



ART AFICIONADO

Actor Radhika Apte says she likes both theatre and cinema as they have their own charms

LEISURE P2



TMC ACCUSES FB OF BIAS

In a letter to Zuckerberg, TMC says the firm's recent blocking of pages, accounts pointed to links it had with BJP

TWO STATES P7



CHINA'S NUKE PLANS

China is seeking to double the number of its nuclear warheads in the next decade

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Next team we are playing with is very dangerous. Half of the players have been tested positive for COVID!

SHORT TAKES

All countries can fly over Saudi skies

Dubai: Saudi Arabia announced Wednesday that it will now allow flights "from all countries" to cross its skies to reach the United Arab Emirates, a historic first that comes just days after the kingdom let the first direct Israeli commercial passenger flight use its airspace to reach the UAE. The statement makes no mention of the kingdom's rival, Iran, nor Qatar, which Saudi Arabia is currently boycotting. It is apparently a reference to the start of commercial flights from Israel to the UAE, as any direct flight between the two nations would need to use Saudi airspace to be commercially viable. P10

India's Covid fatality rate slides to 1.76 pc

New Delhi: India has been reporting one of the lowest COVID-19 fatality rates in the world with the figure further declining to 1.76 per cent as on date against a global average of 3.3 per cent, the Union Health Ministry said Wednesday. It also said that COVID-19 deaths per million population in India is one of the lowest in the world. "While the global average is 110 deaths per million population, India is reporting 48 deaths per million population. The comparative figure for Brazil and the UK is 12 and 13 times higher, respectively," the ministry highlighted.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	39086.03 ↑ 185.23
NIFTY	11535.00 ↑ 64.70
DOLLAR	73.57 ↑ ₹0.19
EURO	86.98 ↓ ₹0.71
GOLD	₹50,960 ↓ ₹542
SILVER	₹66,000 ↓ ₹2349

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	32.0°C	33.4°C
TEMP MIN	24.8°C	23.5°C
Humidity	89%	81%
Rainfall	1.6mm	Nil

Forecast: Generally cloudy sky

PUBG, 117 more apps banned

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 2: In yet another surgical strike on malicious Chinese apps, the Indian government Wednesday banned 118 apps on national security concerns, including the immensely popular PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds (PUBG) Mobile, Baidu and couple of virtual private networks (VPNs) that allowed access to TikTok that was earlier banned.

The action came after the fresh Chinese incursion attempts in Indian territory at Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh. "This move will safeguard the interests of crores of Indian mobile and internet users. This decision is a targeted move to ensure safety, security and sovereignty of Indian cyberspace," the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) said in a statement.

The PUBG game, which has more than 600 million downloads and 50 million active players globally, has millions of users, especially young, in India.

PUBG Mobile saw a global revenue gain of \$1.3 billion (roughly ₹7,731

GAME OVER

PUBG'S REVENUE SOARED TO \$3 BILLION WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF DOWNLOADS IN INDIA WHICH RANKS AT THE TOP WITH 175 MILLION INSTALLS

PUBG GAME HAS MORE THAN 600 MILLION DOWNLOADS AND 50 MILLION ACTIVE PLAYERS GLOBALLY

ACTION CAME AFTER THE FRESH CHINESE INCURSION BIDS IN INDIAN TERRITORY IN EASTERN LADAKH



crore) in the first half of this year, bringing its lifetime collection to \$3 billion (nearly ₹22,457 crore) with the highest number of downloads in India which ranks at the top with 175 million installs as people stayed home owing to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns. PUBG was not banned in India earlier as it is not entirely Chinese. The game has been created and managed by Bluehole which is a South Korean organisation.

After PUBG became popular, Tencent -- a Chinese conglomerate -- joined hands with Bluehole to market the

product in China and started handling a large portion of its distribution. The game is distributed in India by Tencent Holdings. The ban on PUBG came as it announced the arrival of a new gaming era with its 1.0 version, along with global mobile esports tournament PUBG Mobile Global Championship (PMGC) with a grand prize pool of \$2 million (about ₹15 crore).

Other popular banned apps in the fresh list of banned apps are Baidu and Baidu Express Edition, ShareSave by Xiaomi, WeChat Work, Tencent Weiyun, Tencent Watchlist, Alipay, GO

SMS Pro, ZAKZAK Pro and Live, Smart AppLock and Ludo World-Ludo Superstar, among others.

The ministry said that it has decided to block 118 mobile apps in view of information available that "they are engaged in activities which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order".

The ministry received many complaints from various sources including several reports about misuse of some mobile apps available on Android and iOS platforms for stealing and surreptitiously transmitting users' data in an unauthorised manner to servers which have locations outside India.

In July, the government barred 47 Chinese apps from operating in the country, which were largely clones of the previously 59 apps banned in June.

On June 29, the government banned 59 Chinese apps including TikTok, WeChat and UC Browser and Xiaomi's Mi Community over national security concerns amid the border tussle in Ladakh which led to the death of 20 Indian soldiers in the Galwan Valley clash with Chinese PLA troops.

All state varsities to come under one Act

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: In a bid to rationalise the administrative functioning of all state-run universities, the state cabinet Wednesday decided to bring all universities under the Odisha Universities Act, 1989.

Briefing media, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy said the state cabinet has been pleased to approve the proposal for amendment of the Odisha Universities Act, 1989.

"The Odisha Universities Act, 1989 very well addresses the specific requirement of unitary universities. Having many Acts will lead to disharmony between identical provisions of various Acts. Therefore, it is decided to repeal the Ravenshaw University Act, 2005. The Ravenshaw University will continue to function without any hindrance under the Act, 1989," he said.

"As the concepts of registered teachers and registered graduates have become obsolete, the concept of senates in universities will be done away with," he said. It was decided to reconstitute a committee for selection of vice-chancellor of a university by including a nominee of the state government (an academician) in place of the member selected by the syndicate. Now, the state government will be a stakeholder in selection of VCs.

The cabinet has also approved a provision to enhance the tenure of VC to four years from three

AUTONOMY HIT

- OPSC to carry out recruitment of varsity teaching staff
- SSB will look after recruitment of non-teaching staff
- Tenure of VCs extended to 4 years from 3 years now

years now with the upper age limit of 67 years with no provision of re-appointment. "This provision will provide ample opportunities to VCs to bring in long term changes and improvement in university's functioning," the CS said.

It was also decided to assign the responsibility of selection of teachers for the university to Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) and recruitment of non-teaching employees to State Selection Board (SSB) in order to prevent collective wastage of resources of the institutions.

As per the approved provisions, universities will no longer need to lay down annual audit reports before the Assembly. They will upload the audit reports on its website and will continue to display the same for at least three years, he stated.

The Cabinet also approved the law department's proposal for amendment of the Odisha Advocates' Welfare Fund Act, 1987 by promulgation of an ordinance.



A flashback of WW II

In this file photo of September 2, 1945, servicemen, reporters, and photographers perch on the USS Missouri for the onboard ceremony in which Japan surrendered, ending World War II. Wednesday, September 2, 2020, is the 75th anniversary of the formal September 2, 1945, surrender of Japan to the US when the two sides signed documents officially ending years of bloody fighting in a ceremony aboard the USS Missouri in the Tokyo Bay, with an armada of American warships and planes hovering nearby.

PTI PHOTO

State government to push for classical tag to Odissi music

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: The state cabinet Wednesday decided to take up proactively with the Centre for granting classical tag to Odissi music.

The government cited the uniqueness of Odissi music and its cultural heritage as reasons for demanding the same. "In 1964, Odissi was recognised as a classical dance by the Centre. In 2014, Odia was recognised by the Union government as a classical language. Odisha government recognised Odissi as a classical form of music in 2008," culture minister Ashok Panigrahi said.

"This form of music is very ancient and has a classical base. It is

also different from other forms of classical music. A resolution was passed to request the Centre to anoint Odissi music with a classical status," the minister said.

Seven major decisions were taken by the state cabinet, which sat under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, relating to culture. The minister told media that the government has decided to develop Suando, the birthplace of Pandit Gopabandhu Das with a budget of ₹11 crore.

The cabinet has approved filling up several vacancies in institutions managed by the department. In a good move towards artistes, the government approved raising the award amounts of Atibadi

Jagannath Das Samman, Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanja Samman, Dharmapada Samman and Byasakabi Fakir Mohan Samman from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh. Similarly, amounts for awards of various academies would be increased from ₹50,000 to ₹2 lakh and the amount of felicitations of various academies will be raised to ₹1 lakh.

According to a written statement of the department, it has received approval for carving out separate directorates for state archaeology and state museum. The government will also develop the state museum into a virtual entity. A similar model will be followed for Ananda Bhavan Museum.

Govt nod to ₹3,205cr business proposals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: The state government Wednesday granted seven investment proposals from different sectors worth Rs3205.67 crore. The proposals were approved during the state level single window clearance authority (SLSWCA) meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy.

Investments will be made in sectors such as metal & metal downstream, infrastructure, tourism and cement. The proposals will create jobs for 2,494 people in the state. MGM Minerals Limited will expand its project by setting up a 0.125 MTPA sponge iron plant, 0.6 MTPA pellet plant, 0.25 MTPA MS billets, 0.25 MTPA TMT & wire rods and 40 MW captive power plant at Nimdha in Dhenkanal district. The company will invest ₹801.89 crore.

GM Iron & Steel Company will invest ₹607.52 crore for expansion of its project. The company will set up 0.8 MTPA pellet plant, 0.2379 MTPA DRI plant, 0.195 MTPA billet, 0.24 MTPA wire rod mill, 0.416 MTPA slag cement and 46 MW captive power plant in Dhenkanal.

Hindalco Industries will set up a flue gas desulphurization plant for its existing CPP (6x150 MW) at Lapanga in Sambalpur. The company is likely to invest ₹696 crore. SLSWCA also approved a proposal by JSW Cement Ltd (JSW) for expansion of its cement grinding capacity from 1.2 MTPA to 2.4 MTPA at Kalinga Nagar in Jajpur with an investment of ₹489.88 crore. Jajpur Cements will also invest ₹400 crore for a project at Kalinga Nagar, Jajpur.

PM CARES Fund got ₹3,076 cr in just five days

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 2: The PM CARES Fund, set up in March to deal with emergency situations like the COVID-19 pandemic, received ₹3,076.62 crore in just five days of its formation, as per an account statement made public by the fund Wednesday.

The 'receipt and payment account' showed nearly ₹3,075.85 crore as 'voluntary contributions', while ₹39.67 lakh came as foreign contributions. It put the fund's closing balance as March 31, 2020 at ₹3,076.62 crore, after including interest income and deducting serv-

ice tax on forex conversion.

The fund started with an initial corpus of ₹2.25 lakh, as per the account statement posted on the fund's official website. It also referred to "accompanying notes to the financial statements", but those were not made public on the website.

According to details posted on the website of the Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund), the fund consists "entirely of voluntary contributions from individuals/organisations and does not get any budgetary support". "During 2019-20 (from March 27-31, 2020), an amount of



₹3076.62 crore has been collected under PM CARES Fund," it said. It further said this fund has been set up as a public charitable trust "keeping in mind the need for having a dedicated national fund with the primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency or distress

situation, like posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to provide relief to the affected".

The fund generated a lot of interest immediately after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced its formation after the COVID-19 outbreak and appealed for donations, prompting several private firms, government bodies and individuals, including celebrities, to donate money. The Fund's objectives include undertaking and backing relief or assistance of any kind relating to a public health emergency or any other kind of emergency, calamity or distress, either man-made or natural.

The government has used a part of the money to buy medical equipment, including ventilators, to boost the battle against the COVID-19 and has also provided relief to migrants. Opposition parties have, however, criticised the Fund, claiming that its contributions and expenses are not transparent, a charge denied by the government. Reacting to the account statement of the fund, Congress leader P Chidambaram said the auditors of the fund have confirmed that the fund received ₹3,076 crore in just five days, but the "names of these generous donors will not be revealed". "Every other NGO or Trust is obliged to reveal the

names of donors contributing more than a threshold amount. Why is the PM CARES Fund exempt from this obligation," he tweeted.

"The donee is known. The trustees of the donee are known. Why are the trustees afraid to reveal the names of the donors?," Chidambaram said. Last month, the Supreme Court had refused to direct the transfer of contributions made to the PM CARES Fund to the National Disaster Response Fund. While Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of the PM CARES Fund, the Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Finance are its ex-officio trustees.

leisure



SUNNY LEONE, CHILDREN INDULGE IN PAINTING

Sunny Leone and her children Nisha, Noah and Asher gave in to an artistic indulgence Wednesday. They ended up making around half a dozen paintings. Sunny shared a photo and video collage of their artistic labour on Instagram. In a picture, Sunny is seen helping Nisha paint.

NATURE A PART OF OUR LIFE, EXISTENCE: HELLEN MIRREN

Actress Helen Mirren feels nature plays an important role in the existence of humankind, and the ongoing pandemic is a lesson in that direction. Mirren, found the technical experience, necessitated by post-Covid-19 norms, to be a fascinating one.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
If you are about to begin some important work, today is not the day, says Ganesh. But keep yourself motivated, despite minor problems. Do something you've never done before. Think out-of-the-box: grow your own mint, make some chocolates.

TAURUS
There is a fair chance that you will make heads turn at work today, forecasts Ganesh. It may not be an auspicious day for auction bids or tenders. Some of you may succeed in interviews and entrance tests this afternoon, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
There is every possibility that you will keep your partner in the loop while making important decisions today, predicts Ganesh. And this will prevent a grave misunderstanding. Later in the day, you will benefit from the insights of your soul mate.

CANCER
The first half of the day may leave you a little flummoxed. You may get discouraged when things are not going your way, predicts Ganesh. But your subconscious mind knows how to handle such situations.

LEO
A good deed is never wasted. Remember this as today, you shall find yourself in the incredible position of being of invaluable assistance to someone in need, says Ganesh. So lend out that helping hand and be assured that your generosity will not be forgotten.

VIRGO
Love will bite you today. It will bleed, and break it in two. The ship of career will sight port soon, says Ganesh. Dinner in a candlelit ambience will only help raise your spirits.

LIBRA
Today, you seem to have the Midas touch, so every task you take in your hands is bound to be a success. You may also want to take time out to spend with your loved ones and lavish them with attention. Also, don't forget to hand out credit to others for their valuable inputs.

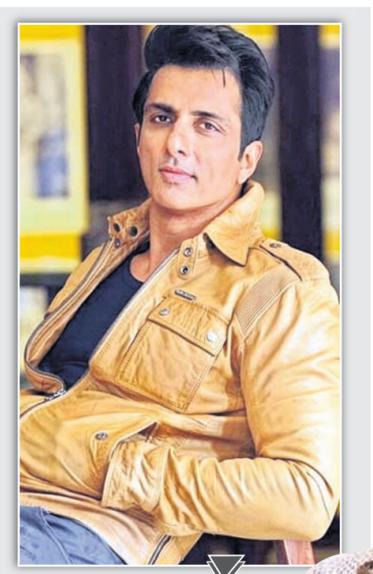
SCORPIO
Your balancing skills may be called to fore today, as some of the important decisions of your life may come calling for judgement today. Later in the day, sudden and unexpected profits are on the cards. In the workplace, reputation and rewards may come for previous efforts.

SAGITTARIUS
The bossy nature of your soul mate is likely to put you off. At work, you may find yourself helpless and left scratching your head. Ganesh advises and foresees you sitting together with your beloved and resolving all your differences.

CAPRICORN
Love for long, today may be the start of a new chapter, foresees Ganesh. And for those of you already in love, your sweetheart may appear sweeter. No, it's not because they will be overpowered by love.

AQUARIUS
Fortune is mighty pleased with you, so go ahead and play roulette if you wish! Partnerships will work today, as will business deals. But somewhere, a dark sentiment may cloud your thinking. Ganesh says that you should enjoy yourself and take life a bit lightly.

PISCES
A conflict-ridden day awaits you. Avoid openly confronting people today, for petty issues could blow up into major disasters. Legal disputes may also hassle you. Meditative techniques will bring you peace of mind.



Sonu Sood

'Not ready to enter politics at present'

Mumbai: Actor Sonu Sood says he is not interested in entering politics at the moment, as he still has miles to go as an actor.

"I have been getting offers to join politics from the past 10 years. Many people have told me, 'you'll be a great leader'. But I feel as an actor, I have miles to go. One can enter politics anytime and I am not the kind who will try to sail in two boats," Sonu said.

"If I get into politics, I'll give my 100 per cent. I'll make sure that no one has any problem. So, I think I am not ready for it at the moment. And I think that at the moment, I am not answerable to anyone and that is why I can do things in a more open way. I don't have to ask anyone or any party 'what should I do'. I decide and do it on my own will," added Sonu.

Sonu, who became popular playing the villain in Hindi films, turned hero in real life for many stranded migrant workers when he organised transport and resources for them to reach home amid the pandemic-induced lockdown.

IANS

Vaani feels 'surreal' flying off to Scotland



Mumbai: Actress Vaani Kapoor is off to Scotland to shoot for her upcoming film *Bell Bottom*, starring Akshay Kumar. She is thrilled and says she has been waiting to be back on the sets.

"It feels surreal that I'm starting to shoot for a film! Being back on the set is a moment I have been dearly waiting for, and I can't wait to finally start shooting. I will be stepping out of Mumbai too after five months, and boarding a flight to work. It seems I did all this in another lifetime," Vaani said.

The actress is happy that the industry is looking to restart after taking a hard hit due to the pandemic. "It's been a testing year for all of us, but I'm glad that things are slowly starting because we have to adapt to this new normal," she said.

Bell Bottom is a thriller set in the 1980s. The film also features Huma Qureshi and Lara Dutta.

IANS

Raju Mishra to receive Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Award - 2020

The award carrying a cash prize of ₹1,00,000 and a citation is given every year to individuals in recognition of their contributions to the fields of dance, music, cinema, and theatre.



Director-cinematographer Raju Mishra

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: Eminent film director and cinematographer Raj Gopal Mishra, popularly known as Raju Mishra, will be presented with prestigious Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Award for the year 2020 for his lifetime contributions to the Odia cinema.

Srjan, a premier training institution in Odissi dance will organise the award festival from September 5 to 9 on digital platform following the Covid guidelines laid down by the government. The event, to be inaugurated by eminent actress Hema Malini, will be premiered on Facebook Live and YouTube.

Several other luminaries from the art world and other fields will also join the virtual programme.

The award, which carries a cash prize of Rs 1,00,000 and a citation, aims to recognise the outstanding contributions of individuals in the fields of dance, music, cinema, and theatre.

Srjan will also present Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Yuva Pratibha Samman, which carries a cash prize of Rs. 25,000/ and a citation, to an exceptionally talented performing artiste under the age of 40 years.

For 2020, the award will be presented to two performers - Pravat Kumar Swain for Odissi dance and Himansu Sekhar Swain for Odissi music-acknowledging their contribution to the art forms.

The festival, this year, has been dedicated to late Sangeet Martand Pandit Jasraj, who passed away recently and had close association with Gururji for many decades.

Eminent dance exponents of the likes of Madhusmita Mohanty (Odissi), Praveen Kumar (Bharatnatyam), Gauri Diwakar (Kathak)

Purvadhanashree (Vilasini Natyam) have given their consent to perform in the event, said the organisers.

Among others, Hindustani musician Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Mardala Guru Dhaneswar Swain and acclaimed Carnatic vocalist Abhishek Raghuram will also perform during the five-day event.

Odia daily Dharitri and the only home-grown English daily **Orissa POST** are the media partners for the event.

Platform hardly matters for Radhika

Mumbai: Actress Radhika Apte has revealed her process of choosing projects. For her, the platform does not matter.

Radhika has acted in films such as *Badlapur*, *Phobia*, *Pad Man* and *Anhadhun*, but her name is often associated with an OTT platform, thanks to her roles in *Lust Stories*, *Sacred Games* and *Ghoul*.

"I have always chosen a project basis of how deeply I feel connected to the character and storyline. I have never chosen a project because of a platform," she said.

Talking about her preferences,

Radhika shared: "I don't have any preference, I like both theatre and cinema they have their own charm and own things to appreciate."

The actress made her directorial debut with *The Sleepwalkers*.

On the acting front, she will be next seen in her international

project *A Call To Spy*, as a real-life character of the spy Noor Inayat Khan.

IANS

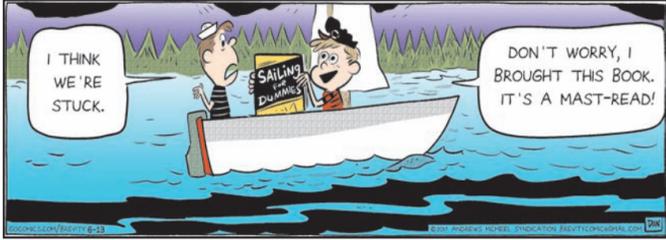
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

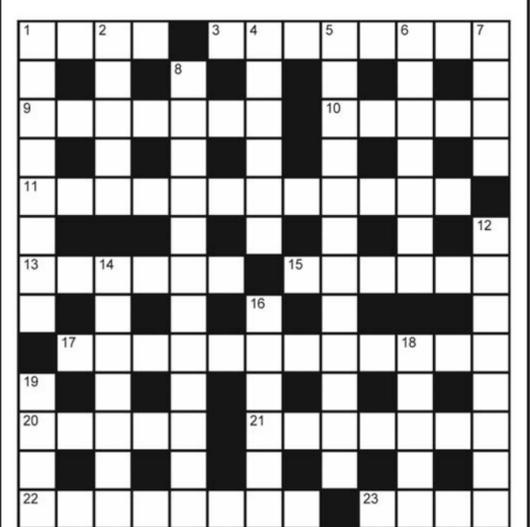


BREVITY



FUN post

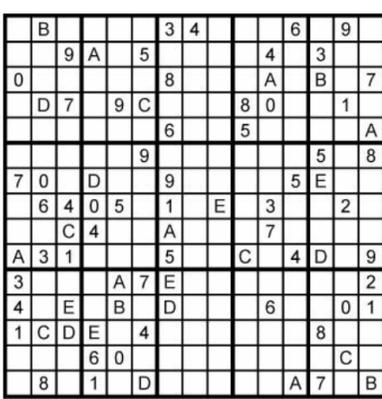
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Egyptian port
 - 3 Sea of seaweed
 - 9 Oil source
 - 10 Title holder
 - 11 Overly proud
 - 13 Longest river in England
 - 15 Land on Lake Victoria
 - 17 Condemnation
 - 20 Fabricating
 - 21 Vie
 - 22 Pumpernickel's pal (3,5)
 - 23 Dog command
 - Down**
 - 1 Want something badly
 - 2 Tedium
 - 4 Sound recordings
 - 5 Adolescent problems (7,5)
 - 6 Largest city of Puerto Rico (3,4)
 - 7 Fairy tale villain
 - 8 Meatless BBQ offering (6,6)
 - 12 Picnic spoiler (5,3)
 - 14 Shad-like food fish
 - 16 Flame tree
 - 18 Klutzy
 - 19 Picture problem

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



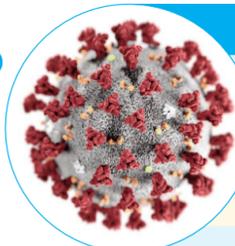
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



NORMS IGNORED

Vehicles parked at a no parking zone in Bapuji Nagar area of Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	2,60,17,221	1,82,78,880	8,63,397
India	37,69,523	29,01,908	66,333
Odisha	1,09,780	84,073	514

UGC urged to push exam deadline to Oct 10

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: The state government Wednesday urged the University Grants Commission (UGC) to extend the deadline for completion of final semester of UG and PG examinations to October 10 from September 30.

"The state government today requested UGC to extend the September 30 deadline for completion of all UG & PG final semester/year exams till October 10. This will ensure conduct of exams with adequate precautions as per Covid-19 protocol," Higher Education Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo tweeted.

The final exams will be held between September 20 and October 10 while results will be published by October 31, he said. Considering the Covid-19 pandemic situation, the state government had taken a decision June 18 last to cancel all final semester/ UG and PG examinations of universities and colleges. However, in its revised guide-



UG-PG FINAL SEMESTERS

The final exams will be held between September 20 and October 10 while results will be published by Oct 31

University vice chancellors and principals of autonomous colleges had not planned to conduct final semester/year UG and PG examinations

However, in its revised guidelines dated July 6 this year, the UGC had stipulated that final semester/year UG and PG examinations must be compulsorily held by Sept 30

lines dated July 6 this year, the UGC had stipulated that final semester/year UG and PG examinations must be compulsorily held by September 30.

The Supreme Court also upheld the revised guideline of UGC granting liberty to states to make an application to UGC for extending the dateline in case they feel so.

In this backdrop, Higher Education Secretary Saswat Mishra has written a letter to UGC secretary in this regard.

University vice chancellors and

principals of autonomous colleges had not planned to conduct final semester/year UG and PG examinations. Therefore, about 20 days would be required to make necessary preparation for conducting the examination. Therefore, conduct of the examination can commence from September 20, Mishra said in his letter. To complete the exams by September end, the institutions will have to conduct multiple examinations (subject-wise and paper-wise) each day, which would lead to congregation of a

large number of students at examination centres, he said.

"Conducting examinations everyday without gaps will lead to universities and colleges not getting enough time to sanitize and disinfect the examination centers before next day of examination," he further said. Hence, the state government, in exercise of its power under the State Disaster Management Act, has decided to request UGC for extension of the dateline by 10 days.

Guidelines issued for UG-PG exams

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: Following the Supreme Court order, the state Higher Education department has issued detailed guidelines for conduct of final semester examination of UG and PG courses in state-run universities and autonomous colleges.

Higher Education secretary Saswat Mishra has written to vice-chancellors of all state universities and the principals of autonomous colleges in this regard, Wednesday. Mishra asked the institutions to conduct the examinations on holidays, if required, to complete the examinations on time.

"Results of final semester/year UG and PG examinations, including back paper examinations, must be published by October 31," he wrote in the letter.

Special examinations will also be held for those who cannot take the final examinations for whatever reasons. But, Mishra said, these special examinations will be con-

Special exams will also be held for those who cannot take the final examinations for whatever reasons

ducted by the universities and autonomous colleges once the Covid-19 situation improves, hopefully by December 2020.

He further instructed the higher education institutions to strictly follow the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) communicated by Union Ministry of Education for conducting examinations in offline mode.

"The universities and autonomous colleges shall follow the UGC original guideline dated 29.04.2020 regarding intermediate semester/year examinations and publish results by December 31, 2020," read the guidelines.

All the universities and autonomous colleges have been directed to chalk out their own plans and strategies for conducting ex-

aminations within the prescribed deadline in adherence to UGC guidelines. The institutions were further asked to provide necessary support to Odisha State Open University for conduct of its examinations through OSOU Study Centres.

As it is a time-bound task, the university and college authorities have been empowered to call any employee (both teaching and non-teaching) to join duty on holidays and vacations for smooth and timely conduct of examination, evaluation, result publication and ancillary purposes.

These decisions are also applicable to final year students of distance education students of Utkal University and Fakir Mohan University, all types of teacher education institutions and all self-financing courses/PPP based self-financing courses.

However, it will not be applicable to courses including medical, paramedical, pharmacy courses run under the aegis of other departments of the state government.

Stray dogs foil loot bid in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: A pack of stray dogs foiled an alleged dacoity attempt in Bhubaneswar in the wee hours of Wednesday. The unusual incident took place at Baramunda Housing Board colony here.

Khandagiri police reached the spot and launched an investigation into the incident

The CCTV footage of the incident shows two bike-borne miscreants arriving in the locality at around 2am. One of them is seen approaching the boundary wall of a house.

In the meantime, 10-15 stray dogs attacked and severely injured the duo. Before fleeing the spot, the two miscreants left a toy gun on the road. It is being suspected that they had brought the toy gun with them for threatening people during the loot bid on being intervened by locals. The entire incident was captured on CCTV cameras installed nearby.

Residents of the locality spotted bloodstains on the road and the toy gun near it Wednesday morning. On being informed, Khandagiri police reached the spot and launched an investigation into the incident. The CCTV footage is being inspected to identify the miscreants.

Fresh norms for marine police stations

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: In a bid to bolster coastal security, the Odisha Police, Wednesday, issued a set of guidelines regarding posting of personnel at 18 marine police stations (MPs) across seven coastal districts of the state.

According to the guidelines undersigned by the Director General of Police (DGP), constables and havildars posted to MPs should continue for a period of seven years.

"Such constables and havildars shall not be transferred before the stated period to non-marine police stations except on administrative ground with approval of the coastal security ADGP. The personnel may, however, can be transferred from one marine police station to another," said the order (388/2020), adding that the directive will be applicable from October 2020.

It further said that sub-inspector and assistant sub-inspector of police posted to any marine police station should normally continue for a period of three years. "Approval of coastal security ADGP will be required for any premature transfer," it added.

AGRI CABINET DECISIONS

₹ 9,964Cr farm credit disbursed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: In its 6th meeting held Wednesday, the Cabinet Committee on Agriculture took stock of preparedness for Kharif season, distribution of loans and fertilizer and other agricultural activities in the state.

Farm credit amounting to Rs 9964.47 crore has been disbursed by the financial institutions benefiting 21 lakh farmers, Agriculture Secretary Saurabh Garg said. Similarly, 14.08 lakh farmers have been enrolled for crop insurance, he said.

Garg said 61.61 lakh hectares were set for Kharif crop and at present 55.52 lakh hectares have been covered. The crop and pest situation is being monitored through e-pest surveillance upto gram panchayat (GP) level. This was briefed to the Cabinet, he said. Crop-pest advisories are being issued in weekly intervals by a technical team headed by OUAT through Ama Krushi with helpline number - 155333, he said. The Cabinet has decided to ensure smooth supply of urea and other fertilizers to farmers. For this, Garg said, steps are



THE CABINET HAS DECIDED TO ENSURE SMOOTH SUPPLY OF UREA AND OTHER FERTILIZERS TO FARMERS

CROP-PEST ADVISORIES ARE BEING ISSUED IN WEEKLY INTERVALS BY A TECHNICAL TEAM HEADED BY OUAT THROUGH AMA KRUSHI WITH HELPLINE NUMBER - 155333

being taken with support from the Centre and through rigorous monitoring and enforcement.

The secretary said a number of innovative changes have been taken up for better support to farmers, which was also presented before the panel.

The details of progress on implementation of package for Covid-19 announced by the Chief Minister were discussed in details. The livelihood interventions for Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment and Fisheries & Animal Resources Development department are being worked out through which 24.99 lakh farmers would be benefitted with an outlay of Rs 373.95 crore, he said.

"Till now, 8.15 lakh farmers have been benefitted," he added.

The panel also reviewed the status of Kalia and Balam schemes. The government has in-principle decided that "Every willing farmer to have a farm pond" to supplement the water scarcity during critical junctures and particularly to provide life-saving irrigation during Kharif season. Target was set to dig 5 lakh farm ponds in five years (2019-20 to 2023-24).

Under 5T initiative, the Agriculture department has developed Dakshyata app to recognise and incentivise the efforts of employees towards improvement of agricultural practices and upliftment of farmers, he added.

MATTER OF BELIEF



People offer water to their deceased ancestors' souls as part of Tilatparan at Markanda pond in Puri, Wednesday

COOKED FOOD, WATER ELUDE MAROONED VILLAGERS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Sept 2: Floodwaters from Daya and Rajua rivers have inundated several villages of Khurda, Jatni, Baliana, Balipatna and Begunia blocks in the district.

However, around 10,000 people of Orabarasingh, Narangarh and Brajamohanpur panchayats in Khurda block have been severely affected by the floods. More than 7,000 hectares of agricultural land in the locality have been inundated by the floodwaters, sources said.

According to villagers, several houses in at least 15 villages in the above said three panchayats have been submerged with the floodwaters. Household goods and food grains of many villagers have been damaged by the flood.

"Several villages of Khurda block have been marooned by the floods. Most of the people have taken shelter on the roofs. Several poisonous snakes have been spot-

ted in the floodwater," said a villager. The villagers claimed that pregnant women, children and elderly people at villages like Orami, Hirimula, Dihakhala, Dhabalpur, Balapur, Narangarh, Manapur, and Saradhapur have been facing loads of difficulties due to the flood.

"Our village has been submerged with 5-ft deep floodwater. We have taken shelter on the roofs. We are unable to cook food for last several days. The fear of snakebite is also looming large," said many women of Saradhapur.

The villagers have been facing difficulties in getting potable water as most of the tubewells and wells in the locality have been submerged with the floodwater. The flood-affected villagers are yet to get adequate drinking water through tankers, sources said.

"Boats have become the only medium of communication for us. We have been facing shortage of



Villagers wading through waist-deep floodwater at Saradhapur in Khurda

essentials. We do not have adequate money to buy essential com-

modities from distance places. The poor people have been severely af-

ected by the flood. Most of them have not eaten cooked food for last

Cong seeks clarity on GST aid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: The state leadership of Congress Wednesday attacked the BJD-ruled state government on the GST compensation issue and asked them to come forward with clarification on the issue.

Congress leader Panchanan Kanungo Wednesday held a press conference at Congress Bhawan here and demanded answers from the government on GST losses. He also accused the Union government of shirking its responsibility towards the states when it comes to payment of GST compensation.

He said, "As per GST notifications, GST Council takes decisions and it is later ratified by Parliament. Thus, payment of GST compensation is quite under the control of the Centre. They cannot shirk their responsibilities for the payments to the states."

According to the party's estimates, Kanungo said, about Rs 1,000 crore GST compensation is yet to be paid to Odisha for 2019-20 financial year. "We are going to lose around Rs 16,700 crore. As per provisional estimates, till now we have

already seen loss of Rs 5,300 crore on GST. In August, the GST collections have come down," he said.

He said that the Centre seems to be reluctant to pay the compensation but said that the GST Act binds the Centre to do it. "The Centre seems to be suggesting states to buy bonds to borrow money which could be nothing but an additional financial burden on them. States like West Bengal and Kerala have rejected such proposals, but not Odisha."

He asked the state government whether it was working as a subsidiary of BJP or for the state welfare.

We are going to lose around Rs 16,700 crore. As per provisional estimates, till now we have already seen loss of Rs 5,300 crore on GST. In August, the GST collections have come down

PANCHANAN KANUNGO | CONGRESS LEADER

AICC PANEL FOR FLOOD-AFFECTED

Bhubaneswar: The All India Congress Committee (AICC) Wednesday constituted a committee to help the flood-affected people in Odisha. A communication from Jitendra Singh, Odisha Congress In-charge, said that the panel would work for relief and coordination works. "As you are aware lakhs of people are affected due to the flood in the past few days. More than 20 districts are currently affected. Please ask Congress workers to extend all support for relief work in the affected districts," a letter from Singh to Odisha Congress Chief Niranjan Patnaik reads. The nine-member committee would be led by Narasingha Mishra as its chairman while Bhakta Charan Das, Pradeep Majhi, Prasad Harichandan, Jayadev Jena, Sarat Patnaik, Tara Prasad Bahinipati, Suresh Routray and Mohammad Moquim would be its members.

COVID TALLY JUMPS BY 3,219 Local contact cases rise in Mayurbhanj

AS MANY AS 3,219 NEW COVID-19 CASES TAKE ODISHA'S TALLY TO 1,09,780

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: State Wednesday reported 3,219 new COVID-19 cases, taking Odisha's novel coronavirus tally to 1,09,780, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

The death toll, on the other hand, rose to 514 with 11 fresh fatalities, said the official.

Most of the fresh cases were detected in Khurda where 731 people tested positive, followed by Cuttack (400), Puri (217) and Balasore (194). Total nine districts reported more than 100 cases.

Ganjam reported three of the fresh deaths, two people lost their lives in Khurda and one patient each died in Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Rayagada and Sambalpur districts.

Most of the deaths have been reported from Ganjam where 194 people have so far succumbed to the infection, the official pointed out, adding that Deogarh has the lowest number of 33 active cases. The district has reported no COVID death till date along with Boudh and Sonepur districts.

As far as active cases area is concerned, Khurda district remained in the top with 6,629 cases followed by Cuttack (3,505) and Ganjam (1,451). There are 28,443 active cases in the state at present, while 80,770 patients have recovered.



Most of the fresh cases were detected in Khurda where 731 people tested positive, followed by Cuttack (400), Puri (217) and Balasore (194)

The state has so far tested over 18.19 lakh samples for COVID-19, including 51,245 Tuesday, the official said.

As per the direction of the Chief Minister, persons who have successfully completed institutional quarantine are being given incentive of Rs 2,000 each. Till date, a sum of Rs 129,94,26,000 has been paid incentives from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund, said an official.

Bhubaneswar sees biggest jump

The COVID-19 tally in Bhubaneswar breached 11,000-mark with as many as 541 persons, the highest in a day, testing positive for the viral infection in the last 24

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: Notwithstanding the tall claims of the Mayurbhanj district administration of screening and surveillance of COVID cases, the rise in number of local contact cases in the district is certainly a cause for concern.

With a meagre amount of cases emanating from home and institutional quarantine centres from the state, the situation hints at low success of such centres in containing

DATE	QUARANTINE CASES	LOCAL CASES
Sept 2	0	137
Sept 1	7	201
Aug 31	5	57
Aug 30	17	268
Aug 29	0	123
Aug 28	13	259

the rise of new cases in the north-east of Odisha.

In the last one week, Mayurbhanj along with Rayagada district has seen a spurt in new COVID-19 cases.

This rise has posed new challenges in front of the district administration.

It also raised speculation of more active cases among the unprotected population which is coming to the fore on a regular basis. For example, the government records as submitted by the district administration, August 29 the district saw 123 new cases and all of them were from local contacts and not a single case was from the quarantine system.

Similarly, the district reported

a total of 215 new cases September 1. Out of the new cases, only seven were from quarantine and a massive of 201 cases are from local contacts. Meanwhile, the district witnessed a total of 137 cases September 2 and all of them were local contact cases.

The overall COVID related data claimed that the district till now has seen a total of 3,657 COVID-19 cases. Five of the patients succumbed to the virus. The district has a total of 1495 active cases and 2190 recoveries.



Members of Ekamra Haat Artisans' Association demonstrate on the market premises at Unit III in Bhubaneswar Wednesday demanding rehabilitation before demolition of the urban market

Virus spreads in govt, pvt offices

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: With September being observed as critical phase for the state capital, the COVID virus is now gradually spreading its tentacles to government and private offices with large number of employees being recorded positive on a daily basis.

As per the information provided by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), the city until now has seen more than 250 cases being reported from various government offices. While 27 were found positive in Orissa University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), 25 were of SBI Main Branch, 15 in Odisha Hydro Power Corporation, nine in State Assembly, six in Odisha State Housing Board, five in Odisha Tourism.

Similarly, the Commissionerate Police and Special Intelligence Wing have recorded about 105 cases. Moreover, Lok Seva Bhawan and Kharavela Bhawan have total 35 were reported cases recently while the Tahasil and Sub-Registrar office

The city has so far recorded 250 cases from different government offices. Even BMC and BDA have witnessed 23 cases with one death



have a total of 15 cases. Even BMC itself along with BDA has reported 23 cases with one death until so far.

"As the nature of work for government employees calls for field visits and public interaction, contact tracing becomes difficult. Even with contact tracing only nature of infection in a positive person of working at these offices can be found. Preventive measures are always needed keeping at the profile of the Corona virus," said a senior BMC official.

Moreover, many private undertaking offices and industrial units have also reported clusters of cases

recently. For instance, Aditya Birla Fashion at Mancheswar had reported 15 positive cases. Similarly, 30 were reported from Swosti Premium, 10 from Hotel Crown and 30 from IT major Tech Mahindra.

The sudden surge in cases has also put strain on the COVID facilities at the BMC's disposals. Recent media reports indicated that the civic authority is now even struggling to provide beds to even government employees or the front-line warriors.

One of our officials who was deployed with the BMC tested positive recently. He stays in a rented house

in Bhubaneswar and home quarantine for him was not feasible. Thus, we requested the BMC to transfer him to COVID hospital or care centre. However, the authorities instead suggested home isolation and necessary medicines," said a source from Steel and Mines Department.

However, refuting such claims, a senior BMC official said that despite being informed that certain patients have mild symptoms or even asymptomatic, they are getting anxious and requesting to shift to hospitals which are meant for serious and symptomatic patients.

Meanwhile, requesting people to be more open about their symptoms, BMC Deputy Commissioner of Sanitation said, "As the preventive measures are very sacrosanct to keep the COVID-19 at bay, citizens should also become pro-active in abiding by such measures. If we consider contact tracing as a vital feedback and exercise people should be voluntarily give information to the contact tracing experts in BMC."

65-yr-old among three held for vehicle lifting

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Sept 2: The twin city Commissionerate Police Wednesday claimed to have busted a notorious vehicle lifters' gang with the arrest of three of its members including the kingpin, a 65-year-old man.

According to Madhupatna police, the kingpin—Ashok Kumar Das alias Babuli, a resident of Pithakhia village under Gurudijhatia police limits here, has more than 50 criminal cases to his credit across Odisha.

About the crackdown, a senior Madhupatna police official said that Manoranjan Behera of Khuntuni Chhenakhia village here had approached them August 21 alleging that his tractor had been stolen.

"Behera had sent his tractor (OD-05-AC-4698) to Tinigharia area here for some work August 18. The vehicle, however, disappeared from the site mysteriously," said the official adding that they began a probe on the basis of Behera's complaint. During investigation, police stumbled upon Babuli and his men. "Surprising! A 65-year-old man turned out to be the gang's mastermind. Nobody would usually doubt him if age is something to be considered. Babuli takes advantage of this. We recovered the tractor from him," Madhupatna IIC Tushar Kant Sethy pointed out, identifying the two others as Paresh Mishra and Akash Nilakantha Nayak, both from Mayurbhanj.

A case (141) has been registered against the trio under several sections of the IPC. Efforts are on to check if they are involved in other cases as well, Cuttack deputy commissioner of police Prateek Singh said.

28 goods sheds to boost ECoR freight traffic

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: In an attempt to have a larger share in transportation of industrial materials, the East Coast Railway (ECoR) has decided to come closer to traders and industries through its recently launched Business Development Units (BDUs).

These BDUs will entice trade and industry bodies to supply their products through rail rather than road. In the recent interaction with trade and industries, ECoR has planned to provide 28 goods sheds on outsourcing basis and has invited Expression of Interest (EoI) for the purpose.

Sources said BDU members are now having frequent interactions with trade and industries to know about the existing transportation patterns and also to attract more traffic to Railways. ECoR's BDUs are expediting the clearance of proposals received from the trade and industry bodies apparently

for the benefit of both customers and Railways.

The ECoR is exploring ways to increase miscellaneous non-bulk goods traffic to strengthen Railway's share in traditional commodities being carried currently. All proposals received from customers, traders and industries are being reviewed promptly in appropriate level so that immediate assistance will be provided, said the sources.

The 28 goods sheds that ECoR has planned to offer on outsourcing basis are: Bhadrak, Cuttack, Dhanmandal, Dhenkanal, Jagannathpur, Jajpur-Keonjhar Road, Kapilas Road, Khurda Road, Nergundi, Barbil, Jagadapur, Jeypore, Rayagada, Srikakulam Road, Visakhapatnam New Goods Complex, Vizianagaram, Bolangir, Bargarh Road, Belsonda, Dugripalli, Hirakud, Junagarh Road, Kantabanji, Kesinga, Khariar Road, Komakhan, Lapanga and Sambalpur City.



Manas Mangaraj tests COVID +ve

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: Media advisor to government and BJD general secretary has tested Covid-19 positive.

Mangaraj informed the development in his Twitter handle Wednesday.

Mangaraj said he was admitted to a COVID hospital following illness and requested all who have come in contact with him to go for testing.

The leader also thanked all who wished and prayed for him.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik spoke to Mangaraj over phone to enquire about his health. Naveen wished him speedy recovery.

RSP creates new record in production

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP), a unit of the state-run SAIL, has registered a record monthly production of 3,33,840 tonne of hot metal in August.

The steel plant authority gave a statement regarding the same Tuesday. The monthly road dispatch of prime material at 54,183 tonnes was also an all-time high.

The steel plant made 3,33,840

tonnes of hot metal from two blast furnaces, posting its best-ever monthly production. Of this, blast furnace-1 made 89,459 tonnes, thereby creating a new record in production for any month since inception," RSP said in a statement.

Besides, the new plate mill set a fresh record by dispatching 91,138 tonnes of plates during the month, it said. The mill rolled 7,958 slabs and produced 22,591 plates, which

are new records, the RSP said, adding that the captive power plant-three clocked 41.6-megawatt daily average electricity generation which is its all-time-best for any month.

"Blast furnace-1 notched up its best-ever single-day production of 3,552 tonnes on August 17, while on August 19 the steel melting shop-2 created a new record by making 73 blows from two converters on a single day," the RSP said.

There is life beyond PUBG, say gamers after ban

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: The PUBG mobile gaming app was banned by the central government along with 118 other Chinese apps amid fresh tension over China's provocation in Ladakh.

With the embargo, PUBG loses its largest market. There are close to 33 million active PUBG players in India, according to reports.

The dangerous implications of the game have come to the fore many times. Recently, a youth committed suicide by hanging at Dhamra in Bhadrak district after his uncle pulled him up for playing online mobile game PUBG. The deceased was identified as Ganesh Sahu, 20, a native of Panijharia village under



Mahulia panchayat of Chandbali block. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, Ganesh returned home two months back.

Orissa POST interacted with city-based gamers, doctors and fitness experts to solicit their views on the move.

There is no doubt about supporting the decision on banning PUBG. The ban is in the interest of nation

SARTHAK MOHAPATRA | GAMER

It (PUBG) affects their daily routine. They lose precious study time, their grades at schools and colleges get hampered

ANIL DAYAL | DOCTOR

Sarthak Mohapatra, a gamer, said, "There is no doubt about supporting the decision on banning PUBG. The ban is in the interest of nation, so of course it is a logical step.

PUBG definitely had a huge role to play in kick starting the gaming scene in India. There were e-sport athletes even before PUBG was launched, but the game successfully caught a lot of eyeballs. It brought in global gaming powerhouses into the country as well, who saw talent in Indian players."

"I feel the people who are condemning the ban need to realize that India has a huge numbers advantage and Indian teams have also been doing well at other games like Call of Duty and Counter-strike. It's time we as audience support the gamers and streamers and help build a gaming culture. Gaming is a craft, a skill which shouldn't only be judged on PUBG metrics," he added.

Fitness expert Ranjan Rout said that playing such games continuously can lead to obesity "You are sitting ducks!" he exclaimed. "Exercises such as running, jumping and playing outdoors are must for a healthy life so that during your declining years you aren't restricted to your rocking chair," he added.

Dr Anil Dayal lamented that the youth is wasting its precious time playing PUBG. "It (PUBG) affects their daily routine. They lose precious study time, their grades at schools and colleges get hampered," he said. He informed that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has recognised gaming as a disorder in the International Classification of Diseases.

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The sorrows of Dhenkanal fish farmers

THE FLOOD IN BRAHMANI RIVER IS SUMMED BY THE OLD YIDDISH PROVERB— ‘WE PLAN, GOD LAUGHS’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Sept 2: Fish farmers of Gondia area in Dhenkanal district were hopeful that they would earn a decent earning this season. But what transpired was a bitter demonstration of the saying— ‘Man proposes, God disposes’.

The rush of floodwaters from Brahmani river has washed away the fingerlings from their ponds, thereby washing away their hope for a good harvest as well.

These poor fish farmers are now under severe mental stress. They had invested all they had with them with some having borrowed loans from friends and relatives. As of now they have no new avenues left to start afresh.

As per the information shared by Gondia block fishery department, fish farming has largely been affected after floodwaters entered Mandar panchayat, Kendupada of Kaluria panchayat and Bhaliapat village of Kasipur panchayat.

In Bhaliapat village, two SHGs had released fingerlings in ponds. All the fingerlings have been washed



“The flood has left me nowhere as 55 quintals of my fingerlings have been washed away. There was a sudden rush of floodwater from Brahmani river. I have suffered a loss of Rs10 lakh

DUSHMANT MALICK | FISH FARMER, CHITTALPUR, MANDAR PANCHAYAT

I have incurred a loss between Rs 20 and 25 lakh in the recent flood. The government should provide insurance facility for fish farming

KHIROD CHANDRA SAMAL | FISH FARMER, KENDUPADA

The affected farmers will be compensated once the government sanctions the funds

SARAT KUMAR JENA | ASSISTANT FISHERY OFFICER, GONDIA BLOCK

away in the floodwaters.

Similarly, Dushmant Mallick, a fish farmer of Chittalpur village of Mandar panchayat alleged that

the flood has left him nowhere as his 55 quintals of fingerlings have been washed away in floodwater. “There was a sudden rush of floodwater

from Brahmani river Thursday night.”

In the floodwater, all the fish and fingerlings of my ponds were swept

away. Due to this, I have suffered a loss of Rs10 lakh. “But for government assistance, we cannot survive,” he said.

Another farmer, Khirod Chandra Samal of Kendupada has a similar plight to share. He had dug five ponds in his two acres of land and was rearing fish in them. In the floodwaters, over 10 quintals of fish and fingerlings from his pond have been washed away. “I have incurred a loss between Rs 20 to 25 lakh in the recent flood. The government should provide insurance facility for fish farming,” he observed.

Meanwhile, district assistant fishery director Diptiranjana Mohapatra and block assistant fishery officer Sarat Kumar Jena paid a visit to the affected areas to take stock of the situation and assess the loss suffered by the farmers.

When contacted, block assistant fishery officer Jena said the report on the loss suffered by fish farmers due to floods has been placed before the district assistant fishery director. “The affected farmers will be compensated once the government sanctions the funds,” he added.

Yes, these 17 Ganjam villages are still ‘untouched’ by Covid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Sept 2: Indubitably, Ganjam has turned the Covid hotspot in the state, still there are 17 such villages in one panchayat in the district which have not reported even a single case of coronavirus case as of yet.

Yes, it is true! These green zone (as per the coronavirus colour zones) villages are of Kankia panchayat under Kukudakhandi block. Towards the fag end of Kukudakhandi block and near the border of Chikiti block, nestles Kankia panchayat in the lap of nature. The panchayat is surrounded by hills and jungles.

Out of 22 villages of the panchayat, most are in close proximity to hills and Baniamari reserve forest. The total population of the panchayat is 4,476—2,449 males and 2,027 females.

These villages where the deadly virus has not dared to enter into till

date are 20km away from the Kukudakhandi block headquarters. Apart from following proper sanitation measures like washing hands for couple of minutes and maintaining social distance, they have made it a mental note not to visit any village outside their zone unless it is an emergency. Besides, they do not even allow any outsiders into their villages.

Kukudakhandi block chairman, Kamakhyas Prasad Patra has praised the villagers. “The fact that 17 villages of a panchayat are still remaining coronavirus-free will definitely raise many eyebrows. The villagers have set an example for others,” he said. According to BDO Gadadhar Patra, the block’s tally was 652 by August 29. Of them, 612 patients have so far recovered from the disease. The block has so far reported nine deaths. Some of the remaining 32 patients are undergoing treatment at COVID care centre, Patra informs.

7-YEAR-OLD BOY TRAPPED IN ROCK CREVICE RESCUED

THE INCIDENT TOOK PLACE AT BURUBUDA VILLAGE UNDER PURUNAKATAK POLICE LIMITS IN BOUDH DISTRICT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Harbhanga, Sept 2: A 7-year-old boy trapped in a rock crevice in a flooded stream during bath got a new lease of life after an ODRAF team rescued him at a village here in Boudh district Wednesday.

The incident took place at Burubuda village under Purunakatak police limits in Boudh district. The boy was identified as Nilamani Nayak.

Reports said that Nilamani along with his friends had been to Lakshmi nullah in the morning to take bath. While taking bath with them, one of his legs got trapped in a rock crevice and he was not able to come out from the flooded stream.

His friends called the locals seeking help to rescue him. Locals initially tried to rescue the child but failed to do so. Later, they informed the fire service personnel following which an ODRAF team reached the spot and successfully rescued



The operation lasted for over four hours during which the locals and ODRAF put up stone blocks to stop the flow of swirling waters

the victim from the danger with the help of locals.

The operation lasted for over four hours during which the locals and ODRAF put up stone blocks to stop the flow of swirling waters. Later, Nilamani was rushed to the

Purunakatak health centre where he underwent a health check-up before being handed over to his family members, additional tehsildar Hariom Bhoi said. Purunakatak police and senior administrative officials supervised the operation.

Will flood-hit Jajpur limp back to normalcy?

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur/Bari, Sept 2: This year’s flood has been the most devastating in this district as it has snatched away a year’s food reserve of the residents with over 75,737 hectares of farmland getting submerged and sandcast in the floodwater, a report said.

The Bari block with 29 panchayats has been severely hit by flood. Over 4,000 hectare of farmlands are lying submerged alone in Gamu, Serpur, Mandari, Ratnagiri and Chandanpur panchayats of the block.

As a result, the paddy saplings have got rotten or buried under heap of soil and muck on the farmland. Residents said that the loss is so glaring that the poor farmers will not be able to make up for the loss no matter how much effort they put up to recover from the loss.



Over 75,737 hectares of farmland is submerged or sandcast because of the flood

The farmlands are still lying submerged in floodwater despite water level declining in Brahmani and its distributaries. Many have been rendered homeless as the flood has washed away their thatched and mud houses. There are even several panchayats which are still lying inundated in floodwater. Lack of drinking water and power supply

is what that has been hitting the flood-hit residents the most.

The flood occurred in the district due to incessant rainfall lashing the district from August 15 to August 20. Over 75,737 hectares of farmland have been either submerged or sandcast in the district.

Farmers do not have any food stock at home or crops on their

farmland as they had invested all their earnings from last year’s paddy sale on their cultivation. Many of the farmers have borrowed from banks and local moneylenders to raise their crops. The crop loss has pushed them into distress as they ponder over how to repay their loan.

The migrants who were working outside have comeback after the government imposed lockdown following Covid-19 outbreak in the country. All their dreams have been shattered as managing their family is the main concern for them. Moreover, leaving home to work outside is not possible for them as Covid has put a spanner in their movement.

When contacted, Bari BDO Sibananda Swain said that relief distribution work has been expedited in the flood-hit areas of the block.

FISHY AFFAIR



An angler returning home after catching fish from Mahanadi in Sambalpur

OP PHOTO

SPURIOUS LIQUOR TRADE BUSTED IN BALASORE DIST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, Sept 2: In a major crackdown, Rupsa Police in Balasore district busted a fake and illegal liquor manufacturing unit in Kusipada, late Tuesday night.

The police also arrested two persons in this connection. The identification of the accused duo is yet to be ascertained.

According to sources, one among the two detained is the owner of the illegal manufacturing facility. He was being interrogated.

Police said that the cops seized huge quantities of spirits, labels of various foreign liquor brands, other articles used in manufacturing the illicit liquor and packing materials from the spot. Police also seized Rs 17 lakh in cash, three motorcycles and mobiles phones from their possession.

nCoV +ve JEE aspirant disallowed into exam hall

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Sept 2: A JEE aspirant, who was suffering from Covid-19 related ailments, was not allowed to enter the examination hall to give JEE (Main) examination in Berhampur Wednesday.

Following instructions from National Testing Agency (NTA), the JEE (Main) aspirant, who was a Covid-19 positive, reached the examination hall wearing a PPE kit. However, the authorities did not allow him to enter the centre as per the instructions of the district

administration.

According to controller of examination Sunil Sahoo, “We had made all necessary arrangements for candidates with COVID-19 disease like isolation lab where the candidate is supposed to write his exam paper and sanitation facility. An invigilator was also supposed to be deployed in the isolated room to keep a tab on the candidate. The candidate also reached the exam center wearing a PPE kit.”

“But at the last moment, we received a note from the district administration not to allow candi-

dates with Covid-19 disease in view of the safety of other students,” Sahoo added.

He said had the candidate been allowed there will be fear of infection among other candidates. However, a special examination will be conducted for the candidates with Covid-19 virus all over India. There is no need to worry, clarified Sahoo.

Additional District Magistrate Kabindra Kumar Sahoo said students with Covid-19 virus will be facilitated to give JEE (Main) in the next phase.

How Dandadhar turned a jackpot for these tribals

The dam has become a lifeline for the tribal farmers of Kankadahada area by boosting agriculture and tourism prospects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kamakhyanagar, Sept 2: Years ago, tribal farmers of Karagola panchayat in Dhenkanal used to suffer huge loss when water gushing from nearby hills swept away their crops in the monsoon. In the dry seasons, they could not have enough water to raise other crops and vegetables.

But everything turned around after Dandadhar dam was built in the area. The dam has become a lifeline for the tribal farmers of Kankadahada area by boosting the agriculture as well as strengthening economic backbone of the residents. By damming up the river water, thousands of hectares of farmlands are being irrigated in the tribal dominated hilly area.

Besides, the dam has provided potential for tourism sector in the area. The Dandadhar dam was built across Ramial river near Budhibil village under Kankadahada block. The dam and its greenery provide scenic pleasure for tourists.

In the seventies, Chief Minister Nandini Satpathy decided to bolster the agriculture sector in the backward areas.

With her efforts, two dams were planned—one at Kankadahada block and other at Parjang block.



In 1975, the construction of the two dams was initiated.

Ramial river flows amid hills. Near it, is the sprawling Ranjagad reserve forest while Kerjola revenue forest is spread for kilometers to the west of the river.

A 424-metre-high dam, Dandadhar, was laid across the river. People of some villages like Rekuti Nuagan, Biripal, Kalihata and Kaibasa of Keonjhar district were displaced for the dam.

Scores of displaced families were

rehabilitated in four colonies at Kantapal while 813 families were rehabilitated in five colonies at Dadaraghati. In 1983, the dam was made full-fledged.

The dam, sprawling over 328 square km, has water retaining capacity of 600 cusec/metre. There are four gates to release water from the dam while water is supplied through two main canals. Farmlands in far-flung areas get irrigational coverage through sub-canal.

In Kharif season, 6,128 hectares of

farmlands are irrigated while 3,200 hectares are irrigated in Rabi season.

The left canal irrigates farmlands at Kargola, Kankadahada, Balikuma, Maruabila, Raibola, Birashala, Makuachatani, Batagan under Kankadahada block and Kanpura (Kamkshyanagar block) while the right canal irrigates farmlands at Kantapal, Kandara and some other villages.

However, over years, the dam has been losing its water retaining capacity, as a result of which water is

ISSUE PLAGUING

Over years, the dam has been losing its water retaining capacity, as a result of which water is not reaching to the targeted areas

Farmers demand that the dam should be de-silted and restored so as to expand its irrigational coverage

not reaching to the targeted areas.

Farmers demanded that the dam should be de-silted and restored so as to expand its irrigational coverage.

Rajesh Dehury, a local, said, “Dandadhar dam acts as a lifeline in the tribal-dominated block of Kankadahada. Farmers raise crops throughout the year by using the dam water. Besides, the dam draws a huge number of tourists during the picnic season. The government can develop the peripheral area of the dam with tourism infrastructure so as to boost ecotourism in the tribal pocket.”

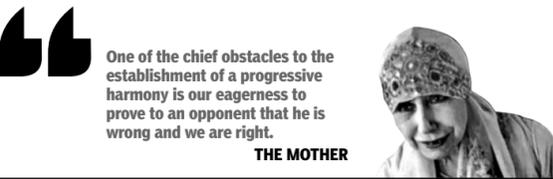
Balabhadra Sahu, a former ZP member said: “Dandadhar dam is the outcome of years of efforts by our forefathers. Though 45 years have passed since the dam was built, the miseries of the displaced people have not been removed. The canal laid for displaced people is of no use. The government needs to pay heed to the problem.”

Assistant engineer of the dam, Sarat Chandra Sahu, said: “Dandadhar is gradually getting silted, resulting in fall of its water retaining capacity. It needs to be dredged to increase its water retaining power. This place has enough potential to boost tourism. It should be developed for that purpose.”

Locals set bus ablaze in Kendrapara

KENDRAPARA: Over 50 irate locals set a private bus ablaze after it hit a scooter and killed a youth on the spot on national highway at Haladiagada in Kendrapara district Wednesday forenoon. According to reports, a bus (bearing registration number WB-41 E-6012) was on its way from Kolkata to Paradip, when it hit a scooter coming from the opposite direction. The deceased has been identified as Bikash Nayak (25) of Haladiagada village. Following the accident, outraged locals asked all passengers to get down and set the bus ablaze. By the time fire brigade arrived and doused the flames; the bus including luggage of some passengers kept therein were completely gutted. Tension ran high on NH-5 in Marshaghai area in the district.

BHUBANESWAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Progress through Partnership for Better Bhubaneswar
RFP No. 41825 Date: 02.09.2020
NOTICE INVITING REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
No. C-122: Sealed proposals are invited for “Selection of Shelter Management Agency/ies for Operation & Management of Shelter for Urban Homeless (SUHs) under Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation” in conformity with the Terms & Conditions of the Detailed RFP from intending bidders fulfilling the terms of eligibility laid down in the RFP document. Please refer to website www.bmc.gov.in for complete details and downloading the document. The RFP document is available from 03.09.2020 with last date of submission being 30.09.2020 till 4.00 P.M.
For any queries please contact bmcpmu@bmc.gov.in.
Sd./- Dy. Commissioner (F&CS)
Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation
OIPR-13002/11/0036/2021



One of the chief obstacles to the establishment of a progressive harmony is our eagerness to prove to an opponent that he is wrong and we are right.

THE MOTHER

CULTIVATING COMPASSION

Compassion is not a hobby, or something you do in a good mood, or when you are well fed, or with your friends. It is a mental state, or an orientation towards suffering that includes four things - recognising that there is suffering, being emotionally moved by that suffering, wanting relief from that suffering, and being ready to take action to relieve that suffering.

The heart is a muscle. It needs to be exercised for it to expand or it can deteriorate and atrophy. All children are born with the capacity to love all beings - humans and nonhumans. By the time they are three, their parents have conditioned them to fear compassion and they stop loving. But you can recondition yourself.

In fact, there is a course for it! Based on scientific trials, there is a two-month academic compassion cultivation training course that was developed by Thupten Jinpa, Ph.D., and colleagues at Stanford University's Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education. If I were minister for education, I would make it compulsory.

There is also a course called Great Good in Action, GGIA, which gives your exercises. As with most exercises, the more you do them, the quicker the heart and mind expand. Even tiny steps help - if your physical exercise goal is to take 10,000 steps a day and you only take 3,000, that's still better for your health than taking none.

Start noticing your own actions: when do you feed spontaneously compassionate? When you see an accident on the news and don't have to do anything about it except watch? When do you resist acknowledging suffering throughout the day (e.g., when passing someone on the street who is asking for money, or your attitude towards an annoying family member)? Once you notice your own thoughts, change comes easily.

So next time you are going for work, notice how clean the steps are and who cleaned them, when you stand in line at a mall take a moment to actually see the stress of the cashier or the people stocking the shelves. A word of appreciation? One of the times I remember with pride, because it came naturally, was when my car stopped at a light. I opened a bottle of water to drink when I noticed a parched plant on the road divided with drooping leaves. I jumped out, put the water on the plant and waited to see it revive. At that point I didn't think of anything, but it certainly gave me happiness. You are on the right track when giving and doing for other forms of life give you more happiness than getting something for yourself.

Set the intention to 'practice' compassion. What do you want for the world? What do you want for your life? What do you have to offer the world? Here are some tips which sound like clichés but work: Encourage others with praise, respect privacy, open the door for someone (metaphorically!), allocate time to do good things consciously, learn how to say thank you, practice empathy - the art of seeing yourself in the other's place, step mindfully (literally).

Are you changing? Have you stopped making excuses to turn away? Is your sight improving to see the world as a place of suffering which you can make better? Are you better towards humans and nonhumans? Have you added value to your life? Whose life did you affect for the better? Have your heroes changed? How many times have you thanked a being or even the universe? How many times did you resist the opportunity to hurt? Did you notice how many times beings were compassionate to you?

Compassion is about alleviating suffering and ultimately it is the only thing that is meaningful in life. It is easy to fight with your neighbours and thousands of people did that during the lockdown. It is easy to kick a dog on the stairs who is taking shelter from rain. It is easy to declare a wounded mother tigress as a man-eater and hunt her down. It is easy to put bombs in food so that a cow has her jaw blown apart, it is easy to chop down trees. But did that take the world forward or backwards? Violence is the ultimate setback for good economics and it is the direct opposite of compassion.

Princess Diana's handshake with an AIDS patient, something done spontaneously, changed attitudes towards AIDS all over the world. Mother Teresa cradling the sick, the lepers and the homeless, brought so many people into the field of compassion. The people who have made companies to bring artificial meat to meat-eaters have done so out of compassion, the people who run shelter homes, with absolutely no money, for accident hit and diseased animals, the people who give blood, the people who start foundations for bone marrow transplant victims, the people who donate small amounts of money to the needy rather than offering it to a temple as forward payments for wishes to be granted, the NGOs who go into villages to help medicate or train people... the world is better for them. The Pay it Forward movement is what we need to adopt. Do three good deeds without expecting anything in return and only ask that the recipient do three good deeds too.

Many years ago, my mother and I watched a TV show by Larry King. His guest of the evening was Jeanne Dixon, a world famous 'seer' who was famous for her predictions. We, in India, have hundreds of people like that, so it wasn't that part that interested me. It was something else that she said that has stayed with me as a living principle. She said that Earth was the designated 'hell' of the universe. Every being that had committed violence or 'crime' of some kind on any other planet was sent here and that is why everyone on the planet, rich or poor, was in a constant state of suffering. And we would come back again and again until we changed ourselves. And the only way out of it was compassion, rising above oneself to be kind. Do you want to get yourself out of here? I do.

To join the animal welfare movement contact gandhim@nic.in, www.peopleforanimalsindia.org

WISDOM CORNER

- We enjoy the process far more than the proceeds. **WARREN BUFFETT**
- Stay hungry, stay foolish. **STEVE JOBS**
- Intellectuals solve problems, geniuses prevent them. **ALBERT EINSTEIN**

WORDSWORTH

Thwart

Thwart is strictly speaking Middle English. However, an equivalent word did exist in Old English, thweorh, transverse, perverse, angry or cross. It seems to have died out and the adverb thwart was reintroduced from the related Old Norse thvert. It's from an ancient Indo-European root that's shared by Latin torquere, to twist. In English an early sense was of something transverse or crosswise. The early evidence is pretty sparse - it doesn't seem to have been especially common - so the way it developed isn't altogether clear. Early on, though, the idea developed of something that lay or was put across the way, so hindering or obstructing one's progress. Another early sense, recorded around 1250, was one borrowed from Germanic languages of a person who was figuratively obstructive or cross-grained - awkward, obstinate or stubborn. The verb, which appeared about the same time, first meant to oppose or hinder. Our modern sense, to successfully oppose another person's intentions, appeared near the end of the sixteenth century.

FOCUS WORLD

NOW, THE COVID CITY

No city has escaped the deadly spread of Covid-19. But the virus has had a profoundly uneven impact on different groups of people even within the same city. When New York City was the global epicentre of the pandemic, downtown Manhattan had an infection rate of roughly 925 per 100,000, compared to 4,125 per 100,000 in Queens. The reason for this gap is straightforward: New York's wealthiest residents could access a wide range of health services and work remotely in spacious multi-story buildings.

As in every big city, one's post code profoundly shapes one's destiny. Manhattan and Queens are less than 25 minutes apart by subway, but the difference between them in annual median income is a staggering \$78,000; and the variation in life expectancy between the city's boroughs can be as high as ten years. Similar inequalities in income, health, education, and virtually every other metric of wellbeing persist in most metropolises around the world. Covid-19 will widen these disparities further.

Around the world, it is not so much densely populated cities as overcrowded, marginalised neighbourhoods that are struggling to contain the spread of Covid-19. Socioeconomic factors, not physical geography, are a key determinant of contagion risk, particularly in the built-up areas of developing countries. For example, it is estimated that over half of Mumbai's seven million slum-dwellers already have Covid-19. And in South Africa, where five million households do not have a refrigerator, barely 46 per cent have access to a flush toilet in their homes and a one-third share toilets with other families - it is not surprising that new infections soared despite drastic lockdown measures.

The pandemic is especially harmful for urbanites in the informal economy, where most jobs are low-paid and cannot be performed remotely. Whereas 47 per cent of college graduates could



While the pandemic has severely affected many superstar cities, some of the industries driving their economies are remarkably resilient, which may help to explain why global stock markets have bounced back

work remotely in the United States in July, only 4 per cent of those without a high school diploma were able to do so. While this dynamic certainly hurts the urban poor in cities like New York, it is even more debilitating for those in, say, Dhaka, where over 80 per cent of workers depend on the informal sector - the development organisation BRAC reports that 62 per cent of all daily wage income essentially disappeared in June.

As we show in our new book Terra Incognita, Covid-19 is exacerbating multiple forms of inequality within and between countries and cities, and raising fundamental questions about the future of urban living. Major cities are bearing the brunt of the pandemic's human and economic costs - and the worst is yet to come - fueling concerns about whether they will survive as the central nodes of the global economy.

But while the pandemic has severely affected many superstar cities, some of the industries driving their economies are remarkably resilient, which may help to explain why global stock markets have bounced back. It is clear that the biggest winner in the current crisis will be Big Tech. On the same day that US economic growth was reported to have fallen by 32.9

per cent (July 31), Amazon reported quarterly profits of \$5.2 billion, with sales up 40 per cent from the previous year. Similarly, Google, Apple, and Facebook have all performed far better than the economy as a whole during the pandemic.

Even if a vaccine is developed and distributed as early as 2021, Covid-19 will be tremendously disruptive to cities. Nicholas Bloom of Stanford University predicts that if cities lose the office space previously used by knowledge workers, urban expenditures overall could drop by one-third. The dramatic decline in property taxes and other revenue streams will seriously compromise municipal governments' ability to provide basic services. The exodus of high-value workers will have dangerous ripple effects on city residents - from waiters and actors to grocers and retailers. These people and services give cities much of their character, and their loss would accelerate the downward spiral.

Still, while many major cities are down, they are far from out. The death of the superstar city has been predicted before, yet urban areas have always demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to bounce back, including from pandemics and plagues. Even in the

most adverse conditions, large, medium, and smaller cities remain the most desirable places to live, work, and play, and urban dwellers are healthier and wealthier than their rural counterparts, on average. This is unlikely to change, despite the acceleration of remote working.

Cities will continue to be sites for innovation, experimentation, and invention. With many countries now facing the second wave of Covid-19 (or still caught in the first), mayors are rethinking their strategies to improve affordability, promote cleanliness, ensure stable supply chains, produce energy, and reduce congestion. Precisely because cities face tremendous financial shortfalls and growing liabilities, they will need to draw on their exceptional creativity to do more with less. Rather than being an existential threat to cities, Covid-19 may lead to a more advanced and inclusive urbanism in some parts of the world.

One way or another, our future lies in cities. This is why the World Economic Forum has focused its Great Reset initiative on urban hubs, and why the UN Secretary-General António Guterres has put resilient and inclusive cities at the center of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For city leaders, the task is to start investing in micro-mobility and pedestrianisation, while testing new models of urban design, including retrofitting buildings and public spaces with healthier renewable alternatives. The pandemic has shown us that ensuring a healthy population requires reshaping society. Cities are where that process will start.

Ian Goldin is Professor of Globalisation and Development at the University of Oxford. Robert Muggah is a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Cities and Urbanisation and an adviser to the Global Risks Report.

@PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM PANDEMIC

Leading a double life after lockdown

More than five months have elapsed since we started the lockdown and are now in the phase of relaxing restrictions despite a huge surge in Covid-19 cases. India reported 79,000 fresh cases on 29 August - the highest number globally for a single day - when even USA recorded about 500 less in number.

The challenge with asymptomatic infection is intensifying with removal of travel restrictions and opening of public transport system. State governments are aware that the vigil against the infection has to be intensified. Truly a novel experience of knowingly taking health-risk under economic compulsions!

Both the authorities and the people are visibly concerned about the inevitable consequences to be faced if people do not behave. Therefore, arrangements are being made particularly in workplaces and norms and guidelines are given with instructions to strictly enforce these. Unlock is accompanied with close monitoring of people's behaviour.

The post-lockdown period is going to be tension-ridden with isolation, distancing, uncertainty, and in-

convenience being thrust as normal in social life. Hereafter, following reports regarding the course of the pandemic must become a habit. The number of close face-to-face contacts has to be kept as low as possible and high risk activities as short as possible. Remote learning and work, introduced during lockdown, will tend to stay even after the demise of the pandemic.

Our hope lies in finding an effective vaccine against Covid-19. Lockdown has only a limited effect.

Lifting the lockdown or relaxing the restrictions does not mean that the virus is weakening. What it means is that hereafter we have to lead a double life, struggling to continue with normal activities and adhering to pandemic restrictions.

Unlock 4.0 guidelines from 1 September cannot be read as lifting of the road block to the old and familiar pattern of life, like lifting of a curfew after a war and surrender of the enemy. Rather, they are crucial tests to assess what we have learnt about the pandemic, and how equipped we are to re-design our life to cope with medical emergencies. Unlock does not mean that we can run in the open as people do when heavy rains stop. Such unruly behaviour will invite re-im-

position of restrictions in no time.

Active coronavirus cases have crossed 3.5 million in India. It is not likely to abate soon. Epidemiologically, India presents a picture of a continent of many countries. This is evident from the way it has spread in different states. Multiple strategies are required.

It is almost impossible to restore complete normalcy in human life and activities in any one country in isolation in this age of globalisation; and more so in any one state or district. Wholesale action and remedies are required. Protecting pockets of areas or people does not lead to eradication of epidemics. Ideally, immunity efforts have to be global and definitely national. Vaccines should be made available to all countries.

Disruption of routine health services may cause widespread damage as bad as the pandemic. Even the essential immunisation services for children are halted in many places. Institutional deliveries that have slowly been adopted in rural India are affected by diversion of medical attendants to Covid care. Routine check-ups for non-communicable diseases are postponed, thus increasing the risk of patients. It is time to restore

these health services without loosening our grip over treatment and prevention of Covid-19.

The pandemic has stimulated a spirit of national self-reliance and has also pointed to the need for opening of supply chains and data flows for mutual benefit of nations.

The gravity of the infection intensifying global search for remedies, the importance of international cooperation in medical research is acknowledged. Indigenous systems of medicine must also be encouraged and assisted to manufacture resistance-building and preventive therapies. Covid-19 has provided opportunities to learn about our immune system and seek advice on healthy lifestyle.

It is the virus which will be winning as long as we do not have a thorough knowledge of the disease, potent medicine for cure and a vaccine for prevention. We are still in the stage of restraining the destructive capacity of the pandemic. Lockdown or Unlock - everyone has to remain conscious of the presence of the pandemic. Eternal vigilance is the price we pay for keeping ourselves healthy.

The writer is a former director ICSSR, New Delhi.

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

Sex ratio in India

Sir, India, the second most-populous country, is faced with a lesser female population ratio and the scenario might get further worse in the next decade. A severe imbalance of 6.8 million in lesser female gender births, compared to male babies, could be registered as per present projections. Significantly, a nation-wide study carried out jointly by KAUST of Saudi Arabia and Université de Paris, France, has noticed two prime reasons - cultural preference for male babies and facility of prenatal sex selection - leading to the imbalance in sex ratio here. Preference for male over female is prevalent here for ages, particularly from 1970, the imbalance in sex ratio at birth has worsened due to technological interventions like pre-natal sex determination tests. Among the states, Uttar Pradesh is likely to record the lowest female births. The researchers found that a majority of respondents in 21 states and all Union Territories preferred male child. The urge for male babies in nine north-western states is high. Each year, counting from 2017, the missing female births may be figured at 4,69,000. Though India has a strict law against sex determination tests since 1994, there has been no positive result.

Santosh Kumar Satapathy, PARALAKHEMUNDI

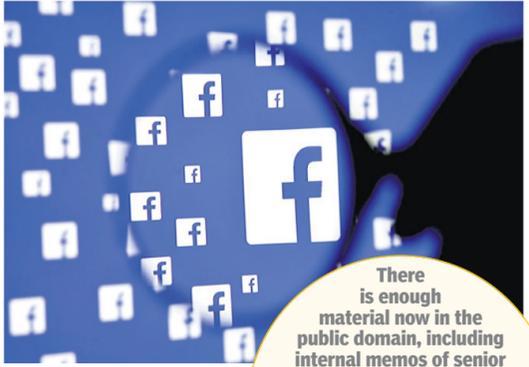
Pranab as statesman

Sir, With the passing away of Bharat Ratna Pranab Mukherjee August 31, a void has been created in the nation's polity. The five decades of glorious political career of the former president have come to an end. Hailing from a family of politicians, Pranab rose to political limelight after he won the hearts of the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. He never failed in any of his missions, be it his representations at various world forums for India's cause, or in the group of ministers (GoMs) during the UPA rules. Hailed as 'remover of obstacles' in the most critical days of the Congress, he left no stone unturned to see that the nation moved forward. During Rajiv Gandhi's tenure as PM, he was forced to quit the organisation and form a new political party, but returned to the Congress after a while. The staunch Congressman was denied what was his due, the prime minister post, and everybody knows why. Still, the generations to come will appreciate the contributions of such a veteran politician and statesman.

Sanjib Das, CUTTACK

Now, TMC accuses FB of bias towards BJP

In a letter to Facebook boss Mark Zuckerberg, the West Bengal ruling party said the company's recent blocking of pages and accounts in the state pointed to the links it had with the BJP



There is enough material now in the public domain, including internal memos of senior Facebook management, to substantiate the bias. Please do all it takes to urgently work toward maintaining the integrity of your platform in the Indian electoral process

New Delhi, Sept 2: The Trinamool Congress has accused Facebook Inc of bias toward Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), adding to the clamour of opposition voices which have called out the social media giant for its content regulation practices.

plain his company's content regulation policies. "There is enough material now in the public domain, including internal memos of senior Facebook management, to substantiate the bias," Trinamool Congress spokesman Derek O'Brien wrote in an August 31 letter to Zuckerberg.

litical storm, following a recent Wall Street Journal story that said Ankhil Das, the U.S. tech giant's Public Policy Director for South and Central Asia, had opposed the taking down of posts by a BJP politician who labelled Muslims traitors.

Facebook is in the midst of a PR crisis following a recent WSJ story that the tech giant's Public Policy Director for South and Central Asia had opposed taking down of posts by a BJP politician who labelled Muslims traitors

Congress calling for an investigation. It also pushed parliament's IT panel, headed by a Congress lawmaker, to summon Facebook. At the time Facebook responded to WSJ by saying it banned hate speech and violence-inciting content globally without any bias. It also said it conducted regular audits of its processes for fairness and accuracy.

Don't belie trust between Centre, states: Didi to PM

Kolkata, Sept 2: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi that depriving states of GST compensation is an "attempt to undermine federalism" and urged him not to belie the trust between the states and the Centre on the issue.



On behalf of Bengal and other states, I sincerely urge you not to belie the trust between the States and the Centre on matters of GST which has been hailed globally as the finest example of cooperative federalism

Attorney General KK Venugopal's opinion that it is not the responsibility of the Centre to compensate the states for Goods and Services Tax (GST) shortfall during a pandemic "appears to be an act of subterfuge", Banerjee said in the letter.

states of the GST compensation. "I am deeply anguished by the Goods and Services Tax (GST) imbroglio which tantamounts to a betrayal of the trust and moral responsibility of the Government of India towards the states, violating the very premise of federalism. This is a travesty and an abrogation of the fundamental basis on which the states gave up 70 per cent of their taxing powers, including the entire VAT regime, to usher in the GST regime," Banerjee said in the four-page letter.

losses to the states. "His words are ringing in our ears as we are losing trust on the BJP Government in the Centre, in honouring its solemn, promise of fully compensating GST losses to the states," Banerjee said.

'Gupkar Declaration' may meet same fate as Indira-Abdullah accord



Srinagar, Sept 2: Would the re-assertion on restoration of pre-August 5, 2019 status by mainstream political parties of Kashmir impede Delhi's efforts to restore democracy in J&K?

Almost all mainstream political parties of Kashmir including the NC, PDP, PC, ANP, JKPM and the CPI M met last week at former CM Farooq Abdullah's Gupkar residence in Srinagar to re-assert their commitment to 'Gupkar Declaration'

The declaration seeks unconditional restoration of Pre-August 5, 2019 status for J&K. In layman terms, the declaration wants Article 370, 35A and statehood restored back before these parties join elections in J&K.

The only mainstream political party that has not joined the Gupkar Declaration bandwagon is the Apni Party led by former minister, Syed Altaf Bukhari

There is apparently no way New Delhi can go back on restoration of Article 370 and 35A in J&K. "It is cut, dried and buried," said a top central intelligence officer who is known for his understanding of Kashmir affairs.

How firm would the supporters of Gupkar Declaration remain once it is trashed by the centre? Well, how firm did Farooq Abdullah remain when his autonomy resolution was thrown into the dustbin?

Kashmiri, Dogri, Hindi added to list of official languages in J&K

New Delhi, Sept 2: The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved a bill under which Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi, apart from the existing Urdu and English, will be the official languages in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.



Union Minister Jitendra Singh says the govt has accepted the demand of the region for inclusion of Dogri, Hindi and Kashmiri as official languages apart from the existing Urdu and English

Prakash Javadekar said the Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020 will be introduced in Parliament in the upcoming Monsoon Session. The Bill received the Cabinet nod Wednesday at a meeting presided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Union Minister Jitendra Singh said the government has accepted the long pending demand of the region for the inclusion of Dogri, Hindi and Kashmiri as official languages in J-K.

J&K Congress seeks 'white paper' on domicile certificate beneficiaries

Srinagar, Sept 2: Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Saifuddin Soz Wednesday said the people of Jammu and Kashmir wanted to know who have been the non state subject beneficiaries of domicile certificates in the union territory. He demanded a 'white paper' on the issue.

people would like to know as to who constituted the crucial remaining one per cent of the beneficiaries?" Soz asked. He said the people of J&K are entitled to know the particulars of the persons who were not permanent residents, yet they got the Domicile certificates.

The Domicile Certificates to such a big number in hot haste, the process must have involved recklessness of sorts," he said. He said the perception of the people is that the UT Administration is a stopgap arrangement and that the Centre should not have amended the Domicile Law in the absence of the public support.

Students shell out a lot to reach JEE test centres

SUSPENSION OF LOCAL TRAIN SERVICES DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAD ADDED TO THE WOES OF THE CANDIDATES

Kolkata, Sept 2: Appearing for the JEE (Mains) during the pandemic cost the parents of Ayan Roy Mahapatra ₹25,000 to cover a distance of 365 km from Malda to Kolkata.



from Midnapore town to Esplanade here. The journey on a crowded bus made him jittery about the possibility of getting infected by coronavirus. "We had to pay thrice the regular fare but the conductor still kept on picking up passengers without thinking for our safety. We can't afford to pay ₹25,000 for a car so we chose the public transport," he said.

'75 pc candidates could not write exam' KOLKATA: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that 75 per cent of the state's candidates could not take JEE Tuesday while only half of them managed to turn up in exam centres in other states due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic situation.

When contacted, his father Anup Roy Mahapatra said, "We started Sunday morning for reaching the city so that we could reach Kolkata before complete lockdown in West Bengal Monday. An AC SUV was needed as we were covering such a distance. I tried to settle for a lesser amount, but in vain."

driver was also borne by Roy Mahapatra. The car owner will not charge an extra amount for the return journey. The father and son, who stayed at a hotel here, are returning to Malda Wednesday.

the amount as there would be no overcrowding and sanitisers would be provided at frequent intervals. I stayed at a friend's place in Dum Dum and came to the exam centre Tuesday morning. Almost 60 per cent of the money, given to me by my father, has been spent," Biltu, whose father is a primary school teacher, told PTI outside the exam centre Tuesday.



India is reeling under Modi-made disasters: 1. Historic GDP reduction -23.9% 2. Highest Unemployment in 45 yrs 3. 12 Crs job loss 4. Centre not paying states their GST dues 5. Globally highest COVID-19 daily cases and deaths 6. External aggression at our borders RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

HYD TO UNVEIL DAZZLING BRIDGE

Hyderabad is all set to add another iconic structure as the city's first cable-stayed bridge is ready to be unveiled



of the day quote

'Mission Karmayogi', a major bureaucratic reform exercise approved by the Union Cabinet, will radically improve the government's human resource management practices



We will raise the issue (Bangalore violence) in the Assembly. Whoever is responsible should be punished if found guilty



Our corona warrior Shri Rajesh Bhardwaj Ji, who was posted as a pharmacist in Delhi government, had recently passed away due to coronavirus. I met his family and offered them an assistance of Rs 1 crore. I hope that the family will get some help with this amount



Oppn cries foul over no question hour move

EXCEPT FOR THE FIRST DAY, THE RAJYA SABHA WILL SIT IN THE MORNING SHIFT AND THE LOK SABHA WILL SIT IN THE EVENING, ACCORDING TO THE NOTIFICATIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 2: There will be no Question Hour, a curtailed Zero Hour and no private members' bills during the upcoming monsoon session of Parliament, the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha secretariats have decided, prompting opposition leaders to accuse the government of trying to "murder the democracy" in the name of the COVID-19 pandemic and of reducing "Parliament to a notice board".

In separate notifications, the two secretariats also said there will be no breaks as well during the session to be held from September 14 to October 1, and both Houses will function on Saturdays and Sundays as well. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the session will be held in two shifts - 9 AM to 1 PM and 3 PM to 7 PM.

Except for the first day, the Rajya



Sabha will sit in the morning shift and the Lok Sabha will sit in the evening, according to the notifications. "There will be no Question Hour during the Session. In view of the request of the government owing to the prevailing extraordinary situation due to COVID-19, the Speaker has directed that no day be fixed for the transaction of Private Members' Business during the Session," the Lok Sabha Secretariat said in a notification. A similar notification was issued by

the Rajya Sabha Secretariat as well. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said that the government is not running away from any debate and that all opposition parties were told beforehand about the move with most of them agreeing to it. The government is ready for unstarred questions and it has requested presiding officers of both the Houses to facilitate the same, he said. Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and the

party's deputy leader in Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma, however, said that the proposal to exclude Question hour during this session is arbitrary and undemocratic as it is the members' right to ask questions to the government on key issues.

Trinamool Congress MP and Floor Leader in Rajya Sabha Derek O'Brien said opposition MPs will lose the right to question the government and alleged that the pandemic was being used as an "excuse to murder democracy."

The Congress party also tweeted separately that questioning the government is the "life-blood of parliamentary democracy". CPI MP Binoy Viswam has also written to Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu, saying that suspension of Question Hour and Private Members' business is "unjust" and they must be reinstated immediately.

BORDER TENSION

India, China hold talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



New Delhi, Sept 2: Days after China's "provocative actions" in Pangong lake area in eastern Ladakh, the situation in the region remained sensitive Wednesday while army commanders from both sides held another round of talks to defuse tensions, government sources said.

The army of the two countries held Brigade Commander-level talks in Chushul with a focus on bringing down tensions in the Pangong lake area, they said, adding similar dialogue on Monday and Tuesday, each lasting over six hours, did not produce any "tangible outcome".

Sources said India has achieved tactical gains in eastern Ladakh in the last few days by occupying a number of strategically important hill tops and locations.

Monday, the Indian Army said the Chinese military carried out "provocative military movements" to "unilaterally" change the status quo on the southern bank of Pangong lake on the intervening night of August 29 and 30 but the attempt was thwarted by the Indian troops.

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava on Tuesday said the Chinese PLA was engaged in "provocative action" again on Monday when the ground commanders of the two sides were holding talks to ease the situation following China's attempt to change the status quo in the Pangong lake area two days back. "The situation in the area remained sensitive," said a source.

The two sides were earlier engaged in a confrontation on the northern bank of Pangong lake but it was for the first time such an incident occurred on its southern bank, they said. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday carried out a comprehensive review of the situation in eastern Ladakh at a high-level meeting attended by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff Gen

The army of the two countries held Brigade Commander-level talks in Chushul with a focus on bringing down tensions in the Pangong lake area

Bipin Rawat, Army Chief Gen MM Naravane and Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria.

It was decided at the nearly two-hour meeting that the Indian Army will continue to maintain its aggressive posturing in all sensitive areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) to effectively deal with any Chinese "misadventure", the sources said.

They said the Indian Army has further bolstered its presence around the Southern Bank area of Pangong lake by deploying additional troops and bringing in more weaponry including tanks and anti-tank guided missiles. A battalion of the Special Frontier Force was also deployed in the area.

The sources said the Indian Air Force (IAF) has also been told to enhance its surveillance on increasing Chinese air activities along the LAC in eastern Ladakh.

There have been reports that China has deployed J-20 long-range fighter jets and several other key assets in strategically located Hotan airbase which is around 310 kms from eastern Ladakh.

In the last three months, the IAF deployed almost all its front-line fighter jets like Sukhoi 30 MKI, Jaguar and Mirage 2000 aircraft in the key frontier air bases in eastern Ladakh and elsewhere along the LAC.

SHORT TAKES

Ayodhya temple map cleared

Ayodhya: The Ayodhya Development Authority (ADA) has unanimously passed the map for the proposed Ram temple in Ayodhya. A meeting of the ADA was held on Wednesday which passed the map. This clears the way for the construction of the temple in the holy city. According to official sources, the covered area of the temple land is around 13,000 square metres. Anil Mishra, member of the Shri Ram Janambhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, had submitted the map for approval on August 29 along with other necessary documents.

Elephant dies

Mangaluru: A 30-year-old male elephant was electrocuted in Karnataka's Mangaluru forest circle early on Tuesday as it was trying to feed itself, a forest official said. The incident occurred at Bilinele in Subramanya Range at around 4 a.m. when the jumbo was trying to uproot a tree, but this fell on the electric line, whose wires broke and fell on the animal, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Karikalani, said. The animal also suffered a burn injury on its left leg, he said, terming the death as unnatural due to electric shock.

Woman molested

Gurugram: A 25-year-old woman working at a city-based five-star hotel has allegedly been molested and manhandled by a guest. An FIR has been registered in connection with the incident, which occurred at around 8.30 p.m. on Monday, under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at the Sector-50 police station.

Five killed

Hyderabad: Five fans of popular Telugu actor Pawan Kalyan, died in a road accident while returning home after celebrating his birthday in Telangana's Warangal district in the early hours of Wednesday. The car, in which they were travelling, collided head on with a sand laden truck at Pasaragonda Crossroad in Damera mandal, police said. This was the second tragedy to hit Pawan Kalyan's fans celebrating his birthday, in less than six hours. Three youth were electrocuted to death and three others were injured when they came in contact with a live wire while erecting a banner in Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district on Tuesday night. The victims were identified as Rajender (31), Somasekhar (29) and Arunachalam (20).

Kafeel Khan freed from jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow/Mathura/Aligarh, Sept 2: The Uttar Pradesh government was indulging in 'Baal Hatth' or childlike-stubbornness instead of observing 'Raj Dharma' and could frame him in another case, Dr Kafeel Khan said after being released from Mathura jail late on Tuesday night.

He was in jail since January after he delivered an allegedly provocative speech at the Aligarh Muslim University during the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests in December last year.

Earlier on Tuesday, the Allahabad High Court quashed his detention under the stringent National Security Act and ordered the Uttar Pradesh government to release him "forthwith", saying his speech at the AMU didn't promote hatred or violence and called for national integrity.

MATTER OF LIVELIHOOD



A vendor looks for customers during Unlock 4.0 in New Delhi, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

Nod to 'Mission Karmayogi'

The core guiding principles of the competency-driven programme will be to support a transition from "rules based to roles based" HR management to prepare the Indian civil servant for the future

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 2: The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved 'Mission Karmayogi', dubbed as the biggest bureaucratic reform initiative, aimed at capacity building of government employees to make them more "creative, proactive, professional and technology-enabled".

The core guiding principles of the competency-driven programme will be to support a transition from "rules based to roles based" HR management to prepare the Indian civil servant for the future, according to a government statement.

BUREAUCRATIC REFORM INITIATIVE

"This is the biggest human resource development programme in the government." Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said during a press briefing after the cabinet meeting. To cover around 46 lakh central employees, a sum of Rs 510.86 crore will be spent over five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25 under Mission Karmayogi or the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB), according to the statement.

A council, comprising select union ministers, chief ministers, eminent public HR practitioners among others and headed by the prime minister, will serve as the apex body for providing strategic direction, while a Capacity Building Commission is also proposed to be set up.

The programme will help in overcoming existing impediments like "lack of lifelong & continuous learning environment", "evolution of silos at department level preventing shared understanding of India's development aspirations" and "diverse and fragmented training landscape" among others.

"Today the Union Cabinet under Prime Minister Narendra Modi decided to bring this very big, post-recruitment reform, where an opportunity will be given to officers and employees to improve their performance," Javadekar said. Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh, who was also present at the briefing, said the scheme will help end subjective evaluation, and ensure scientifically devised, objective and real-time assessment of employees.

Mission Karmayogi is an endeavour "to reincarnate a government servant into an ideal karmayogi to serve the nation by enabling him to be creative, to be constructive, to be pro-active and technically empowered", Singh told reporters.

"The endeavour is also to end the culture of working in silos and to overcome the multiplicity of training curriculum, which we have because of the institutions spread all over the country, with the introduction of a common platform for the uniform realisation of nation's vision and our shared aspiration and our shared future goals," he said.

Puja at UP police station to get rid of Bikru's evil spirits

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kanpur, Sept 2: Policemen at a police station in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur district organised a "havan" to put a check on the spiralling crime graph and "ward off" evil spirits, following the Bikru ambush that claimed the lives of eight personnel and injured seven others on July 3.

The havan was held Tuesday. The entire staff posted at the station said that a local priest had advised them to regularly perform puja to free it of evil spirits.

"Many personnel had complained of feeling uneasy during duty hours, so we thought that a havan may improve the atmosphere. We have arrested all the accused in the Bikru massacre and we want to put the past behind us," a police official said.

Almost all the duty staff, besides some local villagers, participated in the havan. A priest performed the "puja" and chanted mantras to convince the staff that the police station has now been cleared of evil influences.

While the havan was being held, none of the policemen attended to the complainants who waited for the puja to be over. Officiating in-charge of the Chaubeypur station, D. Chaudhary, told reporters: "The havan was performed for the purity of the police station."

Eight policemen, including circle officer Devendra Mishra, were ambushed in the Bikru village in the Chaubeypur police area in Kanpur when they had gone to arrest gangster Vikas Dubey who opened fire on them.

Vikas Dubey was killed in an encounter on July 10 while five of his accomplices were also killed in police encounters. The remaining have either been arrested or have surrendered.

Go digital: Govt departments told

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 2: Amid ever-increasing cases of coronavirus in the country and the economy going through an unprecedented recession, the Centre has come up with an interesting directive as it has told all ministries and departments to halt the printing of calendars, diaries, schedulers and other printed materials and asked them to publish them online in digital format.

An official statement said on Wednesday that all public sector units and state-run banks also have been directed to go digital in terms of these regularly printed materials.

The Finance Ministry cited global best practices and the adoption of digital technologies to increase productivity to back the move.

"Given the prevailing circumstances in which the world is increasingly moving towards adopting digital force-multipliers for productivity, the Government of India has decided to follow this best practice," it said in a statement.

NOTES OF DESPAIR

Wedding band owners, musicians on verge of penury

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 2: The music has gone out of their lives, quite literally, and the band of men who made their living drumming up tunes for parties, wedding processions and sometimes funerals too are on the verge of penury, scrambling for every rupee they can manage.

Almost six months into the pandemic, those in the business of weddings bands have gone bust. With celebrations restricted to just a few people in the era of social distancing and no bookings, some like Khurshid Siddiqui are selling old clothes and others like Mohammad Ali are selling off the accoutrements

of the trade - the buggy, lights and even the mare.

Drummer Khurshid Siddiqui who ran the 'band business' from his ancestral shop in east Delhi's Laxmi Nagar Market said there hasn't been a single booking in months, not from weddings, celebrations such as births and not even the odd funeral of an old person they sometimes played for.

The 40-year-old said he has put his shop on rent for Rs 10,000 and is reduced to selling old clothes on the roadside. "All our old bookings were cancelled due to which even the little money that was left with us had to be returned," Siddiqui said.



"I have completely stopped the work that had carried on for generations in my family. I have sent some of the items to my village,

sold some and am selling clothes," he added. Mohammed Ali, who owned the 'Great Band' close by, spent a hefty Rs 4.5 lakh in January to buy a buggy, lights and a mare, all necessary for a big fat Indian wedding that is incomplete without 'band, bajaa and baraa'.

The mare, he said, cost Rs 2.5 lakh and he is now ready to sell it for just Rs 50,000 or rent it out for Rs 500 a day. "The buggy is getting damaged in the rain. There is trouble from all sides. The coronavirus has devastated us. And the government is also ignoring us," the 40-year-old said.

The signs of the desperate times are visible in the ribs jutting out of

the mare standing in a corner. Part of the buggy lies on a garbage laden road with children playing inside it. Some kilometres away near the Loni border, trumpet player Navi Jaan echoes the despair.

The 58-year-old said he had been working with a band but since 1985 but the owner shut shop and he has been jobless since. "I have been sitting without any work for the last five months. I called the owner on Eid for money but he refused, citing the lockdown. There are four people in my family who are dependent on me," Jaan said. Of his 35 band mates, some are selling vegetables and some are driving rickshaws, he said.



Will the BJP government bother to explain why the incidents of persecution of Dalits are not stopping in Uttar Pradesh?
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

OVER 23,000 IDOLS IMMERSED

Over 23,000 idols were immersed in Maharashtra's Thane city during the Ganesh Chaturthi festival, which was celebrated in a subdued manner in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, a civic official said Wednesday



of the day quote

Presently, the problem with this government is that the entire government is occupied with transfers only. Conducting transfers has become the only business of this government now



DEVENDRA FADNIS | FORMER MAHARASHTRA CM

All justice-lovers have welcomed the High Court's order for release of Dr Kafel Khan from detention. We hope Azam Khan, framed in false cases, will also get justice. Injustice and atrocities of those in power do not last long



AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

Swami Sree Narayana Guru's relentless effort and contribution towards the empowerment and education of the downtrodden can never be forgotten



AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

4 LeT militant associates held

Srinagar: Four associates of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group were arrested by the security forces Wednesday in Jammu and Kashmir's Badgam district, police said. "During a cordon and search operation troops of the 53 Rashtriya Rifles and police arrested 4 LeT militant associates in Pethkoot village of Beerwah tehsil. Incriminating material has been recovered from them. "The four men were identified as Shakil Ahmad Wani and Showkat Ahmad, both residents of Pethkoot village, and Aqib Maqbool Khan and Ajaz Ahmad Dar of Cherwani Char-e-Sharief. The group was involved in providing shelter and logistical support to active LeT militants in the area.

Missing girl found dead

Mathura: A nine-year-old girl, who was reported missing, was found dead in a field in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura district, officials said, adding the post-mortem examination confirmed that she was raped before being murdered. The victim had gone missing on Monday evening. Her body was found outside Dehrua village in Mathura on Tuesday. There have been no arrests so far. Mathura SSP Guarav Grover said the post-mortem report found blood clots on the victim's private parts, which were injured.

Property dealer shot dead

Lucknow: A property dealer was shot dead in broad daylight Wednesday near the Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences in the state capital. The property dealer, Durgesh Yadav, was taken to the Trauma Centre where the doctors declared him brought dead. Preliminary investigations revealed that a monetary dispute was the reason behind the murder. Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) east, Charu Nigam, told reporters that one of the accused, Manish Yadav, had been arrested and a search had been launched for the other accused Palak Thakur.

Army officer killed

Jammu: A junior commissioned army officer (JCO) was killed Wednesday in a ceasefire violation by Pakistan on the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district. The JCO deployed on a forward post in Tarkundi sector was injured in Pakistan firing and later succumbed, police sources said.

SUSHANT DEATH CASE

NCB ARRESTS 'DRUG' DEALER

The arrested man has been identified by the federal anti-narcotics agency as Zaid Vilatra



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 2: The Narcotics Control Bureau has arrested an alleged contraband dealer and detained another in connection with the drugs trafficking case linked to the case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death, officials said Wednesday.

The arrested man has been identified by the federal anti-narcotics agency as Zaid Vilatra. Indian currency worth ₹9,55,750 and foreign currency (USD 2,081, 180 British Pounds, 15 dirhams), which the NCB claimed are "proceeds of drug peddling", have been recovered from him.

"Zaid disclosed that he runs an eatery in Bandra which was not giving any pecuniary gains since lockdown. He also disclosed that he is into drug peddling especially bud, through which he used to earn a substantial amount of money," the NCB said.

According to the NCB, the best quality of bud is sold for about

₹5,000 per gram. Zaid came under the scanner after the agency arrested two people - Abbas Lakhani and Karan Arora - in another narcotics case on August 27-28 in Mumbai and recovered a bud consignment from them.

Lakhani had "linkages" with Zaid, the NCB claimed. The agency has also detained a Bandra resident identified as Basit Parihar after interrogating Zaid. Parihar is "learnt to have linkages" with the narcotics case registered against Rajput's live-in partner Rhea Chakraborty, 28, and others.

Rhea is the main accused in the death case of the 34-year-old actor that is being probed by the NCB, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on money laundering charges and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The role of Rhea's brother Showik and his purported links with the people nabbed by the NCB are under the scanner of the agency and he is expected to be summoned for questioning soon, the officials said. Some more drug peddlers based in Maharashtra, Delhi and Goa are also under the agency's scanner, they said.

A special NCB team from Delhi, headed by deputy director (operations) K P S Malhotra, is camping in the western metropolis to take forward the probe. The team also includes agency officers from Mumbai and has been constituted by NCB Director General Rakesh Asthana.

The agency filed a case under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act after the ED shared with it a report following the cloning of two mobile phones of Rhea.



A fisherman casts his net in New Delhi, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

Indian Consulate in Af faces threat

The security establishments of Afghanistan and India have been alerted that Lashkar-e-Taiba may carry out vehicle-borne attacks on the Indian Consulate in Jalalabad

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 2: Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency or the ISI could be planning attacks on Indian establishments in Afghanistan while India is engaged with China at other frontiers, intelligence agencies have flagged.

The security establishments of Afghanistan and India have been alerted that Pakistan-sponsored terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) may carry out vehicle-borne attacks on the Indian Consulate in Jalalabad and use improvised explosive devices.

"Four suicide attackers from the LeT have been sent to Kunar province. They are planning a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack on the Indian consulate in Jalalabad," said the Indian intelligence agency.

A senior government officer stated there have been a number of threats against Indian establishments in Afghanistan. One of its main reasons being Pakistan remaining insecure about Indian in-



fluence in Afghanistan. "So they may use proxies/sponsor terrorists groups to target Indian personnel and infrastructure," the officer said.

Pakistan has also engaged the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) to execute high visibility and high impact attacks targeting ethnic minorities in Kabul. They have started targeting Hindu and Sikh communities in Afghanistan. Once the strength of these communities were in tens of thousands with well-established businesses and high-ranking positions in the government. Now, most of them have fled to India, Europe, or North America after decades of war and persecution.

Further, Pakistan is alluring Indian Muslims to seek jihad. It has also turned Afghanistan into a breeding ground for such Indians. Recently, the UN Security Council stated that the Indian ISIS affiliate - Hind Wilayah - that was announced on May 10, 2019, already has around 180 to 200 members present in Kerala and Karnataka.

The current security situation in Afghanistan remains volatile with both the Taliban and the ISKP stepping up attacks across the country. In its bid to enhance territorial power, the Taliban seized control of Yumgan district in the north-eastern province of Badakhshan on March 28 and 29 while continuing with its attacks targeting the Afghan Security Forces. The Taliban have long controlled the Yumgan and Jurm districts of Badakhshan Province until the government forces retook them late in 2019.

The Afghan Security Forces this year inflicted heavy casualties on the militant group and retook control of Khamab district of Jawzjan province on April 18.

GOA CM TESTS COVID POSITIVE



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, Sept 2: Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said Wednesday that he has tested positive for the novel coronavirus and was in home isolation.

"I wish to inform all that I have been detected Covid-19 positive. I am asymptomatic and hence have opted for home isolation," Sawant said in a Facebook post. "I shall continue to discharge my duties working from home. Those who have come in my close contact are advised to take the necessary precautions," he added.

In a statement, the Chief Minister's Office said that all officials who had come in close contact with Sawant had opted for home isolation and would work from home.

"People of Goa are hereby informed that all regular operations of the CMO shall continue unhindered. It may be noted that all appointments and meetings scheduled stand suspended until further notice," a statement issued by the CMO said.

Four other MLAs, namely former Chief Ministers Ravi Naik and Churchill Alemao, Deputy Chief Minister Sudin Dhavalikar and BJP MLA Nilkanth Halarankar have also tested positive for Covid-19. While Naik, Alemao and Dhavalikar are currently admitted to private hospitals, Halarankar is in home quarantine. Another BJP MLA Clafasio Dias, who had tested positive for Covid-19 last month has recovered.

Union Minister of State for Defence and AYUSH Shripad Naik, a Lok Sabha MP from North Goa parliamentary constituency, is also undergoing treatment at a private hospital for Covid-19.

On Tuesday, Goa witnessed a record 588 positive Covid-19 cases in one day. Goa has so far reported a total of 18,006 coronavirus cases, with 194 deaths.

Manjhi back in NDA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Sept 2: Former Bihar chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi-led HAM(S) will join the NDA ahead of the Bihar elections, a party spokesperson said Wednesday.

The official announcement in this regard will be made by Manjhi Thursday, said spokesperson Danish Rizwan. The Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) will not merge with any party, rather it will be a part of the NDA in the Bihar elections that is due in October-November, he asserted.

HAM(S) national president Jitan Ram Manjhi will formally announce the party becoming a part of the NDA in Bihar on September 3, Rizwan said. The number of seats the party will get to contest in the upcoming elections was never an issue for it as the HAM(S) will join the NDA for the states development, he said.

The party is firmly standing with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for their development works, he added. Manjhi had August 20 severed ties with the Grand Alliance after spending two-and-a-half years in the opposition coalition, comprising of RJD, Congress, RLSP and Bollywood set designer-turned-politician Mukesh Sahnii's Vikashil Insaan Party (VIP).

The HAM(S) chief had also postponed a meeting scheduled on Wednesday with some non-NDA and non-Grand Alliance parties, including the Jan Adhikar Party of former MP Pappu Yadav, to discuss the strategy for the elections. Manjhi met the chief minister last Thursday and believed to have held talks on seat sharing.

The HAM(S) wants to contest 15-20 seats, mostly in the Magadh



region to which Manjhi belongs. But the JD(U) is willing to leave for it 10-12 seats, according to reports. Manjhi is the lone member of his party in the assembly. But, his induction would help the NDA's outreach to Dalits, particularly other than Paswans which is the support base of the LJP.

Dalits in Bihar are over 16 per cent of the electorate and about 40 seats in the 243-member house are reserved for them.

Manjhi had quit the JD(U) in 2015 after being forced to step down as the chief minister to make way for the return of Kumar.

LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT

Pune scientists find remote galaxy

AGENCIES

Pune/New Delhi, Sept 2: In a landmark achievement in Space missions, a team of scientists from Pune's Inter-University Centre for Astronomy & Astrophysics (IUCAA) have discovered one of the farthest galaxies in the universe, officials said here.

The galaxy, called AUDFS01 was discovered by a team of astronomers led by IUCAA's Kanak Saha, announced Union Minister of State Department of Space Jitendra Singh. The galaxy was discovered by India's first Multi-Wavelength Space Observatory 'AstroSat', which detected extreme-UV light from a galaxy located at an astronomical distance of 9.30 billion light-years from Earth.

This is the second achievement for Maharashtra in the past fortnight and comes after two stu-



dents of IIT-Bombay discovered a SUV-sized asteroid that zoomed past just 2,950 km above Earth's surface on August 16. The students are Kunal Deshmukh from Pune and Kritti Sharma from Panchkula, Haryana.

The importance and uniqueness of this original discovery can be made out from the fact that it has been reported in the leading international journal "Nature Astronomy" published from Britain.

NCRB DATA

Maha tops suicide chart, TN next

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 2: A total of 1,39,123 suicides were reported in the country in 2019, showing an increase of 3.4 per cent in comparison to 2018, and the rate of suicide has increased by 0.2 per cent during 2019 over 2018, NCRB data revealed.

According to NCRB, majority of the suicides were reported in Maharashtra (18,916), followed by Tamil Nadu (13,493), West Bengal (12,665), Madhya Pradesh (12,457) and Karnataka (11,288) accounting for 13.6 per cent, 9.7 per cent, 9.1 per cent, 9.0 per cent and 8.1 per cent of total suicides, respectively.

These five states together accounted for 49.5 per cent of the total suicides reported in the country. The remaining 50.5 per cent suicides were reported from the remaining 24 states and seven UTs.



Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state with 16.9 per cent of the country's population, has reported comparatively lower percentage share of suicidal deaths, accounting for 3.9 per cent of the total suicides reported in the country.

Delhi, which is the most-populous UT, has reported the highest number of suicides (2,526) among UTs, followed by Puducherry (493). The

remaining UTs together accounted for 2.2 per cent of the total suicides in the country. A total of 22,390 suicides were reported from the 53 mega cities of the country in 2019.

The states and UTs which have reported significant percentage increase in suicides in 2019 over 2018 were Bihar (44.7 per cent), Punjab (37.5 per cent), Daman & Diu (31.4 per cent), Jharkhand

(25.0 per cent), Uttarakhand (22.6 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh (21.5 per cent), while the highest percentage decrease was reported in Lakshadweep (100 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (21.1 per cent), Chandigarh (18.1 per cent), Arunachal Pradesh (15.2 per cent) and Jammu & Kashmir (13.9 per cent).

A deeper study into the causes of suicides revealed that family problems and illness were the major causes of suicide, which accounted for 32.4 per cent and 17.1 per cent of total suicides, respectively, in 2019. Drug addiction (5.6 per cent), marriage related issues (5.5 per cent), love affairs (4.5 per cent), bankruptcy or indebtedness (4.2 per cent), failure in examination and unemployment (2 per cent each), professional/career problem (1.2 per cent) and property dispute (1.1 per cent) were other causes of suicide.

'LOVE JIHAD' CASE

NIA books Zakir Naik

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Chennai, Sept 2: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has named Islamic preacher Zakir Naik and two hardline preachers of Pakistan origin as accused in an FIR pertaining to a high-profile 'love jihad' case.

The high-profile case involves the daughter of a Chennai-based businessman and the son of a top Bangladesh politician, belonging to former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

The NIA is probing the Indian businessman's daughter and Bangladesh politician son's marriage in London.

Zakir Naik, who is wanted by Indian enforcement agencies, and the hardline preachers of Pakistani-origin based in the US have been named as accused in the case.

Chennai Central Crime Branch in May, alleging his daughter who was studying in London was radicalised and was forced to convert to Islam.

He had also alleged that his daughter was abducted from London and taken to Bangladesh by some Bangladeshis.

"The matter involved investigation in foreign countries. And hence the case was transferred to National Investigation Agency (NIA)," Chennai Police Commissioner Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal said. He said it is not possible to share further details on the case.

The persons named in the NIA's FIR are Zakir Naik, as well as Yasir Qadhi and Nauman Ali Khan, both US-based Islamic preachers. Qadhi had put a video of Naik where he was seen making sensational claims on safe passage from India when he was being pursued by Indian enforcement agencies.

international



Singapore has done well in handling the coronavirus pandemic
LEE HSIEEN LOONG | SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER

MALALA TO START BOOK CLUB IN OCT

Pakistani education activist and Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai is set to begin a book club, which will comprise underrated titles by marginalised voices, a media report said Wednesday



of the day quote

Rioting is not protesting. Looting is not protesting. Setting fires is not protesting. None of this is protesting. It's lawlessness, plain and simple

JOE BIDEN | DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE

In such a bad time Pranab Mukherjee always enquired about my family and stood beside us in any of our necessity

SHEIKH HASINA | PRIME MINISTER OF BANGLADESH

The current pandemic has highlighted our interdependence. We are all linked to each other, for better or for worse

POPE FRANCIS

'CHINA WORKING TO DOUBLE NUCLEAR WARHEADS'

AGENCIES

Washington, Sept 2: China is seeking to "at least double" the number of its nuclear warheads in the next decade from the "low-200s" now, according to a Pentagon report.

This is the first time the US military has disclosed China's nuclear warhead count, Fox News reported. The report detailing China's growing military capabilities comes amid mounting tensions between the Washington and Beijing over a range of issues, including Chinese military activities in the South China Sea, China's new national security law for Hong Kong, the origin of the coronavirus.

The ruling Communist Party of China has not defined what it means by its ambition to have a "world-class" military by the end of 2049, according to the Pentagon report released Tuesday. "Within the context of China's national strategy, however, it is likely that



China is seeking to set up more robust logistics facilities in about a dozen countries, including three in India's neighbourhood, to allow the PLA to project and sustain military power at greater distances, according to a Pentagon report

The entire world is beginning to unite against China's unfair practices and countries like India, Australia, Japan and South Korea are going to partner with the US to push back Beijing on every front, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said

China will seek to develop a military by mid-century that is equal to—or in some cases superior to—the US military, or that of any other great power that China views

as a threat to its sovereignty, security, and development interests," the report said. It suggests that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has made major strides in areas

such as ship building, the development of ballistic and cruise missiles as well as integrated air defence systems.

"Over the next decade, China's nuclear warhead stockpile—currently estimated to be in the low-200s—is projected to at least double in size as China expands and modernises its nuclear forces," according to the report. The number of warheads on Chinese land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles that are "capable of threatening the United States is expected to grow to roughly 200 in the next five years."

"China's nuclear forces will significantly evolve over the next decade as it modernises, diversifies, and increases the number of its land-, sea-, and air-based nuclear delivery platforms," the report said. The Pentagon report said that "China is pursuing a 'nuclear triad' with the development of a nuclear capable air-launched ballistic missile

and improving its ground and sea-based nuclear capabilities." The report also says that "China has already achieved parity with—or even exceeded—the United States in several military modernisation areas," including shipbuilding, land-based conventional ballistic and cruise missiles and integrated air defence systems.

It also notes that China has the "largest navy in the world," with some 350 ships and submarines, "including over 130 major surface combatants. In comparison, the US Navy's battle force is approximately 293 ships as of early 2020." China "has more than 1,250 ground-launched ballistic missiles (GLBMs) and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometers," the report said.

In 2019, China "launched more ballistic missiles for testing and training than the rest of the world combined."

Charlie Hebdo terror attack suspects go on trial

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Sept 2: Thirteen men and a woman went on trial Wednesday over the 2015 attacks against the Charlie Hebdo satirical newspaper and a kosher supermarket in Paris that marked the beginning of a wave of violence by the Islamic State group in Europe.



Seventeen people and all three gunmen died during the three days of attacks in January 2015. Later that year, a separate network of French and Belgian fighters for Islamic State struck Paris again, this time killing 130 people in attacks at the Bataclan concert hall, the national stadium, and in bars and restaurants.

Those on trial in France's terrorism court are accused of buying weapons, cars, and helping with logistics.

Most say they thought they were helping plan an ordinary crime. Three, including the only woman accused, are being tried in absentia after leaving to join Islamic State.

"The trial will establish and confirm that the two attacks were coordinated; one was an attack on freedom of expression and the other was against Jews because they were Jews," Francois Hollande, who was then France's president, told RTL radio. The attacks from January 7-9, 2015, started during an editorial meeting at Charlie Hebdo, whose offices had been unmarked and guarded by police since the publication of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad years before. Brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi, gunned down 12 people before carjacking a vehicle and fleeing. They claimed the attacks in the name of al-Qaida.

SHORT TAKES

Koreas ready for typhoon

Tokyo: An offshore typhoon brought torrents of rain to southern Japan Wednesday as it headed to the Korean Peninsula, while another storm in the Pacific grew stronger. Typhoon Maysak was west of Japan, maintaining sustained winds of 162 kilometers per hour with higher gusts, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. Japan's main southern island of Kyushu was warned of heavy rainfall, fierce winds and possible mudslides.

Afghan airstrikes kill 37 militants

Kabul: At least 37 militants were killed in airstrikes that targeted Taliban gatherings in Afghanistan's Faryab province Wednesday, an army spokesman said. "Acting on a tip-off, the fighter planes struck the gatherings in the restive Qaysar and Khawja Sabzposh districts early Wednesday morning, killing 37 including notorious commanders Mullah Sadiq, Mullah Basir and Faizullah on the spot," the spokesman told Xinhua.

PIA sacks 74 more employees

Islamabad: Pakistan International Airlines has sacked 74 more employees due to fake degrees, poor performance, drug smuggling and theft of government record, it was reported Wednesday.

Careless Pelosi

Washington: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has been pictured without a face mask at a hair salon in San Francisco, breaking the city's Covid-19 prevention rules, the media reported Wednesday. Footage obtained by Fox News showed the veteran Democrat, who has often slammed President Donald Trump for not wearing a mask, inside the salon's premises Monday, the BBC reported. Pelosi was seen walking with a face mask around her neck, rather than over her mouth.

Macron in Baghdad

Paris: French President Emmanuel Macron Wednesday arrived in Baghdad on his first official visit to the Iraqi capital for talks with the country's top leaders over bilateral relations. Macron is expected to meet his Iraqi counterpart Barham Salih and Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi as well as other top officials during his one-day visit, reports Xinhua news agency.

Black holes merge into never before seen size

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Sept 2: Black holes are getting stranger — even to astronomers. They've now detected the signal from a long ago violent collision of two black holes that created a new one of a size that had never been seen before.

"It's the biggest bang since the Big Bang observed by humanity," said Caltech physicist Alan Weinstein, who was part of the discovery team. Black holes are compact regions of space so densely packed that not even light can escape. Until now, astronomers only had observed them in two general sizes. There are "small" ones called stellar black holes that are formed when a star collapses and are about the size of small cities. And there are supermassive black holes that are

millions, maybe billions, of times more massive than our sun and around which entire galaxies revolve. According to astronomers' calculations, anything in between didn't quite make sense, because stars that grew too big before collapse would essentially consume themselves, leaving no black holes.

Star collapses couldn't create stellar black holes much bigger than 70 times the mass of our sun, scientists thought, according to physicist Nelson Christensen, research director of the French National Centre for Scientific Research. Then in May 2019 two detectors picked up a signal that turned out to be the energy from two stellar black holes — each large for a stellar black hole — crashing into each other. One was 66 times the mass of our Sun and the other a husky 85 times the mass of the Sun.

All countries can fly over Saudi skies

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, Sept 2: Saudi Arabia announced Wednesday that flights to and from the United Arab Emirates "from all countries" will now be able to use its airspace — a statement apparently allowing flyovers by Israel following a deal to normalise UAE-Israel relations.

The vaguely worded statement avoided naming Israel directly. However, the announcement came just days after the kingdom allowed the first direct Israeli commercial passenger flight to use its airspace to reach the UAE. Any direct flight between the two nations would need to use Saudi airspace to be commercially viable.

The statement makes no mention of the kingdom's rival, Iran, nor Qatar, which Saudi Arabia is currently boycotting. Flights to and from those countries to the Emirates would, in theory, not need to use the kingdom's airspace. The Saudi Press Agency said the move comes in response to a "request by the UAE" for flights to and from the



country. Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan wrote on Twitter that the kingdom's "firm and established position toward the Palestinian cause will not change."

However, even he did not directly name Israel in his tweet. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised the announcement in an online video, signaling it directly involved his country. "For years, I have been working to open the skies between Israel and the East," he said. "Now there is another tremendous breakthrough — Israeli planes and those from all countries will be able to fly di-

rectly from Israel to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, and back. Flights will be cheaper and shorter, and it will lead to robust tourism and develop our economy." Earlier this week, Jared Kushner, the US president's son-in-law and senior adviser, flew with a high-level Israeli delegation to the UAE on the first direct commercial passenger flight between the two countries, a Star of David emblazoned on the jet's tail. The flight traversed Saudi airspace, signaling at least acquiescence for a breakthrough US-brokered deal by the United Arab Emirates to normalise relations with Israel.

JAPAN PM RACE

Suga launches bid to become next PM

A LONGTIME AIDE TO OUTGOING PM SHINZO ABE, SUGA IS HEAVILY FAVOURED TO WIN THE RULING PARTY'S LEADERSHIP RACE

AGENCIES

Tokyo, Sept 2: Yoshihide Suga, Japan's chief cabinet secretary, has announced he will join the race to succeed Prime Minister Shinzo Abe as head of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) — and, by default, the country's next head of government.

A longtime aide to outgoing Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Suga said he decided to stand for party leader to avoid a political vacuum during the coronavirus pandemic. Abe announced his decision to resign last



week, citing poor health. The LDP's majority in the lower house of parliament ensures the party's next leader will succeed him as Prime Minister. Although he had remained silent about his plans up until Wednesday's announcement, Suga appeared to have clinched the race earlier this week. When media reported that some of the party's most powerful factions would back him,

and after the LDP opted to have a slimmed-down leadership race. By choosing not to poll all of its members for the race, the LDP has concentrated the vote in the hands of party heavyweights, who favour Suga over rival Shigeru Ishiba, a former defence minister more popular with the public and grassroots party members.

"In this time of national crisis, we cannot permit a political vacuum," Suga told a briefing. "I decided to run after giving very deep thought to what I can do, as a politician and as a member of Abe's administration, to bring back as soon as possible the day when people can live without fear." He said that as leader he would continue Abe's aggressive fiscal and monetary stimulus policies and singled out hard-hit rural areas. Suga's rise from a city councillor in Yokohama is notable in a country where top political office is often the preserve of powerful families. Abe, for instance, is the grandson of a premier and the son of a foreign minister.

Nepal 'closely' monitoring Indian Army activities at Lipulekh

Lipulekh is the tri-junction between India, Nepal and China situated atop the Kalapani Valley in Uttarakhand

Last week, the KP Sharma Oli government's Ministry of Home Affairs issued the directions to the Nepalese Armed Police Force (NAPF) to start the monitoring at the tri-junction



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kathmandu/New Delhi, Sept 2: Nepal government has directed its forces to "closely monitor" Indian Army's activities at Lipulekh area amid escalating Indo-China border tension.

The 44 battalion of NAPF was deployed in Lipulekh. It has requested for long range patrols in the forward areas fearing possibilities of escalation between India and China.

China too, has increased its troop build-up at Lipulekh. There 150 Light Combined Arms Brigade is deployed at the tri-junction. The brigade was

moved in last month. They have also reinforced troops in Pala, around 10 km from the border.

In July, around 1,000 troops were deployed near Pala and a permanent post was built there by China. "A fortnight back, 2,000 more additional troops were deployed at the post," sources said.

It was India's road construction to Lipulekh area at 17,000 feet that had sparked a diplomatic row between India and Nepal with Kathmandu claiming the area as its own. The road was aimed at shortening the travel time for Kailash Mansarovar pilgrims.

Things so escalated that Nepal brought out a new political map showing the contested area as its own. India and China, on the other hand, have been locked in a standoff since May at multiple points along the border. China had changed the status quo on the Line of Actual Control at various places, moving inside Indian territories. India has objected to it and is taking up the matter with China at all levels.

Last week itself India thwarted China's provocative military movements to change the status quo at Pangong Tso in Eastern Ladakh. This hap-

pened even when China and India were already engaged in diplomatic and military talks to resolve the disputed border issues with several skirmishes reported between the Asian giants.

In a statement the Indian Army said that on the night of August 29 and August 30, 2020, People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops violated the previous consensus arrived at during military and diplomatic engagements during the ongoing standoff in Eastern Ladakh and carried out provocative military movements to change the status quo.



Sri Lankan youth play volleyball in the evening as rain clouds gather above them, in Colombo, Sri Lanka REUTERS



Karnataka is the favoured choice for investors and is home to 400 of the Fortune 500 companies in the world. The state is currently ranked second in terms of FDI investments for the period ending March 2020
BS YEDIYURAPPA | CM, KARNATAKA

GOVT APPROVES BILATERAL PACT

The Centre has approved for signing a pact between India and Japan aimed at increasing India's exports of textile and apparel to the Japanese market, and to boost co-operation in the textiles sector. The MoU, when signed, will help identify areas for optimising the benefit of the CEPA signed between the 2 nations earlier



of the day quote

While COVID-19 management through hygiene and care is pivotal to controlling the spread of the pandemic, it is equally important that people with ailments continue their testing and therapy, if possible using tele and digital interventions

SHRAVAN SUBRAMANYAM | MD, ROCHE DIAGNOSTICS (INDIA)

While many gyms ran neck-deep into rents and pending salaries, we had no option but to evolve as per market dynamics. We already had a massive network of fitness trainers and a platform. All we did was connect these trainers to people looking for them

SYED IMRAN | FOUNDER, FITSAPP

The pandemic is changing the way consumers shop for essential products with an increased affinity for online shopping. For the past 3 months, we have deepened our understanding of the needs and challenges faced by consumers and offered innovative solutions to address them

ANGELO GEORGE | CEO, BISLERI INTERNATIONAL

SHORT TAKES

Cabinet approves pact

New Delhi: The government has approved a MoU between India and Finland for cooperation in the field of geology and mineral resources. The decision in this regard was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet, headed by PM Narendra Modi. "The Union Cabinet has approved MoU for cooperation in the field of geology and mineral resources between Geological Survey of India, Ministry of Mines and Geological Survey of Finland, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, the Government of Finland," the mines ministry said.

I-T dept launches functionality

New Delhi: The Income Tax (I-T) department Wednesday said it has launched a functionality for scheduled commercial banks to check status of income tax returns filed by entities based on their Permanent Account Number (PAN). It said the data on cash withdrawal had indicated that huge amount of cash is being withdrawn by persons who have never filed income tax returns.

Voda Idea board to meet Friday

New Delhi: Telecom operator Vodafone Idea has said its board will meet Friday to consider fund raising through various means. The development comes following the Supreme Court verdict directing all telecom operators to pay 10% of total Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR)-related dues this year, and rest of the payments in 10 installments starting from next fiscal year.

Embassy to invest ₹300 cr

New Delhi: Embassy Industrial Park has announced an investment of Rs 300 crore to develop a 40 acre warehousing project at Bilaspur in Gurugram, as demand for storage space has risen from e-commerce players after the outbreak of COVID-19. "Spread across 40 acres of land, this project will be built with an investment of INR 300 crore.

GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX 2020

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 2: India has joined the group of top 50 countries in the global innovation index for the first time, moving up four places to the 48th rank and keeping the top position among the nations in central and southern Asia.

According to the Global Innovation Index (GII) list, 2020 released jointly by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Cornell University and INSEAD Business School Wednesday, the rankings show stability at the top but a gradual "eastward shift in the locus of innovation" as Asian

economies like China, India, the Philippines and Vietnam have advanced considerably in the innovation ranking over the years.

Switzerland, Sweden, the US, the UK and the Netherlands lead the innovation ranking, and the top 10 positions are dominated by high-income countries, WIPO said in a statement.

About India, the statement said it has become the third most innovative lower middle-income economy in the world, thanks to newly available indicators and improvements in various areas of the GI.

India ranks in the top 15 in indicators such as ICT (Information

According to the GI list, 2020, the rankings show stability at the top but a gradual "eastward shift in the locus of innovation"

Switzerland, Sweden, the US, the UK and the Netherlands lead the innovation ranking



India has become the third most innovative lower middle-income economy in the world

India ranks in the top 15 in indicators such as ICT services exports, government online services, graduates in science and engineering, and R&D-intensive global companies

and Communication Technology) services exports, government online

services, graduates in science and engineering, and R&D-intensive

COVID FALLOUT

Fiscal deficit to balloon over 8% of GDP in FY21



According to a report on Indian economy by Kotak Institutional Equities, low economic activity and lower tax collections have created a scenario where the deficit would widen

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 2: With economic disruptions set for a long haul due to Covid-19 pandemic, India could see its fiscal deficit this year may rise over 8% of GDP, brokerages analysing the deficit numbers post release of August GST collection data have said.

The Controller General of Accounts Monday said that country's fiscal deficit has expanded to 103.1% of Budget Estimate in the April-July period primarily due to lower tax collection and higher expenditure for Covid-19 relief.

According to a report on Indian economy by Kotak Institutional Equities, low economic activity and lower tax collections coupled with expanded Covid-19 related expenditure have created a scenario where the deficit would widen.

It could go up over the estimated levels of 8% to 9% or more if the Centre did not cut its expenditure by ₹1.7 lakh crore while increasing spent on infrastructure sectors, the brokerage report said.

Government's expenditure in the four-month period (April-July) of FY21 was around 35 per cent of budget estimates with revenue ex-

penditure growth of around 12% and capital expenditure growth of 4%.

But the concern is on revenue collections, with GST collections being at just around ₹3.1 lakh crore in the five month period (April-August) against the budget estimate of ₹13.4 lakh crore for FY21. This means that in the rest of the year collections should go up to ₹1.5 lakh each month. This looks impossible in the current situation.

"Even though there will be some improvement in collections over the next few months, we could still witness a CGST shortfall of ₹1.5-2 lakh crore against FY2021BE," the Kotak report said.

"With gradual reopening of the economy, tax collections will improve over the next few months. We have already seen some improvement in the activity levels. However, we have factored in our revised GDP growth of (-) 11.5% (nominal at (-) 10%) in our fiscal estimates and revise our GFD/GDP forecast to 8%," the brokerage said.

The report has factored in short-fall of ₹5.3 lakh crore in total receipts, Covid-related expenditure of around ₹3 lakh crore (announcement of ₹2.7-3.2 lakh crore with fiscal impact of ₹1.8 lakh crore till now), and overall expenditure cuts of ₹1.7 lakh crore while increasing spending in railways and roads.

State sees revival in GST revenue growth



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: Odisha is moving towards recovery by witnessing growth in both GST and non-GST revenues steadily as is observed from the collection figures in last three months.

The collection from State GST during June '20, July '20 and August '20 registered a growth rate of -5.63%, +13.04% and -1.76% in comparison to the corresponding periods of last year.

The SGST collection could be ₹759.17 crore, ₹794.02 crore and ₹686.15 crore in said three months of 2020 against the collection of ₹804.49 crore, ₹702.44 crore and ₹698.47 crore during June '19, July '19 and August '19 respectively. Commissioner Commercial Tax and GST SK Lohani is monitoring the collection from State GST regularly.

VAT Collection from petroleum products has shown a positive trend from July 2020 as it could be

global companies.

"Thanks to universities such as the Indian Institute of Technology in Bombay and Delhi and the Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru, and its top scientific publications, India is the lower middle-income economy with the highest innovation quality," it said.

A total of 131 countries were analysed under the GI before arriving at the rankings.

The metrics include institutions, human capital and research, infrastructure, market sophistication and business sophistication, knowledge and technology outputs and creative outputs.

FLIPKART BEGINS WHOLESALE E-COMM SERVICE IN INDIA

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Sept 2: E-commerce platform Flipkart Wednesday launched operations of its digital business-to-business marketplace, Flipkart Wholesale, with an aim to connect local manufacturers with retailers and bring the entire wholesale marketplace at their fingertips.



The platform is currently available for fashion retailers, especially footwear and apparel, in Gurugram, Delhi and Bangalore, with plans to expand to Mumbai as well, the company said in a statement.

Flipkart Wholesale also plans to expand to 20 more cities and in categories such as home and kitchen and grocery by the end of this year.

"With the strong capability within the group in B2B, we will focus on meeting the needs of kiranas and MSMEs by providing these small businesses a wide selection at significant value, powered by technology to make their lives easier," said Adarsh Menon, Senior VP and Head, Flipkart Wholesale.

"Whether in grocery, general merchandise or fashion, these businesses will have one-stop access to an extensive selection of products with attractive schemes and incentives."

Govt allows domestic flights to operate with 60% capacity

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 2: In further easing of restrictions, the government Wednesday permitted Indian airlines to increase the number of domestic passenger flights to 60% of their pre-COVID services, according to an official order.

On June 26, the Ministry of Civil Aviation had allowed the airlines to operate a maximum of 45% of their pre-COVID domestic flights.

The ministry had restarted domestic passenger services from May 25, after a gap of two months due to the coronavirus-triggered lockdown. However, the airlines were allowed to operate not more than 33% of their pre-COVID domestic flights.

Modifying its previous order of June 26 where it had put the 45% limit on the number of domestic flights, the ministry issued an order Wednesday stating that "45% capacity may be read as 60% capacity."

The average occupancy rate in domestic flights since their resumption in India on May 25 has been around 50-60% only. Scheduled international passenger flights continue to remain suspended in the country since March 23 due to the pandemic.

However, special international flights have been operating under Vande Bharat Mission since May and under bilateral air bubble pacts signed with various countries since July.

Unacademy raises \$150 mn funding led by SoftBank

AGENCIES

Bangalore, Sept 2: Edtech firm Unacademy Wednesday said it has raised an investment of \$150 million (approximately ₹1,088 crore) in a round led by Japanese conglomerate SoftBank, increasing the Bangalore-based firm's valuation to \$1.45 billion.

Existing investors General Atlantic, Sequoia Capital, Nexus Venture Partners, Facebook, and Blume Ventures also participated in the round.

"Learning from the best experts to achieve a life goal has mostly been a privilege, available only to those living in the top few cities of

the country," Gaurav Munjal, Co-Founder and CEO, Unacademy, said in a statement.

"At Unacademy, we are breaking that barrier and helping people achieve their life's most important goals, by giving them access to the best coaching from experts in the field," Munjal said, adding that Unacademy plans to utilise the funds to launch new products.

Unacademy boasts of a vast network of over 18,000 educators and over 350,000 subscribers. The company caters to the learning needs for more than 35 competitive exams, besides important life goals such as Chess.

IndianOil to invest ₹1,268 cr in Paradip refinery

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: The Indian Oil board cleared the Stage-1 approval to install a Grassroot Needle Coker Unit at Paradip refinery using Indian Oil R&D's in-house technology. The proposed unit will have a Calcined Needle Coke (CNC) production capacity of 56KTPA. The estimated project cost is likely ₹1,268 crore.

With the production of CNC, IndianOil shall enter this niche product segment for the first time. CNC is used to produce Graphite Electrodes for deployment in the high temperature (2,800 degrees Centigrade) electric arc furnaces of Steel Industry.

Indian Oil Chairman SM Vaidya said "This Needle Coker Unit is yet another significant step towards



de-risking the uncertainty in the POL business. The proposed unit will enhance the Refinery Gross Margin and will also demonstrate IndianOil's capability of supplying indigenously licensed technology in the niche product segments".

Presently the entire Needle Coke requirement of the country (80-100 KTPA) is met through imports. Production of needle coke at Paradip refinery will reduce import dependency and would contribute to

the vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

Needle coke is a substitute for natural graphite and offers higher quality consistency. With these technological advancements, needle coke is now used to make the carbon anode of Lithium-ion Batteries. As Electric Vehicle (EV) transportation is emerging as a viable option, the production of needle coke (Anode for Li-ion battery) would add to the quest for a self-reliant India.

Indian firms embracing AI in big way: Survey

THE TOP 3 AREAS WHERE AI IS BELIEVED TO ADD MAXIMUM VALUE WERE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND REVENUE GROWTH

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 2: Nearly 70% of Indian enterprises that deployed Artificial Intelligence (AI) have achieved measurable results while 60% believe that AI will disrupt their business within the next 2-3 years, a new Nasscom-EY survey said Wednesday.

While 74% enterprises established either a formal strategy or obtained C-suite sponsorship to initiate or scale-up their AI programmes, 78% believed re-skilling of the existing talent will aid in maximising value from AI.

"Implementing AI will not only

catalyse the innovation to stay competitive but also generate long-term value for enterprises. The survey is ready reckoner that AI adoption is a critical competitive lever. It enables business leaders to infuse technology at speed," said Debjani Ghosh, President, Nasscom.

As business leaders continue to recognise the role AI can play in providing competitive advantage and generating long-term value, the top three areas cited by the survey respondents where AI is believed to add maximum value were; operational efficiency, customer experience and revenue growth.

"AI adopters have already



achieved remarkable success in transforming their business mod-

els, operational processes and stakeholder experiences. As business

leaders continue to push the frontiers of technology and the future success of AI will be driven only by our inspiration and imagination," explained Nitin Bhatt, Partner & Technology Sector Leader, EY India.

Sectors such as BFSI and retail that are intensive in terms of recorded or digitized data were found to be leading in AI adoption with 36

per cent and 25 per cent, respectively. While end-customer centric functions were most favoured by organizations in retail and BFSI sectors, healthcare and agriculture cited operations to be the function with the highest potential for AI deployment, the survey added.

The joint survey assessed the responses of over 500 CXOs on the maturity of AI adoption and the challenges faced by enterprises in their AI journey.

Implementing AI will not only catalyse the innovation to stay competitive but also generate long-term value for enterprises. The survey is ready reckoner that AI adoption is a critical competitive lever
DEBJANI GHOSH | PRESIDENT, NASSCOM

US OPEN WITNESSES NEW CHAPTERS



ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, Sept 2: Making quick work of an opponent for a change, Serena Williams wrapped up her 102nd career US Open match win to break a tie with Chris Evert for the most in the professional era.

Then Williams headed back out to the Arthur Ashe Stadium stands Tuesday night, her dog in tow. Williams had a match to watch — her older sister's, which did not work out as well.

Serena, who turns 39 this month, defeated Kristie Ahn 7-5, 6-3. But her sister Venus, who is 40, lost in the US Open's first round for the first time in 22 appearances, beaten 3-6, 5-7 by No.20 Karolina Muchova.

It is the fourth time in the past five Grand Slam tournaments that Venus exited in her opening match. Venus, who won two of her seven major singles championships here, was trying to become only the third woman in her 40s to win a US Open singles match.

Serena has won 23 Grand Slam singles titles, the most in the professional era, which began in 1968; only Margaret Court collected more, with 24.

Six of Serena's trophies came at the US Open, and she also was the runner-up four times, including each of the past two years.

Entering Tuesday, Serena had been 3-2 since tennis matches resumed after a hiatus because of the coronavirus pandemic — and all five went three sets. So Tuesday's match was a welcome change.

Her career mark at the hard-court event is 102-13, a winning percentage of 0.887. "In a weird way, I feel like every time I come here, I'm being told I broke another record," Serena said.

"It's cool. I don't think I appreciate it enough, which is unfortunate," she said. "But I'm in the middle of a Grand Slam, so it's not the time to be focused for me on records when I'm thinking about winning a tournament."

Serena surpasses Evert with 102nd victory in professional era, while her sister Venus suffers defeat in the first round for the first time in 22 appearances

NEW PLAYERS ASSOCIATION

The man who joined Novak Djokovic in trying to start a new association to represent male tennis players, Vasek Pospisil, said there's been 'a lot of misleading information in terms of what we're trying to accomplish' in setting up the Professional Tennis Players Association (PTPA).

Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal are among those who have said they're not in favor of the proposal to set up something outside of the ATP Tour. As things stand, tennis players do not have a union, the way athletes in the major North American team sports do.

"The structure within the ATP leaves the players completely, like, powerless," Pospisil said. "Our voices are just not heard. That's all we're trying to do here."

Pospisil reached the US Open's second round Tuesday by beating Philipp Kohlschreiber 7-6(7-4), 7-5, 7-6(7-3) and will face 2016 Wimbledon runner-up Milos Raonic in an all-Canadian matchup next.

PELLA SPEAKS

One of the two players dropped from the Western & Southern Open draw last month after their fitness trainer tested positive for the coronavirus spoke out Tuesday about what he called unfair treatment.

Guido Pella, an Argentine seeded 29th at Flushing Meadows, lost his first-round match at the US Open to American wild-card entry JJ Wolf 2-6, 6-0, 3-6, 3-6.

Pella said he tested negative nine times for COVID-19 but still was quarantined and withdrawn from the Western & Southern Open — along with Bolivia's Hugo Dellien, who also lost Tuesday — after they had contact with the trainer. Seven players were allowed to remain in the US Open after they had contact with another player, Benoit Paire, who tested positive.



Venus Williams

NAGAL BECOMES FIRST INDIAN TO WIN A GS MAIN ROUND MATCH IN SEVEN YEARS AS THE 126TH RANKED PLAYER DOWNS KLAHN TO SET UP A CLASH WITH WORLD NO.3 THIEM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, Sept 2: Sumit Nagal became the first Indian tennis player to win a round at a Grand Slam in seven years when he downed American Bradley Klahn in his US Open first round, setting up a contest against world number three Dominic Thiem, here.

Returning to the Flushing Meadows where he took a set off Roger Federer last year, the Indian got past the local rival, ranked just a rung above the Indian at 126th in the world, 6-1, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 in two hours and 12 minutes Tuesday night.

Somdev Devvarman was the last Indian to win a main draw match at a major and incidentally, it was at the US Open in 2013 when he beat Slovakia's Lukas Lacko after coming through qualifiers.

"I qualified for a junior Slam in 2013 here and then the men's and now to win my first round here means a lot. I enjoy playing here and it has worked out in my favour few times," Nagal told this agency.

"It was not easy to walk inside the court knowing this match is more in your favour. I was definitely nervous and especially playing for my first slam win but I did the things I was supposed to and kept my composure."

Somdev, who retired in January 2017, had reached the second rounds of Australian Open, French Open and US Open in 2013 apart from playing a second round at the Wimbledon in 2011 but never went beyond that.

After Somdev, Indian tennis saw the rise of Yuki Bhambri, Ramkumar Ramanathan and Prajesh Gunneswaran but none of them could win a main draw round.

Ramkumar did not even qualify for a main draw in

many attempts. Saketh Myneni qualified for US Open singles in 2016 but lost to Czech Republic's Jiri Vesely.

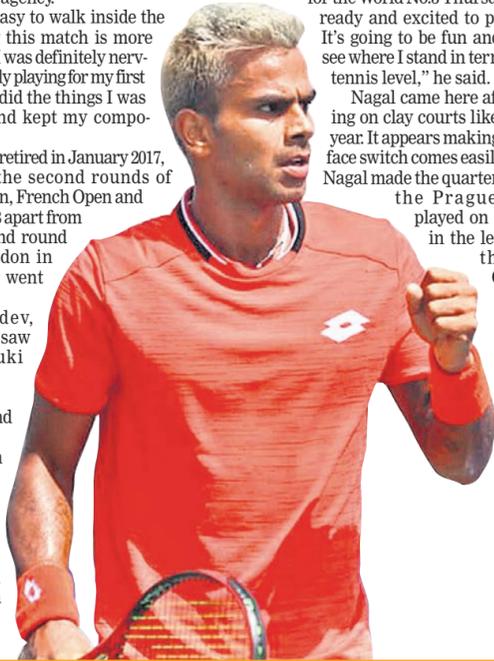
Bhambri had to cope with injuries and that halted his progress. Between 2015 and 2018 he competed all four majors but never crossed a round.

Nagal said Indian tennis should have done better and partly blamed it on the not-so-helpful 'system' as well. "In one way, yes (happy for major win) but in another way, we could do so much better. We have so many people playing this sport, we have great talent but no system, which makes me feel sad," the 23-year-old said without elaborating much.

Up next for him will be Austria's top player Thiem, who advanced when his Spanish rival Jaume Munar retired before the start of the third set. Thiem was leading 7-6(8-6), 6-3 when Munar found it difficult to continue as he injured his knee during the second set.

A fierce fighter, Nagal hardly cares for reputations and is expected to make it tough for the World No.3 Thursday. "I am ready and excited to play him. It's going to be fun and (I will) see where I stand in terms of my tennis level," he said.

Nagal came here after playing on clay courts like the last year. It appears making the surface switch comes easily to him. Nagal made the quarterfinals of the Prague Open, played on red dirt, in the lead up to the US Open.



Stephens sails through

NEW YORK: Former champion Sloane Stephens has won her opening match at the US Open, beating Mihaela Buzarnescu of Romania 6-3, 6-3. Stephens won the title in 2017 when she was ranked No.83. She's seeded 26th. Stephens played on Court 17, and said a match with few spectators required an adjustment. "It's back to girls' 12, where it's you and your parents, and the girl you're playing and their parents," she said.

CLIJSTERS LOSES ON HER GS RETURN

NEW YORK: Kim Clijsters has lost playing her first Grand Slam match in eight years. The four-time major champion was beaten by Ekaterina Alexandrova 6-3, 5-7, 1-6 Tuesday night in the first round at the US Open. Clijsters won the tournament in 2005, 2009 and 2010, and retired after the 2012 Open. Now 37 and the mother of three, she embarked on a comeback this year but has lost all three of her matches and struggled with injuries.

MEDVEDEV ADVANCES

NEW YORK: Daniil Medvedev, who reached his first Grand Slam final at last year's US Open, has won his first-round match at the tournament, beating Federico Delbonis 6-1, 6-2, 6-4. Medvedev went from villain to hero during last year's tournament. He was fined four times and booed by fans, but won their support in the five-set final with comeback that fell short against Rafa Nadal. He took the court Tuesday night to neither cheers nor jeers because fans aren't allowed at this year's Open.

Andy saves match point

NEW YORK: This was the sort of match Andy Murray came back for, the sort of competition and comeback he always lived for, the reason he went through two hip operations and all the hard work that followed. And it was the type of vintage Murray performance — undaunted by a deficit, adjusting on the fly, muttering all the way — that was too compelling not to watch, so while there are no fans allowed into this US Open because of the pandemic, fellow pros made their way into the stands to see the popular 2012 champion save a match point Tuesday and, eventually, win. Playing his first Grand Slam match in nearly 20 months, toiling on his metal hip for four hours, 39 minutes in Arthur Ashe Stadium, Murray put together his 10th career comeback from two sets down and beat Yoshihito Nishioka 4-6, 4-6, 7-6(7-5), 7-6(7-4), 6-4.

OFC sign Marcelinho on a one-year contract

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 2: Odisha FC announced Wednesday about their biggest transfer for the upcoming season as the Bhubaneswar-based side roped in experienced Brazilian footballer Marcelo Leite Pereira, also known as Marcelinho. The 33-year-old forward signed a one-year contract.

With an ability to play as a striker or in the wings or as an attacking midfielder, Marcelinho has a huge experience of playing in various leagues around the world including the ISL.

He was the Golden Boot winner in 2016 with Delhi Dynamos by scoring 10 goals in 15 appearances and also guided the team into the playoffs. Marcelinho then played for FC Pune City (now known as Hyderabad FC) for three consecutive seasons and has a cumulative figure of 31 goals and 18 assists in 63 ISL matches so far.

After starting his professional career with Atletico Madrid B, the Rio de Janeiro-born playmaker has played club football for various other teams in the UAE, Greece, Spain, Italy and his home country Brazil. "With good experience of Indian



football and a record that is admired by many, Marcelinho represents a good signing on all fronts," said head coach Stuart Baxter. Marcelinho expressed his delight saying, "I am very motivated for the challenge. I really want to do well with my new team and new coach. I hope that we have an amazing season ahead and I can't wait for this." Club president Rohan Sharma said, "After a long time, it's great to have Marcelinho back with me. Last time we were together, he set the league ablaze with his skills and goals. Now he has become the third highest goalscorer in the ISL and I am sure he will bang some more in this season."

SON'S FUTURE AT THE CLUB LEADS THE DISCUSSION CHART Messi's father lands in Barcelona

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, Sept 2: Lionel Messi's father arrived in Spain early Wednesday and is expected to meet with Barcelona club officials to discuss his son's future.

Jorge Messi, who is also Lionel Messi's agent, landed here from Argentina. He is expected to meet with club president Josep Bartomeu and other team officials, but it's unclear when this meeting will take place.

The six-time world player of the year insists he has a clause in his contract that allows him to leave on a free transfer — a claim disputed by Barcelona and La Liga, who say the Argentine can only leave if a rival club is willing to pay a 700 million euro buyout clause.

"I don't know, I know nothing," Messi's father told Spanish TV channel Cuatro when asked if the 33-year-old would leave the only club he has played for professionally.

But when pressed if it would be hard for him to remain, he said "yes". And asked how he sees Messi's future at Barcelona, he replied "difficult, difficult."

He dodged questions on whether Manchester City would be a good option for his son. A move to



Manchester City would allow Messi to link up with his former Barcelona coach Pep Guardiola.

"I don't know, there's nothing yet," he said, adding he had not had any discussions with Guardiola, who enjoyed trophy-laden years as Barcelona manager with Messi in his pomp.

Messi did not show up Monday for the first training session of the season under new coach Ronald Koeman. Messi last week told Barcelona he wanted to leave the club and invoked a contract clause that allowed him to depart for free at the end of the season.

But Barcelona claimed the clause expired in June and said he must

see out his current contract until June 2021, or leave by paying the buy-out clause of 700 million euros.

Barcelona has been saying it will not facilitate Messi's departure and will only negotiate a contract extension. The club has offered the Argentine a two-year extension that would keep him with Barcelona through the 2022-23 season.

In addition to meeting with Messi's father, Barcelona said it also wanted to meet personally with the player to try to change his mind about leaving.

The club said it has been doing everything to try to convince Messi to finish his career at the club where he started nearly 20 years ago.

Neymar reportedly tests nCoV positive

AGENCIES

Paris, Sept 2: PSG star Neymar has reportedly tested positive for coronavirus, with the Ligue 1 club confirming that three players have contracted the virus.

The Ligue 1 champions and Champions League finalists did not name the players involved, but Angel Di Maria and Leandro Paredes are believed to be the other two players to have tested positive, with Neymar's positive test reported by French outlet 'L'Equipe'.

"Three PSG-English players are confirmed positive after a Sars CoV2 test and have undergone the appropriate health protocols," the club said on social media. "All players and staff will continue to be tested over the next few days."

PSG are making a delayed start to the new Ligue 1 season after their European exertions, with their first fixture scheduled for September 10 when they are due to travel to Lens.

PSG said the reason for the postponement was to give their players time to rest after playing three games in 10 days in the Champions League, however, players, including Neymar, Di Maria and Paredes took the opportunity to extend their holidays in Ibiza, where they



appear to have become infected with COVID-19. Positive tests have already disrupted the start of the new season, with the opening match of the campaign between Marseille and St Etienne postponed when Marseille reported four positive tests.