



IN NATURE'S LAP

Actor Kirti Kulhari says she is currently enjoying yoga sessions amid the lofty hills of Uttarakhand

LEISURE P2



BATTERED HYD

Many colonies in Hyderabad remain under water while Army and the NDRF personnel continue rescue ops

TWO STATES P7



EMERGENCY IN BANGKOK

Thai authorities declared a state of emergency in Bangkok, a day after student-led protests erupted

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Meet the bravest couple working hard to revive the economy. They just had lunch at restaurant and now are on way to cinema!

'Prevailing recession due to Covid among the worst'

World Bank President David Malpass said that given the extent of the economic contraction, there was a rising risk of disruptive debt crises in countries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Oct 15: The world is experiencing one of the deepest recessions since the Great Depression in the 1930s owing to the novel coronavirus, World Bank President David Malpass has said, terming the COVID-19 pandemic a "catastrophic event" for many developing and the poorest countries.

He told reporters that given the extent of the economic contraction, there was a rising risk of disruptive debt crises in countries.

So that has got a lot of focus here at the meetings, Malpass told the media Wednesday at the start of the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

"The recession has been deep, one of the deepest since the Great Depression. And for many developing countries, and for the people in the poorest countries, it is truly a depression, a catastrophic event. It is continuing to add to the ranks of those in extreme poverty," he said. That is the focus of this meeting and the focus of their actions,



he said, adding that the World Bank was building as big a growth programme for countries as they can in this fiscal year.

A day earlier, the Board approved the extension of the health emergency programmes to up to \$12 billion for vaccines and therapeutics and distribution of those in countries that do not otherwise have access.

Responding to a question, Malpass said that the world was currently experiencing a K-shaped recovery. That means that the advanced economies have been able to provide support, especially for

their financial markets and for people that have jobs that can be done by working from home. But people that are in the informal economy have lost their jobs, and are depending on social protection programmes, he said.

For the developing countries, and especially the poorest developing countries, that downward leg in the K is an increasingly desperate recession or depression that is facing people in the poorest countries because of the loss of jobs, the loss of income, and also the loss of remittances coming from workers, working outside the country, Malpass said.

"What we're trying to do at the World Bank is recognise that problem and provide extra support for social protection for the poorest in countries, also recognising the agricultural challenges," he said.

The president welcomes countries that are keeping open their export markets, and also countries that are able to change their subsidy systems in order to allow more food availability within their economies during this very challenging time.

US appoints spl officer for Tibet

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Washington, Oct 15: A day after President Xi Jinping called on Chinese troops to prepare for war, the United States appointed a senior official as its special coordinator for Tibetan issues.

Tibet, which has been under Chinese occupation since 1950, remains a sensitive issue for Beijing diplomatically. The Chinese Communist Party regime has persistently refused to engage with the US coordinator on the Tibet issue.

The Tibetan government in exile, established in India, is headed by the Dalai Lama.

Since the beginning of President Donald Trump's term in 2017, the position for the US special coordinator for Tibetan issues was vacant.

On Wednesday, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that Robert Destro, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labour, would assume the additional charge.

"Destro will lead US efforts to promote dialogue between the People's Republic of China and the Dalai Lama or his representatives; protect the unique religious, cultural, and linguistic identity of Tibetans; and press for their human rights to be respected," Pompeo said in a statement.

He added that the US remains concerned with the PRC's "repression of the Tibetan community." The Trump administration in the past has threatened to restrict visas for the Chinese officials responsible for human rights abuses in Tibet and blocking diplomatic access to the region.



ROBERT DESTRO



Another low pressure likely to form October 19

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: A fresh low pressure area is likely to be formed over central Bay of Bengal around October 19 which will trigger heavy rainfall several parts of the state, Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre director HR Biswas said.

The low pressure likely to bring heavy rain in some places of south and coastal Odisha districts between October 19 and 20, he said, adding, "We are now monitoring the system. The exact impact of the low pressure in the state will be known once it will take shape."

As per preliminary prediction, Koraput, Rayagada, Gajapati, Ganjam, Puri and Khurda would experience heavy downpour, October 19. The Met centre said thund-

erstorm with lightning very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada and Kandhamal during the next 24 hours. Southwest monsoon is active over Odisha. Light to moderate rain or thundershower is very likely to occur at most places over the districts of south coastal Odisha and at many places over the rest districts of Odisha in the next 24 hours. Between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm Thursday, highest rainfall was recorded at Boudh (43 mm), followed by Angul (19 mm), Chandbali (15), Nayagarh (14), Talcher (10), Puri (9), Paradip (8) and Cuttack (7).

SHORT TAKES

Three siblings die of food poisoning

Malkangiri: Three minor siblings died due to food poisoning at Kacheli village in Malkangiri district Thursday. Their elder sister and mother are also in a critical condition and undergoing treatment at Malkangiri District Headquarters Hospital. The deceased have been identified as Sukanti Madi (12), Sitaram Madi (7) and Anjali Madi (3). Sources said, the four children and their mother complained of uneasiness, vomiting and loose motions Wednesday night after having dinner at their home in the village. P5

ESPLANADE ONE GEARS UP FOR A SAFE PUJA AND SHOPPING SPREE



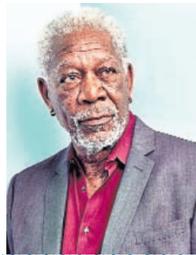
Esplanade One has been the favorite and most popular destination for the whole state of Odisha. Over the last two years, people not just from Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, but from other cities around have also come to Esplanade One to cater to their needs of Fashion, Food and Entertainment. In the current pandemic as well, Esplanade One has left no stone unturned in ensuring the safety of the patrons, retailers and staff.

There is no bigger festivity in Odisha than Puja and Esplanade One is all set to amplify the entire shopping experience for them. To ensure that the shopping experience at Esplanade One is not just safe, but also rewarding, they have rolled out a 'Jitna Bag, Utna Swag' contest, where people who walk out of the mall with more shopping bags, would stand a chance to claim a higher reward. More the number of bags, higher the gratification. Esplanade One is also curating unique looks around the Ethnic attire, which will be in high demand during the 9 days of Puja in Odisha.

Speaking about the Puja festivities, Parth Nayak, Centre Director at Esplanade One said, "These times are unusual times and therefore, we have taken measures to ensure the safety of all our stakeholders at Esplanade One. During the 14 days of our Happyness Wali Puja campaign, we will step up on ensuring all the safety measures are in place, but we have also made the shopping experience more rewarding than it has ever been. Every day, the highest shopper takes home gifts worth INR 10,000 from the mall for their Puja shopping with us."

Esplanade One is the first mall in the state of Odisha to join hands with Bureau Veritas and ICMR to ensure the SOP's set by the Shopping Centres Association of India and the local administration are followed without any deviation. They are also making the dining option at the foodcourt a touchless one, by joining hands with DOTPe, a QR code based food ordering service which is rolled out at Esplanade One.





FREEMAN THANKS FANS FOR MAKING HIS FILM A CLASSIC

On the 26th anniversary of *Shawshank Redemption*, veteran Hollywood star Morgan Freeman has expressed his gratitude to fans for making the film, which had flopped at the box office when it released in 1994, one of the 'most beloved movies of all time' and a cult classic.

I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER SERIES IN WORKS AT AMAZON

Amazon has greenlit a series adaptation of 1997 slasher *I Know What You Did Last Summer*. The movie was about four young friends who are stalked by a hook-wielding killer one year after covering up a car accident in which they killed a man.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES
Good news may bring cheer to you today! A job, a wedding, some profit... it could be personal or professional. Giving your best is almost a habit with you, says Ganesh, and it will pay off today.

TAURUS
Ganesh predicts that today, you will be successful in money matters. There is, at best, only an outside chance that any stimulating event or thrilling escapade will occur today. In short, the day may be boring. Fret not as the dreary day may change into an exhilarating evening, feels Ganesh.

GEMINI
You will long for some privacy today, says Ganesh. You may end up earning a large amount of money, mostly through some private venture. The day will be a greatly profitable one for cashiers, money lenders and those in retail business. Keep working hard to achieve success.

CANCER
Today, there is a strong possibility that you may face unexpected job changes. You are likely to spend lavishly to please family and friends. You may feel we make money to spend on loved ones. Still it would probably be a good idea to count every penny before using it, says Ganesh.

LEO
Being good to oneself is not vanity. To Ganesh, it seems as if you take this statement to heart, since it looks quite possible that you make your personal care number one priority today.

VIRGO
You better identify your worth in the realms of emotions, feelings and sentiments. You shall warm up to and about everything - from play to colleagues to family. Simultaneously, you may realise where your limitations are. Ganesh predicts that the artist in you will flourish beginning today.

LIBRA
The Bhagavad Gita says, "Do your duty without expecting the fruit." Remember this important lesson and strive hard to put in extra efforts to finish off whatever you undertake to do. Worrying about results will only hamper your progress. Go with the flow and let results come to you.

SCORPIO
Add a pinch of innovation and inventiveness to your daily working style. There shall be order in the chaotic way you perform your tasks - though not apparent to others. Revitalize yourself and plunge into work with new-found zest and vigour, advises Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Today shall be a rather decisive day, speculates Ganesh. Situations that have pushed you into a corner will force you to make rash decisions. But take stock of the situation and assess the long-term consequences of your actions beforehand, advises Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
The day will be of paramount significance as you are likely to meet someone who will be associated with you for life, says Ganesh. Also, relationships and relatives will keep you busy for major part of the day. You may not find it interesting, but you will not have any options either.

AQUARIUS
You may rave and rant, but all you'll get from colleagues or juniors are wishy-washy excuses for a job not done. Ganesh advises that you take care to finish your own work before you help others. The stars say that your beloved will smoothen your creased brow.

PISCES
Of late, the harder you try, the more it seems you have to do. You are likely to put your foot down today and spend some time taking care of yourself and playing truant with your responsibilities. Recharge your batteries fully while you are at it, says Ganesh.

India's first Oscar winner Bhanu Athaiya no more

IN A CAREER SPANNING FIVE DECADES AND OVER 100 FILMS, ATHAIYA WON TWO NATIONAL AWARDS -- FOR GULZAR'S MYSTERY DRAMA LEKIN (1990) AND THE PERIOD FILM LAGAAN DIRECTED BY ASHUTOSH GOWARIKER

Mumbai: Costume designer Bhanu Athaiya, India's first Oscar winner, died at her home Thursday after prolonged illness, her daughter said. She was 91.

Athaiya, who won an Oscar for her work in the 1983 film *Gandhi*, passed away peacefully in her sleep, her daughter Radhika Gupta said. The last rites took place at the Chandanwadi crematorium in South Mumbai.

"She passed away early this morning. Eight years ago, she was diagnosed with a tumour in her brain. For the last three years, she was bedridden because one side (of her body) was paralysed," her daughter said.

Athaiya, who was born in Kolhapur, began her career as a costume designer in Hindi cinema with Guru Dutt's 1956 superhit *C.I.D.*

She won the Academy Award for Best Costume Design in Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* along with John Mollo. In 2012, Athaiya returned her Oscar to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for safe-keeping.

In a career spanning five decades and over 100 films, she won two National Awards - for Gulzar's mystery drama *Lekin* (1990) and the period film *Lagaan* directed by Ashutosh Gowariker.



Yoga is a way of life: Kirti

Actress Kirti Kulhari is currently enjoying yoga sessions in the lap of nature. Kirti is in Uttarakhand these days, and she recently shared an Instagram image that captures her yoga session amid the lofty hills. "Doing anything in the middle of nature feels so liberating and beautiful... Hope I can always find the

time and space for practising.. Yoga is a way of life... Make it yours and it will never betray you." Kirti captioned the image, explaining her love for yoga.

Kirti has been seen urging her followers to adopt a healthy lifestyle. A few days ago, she posted a video of her doing push-ups.

The actress will be next seen sharing screen space with Parineeti Chopra

in *The Girl On The Train*, which is an official Hindi remake of the

Hollywood psychological thriller *The Girl On The Train*, which is based on Paula Hawkins' 2015 bestseller of the same name.

IAN S



Vidya's Natkhat to open Melbourne fest

New Delhi: The Vidya Balan co-produced film *Natkhat* and the Marathi film *Habbadi* will kickstart the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne October 23.

Owing to the threat of the pandemic, the festival will be hosted virtually between October 23 and 30. Opening the virtual festival is *Natkhat*, which is a story of a mother teaching her young son about gender equality and calls out toxic misogyny.

It will be screened in a double bonanza package along with

Nachiket Samant's *Habbadi*, which traces the story of a young boy with a speech impediment.

Like every year, the festival will offer over 60 films in 17 languages.

The films at the festival will stream for free on the festival's official website. The festival's sections - Hurrah Bollywood, Beyond Bollywood, Film India World, Documentaries and Shorts - are expected to be on schedule. IAN S



Sanjay says he will beat cancer soon

Mumbai: Actor Sanjay Dutt has addressed his battle with cancer for the first time, in a video posted by his friend, celebrity hairstylist Aalim Hakim.

In the video, the 61-year-old actor showed his scar mark, saying: "Good to be back in the salon. Got a haircut. If you see this, this is a recent scar in my life, but I will beat it. I will beat it, I will be out of this cancer soon."

He sported a beard, which he said he was growing for the sequel of the 2018 Kannada blockbuster *KGF: Chapter 1*. Dutt plays the antagonist in the film starring Kannada superstar Yash. "I need the look for the film as we are starting in November. I am happy to be on the sets again. There's dubbing for Shmashera too, so that will be fun. It's good to be back," he said. IAN S



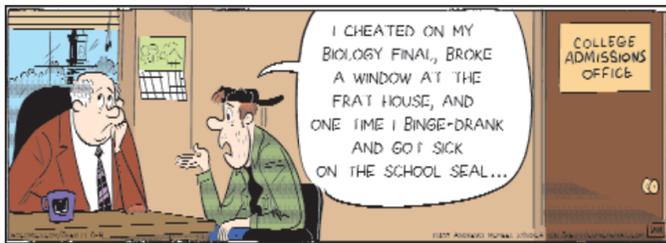
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

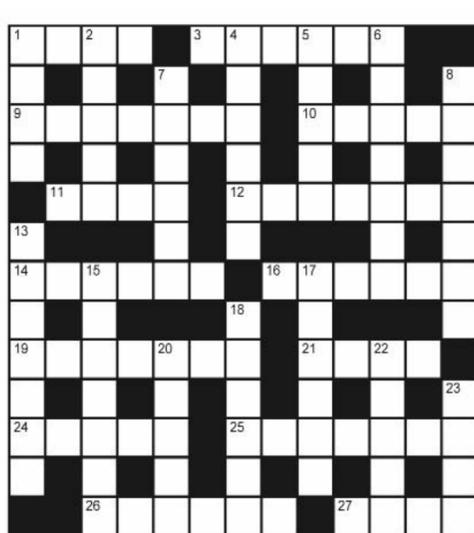


BREVITY



FUN post

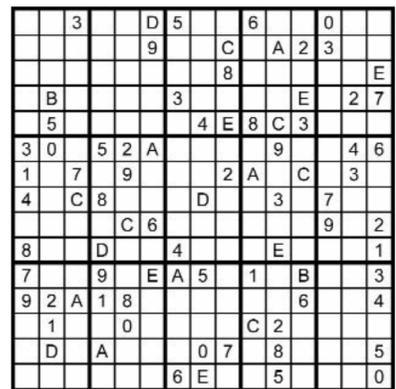
CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Heavy cart
 - 3 Barbeques
 - 9 Drifter
 - 10 Coincide
 - 11 Trifling
 - 12 Pull back
 - 14 Acrobatic stunts
 - 16 Sock pattern
 - 19 Ill will
 - 21 San ____, Puerto Rico
 - 24 Board game
 - 25 Robin Hood's forte
 - 26 Capital of the Bahamas
 - 27 Roman Emperor
 - 5 Minimum
 - 6 Black magic
 - 7 Most recent
 - 8 It can be found in a cap
 - 13 Flightless bird
 - 15 Light source
 - 17 Veto
 - 18 Naval unit
 - 20 Sanctuary
 - 22 Ridgeline
 - 23 Apprentice

SUDOKU

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

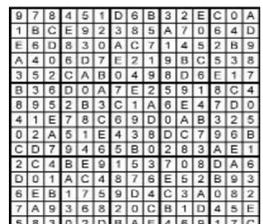


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



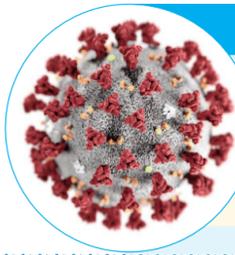
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



RAIN PAIN

Commuters negotiating a water-logged Bomikhhal road in Bhubaneswar as heavy rain lashed the Capital city, Thursday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	3,89,37,260	2,92,32,056	10,99,514
India	73,07,097	63,83,441	1,11,266
Odisha	2,62,011	2,38,535	1,089

SPCB told to go extra mile to woo investors

CONTINUOUS AMBIENT AIR QUALITY MONITORING STATIONS TO BE ESTABLISHED IN 7 MORE PLACES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: In a bid to attract more investments, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy Thursday directed the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) to set national level benchmarks in delivery of its services to the industries.

Presiding over the board meeting held in digital mode, Tripathy asked the Board to come up with definite action plan for setting national benchmark in hassle-free compliance through simplification of the processes and office automation.

Since Odisha is rich in mineral resources, the state also needs to be proportionately industrialised. Process reengineering will help creation of more employment opportunities through facilitation of business environment, he said.

He set transformational goals for SPCB to reduce the timeline for delivery of public services and reverse the increasing trend of air pollution by guiding the industries to adopt latest production technology and containment measures.

The Chief Secretary directed the pollution board officials to simplify and shorten the application forms



TASKS FOR BOARD

The pollution watchdog was directed to simplify compliance conditions through process reengineering and office automation

Process reengineering will help creation of more employment opportunities through facilitation of business environment

A proposal regarding development of geo-database for environmental mapping was approved in the meeting

for availing no objection certificates (NOC) under various norms. He instructed the board to reduce the file processing and disposal times by adopting office automation system.

Tripathy further asked the officials to reduce the time period specified for delivery of different public services under SPCB. The board would adopt self attestation mode by eliminating physical contact with the application.

SPCB Member Secretary K Murugesan said that the automation system should be linked with

regional offices and central laboratory to reduce the time of receiving reports from field officers.

The member secretary was asked to have weekly monitoring of the process simplification, reengineering and office automation. He directed the staffers to accomplish major part of the task within a month.

It was decided to establish continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations (CAAQMS) in air pollution-prone cities. Such systems will be set up at Cuttack, Balasore, Keonjhar, Sundargarh,

Mayurbhanj, Angul and Bhubaneswar. At present, two CAAQMS are operating at Talcher and Brajrajnagar.

The proposal regarding development of geo-database for environmental mapping was approved in the meeting. It would be a web-based application for all pollution-prone areas of Odisha.

The meeting also decided to develop a web portal containing updated data about air and water quality in different areas of the state for public information and use.

AT 75, NAVEEN BATS ON THE FRONT FOOT

Within two decades, the writer-turned politician has not only gained popularity, but effectively crushed potential threats within the party and nearly obliterated the opposition, first the Congress and now the BJP



A young Naveen with his father and former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The longest serving Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik, turns 75 Friday. With the passing of a year, he is reaching a new height, both in politics and administration.

He was roped into politics by the heavyweights of then Janata Dal in 1997 to take over the mantle of his father Biju Patnaik and to carry forward his legacy. After being elected to Lok Sabha, he became a Union Minister in AB Vajpayee government and in 2000, he became Chief Minister of Odisha. Since then he had been unstoppable in Odisha politics.

Within two decades, the writer-turned politician not only gained popularity, but effectively crushed potential threats within the party and nearly obliterated the opposition, first the Congress and now the BJP.

Fairly young in politics with only a little over two decades, he has achieved success and popularity that few leaders in the country can match. His popularity has

grown along with his age. In the political landscape of the nation, Patnaik is known as a man with a clean image.

The Chief Minister is known for his welfare-based model of governance. He rolled out schemes starting from Mamata for birth of a child to Harisandra for conducting the last rites of the poor. He introduced Kalia scheme for providing assistance to more than 50 lakh farmers which is stated to have pushed the Centre to unveil the PM-

Kisan Yojana.

After assuming power for the fifth time in a row, Naveen now focuses on improving public service delivery system by adopting a 5T model of governance. The 5Ts are—technology, transparency, teamwork, transformation and time-laid. The entire state administration is working on this model to improve the services provided to public.

Naveen has become a master in disaster management. After successfully managing many cyclones and floods, he won praise from the World Health Organisation (WHO) for management of Covid-19 pandemic. All kinds of treat-

ment, food and medicine are being provided free of cost to Covid patients in the state. He has made visible improvement in health, education, sports, industrial and infrastructure development in the state.

At 75, he is fit enough to serve the people for a long time. As a video had showed a few months back, Naveen goes through his morning workout regime - jogging, lifting weights, doing lift-ups and sit-ups, pedaling on a stationary bicycle and so on.

Police receive autopsy reports of blast victims

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: Family members of Simanchal Parida, who has been missing since an explosion at the petrol pump at Raj Bhawan October 7, Thursday reached the Capital Hospital for DNA test.

Earlier, Commissionerate Police had requested the parents of Parida to come to Bhubaneswar for the DNA test. Parida, a diploma engineer, an employee of a Faridabad-based firm, was engaged at the refilling of the LPG tank on the fateful day.

Meanwhile, the team investigating the petrol pump blast case had also received the autopsy reports of victims too. Out of the 21 pieces of flesh, 15 have been identified to be that of humans while the remaining belonged to animals.



"Fifteen flesh samples tested probably belong to the same person. However, we can establish that only after matching the DNA sample.

The recovered body parts were sent to the state forensic science laboratory at Rasulgarh for DNA test after conducting autopsy," an investigating officer said.

The recovered animal body parts are of stray dogs, the autopsy report suggested. It is suspected that many stray dogs were killed due to the blast, as there were two Omfed stalls and a fast food vending counter in the close vicinity of the petrol pump.

Sources at Commissionerate Police claimed that the Commissioner of Police Sudhanshu Sarangi is likely to reveal some important facts in connection with the petrol pump blast, Friday.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



TWO NABBED FOR TIRTOL GIRL'S GANGRAPE

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: Police have arrested two persons, including the main accused, in connection with the alleged gangrape of a minor girl from Tirtol in Cuttack for 22 days, and seized three mobile phones from their possession.

Cuttack DCP Prateek Singh identified the accused as Tiki alias Santosh Behera alias Dipu, 22, the mastermind behind the crime and Rakesh Rout alias Raka, 25.

Singh said the accused were arrested under Sections 366, 376, (2xn) 506, IPC and 6/12 of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and were forwarded to court after their medical examination.

The mobile phones of the accused will be sent to State Forensic Science Laboratory (SFSL), Bhubaneswar for cyber analysis.

A request has been made to District Legal Service Authority for providing immediate compensation to the victim

While Raka was arrested Wednesday, Tiki was arrested Thursday.

Singh said the statement of the victim girl was recorded U/S 161 of Cr PC. Her statement was also recorded by the court U/S 164 Cr PC.

The DCP said a request has been made to the District Legal Service Authority Cuttack for providing immediate compensation and relief to the victim.

He said the Chauhaganja Police October 12 rescued the girl, who was sitting near a Hanuman statue in Gatiroutpatna area of the city and accommodated her in Basundhara,



The accused duo in police custody in Cuttack

a shelter home. In her statement to police, she said that she had left her house a

month back following a family dispute and came to her sister's house at Professorpada.

Woman loses ₹20L to cyber crook

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: Longing for precious ornaments as gifts cost an octogenarian widow dearly who lost around ₹20 lakh to unknown cyber criminals recently. The 80-year-old housewife, a resident of Old Sadar Thana Lane of Puri, has lodged a complaint in this regard with the Crime Branch.

According to sources, the victim lady received a message from one Aron Jackson requesting friendship on her phone August 2 which she accepted. Later, Aron used to regularly send her various SMSes and messages on WhatsApp. Their friendship continued for several months till October 6.

Meanwhile, the crook told the lady that he had sent a gift packet containing gold, diamond ornaments and various luxurious beauty



products from outside India in September.

A few days later, Aron again called her that the customs officials at Bombay Airport had seized the gift packet. Subsequently, the victim received an SMS allegedly from the Customs department at Mumbai airport asking her to release the gift by paying various dues like customs duty, GST charges.

The gullible lady deposited ₹19.97 lakh in various bank accounts pro-

vided by the conman pretending as customs official. She deposited the amount in various installments between October 11 and 28. However, she did not receive any gift despite the payment of such a huge amount.

On the other hand, when she questioned Aron over non-receipt of the gift, he suddenly stopped talking to her and sending messages too.

Finding no other way, the victim finally sought the help of CB.

Odisha to play key role in Mission Purvodaya: Pradhan

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Oct 15: Union Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Thursday said that Odisha would play a key role in realising Mission Purvodaya, envisioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi which calls for balanced development of the country with eastern India leading the way.

Pradhan said this while addressing the ICC National E-Conference on 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Focus: Downstream Industries in Steel, Chemical and Petro-Chemical sector organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICC) in association with Ministry of Steel and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas here.

He said Odisha's natural ad-

vantage in mineral resources and having large ports offer unique opportunities for industrial growth. He said both steel and petrochemical sectors and their ancillary industries are uniquely poised to leverage the opportunities and further expand their footprints.

The Union minister emphasised that port-led economy can be a game changer for Odisha.

"The Centre is doing massive work in inland waterways in the state. Paradip port has emerged as the numero uno port of India. Dhamra and Gopalpur ports are playing important roles," said Pradhan. Pradhan said that ensuring minimum government and maximum governance will be key to enable our industries to create wealth for society.

Naveen not to celebrate b'day for Covid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has decided not to celebrate his birthday Friday in view of the prevailing Covid-19 situation in the state, a statement from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) said.

Odisha has reported 2,62,011 coronavirus cases, while 1,089 patients have succumbed to the infection so far.

Patnaik urged his supporters, well-wishers and BJD activists not to visit his residence, Naveen Niwas, and instead help the needy and donate blood and plasma on the occasion.

He said the people are passing through a difficult situation for the last eight months due to the pandemic.

"I am always indebted to the love and good wishes of the people of Odisha," he said.

Ulaka plea to Centre

New Delhi: Congress MP from Koraput Saptagiri Ulaka Thursday met Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar and raised the issue of Odia movie 'Khyanikaa' being pulled down unceremoniously from Amazon Prime video. He said 'Khyanikaa-The Lost Idea' was the only Odia movie at IFFI Goa 2017 and has represented Odisha and the country in 30 international film festivals across 14 countries. Ulaka said the film was released on Amazon Prime video June 6 and was pulled down June 8 without any communication. He urged Javadekar to ensure that such linguistic discrimination doesn't destroy possibility of such an acclaimed Odia film.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	39728.41 ↓ 1066.33
NIFTY	11680.40 ↓ 290.60
DOLLAR	73.70 ↑ ₹0.10
EURO	86.11 ↓ ₹0.02
GOLD	₹50,630 ↑ ₹88
SILVER	₹61,009 ↓ ₹594

WEATHER		
BHUB	CTK	
MAX	29.1°C	30.2°C
MIN	24.9°C	23.4°C
Humidity	97%	94%
Rainfall	4.2mm	7mm
Forecast: Generally cloudy sky		

State's virus caseload at 2,62,011

WITH 17 MORE FATALITIES, ODISHA'S CORONAVIRUS DEATH TOLL STANDS AT 1,089

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: State's novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) tally rose to 2,62,011 Thursday as 2,470 more people tested positive for the infection, while 17 fresh fatalities pushed Odisha's coronavirus death toll to 1,089, an official of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

As many as 1,462 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 1,008 people tested positive for the infection during contact tracing, said the official.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, registered the highest number of fresh cases at 368, followed by Cuttack (186) and Angul (170), the official pointed out.

Four fresh fatalities were reported in Khurda, three each in Cuttack and Sundargarh, two in Ganjam, and one each in Balasore, Boudh, Jajpur, Kalahandi and Nayagarh, said the H&FW department official.

Ganjam has so far reported the highest number of coronavirus fatalities at 225, followed by Khurda (189) and Cuttack (94).

As many as 53 coronavirus pa-



tients have succumbed to other ailments so far, the official said. The state has so far tested over

39.21 lakh samples for Covid-19, including 42,148 Wednesday, added the official.

IN 24 HOURS

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Capital city registers 253 new cases

With 253 persons testing positive for Covid-19 in the Capital city in the last 24 hours, the total number of infected persons in the Temple City surged to 26,536, the Bhubaneswar Municipal

Corporation (BMC) said Thursday.

Meanwhile, the state capital also reported 299 Covid-19 recoveries in the past 24 hours.

Silver City sees 112 fresh infections

Cuttack: Of the 186 new Covid-19 cases reported Thursday in Cuttack district, 112 belong to Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) area, the civic body said. The latest surge has taken the virus tally in the Silver City to 13,863.

3rd round of sero-survey from today

In a bid to identify prevalence of novel COVID-19 in the state capital, the BMC Thursday, said that it will begin the third round of sero-surveillance from 16th to 18th Oct. Briefing the media, BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary said that the BMC along with technical support from RMRC will be conducting the survey in different parts of the city for three days. "Five teams will be carrying out sample and data collection from 1500 people of Bhubaneswar city selected randomly from 25 wards across the city. We urge the general public to support the endeavour and participate in good numbers," the Commissioner said.

Special care taken for kids, says govt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The State Health and Family Welfare Thursday said that it took special care and initiatives to ensure Early Childhood Development of children from the state during the COVID 19 outbreak.

Bijay Panigrahy, Director of State Family Welfare said that the state roped in the frontline workers during the period to ensure the important phase of the children is not compromised during the pandemic.

"We took several steps to ensure that the Early Childhood Development (ECD) of kids is taken care of. We took the help of anganwadi workers, ASHA workers and others for the same. An Odia booklet especially crafted for them was also distributed," he said.

The statement from the state health department came into limelight in a discussion on the issue organized by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar and UNICEF-Odisha. Dr Mridula Phadke, Advisor to the National Health Mission (NHM) said that nutrition plays a key role in the early stages of development



of a kid. "Adequate nutrition is of paramount importance during the ECD days which consists of the conception period (270 days) and the first 2 years of life (730 days). COVID is also having an effect in the overall development process."

Dr Bhagirathi Dwivedi, pediatrician from AIIMS Bhubaneswar said that the ECD encompasses physical, socio, emotional, cognitive development between zero - six year age and development starts in the womb itself and thus it needed special care from the people involved in upbringing of children.

Monika Nielsen, Chief of Field Staff, UNICEF Odisha talked about the capacity building of frontline workers, increasing awareness among care givers, promoting policies and other areas which can act as strong base for the early development of children in Odisha.

Revenue from MVs shoots up

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The State Transport Authority (STA) Thursday said that it has seen an improvement in the revenue collection from motor vehicles in the month of September this year.

The department said that it reported a total collection of ₹89.5 crore in the month of August. However, the total collections in September this year touched 117 crore, showing a 31 percent increase.

However, compared to September 2019, the collections for September this year were a bit lower. While the government saw collection of ₹126 crore in September last year, the amount was ₹117 crore for the month this year.

The department claims that it has seen rise of revenue collections every month from motor vehicles since June 2020

The department in a statement said, "The collection has picked up due to growing sale of new motor vehicles and collection of taxes due to increased economic activity particularly in the mining sector."

HC seeks response on Bagala land sale

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Oct 15: The Orissa High Court (HC) Thursday sought the state government's response in connection with the alleged sale of Bagala Dharmashala land in Puri.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Mohammad Rafiq and Justice Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi served a notice on the state government seeking its response on the alleged sale of land belonging to the Dharmashala while hearing a plea filed by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national spokesperson Sambit Patra.

A similar petition was also filed by Jagannath Bastia, who later filed a misc case with the state's apex court on the issue. The HC decided to hear the cases simultaneously and posted the hearing to November 2.

Patra had filed a petition in the HC demanding the Dharmashala land to be brought back to Lord Jagannath's ownership.

Police stops BJP delegation

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha Police Thursday stopped the padyatra march of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) delegation at the outskirts of the state capital before they entered the city.

A number of BJP leaders began their padyatra from Puri and were expected to march towards Bhubaneswar towards Naveen Nivas to meet the Chief Minister. The delegation was miffed with the decision of the government to allegedly sell the age-old property of Bagala Dharmasala to private players.

The cops intercepted them at Uttara Square in the city outskirts and barred their movement ahead, making their plan to meet the CM futile. The delegation wanted to meet the CM and express their opposition to government plans on the matter.

Cyber crooks create fake id of official

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: Cyber crooks continue to target top bureaucrats of the state by hacking their social media and email accounts.

In the latest development, one senior IAS officer has fallen prey to the cyber criminals after senior IPS officers, Commissioner of Police, Sudhanshu Sarangi and DIG (Intelligence) Anup Sahoo.

As per the sources, cyber fraudsters have created a fake email id, managingdirector@mail@gmail.co, in the name of R Vineel Krishna, top IAS officer and the OMC MD.

The fraudsters also sent email messages to various top officials of OMC seeking favour. Subsequently, the officers enquired with the OMC MD who denied writing the email. The OMC officials have lodged a complaint at the Capital police station seeking stringent action in this regard.

FOR A CAUSE



Members of Odisha Parents' Federation sit on a hunger strike near the heads of departments building in Bhubaneswar, Thursday, demanding an ordinance on Fee Regulation Committee report for unaided private schools

Academicians favour reopening of Srimandir

PNN & AGENCIES

Puri, Oct 15: Most of the academicians, NGOs and senior citizens Thursday expressed their views in favour of reopening Srimandir for devotees.

During a virtual conference with Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) chief administrator Krishan Kumar

Thursday, they said that the temple had remained closed for more than seven months and it should be reopened for devotees under the Covid-19 guidelines.

Kumar had interacted with office bearers of Daitapati, Chunara, Paniapat, Akhand Mekap, Sudhasuar and Muduli the eight Niyogs of the temple Wednesday. He too sought opin-

ions of the Muktimandap.

He is likely to seek opinion of Gajapati Maharaj and Sankaracharya Friday before placing his report in the temple managing body and Chhatisha Niyog.

The temple body would deliberate over the matter and send the outcome of meeting to the state government for its final approval.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The state government's project of constructing 4-lane roads in different stretches of the state have now hit bottlenecks at various regions due to delay in land acquisition in the affected areas.

A recent meeting of the State Works Department during their review of the Biju Expressways found that several areas had been facing land acquisition issues leading to delay in the project. The local

Executive Engineers of the areas have now been asked to expedite the process.

It is reported that 82.7 km of the Sohela-Mondosil, a 4-lane road under the Bargarh Division is complete and a 18.4 km-stretch is still 2-lane. It is said that there was no land acquisition on 38 spots on the stretch.

In the Nuapada Division, 11.56 kms of road in the Ghatpada Chhakh at Kalahandi border out of the 104.9kms are said to be facing land acquisition issues. Few households

are said to be residing on government lands.

On similar lines, works in 4 kms of the Kalahandi border to Amapani in Bhawanipatana division is halted due to land acquisition issues. Moreover, out of the total 70.9 km road, 60.37 kms are only two-lane. The delay in works is also cited to constriction of three major bridges enroute.

"It was pointed out that the land acquisition is being taken up for 4-lane. Therefore, it was decided that necessary steps must be taken for

construction of 4-lane road for entire stretch. Chief Engineer (Roads) was requested to take necessary action for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) for these stretches. The DPR should include construction of major bridges and any other left out work," the minutes of the meeting said.

It also added, "It was further discussed that Biju Expressway should be developed as a model road for the state. All other ancillary and roadside infrastructure also needs to be provided."

Robotic intervention to control dust in mines

PNN & AGENCIES

Sambalpur/Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: In a first, Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) has introduced robotic intervention in mining operations to control the dust pollution and combat fire.

MCL has successfully tested the remotely-controlled mechanised swivel nozzle, popularly known as 'Robotic Nozzle', with variable cone mist and straight throw capacity to deal with fire and dust suppression in effective way.

MCL sources said that the introduction of 'Robotic Nozzle' will be of great help to fire-fighting operations in coal mines besides effective dust suppression using conical mist function.

Being a remotely-controlled system to operate from a safe distance, the 'Robotic Nozzle' throws mist with variable cone envelope with a solid angle from 0 to 120 degrees with additionally covering 360 degrees

MAKING THE MOST OF TECHNOLOGY



The introduction of 'Robotic Nozzle' will be of great help to fire-fighting operations in coal mines besides effective dust suppression using conical mist function

Being a remotely-controlled system, 'Robotic Nozzle' throws mist with variable cone envelope with a solid angle from 0 to 120 degrees with additionally covering 360 degrees horizontal pan and 180 degrees vertical pitch

In the past one year, the company has introduced hired mobile fog canons, and hired mechanical sweepers for better and effective dust control

horizontal pan and 180 degrees vertical pitch. The system has been retrofitted in 28 KL water tanker at Lakhanpur OCP designed and integrated by YK Singha, Manager (E&M/Innovation Cell).

Two more such systems will be retrofitted in 28 KL tankers at Basundhara OCP in Sundargarh

district and Lingaraj OCP, Talcher in Angul district.

In the past one year, the company has introduced hired mobile fog canons, and hired mechanical sweepers for better and effective dust control.

The company has also used

drone for mine monitoring, planning and critical decision making, introduced horticulture and agriculture in mining areas and introduced Aahar Mandal for nutrition sustenance of tribal families.

The fog canons of MCL have also been extensively used for sanitization operation to assist district administration in fight against Covid-19.

Admin starts demolishing boundary wall

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Oct 15: The district administration Thursday started demolishing the boundary wall of a women society's building set up by the OTV authorities at Sarua under Begunia tehsil here in connection with a land grab case.

The boundary wall demolition was started in the presence of Khurda Sub-Collector Ashok Behuria and Begunia Tehsildar Prithwiraj Mandal. Khurda Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Sushil Mihsra, Baghamari police in-charge Pranita Patnaik and a platoon of armed police personnel also present at the spot to maintain law and order, sources said.

The administration deployed two earthmovers to demolish the boundary wall.

On the other hand, the Revenue and Disaster Management has asked the state Crime Branch (CB) to launch a probe into a land grab

OTV LAND GRAB CASE



bing case against the OTV Group. The department ordered for a CB probe after receiving a report in this regard from Khurda Collector, sources added.

The villagers of Sarua had earlier alleged that the boundary wall was blocking them to access a public pond and their agricultural lands. Accepting the villagers' complaint, the administration had launched a probe into the incident.

According to sources, OTV authorities had set up a building at Sarua in the name of Sarua Mahila

Bikash Samiti, a women society. The media house authorities had then claimed that they would promote women empowerment and self-employment through the society.

Subsequently, the media house authorities erected a boundary wall around the building. However, the building has been lying idle since its inauguration.

Locals had alleged that the boundary wall constructed by the media group was preventing them from accessing a public pond and their agricultural lands at Sarua. As a result, the villagers were facing problems to carry out agricultural work, said the complaint.

"We have started demolishing the boundary wall to allow free access to the village pond and facilitate the drainage of rainwater," said the Sub-Collector. Begunia Tehsildar Prithwiraj Mandal said they will take every possible step to allow villagers free access to the pond and their farm lands.

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Rly dvn, route plans in cold store

Three minor siblings die of 'food poisoning'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Oct 15: The proposed establishment of a separate railway division in Silk City is lying in cold storage due to alleged apathy by the Centre and the state government, a report said.

Also, the construction of a rail route to Sambalpur from the city is also hanging fire for the above reason. As a result, the dream of residents in having a separate railway division in Berhampur and a rail route to Sambalpur lies unfulfilled.

Reports said both the Centre and the state government are implementing various plans for the benefit of people. However, many of the plans are never implemented or abandoned in the middle due to lack of willpower on part of both the governments.

Similar is the case of Berhampur where establishment of a railway division and a rail route to Sambalpur is hanging fire for long despite the city fulfilling necessary criteria for the projects. The government is showing no willpower for establishment of a railway division in the city and is backtracking on the issue, various outfits have alleged.

Sources said Berhampur is the second largest town in the state but has remained neglected on various fronts due to government apathy. The railway station in the city witnesses heavy traffic as people



THE AMBITIOUS PROJECT HAS BEEN A VICTIM OF RED-TAPISM. TRAVELLING OF THE RESIDENTS BETWEEN GANJAM, GAJAPATI AND KANDHAMAL DISTRICTS WOULD BE EASIER AND REDUCE TIME IF THESE RAIL ROUTES ARE CONSTRUCTED, OBSERVED MASM CONVENER ABANI KUMAR GAYA

BERHAMPUR IS BETTER SUITED FOR A RAILWAY DIVISION IN COMPARISON TO RAYAGADA, ABANI KUMAR GAYA, CONVENER OF MANAV ADHIKAR SURAKSHYA MANCH (MASM), A HUMAN RIGHTS OUTFIT, SAID

A PLAN FOR CONSTRUCTION OF BERHAMPUR-SAMBALPUR RAIL ROUTE IS ALSO LYING IN COLD STORAGE DESPITE SANCTION OF FUNDS. THE CENTRE APPROVED THE PROJECT HAVING A PLAN OUTLAY OF RS 2957 CRORE AND CONDUCTED A SURVEY IN 2004

from Ganjam, Gajapati, Kandhamal as well as from neighbouring Andhra Pradesh depend on the station to travel to their destinations.

The revenue collection from Berhampur railway station is highest in comparison to all other railway stations under the jurisdiction of east coast railway zone.

However, the dilly-dallying attitude of the government in establishment of the railway division and rail route has raised questions among people.

The state government has forwarded a proposal to the Union Railway Ministry for establishment of two railway divisions at

Rayagada and Jajpur. However, Berhampur is better suited for a railway division in comparison to Rayagada, Abani Kumar Gaya, convener of Manav Adhikar Surakshya Manch (MASM), a human rights outfit, said.

He said Berhampur is better placed socially, geographically, financially, transport and healthcare facilities as well as in trade and commerce for establishment of railway division.

He said the step-motherly attitude of both the Centre and the state government is responsible for the delay. He alleged that parties ruling at both the Centre and state

have betrayed the trust of the residents by not implementing these projects. He said, a case has been filed in the high court and if the projects are not implemented soon then a joint agitation and railroko will be launched.

He said the plan for construction of Berhampur-Sambalpur rail route is also lying in cold storage despite sanction of funds. The Centre approved the project having a plan outlay of Rs 2957 crore and conducted a survey in 2004. However, since then the project has failed to move ahead and is stuck in red-tapism.

Recently, the Centre has given

its approval to Berhampur-Talcher rail route project. The route to be constructed under a public-private partnership mode will pass through five tunnels, 40 long bridge, 154 small bridges and 20 stations like Jagannathpur, Kukudakhundi, Hinjilicut, Aska, Khandrabali, Basudevpur, Bhanjanagara, Mujagad, Phulbani, Lakrapaju, Sunamundi, Mundapada, Boudh, Kadaligarh, Redhakhole and finally Talcher.

He said travelling of the residents between Ganjam, Gajapati and Kandhamal districts would be easier and reduce time if these rail routes are constructed.



POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Oct 15: Three minor siblings of a family died due to alleged food poisoning at Kacheli village under Sadar block in Malkangiri district Thursday. Their younger sister and mother were also in critical condition and admitted to the district headquarters hospital for treatment.

The deceased have been identified as Sukanti Madi, 12, Sitaram Madi, 7, and Anjali Madi, 5, daughters and son of Bhime and Pandu Madi in the village. The incident has spread shockwaves in the area as a pall of gloom descended on the village after the tragic incident. Sources said the four children and their mother complained of uneasiness, vomiting and loose motion after having dinner in their home in the village Wednesday night. The ailing family members had reportedly consumed food preparations made

from wild roots and greens last night. They consulted a quack before medical treatment, locals said.

When their health condition started deteriorating, they consulted the ANM of the village. A team of doctors reached the village for the treatment of the family members following a phone call from the ANM. Seeing the condition of the family members, they immediately shifted the affected family members to the district headquarters hospital where Sukanti, Sitaram and Anjali succumbed to their illness while undergoing treatment.

Pandu's wife Bhime and youngest daughter Malati, 3, were administered treatment while the former was discharged after she showed signs of improvement. Malati is still undergoing treatment. A team of police officials led by IIC Ram Prasad Nag of Malkangiri Model police station sent the bodies for post-mortem.



ROAD BLOCKED

As Ajaygad ghat road near Namangad panchayat in Gajapati lies blocked with debris, communication to three panchayats was disrupted, Thursday. The administration is on its toes to remove the debris to facilitate communication as soon as possible

Cough syrup racket busted, 13,200 cough syrups seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Oct 15: Police busted a cough syrup smuggling racket and arrested five accused Wednesday. A total of 13,200 cough syrups worth Rs25lakh were also seized from their possession. Bargarh superintendent of police Padmini Sahu informed this at a press meet at the district police headquarters Thursday.

The police identified the accused as Shukru Mirdda of Talapadar village under Sasan police limits in Sambalpur district, Akash Kumbhar of Sasan area, Alok Moharana of Beherapali under Ainthapali police limits in

Sambalpur district and Shankardeb alias Deepak Seth and Sangram Sahu of Sodhapadar village in Bolangir district.

A racket has been actively working in western Odisha, it was alleged.

SP Sahu said, "Acting on a tip-off, Sohela police in Bargarh district conducted a raid in Haladipali Chowk area and found out a pick up van laden with cough syrup bottles packed in 110 cartons.

The vehicle and the bottles have been seized." Registering a case (No-161/20) against the accused, the police have launched a probe to trace if others are involved in the racket.

2 sisters jump into Tel river, go missing

POST NEWS NETWORK

Gudvela, Oct 15: Two girls, both sisters, went missing Thursday after they jumped into the Tel river under Tushura police limits in Bolangir district.

The siblings were identified as Anmol Agarwal, 22 and Anchal Agarwal, 19, daughters of Mahakumar Ramawatar Agarwal

Sources said the sister duo, residents of Gudvela area, jumped into the river by holding each other's hands leaving behind their scooter and two pairs of slippers.

Tushura police found a scooter and missing sisters' shoes on the bridge. The fire personnel launched a search operation in the river to rescue the two sisters.

Gambling den busted in Ganjam, 14 including 4 women arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Oct 15: Bada Bazaar police busted a gambling den at Lakshmi Vihar in Haridakhundi here in Ganjam district and arrested 15 persons, including four women and the owner of a house late Wednesday night.

Police also seized Rs 2.15 lakh, 12 mobile phones, a bike from the gamblers. They are yet to reveal the identities of the gamblers.

The accused were arrested during a raid at a house in the area, IIC Bhabnananda Pradhan said. The accused were found engaged in



gambling defying Covid restrictions. Suspecting some wrongdoing in the house, the neighbours had tipped off the police. The police immediately swung into action and a team was formed which con-

ducted raids at the house.

Gambling is considered a part of puja celebrations in the district. People of all ages in the district indulge in gambling and it generally starts from Ganesh Puja and continues till Kumar Purnima. Even parents ask their children to gamble during the festival and provide money to them to play the game.

Berhampur superintendent of police Pinak Mishra October 13 had stated that the police had arrested 216 gamblers, seized Rs15 lakh and registered 32 cases in this regard in the past 15 days.

Tito aide nabbed in Bhadrak; gun seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Oct 15: The Special Task Force (STF) arrested an aide of gangster Tito and dreaded criminal Sk Raja. The STF also seized a country-made pistol, live bullets, including a motorcycle and other incriminating material from his possession Wednesday evening.

According to police sources, acting on a tip-off the STF along with Bhadrak rural police raided Charampa bazaar area at 2 pm and arrested the aide of Tito.

Sk Raja, a native of Kendrapara was staying in Purunabazaar area and was actively involved in crimes. Several cases are pending against him, the police sources said.

Woman farmer bears lockdown brunt, seeks aid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bantala, Oct 15: A woman farmer of Poktunga village under Bantala police limits in Angul district had high hopes of making a handsome profit from her banana plantation. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has shattered her hopes.

Ashalata Pradhan, a widow, is hoping for some assistance from the government. She said if she doesn't get any financial assistance it will be impossible for her to continue farming.

Ashalata lost her husband, Amar, two-and-a-half years ago. She had

grown banana and other vegetables on five acres. Just at the time of harvest, COVID-19-induced restrictions were imposed, spelling doom for her. More than one thousand banana bunches perished and she suffered losses of more than Rs 1,00,000.

According to Ashalata, her husband used to grow banana and sell it in the market to run the family. After his demise, the responsibility of running the family fell on her shoulders. She could not think out a way as to how she could educate her three children - one son and two daughters.



Eventually, Ashalata decided to take up banana cultivation like her husband. She started growing crops on five acres at Jammutaila near Bada School. Two acres belonged to the family and she hired three acres from a neighbour. She had grown

banana on three acres and vegetables like egg plants, pointed gourds on the rest two acres. Last year, from the banana plantations she had earned a profit of Rs 70,000.

Eyeing better profits this year, she invested Rs2,00,000 in her farmland. She also engaged eight to 10 labourers on a daily wage basis to grow bananas. She had expected to sell over 1,000 banana bunches with the price of each varying between Rs 250 and Rs 300.

Due to the lockdown restrictions, traders could not visit her plantation and the fruits were left to rot on trees, she lamented.

Crorepati Hindi teacher arrested by Vig

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Oct 15: Vigilance officials Thursday arrested a Hindi teacher whose houses in Berhampur, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack were raided Wednesday and properties

worth nearly Rs 5 crore were seized.

Berhampur Vigilance SP Anil Patra said the vigilance officials of Berhampur division had conducted simultaneous raids at his houses at ten different locations in Berhampur, Bhubaneswar and

Puri Wednesday. During the raids, the officials detected the properties accumulated beyond his known sources of income. The Hindi teacher is identified as Bhubanananda Sahu of Jashoda High School at Jhadankuli.

Displaced people fume over unkept promises

DEMAND MORE COMPENSATION, AGRICULTURE LAND AS PER NEW R&R NORMS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, Oct 15: The families displaced by Harbhanga irrigation project under Mohana block in Gajapati district have decried their yet-to-be-unresolved problems and promises. They said they have allegedly been suffering for over 23 years after being displaced by the project.

The affected family members under the aegis of Harabhanga Bisthapita Mahasanga protested the government apathy toward their plight and submitted a memorandum to the district administration at Paralakhemundi Wednesday.

They pointed out that they have lost everything after being displaced by the project 23 years ago, but the promises they were given by the administration have remained unfulfilled till date.

They alleged that some people in the area had made a bid to grab their land they are cultivating for 23 years,



False cases have been filed against them as part of a conspiracy to grab the land. As a result, they are unable to harvest maize from the land, they lamented. They also said that they were exhausted from frequenting to the tehsil office to sort out the case, but the tehsildar instead of resolving the issues is making them run.

"Though we had sought details about the land status through RTI queries from the tehsildar, no information is being provided to them," they said. Besides, the irrigation project is not

beneficial to the Gajapati district, but more beneficial for the neighbouring district, they rued.

Notably, Harbhanga irrigation project was started in 1980 and was completed in 1998.

The government had promised a job to a member of each displaced family, 10 acres of land to each family, compensation for the trees, cattle, wells and financial assistance for five years. Housing units were promised to them, but it is yet to be fulfilled. "Due to a dishonest officer

of the irrigation department, financial assistance was thrown to the winds," they said. As per the resettlement and rehabilitation policy, youths over 18 years of age should be considered oustees and they should be paid compensation accordingly. 44 displaced people have not got compensation till date. Over 56 displaced families in six villages have not been provided any assistance. Many of them have died after years of suffering, the association said.

"The government has forgotten promises such as jobs for one member of the displaced families, free vocational training provision for the unemployed youth, special schools for the displaced people, provision of safe drinking water," they added.

They demanded revised compensation as per the new R&R policy, jobs for the families, providing 10 acres of agriculture land, permission for harvest and sale of maize on their land. "The government should keep their promises," they added.

SHORT TENDER NOTICE

NIT Ref. No.: KO/AHC/01/2020 Date: 15.10.2020
KOSISH, Plot No. 496/3023, Jagannath Math Marg, Hatasahi, Old Town, Bhubaneswar-751002, Odisha, invites Tender bids under Two Part system from Eligible and Experienced Contractors - A/B class for the Civil Work of Construction of Common Facility Centre for "Athmalik Handloom Cluster", At Kaladhuni, Kampa, Athmalik, Angul-759125, Odisha for SAKSHYAM (SPV). Detailed "Bid Documents" may be downloaded from website: www.kosish.org.in, and the bids can be submitted by 26.10.2020 (3.00 PM).

No. V.25011/213/2015-HR (Part-I)
Government of India
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
Department of Health Research
2nd Floor, Indian Red Cross Society Building
1, Red Cross Road, New Delhi-110001

Subject: Call for research proposals for financial support under "HRD Scheme for Health Research in the emerging fields of Medical/ Clinical/ Health Sciences" in year 2020-21. It has been decided to call online applications for full-length proposals under Human Resource Development Scheme for Health Research in the emerging fields of Medical/ Clinical/ Health Sciences for the financial year 2020-21.

More details including eligibility criteria, procedures for application and guidelines of the Scheme are available on www.dhr.gov.in and www.dhr.schemes.in.
Last Date for submission of Application: 16.11.2020.
Sd./- (G. A. Raghuvanshi)
davn 17301/11/0006/2021 Under Secretary to the Government of India

LOST

I, Sahabuddin Mollah S/o. Jaynal Abddin Mollah have lost my original sale deed bearing Doc. No. 15220 dtd: 05.09.2009 bearing Khata No. - 158, Plot No.- 482, Mouza- Jharapada and I wish to create mortgage over the said property for a loan from SBI, Jharapada Br. Code-12021, account will be maintained at RACPC, BBSR. If anybody find it kindly contact Laxmisagar PS or to me on my Mobile No. - 9861013365.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

(1) E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2020-16 Dt.: 09.10.2020
Name of the Work : TESTING AND SUBMISSION OF TESTING REPORT (BER CERTIFICATE) AGAINST DEFECTIVE 5 WATT WALKTALKIE SETS OF DIFFERENT MAKE KEPT AT SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER/TELE/SAMBALPUR'S OFFICE.
Tender Value: ₹ 2,55,671/-, EMD: ₹ 5,100/-

(2) E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2020-17 Dt.: 09.10.2020
Name of the Work : COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT OF ELECTRONIC INTERLOCKING SYSTEMS OF SIEMENS MAKE AT LAPANGA STATION OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION FOR THREE YEARS.

Tender Value : ₹ 20,46,921/-, EMD: ₹ 40,900/-, Cost of Tender document: ₹ 3,540/-
Tender closing date & time : at 1500 hrs. of 02.11.2020 (for both tenders).

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders.
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <http://www.ireps.gov.in>
Note : The prospective tenders are advised to visit the website 15 (fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender.
Divisional Railway Manager (S&T), Sambalpur
PR-297/L/20-21

FOCUS HISTORY

MARATHAS IN ODISHA



It is well-documented as to how the Marathas led by the Bhonsle chief of Nagpur plundered and despoiled this landmass during their half-a-century rule here – from 1751 to 1803 AD – turning the life of the inhabitants upside down through a mix of strong-arm tactics and plunder

Odisha, as it is known today, came into being as a unified province in 1948 following the unification of 27 princely states, carrying with it the scars of invasions, famines and natural calamities in iterations. The famine of 1866, for instance, killed a million people. Invasions ravaged the landmass and its people. The region, also known in history sheets as Utkala, still carries the wounds of these, principally the invasions by marauding armies from within and by the British through the instrument of the Bengal presidency.

The Marathas added a prominent chapter in the history of these invasions and engaged in outright loot. Yet, this remains a less-focused part of history books. It is well-documented as to how the Marathas led by the Bhonsle chief of Nagpur plundered and despoiled this landmass during their half a century's rule here – from 1751 to 1803 AD – turning the life of the inhabitants upside down through a mix of strong-arm tactics and plunder. It was the Nawab of Bengal, Alivardi Khan, who ceded the land to the Marathas. The Maratha rule in Odisha was essentially military in nature and a replica of the Mughal administration.

Odisha had in those days been divided into two political divisions – the Garajat or Gadjat states consisting of 24 tributary chieftains (puppets as leaders) and Mughalbandi, the coastal tract extending from Suvarnarekha in the north to the Chilika Lake in the south. Gadjat means where locals ruled from their Gadas (Ga is fort). Among the 24 feudatories (a system of holding land by payment of feudal fee) or princely states, the most powerful was the king of Khurda. The Rajas of Kanika, Dhenkanal, Ranapur, Badamba, Athagarh, Kujang, Aul and Mayurbhanj had also retained their relative importance during the regime of the Marathas.

Significantly, the Maratha governors did not poke their nose in the internal administration of these chiefs. The feudatories were paying tributes – a substantial gift of wealth, such as gold, farm produce, or slaves – to the Raja of Nagpur. The Mughalbandi, an area under

direct Mughal rule, was divided into 150 Paraganas or a group of villages or a subdivision of a district, which were left under the management of 32 Amils or local Diwans. Each Paragana was subdivided into two, three, four, or more Mahalas or allotments. The Amil or Revenue Commissioner was responsible for the assessment of revenue and entrusting charges to different officers for the revenue collection.

During the Maratha rule, the normal practice was to grant various allowances by way of money or land to the revenue officer together with other expenses for these collections and also authorise deductions in the expenses. Records show there was a surplus of about ₹4 lakh to be annually dispatched to the court of Nagpur.

In those times, people were paying rent based on the amount of land under cultivation. The Maratha government imposed heavy customs duties and discouraged cotton cultivation in Odisha. Its aim was to procure more rice from here to be sent to Nagpur. Paddy was cultivated in huge quantities here and was a main item of export to Bengal. The export of commodities from Odisha like sugar, textiles, muslin,

earthen pots and other handicrafts was a net addition to the economy of this province.

Under the Marathas, Odisha was producing salt in plenty due to the existence of a large saliferous tract along the coastal belt. A flourishing salt trade brought huge income to the Maratha government by way of annual revenue. This exceeded the amount of land revenue derived by them from this province. Towards the close of the 18th Century, an economic dispute unfolded on the issue of salt trade between the Maratha government in Odisha and the East India Company in Bengal. Irritated over this, the British decided to conquer Odisha.

During the Maratha rule, Odisha was well-connected by roads with Bengal, Madras, and Nagpur. Roads were made not for the benefit of the people but with the motive of controlling the administration in Odisha and Bengal from Nagpur. Roads were a source of income to the state. Taxes were collected at toll gates on the way from people coming from outside to Odisha. A Customs duty was also collected. For instance, a bullock load of silk was taxed at six rupees.

Notably, the Marathas were not pro-people but pro-Brahmin. They were often portrayed as agents of

Hindu nationalism. They gave priority to aspects like maintenance of the Lord Jagannath Temple in Puri, maybe to woo majoritarian Hindus and camouflage their repressive, nefarious and exploiting nature. Puri used to receive pilgrims from all over India. A pilgrim tax was imposed on them by the Marathas. Some ₹9 lakh – a huge amount in those times – came in as pilgrim tax from those visiting the Jagannath temple.

The Marathas were tyrannical. The one and single aim of the Bhonsle of Nagpur was to treat this land as a milching cow and extort maximum as rent from the local inhabitants. This infuriated the masses. The frequent change of governors made the administration of this land wobbly, shaky, and risky.

Allowing frequent march of the British troops through Odisha sparked a sense of trepidation and consternation in the local inhabitants' minds. Lawlessness prevailed and that was perhaps one reason why there began a mass upsurge against the Marathas. This helped the British to conquer Odisha in 1803.

(Part-II of this article to follow)
The writer is an Odisha-based columnist.



Dr. Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

THE ONE AND ONLY AIM OF THE BHONSLE OF NAGPUR WAS TO TREAT THIS LAND AS A MILCHING COW AND EXTORT THE MAXIMUM RENT FROM THE INHABITANTS. THIS ATTITUDE INFURIATED THE MASSES

Dud policy

The role of real estate sector in turning around the ongoing economic slump cannot be overestimated. Besides, the sector is a dynamo of employment. Because of its inter-linkages with other sectors and industries, a revival of the real estate sector in the country will open opportunities for other sectors leading to their revival. The Covid-19 induced lockdown in the country put paid to housing sector, throwing millions of people jobless. A major portion of the migrants, who headed back home post Covid-19 induced lockdown, had been employed in real estate businesses in metros and tier-II cities. These people constituted a major portion of the migrants who were mobilized between April and July this year. In light of this, the Reserve Bank of India has done well by rationalising the risk weights and loan-to-value (LTV) ratios of new housing loans to be sanctioned till March 31, 2022. This will free up more capital in banks which could be passed on to customers. This measure will address the urgency of funds required to boost the real estate sector in the country. Home loans will become accessible and cheaper for customers. Earlier, lenders looked at multiple factors before fixing the loan size to be disbursed to a customer. They included his credit profile. Lenders were also hamstrung by various regulatory caps. For example, if a bank underwrites a loan of ₹75 lakhs, the customer is asked to arrange ₹15 lakhs after which the lender chips in with ₹60 lakhs. The LTV would be ₹60 lakhs (value of the loan) divided by ₹75 lakhs (cost of the home purchased). The LTV will be 0.8 per cent. If the LTV increases the banks' risk weights for advances will also go up. Therefore, the risk size is linked to size of the loan as well as the loan to value (LTV) ratio. The rise in the LTC therefore will decrease the risk weight of a loan making it easy for banks to extend loans to prospective borrowers.

Having said this, it will be too simplistic to assume that banks will loosen their purse strings for home buyers. Policies are at one level but when it comes to practice, banks are free to decide. Earlier, the central bank had increased the loan to value (LTV) ratio for gold loans to 90 per cent from the earlier 75 per cent. This had been done to redress the economic sufferings of people in the wake of the pandemic. However, few banks followed the order. Ergo, the latest directive by the RBI with regard to home loans may face the same fate. Keeping the existing borrowers out of the new scheme is also not comprehensible. Existing borrowers may want more money against their punned properties which are in any case undervalued because of the lower LTV. The lenders should include the existing borrowers and pass on the benefits of the bigger LTV to them. Keeping such a large chunk of borrowers out of the benefits of the bigger LTV will not serve the full purpose of the measure. Raising the LTV of home loans will of course lower the risk weight of loans freeing banks of the obligations of larger provisioning, but it all depends on the risk appetite of banks. They are free to decide what they want to do with the idle capital. To assume that banks will lower the interest rates to encourage prospective home buyers to take loans as they will be left with more idle money will be too simplistic. Chances are that a rise in home LTV will face the similar fate of the rise in gold LTV. Policies can only make a difference for the beneficiaries if they are executed in letter and spirit. In case of banks, both PSBs and private ones, there is a huge wall between policies and practices.

WISDOM CORNER

- It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness. **LEO TOLSTOY**
- Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared. **LORD BUDDHA**
- Ignorance is the curse of God; knowledge is the wing wherewith we fly to heaven. **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

WORDSWORTH

Twitterpated

This lovely term appeared, slightly differently, in the article Sex in Space in Wired magazine on 18 May 2007: "How do you handle love, sex, romance, heart-break, jealousy, hurt, unrequited longing, crushes, loneliness and twitterpation when you're 18 months away from Earth and perhaps unsure whether you'll make it back?" It refers to the feelings of besottedness you get when you think about your current object of desire. A contributor to the Urban Dictionary defined it as "An enjoyable disorder characterized by feelings of excitement, anticipation, high hopes, and recent memories of interludes, giddiness, and physical overstimulation which occur simultaneously when experiencing a new love." One stimulus for its current popularity is that it appears in the film Bambi II, following on its invention in the original Bambi of 1942, in which Friend Owl says, "Nearly everybody gets twitterpated in the springtime." When the film first came out, the Oakland Tribune remarked that "Twitterpated" is perhaps the best adjective coined by Hollywood since the pixilated sisters were invented for 'Mr. Deeds Goes to Town.'" It also shows signs of becoming accepted, at least in the short term, as a mildly derogatory term for those obsessive communicators who use the online medium Twitter to tell their friends every small thing they're doing with their day.

Twixter

The cover story in Time Magazine of 24 January 2005 argued that a shift has taken place in the culture of young people between the ages of about 20 and 28, usually college graduates who are often unmarried and living at home, often with no settled employment. The article wasn't kind to them, calling them "permanent adolescents" and "twenty-something Peter Pans", stuck between childhood and the adult world; it also coined twixters for them because they were "betwixt and between", perhaps modelled on the established terms tweens and teenagers for those a little younger than teenagers. As the article implied, there's nothing particularly new in identifying this age group as one with special problems: psychologists have in the past coined terms such as kidult, youthhood, adulescent, emerging adulthood, and boomerang kid when writing about it, none of which have been especially successful in linguistic terms. The piece got a lot of attention, including criticism from members of the group, who argued that it was economics, not arrested development, which has led to their situation. It's too early to say whether twixter stands any greater chance of catching the public imagination than previous creations.

Two hoots

A hoot in this slangy sense is the tiniest little bit of something, a whit or jot. To care not even that much shows just how little you really do care about some matter. The original form – which started to appear in the 1870s – had just the one hoot, but it got doubled up later for dramatic effect, around the time that it started to be elaborated into phrases like I don't care a hoot in hell! It might refer specifically to the hoot of an owl but some examples suggest it's more general than that, most likely harking back to two senses known in the seventeenth century: either a loud cry or a shout of disapproval (as in hoots of derision). The owl hoot was taken from the human cry and doesn't appear until near the end of the eighteenth century; the slang sense of an amusing situation or person ("your mother's a real hoot!") is of the early 1920s.

LOL

ROMANCE

At night, as the lady lied down for sleep, there was a humming in her right ear. "Can we do some romance tonight? For, I'm in a good mood ..."



Just a little bit of kissing and biting!!
Hmmm... I can't wait...
Reply to me soon...
"Who you?"
"Yours Loving Mosquito."

SPECTRUM ASIA

US-India ties and 'elephant in the room'

The United States is nudging India into a closer bilateral security alliance as the latter continues to stand-off against China at the border. Also, the US faces Presidential election November 4. Obviously supporting India, the statements emanating from US officials disapprove of India's cautious approach to China.

The US National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien said, "Dialogues and negotiations will not work with China which amassed 60,000 troops on the Northern border". The deputy secretary of state Stephen Beigun visiting India from 12-14 prior to the 2+2 meeting on 26-27 this month said, "As we build the strategic partnership between US and India, there is an elephant in the room, China". Whereas the US seeks to confront China in alliance with India, is New Delhi ready for it?

The US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a radio interview that tensions have spiked between China and India after the hand-to-hand combat where 20 Indian troops died and China suffered casualties so far not disclosed. Pompeo asserted: "They (India) absolutely need the US to be their ally and partner in this fight". The world has awakened

and the tide has begun to turn. President Trump has built up a coalition that will counter the threat from China, maintain the rule of law and the basic civic decency that come from democracies running the world, not authoritarian regimes.

Characterising the growing India-US partnership, Beigun said, in his speech to a think tank in Delhi, "US" benefits from forging close links with countries like India that seeks to provide for their own defence. US own interests intersect with those of India. We have seen the conditions emerged for an organic and deeper partnership, fundamental alignment along shared security, shared interests, shared values and geo-political goals". He elaborated on the partnership and said that post-World War II alliance format requiring in-country US troops' presence may be no longer necessary.

This is a hint at accommodating India's foreign policy tradition of strategic autonomy, or giving India leeway to maintain its neutral posture. Beigun added, "The US benefits from an India that is strong and prosperous". He promised that the US was prepared to do more to strengthen India's ability to defend

itself by promoting inter-operability among the militaries of both countries through regular exercises and exchange, common defence platform and co-development. Cooperation can be achieved in multiple ways in view of advance technology shifts in global economic scenario and changing geo-politics.

The US strategy vis-à-vis China, is two-fold. One, to improve the resilience of US institutions, of alliances and partners to counter the challenges China presents. Second, it seeks to impose tangible costs in order to compel Beijing to stop actions harmful to America's national interests and those of its allies and partner-nations. In this context, one important partnership which will be one of the most key partnerships for the US in the 21st century is that with India.

It is time New Delhi looks at pooling of sovereignty for a common cause like it is in the European Union. A good many scholars and observers have suggested countries accepting limitations on their autonomy in a mutually beneficial alliance system for a greater goal. New Delhi can no longer be a lone ranger in international politics. In the Cold War time in 1970s

and 80s, New Delhi could play the role of mediator on many occasions. New Delhi should focus on building its economy up to the size of China before beginning to confront it by herself.

The US is talking of deepening and expanding the quadrilateral security dialogue called Quad, an informal group of India, Australia, Japan and US. The perspective on Quad articulated by Beigun suggests that any country wanting a free and open Indo-Pacific and is willing to contribute to it, is welcome to join the Quad.

New Delhi is maintaining friendly relations with all the other three Quad participants. But it is fighting shy of developing Quad into a security framework. New Delhi is bugged by this continuing dilemma of choosing between autonomy and alliance. It is somewhat treating 'autonomy' as a Hobson's choice. This is causing continued vulnerability and heavy costs on our security. The hangover of non-alignment affects the foreign policy establishment of our country.

(Part-I of this article to follow)
The writer is professor of International Relations, JMI.

Letters

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Corona spread in south

Sir, India's coronavirus active cases have decreased by 20 per cent since the peak of September 17. This is a matter of great relief. However, while cases in worst-hit Maharashtra decreased by 90,000, it is offset by Kerala's increase of 60,000 cases. Active cases now are in the range of 8.27 lakhs. Southern states are having 29 per cent of India's population but they account for 64 per cent of the active cases. Morbidity is also high in these states; some 64 per cent of India's Covid-linked deaths. If the health care parameters in these states are better as is often reported, it is surprising how the rate of deaths there are more.

Gopal Prasad Mittal,
BHUBANESWAR

EVs, power outage

Sir, The central government has set the ambitious goal of the nation manufacturing and releasing only Electric Vehicles (EV) by 2030, decreasing the reliance on crude oil and pushing the cause of clean energy and fuel. On the one hand, we have skyrocketing aspirations of turning the nation 100 per cent EV by 2030 and on the other, we witness abrupt power outage in the whole of Mumbai and adjacent areas by more than two hours. The latter contradicts the former. We need to create an atmosphere like Vietnam and Taiwan for accomplishing the status of India being a major global manufacturing hub. At a time when our home-grown start-ups are making others bite the dust and attracting enormous investments from abroad, why go after foreign companies? Our nation has the potential to become "Vishwaguru" again on its own.

Rahul Chouhan, UJJAIN

Ayushman Bharat, diseases

Sir, A total of 21 diseases are covered under the Disability Act 2016 and out of these, two are covered under the Ayushman Bharat rare diseases group, where, on a one-time basis, reimbursement of ₹15 lakh is allowed. Two other diseases are sickle cell anemia and spinal dystrophy. The government has passed this scheme of reimbursement after a detailed study which found that treatment for these diseases would involve too much of expenditure not within the reach of the common man. Out of these diseases, two are multiple sclerosis and Parkinson' which have no treatment. A review of the scheme is essential to ensure that all the needy get benefits from such central endeavours.

Yash Pal Rattan,
JALANDHAR

Hyd yet to get back on its feet

MANY COLONIES IN THE RAIN BATTERED CITY REMAIN UNDERWATER

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, Oct 15: Many colonies in Hyderabad and suburbs remained under water Thursday while Army and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel continued rescue and relief work in the flood-hit areas.

Clear skies provided respite to the city battered by heavy rains in the intervening night of October 13-14 but the areas abutting overflowing lakes and nullas remained inundated while traffic on damaged highways was to be restored.

Personnel of Army, NDRF and Disaster Response Force (DRF) of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation continued rescue and relief works in the worst-affected areas. People trapped in marooned houses were being shifted to safe places through boats.

One of the worst floods in the city's history has so far claimed 19 lives while five others are missing. Colonies in Chandrayangutta in the old city of Hyderabad, Chaderghat and Moosarambagh on the banks of Musi river, Uppal and Vanasthalipuram on the city outskirts were still under the flood waters. Following release of surplus water from Himayat Sagar upstream, Musi river was flowing dangerously at Moosarambagh, flooding adjacent areas.

Officials were working to save Palle Cheru lake from breach at Mailardevpally. Sand bags were arranged to strengthen the embankment. Ranga Reddy district collector Amoy Kumar and Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar were supervising the efforts.

People living in areas surrounding the lake were alerted to move to safe places. A part of the bund had breached following heavy rains Tuesday night, inundating Ali Nagar area. Eight members of a family were washed away while trying to wade through flood water in Ali Nagar Wednesday. Bodies of three people were found while the search was on for others.

Some colonies in Manikonda area were also inundated due to an overflowing Firangi nala. With cellars of the buildings completely submerged, residents of the apartments were waiting for help.

Several colonies in Uppal, Boduppall, Ramanthapur, Peerzadiguda and Ghatkesar also remained inundated. Road connectivity to many areas in the city remained disrupted due to inundation. Traffic is also yet to be restored on the highways. Authorities were trying to repair Hyderabad-Bangalore highway which was badly damaged at Gaganpahad.



WHEN IT RAINED WOES

19 people died in a wall collapse late Tuesday in Bandlaguda
10 people were killed in other incidents like drowning and electrocution

The state government has already declared two-day holiday Wednesday and Thursday to all private institutions, offices, non essential services within Outer Ring Road (ORR) with work from home advisory. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will review the flood situation in Hyderabad and other parts of the state at a high-level meeting to be held later in the day.

The Chief Minister asked all the officials concerned to come prepared for the meeting, as the state government has to submit a report to the Centre on the loss caused due to heavy rains and flash floods in the state.

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The D-gang 'connection' in Kerala gold smuggling

AGENCIES

Kochi, Oct 15: In a major development in the Kerala gold smuggling case, the NIA has found links between one of the accused and India's most wanted underworld don Dawood Ibrahim Kaskar and his gang, a report said.

The National Investigation Agency probe has revealed that as one of the accused visited Tanzania, where the 1993 Mumbai accused has vast networks, to launch his diamond business and to smuggle firearms.

The submissions were made by the anti-terror probe agency in a Special NIA court here Wednesday. "KT Ramees and M Sharafuddin visited Tanzania on several occasions and met one of Dawood's close aide Feroze 'Oasis' and discussed ways to smuggle firearms into the country," an NIA official related to the probe told IANS.

The official said that Ramees visited Tanzania first in 2016 to start a diamond business there. He then also smuggled one kilo gold from Tanzania to the UAE in 2017.

Ramees was caught with 13 smuggled revolvers at the Kozhikode airport in November 2019 while returning from Dubai, he added. Ramees had brought the guns for the Palakkad rifle club, it was alleged, however, the charge was denied by the rifle club.

Another NIA official said that they are checking all the details of Ramees, as he has been linked to



KT Ramees and M Sharafuddin visited Tanzania on several occasions and met one of Dawood's close aide Feroze 'Oasis'

NIA OFFICIAL SAYS

- Ramees and Sharafuddin discussed ways to smuggle firearms into India
- Ramees visited Tanzania first in 2016 to start a diamond business there
- He smuggled one kilo gold from Tanzania to the UAE in 2017

gold smuggling as well as firearms smuggling. The gold smuggling case first surfaced when PS Sarith, a former employee of the UAE Consulate here, was arrested by the Customs Department July 5 when he was allegedly facilitating the smuggling of 30 kg gold in a diplomatic baggage from Dubai to Thiruvananthapuram.

The case became murkier when Swapna Suresh, a former employee of the UAE Consulate and later employed with the Kerala IT Department, came to light. Her links stretched to the Chief Minister as she had links to M Sivasankar, Kerala's senior IAS official and secretary to Pinarayi Vijayan. She

later revealed that Sivasankar was her mentor.

After his links with Swapna surfaced, Vijayan first removed Sivasankar from the post of his secretary and also the State IT secretary and later suspended him from service.

While Suresh and her accomplice Sandip Nair, were arrested from their hideout in Bangalore five days later. A multi-agency team started probing the case and 30 people have been arrested so far. Besides the NIA, ED, DRI, Customs and Income Tax are also part of the investigation. The ED has questioned Kerala Higher Education Minister KT Jaleel in connection with this.

Telangana has been reporting less nCoV infections, but how

Answer: The state is conducting fewer tests



During the last 24 hours ending 8 pm Wednesday, the authorities conducted 38,895 tests

This was against the daily average of 55,000 to 60,000 samples tested over the last couple of months

There was no official word for conducting fewer tests

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, Oct 15: Telangana has slashed the number of daily Covid-19 tests in the last few days which have resulted in fewer cases being reported, a report said.

During the last 24 hours ending 8 pm Wednesday the authorities conducted 38,895 tests against daily average of 55,000 to 60,000 samples tested over the last couple of months. There was no official word for conducting fewer tests.

As a result of the drop in the number of tests, the state is consistently reporting a daily count of less than 2,000 cases. Thursday, the state reported 1,432 positive cases.

The previous day, 40,056 tests were conducted. Only 30,000 tests were conducted Saturday-Sunday. The latest infections rose the cumulative tally to 2,17,670. Of this 23,203 are active including 19,084 who are in home isolation.

The state continues to see more recoveries from Covid-19 than the new infections.

As many as 1,949 people recovered from the virus during the last 24 hours, taking the total number of recoveries to 1,93,218.

The state's recovery rate climbed further to 88.76 per cent against the national average of 87.3 per cent.

Eight more people succumbed to the virus during the period, pushing the death toll to 1,249.

The fatality rate remains at 0.57 per cent against the national average of 1.5 per cent.

Officials said the percentage of deaths due to Covid-19 was 44.96 while the remaining 55.04 had comorbidities.

Of 38,895 samples tested, 17,113 were primary and 4,667 secondary. According to a media bulletin from

the office of the director of public health and family welfare, 36,362 tests were conducted in government-run laboratories and 2,533 in private.

Seventeen government-run laboratories, 44 private laboratories and 1,076 Rapid Antigen test centres are conducting the tests.

Samples tested per million population ratio rose further to 99,490. The daily testing target for the state is 5,600 per day as per the World Health Organisation (WHO) benchmark of 140 per million per day.

Out of 2,17,670 total positive cases so far, 70 per cent (1,52,369) were asymptomatic while the remaining 30 per cent (65,301) were symptomatic. Of the new cases registered during the last 24 hours, Greater Hyderabad accounted for 244 cases. Medchal Malkajigiri district recorded second highest number of cases at 115 followed by Bhadradi Kothagudem (99), Khammam (91), Rangareddy (88), Karimnagar (74), Nalgonda (74), Khammam (52) and Suryapet (53).

The data shows that 63.9 per cent of those tested positive so far are in the age group of 21-50 years while 22.91 are above 51 years of age. Those below 20 years are 13.18 per cent.

Officials said 64.64 per cent of those tested positive were male while the remaining 38.37 per cent were female.

The data also shows most of the beds in government and private hospitals treating Covid patients are vacant.

Out of total 8,792 beds in 62 government-run Covid hospitals, 7,095 are vacant.

A total 228 private hospitals treating Covid patients have 9,037 beds, of which 6,615 are vacant.

WAYANAD ADMIN SAYS 'NO' TO RAHUL'S INAUGURATION EVENT

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 15: In Kerala, politics comes first and then comes everything else. This was again evident Thursday when a planned online inauguration of a school building by Wayanad Lok Sabha member Rahul Gandhi failed to take place.

Speaking to IANS, Wayanad district Congress committee president IC Balakrishnan said the inauguration of a new school building at the state-run



...the district administration called him (Rahul Gandhi) up and said that since protocols have to be followed and the State Education Minister and others have to be informed, it has to be cancelled

Munderi School built at a cost of Rs1.20 crore, scheduled for 10.15 am by Gandhi did not happen as the district administration did not give it clearance. "70 per cent of the funds for this new school building came under the Central alloca-

tion and the rest came from the state government. The local body at the location is ruled by the Left and its chairperson wrote to Gandhi and asked for his time. Gandhi said he will be able to do it October 15 and it was fixed," said Balakrishnan.

"But the district administration called him up and said that since protocols have to be followed and the State Education Minister and others have to be informed, it has to be cancelled. We had no other option but to call off all the arrangements made by the school Parents Teachers Association," added Balakrishnan, who is also a Congress legislator from the district. The local Congress party expressed their ire after the earlier planned inauguration was called off.

3 weeks after receiving Jnanpith, Mahakavi Akkitham passes away

Akkitham's literary works began to gain wide attention in the early 1950s

AGENCIES

Thrissur, Oct 15: Renowned Malayalam poet and Jnanpith award winner Akkitham Achuthan Namboothiri, who is said to have heralded modernism in Malayalam poetry, died at a private hospital here Thursday.

He was 94. A widower, the Mahakavi (great poet), as he was known, leaves two sons and four daughters.

Hospital sources said he was admitted for age-related ailments a couple of days ago and the end came at 8.10 am.

Popularly known as Akkitham, his 'Irupatham Noottandinte Ithihasam' (Epic of the 20th Century) is considered as one of the first truly modernist poems in Malayalam literature.

A popular verse—"Velicham dukhamanunni, thamasallo sukhapradam," which is roughly translated as "light brings sorrow, my child, darkness is bliss" is like a proverb for Keralites. It is also interpreted as "worldly knowledge is pain my child, ignorance is bliss."

He penned around 45 books, comprising poetry anthologies, plays and short stories including 'Balidrasanam' (The Vision of Bali), 'Arangattam', 'Nimisha Kshetram', 'Idinju Polinja Lokam', 'Amrita Ghatika', and 'Kalikkottilil' and many more.

Akkitham had bagged the Jnanpith award, the highest literary award, in 2019 and is the sixth



writer to bring the honour for Malayalam literature.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the award was presented to him last month at a function at his home in Kumaranalloor in Palakkad district. Among the numerous awards which came his way are Padma Shri, Ezhuthachan Award, Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award, Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award for Poetry, Odakkuzhal Award, Vallathol Award and Vayalar Award.

Born March 18, 1926 in a traditional Namboothiri family, Akkitham, was a true Gandhian, social reformer and journalist, and had worked as an editor in various magazines before joining the All India Radio (AIR) in 1956 at Kozhikode.

Akkitham's wife, Sreedevi Anantharaman, had passed away last year, aged 85.

Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan expressed grief over the death.

Condoling the death, Khan said the poet's demise was a loss for India literature and Malayalam poetry.

"...With roots firm on Indian thought, he played a role in bringing modern sensibility to Malayalam poetry...He represented the loftiest ideals of poetic tradition, with utmost respect for Indian values & tradition deeply reflecting in his poems (sic)," Khan tweeted.

Vijayan said Akkitham was a great poet who stood for sublime human love.

"He was a poet who wished for unconditional love to be the foundation for the universe and translated that wish into his poetry."

Considered synonymous with an era in Malayalam literary history, Akkitham ushered in modernity into Malayalam poetry through his works, 'Irupatham Noottandinte Ithihasam' and 'Idinju Polinja Lokam,'" Vijayan said in his condolence message.

Heavy rains cause collapse of T'gana's historic Shahpur fort

No one was injured as the residents had vacated the house after cracks in the fort widened



AGENCIES

Hyderabad, Oct 15: A large portion of the historic Shahpur fort in Telangana's Jangaon district collapsed Thursday.

Three houses were damaged under the debris of the fort. However, no one was injured as the residents had vacated the house after cracks in the fort widened following heavy rains during the last few days.

A video of the fort's collapse went viral on social media. Locals can be heard screaming as the dilapidated structure caved in.

Popular as Qila Shahpur, the

hill fort was located in Raghunathapalli mandal of Jangaon district.

It was built in 1690s by Sardar Sarvai Papanna Goud, who along with nearly 4,000 men had attacked Warangal in 1708 after the death of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

It is said that the fort was blown up by the forces led by Dil Khan, then deputy governor Hyderabad. Papanna Goud later rebuilt the fort.

According to historians, Papanna Goud and his men were besieged four times while occupying the fort. He was captured and executed in 1710.

CM asks Keralites to make the state carbon-neutral by setting up greenhouses

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 15: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the state should transform itself into a carbon-neutral region by setting up greenhouses.

Inaugurating through video conference the 1,261st greenhouse set up here by the Haritha Kerala Mission, he said though the target was to construct 1,000 greenhouses, it was an achievement that 1,261 had been set up in an area of over 454 acres.

"Greenhouses are our great contribution to future generations. Every year, more greenhouses should be set up in this manner and it will be possible with the co-operation of local bodies and the people," he said.

Thousand more greenhouses are to be established. If there is no public space, interested persons should be encouraged to put up greenhouses in their place, added Vijayan. Each greenhouse was set

up by selecting plants suitable for each area.

The first greenhouse containing rare herbaceous plants was established at Vengode, Pothencode, in Thiruvananthapuram with the help of the botanical garden at Palode.

In some places, there were only bamboo shoots and in the backwaters and beaches, mangroves and allied trees were planted in the greenhouses.

The stalks have expanded and green stems have come creating a visible change in the habitat in the last one year.

The greenhouses of the mangroves in Kumarakom have made a positive difference to the fishing ecosystem there.

The plants are maintained for three years as part of the project, he said. CPI leader and MLA C Divakaran planted a tree-sapling at the 1,261st greenhouse at Nedumangad block in Thiruvananthapuram district.



Greenhouses are our great contribution to future generations. Every year, more greenhouses should be set up in this manner and it will be possible with the cooperation of local bodies and the people

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CHIEF MINISTER

PB FARMERS TO HOLD STATE-WIDE PROTESTS

Less than 24 hours after the talks between the Centre and representatives of farmer unions ended on a stormy note, farmers belong to 29 organisations Thursday declared they would intensify their non-violent stir and announced state-wide protests in Punjab October 17 against the three farm laws passed by Parliament



of the day quote

Moves to finish off the film industry or shift it elsewhere will never be tolerated



UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

The Chief Minister of Maharashtra who says he does not need anyone's certificate to prove his Hindutva



credentials should take a courageous step to shut down the state-funded Madrasas that propagate radical religious teachings

ATUL BHATKALKAR | BJP MLA

Focus must be on to instil a sense of security among the people and there should be healthy coordination among the armed forces and state (Arunachal Pradesh) police for effective results



BRIG (RETD) DR B D MISHRA | ARUNACHAL PRADESH GOVERNOR

SHORT TAKES

3 Bangladeshi women rescued

Thane: A 42-year-old man was arrested for allegedly holding three Bangladeshi women captive for flesh trade in Maharashtra's Thane city, police said Thursday. Acting on a specific information, the Thane police raided a flat in Dharamveer Nagar locality last week and rescued three Bangladeshi women aged between 20 and 30 years, an official said.

Varavara Rao's wife moves SC

New Delhi: The wife of Telugu poet and writer Varavara Rao, arrested in connection with the Elgar Parishad-Koregaon Bhima case, moved the Supreme Court Thursday seeking bail for him, claiming that his continued custody amounted to cruel and inhuman treatment. The petition, filed by Pendyala Hemalatha, urged the court that during the pendency of the petition, the 81-year-old accused be released on temporary medical bail and be allowed to travel to Hyderabad to be with his family and loved ones.

Dalit woman found dead

Barabanki (UP): An 18-year-old Dalit woman was found dead in an agricultural field in Uttar Pradesh's Barabanki, police said Thursday. Police said the incident took place at a village under the Satrikh police station area and it seemed the victim was strangled. More details will be known only after getting the post-mortem examination report, police said.

India joins hands with Netherlands

New Delhi: India and the Netherlands Thursday unveiled plans for a joint thrust in the e-health sector, with the aim of providing digital health facilities and security to every Indian. This cooperative initiative will see the two countries work closely to create capacities and put in place the requisite technology backbone to enable this revolutionary initiative.

Prisoner killed

Ahmedabad: A 30-year-old prisoner was allegedly killed by a fellow inmate during a scuffle over a petty issue in Gujarat's Vadodra Central Jail, an official said Thursday. Azaharuddin alias Aju Kaniya was killed by Sunil Parmar following a heated altercation over a petty issue Wednesday, deputy superintendent of jail Vishnu Patel said.

China has no locus standi to comment on Ladakh, J&K: MEA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: India Thursday asserted that the union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh "have been, are, and would" remain an integral part of the country, insisting that China has no locus standi to comment on its internal matters.

The comments by External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava came in response to China's contention that it does not recognise the union territory of Ladakh as well as the state of Arunachal Pradesh. "Our position on this has always been clear and consistent."

"The union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have been, are, and would remain an integral part of India. China has no locus standi to comment on India's internal matters, as much as they expect the same of others," he added. Srivastava also said that Arunachal Pradesh is an "integral and inalienable" part of India. "Our position on Arunachal Pradesh has also been made clear several



times. Arunachal Pradesh is an integral and inalienable part of India. This fact has also been clearly conveyed to the Chinese side on several occasions, including at the highest level," he added. After Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a number of new bridges in certain border areas Monday, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said China does not recognise the Ladakh union territory 'illegally set up' by India as well as Arunachal Pradesh.

The Chinese spokesperson had also claimed that development of border infrastructure by India was the 'root cause' of tensions between the two countries. On the border standoff in eastern Ladakh and the outcome of the bilateral military talks, Srivastava referred to a

joint press statement issued by the two armies after their dialogue October 12, calling the meeting "positive and constructive". "Disengagement is a complex process that requires redeployment of troops by each side towards their regular posts on their respective sides of the LAC," Srivastava said. "To achieve this, the two sides will maintain the current momentum of communications based on the guidance of our leadership to not to turn differences into disputes and work towards a mutually acceptable solution for complete disengagement in all the friction areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and restoration of peace and tranquility in the India-China border areas," he added.

Fresh SOPs for cultural events

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: The Culture Ministry released a new set of SOPs Thursday for organising cultural programmes with adequate safety measures, making it mandatory for artistes and crew to furnish a valid Covid-negative test certificate, barring entry of visitors and patrons without masks and allowing seating on only 50 per cent seats for the audience.

The Standard Operating Procedures are to be followed by the management of theatres and host institutions as well as the entertainment or creative agencies, artistes, crew or any other person who hire an auditorium or any other open/closed space for cultural events, the ministry said. It said digital no-contact transactions should be preferred to issue, verify, or pay for tickets, and contact details of all customers should be taken at the time of booking of tickets to facilitate contact-tracing. For viewers, the guidelines said, wearing masks is mandatory and physical distancing of at least 6 feet is to be followed at all times. For the organisers, the SOP included sanitisation of venue before and after the event, availability of hand sanitisers, preferably in the touch-free mode, at entry and exit points as well as common areas within the premises.

IAF team in France to review Rafale project

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: As it prepares to induct a second batch of Rafale jets, the Indian Air Force has sent a team of officials to France to oversee the logistical issues and review the training of a hand-picked group of pilots at the Saint-Dizier air base there, officials said Thursday.

The second batch of four Rafale jets is expected to arrive in India in the next four weeks. The first batch of five Rafale jets arrived in India July 29, nearly four years after India signed an inter-governmental agreement with France to procure 36 of these aircraft at a cost of Rs 59,000 crore.

Several teams from the IAF have visited France since January to oversee the progress of the Rafale project including integration of India-specific enhancements and weapons systems, the officials said. The IAF's Rafale project management team has an office in Paris headed by a Group Captain-rank officer. The team is tasked with overseeing the production timelines as well as coordinating training of the crew.

A team of experts headed by assistant chief of air staff (projects) reached France earlier this week to coordinate logistical issues as well



as training of pilots and technicians, said the officials. The first batch of Rafale jets was finally inducted into the IAF September 10. Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria on October 5 said the induction of all 36 Rafale jets will be completed by 2023.

Ten Rafale jets have been delivered to India so far and five of them stayed back in France for imparting training to IAF pilots. Known for their air-superiority and precision strikes, the Rafale jets are India's first major acquisition of fighter planes in 23 year after the Sukhoi jets were imported from Russia.

The newly inducted fleet has been carrying out sorties in eastern Ladakh where Indian and Chinese troops are engaged in a bitter border row for over five months. A group of IAF pilots is currently undergoing training on Rafale jets at the Saint-Dizier air-base in eastern France.

Lokpal has no power to review its order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: Anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal has held that review petitions regarding an order passed by its bench cannot be entertained due to the absence of related provisions in the law governing it, according to an official order.

The move comes after the Lokpal witnessed an increasing number of complainants desirous of a "reconsideration" or "review" of the orders passed by it. A committee comprising three Lokpal members - Justices Abhilasha Kumari, D.K Jain and I.P Gautam - was constituted to look into the aspect of recommending a policy regarding requests for a review of an order passed by the bench.

The committee, which was formed by Lokpal chairperson Pinaki Chandra Ghose, submitted its reports October 6, 2020. "The committee has opined that in the absence of any express and substantive power of review in the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, a request for review of an order passed by a bench of the Lokpal of India cannot be entertained," said the order issued Monday.

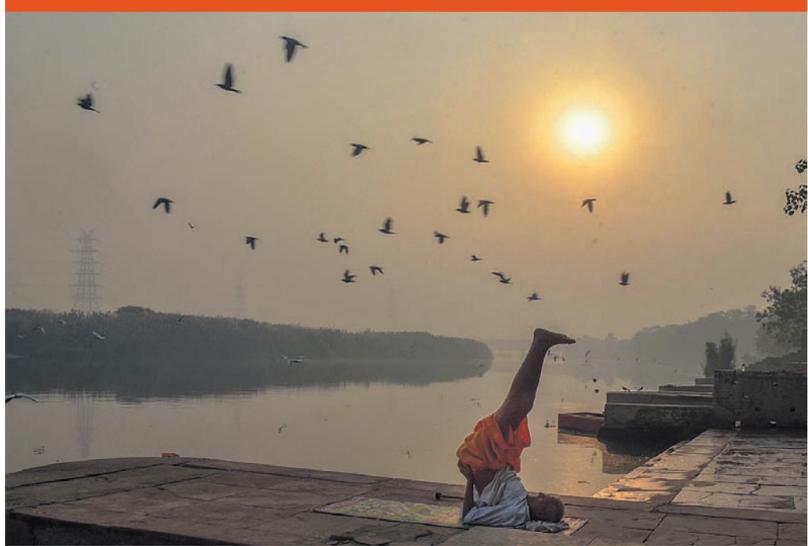
Hence, it is notified that review petitions regarding an order passed by the bench of Lokpal of India will not be entertained,

it said. The committee, in its report, said that the central government may be requested to consider the inclusion of power of review in the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act. In view of the fact that a large number of complainants are filing applications for review of an order, the lack of an express power of review in the Act may act as a deterrent to the dispensation of justice, it said. "Therefore, in order to ensure that no injustice has occurred to the complainant and in the interest of justice, it may be in the interest of things to request the government of India, at an appropriate stage, to consider the inclusion of the power of review on appropriate grounds, in the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013," the report said.

The institution of Lokpal and Lokayuktas has been established under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 to enquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries. The jurisdiction of review can only be derived from the statute and thus, if any order of review is passed, in the absence of any statutory provision empowering the same, it would be a nullity, being without jurisdiction, said the panel, which had held its meeting September 29, citing a Supreme Court order.



HEALTH IS WEALTH



A man does exercises at Yamuna ghat amid hazy weather conditions, in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

CBI refutes closure of SSR case

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 15: Amid some media reports that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is likely to file a closure report in Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death case, the federal agency Thursday refuted the claims and said that such reports are "erroneous" and the investigation is still continuing.

CBI spokesperson RK Gaur said in a statement. "CBI continues to investigate the death of Sushant. There are certain speculative reports in the media that the CBI has reached a conclusion. It may be reiterated that these reports are speculative and erroneous." The remarks came amid media speculation that the agency will be filing a closure report soon.

Earlier, the forensic team of the All India Institute of Medical



Sciences (AIIMS) led by Sudhir Gupta had ruled out the murder angle in the actor's death case. The CBI had registered a case on August 6 after a notification from the Centre on the request of the Bihar government based on a complaint filed by Sushant's father KK Singh in Patna.

The CBI sleuths, along with the AIIMS forensic team, visited

Mumbai August 20, a day after the Supreme Court gave its nod for a federal agency probe. The CBI team recorded the statements of Sushant's girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik, the late actor's house manager Samuel Miranda, flatmate Siddharth Pithani, personal staff Neeraj Singh, Keshav Bachane and Dipesh Sawant, Sushant's former manager Shruti Modi, talent manager Jaya Saha and several others. Sushant was found dead in his Bandra's apartment June 14. Besides the CBI, the Enforcement Directorate and the Narcotics Control Bureau are also probing the money laundering and drugs angle in connection with the actor's death, respectively. Rhea was arrested by the NCB in a drugs related case. She was granted bail after spending 28 days in Byculla jail, while her brother Showik is still lodged in the jail.

Handwashing an effective tool to prevent COVID: WHO

To beat the virus today and ensure better health outcomes beyond the pandemic, handwashing with soap must be a priority now and in the future

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 15: Ten months into the pandemic, handwashing with soap remains one of our best defences against the virus, along with other public health measures such as maintaining physical distance, avoiding crowded places, practising cough etiquette and wearing a mask wherever recommended.

Global Handwashing Day observed annually October 15 to raise awareness and highlight the importance of handwashing as an effective means of disease prevention - this year marks a critical reminder



for the world that this simple, cost effective practice can save lives. "Handwashing has always been one of the most effective ways of keeping diseases at bay. It is a simple act that pays in dividends when

it comes to keeping ourselves healthy and safe. Handwashing is also one of the key cornerstones of Covid-19 prevention," said Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region. She added, "Now more than ever as we embrace the new normal and live with COVID-19, hand hygiene needs to become an integral part of our daily routine and our lives, as we live through this pandemic, and beyond, to protect us from diseases."

With COVID-19 transmission mainly spreading between people through direct, indirect or close contact with infected people via

mouth and nose secretions, washing hands with soap and running water is of critical importance.

To stop the spread of COVID-19, along with other COVID appropriate behaviours, the practice of handwashing at regular intervals is a must, after coughing or sneezing, when caring for the sick, after using the toilet, before eating, while preparing food and after handling animals or animal waste. Handwashing after touching common surfaces such as doorknobs or handles, or after one comes back home from visiting a public place will keep ourselves and others around us

Millions of urban Indians at risk: UNICEF

Around 91 million urban Indians lack basic handwashing facilities at home, UNICEF has said while noting that washing of hands with soap is critical in the fight against infectious diseases like COVID-19. In a statement released on the occasion of Global Handwashing Day, UNICEF said lack of handwashing with soap puts millions at increased risk to COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. "In Central and South Asia, 22 per cent of people in urban areas, or 153 million people, lack access to handwashing. Nearly 50 per cent of urban Bangladeshis, or 29 million people; and 20 per cent of urban Indians or 91 million, lack basic handwashing facilities at home," it said.

safe. This year's Global Handwashing Day theme is 'Hand Hygiene for All' and calls for all of society to achieve universal hand hygiene.

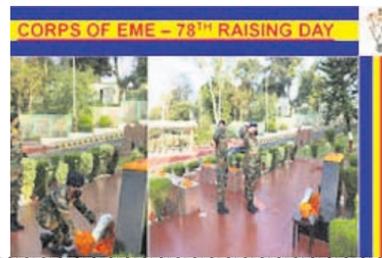
To beat the virus today and ensure better health outcomes beyond the pandemic, handwashing with soap must be a priority now and in the future.



Young and healthy people may have to wait till 2022 to get the Covid-19 vaccine
Soumya Swaminathan | WHO Chief Scientist

78TH EME CORPS DAY

The Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) of the Indian Army commemorated its 78th year of raising at the Western Command headquarters at Chandimandir near here Thursday



of the day quote

India is prominently becoming a global education hub and the National Education Policy 2020 is making sure the academicians will study in India and stay in India. Soon, the world will come to India to learn



RAMESH POKHRIYAL | UNION EDUCATION MINISTER

It must be kept in mind that the BJP has never been a fan of Nitish Kumar's style of politics. He has harmed the Dalits by creating a sub-group of Mahadalits for his own political gains



CHIRAG PASWAN | LJP PRESIDENT

The Congress got restless as the Modi government in the last parliament session gave farmers the freedom to sell their crop in any city or village, to any person or organisation



SMRITI IRANI | UNION MINISTER

STEP TOWARDS HEALTHY LIFE



Delhi University students and Sulabh volunteers demonstrate hand-washing techniques during a campaign to mark the Global Handwashing Day, in the backdrop of historic Taj Mahal, in Agra

PTI PHOTO

J&K parties come together for special status

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Oct 15: Mainstream political parties in Jammu and Kashmir Thursday held a meeting and formed an alliance for restoration of the special status of the erstwhile state as it existed before August 5 last year and also to initiate a dialogue between all stakeholders in the issue.

The meeting was held at the residence of National Conference president Farooq Abdullah and attended by PDP president Mehbooba Mufti, Peoples Conference chairman Sajad Lone, Peoples Movement leader Javid Mir and CPIM leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami.

Briefing reporters after the nearly two-hour meeting, Abdullah said the leaders decided to formalise the alliance, that has been named 'Peoples' Alliance for Gupkar Declaration'.

The National Conference president said the alliance will strive for restoration of the constitutional position in respect of Jammu and Kashmir as it existed before August 5 last year.

"We shall struggle for restoration of what was snatched from Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh. Ours is a constitutional battle... we would strive for restoration of the constitution (with regard to Jammu and Kashmir) as it existed on August 5, 2019," he said. Abdullah said the alliance also seeks a dialogue between all stakeholders for resolution of the issue pertaining to

Jammu and Kashmir:

"We will be informing you about the future course of action in due course," he added. National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah and other senior leaders of the party were also present at the meeting. JKPC chief Ghulam Ahmad Mir could not attend the meeting "due to medical reasons". A spokesperson of the party said Mir had conveyed his inability to attend the meeting to Farooq Abdullah as the Congress leader was advised by doctors to get himself medically examined including a COVID screening.

Abdullah said the meeting congratulated the PDP president on her release from 14 months of detention which they said was "completely illegal and unjustified".

On August 4 last year, all major political parties in Kashmir, except BJP, had met at the residence of Farooq Abdullah amidst uncertainty and tension in the erstwhile state as the Centre had rushed additional paramilitary forces there while asking all tourists including Amarnath pilgrims to leave the Valley as soon as possible.

The joint statement issued by the political parties, expressing concern over the situation, came to be known as the Gupkar Declaration.

The Centre revoked the special constitutional status of the state and also bifurcated it into two union territories - Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.



No message sent to Pak for talks: MEA



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: India Thursday rubbished the claim by Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's adviser on national security that New Delhi has sent a message to Islamabad indicating a desire for talks between the two countries.

"As regards the purported message, let me make it clear that no such message was sent from our side," Spokesperson in the Ministry of External Affairs Anurag Srivastava said. He was replying to questions at a media briefing on remarks by Pakistan PM's advisor

during an interview to news website The Wire that India has sent a message to Pakistan with a desire for conversation.

In the interview, Yusuf commented on a variety of issues including on Kashmir. "We have seen reports on the interview by a senior Pakistani official to an Indian media outlet. He has commented on India's internal matters," Srivastava said.

"As always, this is Pakistan's effort to divert attention from domestic failures of the present government and mislead its domestic constituents by pulling India into headlines on a daily basis," he added. Srivastava said the official is well advised to restrict his counsel to his establishment and not to comment on India's domestic policy.

PM CALLS FOR SCALING UP OF COVID TESTING

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 15: Calling for continued vigilance and a high state of preparedness against the coronavirus pandemic, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday directed health authorities to scale up COVID-19 testing and serosurveys and said the facility to get tested regularly and speedily at a low cost must be available to all at the earliest.

Chairing a review meeting of the research and vaccine deployment ecosystem against the COVID-19 pandemic, the prime minister also underscored the need for continuous and rigorous scientific testing and validation of traditional medicine treatments. He appreciated the efforts of Ministry of AYUSH for conducting evidence-based research and providing reliable solutions in this difficult time, an official statement said.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

"The prime minister reiterated the country's resolve to provide cost-effective, easily available and scalable solutions for testing, vaccine and medication, not only for India but for the entire world," it said. At the meeting, also attended by Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, NITI Aayog Member (Health), Principal Scientific Advisor, senior scientists and other officials, Modi called for continued vigilance and a high state of preparedness against the pandemic. Modi also appreciated efforts made

'nCoV doubling time improves'

The doubling time of the coronavirus infection has sharply improved from 25.5 days in mid-August to nearly 73 days now, the Health ministry said on Thursday. Doubling time for COVID-19 is the number of days it takes for the count of cases to double. In a statement, the Health ministry said 81,514 new recoveries were added in the last 24 hours. With this, the total number of recoveries are nearly 64 Lakh (63,83,441). "India has come a long way from registering a doubling rate of 25.5 days in mid August to now registering a doubling rate of nearly 73 days (72.8 days)," it said.

by Indian vaccine developers and manufacturers to rise to the COVID-19 challenge and committed to continue government facilitation and support for all such efforts.

Flood situation grim in K'taka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, Oct 15: The flood situation in Karnataka worsened further Thursday with several areas in the northern parts of the state inundated due to torrential rains and release of water from major dams.

According to the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Management Centre, the floodgates of all the major dams have been opened resulting in water gushing into villages and formation of islands at different places. Dams which were filled to the brim were Linganamakki, Supa, Varahi, Harangi, Hemavathi, Krishna Raja Sagar, Kabini, Bhadra, Tungabhadra, Ghataprabha, Malaprabha, Almatti and Narayanapura.

An overflowing river Bhima has wreaked havoc in Kalaburagi and Yadgir districts whereas water level in Krishna river at Devasugur in Raichur district is rising at an alarming level. The Central Water

Commission too warned that River Bhima at Deongaon Bridge in Afzalpur Taluk of Kalaburagi was rising and "is expected to cross danger level by this evening".

The river in Yadgir district was expected to go very near high flood level by Thursday afternoon. The Commission has also stated that though the water level of River Kagna at Malkhed in Kalaburagi District was receding, it continued to flow at an alarming level.

According to sources in the Karnataka Disaster Management Authority, as many as 515 animals lost their lives while 4,782 people have been shifted to 36 relief camps opened by the district administration.

The NDRF team rescued people stranded at Haragadde, Karakalagadde in Raichur in the temporary island due to the sudden release of water from the dam across Krishna river due to the rising level.

SMOG RETURNS

DELHI-NCR SHROUDED BY HAZE



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: The national capital's air quality hit an eight-month low on Thursday with stubble burning accounting for only six per cent of the city's PM2.5 concentration, according to government agencies. NASA's satellite imagery showed a large cluster

favourable for the transport of smoke from farm fires and "hence, an increase in contribution in Delhi's PM 2.5 (concentration) is expected". Delhi recorded a 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) of 312. The last time the air quality hit such a poor level was in February with an AQI 320. The 24-hour average AQI was 276 on Wednesday, which falls in the 'poor' category. It was 300 Tuesday, 261 on Monday, 216 Sunday and 221 on Saturday. Javadekar flagged off 50 inspection teams of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for field visits in Delhi-NCR to keep a watch on pollution hot spots during the winter season even as a layer of smoky haze lingered over the region with the air quality hitting 'very poor' levels Thursday.

Shatrughan's son, Sharad's daughter figure in Cong's 2nd list

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: The Congress Thursday released its second list of 49 candidates for the Bihar Assembly elections, fielding Shatrughan Sinha's son Luv Sinha from Bankipur and Sharad Yadav's daughter Subhashini Yadav from Bihariganj seats.

The party also nominated former MP Kali Pandey from Kuchaikote assembly constituency. Both Subhashini and Kali Pandey had joined the Congress only Wednesday. Pandey has switched over to the Congress from the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP).

The list of candidates released on Thursday pertains to the second and third phase of polls to be

BIHAR POLLS

The Congress Thursday released its second list of 49 candidates for the Bihar Assembly elections

held November 3 and 7. It also nominated Pravesh Kumar Mishra for the ensuing bye-election to the Valmiki Nagar Parliamentary constituency. The Congress had released its first list of 21 candidates for the Bihar polls starting October 28. The party is contesting a total of 70 seats as part of the 'Mahagathabandhan' in Bihar, with RJD leading the coalition.

Theatres open after seven months in nCoV shadow

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: Cinemas in several parts of the country opened after almost seven months on Thursday, ushering in a new era of 'contactless' movie watching in the shadow of a pandemic with alternate seating, 50 per cent capacity and packaged snacks.

While theatres and multiplexes will remain closed in states like Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Chhattisgarh, they will open in several places, including Delhi and parts of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, with stringent dos and don'ts in keeping with the new COVID-19 normal.

While PVR will resume commercial screenings on Friday, Cinepolis and INOX started showing films from Thursday with an emphasis on safety measures, including stringent sanitising and social distancing. "Yes, you heard that right! We are open now! See you at the big screen! Cinemas will not



be functional in a few states until further notice," Cinepolis India said in a tweet.

"Sanitisation and deep cleaning with WHO recommended chem-

icals is done at regular intervals to keep your surroundings safe," the tweet further read. PVR Cinemas, India's largest film exhibitor with 845 screens in 176 properties across 71 cities, on Wednesday said 10 states and four union territories have given their go-ahead for the re-opening of cinemas.

Accordingly, PVR started operations in 487 screens. The hope is that other states will soon give their green signal too. The Ministry of Home Affairs allowed theatres to reopen from Thursday with up to 50 per cent of their seating capacity. They have to strictly follow the central government's Standard operating procedures (SOPs).

The SOPs mandated by the Union government include one seat distance in halls, 50 per cent capacity, masks at all time, proper ventilation

and air conditioner temperature settings at above 23 degrees Celsius. Besides mandatory temperature checks, masks, pedal-operated touch-free hand sanitisers, multiplexes have gone digital with e-tickets instead of traditional paper tickets, self-check in with QR codes, sharing of the auditorium's seat chart and location of the seat and online ordering of food and beverages.

Though the MHA has given its go-ahead to resuming cinema and theatre activities under Unlock 5.0, it has left it to individual states to take a final call. With producers reluctant to release new films, cinemas have to deal with the double whammy of COVID fears and old content and have their fingers crossed as they rolled out a different kind of movie going experience.

international



The global economy is experiencing a K-shaped recovery, as advanced economies have been able to provide support while the poorest countries are facing an increasingly desperate recession

WHO CHIEF TWEETS IN 'HINDI' DG Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has urged the leaders across the world to maintain peace and focus on combatting against coronavirus. In a tweet, he wrote, "Shanti" which means peace in Hindi



of the day quote

Most of the COVID-19 spread is happening in homes, indoor spaces and in communities not complying with protection measures. These measures are meant to keep us all ahead of the curve and to flatten its course



We believe Tibet's future will be better. The US should stop interfering in China's internal affairs under the pretext of Tibet or destabilising it. China will take all necessary measures to uphold our interests



We have a Commonwealth definition in terms of hotspots, and that's a rolling average of less than 10 cases. Victoria is below that rolling average



SHORT TAKES

5,600 Afghan families displaced

Lashkar Gah: Renewed fighting in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province between Taliban insurgents and government forces has forced more than 5,600 families to flee their homes, local officials said Thursday. Omar Zwak, the provincial governor's spokesman, said Afghan security forces were fighting to regain areas lost to the Taliban over the weekend, while the local government was scrambling to provide food and shelter to the growing number of civilians coming from nearby districts to the provincial capital, Lashkar Gah.

Oli sparks speculation

Kathmandu: Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has reshuffled his Cabinet, keeping the key defence portfolio with himself, in a bid to strengthen his grip within the fractious ruling party and to allow smooth functioning of his government. Oli has inducted three new ministers, including Finance Minister Bishnu Poudel, and changed the portfolio of Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Ishwor Pokharel.

Cops raid media tycoon's office

Hong Kong: Hong Kong police raided the private offices of media tycoon and pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai Thursday, according to Lai's aide. Lai's aide Mark Simon wrote in a post on Twitter that 14 police officers visited Lai's office and confiscated documents. Lai, 71, is an outspoken pro-democracy figure who regularly criticises China's authoritarian rule and Hong Kong's government.

S'pore, HK agree on travel bubble

Singapore: Singapore and Hong Kong have agreed on a bilateral air travel bubble, which will exempt travellers from the mandatory quarantine upon arrival, as the rate of coronavirus infection declines in both regional aviation hubs. To avail the flights, travellers will have to test negative in the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test for COVID-19, Singapore's Ministry of Transport (MOT) Thursday. Travellers under the bubble will not be subject to mandatory quarantining, the MOT release said.

Thailand declares emergency in Bangkok amid protests



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Bangkok, Oct 15: Thai authorities declared a strict new state of emergency for the capital Thursday, a day after a student-led protest against the country's traditional establishment saw an extraordinary moment in which demonstrators heckled a royal motorcade. After the pre-dawn declaration, riot police moved in to clear out demonstrators who after a day of rallies and confrontation had gathered outside Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha's office to push their demands, which include the former general's stepping down, constitutional changes and reform of the monarchy.

Several top leaders of the protest movement were taken into custody,

with one later declaring on his Facebook page that he had been denied access to a lawyer and was being forced onto a helicopter and taken to a city in the country's north.

Police said they had made 22 arrests. The text of the emergency declaration said it was needed because "certain groups of perpetrators intended to instigate an untoward incident and movement in the Bangkok area by way of various methods and via different channels, including causing obstruction to the royal motorcade."

The protest Wednesday in Bangkok's historic district, not far from glittering temples and royal palaces, was the third major gathering by student-led activists who have been pushing the boundaries

of what is considered acceptable — and legal — language by publicly questioning the role of Thailand's monarchy in the nation's power structure.

Thailand's royal family has long been considered sacrosanct and a pillar of Thai identity. King Maha Vajiralongkorn and other key member of the royal family are protected by a lese majeste law that has regularly been used to silence critics who risk up to 15 years in prison if deemed to have insulted the institution.

The protest — held on the anniversary of a 1973 student-led uprising against a military dictatorship — was complicated by the presence of royalist counter protesters who had gathered both to show support for the government and to greet the royal family as they travelled to and from a religious ceremony in the area.

That led to a moment captured in photos and video that circulated widely on social media in which what appeared to be protesters gestured and shouted just meters (feet) from the royal motorcade. Such actions are unprecedented in Thailand, where those waiting for a royal motorcade regularly sit on the ground or prostrate themselves.

Some experts say a line may have been crossed.

London goes into stricter lockdown



Things will get worse before they get better. But I know that there are brighter skies and calmer seas ahead... that the ingenuity of science will find a way through and until then we must come together

MATT HANCOCK | HEALTH SECRETARY, UK

REUTERS

London, Oct 15: London, the world's international financial capital, will enter a tighter COVID-19 lockdown from midnight Friday as Prime Minister Boris Johnson seeks to tackle a swiftly accelerating second coronavirus wave.

The respiratory pandemic, which emerged in China last year and has killed over a million people worldwide, is spreading in most parts of Britain, whose official death toll of 43,155 is the highest in Europe.

Anger, though, is rising over the economic, social and health costs of the biggest curtailment of freedoms since wartime. One former government adviser warned some people would have trouble clothing their children soon.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said London, which has a population of 9 million, as well as the adjacent, heavily populated county of Essex, would be put on "high" alert level, up from "medium", at

one minute past midnight (23:01 GMT Friday).

The main impact of the move to "high" is that people cannot meet other households socially indoors in any setting, for example at home or in a restaurant. Travel should be reduced where possible, Hancock said.

"Things will get worse before they get better," Hancock said. "But I know that there are brighter skies and calmer seas ahead - that the ingenuity of science will find a way through and until then we must come together."

Britain's move to halt socialising in its capital means that London and Paris - Europe's two richest cities - are shortly to be living under the shadow of state-imposed restrictions as the second wave of the outbreak spreads through Europe.

President Emmanuel Macron announced night curfews for four weeks from Saturday in Paris and other major cities.

California heat wave prompts power shutdowns

ASSOCIATED PRESS

San Francisco, Oct 15: More than 50,000 California utility customers were without power and others around the state were urged to conserve electricity Thursday amid a fall heat wave that brought another round of extreme wildfire danger.

The National Weather Service issued heat advisories through Friday for temperatures in the 90s and even triple digits in many parts of the state.



Red-flag warnings for extreme fire danger were in place for much of the San Francisco Bay Area where winds bringing hot, dry gusts of up to 55 mph (88.5 kph) were expected to pose a threat of sparking new blazes in a region that already has seen some of the worst wildfires in state history.

A brush fire erupted early Thursday near the inland Southern California city of Redlands, triggering a small evacuation as it grew to about 100 acres (40 hectares), but was about 30% contained before dawn. The Pacific Gas & Electric utility began shutting off power Wednesday evening to customers in portions of 24 counties, mainly in the Sierra Nevada and the San Francisco Bay Area.

DOGS' DAY OUT



A man takes a morning walk with his dogs in Tokyo, Japan

REUTERS

Kyrgyz Prez steps down after unrest



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bishkek, Oct 15: Following weeks of unrest that resulted from a disputed election, Kyrgyz President Sooronbai Jeenbekov Thursday resigned, saying that he made the decision in order to restore stability in the country. In a statement, the Jeenbekov said: "I do not want to go down in Kyrgyzstan's history as a President who shed blood and shot at his own citizens."

"The military and security forces will be obliged to use their weapons to protect the state residence. 'Blood will be inevitably shed. I urge both sides not to fall for provocations.'"

The President also called on newly-appointed Prime Minister Sadyr Japarov and other opposition politicians to "take their supporters away" from the capital Bishkek

in order to restore peace in the city, the BBC reported.

Jeenbekov is the fifth President of the Central Asian country, which gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. He came to power November 24, 2017.

Kyrgyzstan has been gripped by unrest sparked by allegations of vote buying and impropriety in the October 4 parliamentary elections, in which 16 political parties participated, Xinhua news agency.

Preliminary results showed that four parties crossed the 7% threshold to enter Parliament.

Some parties which failed to meet the threshold organized nationwide protests the next day, demanding the annulment of the elections and claiming gross violations. The protests led to clashes between the police and protesters.

France declares health emergency

REUTERS

Paris, Oct 15: The French government Wednesday declared a public health state of emergency, giving officials greater powers to impose new measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. "The COVID-19 epidemic constitutes a public health disaster which, by its character and its severity, puts at risk the health of the population," the government said in a statement announcing the state of emergency.

"It justifies the declaration of a state of emergency so that measures can be adopted... which are strictly proportionate to the public health risks." The statement did not say what action the government would take, but the adoption of a state of emergency gives the authorities statutory powers to impose tough measures.

President Emmanuel Macron is expected to detail the measures being planned when he gives an



interview on national television at around 8 pm (1800 GMT) Wednesday.

French media reported that a night curfew between 9 pm and 6 am was one of the measures Macron would unveil. The French government previously declared a public health state of emergency in March this year, when hospitalisations caused by the epidemic were near their peak. At the time, the authorities used their extra powers to order people to stay at home except for essential work, buying food or taking one hour of daily exercise.

CURFEW IMPOSED

France will deploy 12,000 police officers to enforce a curfew that starts Friday night and plans to spend another 1 billion euros helping businesses hit by the new restrictions. French PM Jean Castex and other government ministers laid out new rules Thursday aimed at what he called a "sudden acceleration" of infections.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin says 12,000 police officers would be deployed between 9 pm and 6 am to enforce the new curfew, imposed in Paris and eight other cities.

'DUELING ELECTORS' POSE RISK OF US VOTE DEADLOCK

If early returns show a Trump lead, experts say he could press Republican-controlled legislatures to appoint electors favorable to him, claiming the initial vote count reflects the true outcome

REUTERS

Washington D.C.: The 2020 US presidential election could be the most closely contested in recent memory due to a deeply divided electorate and the possibility that President Donald Trump will challenge widely used mail-in ballots, claiming without evidence they are fraudulent.

Some election law experts are concerned the combination of factors could lead to a crisis in which both political parties claim to have won the same state, a phenomenon known as "dueling electors."

Below are details of how that might play out.

What are electors?

The US president is selected by 538 electors, known as the Electoral College, rather than the popular vote. Electors are apportioned among the states based on population and the popular vote in each state typically determines which candidate receives that state's electors.

The Constitution and the 1887 Electoral Count Act govern the counting of electoral votes and any related disputes. The electors will meet on Dec. 14 to cast their votes which are then counted by Congress on Jan. 6 in a process overseen by Vice President Mike Pence in his role as president of the Senate. What are dueling electors?



States with close contests between Republican Trump and his Democratic rival Joe Biden could produce competing slates of electors, one certified by the governors and the other by the legislature.

The risk of this happening is heightened in the battleground states of Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, which have Democratic governors and Republican-controlled legislatures.

Some election law experts are concerned that an unprecedented volume of mailed-in votes and legal challenges will delay the outcome of the election for weeks, creating an extended period of uncertainty.

Trump has repeatedly said the election is rigged and made unfounded attacks on mail-in voting, which tends to favor Democrats.

If early returns show a Trump lead, experts say the president could press Republican-controlled legis-

latures to appoint electors favorable to him, claiming the initial vote count reflects the true outcome.

Governors in those same states could end up backing a separate slate of electors pledged to Biden if the final count showed the Democratic candidate had won.

Both sets of electors would meet and vote on Dec. 14 and the competing results would be sent to Congress.

Set of electors who would prevail

Both chambers could agree to accept one slate of electors, which would almost certainly put the matter to rest.

The chambers could also split, which is more likely if the Republicans retain control of the Senate and Democrats hold onto their House majority.

If lawmakers cannot agree on a set of electors, the country will find itself in uncharted territory. The Electoral Count Act, often described by academics as "unintelligible," seems to favor the slate of electors certified by the state's governor, according to Ned Foley, a professor at Ohio State University Moritz College of Law.

But Foley notes that some scholars and an analysis by the Congressional Research Service have rejected that conclusion.

of the day quote

PM Modi gave us a clarion call when he talked about the Aatmanirbhar Bharat, or self-reliant India. Becoming more self-reliant does not mean going back to the Nehruvian era of closing our economy and import substitution

ANURAG SINGH THAKUR | MOS FOR FINANCE

By leveraging technology to bring in efficient and intelligent tools to drive demand-driven and future-relevant skilling programs, the assessment app will ensure seamless convergence and coordination across various schemes and programs as a single point interface

MN PANDEY | SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP MINISTER

We have to make sure that we aggressively test and aggressively contain. I think we have shown that this is possible in at least the corporate world, in many of our campuses, but we need to scale it up

KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAH | EXECUTIVE CHAIRPERSON, BIOCON

SHORT TAKES

Import of ACs banned

New Delhi: The government Thursday banned imports of air conditioners with refrigerants with a view to promote domestic manufacturing and cut imports of non-essential items. "Import policy of air conditioners with refrigerants ... is amended from free to prohibited," directorate general of foreign trade said in a notification. The government is taking steps to promote domestic manufacturing and reduce import bill of non-essential goods.

Lendingkart's income doubles

New Delhi: Fintech company Lendingkart Thursday said it has disbursed funds worth over ₹2,500 crore to micro and small enterprises, and its gross income increased by 113 per cent to ₹465 crore in FY20 over the previous fiscal. Lendingkart Finance Ltd (Lendingkart group's NBFC arm) disbursed about 53,000 loans in FY20, about 85 per cent increase over the last year, it said.

Multiplexes roll out offers

New Delhi: Multiplexes and their partners are rolling out a number of offers to woo film goers and rev up their business that fell silent for seven months on coronavirus pandemic woes. Movie halls have reopened or are reopening in several places, including the national capital and parts of Madhya Pradesh, this week, with stringent dos and don'ts in keeping with COVID-19-triggered new normal ways.

Toyota rolls out special offers

New Delhi: Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) Thursday said it has launched special offers for salaried people from both government and private organisations, ahead of festive season. As part of the initiative, the company is providing flexible finance options, including a three-month EMI (equated monthly instalment) holiday, to prospective customers. "At Toyota, we always look for ways to enable that big purchase decision with attractive offers for different segments of buyers," TKM Senior Vice-President (Sales and Service) Naveen Soni said in a statement.

GST SHORTFALL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 15: The Central government will borrow up to ₹1.1 lakh crore on behalf of the states to bridge the shortfall in GST collections, the Finance Ministry said Thursday. A slowdown in the economy since last fiscal has resulted in a drop in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections, upsetting the budgets of states which had given up their right to levy local taxes such as sales tax or VAT when GST was introduced in July 2017.

To make up for the shortfall, borrowing from the market was proposed. In a statement, the Union Finance Ministry said states were offered a special window to borrow ₹1.1 lakh crore over and above their existing limits, to bridge the shortfall. "Under the Special Window, the estimated shortfall of ₹1.1 lakh crore (assuming all States join) will be borrowed by Government of India in appropriate tranches," the statement said. "The amount so borrowed will be passed on to the States as a back-to-back loan in lieu of GST Compensation Cess releases."

The release, however, did not say

Jio, BSNL add new users in July: TRAI



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: The telecom service providers Reliance Jio and state-owned BSNL are only operators who added new subscribers during the month of July in Odisha.

As per latest mobile subscriber data released by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Jio added over 2.15 lakh new subscribers in July while BSNL added 41,005 new subscribers in same month in the state. On the other hand, Vodafone Idea lost over 90,000 subscribers in the state followed by Bharti Airtel which lost over 41,000 subscribers during the same period. TRAI's report said.

With continual addition, Reliance Jio further consolidated its top position as the most preferred digital service provider in Odisha. Also, Jio now holds nearly 40% customer market share in Odisha and is the market leader with highest customer and revenue market share in the state.

Nationally, Jio continued adding millions of new subscribers and became the first digital service provider in the country to surpass 40 crores, as per the data released by TRAI for July 2020.

Also, as per the latest 4G speed chart published by TRAI on its MySpeed portal, Jio has again topped in 4G download speed chart with 19.3 Mbps download speed in September, which is more than 2.5 times than Bharti Airtel which has 7.5 Mbps download speed in September.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Oct 15: Facing the twin task of fighting the coronavirus pandemic today and building a better tomorrow, the world is experiencing a new Bretton Woods moment, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said Thursday.

Addressing the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund's Board of Governors, she said that what was true at Bretton Woods, when allies at the end of World War II gathered for a conference to create the institutions that would use economic cooperation to prevent future conflicts, remains true today.

"Today we face a new Bretton Woods moment. A pandemic that has already cost more than a million lives. An economic calamity that will make the world economy 4.4%

Centre to borrow ₹1.1L cr



who will service the interest and principal payments.

The Centre borrowing on behalf of states is likely to ensure that a single rate of borrowing is charged and this would also be easy to administer.

The borrowing, the statement said, "will not have any impact on the fiscal deficit of the Government of India."

"The amounts will be reflected as the capital receipts of the State Governments and as part of the financing of its respective fiscal deficits," it said.

Indian banking sector needs to use emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and machine learning for corporate loans for quality lending
KRISHNAMURTHY SUBRAMANIAN | CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISOR

'FARM SECTOR STAR PERFORMER DURING PANDEMIC'
The farm sector has been a star performer in India's pandemic-hit economy, with 3.4% growth in April-June quarter of 2020-21 fiscal, MoS for Agriculture Parshottam Rupala has said



A slowdown in the economy since last fiscal has resulted in a drop in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections, upsetting the budgets of states which had given up their right to levy local taxes

When the GST was introduced in July 2017, states were promised a 14% incremental revenue over their last tax receipts in the first five years of the GST rollout. This was to be done through a levy of a cess or surcharge on luxury and sin goods, but the collections on this count have fallen short with the slowdown in the economy since last fiscal.

To make up for this, the Centre suggested that the states can borrow against future compensation receipts.

The Finance Ministry had earlier this week stated that 21 states have accepted one of the two borrowing options suggested by the Centre.

Exports turn positive in Sept, up 6% at \$27.58 bn

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 15: After contracting for six straight months, India's exports rose 5.99% to \$27.58 billion in September on account of growth in shipments of drugs and pharmaceuticals and readymade garments, as per the government data released Thursday. Exports stood at \$26.02 billion in September 2019.

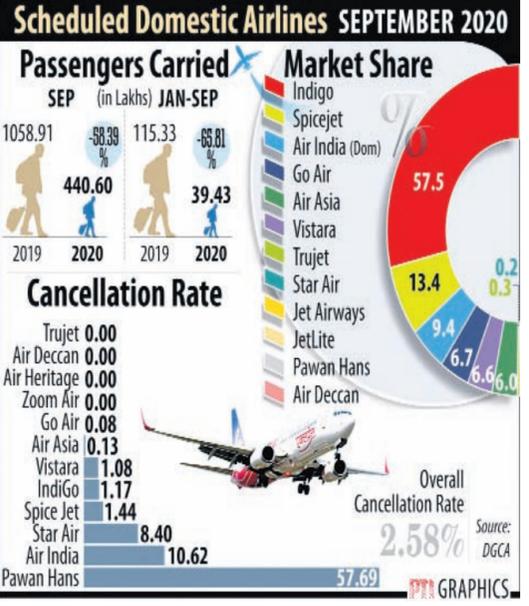
The country's imports contracted 19.6% to \$30.31 billion in September. It was \$37.69 billion in the same month last year. The trade deficit narrowed to \$2.72 billion, compared to a shortfall of \$11.67 billion in the year ago-month. Gold imports declined by nearly 53% to \$601.43 million in September.



POST NEWS NETWORK

"Exports in September 2020 were \$27.58 billion, as compared to \$26.02 billion in September 2019, exhibiting a positive growth of 5.99%," the government said in a statement.

During the April-September 2020 period, exports declined by 16.66% to \$21.86 billion, while imports fell 35.43% to \$204.12 billion over the same period last year.



STATE GOVT TO ESTABLISH TECHNOLOGY CENTRE AT RSP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 15: Principal Secretary of State MSME department Satyabrata Sahu Thursday stated that the Government of Odisha has approved for the establishment of a technology centre at Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP).

Sahu said, "State Government has been pleased to approve establishment of one technology centre at RSP where around ₹200 crore will be invested. The coming up of the centre will benefit both MSMEs (in Sundargarh) and RSP."



POST NEWS NETWORK

He informed during a virtual meeting that was conducted for the plant level advisory committee of RSP. RSP CEO was also present at the meeting.

The purpose of the meeting was

and RCC also attended the meeting. Among others they put forth their grievances under that GCM procurement done by RSP concession to be given to the local MSMEs as per their requirement, purchases items from local MSMEs, and entry pass into RSP.

RSP authorities assured their cooperation on the grievances of MSMEs. Principal Secretary requested RSP to facilitate the local MSMEs so that their economic conditions may improve amid the pandemic.

Director of industry department was requested to list out the grievances of the MSMEs and circulates it to RSP to sort out within a time frame and review the same after three months in mid January, 2021.

World facing new Bretton Woods moment: IMF MD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Oct 15: Facing the twin task of fighting the coronavirus pandemic today and building a better tomorrow, the world is experiencing a new Bretton Woods moment, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said Thursday.

Addressing the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund's Board of Governors, she said that what was true at Bretton Woods, when allies at the end of World War II gathered for a conference to create the institutions that would use economic cooperation to prevent future conflicts, remains true today.

"Today we face a new Bretton Woods moment. A pandemic that has already cost more than a million lives. An economic calamity that will make the world economy 4.4%

smaller this year and strip an estimated \$11 trillion of output by next year. And untold human desperation in the face of huge disruption and rising poverty for the first time in decades," she said.

"Once again, we face two massive tasks: to fight the crisis today and build a better tomorrow," she said.

Prudent macroeconomic policies and strong institutions are critical for growth, jobs and improved living standards, she said.

Strong medium-term frameworks for monetary, fiscal and financial policies, as well as reforms to boost trade, competitiveness and productivity can help create confidence for policy action now while building much-needed resilience for the future, she added.

"We know what action must be taken right now. A durable eco-

We have seen global fiscal actions of \$12 trillion. Major central banks have expanded balance sheets by \$7.5 trillion. These synchronised measures have prevented the destructive macro financial feedback we saw in previous crises
KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA | MD, IMF

conomic recovery is only possible if we beat the pandemic. Health measures must remain a priority. I urge you to support production and distribution of effective therapies and vaccines to ensure that all countries have access,"

Georgieva said. She urged countries to continue support for workers and businesses until a durable exit from the health crisis.

"We have seen global fiscal actions of \$12 trillion. Major central banks have expanded balance sheets by \$7.5 trillion. These synchronised measures have prevented the destructive macro financial feedback we saw in previous crises," she said.

"But almost all countries are still hurting, especially emerging market and developing economies. And while the global banking system entered the crisis with high capital and liquidity buffers, there is a weak tail of banks in many emerging markets. We must take measures to prevent the build-up of financial risks over the medium term," she said. The IMF expects 2021 debt lev-

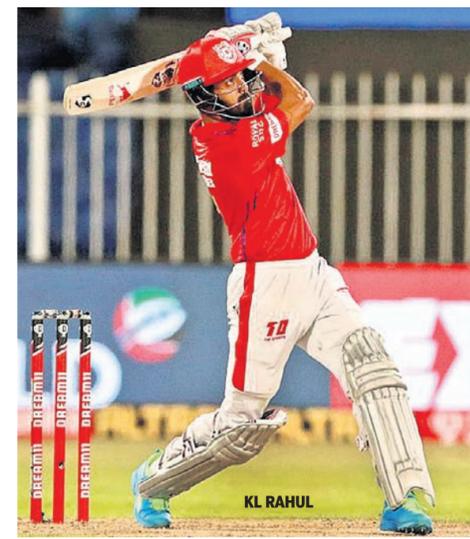
els to go up significantly - to around 125% of GDP in advanced economies, 65% of GDP in emerging markets; and 50% of GDP in low-income countries, Georgieva further said.

The fund is providing debt relief to its poorest members and, with the World Bank, they support extension by the G20 of the Debt Service Suspension Initiative.

"Beyond this, where debt is unsustainable, it should be restructured without delay. We should move towards greater debt transparency and enhanced creditor coordination. I am encouraged by G-20 discussions on a Common Framework for Sovereign Debt Resolution as well as on our call for improving the architecture for sovereign debt resolution, including private sector participation," she said.

KXIP WIN LAST-BALL THRILLER

MI favourites against KKR



Sharjah, Oct 15: The 'Universe Boss' Chris Gayle (53, 45b, 1x4, 5x6) sent warning to the opposition teams with his trademark innings as Kings XI Punjab (KXIP) secured an eight wicket victory over Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in their IPL encounter here, Thursday. KXIP almost made a mess of what could have been an easy task. In spite of having nine wickets in hand and needing only two off the final over, bowled by Yuzvendra Chahal (1/35), it all came down to one off the final ball after Gayle was un out off the penultimate delivery while searching for a quick single. However, Nicolas Pooran completed the task with a six, which just cleared the long-on boundary.

Chasing 172, KXIP stated with a bang as skipper KL Rahul (61 n o, 49b, 1x4, 5x6) and Mayank Agarwal (45, 25b, 4x4, 3x6) added 78 runs inside 7.5 overs before the latter's departure in the final ball of the eighth over. Chahal broke the stand casting Mayank. Then it was all Gayle and Rahul. Gayle started his innings cautiously before unleashing his power, what the KXIP fans were waiting for. Both Rahul and Gayle were at their best playing shots all around the ground. The duo added 93 runs for the second wicket. Earlier, KXIP put up a disciplined effort with the bowl to restrict RCB to 171/6 in their must-win IPL match. Skipper Virat Kohli top-scored with 48 off 39 balls in his 200th game for RCB but it was Chris

Morris' 25 off 8 balls in the death overs that took the team to a competitive score. The final over bowled by Mohammad Shami (2/45) went for 24 runs. Notwithstanding Shami's wayward 20th over, it was a much improved bowling effort from a team who have been leaking runs in the death overs game after game. KXIP conceded only 25 runs from over 16-19 before Morris and Isuru Udana hammered Shami for three sixes. After Kohli chose to bat, KXIP experimented by opening the bowling with Glenn Maxwell (0/28). Both the openers - Devdutt Padikkal (18) and Aaron Finch (20) - could not build on their starts. Padikkal was foxed by a slower one from left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh, while Finch missed a fast leg-break

from Murugan Ashwin (2/23), leaving RCB at 62/2 in the seventh over. With Kohli looking good at the other end, AB de Villiers was expected to come in at his usual number four spot but with two leg-spinners in operation, left-handed batsman Washington Sundar and Shivam Dube were sent ahead of the South African. Following Dube's dismissal in the 15th over, De Villiers finally joined Kohli for the late assault, which was eventually provided by Morris. **BRIEF SCORES**
RCB 171/6 (Virat Kohli 48, Chris Morris 25 n o; Murugan Ashwin 2/23, Mohammed Shami 2/45) lost to KXIP 177/2 (KL Rahul 61 n o, Chris Gayle 53, Mayank Agarwal 45) by eight wickets.

Abu Dhabi, Oct 15: An explosive batting line-up and a lethal-at-death bowling attack will give defending champions Mumbai Indians (MI) a definitive edge over Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) when the two teams clash in an IPL game here Friday. The defending champions are on a roll having won their last four games, while there are problems aplenty for KKR, who were decimated by the Royal Challengers Bangalore by 82 runs in their last game. Mumbai Indians are thus unlikely to tinker with their playing XI. For KKR, questions remain as to whether their key spinner Sunil Narine, who has been once reported for suspect bowling action, will play or not. He had missed the game against RCB even as KKR hoped for an 'early resolution' to the issues surrounding his controversial action. In the event of Narine missing out again, Mumbai will fancy their chances even more at the Sheikh Zayed stadium, where skipper Rohit Sharma has scored both his half centuries this season. Sharma (216 runs), on his day, can pummel any attack to submission and particularly enjoys playing against Kolkata. When the two teams met last, Mumbai rode on his belligerent 80 to register a 49-run win. Apart from Sharma, the Mumbai top and middle-order is in good form - be it Quinton De Kock (191 runs) or Suryakumar Yadav (233 runs), who would like to continue in the same vein. Ishan Kishan (186 runs) underlined his potential with a blistering 99 against RCB, but the Jharkhand player needs to convert his starts into big scores



to make his presence felt. Mumbai Indians coach Mahela Jayawardene would be pleased with the likes of Hardik Pandya and swashbuckling Kieron Pollard, who have been launching into the opposition attack with their big-hitting prowess along with Krunal Pandya. Given the trio's abilities, they can rip apart the KKR attack, especially ones Sunil Narine. On the bowling front too, Mumbai looks a settled unit with Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah providing early breakthroughs. They are complemented by Australian James Pattinson and the trio has accounted for 31 wickets. Spinners Rahul Chahar and Krunal will be again looking to contain the KKR batters. Meanwhile, the biggest drawback for KKR is the inconsistent performance of their batsmen, particularly Andre Russell, who has just managed a meagre 71 runs from seven games. There was talk of Russell being promoted up the order, but he continues to bat down and hasn't done justice to his abilities. Kolkata also possess a number of batsmen who can take any attack to cleaners. It comprises the young and elegant Shubman Gill, England's World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan, Nitish Rana and skipper Dinesh Karthik, but they have not got going barring the odd game. The management would be hoping that come Friday, they fire in unison to reduce pressure on young guns Rahul Tripathi and Tom Banton. KKR bowlers did well to fashion narrow victories against Kings XI Punjab and Chennai Super Kings, but were profligate against RCB when Pat Cummins and Prasadh Krishnan leaked 38 and 42 runs respectively. They would want to forget the hammering and regain form. KKR may also look to play Kuldeep Yadav, who was dropped after playing just three games, in place of a third pacer. He can come in handy along with mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy, who was economical in the game against RCB.

TODAY'S MATCH
MI vs KKR
AT 7:30 PM
TELECAST: STAR SPORTS

Srikanth in last eight after beating Ho-Shue



Odense, Oct 15: Ace Indian shuttler Kidambi Srikanth stormed into the Denmark Open quarter-finals with a straight-game win over Canada's Jason Anthony Ho-Shue here Thursday. The fifth seeded Indian took 33 minutes to get the better of his Canadian opponent 21-15, 21-14 in the men's singles second round of the USD 750,000 Super 750 tournament, the only world tour event happening this year in a calendar thrown haywire by the COVID-19 pandemic. The BWF was forced to cancel multiple tournaments and postpone the Asia leg and the World Tour Final to January next year due to the pandemic. The 27-year-old is likely to face World No.2 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei, who meets Ireland's Nhat Nguyen later in the day. Talking about Chou Tien Chen, Srikanth said: "He's been playing well the last few years. It's definitely a match where I can understand where I'm at. That's the whole idea of playing this tournament. "He hits hard, he's someone who has an overall game, he has a hard smash, he knows when to attack and when to defend. He has matured. It's always good when you play a top 4 player."

due to the deadly virus, leading to concerns over the mental health of athletes. Ekka said that it has been her responsibility to ensure that the youngsters in the team remained motivated during this tough period. "As a senior player in the team, I had to make sure that the youngsters are not too impacted and remain positive during this period. It's easy for negativity to set in during this time, but our group has done well to take each day as it comes," she said. "It's my duty to ensure that the youngsters remain motivated and they have done a great job. All of us focused on our fitness while we were away from the pitch and now, we are relishing our sports activities on the pitch," Ekka added. The 26-year-old defender from Odisha said that the national side has been able to cope with this period by concentrating on fitness. "We had enough facilities at our disposal for our fitness training during the lockdown and now, we are able to practice for the Olympics only because of the efforts put in by Hockey India and SAI," Ekka said.

Ekka lauds Indian back line

New Delhi, Oct 15: Defender Deep Grace Ekka Thursday said the Indian women's hockey team's back line has a good balance of experience and youth which will come in handy at the Tokyo Olympics. The team has enjoyed good results in top tournaments recently, including winning a silver medal at the 2018 Asian Games and qualifying for back-to-back Olympics, and Ekka said the experienced players are working with the young ones to further strengthen the team's defence. "It's great to have a great balance of youth and experienced players in our defence line. We are guiding the youngsters to get even better at their game and I am sure after a few months we will get even better as a defense unit," Ekka was quoted as saying in a media release. "Having a great defense line always helps any team and if we are rock solid then it will be a huge benefit for the Indian team, especially in big tournaments like the Olympics," the senior defender added. It has been a difficult time for the entire world in the last few months because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sports activities across the globe were brought to a complete halt



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Mbappe strike helps France down Croatia

Zagreb, Oct 15: Star striker Kylian Mbappe scored late as France frustrated Croatia again, winning a closely-contested UEFA Nations League match 2-1 to stay level on points with group leader Portugal. Croatia have never beaten France, losing the last Nations League encounter and the 2018 World Cup final by the same score of 2-1. They were also beaten 1-2 in the 1998 World Cup semifinals. After forward Antoine Griezmann put France ahead early, midfielder Nikola Vlasic equalised midway through the second half. Croatia were starting to get on top when France substitute Paul Pogba floated over a superb pass from the halfway line to Lucas Digne sprinting down the left. The Everton left-back's volleyed pass fell to Mbappe, who met the ball on the bounce from close range for his 16th international goal. Griezmann netted in the eight minute after Croatia's defense failed to properly clear Ferland Mendy's cross from the right. Lurking to the right of the penalty spot, Griezmann smacked a quick shot which hit the underside of the crossbar for his 33rd international goal. Croatia improved after the break but did not threaten until Vlasic's excellent finish from the edge of the penalty area in the 64th. He controlled Josip Brekalo's pass with his left foot and stabbed the ball past Lloris and into the bottom corner with the outside of his right.



DEADLY COMBO: Kylian Mbappe celebrates with other scorer Antoine Griezmann after France's winner, Wednesday

Coutinho makes good on 2nd chance with Barca



Barcelona, Oct 15: Two months after helping Bayern Munich hand Barcelona their most humbling loss in decades, Philippe Coutinho is helping the Spanish club rebuild. Coutinho has been through plenty

since joining Barcelona from Liverpool in January 2018, burdened by the responsibility that went with his club-record club transfer. Besides his price tag of 160 million euros, he had also been tasked to replace the irreplaceable Andres Iniesta. After a season-and-a-half of failing to meet the huge expectations placed upon him, his relationship with Barcelona hit a low point when he seemed to taunt the team's fans by plugging his fingers in his ears after scoring his finest goal with the team in a 3-0 win over Manchester United. Many were offended by his gesture, which they took to mean he was fed up with criticism. Hoping that a temporary move would be good for the player, and possibly the club's chances to eventually sell him, Barcelona loaned Coutinho to Bayern in 2019. At that point, it would have been difficult to imagine that in the last game of Barcelona's season it would be Coutinho who scored two goals against the club that owned his rights. Those goals capped Bayern's eight-goal rout of Barcelona in the Champions League quarterfinals, assuring the club finished the season without a title for the first time in 12 seasons. While Barcelona went home broken, Bayern went on to win



Coutinho has been linking up well with Ansu Fati (C) and Lionel Messi

the European Cup. His goals for Bayern, ironically, may have helped him regain his post in Barcelona. Incoming coach Ronald Koeman wanted Coutinho to come back and play, unlike a long list of players that the club sold or practically gave away to make way for new faces and reduce a heavy salary burden. "Like any player, he needs the support and confidence of his coach, but this all starts with the player. He has demonstrated that he is a great player, and I am happy to have him with us," Koeman said about Coutinho after he scored in a 1-1 draw with Sevilla two weeks ago. Coutinho has proven to be a key piece in Koeman's new-look Barcelona. The Dutch coach has moved on from the classic 4-3-3 of Barcelona and shifted to a 4-2-3-1 with Coutinho acting as the central playmaker behind Lionel Messi as striker. With Ansu Fati on his left, Antoine Griezmann on his right, and Frenkie de Jong and Sergio Busquets defending his back, Coutinho has a full range of passing options and orders to go forward. Perhaps, too, it helped that with the COVID-19 crisis there are no fans in the stadiums to judge his every pass and dribble. Gone was the player who looked uncertain and appeared to shrink from the action during long stretches of his first stint with Barcelona. Coutinho now seems to be in his ideal position, as the assists and goals have shown so far. He set up Fati to score two goals in a 4-0 win over Villarreal to open the season and in a 3-0 win at Celta Vigo. Coutinho then scored his first goal since returning to the team against Sevilla before a break for international matches, where he played well for Brazil in two World Cup qualifying wins. Back from the national team, Coutinho will again likely be back in the heart of Barcelona's attack when they visit Getafe Saturday. Known for their physical defending, Getafe are undefeated in two home games and has kept clean sheets in three of the four games they have played. When asked about his transformation, Coutinho focused on what he considered the basics. "I am motivated to work hard and do things well, to achieve important things for this club," Coutinho said after his goal against Sevilla. "That is what counts."

NATIONS LEAGUE ROUND-UP

Netherlands hold Italy in a thriller
Bergamo: Italy were held to a 1-1 draw by the Netherlands in a game that paid tribute to Bergamo's many victims of the coronavirus pandemic. Dutch midfielder Donny van de Beek cancelled out Lorenzo Pellegrini's opener in the first half Wednesday. It was the first time in 14 years that Italy played a match here. Italy took the lead in the 16th minute. Nicol Barella played a perfect through ball for Pellegrini to run onto and drill past Dutch goalie Jasper Cillessen. The Dutch levelled nine minutes later as Van De Beek fired into the roof of the net from close range.

Jota shines
Lisbon: Diogo Jota scored two goals and set up another as Portugal defeated Sweden 3-0 in the Nations League in their first game since Cristiano Ronaldo had to be dropped from the squad after testing positive for the coronavirus. Jota set up Bernardo Silva's opening goal in the 21st minute and scored himself in the 44th. The Liverpool forward finished off the scoring in the 72nd.

Denmark stun England
London: Christian Eriksen marked his 100th Denmark appearance by scoring the penalty that clinched a 1-0 victory over England in the UEFA Nations League. England had already been reduced to 10 men Wednesday after Harry Maguire was sent off by the time a disputed penalty was awarded for Kyle Walker's challenge on Thomas Delaney. Eriksen converted the penalty for his 34th international goal in the 35th minute at Wembley. Reece James' first England start ended with him being sent off after the final whistle.

Lukaku scores twice in Belgium's victory
Reykjavik (Iceland): Striker Romelu Lukaku scored both goals to give Belgium a 2-1 win at Iceland, taking his international tally to 55 goals and moving his team back atop their Nations League group. Iceland scored in between Lukaku's goals as midfielder Runar Mar Sigurjonsson's astute pass sent veteran right-back Birker Saevarsson through and he beat goalie Simon Mignolet with a low shot.