1,214, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

Of the 1,793 fresh cases, 1,031 were reported from various quarantine centres, and the rest were detected during contact tracing exercise, the official said.

Khurda district, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the maximum number of fresh cases at 208, followed by Cuttack at 160, Angul at 107 and Mayurbhanj at 104.

Taking to Twitter, the health department said, "Regret to inform the demise of eighteen #COVID19 positive patients while under treat-



FILE PHOTO

IN NUMBERS

Khurda, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the maximum number of fresh cases at 208, followed by Cuttack at 160, Angul at 107 and Mayurbhanj at 104

More than 42.40 lakh COVID-19 tests have been conducted in the coastal state thus far, including 40,733 Thursday

ment in hospitals."

Three fresh fatalities each were registered in Angul, Gajapati and Khurda, two each in Jajpur and Mayurbhanj, and one each in Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Malkangiri, Nayagarh and Puri.

Ganjam district reported the maximum number of 225 deaths followed by Khurda (208), Cuttack (105), Puri (80), Balasore (63) and Sundargarh (56).

Khurda district has topped the list with 47,200 Covid cases fol-

lowed by Cuttack (25,001), Ganjam (20,959), Puri (12,101), Sundargarh (10,245) and Balasore (9,699).

As many as 53 Covid-19 patients have died to comorbidities, the official said.

More than 42.40 lakh COVID-19 tests have been conducted in the coastal state thus far, including 40,733 Thursday, added the official.

Meanwhile, official sources said that 500 Odisha Police personnel have donated plasma so far.

Director general of police (DGP) Abhay said, "We note this milestone with humility and determination to serve Odisha people with renewed dedication."

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik tweeted, "Commend the gesture of 500 #CovidWarriors of @odisha_police for coming forward to donate plasma to treat serious patients. In these trying times, such noble acts will encourage others to #donateplasma to save precious lives."

Centre, state failed to regulate prices: Cong

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Oct 23: The city unit of Congress party Friday alleged that the Centre and state government have failed to regulate the prices of essential commodities like onion and potato.

The party claimed that the recent rise in vegetable prices has hit the consumers hard. "The outbreak of novel coronavirus and the subsequent lockdown have taken a heavy toll on the financial condition of common people. The recent spike in the prices of essential commodities has added to their woes. The Centre and state government have failed to regulate the prices," said Cuttack city Congress president Giribala Behera.

Behera claimed that the prices of onion and potato have reached ₹80 and ₹40 in Cuttack and other places in Odisha. "Now, one cannot get a bag full of vegetables even if he spends ₹500. The district administrations are yet to monitor the situation and take necessary action," Behera alleged.

The Congress leader further claimed that some unscrupulous traders are trying their best to garner maximum profits by hiking the prices of edible oil, pulses, potato, onion and garlic amid the festivities.

Some unscrupulous traders are trying their best to garner maximum profits by hiking the prices of edible oil, pulses, potato, onion and garlic amid the festivities. "The price rise has exposed the inefficiency and helplessness of the Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department of the state government," Behera alleged.



Behera claimed that the prices of onion and potato have reached ₹80 and ₹40 in Cuttack and other places in Odisha

Stationary truck catches fire

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: A stationary truck caught fire at Mancheswar Industrial Estate area here Friday, triggering panic among passersby.

The fire fighters immediately rushed to the spot after receiving the report of fire from the locals. However, the blaze was brought under control by the Fire Services personnel.

Although the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, no major damages, apart from the vehicle, were reported in the incident.

City institute gets distinct recognition

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: The Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) Deemed to be University here, was ranked as the 20th best university by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) this year.

The university was also chosen as the only university from Eastern India to get the prestigious overall QS I-GAUGE Diamond Rating.

The ranking was decided through rigorous and independent data collection and analysis against performance metrics as set out in the methodology. Subhayou Nayak, Director (Client Relations), QS I-GAUGE, said, SOA was awarded

SOA was awarded 'Diamond Rating' in a virtual program in six parameters which included teaching and learning, employability, facilities, social responsibility, research and accreditation.

QS I-GAUGE is a custom designed rating system for universities and colleges in India which enables academic institutions to effectively benchmark their performance with reference to key indicators and lays down the developmental roadmap for upgrading their educational services.

SOA had also received the e-Learning Excellence for Academic Digitisation (e-LEAD) certificate recently at the QS I-GAUGE awards function for its excellence in e-learning and on-line teaching in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, SOA University sources here said.

Uniform fire safety law for states likely

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: The Union government has proposed legislation of a uniform fire safety and fire prevention law for all the states in an attempt to reduce the compliance burden and promote ease of doing business.

The Centre has written a letter to Odisha in this regard. In the matter of fire safety and fire prevention, it is proposed to frame a uniform law for the country instead of separate laws for the states, sources said here, Friday.

The Centre has proposed for re-

peal/subsume/amendment of the state Act. Accordingly, the state Law department has sought opinion of the Home department, which is dealing with fire services in the state.

The Odisha Fire Services Act, 1993 was enacted to provide fire safety, fire prevention and constitution of a state fire service department to carry out fire fighting measures, the sources said.

If the Parliament legislates a uniform law for all the states that will be applicable to the state after the same is adopted by the state under Article 252 of the Constitution. The existing state law will become redundant, they said.



In the matter of fire safety and prevention, it is proposed to frame a uniform law for the entire country

PAYING HOMAGE



People from various walks of life pay tributes to communist ideologue and revolutionary writer Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi on his death anniversary at OSTA office in Cuttack, Friday

OP PHOTO

EXTORTIONIST, KIN THRASH COPS IN CITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: Many policemen including a sub-inspector of Nayapalli police station sustained severe injuries following attacks by an alleged extortionist and his family members at Salia Sahi here.

The injured SI, Bijay Kumar Barik, has lodged a complaint with the Nayapalli police in this regard. According to sources, one Riyasat



Khan had filed a complaint with Nayapalli police accusing Sanjaya Sethi, an alleged anti-social, and his

associate Nitish, of snatching away his scooter when he denied giving him extortion amounting ₹30,000 October 20.

Khan along with his wife was passing through Janata Nagar when the duo intercepted their vehicle and demanded the money.

Later, Nayapalli police started investigation into the incident by registering a case (419/20).

SI Barik along with some constables and home guards Thursday

reached the residence of Sethi to enquire into the allegations. During interrogation, Sethi, his mother and sister suddenly started attacking Barik with sticks.

Other staffers were also injured when they rushed to help the SI. The cops immediately bolted away from the spot to save their lives.

The accused also threatened the cops of dire consequences if they again go there for investigation.

Online services facing infra roadblocks: CSOs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: The recently launched online citizen services by the state government faces several infrastructural roadblocks which would affect its implementation, opined several city-based civil society organizations (CSOs).

Several CSOs, while welcoming the move, have called for an effective mechanism such as making Jana Seva available in those areas or make online service facilitation centre so that poor people can be benefited.

Social activist Naba Kishore Pujari said, "Offering online service is the need of the hour. But poor internet infrastructure and tele density pose a major challenge."

Arun Prasad Dihadi, a member of Odisha Shramajeebe Manch said, "We have already tested the online access of education of the children where the government has mostly failed. The online service of Food Department will also have similar consequences."

According to the report of Department of Telecommunications, out of

Odisha's total 32.8 million wireless internet subscribers, 21 million are in rural areas. As far as the internet through wireline or cable is concerned, of the total 0.23 million subscribers in Odisha, only 0.05 million are from rural areas. Rural Odisha's wireline density is just 0.13 pc. So, how can people access online services?" asked social activist Anjan Pradhan.

We have tweeted thousands of cases regarding denial of ration card under our "No hunger campaign" and had called on the Food Minister to address the issue. While many have been benefited from our efforts, universalisation of this service needs political will, said Manas Saurabh Behera, a twitter campaigner from Jeebika Suraksha Mancha.

This is a good thing that the Odisha government is doing it online which will benefit the people. However, we demand that no one should be left out due to lack of Aadhar card/ration card. And the government must include dal, edible oil and iodised salt in its food security scheme, which is a long-standing demand of the people," Pujari added.



Several CSOs have called for an effective mechanism such as making Jana Seva available in those areas or make online service facilitation centre so that poor people can be benefited

LEFT RALLY



CPI(M) leader Janardan Pati addresses a rally of Cuttack Motor Staffers' Union at Palamandap bus stand in Cuttack, Friday

OP PHOTO

Woman dies in road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: A woman died when a speeding truck hit her scooter at Khandagiri square here, Friday.

The deceased lady was identified as Priti Nayak, 38, of Raghunath Nagar under Khandagiri police limits. According to sources, Nayak, an LIC agent, was on her way to Barmunda by her scooter (OD 33 V 1450) when the speeding truck hit her scooter from the rear.

Locals revealed that Nayak fell off the vehicle and died on the spot due to head injury.

Upon receipt of information, police reached the spot and seized the truck.



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KALINGNANGAR INDUSTRIALIZATION

Downstream industries in the doldrums

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, Oct 23: The state government has turned Kalinganagar into an industrial hub, but its efforts for pushing its ambitious plan for downstream industries have not met success. The plan has been confined to only land allotments to some small scale industries, a report said.

Notably, ancillary and downstream industries in metals such as steel and aluminum, is listed as one of the six focus sectors by the state government in its Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR), 2015.

As for Kalinganagar, the IDCO has only provided land to 36 small scale industries, but these SSIs are yet to receive land.

Other basic infrastructure facilities like roads, drainage, electricity and water supply have not been put in place, leaving the importance of the downstream plan in a limbo.

On the other hand, the government has a plan to shift the Biju Patnaik National Institute from Puri to Kalinganagar so that skills of technical students can be honed. But the IDCO has not yet provided land for this technical institute.

It is alleged that the IDCO has failed to cater for the basic needs of the downstream industries in the industrial hub. As a result, the



scope of jobs as promised by Kalinganagar industries has shrunk.

On the other hand, many old industrial units have allegedly got hundreds of acres of land without their proper use in Kalinganagar Industrial Complex.

There are forest lands in the area, but there is a lot of problems in conversion of forest land for industrial use.

A 21-year old company has taken 1500 acres of land here. IDCO has moved the court to reclaim the land from it. Another company has got 370 acres of land.

It was alleged that both the companies have been misleading government in the name of industri-

alization after taking land.

Four major industrial units are lying closed while the companies keen on downstream industries have been waiting for land over years. The IDCO has sought conversion of 2200 acres of forest land.

Biju Patnaik National Institute has been shifted to Kalinganagar. IDCO has allotted only 10 acres of land at Jakhapura and Kacherigan under Danagadi tehsil May 29, 2020.

However, 10 acres of land will fall short for the need of the Biju Patnaik National Institute, which was set up in Puri in 2002, but it failed to function fully.

Experts say large-scale steel and stainless steel industries in Kalinganagar ensure that there is

Ancillary and downstream industries in metals such as steel and aluminum, is listed as one of the six focus sectors by the state government in its Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR), 2015

As for Kalinganagar, the IDCO has only provided land to 36 small scale industries, but these SSIs are yet to receive land

Other basic infrastructure facilities like roads, electricity, drainage and water supply have not been put in place, leaving the importance of the downstream plan in a limbo

no dearth of raw material for the downstream metal sector in Kalinganagar. Opportunities for downstream and ancillary industry exist in areas like equipment manufacturing, foundries, flat and cold rolled products, fabrication, machining and precision equipment, appliances and white goods, auto components, fasteners and kitchenware.

Ranjan Nayak, president of the Kalinganagar Small Scale Industries Association said the association has drawn attention of the Chief Minister to provide land, electricity, roads, water and drainage. But IDCO authorities could not be available for comment in this regard.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tirtol/Balasore, Oct 23: The by-poll fever is on the rise in Tirtol and Balasore Sadar Assembly constituencies with leaders of the BJD, BJP and the Congress trying their best to woo the voters. In spite of the rough climatic conditions, candidates of respective parties and other leaders are constantly building up the campaign trail.

The BJP is pitching its heavy-weights to win the mandate in both the constituencies. Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan is scheduled to address Friday afternoon the voters of Tirtol Assembly constituency through virtual mode. The BJP's Raj Kishore Behera is contesting from Tirtol.

In Balasore Sadar, BJP's leader and Lok Sabha MP Aparajita Sarangi has already started door-to-door campaigning. She is trying to woo local women voters for party candidate Manas Kumar Dutta, son of Madan Mohan Dutta, the erstwhile MLA from this seat.

Several senior BJD leaders are camping in Tirtol and Balasore. They have started door-to-door campaigning for its candidates Bijay Shankar Das and Swarup Kumar Das. The BJD is hopeful of winning both the seats and is banking heavily on party supremo and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen



Patnaik's image.

As far as campaigning is considered, the Congress is a distant third. The party has fielded Himansu Bhusan Mallick as its candidate for Tirtol Assembly constituency while Mamata Kundu

will contest from the Balasore Sadar constituency. Odisha Congress in-charge Chella Kumar and Pradesh Congress Committee president Niranjan Patnaik, former MP Pradeep Majhi will start campaigning from Friday onwards.

2 villages to boycott bypoll

BALASORE: Even though 72 years have passed since independence, people of Nanadachhak and Kayakada villages of Parikhi Panchayat in Balasore Sadar Assembly constituency have still been suffering from commuting woes. They have been crossing a river by using a bamboo bridge made by them, they fumed. Infuriated over lack of development, people of both the villages have decided to boycott the bypoll November 3. "Even in mild rains, villages get flooded with sea water. We remain marooned for days together. We have been pleading with political leaders and the administration, but our problems continue unheard," they pointed out. They alleged that all development work has taken a backseat in the villages. Over 400 residents of the two village alleged that they had been facing a lot of difficulties in rainy season. Following the announcement of the poll notification, the villagers have been voicing their resentment over developmental issues.

Section 144 imposed in Bhawanipatna town

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatana, Oct 23: In a bid to contain the spread of COVID-19 infection during 'Chhatar Yatra' which is celebrated at Bhawanipatana town in Kalahandi district on the occasion of Durga Puja, prohibitory orders under Section-144 was imposed in the town.

This information was given by District Collector Gavali Parag. Entry of people from outside the town and gatherings has been banned from midnight October 23 to midnight October 25. He, however, said people with medical/emergency needs and media with Valid IDs will be allowed to enter the town during the two days.

Movement and gathering of people was restricted to four persons at any point of time in the town from October 23 to October 25, said Parag. The order shall remain in force from 12.00 (midnight) of October 23 to 12.00 am (midnight) of 25.10.2020. All executive magistrates, officers, officials of essential service de-

CHHATAR YATRA



partments carrying valid ID proofs/movement passes shall be exempted from the purview of this order.

The Collector said any person contravening this order will be prosecuted under Section 188 of IPC. Parag also urged people to celebrate Durga Puja at their homes. Live telecast of the 'Chhatar Yatra' will be shown by various social media platforms belonging to the district administration and some news channels, he added.

1,106 schools in Mayurbhanj to shut

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Oct 23: Even though the state government has introduced various schemes to motivate children of Odisha to continue school education, the district administration has failed to achieve desired results.

Forced by poor enrolment, the school and mass education department of Odisha has ordered closure of 1,106 schools in the district. Sources said, there are a total of 4,025 primary, upper primary and high schools in the district. A total of 3,19,495 students study in these schools and as many as 15,496 teachers work there.

According to School and Mass Education (S&ME) department's letter - 5465, 486 and 448, primary schools with less than 20 and 25 students and 172 upper primary schools due to low attendance will have been shut down in Mayurbhanj district.

The S&ME department also instructed the district administration to achieve good environment, good examination results to increase the number of students in schools, good infrastructure and e-shiksha. The



Primary schools with less than 20 and 25 students and 172 upper primary schools with low attendance will be shut down in the dist

government is spending crores of rupees under mid-day meals, free uniform, free textbooks and other schemes to encourage students to join government-run or aided schools. However, rising cases of schools facing closure due to poor enrolment has raised questions on the effectiveness of the schemes and programmes. According to guidelines by the S&ME department, there should be one teacher in the school for every 25 students. In Mayurbhanj district, there are 4,848 extra teachers for a total number of students in government schools.

If the trend continues, there will be no need for fresh appointment of teachers in the government schools. Many parents from the district, meanwhile, said that the government-run schools are lagging far behind in providing quality edu-

cation to students. As a result, enrolment of students in private schools is increasing day by day. Parents said when children in rural areas walk to school with the expectation of quality education they may encounter a different scenario. Either they drop out due to family pressures or lag behind private school-educated students.

Parents in rural areas who want to give their children quality education and teach their children necessary skills, they choose private schools in urban areas.

Even though private schools are expensive, parents prefer them as they hold out the hope of a bright future for children. Besides, while the pass percentage in government high schools in matriculation examination has been declining, private schools' performance is better.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Udala, Oct 23: Accusing forest department officials of beating a youth to death on suspicion of being a poacher, the deceased's family members staged a sit-in along with the body at Podadiha range office here under Kaptipada police limits in Mayurbhanj district Thursday. Till the time of filing this copy, the demonstration was continuing Friday.

The family members of the deceased are demanding adequate compensation from the forest department.

According to family members, Gajendra Nayak had gone to Similipal forest October 9. He did not return home that day. He was found October 10 inside the forest in a 'critical condition', family members said quoting forest department officials. They admitted him at the government hospital in Baripada. Later, they informed Gajendra's family members.

Gajendra was shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital

October 14 as his condition started deteriorating. He breathed his last October 22 while undergoing treatment. The family members demand a government job to one of them and financial assistance for the deceased's last rites. Some senior officials held talks with the bereaved family members.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
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Tender Value : ₹ 42.04,112.57, EMD: ₹ 84,100/- Cost of tender document: ₹ 3,540/- (Including 18% GST).
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Turmeric farming adds glow to women of Swabhiman Anchal



Organic turmeric farming has widely spread in forested and hilly pockets like Jodamba, Panaspur, Andirapalli, Jantri and Gajulumamudi panchayats.

Alaka Sethi, a woman farmer of Panaspur area cultivates turmeric on an acre of her land. Turmeric is harvested once in two years. As part of the traditional practice, turmeric seeds are cleaned and then boiled before they are laid to dry. I harvest about six to seven quintals of turmeric every year, she added.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chittrakoda, Oct 23: Kandhamal is known for its organic turmeric cultivation as it has been a good cash crop for scores of people. Taking a leaf from Kandhamal farmers, many women farmers have replicated success in turmeric farming in Swabhiman Anchal under Chittrakonda block of Malkangiri district. They are earning in thousands annually, a report said.

Notably Chittrakonda, once a cut-off area, was a backward region, but now development is gradually taking shape.

The report said that organic turmeric farming has widely spread in forested and hilly pockets like Jodamba, Panaspur, Andirapalli, Jantri and Gajulumamudi panchayats. Significantly, many women farmers have taken up this farming and earn about Rs 40,000 on an average annually. In fact, turmeric farming has been empowering women in this Swabhiman Anchal.

Take the case of Alaka Sethi, a woman farmer of Panaspur area. She cultivates turmeric on an acre of land. "Turmeric

is harvested once in two years. As part of the traditional practice, turmeric seeds are cleaned and then boiled before they are laid to dry. I harvest about six to seven quintals of turmeric every year," she added.

Traders take away turmeric from the doorstep at Rs 70 a kg and she earns about Rs 40,000 from it, she said. Another locally known turmeric farmer is Kamsel Sethi of the same area. She said she also earns in thousands.

Besides these two farmers, many other women have been successfully farming turmeric in five panchayats. Most of them said that lack of proper market linkages has been a major hurdle in promotion of this cultivation. "We could make more profits if we are provided with right kind of the marketing facility in the area," they observed.

Most of the time, the turmeric farmers fail to sell their produce as its procurement price nosedives in the absence of marketing facility, it was alleged.

In many interior villages, farmers are not even approached by local traders. Those who are in urgent need of cash have no choice, but to sell turmeric at

throwaway price, it was said. Now, with Covid-19 sweeping across the region, some farmers face trading blues.

They also asserted that if turmeric is promoted with government support and market linkage, the area would be able to export to other areas. The turmeric produced here is of good quality which holds the key to a major source of earning for a large population in the area. It may be noted here that the district administration has sent samples of turmeric from Swabhiman Anchal to New Dehli. The testing report found the samples of excellent quality.

Locals put forth several demands like setting up of a turmeric procurement centre, processing and storage units in the area.

Moreover, the horticulture department, the ITDA, Odisha Livelihood Mission and Mission Shakti should come out to promote this farming in the large interests of people, who have been suffering for lack of livelihood sources as development is gradually taking baby steps after Swabhiman bridge was commissioned.

FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS

BHUBANESWAR - CHENNAI CENTRAL - BHUBANESWAR WEEKLY SPECIAL From Bhubaneswar as 02830 on every Thursday from 22.10.20 to 26.11.20. From Chennai Central as 02840 on every Friday from 23.10.20 to 27.11.20.	HOWRAH - YESVANTPUR - HOWRAH WEEKLY AC SPECIAL From Howrah as 02863 on every Monday w.e.f. 19.10.20 From Yesvantpur as 02864 on every Wednesday w.e.f. 21.10.20	BHUBANESWAR - ANAND VIHAR (T) - BHUBANESWAR SPECIAL From Bhubaneswar as 02819 on every Wednesday & Sunday from 22.10.20 to 26.11.20. From Anand Vihar (T) as 02820 on every Friday & Tuesday from 23.10.20 to 01.12.20.
BHUBANESWAR - BANGALORE CANT. - BHUBANESWAR WEEKLY SPECIAL From Bhubaneswar as 02845 on every Sunday from 25.10.20 to 29.11.20. From Bangalore Cant. as 02846 on every Tuesday from 22.10.20 to 30.11.20.	BHUBANESWAR - TIRUPATI - BHUBANESWAR WEEKLY SPECIAL From Bhubaneswar as 08479 on every Saturday from 24.10.20 to 28.11.20. From Tirupati as 08480 on every Sunday from 25.10.20 to 29.11.20.	BHUBANESWAR - LOKAMANYA TILAK (T) - BHUBANESWAR SPECIAL From Bhubaneswar as 02880 on every Monday & Thursday from 22.10.20 to 30.11.20. From Lokamanya Tilak (T) as 02879 on every Wednesday & Saturday from 23.10.20 to 01.12.20.
SAMBALPUR - MANDUADIH - SAMBALPUR BI-WEEKLY SPECIAL From Sambalpur as 08311 on every Wednesday & Sunday from 21.10.20 to 29.11.20. From Manduadih as 08312 on every Thursday & Monday from 22.10.20 to 30.11.20.	BHUBANESWAR - BANGRIPOSI - BHUBANESWAR SPECIAL From Bhubaneswar as 02892 on Daily from 20.10.20 to 30.11.20. From Bangriposi as 02891 on Daily from 21.10.20 to 01.12.20.	BHUBANESWAR - PUDUCHERRY - BHUBANESWAR WEEKLY SPECIAL From Bhubaneswar as 02898 on every Tuesday from 22.10.20 to 24.11.20. From Puducherry as 02897 on every Wednesday from 21.10.20 to 25.11.20.
SAMBALPUR - PURI - SAMBALPUR WEEKLY SPECIAL From Sambalpur as 08303 on Daily from 20.10.20 to 30.11.20. From Puri as 08304 on Daily from 20.10.20 to 30.11.20.	SAMBALPUR - HOWRAH - SAMBALPUR WEEKLY SPECIAL From Sambalpur as 08306 on every Friday from 23.10.20 to 27.11.20. From Howrah as 08305 on every Saturday from 24.10.20 to 28.11.20.	BHUBANESWAR - RAMESWAR - BHUBANESWAR WEEKLY SPECIAL From Bhubaneswar as 08496 on every Friday from 23.10.20 to 27.11.20. From Rameswar as 08495 on every Sunday from 25.10.20 to 29.11.20.
PURI - LOKAMANYA TILAK (T) - PURI WEEKLY SPECIAL From Puri as 02866 on every Tuesday from 20.10.20 to 24.11.20. From Lokamanya Tilak (T) as 02865 on every Thursday from 22.10.20 to 26.11.20.	PURI - PATNA - PURI WEEKLY SPECIAL From Puri as 08449 on every Monday from 26.10.20 to 30.11.20. From Patna as 08450 on every Wednesday from 28.10.20 to 01.12.20.	PURI - HOWRAH - PURI WEEKLY SPECIAL From Puri as 02896 on every Thursday from 22.10.20 to 26.11.20. From Howrah as 02895 on every Friday from 23.10.20 to 27.11.20.
PURI - CHENNAI CENTRAL - PURI WEEKLY SPECIAL From Puri as 02889 on every Sunday from 25.10.20 to 29.11.20. From Chennai Central as 02890 on every Monday from 26.10.20 to 30.11.20.	PURI - SURAT - PURI WEEKLY SPECIAL From Puri as 02827 on every Sunday from 25.10.20 to 29.11.20. From Surat as 02826 on every Tuesday from 27.10.20 to 01.12.20.	PURI - JAYNAGAR - PURI WEEKLY SPECIAL From Puri as 08419 on every Thursday from 22.10.20 to 26.11.20. From Jaynagar as 08420 on every Saturday from 24.10.20 to 28.11.20.
HATIA - YESVANTPUR - HATIA WEEKLY SPECIAL From Hatia as 02835 on every Tuesday from 20.10.20 to 24.11.20. From Yesvantpur as 02836 on every Friday from 23.10.20 to 27.11.20.	PURI - BARBIL - PURI TRI-WEEKLY SPECIAL From Puri as 08418 on every Monday, Wednesday & Friday from 21.10.20 to 30.11.20. From Barbil as 08415 on every Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday from 22.10.20 to 01.12.20.	PURI - PARADEEP - PURI SPECIAL From Puri as 08414 on everyday from 20.10.20 to 30.11.20. From Paradeep as 08413 on everyday from 20.10.20 to 30.11.20.
HOWRAH - PUDUCHERRY - HOWRAH WEEKLY SPECIAL From Howrah as 02867 on every Sunday from 18.10.20 to 29.11.20. From Puducherry as 02868 on every Wednesday from 21.10.20 to 02.12.20.	VISAKHAPATNAM - LOKAMANYA TILAK (T) - VISAKHAPATNAM SPECIAL From Visakhapatnam as 02897 on every Sunday from 25.10.20 to 29.11.20. From Lokamanya Tilak (T) as 02898 on every Tuesday from 27.10.20 to 01.12.20.	VISAKHAPATNAM - NIZAMUDDIN - VISAKHAPATNAM SPECIAL From Visakhapatnam as 02887 on every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday & Sunday from 20.10.20 to 29.11.20. From Nizamuddin as 02888 on every Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Monday & Tuesday from 22.10.20 to 01.12.20.
YESVANTPUR - BHAGALPUR - YESVANTPUR WEEKLY SPECIAL From Yesvantpur as 02253 on every Saturday from 24.10.20 to 28.11.20. From Bhagalpur as 02254 on every Wednesday from 28.10.20 to 02.12.20.	KANNIYAKUMARI - HOWRAH - KANNIYAKUMARI SPECIAL From Kaniyakkumari as 02866 on every Saturday from 24.10.20 to 28.11.20. From Howrah as 02865 on every Monday from 26.10.20 to 30.11.20.	HOWRAH - ERNAKULAM TOWN - HOWRAH WEEKLY SPECIAL From Howrah as 02877 on every Saturday from 17.10.20 to 28.11.20. From Ernakulam Town as 02878 on every Tuesday from 20.10.20 to 01.12.20.
THIRUVANTHAPURAM CENTRAL - SHALIMAR - THIRUVANTHAPURAM CENTRAL TRI-WEEKLY SPECIAL From Thiruvanthapuram as 02841 on every Thursday & Saturday from 22.10.20 to 26.11.20. From Shalimar as 02842 on every Tuesday & Sunday from 21.10.20 to 25.11.20.	TATA NAGAR - YESVANTPUR - TATA NAGAR WEEKLY SPECIAL From Tata Nagar as 02889 on every Friday from 23.10.20 to 27.11.20. From Yesvantpur as 02890 on every Monday from 26.10.20 to 30.11.20.	GUWAHATI - SECUNDERABAD - GUWAHATI WEEKLY SPECIAL From Guwahati as 02514 on every Thursday from 22.10.20 to 26.11.20. From Secunderabad as 02513 on every Sunday from 25.10.20 to 29.11.20.
REVISED TIMING OF BHUBANESWAR - NEW DELHI - BHUBANESWAR RAJDAHNI SPECIAL From Bhubaneswar as 02823 w.e.f. 19.10.20-Dep. at 0930 Hrs. From New Delhi as 02824 w.e.f. 20.10.20-Dep. at 1705 Hrs.	HOWRAH - PURI - HOWRAH SPECIAL From Howrah as 02837 on everyday from 16.10.20 to 30.11.20. From Puri as 02838 on everyday from 17.10.20 to 01.12.20.	HOWRAH - YESVANTPUR - HOWRAH SPECIAL From Howrah as 02873 on everyday from 22.10.20 to 30.11.20. From Yesvantpur as 02874 on everyday from 24.10.20 to 02.12.20.

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Pain is the hammer of the Gods to break a dead resistance in the mortal's heart.

SRI AUROBINDO



Babus in good books

Politicians are loath to let a favourite babu go off into retirement. They find ways to bring them back into the administration. In 2017, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had appointed retired chief secretary Suresh Kumar as his chief principal secretary even though the state had a regular principal secretary, another IAS officer, because Kumar enjoyed his full trust.

Now taking a cue from the neighbouring state, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has sprung a similar surprise in his administration, and one that is likely to alter power equations in the Chief Minister's Office (CMO). He has appointed retired IAS officer DS Dhesi as chief principal secretary in the CMO.

According to sources, Dhesi was Haryana's chief secretary for four years and retired last year. He was then appointed chairman of the Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission (HERC), which he has now left to join his new assignment. Though his duties have not been spelt out, it is quite likely that Dhesi will become a power centre in the CMO, with all important files meant for Khattar being routed through him.


SPECTRUM STORY

Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba will head a panel of secretaries to streamline the spectrum allocation process. The other members of the panel are Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar, Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash, I&B Secretary Amit Khare and Secretary, Department of Space, K. Sivan.

Those in the know say that the committee's ambit may eventually be widened to also include spectrum pricing issues, always contentious, as we have seen in the past.

According to sources, the high-powered panel will examine the possibility of drawing up an annual calendar for auction of the spectrum that will give telecom companies a clear road map of the quantum as well as the frequency of spectrum being offered for commercial use. It will also sort out the various spectrum-related issues between ministries – as seen in the composition of the panel.

This may meet a long-standing demand of telecom companies that have been asking the government to clear the air for auctioning spectrum, which will help them plan and allocate resources efficiently, optimise their networks and roll out new technologies.



BABUDOM BYTES
Dilip Cherian

It is that time of the year, Covid or not, when the air quality in north India deteriorates rapidly. Stubble burning by farmers in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi is a major contributor to this. Every year several steps are announced, media raises a big stink, but nothing much has happened.

This year, stubble burning has begun already and urgent steps would be required to prevent Delhi from turning into a gas chamber. The Supreme Court has now taken a serious note of the failure of these states to stop stubble burning which poses a serious threat to public health in the region. It directed the respective chief ministers of these states to remain present when the court takes up the matter of combating air pollution at the next hearing. Hopefully, some meaningful action will emerge from the apex court's intervention.

Meanwhile, the state administration in Punjab and Haryana are busy dealing with angry farmers agitating against the Centre's controversial farm bills. The chief secretaries have their hands full. This year could see a repeat of our previous trysts with polluted air at the onset of winter with babus issuing the usual warnings and threats to fine farmers who are burning stubble.

CLEANING THE AIR

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

WISDOM CORNER

“We are here to add what we can to life, not to get what we can from life.”
WILLIAM OSLER

“The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm.”
ALDOUS HUXLEY

“Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.”
DALAI LAMA

WORDSWORTH

Understrapper


The late British author and newspaper columnist Simon Hoggart used to be fond of this word, applying it particularly to a governmental minion sent to make a statement before the House of Commons, thereby taking abuse that should have been directed at his boss. Few people now would grasp the full import of the word, though its first element gives enough of a clue that it's an alternative to underling. It was a popular term of the 18th Century, its first user on record being Thomas Brown, a satirist now only remembered, if at all, for a verse translation of a Latin epigram he composed when under threat of being sent down by his Oxford tutor, Dr John Fell: "I do not love thee, Dr Fell, / The reason why I cannot tell; / But this I know, and know full well, / I do not love thee, Dr Fell." A strapper could be a labourer or a man who groomed horses, hence a menial employee. His subordinate would be the ultimate underling.

Unfriend

This is a verb, meaning to remove a person as a "friend" on a social networking site such as Facebook. It was chosen as Word of the Year 2009 by the New Oxford American Dictionary. Christine Lindberg, senior lexicographer for Oxford's US dictionary programme, was quoted as saying "Unfriend has real lex-appeal." She wrote in the Dictionary's blog: "It has both currency and potential longevity. In the online social networking context, its meaning is understood, so its adoption as a modern verb form makes this an interesting choice for Word of the Year." The New Oxford American Dictionary's editors have been criticised for selecting it and the word itself has gained few friends among writers. The main objection to it – apart from its inelegance – is that it ought to be defriend, which is also used, which would parallel the standard English befriend. However, the Dictionary's editors found unfriend was much more common. It is presumably modelled on terms such as unsubscribe.

LOL

LOST IN A BALLOON



The man thinks for a while, looks down, looks up, looks down again, stares into space for a minute, and then cries out: "You're in a balloon!" The wind picks up, and the balloon floats off. After a moment, one balloonist says to the other: "That man must be a manager." "Why?" "Three reasons. First, he took a long time to answer. Second, he was perfectly correct. Third, his answer was perfectly useless!"

FOCUS ECONOMY

INCREASE IMPORT DUTY



Many institutions had assessed in June that our economy will suffer a contraction of five per cent. Now the same institutions are saying that the contraction will be of ten per cent. This is likely to get worse in the coming months because the corona pandemic is showing no sign of abating. We may face a second wave in the winter months if the experience of resurgence of the pandemic in Europe is any guide. In this gloomy scenario, the government is mighty pleased that a huge 75 per cent increase in sale of tractors, about 18 per cent increase in the sale of cars and 12 per cent increase in the sale of motorcycles has taken place in September 2020 as compared to the same month the previous year. Question is this: how come the purchase of tractors and cars is increasing when the GDP is contracting? My assessment is that farmers are making 'distress' purchases of tractors due to the shortage of labour caused by the failure of the government to encourage migrant workers back to their host states. Similarly, the unavailability of public transport like bus, metro and local trains have pushed commuters to make distress purchases of cars and motorcycles. Owning a vehicle helps in safe travel in Covid times. So, these purchases should not be misconstrued as indicators of a revival of the economy. The government, however, is aware of the contraction of GDP. It has encouraged banks to give loans to consumers and businesspersons aggressively to generate demand in the market. There is a basic difference in the loans taken by businesspersons and consumers. Loans taken by investors are used for setting up factories, establishing shops or buying trucks. The businessperson and the nation generate additional income from these investments; and he could pay the interest and repay the principal amount from that additional income. Say, a businessperson took a loan of ₹10 lakh, earned an additional income of ₹3 lakh and used this to repay the interest of ₹1 lakh and principal

of ₹1 lakh; and he may still have with him ₹1 lakh for making new investment in the next year. His total expenditure will increase from ₹10 lakh this year to ₹11 lakh the next year. The situation of a consumer stands on an entirely different footing because he is not likely to obtain any additional income from buying, say, a fridge. Say, he took a loan of ₹10 lakh. He would have to pay an interest of ₹1 lakh and principal of ₹1 lakh and will be left with ₹2 lakh less for making new purchases in the next year. His expenditure will decrease from ₹10 lakh this year to ₹8 lakh next year. The income of the common man is already under stress. They should not invite further decrease in the same by take a consumption loan. The economy may show some immediate benefits from disbursement of such loans just as steroids help increase the milk yield in cows immediately but this will only lead to problems later. The second method of increasing demand in the market is for the government to borrow and transfer some amount directly to the bank accounts of the people who can use this windfall to buy goods from the market. However, the government will have to repay the loan and for this purpose it will have to impose additional taxes or print notes. The imposition of these additional taxes will lead to a reduction in income in hands of the people and lower demand the next year. Printing of notes will lead to an increase in the prices and again lead to reduced demand the next year. These are, therefore, band-aid type of temporary fixes that will only push the economy deeper into the pit. The third method of raising money for making the direct transfers is for the government to increase import duties. The share of import taxes in the revenues of the government has declined from 18 per cent about six years ago to 12 per cent today. The government has actively promoted imports by reducing import duties. Note that we have committed in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) that we will not increase the average import duties beyond 48 per cent. The actual rate today is less than 20 per cent. Therefore, we face no roadblock from the WTO in doubling the import duties. The government can increase the import duties, say, from present average 20 to 40 per cent.

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The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore.

SPECTRUM QUAD

A bulwark against Chinese designs

Although reports of a trade deal with Taiwan have not been officially confirmed by India, Beijing has issued a veiled warning to New Delhi. Obviously, it is not just India-Taiwan. Beijing is reacting to the latest development in the Quad, and the ensuing defence pact between India and the US. As New Delhi decides to take on China, the latter makes a desperate attempt to bully India.

Recently, India participated symbolically in the National Day of Taiwan, drawing a sharp response from Beijing. The Chinese embassy in New Delhi issued an advisory to the Indian media against felicitations of Taiwan on its National Day. New Delhi reacted by saying that media in India is free and vibrant unlike in China. The cooperation between Taiwan and India is rising especially since a pro-independent Prime Minister took charge in Taiwan. Trade between the two countries is on the rise and Taiwan has a trade office in Mumbai.

On a serious note, observers interpret Beijing's diplomatic advisory to India as a military threat. The vibe emanating from China points to Chinese military taking action if New Delhi were to seal a deal of any sort with Taiwan. Since containing China consists of a multi-

pronged strategy, it is in order that we factor the development in the Quad. New Delhi has invited, for the first time, Australia to participate in the joint naval exercise along with Japan and the US. The partners in Quad have responded warmly to India inviting Australia to join the Malabar Naval exercise. Arguably, the US views Quad as a countervailing body to China. But for long-term partnership between these four democracies, Quad should mean more than China. It should be a partnership based on shared values and interests including rule of law, freedom of navigation, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, peaceful resolution of disputes and free trade. India-Pacific region draws attention from other countries like Germany, UK and France. Germany, which is holding the EU presidency at present, is spearheading an India-Pacific strategy for the European Union. Germany has hinted that any engagement with India will always have the China angle in the equation. Out of all the four members in Quad it is India that shares a long border with China and is facing Chinese hostility for many years. So, the onus is on New Delhi to keep the Quad going for a secure and conflict-free India-Pacific region.

The third thorn in China's flesh is the India-US defence deals in the forthcoming 2+2 ministerial meeting. India and US are going to sign the Basic Exchange and Co-operation Agreement, which pertains to geospatial intelligence, and sharing information on maps and satellite images for defence. The BECA is sequel to LEMOA and COMCASA; these three defence pacts are considered to be the troika of foundational pacts leading to deeper military co-operation.

On the pacts, the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) was signed in August 2016. It allows each other's military to replenish from others' bases access supplies, spare parts and services from other countries' land, air and ports, which then can be reimbursed. Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) signed in 2018 after the first 2+2 dialogue allows US to provide India with encrypted communications equipment and systems. In simpler terms, it is like WhatsApp or Telegram for the two militaries. While LEMOA lays the bases for mutual trust on exchange of valuable assets, COMCASA connects two militaries and BECA facilitates sharing classified information in real time with-

out any risk of being compromised. All these pacts put together mean both militaries coming closer and building trust in the face of an increasingly aggressive China.

There are those who might read a US strategy in these pacts to wean India away from its dependence on Russia. India was putting off US overtures because of deep-rooted links between Pakistan and Pentagon. The US could still rely on Rawalpindi for access to an exit from Afghanistan. Both these premises have changed. The US is successfully nudging India to engage in Afghanistan, partly to replace Pakistan and the Chinese aggression has pushed New Delhi into America's embrace.


Apparently New Delhi has blown the bugle although not so loud against China. The India-Pacific region manned by Quad is the real bulwark against Chinese aggression. New Delhi is the critical anchor in making India-Pacific a viable strategic instrument. Japan may have originated the idea and the US may have given it a push but it is India that has made Quad happen. Taiwan is a pinprick for China, but it should not become another Tibet.

The writer is Professor of International Relations, JMI.

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
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Centre vs states

Sir, Following the Punjab government's footsteps, Rajasthan is set to pass a law against the provisions of farm laws passed recently by the central government. Previously, many non-BJP ruled states had passed laws against the provisions of CAA, NRC, terming them anti-people. In the case of the present farm laws, they oppose it by saying that the laws are against the interests of farmers. At this juncture, the Supreme Court is urged to come out and interpret the laws regarding states' Constitutional rights and obligations in relation to central laws, and clear the air so that peace reigns in the farm sector.

Satya Behera, BOLANGIR

Superstition in TV shows

Sir, As per Article 51 A(h) of the Constitution, a fundamental duty of the citizens is to develop a scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry. But, some television channels are promoting superstition and blind belief in the guise of popular family serials. Scenes of witchcraft, appearance of ghosts, witches, human sacrifice, mysterious and obscure cults are being shown in these serials. The scenes are not only a contradiction of the Constitutional provisions but also creating an environment for psychological disorders among the weak-minded. These scenes are getting transported to the dreams of spectators. When scientists are researching for Mangalyaan, TV is being used to spread horror in society in the name of entertainment. Action should be taken against these serials.

Sudhansu Sekhar Dhada, BHUBANESWAR

New gold rule

Sir, The central government's consumer welfare ministry has issued directions to some three lakh jewellery shops to abide by the compulsory hall-marking on every gold item they sell from mid-January 2021 and any violation shall invite stiff penalty. There are facilities only at 27 places to issue Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) hallmarking. So, how could the mammoth task of hall-marking be achieved for all these jewellery outlets? The new act is also silent about the huge gold or ornament deposits in temples. In the absence of hallmark, what would be its value? Indian households possess ornaments, gold and silver as inheritance over generations, which are bereft of any such hall-marking. Every family possesses some ornaments to carry on their sustenance in times of financial difficulties. The government is urged to clear the air on this.

Janaki Ballav Dash, MAYURBHANJ

of the day quote

Amarinder Singh played fraud with the farmers through misuse of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha. All the anti-farmer acts passed by the Centre have been endorsed by him

SUKHBIR BADAL | SAD PRESIDENT

Under BJP rule, MP is identified with the mafia, adulteration etc, while industries in the state have got totally ruined

KAMAL NATH | CONGRESS LEADER

Congress party needs to first decide who is their leader. Is it a person or a family? In politics, you cannot understand the pain of poor and middle class citizens if you are blinded by the love for one family. Since Congress is a sinking ship, I wonder how it can help the people of Morbi?

SMRITI IRANI | UNION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Farmer ends life

Aurangabad: A 30-year-old farmer allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself in Marathwada region of Maharashtra on Friday, after his crop got washed away due to recent heavy rains, a police official said. The incident occurred at Kader village in Omerga tehsil in the morning, he said. "According to his relatives, Shivaji Jadhav hanged himself from a tree in the early hours," S K Shaikh of Omerga police station said.

Two arrested

Amravati: Two persons have been arrested in Amravati district of Maharashtra for allegedly cheating 41 persons of Rs 40,000 each on the pretext of arranging trips for them to Thailand, police said Friday. Dr Nandkishor Arun Patil (30) and his brother Vinod were nabbed on Wednesday for allegedly taking money from the victims for arranging a trip to Thailand in June 2019 and not refunding the money after cancelling the tour, sub-inspector Rajesh Jaware of Anjangaon police said. The duo had floated attractive advertisements of trips to Thailand through Manav Sewa Vikas Foundation and 41 persons had responded to the ad and shelled out Rs 40,000 each for the trip, which was scheduled for June 16, 2019, he said.

Silver seized

Thane: Silver and imitation jewellery worth Rs 6.17 crore were seized from a van in Navi Mumbai in Thane district, police said Friday. The van was moving in a suspicious manner near a toll plaza on Thursday night and a search yielded 929.414 kgs of silver and imitation jewelry being transported through courier services to Pune, Kolhapur and other parts of Maharashtra, Senior Inspector Sanjeev Dhumal of Vashi police station said.

Debris removed

Malappuram: Part of the debris of the Air India Express plane that crashed at nearby Karipur airport on August 7, killing 21 people, was Friday shifted from the accident site for facilitating a thorough probe, airport authorities said. The airline's officials from Mumbai supervised the shifting of the cockpit portion of the aircraft to a nearby area, using a crane, they said. Twenty one people were killed when the AIE flight from Dubai with 190 people on board overshot the tabletop runway, fell into a 35-feet valley and broke into two portions.



The Maha Vikas Aghadi government is showing budgeted provisions as a special package and trying to portray a false picture of helping farmers

DEVENDRA FADNIS | MAHARASHTRA LEADER OF OPPOSITION

FIGHT AGAINST COVID

Next 3 months decisive: Vardhan

"From just one lab, the country now has nearly 2,000 laboratories. The number of total COVID-19 tests conducted across the country have surpassed 10 crore. This is a positive indication that we are moving in the right direction," the minister said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan Friday said the next three months are going to be decisive in determining the coronavirus situation in the country as he urged people to follow COVID appropriate behaviour in the coming festival season and winter months.

He also highlighted that the number of active COVID-19 cases in the country are less than 7 lakh and the doubling rate has increased to 97.2 days.

Vardhan, who reviewed the COVID-19 preparedness with the health and medical education ministers and other senior officials of Uttar Pradesh, said in the last three months, the country has seen significant improvement in the COVID parameters, the health ministry said in a statement.

"From recording over 95,000 COVID-19 cases in a day, they have been substantially reduced to less than 55,000 per day. The recovery rate of India is nearing 90 per cent. The Case Fatality Rate (CFR) is also declining. CFR stands at 1.51 per cent and is moving towards the target of being less than 1 per cent," he was quoted as saying in the statement.



PTI PHOTO

"The number of active cases is less than 7 lakh and the doubling rate has increased to 97.2 days, as of now," Vardhan said.

"From just one lab, the country now has nearly 2,000 laboratories. The number of total COVID-19 tests conducted across the country have surpassed 10 crore. This is a positive indication that we are moving in the right direction," the minister said.

He said appropriate measures are being taken to combat the infectious disease.

"But the next three months are going to be decisive in determining

the situation of COVID-19 in the country. If we take adequate precaution and follow COVID appropriate behaviour in the coming festival and winter season, we will be in a better position to fight coronavirus," Vardhan said.

"For a big state like Uttar Pradesh, it becomes important that maximum thrust is given to simple precautionary measures which are effective in preventing the spread of the disease to a large extent like wearing masks/face cover, especially in public spaces, and following hand and respiratory etiquettes," he added.

One-fourth of Delhi air 'severely' polluted



PTI PHOTO

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 23: Nine of the 36 pollution monitoring station in Delhi showed 'severe' air quality index on Friday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board's data.

According to the pollution monitoring agency, AQI in North Delhi's Alipur area was 447, which falls in the 'severe' category, followed by Shadipur, Wazirpur, Jahagirpuri, Mundka, Patparganj, Anand Vihar, Bawana, and Vivek Vihar.

Besides these, 26 pollution monitoring station showed 'very poor' reading and one logged moderate air quality index. The overall pollution levels continued to be in the lower end of the 'very poor' category at 372 at noon.

Vijay Kumar Sonu, Head of Environment Monitoring and Research Centre at IMD told IANS that "due to calm wind there is no dispersion of pollutants". "The wind speed will, however, pick up from October 26 and would likely result in improvement of AQI," he said.

The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and

Research, which comes under the aegis of Ministry of Earth Sciences, also stated that the most dominant factor for deterioration is extremely calm surface wind in Delhi, combined with low inversion height followed by moderate stubble related intrusion.

"Highly calm surface wind conditions prevail over the Delhi region and is forecast to continue for next two days. It will lead to low ventilation conditions and little dispersion for an extended period and hence accumulation of pollutants near the surface. Further deterioration of AQI is predicted for the next 2 days," the forecasting agency added.

SAFAR also stated that there was significant stubble fire count around Haryana, Punjab, and neighbouring regions with the counts at 1,213 on Thursday, slightly less than what was a day before.

"However, the boundary layer wind direction is not fully favourable for pollutant transport towards Delhi region, the SAFAR model estimate of stubble burning share in PM2.5 is 17 per cent for today," it added.

PAR PANEL QUIZZES FACEBOOK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: A parliamentary panel Friday quizzed social media giant Facebook about the quantum of their revenue, profit and tax payouts in India and asked what portion of their earnings were being used for data security in the country, sources said.

Facebook India's policy head Ankhi Das appeared before the Joint Committee of Parliament on Data Protection Bill, 2019 chaired by BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi.

She was questioned for two hours and asked some tough and searching questions by the panel members from across the political spectrum, sources said.

During the meeting, a member suggested that the social media platform should not draw inferences from the data of its users for commercial benefits of its advertisers or for electoral purposes, they said.

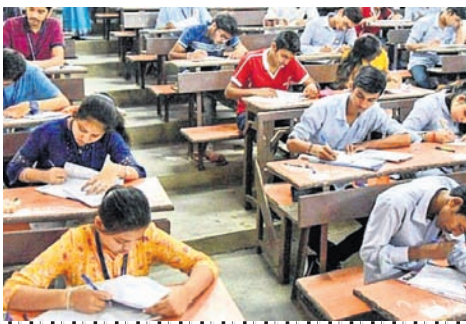
The MPs also sought to know the revenue Facebook generates from India and what percentage of the revenue is spent on safeguards for data protection, sources said. India is the biggest market for Facebook in terms of its users.

The panel also asked how much tax the social media giant pays in India, they said.

During the meeting, concerns were also raised about the allegations that majority of the employees of the social media giant in the United States were inclined towards one specific political party of the country.

KARNATAKA TO REOPEN DEGREE COLLEGES

The Karnataka government has decided to reopen diploma and degree colleges including engineering colleges after November 17 that were shut after Covid pandemic outbreak since March



PDP, Gupkar alliance to take call: Mehbooba

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Oct 23: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti Friday said her party and the recently-floated People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration will take a final decision on whether to contest elections or not in the Union Territory. Jammu and Kashmir's mainstream political parties, including the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party, formed the Gupkar alliance on October 15 for restoration of special status of the erstwhile state and also to initiate a dialogue between all the stakeholders on the issue.

In her first media interaction in over 14 months after the abrogation of provisions of Article 370 in August last year and her subsequent detention, Mufti said personally she was not interested in contesting polls till the erstwhile state's flag and constitution were restored.

"As far as the PDP is concerned, now we are not alone. If you remember, we, along with the NC, had taken a united stand before the commencement of panchayat polls (in 2018) that we will not participate in them. This time also, we will discuss it in the party, with our workers, and then discuss it in the People's Alliance (for Gupkar Declaration). Whatever decision we take there, will be bound on everyone," she told reporters at a



PTI PHOTO

press conference at her Gupkar residence.

However, the former chief minister said on the personal front, she had no interest in contesting any elections till the erstwhile state's flag and its constitution was restored. "As far as I am concerned, I have no interest in elections. Till the time the constitution, under which I used to contest elections, is returned to us, Mehbooba Mufti has got nothing to do with elections, let me tell you that," she said.

Mufti said she was not for power even if the union territory was upgraded to a state. "I am no more for power be it a union territory or even a state. I was never for power. If I had any greed for power, we would not have left the Congress and created the PDP. We are not only for power. We could have made the government with the Congress (after 2014 polls), but we entered into an alliance with the BJP for a reason," she said, adding that "I am not ready to take any oath without my flag and my constitution".

Rahul takes a dig at Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hisua/Bhagalpur (Bihar), Oct 23: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Friday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of having "insulted" the soldiers with his comment that nobody had intruded into Indian territory in Ladakh, and also alleged that his government did not help the migrant workers from Bihar during the lockdown.

Addressing his first poll rallies in the state, Rahul Gandhi said the BJP's election promise of providing 19 lakh jobs is akin to its pledge of depositing Rs 15 lakh in bank accounts of the people. Raising the China issues at his both rallies - the first at Hisua in Nawada district and another at Kahalgao in Bhagalpur - he said the Chinese army had indeed intruded into the Indian territory, and the Prime Minister should tell the country when they



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi along with RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav during an election meeting, at Hisua in Nawada district, Friday

PTI PHOTO

will "be thrown out".

"They have seized 1,200 sq km of our land. But when the Chinese army intruded, why did our Prime Minister insult our soldiers by saying that nobody entered into the Indian side?" Rahul Gandhi said. "You ask any Army jawan, he will tell you that today the Chinese army is standing in the area which

we use to patrol earlier. Our land has been snatched away from us," he claimed. "The question is, Modi ji, when will you throw out the Chinese soldiers sitting in our territory?" he asked. Upping the ante, Rahul said that the Prime Minister who calls himself a nationalist and a patriot has weakened the country over the last six years.



Devotees take part in rituals as part of Durga Puja celebrations in Birbhum district of West Bengal, Friday

PTI PHOTO

New Parliament building to be ready by Oct 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: Construction of a new Parliament building will begin in December this year and is likely to be completed by October 2022, while necessary measures have been put in place to ensure that Parliament sessions can be held uninterrupted during this period in the existing buildings, Lok Sabha Secretariat said Friday.

Officials also said that sufficient steps have been taken to control air and noise pollution during the construction work for the new parliament building, which will have separate offices for all MPs and those will be equipped with the latest digital interfaces as a step towards creating 'paperless offices'.

The new building will also have a grand Constitution Hall to showcase India's democratic heritage, a lounge for members of Parliament, a library, multiple committee rooms, dining areas and ample parking space.

In the new building, the Lok Sabha chamber will have a seating capacity for 888 members, while Rajya Sabha will have 384 seats for the upper house members, sources said after a review meeting chaired by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. This has been done keeping in mind the future increase in the number of members for the two houses.

At present, Lok Sabha has a sanctioned strength of 543 members and Rajya Sabha of 245. The groundbreaking ceremony is expected to be held in December and may be at-



PTI PHOTO

tended by President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, besides the presiding officers of the two houses among other dignitaries including political leaders.

The existing building is a British era building, designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker who were responsible for planning and

construction of New Delhi. The Foundation Stone of the existing Parliament House was laid on February 12, 1921 and the construction took six years and cost Rs 83 lakh at that time. The opening ceremony was performed on January 18, 1927 by the then Governor-General of India, Lord Irwin.

At the meeting, Birla said there

should be no compromise in ensuring quality control and timely completion of the work relating to the new Parliament House. A monitoring committee will be constituted to oversee the construction work, which would include officers of Lok Sabha Secretariat, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, CPWD, NDMC and architect/designer of the project.

Last month, Tata Projects Limited won the bid to construct the new parliament building at a cost of Rs 861.90 crore. The new building will be constructed close to the existing one under the Central Vista redevelopment project.

In a statement, the Lok Sabha Secretariat said Birla chaired a review meeting regarding the con-

struction of the new Parliament House today. The meeting was also attended by Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Shri Hardeep Singh Puri.

During the meeting, Birla was briefed about the progress made in the shifting of facilities and other infrastructure from the area proposed for the construction of the new building. "The barricading plan and the various mitigating measures to control the air and noise pollution during the construction process were elaborated. The officers of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs further briefed Birla about the proposed movement plan of VIPs and staff during this period, including during Parliament sessions," the statement said.

of the day quote

After mocking the RJD for promising to create 10 lakh jobs, the NDA has promised to create 19 lakh jobs in Bihar if elected. I did not know that 19 was a smaller number than 10. I think I should go back to primary school

P. CHIDAMBARAM | FORMER FINANCE MINISTER

Officials must use the best technology, including drones in conducting the comprehensive land survey in the state

Y.S. JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | ANDHRA CM

Districts Collectors in Goa have been directed to keep tabs on nightclubs and hotels, which do not follow social distancing norms and other government SOPs

VISHVAJIT RANE | GOA HEALTH MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Andhra school head arrested

Penugonda (Andhra Pradesh): Andhra Pradesh's Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials have arrested a village school headmaster for demanding a bribe of ₹10,000 to issue duplicate certificates to an old student, ACB officials said Friday. Surya Prakash, 46, once a student of Penugonda's ZNVR High School, approached school's headmaster J Srinivas for issuing duplicate certificates as he had lost his certificates sometime ago. Srinivas allegedly demanded ₹10,000 from him to issue duplicate certificates.

4 Bangladeshis nabbed by BSF

Kolkata: Four Bangladeshis have been apprehended by Border Security Force personnel in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas for illegally entering India, a statement by the paramilitary force said Friday. All four of them were nabbed by border guards at Dobarpara outpost on Wednesday as soon as they crossed the Ichhamati river, which separates the two countries, and set foot in India, it said.

Three killed

Jammu: Three persons were killed and eight injured on Friday in a road accident in Jammu and Kashmir's hilly Doda district. Police said the vehicle, carrying the passengers from Khillani to Hambal, plunged into a deep gorge after the driver lost control. The accident took place in the Domail village. "Three persons died on the spot and eight were injured in this road accident. "The injured have been shifted to hospital", police said.



Since the time Covid-19 vaccine trials started, there has been one discussion among the poor people -- whether we will be able to afford the vaccine? Today, I want to make it clear that every poor person in Madhya Pradesh will get the vaccine free of cost

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | MADHYA PRADESH CM

RLYS RECEIVES 2.4 CRORE APPLICATIONS FOR 1.4L POSTS

The Railways said that around 2.4 crore candidates have applied for 1.4 lakh vacancies in Indian Railways for various categories of staff to be hired by the Railway Recruitment Boards



VENTING ANGER



Women from the farming community raise slogans as they take part in the ongoing agitation against the central government's newly-introduced agri-bills, in Amritsar, Friday

PTI PHOTO

CHOPPER SCAM

Saxena granted interim bail

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 23: A Delhi court Friday granted interim bail to accused-turned-approver Rajiv Saxena in the ₹3,600-crore AgustaWestland VVIP chopper deal scam case being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation. Special Judge Arvind Kumar granted interim bail to him on the personal bond of ₹2 lakh and surety of like amount till the next date of hearing. His bail application was vehemently opposed by the probe agency and the matter will now come up on December 11 for arguments on it.

On September 19, the agency had filed the supplementary charge sheet against 15 accused, including alleged middleman Christian Michel and Saxena in connection with the case. The court had then taken its cognisance and summoned the accused on October 23. Saxena, along with few other accused appeared before the court today via video conferencing Friday. Those who appeared were let off on bail in the case, while others moved the exemption application.

5 killed in TN blast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madurai (TN), Oct 23: At least five women were killed in a blast at a private fireworks factory here on Friday, police said.

Citing initial probe, police said chemicals which were being mixed and stuffed caught fire due to friction leading to a series of explosions, severely damaging the structure located at Muruganeri village. Chief Minister K Palaniswami announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh each to the kin of the deceased. The victims were identified as Ayyammal, Suruliammal, Lakshmi, Veluthai and Kaleeswari. Several other workers managed to escape to safety, police said, adding fire service units from Virudhunagar and Srivilliputhur were used to put out the blaze.

NAVY MISSILE SINKS SHIP WITH 'DEADLY ACCURACY'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: In a demonstration of its combat readiness in strategic sea lanes around India, the Indian Navy Friday released a video of an anti-ship missile destroying a sinking ship with "deadly accuracy" somewhere in the Arabian Sea. The missile was fired by frontline corvette INS Prabal as part of a mega naval drill involving aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya and a number of warships, attack helicopters, aircraft and other assets of the Navy. An Indian Navy Spokesperson tweeted that the missile homed in on its target, an old ship, hitting with deadly accuracy at its maximum range.

"#ASHM launched by

#IndianNavy Missile Corvette #INSPrabal, homes on with deadly accuracy at max range, sinking target ship," he said. Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh on Thursday reviewed the operational preparedness of his force at various shore-based locations as well as at sea.

He also addressed a select group of combatants of the Navy's Carrier Battle Group over a broadcast from the INS Vikramaditya, India's only aircraft carrier, and reviewed the force's overall combat readiness, officials said.

In his remarks, Admiral Singh complimented his force for continuously maintaining "peak combat-readiness" and "high tempo" of operations over the past few months, they said. The Indian Navy has sig-

nificantly increased its deployment in the Indian Ocean Region, in an attempt to send across a message to China in the wake of escalation in tension between the two countries.

Giving an overview of the prevailing security situation, the Chief of Naval Staff stated that the Navy would continue to maintain a high-tempo of operations in coming months. "He also complimented the Carrier Battle Group and its combatants for accurate and effective weapon firings, which left no doubt about the Navy's readiness to meet any emergent contingencies," the Navy said in a statement on Thursday.

A carrier battle group is a mega naval fleet comprising an aircraft carrier, accompanied by large number destroyers, frigates and other ships. "Indian Navy continues to maintain a high tempo of operations and combat-readiness despite the COVID-19 pandemic by adhering to stringent protocols onboard warships, submarines and aircraft squadrons and bases, and is fully prepared to tackle challenges in the maritime domain," the Navy said.

Artist creates Durga idol with expired medicines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhubri, Oct 23: With the COVID-19 pandemic having brought the world to its knees, a 37-year old Assam government employee, in solidarity with everyone fighting the global menace, has created a Durga idol here with strips of expired tablets, capsules and injection vials.

Sanjib Basak, an employee of Dhubri district administration, has, over the past few years, come up with various innovative and

eco-friendly ideas to design the idol, but this year, amid the COVID-19 crisis, he wanted to make a difference with his creation.

"During lockdown, I had observed that people were queuing up outside pharmaceutical shops to buy essential medicines in bulk. It was then the idea struck me that I could be making Maa Durga's idol with medicine strips to mark the pandemic," Basak, who had last year made the figurine with discarded electric

wires, said.

It took the district official nearly five months and 40,000 strips of tablets, capsules and injection vials of different colours to give shape to his idea. "Initially, I was worried that I won't be able to make the idol this year due to work pressure and strict safety protocols. But I managed to create one with expired medicines. "Paper, thermocol and board, among other things, were used to fix the medicine strips to a frame and create the idol," Basak added.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses a gathering during an election rally, at Gandhi Maidan in Gaya, Friday

PTI PHOTO

Corona gives fragile Rohtang Pass recovery time

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Manali, Oct 23: The coronavirus-induced lockdowns have cleaned up the fragile Rohtang Pass with the piles of trash almost vanished and nature making a comeback in the cold, rugged and rocky mountains of the Pir Panjal range of the Himalayas -- the origin of one of North India's major rivers, the Beas.

Also the vehicular pollution plummeting to levels unseen in the living memory. "What a pleasant surprise to see no littering of trash in hills en route to the Rohtang Pass," remarked Nikita Pandey, a tourist from Delhi.

"We should be thankful to Covid-induced lockdowns that gave nature a recovery time to regain its glory," she said, while pointing towards spots where non-biodegradable waste



PTI PHOTO

was normally dumped carelessly along the banks of the glacial-fed Beas river near Marhi, en route to the Rohtang Pass from Manali.

The Rohtang Pass is located at an altitude of 13,050 feet and 52 km from tourist resort Manali in Himachal Pradesh. Her friend Gauri Vaidya said in her past visits, the ninth this time in as many years, she

felt angry to see the stunning amount of waste like beer and liquor bottles and food sachets dumped haphazardly in the mountains.

"This visit is memorable to see nature blooming again amid pine forests and gurgling streams," she added. The picturesque Rohtang Pass, which remains under snow even during the onset of summer,

is a major attraction for both domestic and foreign tourists.

According to the state tourism department, more than 1,00,000 tourists visit the Rohtang Pass every year and tourism, including skiing, trekking and paragliding, is a key source of income for the local people. For more than five months from December, the pass remains cut off from the rest of the country due to heavy snowfall.

After nearly six months of sealing borders, the state government on September 15 threw open its borders for free movement of people and goods. "In the last one or two weeks, the trend of tourists is picking up in Manali and its nearby areas. Compared to thousands of tourists that normally descend here daily ahead of Diwali, now tourists, mainly from the northern states, are

thronging that too on weekends," an official of the state Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corp. said here.

Travel agent Naresh Thakur said the tourists from Manali now prefer to travel towards the Lahaul Valley via the newly opened Atal Tunnel, beneath the Rohtang Pass, rather than taking the long, treacherous route of the pass.

"Snow is the only attraction for the tourists and the mighty Rohtang Pass is the only destination near Manali that remains marooned in snow cover till end of May. In this season, Rohtang slopes are totally bereft of snow cover, so they are not on their preferred list," he added. Government officials said the Rohtang Pass normally closes for the traffic every year in December owing to snowfall.

LYNCH MOB ATTACKS RAPIST, HIS GRANDPA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, Oct 23: A lynch mob went berserk Friday and assaulted an accused and his grandfather, who were in police custody on charges of raping and burning a six-year-old girl of a migrant labourer in Punjab's Tanda town.

The mob demanded the handover of the accused -- Gurpreet Singh and his grandfather Surjit Singh -- so they could punish them with their own hands and bring justice to the victim. The accused allegedly killed the child and then burnt her body after which the half-burnt body was found from their house, police said about the crime that took place on Thursday.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has

taken suo-moto cognizance of the crime and sought a report from the state within three days. The girl's half-burnt body was found at the residence of the accused in Jalalpur village in Tanda in Hoshiarpur district on Thursday evening, the police said.

The accused have been arrested on charges of murder and rape under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The police took the accused to a hospital in Tanda on Friday for their medical examination when the mob attacked them. The police rescued them as the mob broke down windowpanes of the hospital. As per the first information report, accused Gurpreet took the girl to his home where he allegedly raped her.



If the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with the US expires, Moscow can ensure its security with modern weapons
VLADIMIR PUTIN | RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

LOCKDOWN WOES

The initial phase of the COVID-19 lockdown, which was imposed through March and April in several countries, may have dramatically altered people's personal eating and sleeping habits, according to a study



of the day quote

This cabinet's main duty would be to implement the reforms listed by the French initiative. I will form a cabinet quickly as this is the only and last opportunity for our country



SAAD HARIRI | LEBANON'S PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE

A COVID-19 vaccine could be available to all Americans by early April 2021



In today's world, the pursuit of unilateralism, protectionism and extreme egoism leads nowhere



XI JINPING | CHINESE PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

20th Amendment passed in SL Parl

Colombo: The 20th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, which will replace the 19th Amendment introduced in 2015 that curtailed the powers of the President, was passed in Parliament, the media reported Friday. It was passed Thursday night with 156 MPs voting for the Bill and 65 against, reports the *Daily Financial Times* newspaper.

20 Afghan army personnel killed

Kabul: At least 20 Afghan security personnel were killed in a Taliban attack in Nimroz province, an official said Friday. The attack took place in Khashrod district Thursday night, *TOLO* News reported. Khashrod Governor Jalil Ahmad Watandost said six other personnel were taken hostage by the Taliban, without giving any other details.

Strict COVID-19 rules in Belgium

Brussels: Belgian Prime minister Alexander De Croo stopped short Friday of imposing another full lockdown, as the country did in March, but introduced a series of new restrictive measures as the number of COVID-19-related hospital admissions and deaths continues to soar.

Israel strikes Gaza

Jerusalem: The Israeli military said Friday it launched overnight airstrikes in the Gaza Strip after Palestinian militants fired two rockets, with no reports of casualties or major damage on either side. The military said fighter jets and other aircraft struck a weapons manufacturing site and "underground infrastructure" belonging to the Islamic militant group Hamas, which rules Gaza.

Unrest in Nigeria

Abuja: Gunfire has erupted and jailbreaks have been reported in Nigeria, as unrest over the shooting of protesters in the country's biggest city Lagos continues. Rights group Amnesty International has said security forces killed at least 12 people in Lagos Tuesday, the *BBC* reported.

15 detained

Warsaw: Poland's police said Friday they detained 15 people during protests in Warsaw against a court ruling that toughened the nation's strict abortion law and banned abortion of fetuses with congenital defects.

FINAL PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

TRUMP, BIDEN SPAR OVER nCoV, CLIMATE

AGENCIES

New York, Oct 23: US President Donald Trump and his challenger Joe Biden clashed over COVID-19, immigration, racism and climate change during their final debate, ahead of the November 3 presidential election, presenting Americans with sharply divergent views of where they would lead them over the next four years.

The two leaders traded barbs during the debate that lasted just over 90 minutes, attacking each other's positions on controlling the raging coronavirus pandemic and curbing the country's world-leading death toll of over 2,23,000. On climate change, Trump accused China, India and Russia of not taking care of their "filthy air" as he justified America's withdrawal from the landmark Paris climate agreement. The prime-time debate in Nashville, Tennessee, was a less acrimonious and more substantive affair than their previous showdown September 29, which devolved into insults and name-calling. This prompted the debate organisers to put in place muted microphones during the candidates' opening statements on each topic



President Donald Trump and Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden participate in the final presidential debate

PTI PHOTO

to minimise disruption.

The debate, deftly moderated by NBC's Kristen Welker, saw plenty of personal attacks between 74-year-old Trump, a Republican, and his 77-year-old Democratic rival, Biden, whose mutual dislike was quite evident. Millions of Americans have already made up their minds about the election, with more than 47 million people having cast early ballots by mail or in person due to COVID-19 fears. The figure exceeds the early vote total in 2016. There are about 230 million eligible voters in total. The coronavirus dominated the opening minutes of the Trump-Biden face-off with President Trump

terming the contagion a "world-wide problem". "This has been a worldwide problem, but I've been congratulated by many countries on what we've been able to do," he said. Trump once again blamed China for the virus and said Beijing failed to prevent the disease from becoming a pandemic. He claimed that America was very close to developing a vaccine against the deadly disease that Biden said was claiming 1,000 lives daily in the US. "We have a vaccine that's coming, it's ready. It's going to be announced within weeks and it's going to be delivered," Trump said. The president said his generals have

lined up for the fast distribution of the vaccine, as he expects to have 100 million vials. Biden challenged Trump and alleged that his policies have resulted in a large number of deaths in the country. Biden and Trump clashed on race relations, a topic that has gained prominence after the horrific murder of an African American in police custody early this year in Minneapolis.

Biden termed Trump "one of the most racist presidents we've had in modern history", asserting that his Republican rival at his last debate did not condemn white supremacy and told an extremist group to "stand down and stand by." When the debate moved to the topic of immigration, Trump appeared callous about the toll that his policies have taken on over 500 children who were separated from their parents at the border. "They are so well taken care of. They are in facilities that are so clean," Trump said. Trump's cold response allowed Biden to attack the president, calling his family separation policy contrary to everything that America stands for. The two candidates accused each other of serious corruption charges.

Row in Nepal over R&AW chief's meeting with Oli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Oct 23: Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli has come under fire, including from the ruling Communist Party leaders, for breaching diplomatic norms over his meeting with Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) chief Samant Kumar Goel.

Goel called on Prime Minister Oli at his official residence at Baluwater Wednesday evening.

However, the Indian intelligence chief's visit did not go down well with some political leaders of the country, including members of the ruling party Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

The meeting that took place between RAW chief Goel and Prime Minister Oli was against diplo-



PTI PHOTO

matic norms and it doesn't serve Nepal's national interest, said senior ruling party leader Bhim Rawal. "As the meeting took place in a non-transparent manner without consulting with the concerned section of the Foreign Ministry, this may also contribute to weakening our state mechanism," he pointed out. Bishnu Rijal, deputy chief of the foreign

affairs department of the NCP, said politicians should not overstep in matters related to diplomacy.

"Diplomacy should be handled by diplomats—not politicians," he said. The ties between the two countries came under strain after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated an 80-km-long strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Dharchula in Uttarakhand May 8.

Nepal protested the inauguration of the road claiming that it passed through its territory. Days later, Nepal came out with the new map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as its territories.

India too had published a new map in November 2019 showing the areas as its territories.

FLYING HIGH



Birds fly over the water in Kuwait City

UNI PHOTO

'nCoV to push 150-175 mn more people into poverty'

MOST AFFECTED WILL BE PEOPLE WHOSE LIVELIHOODS DEPEND HEAVILY ON ECOSYSTEMS: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, FARMERS, HERDERS, PASTORALISTS AND FISHERFOLK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Oct 23: Between 150 million and 175 million more people will fall into extreme poverty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an expert said at the UN.

Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights Olivier De Schutter said that between 150 million and 175 million more people will fall into extreme poverty due to the epic fallout from COVID-19.

Schutter told the UN General Assembly Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Wednesday as delegates raised concerns about the plight of the world's most vulnerable in a series of interactive dialogues.

"We must rethink our development model," De Schutter said, adding that most of those who will fall into extreme poverty will be workers in the informal sector or in precarious employment conditions—most of them women.

In order to emerge from the worst crisis since the 1929 Great Depression, "we cannot count, as we did in the 20th century, on economic growth as usual," he said. Environmental sustainability and social justice must be considered prerequisites for shaping the economic recovery that countries envision, he said.

De Schutter was one of five independent experts participating in virtual dialogues with delegates,



PTI PHOTO

which covered topics ranging from extreme poverty and internal displacement, to the human rights to education, safe drinking water and adequate housing. Experts described the interplay between con-

flict and climate change, and recommended ways to ensure that students can access water and sanitation in school during the pandemic. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, Special Rapporteur on the human

Pakistan fails to get off FATF 'grey list'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Paris, Oct 23: In yet another major setback, Pakistan Friday failed to get off the 'grey list' of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global watchdog for terror-funding and money laundering.

The Imran Khan-led government lost Pakistan's bid at the FATF because of its failure to comply with the requirements of the Paris-based watchdog. Pakistan, already facing severe economic and financial crisis, has been in the grey list since 2018.

Being in the grey list makes it difficult for the already debt-ridden Islamic Republic to get financial aid from international agencies.

India has been persistently protesting against Pakistan's continued cross-border terrorism in Kashmir and its inaction against the mastermind and planners of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.

The banned terror outfits, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Hizbul Mujahideen, and their chiefs Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azhar and Syed Salahuddin, continue to get state patronage and protection in Pakistan.



AFP PHOTO

A report of the United Nations Security Council released earlier this year said the three terror groups are collaborating with Al Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan.

India Thursday had strongly recommended that Pakistan, which continues to provide safe havens to the banned terror groups, should continue on the grey list.

On Friday, after concluding its three-day virtual plenary session, the FATF decided to keep Pakistan in its grey list. Sources said Pakistan had failed to comply with at least six of the 27 points in the FATF's action plan.

China warns UK over HK citizenship plan

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Beijing, Oct 23: China Friday warned the UK against offering citizenship to Hong Kong residents and "immediately correct its mistakes" in order to avoid retaliatory measures.

In response to China imposing the national security law on Hong Kong, the UK in July reaffirmed its plan to offer citizenships only to those holding a British National Overseas (BNO) passport, reports the *BBC*. Around 300,000 people currently hold a BNO passport, while an estimated 2.9 million people are eligible for it, according to the British Consulate General in Hong Kong. Addressing the media here, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian was asked if Beijing would take retaliatory measures or stop BNO passport holders from leaving Hong Kong, the *South China Morning Post* reported.

"The Chinese government has repeatedly made clear its strong stance on this issue, but the British side has insisted on interfering with Hong Kong affairs and China's domestic issues." As the British side broke its own promises, the Chinese government will consider not recognising the BNO passport as a valid travel document, and reserve the right to impose further measures," Also in a statement issued Friday, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry's Hong Kong office also said he "strongly opposed and firmly objected" to the UK move.

Sharif charged with fresh graft case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Oct 23: Pakistan's anti-corruption body has slapped a fresh corruption case on deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, compounding the legal woes of the embattled Opposition leader who has frequently attacked the powerful military as well as the government.

Sharif, the 70-year-old supremo of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) who was ousted from power in 2017 by the Supreme Court on corruption charges, is currently in London for medical treatment. The National Accountability Bureau also approved cases against Sharif's ex-personal secretary Fawad Hasan Fawad, former federal minister Ahsan Iqbal, former foreign secretary Aizaz Chaudhry and former Intelligence Bureau (IB) chief Aftab Sultan, *Dawn* newspaper reported.

On Thursday, a total of 11 cases were approved at NAB's Executive Board Meeting (EBM) presided over by its chairman, retired Justice Javed Iqbal.

According to the NAB, a fresh case was approved against Sharif along with Chaudhry, Sultan and Fawad for "illegally" purchasing 73 high-security vehicles for the security of foreign dignitaries.

of the day quote

The flexible workspace industry in India has displayed resilience and growth even during challenging times



KARAN VIRWANI | CEO, WEWORK INDIA

There have been remarkable changes in the industry in the last six months, following the lockdown in March end. In the face of crisis, the industry cohesively adopted wider technological innovations



ANKIT KANSAL |

FOUNDER AND MD, 360 REALTORS

The 5 million mark is a testimony of our consumers' trust in our products. To the best of our knowledge, no other brand has ever achieved this before. We at Mi India aim to keep delivering the highest quality products at honest prices



RAGHU REDDY |

CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER, MI INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Energy demand rises again

New Delhi: Easing of lockdown curbs lifted India's energy demand in September after a decline of six months, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) Thursday. In a report on India's power sector, the ratings agency said that in September 2020, the all-India energy demand increased 4% Y-o-Y after declining for the six consecutive months to 112.6 billion units. "This was led by an improvement in the demand from the northern region and the western region due to the further lifting of lockdown for certain economic activities under Unlock 4," the report said.

Huawei reports 9.9% rev growth

Shenzhen: Huawei Friday said that it generated a revenue of 671.3 billion yuan (\$98.57 billion) in the first three quarters of this year, an increase of 9.9% over the same period last year. The results showed that restrictions imposed by the US slowed down growth of the Chinese technology giant as during the same period last year, the company reported revenue growth of 24.4%. For the September quarter, Huawei reported revenue of 217.3 billion yuan (\$31.91 billion), an increase of just 3.7% over the the same period last year, said the report.

Bad loans surge amid pandemic

Mumbai: Amid financial stress among borrowers in view of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, SBI Cards and Payments reported a rise in its gross NPAs during the quarter ended September. The company's gross NPA, during the July-September quarter, was at 4.29%, against 2.33% from the same period of the last financial year. Further SBI Cards, in its quarterly earnings, also said that its gross NPA for the period under review would have stood at 7.46%.

Tech M Q2 profit slips 5%

Mumbai: Tech Mahindra Friday reported 5.27% decline in September quarter net profit at ₹1,064.6 crore, even as profit margins widened sharply. Revenue of the Mahindra Group company grew 3.32% over last year and 2.32% over the preceding June quarter to ₹9,371 crore. The operating margin improved sequentially by over 4 percentage points to 14.2%.

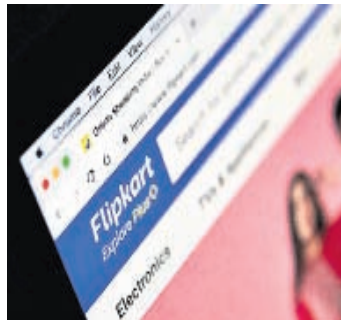


The Indian Economy is still in the recovery mode. Tourism provides a big boost to the economy, but right now inbound travel from foreign countries has not been restored, preventively, to control the pandemic. Likewise, the job market has not started to look up just yet

AMIT ADARKAR | CEO, IPSOS (INDIA)

FLIPKART TO BUY STAKE IN FASHION UNIT

Walmart Inc's Flipkart will buy a 7.8% stake in Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd for ₹15 bn, the fashion retail firm said. The investment comes at a time when Amazon, RIL and Flipkart are in a race to gain market share in India's online market



Rate cut will depend upon moderation in inflation: Das

The RBI Governor said after the sharpest contraction in economic activity in Q1 FY 2020-21, a number of high frequency indicators of economic activity for Q2 suggest a sequential improvement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 23: Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that there is room for rate cut but monetary policy action would depend upon the evolving situation on the inflation front which is currently above the tolerance level of the central bank.

"I recognise that there exists space for future rate cuts if the inflation evolves in line with our expectations. This space needs to be used judiciously to support recovery in growth," opined the governor as per the minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The reconstituted MPC, which met from October 7 to 9, had decided to keep the benchmark lending rates unchanged in view of the hardening of retail inflation.

Das said after the sharpest contraction in economic activity in the first quarter of 2020-21, a number of high frequency indicators of economic activity for the second quarter suggest a sequential im-



provement.

"There are, however, downside uncertainties that could put sand in the wheels of this nascent recovery. Primary among them is the risk of a second wave of COVID-19. Private investment activity is likely to be subdued, even as domestic financial conditions have eased significantly," he said.

External demand is also expected to remain anaemic with sharp contraction in global economic activity and trade. As per RBI, the full year gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to contract by 9.5% with a strong rebound next year.

"On the outlook for inflation, food inflation should moderate

going forward on a combination of good kharif harvest and a favourable rabi season," the Governor said.

As per the RBI's assessment, headline inflation would moderate in H2 of the current year and further in Q1 of next fiscal year.

Inflation remained above the upper tolerance threshold of 6 per cent since June, with signs of aggravation of price pressures. The government has asked RBI to keep inflation at 4% (+, - 2%).

Deputy Governor and MPC member Michael Debabrata Patra noted that India has entered a technical recession in the first half of the year for the first time in its history.

"GDP is an aggregative indicator of economic activity and hides the extent of human misery and the loss of social and human capital caused by the health crisis.

"Nonetheless, if the projections hold, the level of GDP would have fallen approximately 6% below its pre-COVID level by the end of 2020-21 and it may take years to regain this lost output," he said.

Renault India bolsters network presence



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: Renault India has announced the addition of 34 new sales and service touch points across India in last two months. This marks a total of more than 90 new sales and service touchpoints that Renault has added across the country in less than a year. The aggressive network expansion is part of a strategic business focus to grow the brand across existing and emerging markets.

With this expansion Renault India has bolstered its network presence to more than 415 sales and 475+ service touchpoints, which include 200+ Workshop on Wheels locations across the country, with benchmark sales and service quality.

"We are not only attracting new dealers in these times, but also getting more investments and expansion requests by existing partners. An increasing network presence is making it possible for us to cater to more customers across

The aggressive network expansion is part of a strategic business focus to grow the brand across existing and emerging markets

the country, and thereby playing an important role in our consistent sales volumes," said Sudhir Malhotra, Head- Sales & Network, Renault India.

Renault India has announced exciting offers across the range and exclusive additional offers for public sector employees, central and state government employees that include both doctors and teachers.

These offers include special additional offers worth up to ₹22,000, which adds to the attractive festive offers already rolled out across the range with benefits of up to ₹70,000 on DUSTER, ₹40,000 on KWID and ₹30,000 on TRIBER.

LINEN CLUB LAUNCHES 'LINEN UTSAV'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: Country's leading linen fabric and apparel brand Linen Club launched its Linen Utsav campaign in Odisha. With this campaign, Linen Club is offering its consumers an opportunity to try its newly launched product innovation(s) while also enjoy never seen before offers on both Linen Club fabrics and apparel.

Keeping in mind the current pandemic situation, the brand launched a special antiviral treated fabric range - Linen Club LinShield. Carefully crafted using anti-viral technology, LinShield is safe and stylish at the same time and shields the user against harmful viruses and microbes. It is anti-viral, skin-friendly, antibacterial and anti-odour.

Linen club has also introduced its thoughtfully crafted Linen mask range which is designed with special 3-layered shield. These antiviral and antibacterial masks are high on breathability, light and easy to wear, reusable and washable. Consumers can also select from Linen Club's wide festive range which includes finely crafted linen fabrics in various colours, designs and patterns.

Apart from fabrics, consumers can also pick from Linen Club's Ready-to-wear range which includes Kurta, Nehru Jacket and more.

The exclusive Linen Club showrooms are located at - Janpath Road, Vani Vihar Square, Bhubaneswar, near Gurudwara Singh Sabha, Janpath, Bhubaneswar and at Cantonment Road, in front of DCP Office, Cuttack.

Forex reserves touch life time high of \$555.12 bn



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 23: The country's foreign exchange reserves touched a life time high of \$555.12 billion after it surged by \$3.615 billion in the week ended October 16, according to RBI data. In the previous week ended October 9, 2020, the reserves had increased by \$5.867 billion to reach \$551.505 billion.

During the latest reporting week, the rise in total reserves was due to a sharp rise in Foreign Currency Assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves. FCA jumped by \$3.539 billion to \$512.322 billion, the data showed.

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

Gold reserves were up by \$36 million in the reporting week to \$36.685 billion. The special drawing rights with the IMF remained unchanged at \$1.480 billion during the reporting week.

The country's reserve position with the IMF declined by \$11 million to \$4.634 billion during the reporting week, as per the data.

TCS, Wipro announce ₹27,558 cr of buybacks



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 23: Buybacks are seeing a strong trend with cash-rich companies, led by IT giants TCS and Wipro, announce buybacks worth ₹27,558 crore to reward shareholders by returning excess cash on the balance sheets.

In the period, April 1 to October 15, 15 companies have announced buybacks worth ₹27,558 crore, as per Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Hemang Jani, Head of Equity Strategy, Broking & Distribution, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said: "We have seen strong trend of buybacks both through tender offer and through stock exchanges as the markets have been strong. Companies having strong cash flow and no immediate capex are using this tool for the benefit of shareholders."

Among the companies announcing buybacks are Tata Consultancy Services (worth ₹16,000 crore), Wipro (₹9,000 crore), Majesco (₹631.3 crore), Indiabulls Real Estate (₹500 crore), Rites (₹257 crore), Kalpataru Power Transmission (₹200 crore), Eclerx Services (₹109.5 crore), JK Paper

GST SHORTFALL

Centre borrows, transfers ₹6K cr to 16 states, 2 UTs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: The Centre has borrowed and transferred ₹6,000 crore as the first tranche of GST compensation shortfall to 16 states and two union territories, including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar, Assam, Delhi and J&K, the finance ministry said Friday.

Last week, the Centre gave in to the demands of opposition-ruled states to borrow and fund the GST compensation shortfall.

The finance ministry said that the Centre would borrow from the market to pay the GST compensation shortfall of ₹1.1 lakh crore to states, and then act as an intermediary to arrange back-to-back loans to state governments.

The ministry said the government of India has evolved a special borrowing window to address the shortfall in the GST collection during the year 2020-2021. Twenty-one states and two union territories opted for this special window involving back-to-back borrowing coordinated by the Ministry of Finance. Out of these, five states did not have any shortfall on account of GST compensation.

"Today, the central government borrowed and transferred ₹6,000 crore as first tranche to 16 states namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana,



FM Nirmala Sitharaman said that the Centre would borrow from the market to pay the GST compensation shortfall of ₹1.1 lakh crore to states, and then act as an intermediary to arrange back-to-back loans to state governments

Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and two union territories: UT of Delhi and UT of Jammu and Kashmir," it said.

The borrowing is at an interest rate of 5.19 per cent and tenor of borrowing is expected to be broadly in the range of 3 to 5 years, the ministry said it intends to release ₹6,000 crore to the states every week.

Nestle India clocks double-digit sales growth in Q2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: FMCG major Nestle India Friday announced its plans to invest ₹2,600 crore over the next three to four years to augment its manufacturing capacity in the country, terming the move as "vindication of confidence and trust" the company has in its India journey.

The company, which saw a robust 10.23% growth in its domestic sales in the July-September quarter, said its production units have returned to "normal output" post lockdown. As per Nestle's plan, the new investments are aimed at expansion activities of the existing units and towards the construction of its new upcoming unit in Sanand, Gujarat.



Meanwhile, the FMCG major - which follows January-December financial year - posted a marginal 1.37% drop in its net profit at ₹587.09 crore in the third quarter ended September 30, 2020.

Its net sales, however, were up 10.19% at ₹3,525.41 crore during the period under review, the company said. Domestic sales in July-September moved up 10.23% to ₹3,350.10 crore as against ₹3,039.09 crore in the year-ago period.

Nestle, which presently operates eight production units in India, said its factories have returned to normal output and witnessed growth driven by an improved supply situation.

'HOPEFUL OF QUICK REVIVAL OF INDIA'S AVIATION SECTOR'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 23: Strong local fundamentals will aide the revival of India's aviation sector, believes Airbus South Asia President, Remi Maillard. In a conversation with IANS, Remi Maillard, President and MD, Airbus India and South Asia, expressed confidence in the industry's potential along with its revival prospects on the back of strong fundamentals.

"I remain confident about the future of the Indian aviation industry because of the strong local fundamentals," Maillard said. "That is why, in parallel to our efforts of catalysing a safe traffic recovery, we need to work on further strengthening the foundations for India to become a world leader in the civil aviation industry."

This implies further developing

the domestic market, turning India into an international hub, growing the MRO and training eco-systems as well as stimulating the helicopter business," he added.

Notably, the sector has been heavily battered by the coronavirus outbreak and its cascading impact on the overall travel industry.

Maillard termed the pandemic as the 'gravest crisis' that industry has ever faced.

"There is not one single player in the market that is immune to the crisis, be it an airline, a lessor, an MRO, a training center, an airport, an equipment supplier or an aircraft manufacturer. It is a long-term crisis," he elaborated.

"Given how deep the crisis is, a full recovery in aviation will take years specifically when it comes to international flights," he added.

Nevertheless, Maillard pointed out



that with the economy opening up gradually, demand for air travel has started to pick-up.

"We have now started seeing a gradual increase in air travel as the domestic flights have increased in a phased manner," he said.

"We are hopeful passenger demand will further pick up during the festival season. Now the situation remains very fluid and uncertain and we predict that 2021

will remain a difficult year for the industry. This is why we need to continue adapting ourselves to navigate the crisis," he added.

According to him, the regional connectivity scheme, 'Udan', will play a major role in the growth of the domestic market.

Besides, the aerospace major is aiding its airline partners to fully utilise the potential of its cargo business.

"Indian carriers have started focusing on international markets in the recent past and the induction of wide-body aircraft will be a key strategy for consideration in their growth plans," he said.

"We are also supporting our customers to diversify in the cargo market for them to capture additional sources of revenue," he added.

Furthermore, Maillard sees immense potential in the chopper, MRO and aviation training segments of the industry.

As a case in point, he pointed out that India has only about 270 civil helicopters which is less than 1% of the worldwide helicopter fleet.

"India's civil helicopter market has a large runway for growth. The emergence of new segments like urban air connectivity as well as the launching of next generation helicopter plat-forms such as the re-



Given how deep the crisis is, a full recovery in aviation will take years specifically when it comes to international flights

REMI MAILLARD | PRESIDENT AND MD, AIRBUS INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA

cently certified H160 and the 5-bladed H145 will also further drive growth," he said.

Kapil Dev undergoes angioplasty following heart attack; now stable

TEAM	M	W	L	N/R	NRR	PTS
MI	10	7	3	0	+1.448	14
DC	10	7	3	0	+0.774	14
RCB	10	7	3	0	+0.182	14
KKR	10	5	5	0	-0.828	10
SRH	10	4	6	0	+0.092	8
KKXP	10	4	6	0	-0.177	8
RR	11	4	7	0	-0.620	8
CSK	11	3	8	0	-0.733	6

