



RARE CELEBRITY

Actor Rasika Dugal says she doesn't shy away from admitting that she often reuses her clothes

LEISURE P2



IN A FIRST

Kerala becomes the first state in the country to fix the floor price for vegetables

TWO STATES P7



LONG-TERM IMMUNITY

Levels of protective antibodies in people wane quite rapidly after Covid infection, say experts

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Looks like the virus is not afraid of poetry too...

SHORT TAKES

Relief to Dilip Ray

New Delhi: In a major relief to former Union Minister Dilip Ray, the Delhi High Court Tuesday stayed three-year imprisonment given to Ray by a special CBI court in a coal scam case pertaining to allocation of coal block in Jharkhand in 1999. A bench of Justice Suresh Kait suspended the judgement of the CBI court till the matter is decided by the High Court. The court has posted the matter for hearing November 25. Special CBI judge Bharat Parasher Monday had granted bail to all convicts on a personal bail bond of ₹1 lakh each immediately after awarding three years imprisonment to all the convicts. P4

Pak blast kills 8

Peshawar: A powerful blast ripped through a religious seminary in northwest Pakistan's Peshawar city Tuesday, killing at least eight people, mostly students, and wounding over 120 others, senior police officials said. The blast occurred around 8:30 am at a local mosque, which also serves as a religious school in Dir Colony in interior Peshawar, while students were reading the Quran, Peshawar police chief Muhammad Ali Khan said. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa CM's Advisor Kamran Bangash and spokesman of the LRH Hospital Asim Khan confirmed that eight persons have died. P10

MARKET WATCH

INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	40552.10	376.60
NIFTY	11889.40	121.60
DOLLAR	73.75	₹0.25
EURO	87.32	₹0.32
GOLD	₹50,916	₹14
SILVER	₹61,991	₹85

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	32.0°C	33.2°C
TEMP MIN	19.7°C	20.0°C
Humidity	93%	72%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Mainly clear sky	

With China in mind, US, India seal military deal

REUTERS

New Delhi, Oct 27: The United States and India signed a pact to share sensitive satellite and map data Tuesday as US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned of the threat posed by an increasingly assertive China.

Pompeo, who arrived in New Delhi Monday along with Defense Secretary Mark Esper, said after talks with their Indian counterparts that the two countries had to work together to confront the threat China posed to security and freedom. The annual US-India strategic dialogue comes at a time of heightened tension in the region, with Indian troops confronting Chinese forces on their disputed Himalayan border.

"Big things are happening as our democracies align to better protect the citizens of our two countries and indeed, of the free world," Pompeo told reporters after the talks with Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. "Our leaders, and our citizens, see with increasing clarity that the Chinese Communist Party is no friend to democracy, the rule of law, transparency, nor to freedom of navigation, the foundation of a free and open, pros-



PARADIGMATIC SHIFT

● The annual US-India strategic dialogue comes at a time of heightened tension in the region, with Indian troops confronting Chinese forces on their disputed Himalayan border

● The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement on Geospatial Cooperation was a "significant milestone" that would foster cooperation between the militaries of both countries

perous Indo-Pacific," Pompeo said. The new defence pact - the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement on Geospatial Cooperation - was a "significant milestone" that would foster cooperation between the militaries of both countries, Esper told the news conference. The United States planned to sell more fighter planes and drones to India, Esper added. The pact will give India ac-

cess to a range of topographical, nautical and aeronautical data that is considered vital for targeting of missiles and armed drones. It would also allow the United States to provide advanced navigational aids and avionics on U.S.-supplied aircraft to India, an Indian defence source said. US President Donald Trump has made being tough on China a key part of his campaign to secure a second term in next week's presidential election and Pompeo has been trying to bolster allies to counter China's growing influence in the region.

China dismissed Pompeo's accusations. "We urge Pompeo to abandon his Cold War mentality, zero-sum mindset, and stop harping on the 'China threat'," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told media in Beijing earlier Tuesday. India has its own problems with China. In June, 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a clash with Chinese troops on their border, hardening the mood in India against China and driving Modi government to seek closer military ties with the US. Jaishankar did not refer directly to China in his comments at the news conference but hailed "national security convergences" with the US and their determination to tackle security and counter-terrorism issues.

Centre allows 'outsiders' to buy land in J&K

AGENCIES

Srinagar, Oct 27: The Centre has paved the way for people from outside Jammu and Kashmir to buy land in the union territory by amending several laws, more than a year after the nullification of Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution.

In a gazette notification, the Ministry of Home Affairs has made several changes to the land laws, including allowing use of agricultural land for setting up facilities of public purpose. The most important tweak has been made in the Jammu and Kashmir Development Act that deals with disposal of land in the UT as the Centre has omitted the phrase "permanent resident of the state" from Section 17 of the law.

Before the repeal of Article 370 and Article 35-A in August last year, non-residents could not buy immovable property in J&K. However, the fresh changes have paved the way to buy land in the UT. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said the amendments did not allow transfer of farm land to non-agriculturists. However, there are several exemptions in the Act which enable transfer of farm land for non-agricultural purposes, including setting up of educational or health care facilities. P7



5 scribes held for extortion; 3 booked in Ganjam district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 27: The Commissionerate Police arrested five journalists along with a driver for extorting Rs1.60 lakh from a city-based businessman. DCP Umashankar Dash said all five scribe caught for extortion worked for web channels.

The seven persons introduced themselves as journalists of various news websites to the owner of a ghee firm. They threatened to publish negative news about him if he did not pay them ₹3,00,000. Fearing problems, the firm owner paid them ₹1.64 lakh in phases.

However, as the demand for money kept mounting, the businessman lodged a report at Tamando police station. Subsequently, police

Extortion: Ex-MLA candidate arrested

SAMBALPUR: Police here arrested two persons including a former MLA candidate of Congress on charge of demanding extortion from a private firm and assaulting its HR manager after he refused to yield to their demand, Tuesday. The accused were identified as Balakrushna Rohidas and his brother Rajesh Rohidas. Balakrushna contested as a MLA candidate of Congress party from the Rengali Assembly segment. P5

arrested the six Monday. Meanwhile, the Ganjam police registered a case against three journalists on the charge of demanding extortion and threatening a public servant.

GDP growth to be negative: Nirmala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 27: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Tuesday said there were visible signs of revival in the economy but the GDP growth may be in the negative zone or near zero in the current fiscal.

She said the economy saw a contraction in the April-June quarter, but demand has picked up in the festival season. Speaking at the India Energy Forum of CERAWeek, she said infrastructure, fintech and all employment generating and asset creating industries would be priority sectors for the government. Sitharaman further said recent data indicates revival in the economy, with PMI number being the highest since 2012.

"Which sort of indicates that the revival is there which is going to be steady and sustainable revival. If that sustainable revival is going to happen between quarter three and quarter four, we expect that the overall GDP growth... (is) going to be in the negative or near zero this time," she said.

India will regain the tag of the fastest growing major economy next year, she asserted.

The Indian economy had contracted by a huge 23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter, hit by the COVID-19 crisis. Sitharaman said a "very firm lockdown" was imposed

beginning March 25, with the government putting lives before livelihood to contain the coronavirus pandemic. "We had a contraction which happened during the first quarter and post which the unlocking has been steadily happening and we can see the revival now..." she said.

The finance minister further said indicators show that primary sector, agriculture-related segments and rural India are all doing very well. "Demand for durable goods, agriculture equipments, tractors, vehicles are all going up. Festival season has commenced in India,



as a result of which I expect demand go up and be sustainable also," she emphasised. High-frequency economic indicators show continued improvement both in month-on-month and year-on-year terms. Manufacturing PMI rose to 56.8 in September, an eight-and-a-half year high, while services PMI, albeit marginally below the 50 mark, continued to increase from its April trough. Growth in power demand stood at 10.2 pc YoY for October versus 4.6 per cent for September.

HARVESTING SAFFRON



A family plucks saffron flowers from a field at Pampore in Pulwama district of south Kashmir, Tuesday. Farmers in the Valley are concerned at the falling yield of the saffron crop year after year with the changing climatic conditions responsible for a 50 to 60 per cent decrease in the yield from the last several years

PTI PHOTO

Dad kills self, 2 kids by jumping before train

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, Oct 27: In a shocking incident, three members of a family reportedly committed suicide by jumping before a train at Singaram railway station in Rayagada district Monday morning.

The deceased were identified as Keshab Subudhi, his daughter Khushi and son Sindhyu, belonging to Podapadi village under Kashipur

block. According to reports, after Dussehra puja was performed at home Monday, Keshab called his two children to go outside. The three went to nearby railway station on his bike.

Before anyone could think of anything at the station, Subudhi threw his 7-year old son Sindhyu before the moving train. His daughter was shocked to see this and tried to flee. Subudhi got hold of his daughter and jumped before

the train. The train mowed down on the three. However, what drove Keshab to take such an extreme step is not yet clear. Keshab is survived by his parents and wife. A pall of gloom gripped the village.

Railway police have seized the bodies and sent them for post mortem. After post mortem, the bodies were consigned to flames Tuesday at one place. Police are looking into the matter.

Water molecules found on sunlit surface of moon

The moon possesses roughly 15,000 square miles of permanent shadows that potentially could harbour hidden pockets of water

AGENCIES

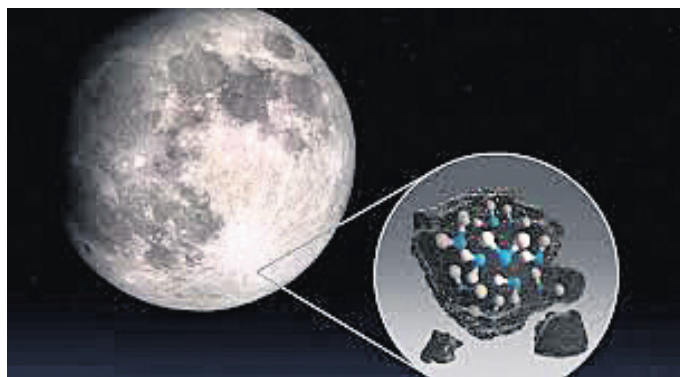
Washington, Oct 27: The moon lacks the bodies of liquid water that are a hallmark of Earth but scientists said Monday lunar water is more widespread than previously known, with water molecules trapped within mineral grains on the surface and more water perhaps hidden in ice patches residing in permanent shadows.

While research 11 years ago indicated water was relatively widespread in small amounts on the moon, a team of scientists is now reporting the first unambiguous detection of water molecules on the lunar surface. At the same time, another team is reporting that the

moon possesses roughly 15,000 square miles (40,000 square kilometers) of permanent shadows that potentially could harbor hidden pockets of water in the form of ice.

Water is a precious resource and a relatively plentiful lunar presence could prove important to future astronaut and robotic missions seeking to extract and utilize water for purposes such as a drinking supply or a fuel ingredient.

A team led by Casey Honniball of NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland detected molecular water on the lunar surface, trapped within natural glasses or between debris grains. Previous observations have suffered from ambiguity between water and its molecular



cousin hydroxyl, but the new detection used a method that yielded unambiguous findings.

The only way for this water to survive on the sunlit lunar surfaces

where it was observed was to be embedded within mineral grains, protecting it from the frigid and forboding environment. The researchers used data from the SOFIA airborne

observatory, a Boeing 747SP aircraft modified to carry a telescope.

"A lot of people think that the detection I've made is water ice, which is not true. It's just the water molecules - because they're so spread out they don't interact with each other to form water ice or even liquid water," Honniball said. The second study, also published in the journal Nature Astronomy, focused upon so-called cold traps on the moon, regions of its surface that exist in a state of perpetual darkness where temperatures are below about negative 260 degrees Fahrenheit (negative 163 degrees Celsius). That is cold enough that frozen water can remain stable for billions of years.

Parag OFDC chairman

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 27: In a minor reshuffle among senior IAS officers, the state government Tuesday appointed Parag Gupta as chairman of the state-owned Odisha Forest Development Corporation (OFDC). Gupta, an Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) rank officer, recently returned to the state after completing his central deputation.

Steel & mines secretary Surendra Kumar has been given additional charge of chairman, Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC). Kumar will take charge of OMC from IAS officer Sanjeev Chopra.

Housing and urban development secretary G Mathivathan was given additional charge of Cuttack

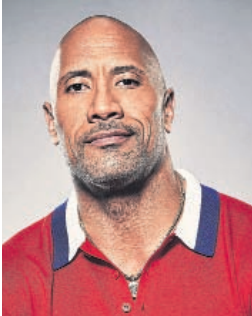
Development Authority (CDA) chairman. Kumar was the chairman of CDA. Mathivathan will also continue as parliamentary affairs secretary.

The government has appointed 2010 batch IAS officer Mansi Nimbal as Member Secretary of Odisha State Agricultural Marketing Board (OSAMB). Nimbal is al-

lowed to remain in additional charge of tribal development co-operative corporation of Odisha Ltd (TDCOL).

Young IAS officer Yeddula Vijay has been given additional charge of Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency's (OREDA's) chief executive. Vijay is now serving as a deputy secretary in the planning and convergence department.

MINOR IAS RESHUFFLE



DWAYNE JOHNSON INJURES FACE WHILE WORKING OUT

Hollywood action star Dwayne Johnson sustained a face injury during a workout session. However, that did not stop the 48-year-old actor and fitness enthusiast from continuing his extremely intense regime. He got a gash on his face while training with around 50-pound chains, reports *foxnews.com*.

OSCAR ISAAC IN TALKS TO STAR AS SUPERHERO 'MOON KNIGHT'

Actor Oscar Isaac is in talks to lead the upcoming superhero series *Moon Knight*. After his appearances in the Star Wars and X-Men franchises, the actor is in talks to take on a new role in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, reports *variety.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Today you will go overboard trying to spruce up your looks. You attempt to imbibe new looks. A very desirable date will raise high expectations in you and will keep you on the edge of your seat. Ganesha advises you to take it easy as real relationships are not measured by outward expressions.

TAURUS

Ganesha sees you in a very romantic mood today. Your thoughts, tender and dreamy, will keep drifting towards someone special; someone of the opposite sex. Come evening and you will, in all likelihood, be sitting closely together, arm in arm, with your spouse or your sweetheart.

GEMINI

An extremely profitable and progressive day awaits you. You may come into a handsome inheritance. Your responsibilities will increase along with a possible promotion at work. However, do not let your success go to your head, says Ganesha.

CANCER

Ganesha says that you will carve out your path for progress. You will get respect and recognition from people. Business rivals and illness may bother you. Beware of enemies' actions. Your alertness will thwart their designs.

LEO

You will be in a light-hearted mood today. Be it at the office or at the home, you will be full of joy and will be looking to pass your time leisurely. You will spend time with family and friends. You will be unable to implement your plans for tackling work today in your current mood, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

The artist in you will set the floor ablaze today. You have the remarkable abilities of a showman and comedian, and people will feel thrilled at your treasure of jokes in the evening, says Ganesha. However, you will do well to conserve some energy for other urgent matters and duties as well.

LIBRA

Ganesha says that to gain future opportunities you may have to rely on past experience. You will tend to become possessive about things close to you. You will also have to deal with unpleasant situations where your integrity is questioned.

SCORPIO

According to Ganesha, it's a good day for long term and real estate investments. It may lead to benefits and profits in long run. Sit back, relax and enjoy the pleasures of life before you miss out on them. Welcome all the opportunities with open arms.

SAGITTARIUS

You have been experiencing the adverse effects of stressful lifestyle off-late. But not anymore, as you realise the importance of good health. Maintaining good health will begin with good news of either promotion or increment at work. This leaves you happy and satisfied, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

You have meticulously planned every aspect of your plan and prepared the check list. The only thing left now to do is execution of that plan. Delays and obstacles, however, will block your path and will leave you disheartened.

AQUARIUS

Don't let your emotions play a spoilsport in the important decisions of your life. The tendency to be sentimental when you need to be rational will become an obstacle in your path. Learn to curb this habit otherwise you may have to pay a heavy price, advises Ganesha.

PISCES

You need to concentrate more on your personal life, and seriously think about the changes you need to make. You are guided more by your heart in these matters. However, there is nothing to worry about, as this is a golden period for you. Today should be a progressive day that will bring a lot of positive changes in your life, says Ganesha.

When Ash shot in lace saree amid freezing cold

Mumbai: The Aditya Chopra directorial Mohabbati was released exactly 20 years, and choreographer Farah Khan walked down memory lane and recalled choreographing Aishwarya Rai Bachchan in the cold weather of London.

Released in 2000, the love story features Aishwarya as the lover of Raj (Shah Rukh Khan). Her character commits suicide when her conservative father (Amitabh Bachchan) refuses to approve her affair with Raj.

Apart from its cast, the songs and dance are a major factor for the film's success. Sharing anecdotes from the film, Farah said: "Ash being a thorough professional, freezing in London, wear-

ing a white lace saree, drenched, and she would not complain. Her and Shah Rukh's chemistry is something else in the film and that whole poetry of Ek ladki thi anjani si - I think that has become almost iconic because of how they did it."

She added: "We were not supposed to know at that point whether Aishwarya was Shah Rukh's imagination or not. He would see her in places and she was the spirit behind the love stories." IANS



Sussanne's 6'day look floors Hrithik

Mumbai: Actor Hrithik Roshan loved the bright birthday look his former wife Sussanne Khan flaunted, and used Instagram to express his appreciation.

Sussanne, who turned a year older on Monday, had shared a picture of herself and spoken of her journey in life.

"Thank you dear Life for giving me the best of chances, the best of grace, the best of guidance and most importantly the best of humans that surround me with their love," Sussanne has written. "Work with your heart, to give back to the people around you, think with kindness and nothing will stop you from manifesting your path," she added. In the comments section of Sussanne's post, her ex-husband Hrithik has dropped a few comments. He wished her "happy birthday" in a comment, and in another he wrote: "Love it", followed by a 100 sign emoji, referring to Sussanne's look. She then sent out hugs to him along with a heart emoji. Their Insta conversation is catching the attention of all. IANS

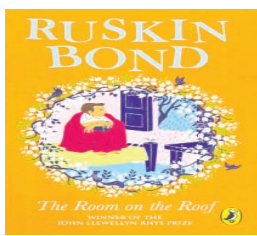


Books that highlight kid's mental health

New Delhi: In these unprecedented times, when isolation fatigue, gloom and the fear of losing a beloved has also come to grip children, taking care of their mental health is of paramount importance.

Here's a list of books that address the various emotions children struggle with, and can be companions to them during the hard times.

The Room On The Roof by Ruskin Bond



A classic coming-of-age story which has held generations of readers spellbound! Rusty, a sixteen-year-old Anglo-Indian boy, is orphaned and has to live with his English guardian in the claustrophobic European part in Dehra Dun. Unhappy with the strict ways of his guardian, Rusty

runs away from home to live with his Indian friends. Plunging for the first time into the dream-bright world of the bazaar, Hindu festivals and other aspects of Indian life, Rusty is enchanted, and is lost forever to the prim proprieties of the European community. Written when the author was himself seventeen, this moving story of love and friendship, with a new introduction and illustrations by a whole new generation of readers.

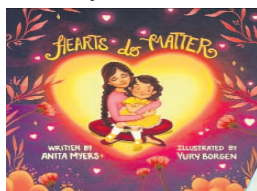
Who Stole Bhaiya's Smile? by Sanjana Kapur



Bhaiya does not feel like playing these days. Could it be because of his new monster friend Dukduk, who is always hanging around him? No one in the family takes Bhaiya seriously. But Chiru knows there is more than what meets the eye. A story about the lingering effects of depression.

The book is illustrated by Sunaina Coelho.

Hearts Do Matters by Anita Myers



What the world needs now in these times is love. Hearts Do Matter supports children and adults through the losses and grief in their life. It teaches us that even when loved ones cannot be with us, we can feel their presence in our hearts. The new release is a beautiful picture book about a little girl who has a very special relationship with her mother. Her mother promised she would always be with her, and she shows in the book that she kept her promise in the most loving way. AGENCIES

Reusing clothes is part of my personality:

RASIKA

Mumbai: Actress Rasika Dugal is a rare celebrity who does not shy away from admitting that she reuses clothes. "I don't buy things that I can't reuse often enough. I get attached to the comfort of the few things I have. So, reusing clothes is a part of my personality. That's one side of sustainability that comes easily to me," the actress said.

She thinks that it's a great idea to wear the same thing in a different way.

"Encourage people to do that and be conscious of the products that they are buying," said Rasika.

She recently graced the virtual Green Carpet Fashion Awards 2020. The interesting dress code was a piece from the attendees' wardrobe that is special to them.

As sustainability was the message of the event, Rasika wore an organza silk saree that has been in her family for 45 years.

Recalling memories of the saree,

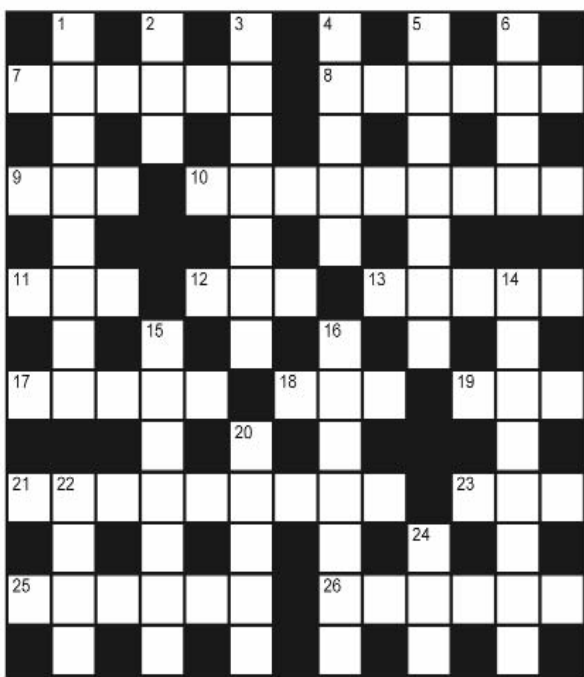
Rasika said: "This is a very special saree because it has been in my family for 45 years. It was gifted to my mother by my grandmother on her wedding day."

IANS



FUN post

CROSSWORD



Across

- 7 Be a busybody
8 Wine bottle sizes
9 Large snake
10 It rotates around the North Star (4,5)
11 Slow-witted
12 Tsetse
13 Carpenter's tool
17 Routine

Down

- 1 Exercise type
2 Commotion
3 Oceanic birds
4 Church part
5 Clad
6 Zilch
14 Winter warmers
15 Seaport
16 Carrion eater
20 Greet the day
22 Jar toppers
24 Gibbon, for one

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



SUDOKU

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

		5		9				7							
3	8		C	7	0	6	1						E		
E	C	4		D	B	5	A		7						
			5			6			0					A	
D	6										0	3			
	1	4	C											2	
5	6		0	E	8		4	9							
	3			1	9		0		C	E					
				A			8	1	B			3			
2	8	A	7		9		6					4			
							7	B	4						
9					A	C	1	3	6	B	5				
			3			B		8	D	2	C				
A	4		5	7		3	C					8			
													A	9	1

SOLUTIONS

C	H	A	T	L	E	A	P	S	P	Y					
O	M	C	R	U	A										
T	E	A	C	H	E	R	B	Y	W	A					
S	A		S		S	M	O								
D	E	S	C	R	I	B	E	T	I	P					
S	A	C	D	R	A	M	A	L	A	C					
K	O	E	C	R	A										
D	U	O		T	H	R	E	A	T	E	N				
O	R	F				B	I								
P	E	A	R	L		T	W	I	S	T	E	R			
A	L	I	E		A	U	T	A							
L	I	E		B	A	B									

8	7	8	5	B	3	E	4	1	2	0	C	A	D	9	
E	3	9	0	8	D	7	C	6	A	1	5	B	2	4	
0	B	2	A	4	7	D	5	3	8	9	6	1	E	C	
1	A	C	E	9	2	8	0	B	D	7	4	3	5	6	
5	D	4	6	1	C	9	A	2	E	B	3	7	8	0	
B	8	6	7	2	0	5	E	4	3	C	9	D	1	A	
9	4	0	D	6	1	3	7	A	B	5	8	E	C	2	
2	E	D	3	A	8	1	9	C	0	4	7	5	6	B	
7	C	1	9	5	E	B	2	0	6	A	D	8	4	3	
3	5	A	4	0	8	6	1	3	7	A	B	5	8	E	
C	1	8	0	5	E	4	3	7	A	B	5	8	E	C	
8	2	3	C	7	4	0	B	E	9	D	1	6	A	5	
4	0	5	1	E	6	C	3	D	7	2	A	9	B	8	
A	8	E	2	3	9	4	1	7	5	8	B	C	D	0	
D	9	7	B	0	A	2	8	5	C	6	E	4	3	1	

downtown

Single portal for all scholarship schemes



Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launches the scholarship portal. 5T Secretary VK Pandian is also seen
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 27: Students are no longer required to log in to various portals to obtain government scholarships as Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday launched the website, www.scholarship.odisha.gov.in, here through virtual mode.

The Chief Minister also inaugurated Sumangal Portal to provide financial assistance for inter-caste marriages

Unveiling the portal, as part of the 5T initiative, Naveen said 21 types of scholarships are being offered by six departments of the state. "Now, this single portal can reduce the distance between government departments and applicants. More than 11 lakh students in the state will be benefited from this initiative," said the Chief Minister.

He emphasised on the widespread use of technology to change the lives of the common people. "Only through the use of technology, we can provide best services to people at the right time with efficiency and transparency," he said. Patnaik was happy that students from SC, ST, Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and socially & educationally backward classes were at the forefront of benefiting from the scholarship.

Stating educational facilities for

vulnerable children have been a priority of the state government, Naveen hoped that they would especially benefit from this single portal.

All scholarships offered by SC & ST Development, Higher Education, Schools and Mass Education, Labor and ESI, Skills Development & Technical Education and Agriculture departments have been brought under the single web-based platform. As the portal is linked to the state treasury, scholarships will be credited directly to students' bank accounts, sources said. Naveen also inaugurated the Sumangal Portal to provide financial assistance for inter-caste marriages. He said that as inter-caste marriages increase social unity, reduces racial discrimination and promotes equality and peaceful coexistence in society. The Sumangal portal would be of great help in this regard, he stated.

For social integration and removal of untouchability, the government had made provision for awarding cash incentive to inter-caste married couples if marriage solemnised between Hindus and Schedule Castes belonging to Hindu communities. The couple concerned can apply through the portal and avail financial aid of Rs 2.5 lakh within two months.

Among others, SC, ST Development Minister Jagannath Saraka, Chief Advisor to CM R Balakrishnan, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy, Development Commissioner SC Mohapatra and Secretary to CM (5T) VK Pandian were present at the occasion.

Monsoon to retreat from state today

Bhubaneswar: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Tuesday said the south-west monsoon is likely to withdraw from the state by Wednesday. "Conditions are becoming favourable for withdrawal of southwest monsoon from the entire country by tomorrow (October 28)," IMD said in a bulletin. Dry weather will prevail across the state for next few days, it said. The monsoon has arrived in the state June 11 last. This year, the state has experienced normal rainfall. Usually, the monsoon season was calculated from June to September, and the state had recorded 1 per cent excess rainfall during the period. Due to low pressures triggering heavy rainfall, the average rainfall of the state was increased by 71 per cent till Tuesday during October. Not a single district in the state has recorded deficit rain during this month.

ASI inspects *Baishi Pahacha* before repair

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Oct 27: The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will repair Baishi Pahacha (22 steps) of Srimandir here.

A four-member team of the ASI Tuesday inspected Baishi Pahacha and examined the status of each stone of the structure.

"A few cracks have been found on Baishi Pahacha. Some stones of the structure have been damaged over the years. Our team has identified the damaged stones," said an official of the ASI.

According to him, the national conservator will mend the cracks at Baishi Pahacha and replace the damaged stones with new ones. "We had earlier repaired the steps



Anukula puja for Nagarjuna Besha being performed at Harachandi Sahi

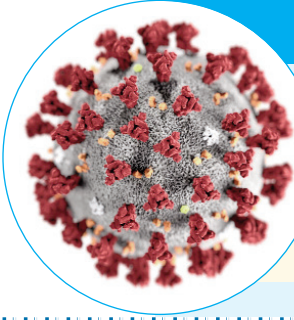
at the North and West gates of Srimandir," said the official.

The ASI team also examined the structural status of Mahalaxmi and Bimala temples on Srimandir precincts. "There were reports of rainwater leakage at Mahalaxmi temple. We will discuss the issue



STIR OVER PRICE HIKE

CPI activists hold a demonstration at Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar to protest the rise in onion price, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	4,39,66,988	3,22,97,554	11,67,097
India	79,46,429	72,01,070	1,19,502
Odisha	2,83,942	2,68,115	1,272

Concrete jungle plan at Ekamra Kanan flayed

KHURDA DISTRICT IS STILL SHORT OF 14% OF RECOMMENDED GREEN COVER AS PER THE NATIONAL FOREST POLICY

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 27: A recent decision of the General Administration (GA) department to take over 20 acres of Ekamra Kanan land has raised eyebrows among the environmentalists and activists.

The farmland spread over 25 acres have 20 acres of nursery beds, diverse species of several trees and the remaining five acres have some buildings. The green activists have alleged that the government has planned the alienation of the land for construction of high-rise building by destroying the green cover there, an allegation yet to be confirmed by the government.

An official communication (No 8336) from the GA department to



The nursery (left) and a horticulture farm at Ekamra Kanan in Bhubaneswar

Horticulture department said, "This is to intimate that decision has been taken by the government to surrender 20.192 acres from Ekamra Kanan Farm to GA and PG department excepting an area of 5.775 acre where there are buildings."

A representation from the green activists has also been sent to the Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA) and Housing and Urban Development department seeking their intervention. It is said that the Ekamra Kanan Farm

(Orchard) was established in 1975 and in 1985 it was divided into two parts as-Regional Plant Research Centre under the forest department and Ekamra Kanan farm orchard under the horticulture department.

"Around 3,500 fruit and medicinal big green trees are there in the entire area on the mentioned plots. The farm supplies various fruit plants and medicinal plants to six different districts of Odisha. But a civil construction/high rise building construction inside the farm will bring an end to such benefi-

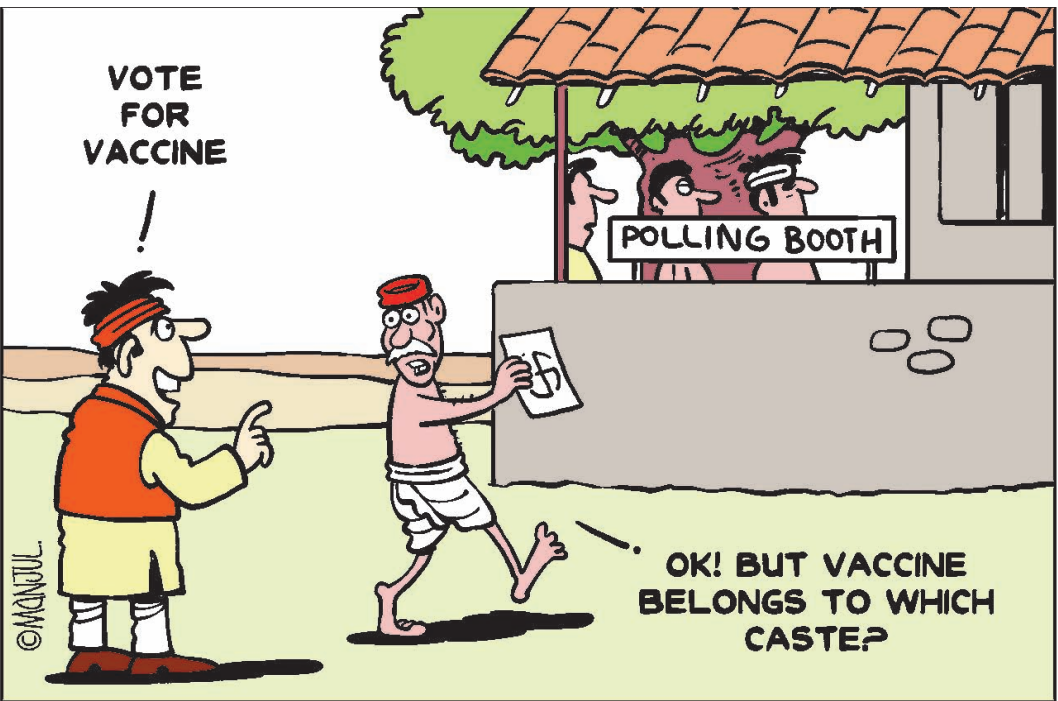
cial activities forever," the letter from environmentalists-Banibrata Tripathy, Sushanta Kumar Jena and Ashwini Kumar Mohapatra said.

"Latest statistics claim that Khurda district is still short of 14 per cent of recommended green cover as per the National Forest Policy. Any threat to the existing green cover in the district especially in regions like Bhubaneswar is likely to harm the local ecology," Shankar Prasad Pani, lawyer with the National Green Tribunal (NGT)

said. According to government records, the site is home to different species of mangoes with some standing for more than 75 years. Other species like guava, amla, cashew, coconut, litchi, pine apple and others also exist. The department is also said to have collected Rs 35 lakh as revenues from them as per the latest figures. Plant research works are also taken on the site.

When contacted for response, GA department Principal Secretary Sanjeev Chopra didn't respond to the queries.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



PADDY PROCUREMENT

Chief Secy thrust on small farmers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 27: Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy, Tuesday, directed officials of Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare (FS&CW) department to procure paddy from small and marginal farmers on priority basis.

Reviewing the preparedness for Kharif paddy procurement, Tripathy instructed the officials to ensure basic facilities for the farmers at mandis and market yards. He also asked the officials to transfer the money to the bank accounts of farmers within 48 hours.

The paddy procurement for the Kharif season will start November 1 and continue till March 31, 2021.

The state has witnessed a 21 per cent growth in farmers' registration for procurement of paddy under the minimum support price scheme for 2020-21 Kharif season, said FS&CW secretary VV Yadav.

Over 14.97 lakh farmers have registered themselves through an online system for the upcoming kharif paddy procurement programme. Last year, around 12.35 lakh farmers had registered for selling their produce, he said.

KARIF HARVEST

The Chief Secretary directed the officials to ensure basic facilities for the farmers at mandis and market yards. The officials were asked to transfer the money to the bank accounts of farmers within 48 hours.

The state has witnessed a 21 per cent growth in farmers' registration for procurement of paddy under the minimum support price scheme for 2020-21 Kharif season

Similarly, the registration of marginal, small and medium category farmers has seen a growth of 21 per cent, 22 per cent and 24 per cent respectively.

A total of 2,857 designated primary agricultural credit societies (PACS) and large area multi-purpose cooperative societies (LAMPCS) along with 224 women self-help groups (SHGs) will participate in the programme from various districts of the state.

The state had procured 70.56 lakh tonne paddy during last year.

with the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) and Srimandir Chhatisha Niyog. The repair work would be carried out after receiving a nod from the SJTA," said the official.

Preparations for Nagarjuna Besha
The SJTA has initiated process for Nagarjuna Besha of Lord Jagannath which would be organised after a gap of 25 years.

The rare ritual is scheduled to be organised at Srimandir November 27. "Anukula Puja for the making of special attires for the rare ritual was held at Chakrakot Jaga of Harchandi Sahi Monday Balam Khuntia and other artisans will prepare the special attires and other decorative pieces for the Nagarjuna Besha," said a source in

Kartika rituals begin at Srimandir

Puri: Lord Jagannath was adorned with Radha Damodar Besha (attire) at Srimandir here Tuesday as part of the special rituals for the holy month of Kartika.

However, devotees could not witness Lord's Radha Damodar Besha as the shrine has been shut for people since March this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As per Srimandir tradition, Lord Jagannath would be adorned with Radha Damodar Besha till Panchaka. During Panchaka, the Lord would be

decorated with five special attires, said an official of the SJTA.

Lord Jagannath would be decorated with Laxmi Narayan Besha November 25 while Bankachuda Besha would be held the next day. Nagarjuna Besha of the Lord would be held November 27 and Tribikram Besha November 28, added the official.

As per the schedule, Laxmi Nrusingha Besha of the Lord would be conducted November 29 and the Rajadhiraj Besha November 30.

Srimandir administration. As per Srimandir tradition, Lord Jagannath and his elder brother

Lord Balabhadra would be decorated as warriors during Nagarjuna Besha.

Political will key to protecting environment: Ex-Chief Secy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 27: Enhanced political commitment holds the key to generating public awareness on environment protection. This was revealed by former Chief Secretary of Odisha, Bijay Kumar Patnaik, at a webinar organised on the occasion of 39th foundation day of Odisha Environmental Society recently.

Patnaik emphasised on resolving the conflict between environment and development, and preserving the quality of environment. The former bureaucrat stressed on enhanced political commitment which is crucial for generating public awareness on protection of environment. On the occasion, chief speaker Anup Kumar

Nayak, former ADG (Tiger Project) & Member Secretary of National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), delivered the Ninth Prasanna Kumar Dash memorial lecture and spoke on the topic 'Tiger conservation scenario in India'. Tiger, as a flagship species, plays a significant role in maintaining equilibrium of forest ecosystems. India with 70 per cent of world tiger population needs to fortify the 32 major tiger corridors across the country to enhance habitat connectivity.

Odisha also holds a lot of promise with Similipal, Sunabeda, Satkosia, Debrigarh and other areas as potential tiger territories, he added.

The guests honoured several distinguished persons in the fields of environment, science and wildlife.

BIDDING ADIEU



Clay idols being immersed at a temporary pond on the bank of Kuakhai river near Bhubaneswar after the conclusion of Dussehra festival, Tuesday
OP PHOTO

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13 fresh fatalities push state's nCoV toll to 1,272

WITH 1,247 NEW CASES, ODISHA'S COVID-19 TALLY STANDS AT 2,83,942

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 27: State Tuesday reported 1,247 fresh novel coronavirus cases taking the tally to 2,83,942, while 13 fresh fatalities pushed the death toll in the coastal state to 1,272, an official of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

Out of the fresh cases, 729 were reported from various quarantine centres while 518 infections were detected during contact tracing exercise, said the H&FW department official. Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, recorded the maximum 206 fresh cases, followed by Cuttack 105 and Sundargarh 96.

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

Of the new fatalities, four were reported from Khurda, three from Nuapada, two each from Keonjhar and Jharsuguda and one each from Malkangiri and Sundargarh.



FRESH STATS

Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, recorded the maximum 206 fresh cases, followed by Cuttack 105 and Sundargarh 96

Four were reported from Khurda, three from Nuapada, two each from Keonjhar and Jharsuguda and one each from Malkangiri and Sundargarh

The state has conducted over 43.85 lakh sample tests for Covid-19, including 30,303 Monday

As many as 53 other Covid-19 patients have died in the state due to

comorbidities, the official pointed out.

The state has conducted over 43.85 lakh sample tests for Covid-19, including 30,303 Monday, added the official.

Meanwhile, 2,010 Covid patients recovered Tuesday, taking the total recovered cases in Odisha to 2,68,115, the H&FW department said.

City's caseload drops below 2K

The Capital city recorded less than 100 cases for the second consecutive day with 88 testing positive for the viral infection Tuesday, according to Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC).

Of the fresh cases, 71 were local contact cases, while the remaining 17 were under quarantine, the BMC said. The Temple City also registered 230 recoveries. With fewer new cases and significant recoveries, the total number of active cases in the City dropped below the 2,000-mark to 1,996.

The total Covid-19 tally reached 28,782, while 26,607 people have recovered so far. The death toll in the Capital City stands at 158.

Hotel manager held for raping staffer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 27: The Commissionerate Police has arrested a hotel manager here on charges sexually abusing a lady staffer in the presence of her husband late October 24 night.

The accused was identified as Sukanta Nayak, the manager of the hotel at Master Canteen near Bhubaneswar Railway station here.

According to sources, the victim and her husband, who also works at the hotel, used to stay in a room inside the hotel. On Saturday, when the husband of the victim had gone outside to answer the nature's call, Nayak reached there and started sexually assaulting the lady. When the victim's husband came back, he was shocked to see the accused sexually abusing his wife. The victim's husband was assaulted by Nayak when he tried to save her.

The victim lodged a complaint with Capital police who swung into action and arrested Nayak. He was sent to judicial custody by the court October 25.



ECoR officials vow to eradicate graft

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 27: East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Vidya Bhushan, Tuesday, administered the oath on 'Vigilance Awareness' to the railway staffers at ECoR headquarters through virtual mode to eradicate corruption for economic, political and social progress of the country.

The Vigilance Awareness Week, which commenced October 27, will continue up to November 2. A massive awareness campaign has been launched to educate the people in general and rail users in particular to bring transparency in public life.

CLASSIFIED

LOST

I, Nawal Kishor Kesharwani, S/o.- Late Kishan Lal Kesharwani, R/o- Ward No.11, Khariar Road, P.S.- Jonk, Nuapada, have lost my Registered Sale Deed near Khariar Road, Daily Market on 10.10.2020 vide number 2448/1981 Dtd. 17.09.1981 executed in the office of Dist. Sub-Registrar, Nuapada.

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before the Executive Magistrate, Bhanjanagar, Dist.- Ganjam, I Snehanjali Digal wife of No.- 14449425M, Rank-Hav., Name- Rasan Kumar Digal, presently residing at- Nidhiapalli, P.O.- Mujagada, Via- Bhanjanagar, Ganjam, Odisha, India, PIN - 761132, declare that in my husband's service record my name is wrongly mentioned as "Shehanjali" Digal instead of "Snehanjali" Digal. Henceforth my name should be mentioned as "Snehanjali" Digal in my husband's Army record.

By virtue of an affidavit before the Notary Public, Cuttack on 19.10.2020, I have changed my name from Kiran Devi Nahar to Kiran Nahar for all purposes. Kiran Nahar, Flat No.- 007, Paras Plaza, Tinkonia Bagicha, Cuttack - 753001, Odisha.

Relief to Ray as Delhi HC stays CBI court ruling

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Oct 27: In a major relief to former Union minister Dilip Ray, the Delhi High Court Tuesday stayed three-year imprisonment given by special CBI court to Ray in a scam pertaining to allocation of coal blocks in Jharkhand in 1999.

A bench of Justice Suresh Kait suspended the judgement of the special CBI court till the matter is decided by the High Court. The court has posted the matter for hearing November 25.

Monday, Special CBI judge Bharat Parashar had granted bail to all convicts on a personal bail bond of Rs 1 lakh each immediately after awarding three years' imprisonment to all the convicts.

Significantly, the special CBI court had awarded three years' imprisonment and imposed Rs 10 lakh penalty on Ray. Besides Ray, Court had awarded three-year jail term to two senior officials of the Ministry of Coal at that time, Pradip Kumar



A bench of Justice Suresh Kait suspended the judgement of the special CBI court till the matter is decided by the High Court

Banerjee and Nitya Nand Gautam and Castron Technologies Ltd's (CTL) director Mahendra Kumar Agarwal. The court had also imposed Rs 2 lakh fine on Banerjee and Gautam and Rs 60 lakh fine on Agarwal.

The court further imposed Rs 60 lakh on CTL and Rs 10 lakh on Castron Mining Ltd (CML).

While pronouncing the order, the court observed that the only reason which may explain such behaviour of "white collar criminals" is their greed or lust to acquire maximum material resources in the name of their business, taking benefit of open competition, econ-

omy and individual freedom.

"In fact white collar crimes are a peculiar feature of an acquisitive and affluent society and even though our society cannot be strictly termed as an affluent society but it is certainly becoming acquisitive," the court said.

The court had held Ray guilty of criminal conspiracy and other offences u/s 120-B IPC, 120-B/409/420 IPC and Section 13 (1) (c) and 13 (1) (d) PC Act, 1988 along with others in the coal scam case pertaining to irregularities in the allocation of 105.153 hectares of abandoned coal mining area in Giridih district of

State's sand art featured in Guv's event on cancer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 27: The sand art of Odisha found a special place during a recent conference on breast cancer awareness presided by Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel and Manipur Governor Nazma Heptulla.

On the onset of the programme, the sand art made on breast cancer awareness by sand artist Sudarshan

Patnaik was unveiled by the Governors during the conference.

The programme was institutionalised by the Integrated Health and Wellbeing (IHW) Council during the ongoing global breast cancer awareness month. The Breast Cancer Action Day is observed as part of IHW Council's month-long mega virtual conclave on Breast Cancer Action Month.

"Efforts like the Breast Cancer Action Day should be held regularly to make people aware of cancer and help the patients survive. I am sure the programme will be a source of encouragement for both patients and survivors and tell them that having cancer does not mean death - people from all walks of life should join such efforts," says Heptulla said.



'Illegal' sand mining at Kuakhai riverbed in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

FIGHT AGAINST VIRUS



Revenue Divisional Commissioner Anil Samal inaugurates a 500-bed Covid hospital at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, Tuesday. Collector Bhawani Shankar Chayani and CMC Commissioner Ananya Das are also seen

OP PHOTO

Naveen to campaign for bypolls digitally

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 27: With the raging threat of COVID 19 in the state, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has planned to conduct his campaigning in Balasore in a 'digital avatar'.

The BJD supremo has now planned to reach out to the people of Balasore through virtual rallies. He would connect to the people of the constituency, going for bypolls through TV screens and mobile phones.

BJD leader Pratap Jena Tuesday told the media that the programme has been scheduled for October 29 at 4:40pm. "Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will undertake campaign for the party in Balasore Sadar. He will conduct a virtual rally Wednesday. This will be a digital rally. It has been planned on October

29 from 4:30 pm," he said.

He also added that he would address the media and will ask the people of the constituency to vote for the BJD during the polls. "There have been big TV screens installed in the region to watch his address. We are also working to make this available on mobile phones," he said.

He admitted that in some pan-chayats, people were not able to get mobile connections and thus special arrangements have been done accordingly. "We have planned TV screen for such areas," he said.

He also attacked the opposition parties for making allegations of violation of Model Code of Conduct by the BJD. He said, "People who are making accusations of violation of model code of conduction on electrical works are misleading. These are ongoing projects."

57kg tumour removed from 25-year-old's abdomen

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Oct 27: A 25-year-old woman from tribal-dominated Nabarangpur district got a new lease of life with a five-member team of healthcare experts 'successfully' removing a 57-kilogram tumour from her abdomen, claimed to be world's largest tumour, after a five-hour-long surgery at a private facility here, sources said Tuesday.

The five-member team, led by Koraput Medical College and Hospital's assistant surgeon Jagdish Chandra Behera and comprising healthcare experts from Sai Seba Sadan Hospital at Kuhudi in the district—Soumya Das and Chandrasekhar Behera, SUM Hospital's Bismrit Chhatra and Hi-Tech Hospital's Purnachandra Dutta, claimed to have successfully removed the enormous tumour from Phulamati Gand's abdomen after a five-hour-long surgery that began at 2pm and concluded at 7pm Monday.

Born to Dhaniram Gand and Haluri at Anchaladihi Pandripakhana Kacharpada village in Nabarangpur, Phulamati had initially developed a small lump in her abdomen that developed into a 57kilogram tumour over the years.

Dhaniram, a daily wage labourer, said that apart from the pain, the developing tumour had almost seized Phulamati's movement. The huge tumour had made Phulamati's life miserable as she had been struggling to perform daily chores for the past 10 years. They had approached several hospitals, both government and private, but to no avail.



File photo of Phulamati struggling with the tumour

OP PHOTO

gling to perform daily chores for the past 10 years. They had approached several hospitals, both government and private, but to no avail.

Dearth of funds on one hand and the pandemic on the other had worsened the tribal family's situation as they had to carry an ailing Phulamati from one hospital to another with all of them asking to the Covid test done.

For a hapless Dhaniram, Sai Seba Sadan Hospital's chief Jagannath Sahu is no less than a messenger of god.

Sahu said that he learnt about the

Sai Seba Sadan Hospital chief Jagannath Sahu claimed that it is the world's largest tumour to be removed through surgery

woman and her plight from a social media post. "I came across a Facebook post requesting help for the ailing woman. Then I contacted her family and the arrangement was made for the noble cause," Sahu said, adding that the surgery was done after getting a go-ahead of the Collector as well as the chief district medical officer of Khurda.

The woman accompanied by her mother and brother reached Sai Seba Sadan Hospital by an ambulance October 21. "Phulamati was operated upon after having the Covid test and requisite medical examinations, Monday," Sahu pointed out.

Sai Seba Sadan Hospital's Chandrasekhar Behera, meanwhile, attributed the surgery's success to the five-member team.

Sahu claimed that it is the world's largest tumour to be removed through surgery. "Earlier, a 55kilogram tumour was removed through a surgical procedure in South Africa. Being 57kilogram, ours is the largest tumour so far. We'll apply for the Guinness World Records," Sai Seba Sadan Hospital's chief said.

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Ex-MLA candidate held over extortion charge

BALAKRUSHNA ROHIDAS CONTESTED AS A MLA CANDIDATE OF CONGRESS PARTY FROM THE RENGALI ASSEMBLY SEGMENT IN THE DISTRICT IN THE LAST ELECTIONS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Oct 27: Sambalpur police here arrested two persons including a former MLA candidate of Congress party on charges of demanding extortion from a private industrial firm and assaulting its HR manager after the manager refused to yield to their demand, Tuesday.

The accused were identified as Balakrushna Rohidas and his brother Rajesh Rohidas. Balakrushna contested as a MLA candidate of Congress party from the Rengali Assembly segment in the district in the last elections. The arrest has sent chatters abuzz and heated up politics in the area. Police also detained a minor in this connection while two others are absconding. A luxury car (OD-15-F-7346) and ₹5,000 were seized from their possession.

A case was registered in this connection in Thelkuli police station and further investigations were on. Police after the arrest asked people to cooperate with them to curb such crimes and lodge complaints in 5T.

The matter has brought to the fore the involvement of a racket in demanding extortions from various industrial firms operating in the district and muscle flexing to keep them under their control. The accused will be produced in the court Wednesday, Sadar SDPO Tapan Kumar Mohanty said.



The accused Balakrushna Rohidas (L) and his brother Rajesh Rohidas

Our party is always for the establishment of rule of law and never supports such activities. The party is trying to ascertain the truth behind their arrest and will take further steps in this regard

ASWINI GURU | DISTRICT CONGRESS PRESIDENT, SAMBALPUR

THE 5 ACCUSED INCLUDING BALAKRUSHNA VISITED THE LABOUR COLONY RESIDENCE OF THE FIRM'S HR MANAGER AND DEMANDED EXTORTION

THE 5 ASSAULTED HIM WHEN THE MANAGER REFUSED TO YIELD TO THEIR DEMAND

THEY SNATCHED AWAY ₹20,000 FROM THE MANAGER AND FLED

firm is working as a sub-contractor of Aditya Birla group which has its plant at Lapanga in the district.

All the five accused including Balakrushna visited the Labour Colony residence of the firm's HR manager Goutam Reddy and demanded extortion from him, Monday.

They assaulted him when he refused to yield to their demand. They snatched away ₹20,000 from his possession and fled in their luxury car.

Later, Reddy lodged a complaint with police. Police raided various places and arrested Balakrushna and his brother from their hideout.

When contacted, Aswini Guru,

district Congress president said that his party is always for the establishment of rule of law and never supports such activities. He added that the party is trying to ascertain the truth behind their arrest and will take further steps in this regard.

Sources alleged that Balakrushna had been implicated in the case. He is working as a contractor in the firm. The company recently tried to engage outsiders in the firm which was strongly opposed by Balakrushna and some other contractors. The firm, to silence him, wrongly framed him in the case which led to his arrest and his brother.

CDPO arrested on graft charge

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jeypore, Oct 27: Vigilance sleuths arrested the child development project officer (CDPO) of Nandapur in Koraput district Tuesday on charges of demanding and accepting bribe.

CDPO Snigdharani Mishra was caught red-handed by the anti-graft officials when she was accepting bribe of ₹1.75 lakh to pass a bill of a supplier towards distribution of kits of Anganwadi centres.

As per the complaint, Mishra had demanded bribe from one Snehalata Dalapati of Badsan Sahi in Nandapur, who works as a member of Tini Bhairabi SHG. The supplier had lodged a complaint with the Jeypore Vigilance. The entire bribe amount was recovered from the possession of the accused.

Later, the Vigilance sleuths of Koraput division conducted a raid on her office and residence at Semiluguda. The Vigilance team also raided her Semiluguda residence and office, Vigilance SP Sashi Sekhar Mohapatra said.

Teacher held for rape attempt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Purusottampur, Oct 27: A teacher from Purusottampur police station area in Ganjam district allegedly attempted to sexually assault an eight-year-old girl at his residence during tuition hours Monday evening.

The incident came to light after the victim's family filed a report with Purusottampur police Tuesday morning. The accused teacher has been identified as Srikanta Samantray. The police arrested the teacher and produced him in court Tuesday.

Villagers' resistance against Red menace

TUESDAY MORNING, AN EXCHANGE OF FIRE TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THE SECURITY FORCES AND THE MAOISTS IN MALKANGIRI



Villagers assemble to carry out an anti-Maoist march

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chittrakonda/ Malkangiri, Oct 27: Angry over the killing of a local by the Maoists, residents of Khajuriguda under Jodamba police limits in the district have vowed to fight against the Red menace.

While the Reds killed Dasu Khemudu of Khajuriguda, three others have sustained critical injuries.

Reports said anti-Maoist posters surfaced Sunday at different villages in the cut-off region, and in a show of solidarity hundreds of villagers took out a rally in Khajuriguda holding placards and raised anti-Maoist slogans.

The villagers convened a meeting where they came down heavily on the Maoists. "We are the believers of 'United we stand, divided we fall' saying and we will never let the ultras succeed in their 'divide and rule' policy," said a local.

Khajuriguda locals urged the residents of Panasput, Jantri and Andirapalli villages to join them in their fight against Maoists and thereby help in accelerating de-

velopmental activities in the area.

Notably Maoists killed Khemudu suspecting him to be a police informer at Khajuriguda area under Jodamba police station limits of Malkangiri district October 20 night. They had also roughed up three other persons from the village who were allegedly supporting the deceased in his work. A group of 25-30 ultras barged into Dasu Khemudu's house, dragged him to a place five kilometres away from his house and killed him there by slitting his throat.

COMBING OPS



The seized items from the Red camp

Meanwhile, Tuesday morning during a combing operation by security forces, an exchange of fire took place between the forces and the Reds at Jumadanga forest under Chittrakonda police limits in the district along the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh border.

However, no casualty was reported even as the gunfight was learnt to be underway, till the last report came in.

Acting on a tip-off about the ultras planning to carry out some anti-state activities, jawans of Special Operation Group (SOG) and District Voluntary Force (DVF) launched a joint combing operation in the area.

According to a source, noticing the security forces marching towards them, the Maoists opened fire at the former. In retaliation, the security forces opened fire as well.

The exchange of fire came a day after a joint team of SOG of Odisha Police and BSF recovered explosives and arms hidden by Maoists in Malkangiri district.

To speak in details, the security forces carried out an operation at Mukudipalli, Gurasetu, Beijing, Jampluru, and Parlubandha villages under Jodamba police limits and recovered the following.

The arms and explosives had been buried by the Maoists. It is suspected that the articles were intended to be used against civilians and security forces, police sources said.

Notably, a team of BSF's 9th Battalion security personnel had unearthed a tiffin box bomb from a place in Malkangiri district October 20 while carrying out a combing operation in the Maoist-infested pocket in Swabhimana Anchal.

THIS BRITISH-ERA POND IS NOW DUMPING YARD

Once upon a time, locals used to collect water from it for drinking purposes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pattamundai, Oct 27: A British-era pond in Pattamundai town of Kendrapara district has virtually turned into a dumping yard with tons of garbage being dumped into it on a daily basis.

The pond in question is Kacheri pond, spreading across one acre of land. Once upon a time, people used to collect water from it even for drinking purposes. The villagers would grow fish in it and earn lakhs of rupees.

With the passage of time, the local administration allegedly stopped taking proper care of the pond. As a result, infestation of water hyacinths and accumulation of silt and garbage rendered the pond of no use.

As if this was not enough, the sweepers engaged by Pattamundai municipality are presently dumping huge quantities of garbage near the market complex in front of the pond and into the pond as well, turning it almost into a dumping yard.

According to some residents, the town does not have a dumping yard. Even if the municipality has been



The government has sanctioned ₹1.5 crore for the renovation of Kacheri pond. Soon, a tender will be floated and the pond will get back its lost glory

SAMPAD KUMAR SWAIN | EXECUTIVE OFFICER, PATTAMUNDAI MUNICIPALITY

making plans for a dumping yard since 2013, the yard is yet to see the light of day.

Pattamundai being a business hub, hundreds of people from areas like Rajnagar, Aul, Rajkanika, Mahakalpara, Kendrapara and Derabis visit the town daily. And thus, the town generates 20 to 25 trolley-full of garbage daily. What with no specified dumping yard in the town, this garbage is being dumped into the pond.

When contacted, tehsildar Sarat Kumar Giri said the present type of the pond is 'Bagayat'. "Soon, it will be converted and steps will be taken for its renovation."

Pattamundai municipality executive officer, Sampad Kumar Swain said the government has sanctioned ₹1.5 crore for the renovation of Kacheri pond. "Soon, a tender will be floated and the pond will get back its lost glory."



Deprived of ration cards, people of Hunjan and Patnasi villages of Ramlanka panchayat under Krushnaprasad block in Puri district stage protests at the block office, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

Suspecting infidelity, man kills wife

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, Oct 27: Suspecting his wife's extramarital relationship with a man of their village, a man beat her better half to death in Balarampur village under Sadar police limits in the district, police said Tuesday.

The deceased has been identified as Shibani Pradhan, wife of accused Dillip Pradhan.

However, Dillip fled from the village after committing the crime. Sources from the village said the incident took place late Monday. They said the couple was married two years ago. Dillip was working in a company. He suspected his wife Shibani of having an extramarital relationship with a person of their village, and fought over the issue several times.

However, Monday night, both of them had a heated argument over the issue. After sometime, he took a stick, killed his wife by beating her and fled from the spot leaving his wife's body in the room.

However, the villagers who had

heard the husband and wife's argument late night Monday found about it Tuesday morning. They informed the police regarding the matter.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice No. ST-SBP-TENDER-2020-18 Dt.: 21.10.2020
Name of the Work : COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT OF DATALOGGER SYSTEMS, MAKE EFFTRONICS FOR THREE YEARS OVER SAMBALPUR DIVISION.
Tender Value : ₹ 1,63,33,311/-, EMD: ₹ 2,31,700/-. Cost of tender document: ₹ 5,900/-.
Tender closing date & time: at 1500 hrs. of 12.11.2020.
No manual offer 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.irps.gov.in>
Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/contingenda issued for this tender.
Divisional Railway Manager (S&T), Sambalpur
PR-318/L/20-21

NOTICE
I Janardan Nayak, S/o Late Pranatanh Nayak, Plot No- 188/1, Nilakanthanagar, N a y a p a l l i , Bhubaneswar notify that my sale deed No-6871 dated 02/08/1985 for land at Plot No 188/1 (1342/3308) K No 503(720) has been lost. If anyone gets it and misuses it in any manner I will not be responsible nor my legal heirs will be responsible. Janardan Nayak, Plot No 188/1, Nilakanthanagar, N a y a p a l l i , Bhubaneswar.

Ropeway project at Patali Srikshetra hangs fire

THE FOUNDATION STONE FOR THE ROPEWAY WAS LAID ABOUT ONE AND A HALF YEARS AGO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, Oct 27: Patali Srikshetra at Kotsamalai under Ullunda block of Subarnapur district is one of the religious and cultural sites of tourist attractions in the state. But an ambitious ropeway project for a major tourist hub in the western Odisha like Patali Srikshetra has been hanging in balance. The ropeway project was aimed at attracting more tourist footfall to the site, but the project is yet to be made functional.

Notably, its foundation stone was laid about one and a half years ago.

This shrine assumes much more importance in the western Odisha as Puri temple administration provided Chaturdha Murti to the shrine.

These deities are being worshipped on Challia hill inside a temporary house.

The shrine was accorded tourism status in 2003. Thereafter, scores of tourists and cultural re-



THE WESTERN ODISHA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL HAD SANCTIONED ₹10 CRORE FOR THE ROPEWAY

THE ODISHA CONSTRUCTION CORPORATION HAS BEEN ASSIGNED THE ROPEWAY WORK AT AN ESTIMATED COST OF ₹10.27 CRORE

Council (WODC) had sanctioned ₹10 crore for the ropeway at Patali Srikshetra located on Trikuta hills.

According to legend, the Trikuta hill was the abode of the Trinity of Jagannath temple in Puri to dodge an attack during the Muslim invasions in 16th century. The Trinity was concealed in a cave of Trikuta hill for 144 years.

The ropeway is to connect the foothill of Trikuta hills with the cave where the Trinity was kept.

The Odisha Construction Corporation (OCC) had been as-

signed the ropeway work at an estimated cost of ₹10.27 crore.

The place where the Trinity was hidden at the hill is situated at a height of about 500 metres from the foothill of Trikuta hill.

As part of the project, four trolleys are to ferry the visitors between the two places.

People from across Western Odisha visit the place. However, the visitors, particularly aged people, face difficulties in climbing the hill to reach the cave. The visitors could easily go to the cave after the ropeway project is completed.


Locals say, the ropeway will certainly boost tourism and attract more number of tourists to the place.

The proposed project at Patali Srikshetra is the second ropeway in Western Odisha, after the ropeway, connecting Jawahar Udayan with Gandhi Minar near Hirakud Dam Project (HDP) site in Sambalpur.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. B-351
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
GANJAM (R&B) DIVISION NO.-I, BERHAMPUR
Phone/Fax: (0680) 2233683, e-mail: eermb1_bam@yahoo.com
"e" Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. EE R&B Divn. No.-I, Bam, 22/2020-21
Lr. No. 7290 Dtd. 20.10.2020
Name of Work : Building Works
No. of Works : 3 (Three) Nos.
Estimated Cost : Approximately Rs.9.91 to Rs.28.30 lakh
Period of Completion : Two, Three & Four Calendar Months
Date and time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 10.00 hours of 04.11.2020 to 16.00 hours of 11.11.2020
Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal : Upto 16.00 hours of 11.11.2020
Name & address of the Officer Inviting Bid : Executive Engineer, Ganjam (R&B) Division No.-I, Berhampur
Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.
Sd/- Executive Engineer
Ganjam (R&B) Division No.-I, Berhampur
OIPR-34109/11/0012/2021

“The joy of service and the joy of inner growth through works are the sufficient recompense of the selfless worker.”

SRI AUROBINDO



Pacts with US

India took a step forward in its bilateral ties with the United States Tuesday with the signing of some significant defence and security pacts. That the US secretary of state Mike Pompeo and defence secretary Mark Esper took a joint trip to New Delhi to sign the agreements is proof of the importance that the US attaches to these deals. The strengthening of the defence and security ties at a time when India is engaged in a standoff with China lasting about six months now adds to the significance of the present deals.

As is pointed out by Pompeo, the relations between India and the US are growing steadily in the past many years. The disintegration of India's close ally, the Soviet Union, in the 1988-1991 period, which also marked the end of the Cold War, created conditions for India to re-shape its foreign policy. The Narasimha Rao government played down on the nation's Socialism pursuit, embraced the West's slogans of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization and changed the course of Indian diplomacy too to noticeable levels. The AB Vajpayee-led government followed suit, the UPA governments too took India's engagements with the US to new levels. While both the Narendra Modi-led NDA governments tried to edge closer to the US, the Americans were seen caught between traditional ties with Pakistan and the newfound surrender from India somewhat confusing. If we look back while professing friendship with India, Prez Trump has always taken steps that have clearly damaged interests of India, whether in the matter of US visas or trade with that country. The most recent Trump speak was about India being a 'filthy' country with bad air quality. On the other side, the whole world is turning away from the ideas of liberalization, privatization and globalization and opting for safeguarding home markets and industries. In this backdrop, India is still pursuing a path that has already been eschewed by the leading nations across the globe. Even if India tries, dependence on China's supply chain cannot be easily cut off since we have successfully destroyed our indigenous manufacturing abilities. From firecrackers for Deepavali to power plants producing electricity, India is using everything made in China. Banning a few Apps is fine for political optics but not for holding the economy in order.

This is the fourth time that Pompeo is visiting India in the course of the past nearly four years of the Trump administration. Both Trump and his predecessor Barack Obama visited India and signed several bilateral agreements. So far no good. Nothing has come out of all those deals. This recent signing of the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) for Geopolitical Cooperation in New Delhi could mark a watershed in the ties between India and the US. This will facilitate sharing of latest military technology as also classified satellite data apart from having mutual access to geospatial maps. Among other benefits, it is being told that the pact will help India aim missiles and drones on enemy targets with more precision.

These pacts are seen in the backdrop of the Chinese designs along the LAC. A full-fledged military cooperation is far from what's done now and will have its serious implications. Such a military tie might require a national consensus as this would involve India too entering the field to fight future American military expeditions. Body bags can come in and public sentiments could turn against the government. Also, China being India's close neighbour, any US offensive against China could put India in the firing line first. The US is readying to challenge China in the South China Sea and the Indo-Pacific. The Quad alliance involving Japan, Australia, India and the US is getting strengthened with a naval drill styled as Malabar Exercise in the Arabian Sea next month, as a follow up to a Quad meeting in Tokyo sometime ago.

Notably, all these might not suffice India to take on China in a real war, the chances of which are strengthening by the day. In such an eventuality, the Indian government is mindful of the possibility of a two-pronged war in which India will have to defend its territories on the western side and the longer northern stretch simultaneously as Pakistan too might step in and try to take advantage. Such collusion between China and Pakistan cannot be ruled out in view of the strong ties both those two nations have been enjoying in recent times.

China's economic might was built mainly in the past two decades after the turn of the century. If at all India with its limited economic abilities had made a matching try, spending billions more into defence purchases, it would have seriously affected the nation's economic well-being and the nation's welfare steps for the large army of the poor. The former governments cannot be blamed for holding on to such a line of thinking.

While this BECA may seem attractive to some, there are others who may point out the US-India Nuclear Treaty of 2008 as another example of utter failure. The signing of that pact had not only threatened the very survival of the Manmohan Singh-led UPA-1 government but brought along multiple charges of bribery and horse trading in its wake. Yet, in spite of all the noise and fury, nothing has come out of that deal. The present deal, signed by an American administration barely days before the Presidential election in the US may have political intonations that could negate the interests of India. Reports claim Prez Trump, who was keen on garnering support of the people of Indian origin living in the US, is now desperate and this agreement being signed in the last week of his being in office is to bolster that support that is plainly dwindling for him. It may be claimed that Prime Minister Modi could be in the know of something very vital about the US elections and that makes him super confident about Trump getting re-elected and so has gone ahead with this deal. The 'Howdy Modi' and 'Namaste Trump' programs could be the torch bearers of this understanding.

Still, any change that may result in the US election could prove not only as a major diplomatic debacle for India but may also affect its security concerns in relation to China. And again, even if Trump returns, his attitude towards India will most likely be retained as seen in the past four years.

Social to economic justice

In a paradigm shift in an assembly election jobs have become a major talking point in Bihar. It used to be water, electricity and roads. Not anymore. Days after RJD's young leader and Lalu Prasad Yadav's protégé Tejashwi Yadav announced 10 lakh government jobs, BJP went a step further and in its manifesto promised 19 lakh jobs and free coronavirus vaccine.

Tejashwi, in an interview to the media recently, has said that the needs of the times have changed. From 'social justice' (a battle cry for the Mulayams and Laloos from the beginning of this century) his call has changed to 'economic justice'. Though people are well aware of the fact that the job rhetorics are hyperbole, there is a wave of palpable anger and widespread disenchantment among the people of Bihar with the leadership of CM Nitish Kumar. The same was visible a few days ago when a section of people chanted the names of opposition candidates during a rally addressed by the JD(U) leader. Even the Mahadalits who have been unwavering in their support for the Bihar CM of three successive terms are disillusioned. Apart from anti-incumbency, the JD(U) leader is also facing a resilient RJD with its young leader Tejashwi who is drawing huge crowds at his rallies. It's still early to say whether these crowds would translate into votes but the migrant crisis caused by coronavirus lockdown and widespread unemployment are major headaches for the incumbent CM.

Chirag Paswan, son of late Ram Vilas Paswan, has been scathing in his criticism on Nitish Kumar. The Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader has repeatedly expressed his admiration for Prime Minister Narendra Modi while deriding Nitish Kumar. The NDA coalition could not retain the LJP in the pre-poll alliance and that party has fielded candidates against the JD(U).

Interestingly, 21 out of its 134 candidates that the LJP has fielded are former BJP functionaries who are taking on JD(U) on the LJP symbol. Several local BJP leaders have also extended their clandestine support to the LJP instead of the JD(U). These candidates, if elected, would happily return to the BJP fold and Chirag would truly become a one-time flaming torch.

The Bihar CM's victory in 2005 and 2010 was the outcome of a successful pre-poll coalition that brought various caste groups together with the help of the RJD once and the BJP another time along with other influential local leaders. In 2015, he joined hands with Lalu Prasad, who had his own winning combination of Yadavs and Muslims. He then split from Lalu, whose absence, this time around, should have made the fight easier for the CM, but given the discord within the NDA, that is not the case.

FOCUS US ELECTIONS

MORAL TIPPING POINT



Given America's importance as a source of global leadership, it is no wonder that so many good people around the world are rooting for Biden to win, and to win big. Republicans who still stand for something should be doing the same, and declaring their support for Biden openly. With America's moral standing now hanging in the balance, they owe it to their country

When debating with Republicans, I could see that they had a genuine commitment to their ideas and were following a moral compass. I appreciated that their party has a great history, and this was further confirmed by my official and personal experience working at the World Bank.

I was anxious when I first met Larry Pressler, a Republican US senator who represented South Dakota from 1979 to 1997 and had taken positions on international trade, business, and foreign policy that I did not share. Yet the more I got to know Larry, the more I was impressed by his decency, honesty, and adherence to principle. And I appreciated that he was willing to make personal sacrifices for moral principle. My wife and I became close friends with him and his wife, Harriet, and I was not surprised when he openly opposed Donald Trump in the 2016 election.

Indeed, the more I listen to Trump, the more I become convinced that he is not the kind of Republican I have known. He stands for himself and nothing else. When called out for paying almost no federal income taxes, his response was "That makes me smart," implying that people who do pay taxes are stupid. In light of these and so many other comments, how can Republicans with any principles support him?

To be sure, it is not easy to distance oneself from the head of one's party. Yet plenty of Republican leaders have done so. Former Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele, former Ohio Governor John Kasich, former Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman, former Secretary of State Colin Powell, and Mitt Romney, now a Senator for Utah,



Kaushik Basu

I WOULD NOT EXPECT A BIDEN ADMINISTRATION TO USHER IN A RADICAL SHIFT IN US POLICY. BUT IT ABSOLUTELY WOULD RESTORE A SENSE OF DECORUM, DECENCY, AND STABILITY AT THE HELM, AND THOSE ATTRIBUTES ARE URGENTLY NEEDED AT THE MOMENT

IN JEST THIS

Old is gold, can be greatly productive



The upcoming U.S. presidential election will decide who will lead the country for the next four years: 74-year-old Donald Trump, the incumbent president, or 77-year-old Joe Biden, the former vice president.

India, meanwhile, is being led by a relative youngster: Narendra Modi, who is only 70.

He's a youngster compared to Biden and Trump, as well as some of his predecessors, including Dr. Manmohan Singh, who was prime minister until age 81, and Atal Behari Vajpayee, who served until age 77.

Much has been made in America about Biden's and Trump's ages, with Biden's supporters and Trump's supporters suggesting that the other candidate is showing signs of physical or mental decline.

Biden's supporters contend that Trump's motor skills are diminishing, and Trump's supporters respond by saying, "Motor skills? He's a president. Why does he need to know how to ride a motorcycle?"

Trump's supporters, in turn, contend that Biden is losing it mentally. "In a crisis, will he be able to react fast enough?" they ask. "Will he be able to process information quickly and send out an instant tweet blaming someone else?"

If Biden is elected president, he will be 78 at his inauguration next January, becoming the oldest American president ever. But that doesn't worry me in the least — and not just because Kamala Harris is ready to take over.

While it's true that our health declines as we age, sometimes rapidly, many of us retain our mental faculties and can be extremely productive in our seventies, eighties and nineties.

History is full of examples of older achievers, people who didn't let age keep them from doing great things.

Ronald Reagan, for example, served as president of America in his seventies and was so efficient and mentally alert, he often succeeded in dressing himself. Just as surprising to political observers, Reagan was extremely active and often jogged all the way from the front of the White House to the dining room. No shortcuts through the kitchen.

Yes, despite his advanced age, Reagan effectively handled the top job in America, partly because he never forgot vital information, such as the shortest route to the bathroom. In fact, his memory was so good, whenever he met an attractive intern, he remembered he was married (unlike Bill Clinton). That's the type of memory more people should have.

Then there's the legendary astronaut John Glenn, who returned to space at age 77 — more than three decades after his first mission — and managed to return to Earth in one piece (two, if you count his dentures). He became the oldest person ever to travel into outer space, not to mention the baldest. I mean, boldest.

Many writers, of course, keep writing as long as their heart is beating. Some of them are truly inspirational. Sid Hartman kept writing thrice-weekly sports columns for a daily newspaper in Minnesota until his recent death at age 100. The word 'retirement' was not in his vocabulary. To be retired, you first have to be tired. And he was never tired.

India's legendary Khushwant Singh was also productive until his death at age 99. According to his obituary in the New York Times, Singh "lived a disciplined, habitual life. In recent years he rose at 4 am, wrote in the mornings, rested in the afternoons and received visitors at 7 every evening, usually drinking two shots of whiskey."

That's a schedule I'd love to keep in my old age, but who am I kidding? My obituary will probably say this: "In recent years he went to bed at 4 am, slept in the mornings, wrote in the afternoons and received visitors at 7 every evening, usually taking two shots of insulin."

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, Rasulgurh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Sir, These days, corruption, deception and dishonesty are the driving forces of our system. Now it's the turn of coronavirus that has taken the responsibility of saving the ruling class and the systems from closer scrutiny. A central minister promises corona vaccine free of cost to Bihar people if the party is elected again to power. Why only Bihar and why not the whole country? Corona is a global pandemic so our thought should be global not personal. As the director of AIIMS Dr Randeep Guleria says, "We want to decrease the number of the infected and the mortality rate, it does not matter what is your economic status." Now the world is a global village so we have to make a global vaccine plan.

Covid vaccine

Sir, The power discom's much hyped rebate to millions of domestic consumers raises questions on its intention as well as of the government-run OERC and also on how such matters have remained neglected for decades! The discom says the customer needs to avail the rebate of 2 per cent on online payment and another percentage during the due payment period which is five days away. Suppose on the 13th of a month, a metre-reading was taken and given to a household, the rebate of a certain per cent can be cut only if the consumer pays the bill dues within five days - by the 18th of the month. What type of rebate can this be to millions of domestic consumers in Odisha? Firstly, the discom meter-reading date is not fixed. The staff used to do this on different dates every month, and at times they come for this after two months. One may find that in this erratic schedule of bills only five days are given for rebate instead of the period till another bill is served on the consumer. No one may be able to deposit the dues within such a short time. After five days of rebate period, the bill again shows a higher amount which the consumer is forced to pay due to his failure to deposit the cash within the rebate period. Those paying regularly are being exploited while the defaulters get benefited by not making the payment for long and finally getting a huge cut on a big defaulted amount under OTS. The OERC is urged to ensure that the customer paying dues regularly must be given a rebate time till the serving of another bill and a discount may be considered as a rebate to such customers.

Discom rebate

Janaki Ballav Dash, MAYURBHANJ

'J&K up for sale': Omar slams new land laws

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Oct 27: National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah Tuesday hit out at the new land laws notified by the Centre for Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, terming them a 'deceit' and a 'wanton breach of trust'.

Calling the J&K Development Act, which has come into force with immediate effect, as hostile to the interests of the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, Abdullah, a former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, contended that the amendments to the land ownership law has put J&K 'up for sale'.

"With these new laws in place, tokenism of the domicile certificate has been done away with as pur-

chasing non-agricultural land has been made easier. These new laws are unacceptable to the people of J&K, Ladakh," he said.

"The BJP remains unchallenged in the opportunistic politics and that the issuance of the amended land rules notification smacks of its cheap politics and deceit," he said.

"Interestingly the Centre waited till the elections to LAHDC had concluded and the BJP had won a majority before putting Ladakh also up for sale. This is what Ladakhis got for trusting the assurances



Such measures reveal that it is not the people's aspirations which matters to the ruling dispensation at New Delhi, it is rather the land which they want to hold on and are interested in

OMAR ABDULLAH I FORMER CM

of the BJP," he said. "The new

laws are a consequence of the measures undertaken by the GOI on 5th of August without demo-

cratic bearings and much to the resentment and anger of the region's populace. The measure reflects the wanton breach of trust of the people of J&K by a dispensation which is brewing with abhorrence for the diversity of the country and the democracy. The measures are also part of a larger design aimed to destroy the local, distinctive cultural identity of Kashmir, thereby giving a ditch to the successive promises made by the successive Central governments from time to time," he said.

"Such measures reveal that it is not the people's aspirations which matters to the ruling dispensation at New Delhi, it is rather the land which they want to hold on and are interested in," Abdullah added.

Cong in a dilemma over Gupkar Declaration



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 27: National Conference leaders Farooq and Omar Abdullah, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti and other leaders held an all-party meet of the signatories of the Gupkar Declaration at the residence of Farooq in Srinagar, last week.

JKPCC along with CPI (Marxist), were signatories to the so-called 'Gupkar Declaration' August 4, 2019, warning the Centre against the then perceived abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A and the division or trifurcation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Initiated by six valley-based mainstream political parties, it pledged a fight for protection of J&K's special status and statehood.

Kashmir's principal mainstream parties, NC and PDP, were — and still are — at the forefront of the amalgam named as 'Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration' (PAGD). The initiative to unite and revive the struggle of sub-national aspiration was taken after more than one year as most of the leaders of this conglomerate, with the exception of Congress, remained under detention for several months after the Centre withdrew J&K's special status August 5, 2019.

In a significant development, Congress has been absent at the conglomerate's two important meetings in the current year. October 15, Congress claimed that the JKPC president Ghulam Ahmad Mir had failed to attend the rendezvous at Farooq's Gupkar Road residence due to a 'medical emergency'. Soon it became public that Mir had on the same day travelled all the way from Srinagar to Doda to attend a condolence meeting for the departed party colleague Mohammad Sharief Niaz. No justification was given with regard to the party's absence October 23 at Dr Abdullah's residence, when the erstwhile J&K state flag was adopted as the emblem for PAGD, and October 24 at Mehbooba's house,

when an organisational structure was drafted for the alliance. While Dr Abdullah was unanimously appointed as president and Mehbooba as vice president, Peoples Conference (PC) chairman Sajad Lone took over as the spokesperson. The CPI (M) state secretary Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami assumed the portfolio of the convenor. It was around this time that Mehbooba issued a controversial statement that has all the potential of benefitting the BJP and damaging the Congress in the forthcoming Assembly elections in Bihar. She asserted that PDP would struggle for restoration of the statehood and Article 370 but added that it would also emphasise the 'resolution of the Kashmir issue'.

This phrase adds a new dimension not only to PDP's political ambition but also to PAGD's relevance and acceptability across the country. As if it was not sufficient to embarrass the Congress, Mehbooba thundered that nobody in Kashmir would pick up the tricolour until J&K's 'own flag' and the statehood would be restored. BJP lost no time to make Mehbooba's statement as an issue in the Bihar elections.

In a quick damage-control exercise, JKPC spokesman Ravinder Sharma asserted, "The tricolour is the symbol of honour for the country and it reminds us of the sacrifices of crores of Indians to achieve freedom. Such statements will defeat the democratic and constitutional struggle for achieving any just right. She (Mehbooba) should desist from making such outrageous utterances."

According to sources, Congress high command had already directed JKPC to stay away from PAGD. "It has been explained to J&K leaders that even the phrase 'restoration of Article 370', let alone Mehbooba's tantrums on the flag, would be deleterious for the Congress throughout the country. It would potentially harm us and benefit our electoral rivals in Bihar," said an insider.

Kerala first in country to fix floor price for vegetables

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 27: Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Tuesday said Kerala had become the first state in the country to fix the floor price for vegetables.

The floor price will be 20 per cent above the production cost of the vegetable. Even if the market price goes below the floor price, the produce will be procured at the floor price from the farmers.

He said this while launching the scheme announcing the floor price for 16 varieties of vegetables, which would come into effect from November 1, often referred to Kerala Formation Day.

"This is the first time in the country that the floor price is being fixed for vegetables produced in the state. This is going to provide relief as well as support for the farmers. The produce will be graded and the floor price will be fixed based on the quality. Sixteen varieties of vegetables would be covered in the first phase and there is a provision to revise the floor price on a regular basis," said Vijayan.

He said the local self-government bodies will have an important role to play in this scheme as they would be coordinating the procurement and distribution of veg-



Lucrative offer

The floor price will be 20 per cent above the production cost of the vegetable

Even if the market price goes below the floor price, the produce will be procured at the floor price from the farmers

price. The scheme also envisages setting up the entire supply chain process like cold storage facilities and refrigerated vehicles for transporting the produce," added Vijayan.

Kerala over the years has been solely dependent on neighbouring states for its vegetable requirements and in recent times the state's production has doubled to 14.72 lakh tonnes.

With this new feature, the target is to increase the production by an additional one lakh tonne each of vegetables and tuber crops this year.

FRUITS OF LABOUR



Workers separate walnuts from their shells at a wholesale market, on the outskirts of Jammu, Tuesday.

PTI PHOTO

How Manzoor Allie became 'Manzoor Pencil'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Oct 27: Finding mention in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' has brought 45-year-old Manzoor Ahmad Allie, whose humble beginning will inspire scores of locals in future, into limelight.

Speaking to IANS, Manzoor went down the memory lane to recall the hardships his family has faced to realise the dream to own a Rs 1 crore enterprise that employs over 100 people today.

"I only realised after the Prime Minister mentioned my work in 'Mann Ki Baat' that I had finally been recognised as an achiever. I was born in Oukhoo village of Pulwama district in 1976. My father, Abdul Aziz Allie worked as a timber loader at a local depot where he earned Rs 100 to 150 per day," Manzoor said.

"The daily earnings of my father were too meagre to support



I only realised after the Prime Minister mentioned my work in 'Mann Ki Baat' that I had finally been recognised as an achiever

MANZOOR AHMAD ALLIE

the family that included my parents, my younger brother and sister besides me. I passed my 10th class exam in 1996 and decided to join my father as a timber loader to augment the family income.

In 1997, we sold a piece of ancestral land which fetched us Rs 75,000. I persuaded by father to start a bandsaw where we initially made

fruit boxes out of soft Poplar wood."

Manzoor said the turning point in his life came in 2012 when he went to Jammu where he met the owners of a pencil manufacturing company.

"They showed interest in buying pencil making blocks from our

village which is known for its soft, moist wood Poplar trees. I started making pencil blocks along with my father and brother, Abdul Qayoom Allie. The pencil company owners said our blocks were of excellent quality and they wanted us to supply the same in large numbers," he recalled.

This was the time when Manzoor engaged 15 locals to help meet the demand of his buyers. "The owners of the pencil company told me I should buy some modern machines those would help meet the growing demand. There was heavy curtailment of electricity in our area. Electric supply would start at 10 pm and last till 5 am the next day. This was the reason that our entire family had

dinner at 6 pm to prepare for our nocturnal working hours."

"In the meantime, I approached the local J&K Bank branch in Kakapora from where I got a loan of Rs 3 lakh for the generator and Rs 6 lakh as the working capital. This was the turning point. We grew by leaps and bonds. Today I own a Rs one crore enterprise that provides employment to over 100 locals. Despite all this success, my father, me and my brother continue to work manually with our employees."

"I have decided to groom my two sons for the same business which has promising future potential," he said.

Today, pencils made of the Poplar wood supplied by Manzoor are available in 77 countries where they are sold under different Indian brand names. Manzoor is fondly known as 'Manzoor Pencil' in his home district today but for the family the journey has not been a cakewalk.

Gold smuggling: Clock ticks for Vijayan, ex-aide



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 27: With the Kerala High Court set to pronounce its final orders Wednesday in the anticipatory bail plea in the gold smuggling case all eyes are on Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his former secretary M. Sivasankar.

It is Sivasankar who has filed the plea. Though Vijayan and the CPI-M, have washed their hands off the case that involves the senior IAS official, Sivasankar, by stating they have had no clue of what he was doing for the nearly four and a half years, the Chief Minister's name has been a part of the case throughout.

Whatever was said about former Congress Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, each time when allegations of corruption surfaced ahead of the 2016 assembly polls in the solar scam case, is reverberating thick, and has come to haunt Vijayan in the gold smuggling case.

What trolls said then for Chandy is now being repeated for Vijayan: "If he has any scruples and shame, he should quit."

Each time when Vijayan's political adversaries remind him of what he said about Chandy, when he and his office was caught in the solar scam led by Saritha Nair, Vijayan's stock statement was, "I do not know anything." Then when Sivasankar's closeness with prime accused in the gold smuggling case - Swapna Suresh surfaced, Vijayan said: "We removed him and then suspended him from service. Who else, other

than we can take such a decision?"

The high court last week extended the status quo - asking both the Enforcement Directorate and the Customs not to arrest Sivasankar till Wednesday, when the court will give its orders.

With regards to the Life Mission case, which is seen as the pet project of Vijayan, which provides homes for the homeless and built using the funds provided by private organisations - here too, Vijayan is caught between the devil and the deep sea, as it has now been revealed Swapna was able to secure a huge commission alleged to be as high as Rs 9 crore for total project cost of Rs 20 crore that came from a UAE-based charity - Red Crescent.

The CBI has commenced a probe as it started to reach the higher echelons of power.

Vijayan and his party are set to come up with a law to ban the entry of CBI into the state, similar to what states like West Bengal, Maharashtra and a few others.

At present the Life Mission probe of the CBI has been partly stayed by the High Court and the premier agency has approached the court to get the partial ban lifted.

Principal opposition parties - the Congress and the BJP have targeted Vijayan for his double standards - while at one time he had proclaimed he has nothing to fear any agency could probe - now when the probe has begun, the Left leader is trying to stop the investigations using the court or by coming out with fresh laws.

Tourist town gets green check posts to protect ecosystem

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 27: For the first time, a scenic hill station in Kerala has got the protection of 'green check posts' and round-the-clock vigil by 'green army' in a bid to guard its serene ecosystem and keep it plastic-free.

Vagamam, a British era plantation town in high range Idukki district in central Kerala, has now got five check posts at all its entry points under an innovative initiative of the state-run Haritha Kerala Mission.

Known for its lush greenery, misty valleys and splendid meadows, the sought-after tourist destination had been choked by plastic and other non-degradable waste dumped by the visitors for long and the present effort was to reclaim its beauty and protect its serene ecosystem, officials said.

Haritha Kerala, launched nearly four years ago by the state government, envisages a clean and green state through waste management, organic farming and conservation of water resources with the support of the people.

The check posts at Vagamam were the first of its kind in the southern state and the initiative was an experimental model of 'green tourism', conceptualised and implemented by the mission, its Executive Vice-Chairperson TN Seema said.

Elappara village panchayat, where the major part of the tourist

hub is located, and the district administration have also joined hands with the Haritha Kerala in this endeavour.

As part of the initiative, members of 'Haritha karma sena', the green army, stop vehicles entering into Vagamam at the check posts and screen whether the visitors are carrying any plastic carry bags or other harmful materials.

The 'green counters', attached to the check posts, offer tourists eco-friendly articles like cloth bags.

They can deposit plastic bottles and other materials at the 'bottle booths', set up at various points, officials said.

Two material collection facilities are open to keep and segregate waste collected at these booths and the state-run 'Clean Kerala' company has been entrusted with removal of the waste at particular intervals.

An amenity centre has also been set up near one of the check posts, the officials added.

"It is part of our efforts to make tourism destinations in the state clean and plastic-free. Visitors used to dump plastic and other harmful materials on the way sides and in the beautiful valleys of the place. We hope that the present effort will surely make a difference," Seema told PTI.

The mission, with the support of the village panchayat and district administration, had also recently carried out a mass cleaning drive at the tourist hub, she said.



of the day quote

There will be four revolutions in Bihar which include industrial, agriculture, milk and Blue revolution



NITYANAND RAI | UNION MINISTER

This is their (Congress) habit, why their mouths were closed when my father was in Congress for 30 years. When I was in Congress for 20 years why did they keep quiet then? Read history first before opening your mouth



JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | BJP LEADER

Crime has reduced in Bihar as the state is now at number 23 ranking, according to the Central government data. We are interested only in work, not in our self-promotion



NITISH KUMAR | BIHAR CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Terrorist killed in Pulwama

Srinagar: One terrorist was killed and another terrorist surrendered as encounter at Awantipora in South Kashmir's Pulwama district came to an end Monday evening, officials said. Army said the terrorist responded to the surrender appeals and was apprehended. "One terrorist, resident of Gulshanpura, Pulwama, absconding since September 25, 2020, surrendered to Security Forces," Army said. The fire-fight between terrorists and security forces took place after security forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation.

Raj schools may open from Nov 2

Jaipur: Schools in Rajasthan that have been closed for the last seven months in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, may finally start from November 2, at least for Classes 10 to 12, confirmed officials. Three days back, the state Education Department sent a ready proposal to the state government for opening schools for the senior classes November 2 onwards. It is now awaiting the response from the state government, state education minister Govind Singh Dotasara confirmed.

Lanka navy attacks TN fishermen

Rameswaram (TN): Groups of fishermen from here were attacked by the Sri Lankan Navy personnel using bottles and stones early Tuesday while fishing near Dhanushkodi, resulting in injuries to some and damage to their gear, a fishermen association leader alleged. While fishermen who ventured into the sea Monday morning onboard 400 boats returned by night after being chased away by Lankan naval personnel, groups that were on their way back home later came under attack.

Man booked for bid to kill sister-in-law

Thane: Police have registered a case of attempt to murder against a 35-year-old man after he allegedly stabbed his sister-in-law with a knife over a petty dispute in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said Tuesday. The incident took place in Bhiwandi Monday night. The accused, Shahid Lal Mohamad Ansari, was averse to his sister-in-law's children coming to his house to play with their cousins. Both the families stayed at the Handi compound in Bhiwandi.



Vegetable prices are skyrocketing. Work and businesses are already stalled. But the BJP government, which spends crores of rupees in false propaganda, is silent on people's problems

PRIYANKA GANDHI | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

NO ONION AUCTIONS IN NASHIK DISTRICT APMCS

There were no onion auctions in Agriculture Produce Market Committees (APMCs) across Nashik district of Maharashtra as traders registered their protest against the stock limit on the commodity imposed by the Centre



1.79 cr young voters force political parties talk 'rozgar'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 27: In 2015, the Bihar election campaign was dominated by former CM Lalu Prasad's controversial statements like "Hindus also eat beef" and PM Modi hitting back saying that it was an insult to Yaduvanshis etc.

However, this time around the baton has passed to the younger Paswan and Yadav in the LJP and the RJD respectively. LJP's 'Bihar first, Bihari first' slogan and RJD's promise of 10 lakh jobs in the first cabinet meeting itself has brought unemployment as the core focus of BJP's campaign too. With less than 24 hours to go for the first phase of the election, BJP leaders are talking 'rozgar' and 'vikas'.

There are a whopping 1.79 crore voters who are under the age of 30. Many of them are without a job and are restless for employment. A large chunk of them are not aware of the tales of abduction and lawlessness of the Lalu era or they have bigger worries to focus upon such earning a respectable livelihood.

Even the initial stress on 'jungle raj' has been overwhelmed with BJP's emphasis on its future plans for Bihar. Though PM Modi mentioned about the lawlessness of the Lalu era, Nadda and other leaders have been focused on answering a simple query: how they plan to create 19 lakh jobs, something they



BIHAR ASSEMBLY POLLS

have promised in their election manifesto. No wonder then that the BJP is referring to unexplored areas such as Madhubani paintings that have not been marketed well or the PM holding virtual addresses for street vendors who have been beneficiaries of central loan schemes in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar's neighbouring state, signalling job creation can be done both by government and self.

When BJP presidnet JP Nadda came to Bihar a few days ago, addressing a huge crowd in Nalanda, he acknowledged that job creation is the government's responsibility. Almost every BJP leader involved in Bihar election says the change of focus on jobs was necessitated with an eye on young voters, many of them first-time voters, who may not know or be concerned about a 'Bihar of the past' and for whom employment is a far more pressing

issue.

"There will be self-sufficient Bihar through self-sufficient India. It is the responsibility of the government to create employment opportunities in Bihar and NDA's Nitish government will do the work to provide employment to 19 lakh people," promised Nadda in his Nalanda rally while focusing on the 'future of Bihar' rather than attacking the 'jungle raj' era.

There are 11.17 lakh first-time voters in Bihar this time who are about to enter college or have just entered college. Whether it is the RJD, BJP, LJP or the Congress, everyone has to sell one narrative to them for their votes: jobs. This segment doesn't care about communalism or Lalu's fodder scam, they live in the present and look forward to a bright future.

Needless to say, Bihar's election campaign has been focused this time largely on them and what they want: employment opportunities in Bihar itself.

BJP for Maratha quota under SEBC category

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jalna, Oct 27: BJP MP Sambhaji Chhatrapati has said the Maratha community in Maharashtra wants reservation under the Socially and Economically Backward Classes category and not under the Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

Speaking at a meet on Maratha reservation in Jalna district Monday, the Rajya Sabha member said it is the responsibility of the state government to defend the case in the Supreme Court.

The SC last month stayed the implementation of 2018 Maharashtra law granting reservation to Marathas in education and jobs, but made it clear that the status of those who have availed of the benefits will not be disturbed.

The Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) Act, 2018 was enacted to grant reservation to people of Maratha community in Maharashtra in jobs and admissions.

"The Maratha community wants reservation under the SEBC and not the OBC category," said the BJP leader, who is a descendant of Maratha king Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

He asked state minister Ashok Chavan, who heads the Maharashtra cabinet sub-com-

mittee on Maratha quota, to prepare well to defend the case during hearing in the apex court.

He said Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj had established "Swaraj" which comprised all communities. Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj carried forward his legacy and gave reservation to the OBCs, Dalits and even Marathas, he noted.

"Why the Maratha community is deprived of reservation today?" he asked.

After the Supreme Court's judgment last month, the state government took several measures to give relief to the agitating Marathas, including giving the community members' benefits meant for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS).

The state Cabinet also decided to offer jobs in the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation to the heirs of those who lost lives during the Maratha quota protests.

The BJP MP also demanded that the Maharashtra government declare wet-drought in the state and seek financial assistance from the Centre.

Earlier this month, heavy rains and floods claimed at least 48 lives in Pune, Aurangabad and Konkan divisions, while crops on lakhs of hectares were damaged.



Rag pickers look for reusable items from puja offerings, left by devotees in a pond beside Rapti river, a day after the culmination of Navratri festival in Gorakhpur, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

Ch'garh approves draft Bill to counter Centre's farm laws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Raipur, Oct 27: The draft of the Chhattisgarh Agriculture Produce Market (Amendment) Bill, 2020 to be tabled in a special session of the state Assembly Tuesday was approved by the Bhupesh Baghel Cabinet, officials said.

The ruling Congress had earlier said it will bring a legislation in the special session of the Assembly to protect the interests of farmers from the three newly-enacted

The ruling Congress had earlier said it will bring a legislation in the special session of the Assembly to protect the interests of farmers from the three newly-enacted Central farm laws

Central farm laws. State Agriculture Minister Ravindra Choubey said

due to some (Central) laws, there was possibility farmers may get exploited and paddy procurement influenced in the state.

"In view of this, the cabinet approved the draft of Chhattisgarh Krishi Upaj Mandi (Agricultural Produce Market) (Amendment) Bill 2020 which will be tabled Tuesday in the Assembly. It has provisions to protect our farmers," he said.

He said the law planned by the state was meant to protect farmers and not to clash with the Centre

on the issue.

An official said the Cabinet also decided to scrap tenders and expression of interest (EOIs) related to the Centre's Jal Jeevan Mission works which aim to provide drinking water through taps to every rural home by 2024.

On October 23, Chief Minister Baghel had constituted a three-member committee under the chief secretary to examine complaints related to Jal Jeevan Mission works in the state, he said.

Unlock 5.0 guidelines will remain in force till November 30

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 27: The Ministry of Home Affairs Tuesday said that the Unlock 5.0 guidelines will be valid till November 30.

It is worth mentioning here that last month the Unlock 5.0 guidelines allowed reopening of cinema halls, swimming pools for sports training and gatherings with restrictions.

A statement issued by the ministry Tuesday said, "The Ministry of Home Affairs issued an order today to extend the guidelines for re-opening, issued on 30.09.2020, to remain in force up to 30.11.2020".

The Union Home Ministry is among the highest executive bodies taking decisions on matters related to Covid-19 pandemic. In September, it allowed resumption of cinema halls with 50 per cent occupancy, international air travel as permitted by the government and gatherings in closed spaces with 50 per cent strength, not exceeding 200 people.

While most of the activities have been permitted in areas outside containment zones, some high-risk activities will function as per the orders of respective state/Union Territory governments, the statement said. "These activities include - reopening of schools and coaching institutes; state and private universities for research scholars; allowing gatherings above the limit of 100 etc," the statement read.

Political gatherings in poll-bound Bihar and those constituencies where by-polls are scheduled have been allowed with attendance of not more than 200.

COVID-19

Delhi nearing 3rd peak

NITI Aayog (health) member and head of the national task force for Covid-19, VK Paul, said the situation remains worrisome in the states of Kerala and West Bengal

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 27: While the spread of Covid-19 in the country seems to be stabilising for now, two states and a Union Territory (UT) have remained a matter of concern for the Centre.

NITI Aayog (health) member and head of the national task force for Covid-19, VK Paul, said Tuesday that Delhi is progressing towards a third peak. At the same time, the situation remains worrisome in the states of Kerala and West Bengal.

"The trend of Covid cases is on a decline in the country. However, it has remained a matter of worry in three states and UTs. Delhi is inching towards its third peak while an unprecedented rise is being witnessed in Kerala and West Bengal," Paul said while addressing a press conference held by the Union Health Ministry.

He also said that the emerging situation in these parts of the country gives a lesson not to take the success of containing the virus for granted and resort to complacency.

"It shows that we are getting complacent and putting down our farfetched efforts to contain the spread of this deadly disease. We still have to remain vigilant as respiratory viruses tend to thrive more in cold weather. Since the winter has approached, we need not let down our guards and make way for the pandemic," Paul said.

Meanwhile, he stated that despite the repeated onslaught of



India records lowest spike in 3 months

New Delhi: With a spike of 36,470 in new Covid-19 cases and 488 deaths in 24 hours, India's tally stood at 79,46,429, said the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Tuesday. This is the lowest spike in new cases in the last three months. On Monday, the recorded spike in new cases was 45,148. Out of the total Covid-19 cases recorded Tuesday, 6,25,857 are currently active, 72,01,070 have been discharged, while 1,19,502 lost the battle against the pandemic. While the recovery rate stands at 90.23 per cent, the fatality rate is 1.50 per cent, the data from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare showed Tuesday.

the virus in the northern hemisphere, India has remained in a better position.

"It has emerged that the pandemic has raged its force again, especially in the northern hemisphere. The cases are rising in Europe which is higher than the first peak. The US is witnessing its third peak. The winter season in this part of the hemisphere seems to be playing a role," he said.

COVID CAUTION GOES FOR TOSS IN BIHAR ELECTION HEAT

With the campaign for the Bihar Assembly election reaching a fever pitch, the EC's warning of stern action for violation of Covid-19 protocol has gone unheeded

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna/Bhagalpur/Gaya, Oct 27: With the campaign for the Bihar Assembly election reaching a fever pitch, the Election Commission's warning of stern action for violation of Covid-19 protocol has gone unheeded with people gathering in huge numbers at rallies without wearing masks or caring for social distancing.

Several senior leaders including Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, BJP incharge for Bihar polls Devendra Fadnavis, former Union minister and Chhappa MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy, his Gaya counterpart Vijay Manjhi, BJP national spokesman Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain and former state minister Narendra Singh have fallen vic-

tim to the contagion. However, these have not had any salutary effect and the crowds remain unrestrained as people jostle for occupying vantage positions at election rallies.

Strict Covid-19 protocol was maintained at the rallies addressed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Dehri, Gaya and Bhagalpur, and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's public meetings at Hisua and Kahalgaon Friday, but elsewhere the crowds throw caution to the wind in their unbridled enthusiasm. The Election Commission had October 21 directed Bihar's Chief Electoral Officer and district administrators to "invoke appropriate and relevant penal provisions" under the Disaster Management Act and the Indian Penal Code against candidates found



violating its orders.

"Instances of such public meetings have come to notice of the Commission, where large numbers of crowds have assembled in utter violation of social distancing and the political leaders/campaigners are addressing the gathering without wearing masks in complete disregard of

the guidelines/ instructions issued by Election Commission," the poll panel had said.

Candidates and organisers found violating the poll watchdog's instructions could face cases and imprisonment up to two years under the relevant sections of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, and the IPC.

Hundreds of people are still seen attending the rallies of top leaders including Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and the grand alliance's chief ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav without wearing face masks and pushing and shoving each other for space.

"When questioned why are they not wearing face masks, they come up with lame excuses like they forgot it at their home or fish out one from their pocket saying they find it difficult to put it on due to oppressive heat," said a police officer.

Additional Chief Electoral Officer Sanjay Kumar Singh said magistrates deployed at rally venues have been instructed to strictly enforce Covid-19 norms, including wearing of masks and maintaining social distancing. "We are trying to en-

force the Election Commission's guidelines to the extent possible. If someone is found deliberately trying to violate the social distancing norm, then a case will be lodged against them," he told PTI.

He said several cases have been registered against those found violating the Covid-19 protocol but expressed his inability to share the exact number. PTI reporters covering election rallies found leaders on the dais wore masks and maintained appropriate physical distance from each other, but people tumbled over one another to have a glimpse of helicopters landing at the rally grounds.

A Bhagalpur report said the dais was chock-a-bloc with people at Tejashwi Yadav's public meeting at Sanokha Tuesday.

of the day quote

The RJD, a party of chaos, has now reached an agreement with the CPI-ML, which had killed swayamsevak, Ram devotees



JP NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

Someone is saying we'll make a new Bihar. But in his poster of "New Bihar", photo of his parents, who ruled the state for 7.5 years each, is missing. Why are you so ashamed of your parents' photo?



RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD | UNION LAW MINISTER

By commenting on my family, Nitish Kumar is targeting PM Modi as he also has six siblings. Using such language, Nitish Kumar has insulted women and my mother's sentiments



TEJASHWI YADAV | RJD LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Lockdown in Aizawl again

Aizawl: A weeklong lockdown came into force in Aizawl municipal area Tuesday, as part of the government's measures to check the spread of Covid-19 in the state capital, where several coronavirus cases with untraceable contacts have been recorded in the past few days. At least 34 people, including two infants, have tested positive for the disease in Mizoram since Monday, 30 of which were detected in Aizawl.

Man attacks TV actor with knife

Mumbai: A man allegedly stabbed a TV actor with a knife in suburban Andheri after she turned down his marriage proposal, police said Tuesday. The incident took place around 9 pm Monday in Versova area of Andheri when actress Malvi Malhotra was returning home from a cafe. The accused, Yogesh Mahipal Singh, who was in a car, stopped her on the way and asked why she had discontinued talking to him, a police official said.

Mild earthquake at Seoni in MP

Bhopal: A low intensity earthquake of 3.3-magnitude was experienced in Madhya Pradesh's Seoni district Tuesday morning and the tremors were also felt at Nagpur in neighbouring Maharashtra, officials said. There was no report of any casualty or damage to property, they said. The earthquake was recorded at 4.10 am in Seoni with its epicentre at a depth of 15 km, India Meteorological Department's (IMD) Bhopal centre scientist Ved Prakash Singh said.



Delhi and Bihar governments are 'bandi sarkar - notebandi, talabandi, vyapar bandi, aarthik bandi, khet-khalihan bandi, roti-rozgar bandi (both are shutdown governments)

SONIA GANDHI | CONGRESS INTERIM PRESIDENT

EASTERN LADAKH GETS FIRST SNOWFALL OF THE SEASON

The entire Depsang plains looks completely white in latest satellite images from Sentinel. However, the snow also brings to light the aspect of continuous induction of Chinese troops in this region



END OF DEMON KING



An effigy of Ravana being burnt during the Dussehra celebration in Kolkata, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Rhea asks court to dismiss Sushant's sisters' plea



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, Oct 27: Actress Rhea Chakraborty asked the Bombay High Court to dismiss a petition filed by actor Sushant Singh Rajput's two sisters to cancel the case filed against them for forging and procuring fake medical prescription for their brother.

Rhea Chakraborty is also accused in Sushant Singh Rajput death case. She was released earlier this month after being granted bail by the Bombay High Court, 28 days after her arrest on drugs-related charges in the case.

The actress, who is the complainant in the case against Sushant Rajput's sisters Priyanka Singh and Meetu Singh, filed an affidavit in the HC Tuesday opposing their plea and said the allegations against them are serious.

Rhea Chakraborty also said since the probe in the case against Sushant Rajput's sisters is at a nascent stage, time needs to be given to the investigating agency.

In the affidavit filed through her advocate Satish Maneshinde, the actress said a forged and fabricated medical prescription was used to help Sushant Rajput procure medicines that are banned under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. "(Sushant) Rajput died merely five days after he obtained the said prescription, wherein he was unlawfully prescribed psychotropic substances at the behest of his sister (Priyanka) and Dr Tarun Kumar," Rhea Chakraborty said in her affidavit.

It needs to be investigated whether Sushant Rajput consumed the medicines prescribed, which may have contributed to his death and/or further deteriorated his mental health, the affidavit said.

SC SAYS ALLAHABAD HC TO MONITOR CBI PROBE

The apex court directed that the victim's kin be provided CRPF protection

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 27: The Supreme Court Tuesday directed the Allahabad High Court to monitor the CBI investigation in the sensational Hathras case and also directed that security to the victim's family and witnesses shall be provided by the CRPF within a week.

A bench, headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde and comprising Justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, said: "In that view, without casting any aspersions on the security personnel of the state police; in order to allay all apprehensions and only as a confidence building measure, we find it appropriate to direct that the security to the victim's family and the witnesses shall be provided by the CRPF within a week from today."

The victim was allegedly brutally raped and assaulted and later

she succumbed to the injuries at a hospital in Delhi.

The top court said the Central Bureau of Investigation, which was handed over the case, shall report to the High Court and the court would also consider the request for appointment of a special public prosecutor in the matter.

It noted that all aspects of the matter are left open to be considered by

HATHRAS CASE

the High Court in connection with the incident where investigation is to be conducted by the CBI and also the grievance put forth alleging illegal cremation.

On the contention of the lawyer for the victim's family to shift the trial out of Uttar Pradesh, the top court said on this aspect, it of the view that it would be appropriate for the probe agency to complete the investigation and in any event since

the local police have been divested of the investigation and the CBI is carrying out the investigation, there would be no room for apprehensions at this stage.

"However, the issue as to whether the trial of the case is to be transferred is a matter which is kept open to be considered if need arises in future," it said.

On the request of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, the bench asked the High Court to delete the name of and relationship of the family members with the victim being depicted in its order dated October 12.

The bench observed that since the incident occurred within the jurisdiction of that High Court and it is already dealing with the matter, therefore it would be appropriate for the High Court to proceed to monitor the investigation in the manner in which it would desire.

BJP WINS LADAKH COUNCIL ELECTIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Leh, Oct 27: Retaining power, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has won the election to the 26-member Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC)-Leh by bagging 15 seats, while the Congress got nine seats.

Independents won two seats in the election, the first since Ladakh was made a Union Territory in August last year.

BJP president JP Nadda termed the party's victory, polling for which was Thursday, as historic. "Gratitude to the people of Ladakh for their faith in BJP," he tweeted and congratulated party leaders and workers. The BJP had won 17 seats in the 2015 election. The Congress had won four; the National

Conference had two seats and the Independents had three. A turnout of 65.07 per cent had been recorded in Thursday's election.

The Aam Aadmi Party, which had contested for the first time, failed to open its account. The National Conference and the PDP had stayed away.

"Out of 26 seats of whose results were declared today, BJP won 15 seats and Congress bagged nine seats. Two seats were won by Independents", an official said.

BJP candidates won from the last village of Turtuk to the Indo-Pak border. The Independents bagged seats of Nyoma and Chushul. The BJP won Diskit, Tegar, Hundar, Panamik, Tangtse, Kungyam and Martsehang.

TN CUSTODIAL DEATHS

CBI says father-son beaten from 7:45 pm-3 am

AGENCIES

Chennai, Oct 27: In the custody death of a man and his son in Tamil Nadu in June, the CBI says it has been established that the two were tortured for over six hours by policemen. They were beaten so brutally that blood was splattered on the walls of the police station, forensic evidence reveals.

Jeyaraj and his son Benniks were arrested June 19 for keeping their mobile phone shop open 15 minutes beyond curfew. After Jeyaraj was taken away by the police, his son, who reached the police station, was also arrested.

The CBI chargesheet says the two were subjected to "several rounds of brutal torture with



intervals in between 7.45 pm and 3 am."

The blunt injuries caused the death of Benniks, according to the post mortem report.

Policemen made Benniks clean the bloodstains in the police station using his vest.

The CBI has also said that a false FIR was registered against Benniks and Jeyaraj to cover up the crime. Investigations have revealed that the two didn't violate lockdown guidelines.

The police destroyed the evi-

dence and the bloodstained clothes of the father and son were thrown in a dustbin at a government hospital, the CBI says in its chargesheet.

The policemen used sticks to torture the two men. Their blood was splattered on the walls of the Santhankulam police station, which was detected by forensic teams.

"The fact that Benniks and Jeyaraj were subjected to brutal torture by the accused police officials on the evening of June 19, 2020 and the intervening night of 19-20 June in the police station Santhankulam, stands established," said the CBI.

The two died of their injuries June 22, within hours of each other.

Banners, prayers for Harris in her ancestral village

THE RESIDENTS OF THE VILLAGE BEAM WITH PRIDE AT WHAT THE FIRST US SENATOR OF SOUTH ASIAN DESCENT HAS ALREADY ACHIEVED

AGENCIES

Thulasendrapuram (TN), Oct 27: A big banner of US vice-presidential candidate Kamala Harris welcomes visitors to Thulasendrapuram, a lush, green south Indian village that is praying for her Democratic Party's victory in the November 3 presidential election.

The village, located about 320 km south of the city of Chennai, is where Harris's maternal grandfather was born more than a century ago.

Its residents beam with pride at what the first US senator of South Asian descent has already achieved, and many are rooting for an election result that will make her the second-most powerful person in the world's richest country. "From Thulasendrapuram to America",



A man drives past a banner of US Democratic vice-presidential nominee Kamala Harris at the entrance to the village of Thulasendrapuram, where Harris' maternal grandfather was born and grew up, in Tamil Nadu

REUTERS PHOTO

declares one of the nearly dozen banners from where Harris smiles often in the village. "We, the people of Thulasendrapuram, wish for the electoral success of American vice-presidential nominee Kamala

Harris, whose ancestors were a native of Thulasendrapuram." Harris's grandfather PV Gopalan and his family migrated to Chennai nearly 90 years ago, where he retired as a high-ranking government official.

Harris, who was born to an Indian mother and a Jamaican father who both immigrated to the United States to study, visited Thulasendrapuram when she was just five and has repeatedly recalled her formative walks with her grandfather on the beaches of Chennai.

Gopalan's childhood home in Thulasendrapuram does not exist anymore, villagers say, and cows and goats were seen grazing on empty plots of land where the house he grew up in once stood.

The banners, with messages written in Tamil, were put up on the directions of M Guranathan, the head of Thulasendrapuram's village committee that oversees its more than 200 mostly farming families.

One banner at the village bus stop has Harris smiling with the

White House in the background.

"We are really hoping she wins," said Guranathan, who is planning to hold a special prayer at the local temple on the election day. "The village has received global fame because of her. She is our pride."

Locals of neighbouring areas are also in touch with the temple to conduct an "abhishekam" - which sometimes involves pouring milk over the idol of a Hindu god - to pray for Harris's victory.

Harris's name is seen sculpted into a stone that lists public donations made to the temple, along with that of her grandfather who had donated decades ago. Her aunt offered ₹5,000 (\$67) in her name after she was appointed the attorney general of California, the temple's caretaker, SV Ramanan, said.

Khushbu Sundar detained by police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Oct 27: Actor-politician Khushbu Sundar and other BJP cadres were detained near here Tuesday as a preventive measure over the 'Manusmriti' row, police said.

Sundar and others were taken into custody when they attempted to proceed to Chidambaram to protest against Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi chief Thol Thirumavalavan for his alleged remarks against women, they said.

Thirumavalavan represents Chidambaram Lok Sabha constituency in Cuddalore district.

If allowed to proceed, it may result in law and order issues and they

were detained as a preventive measure, a police officer said.

When they were lodged on the premises of a resort on the East Coast Road, they raised slogans demanding the arrest of Thirumavalavan for "denigrating" women.

Staging a sit-in on the premises where they were detained by the police, Khushbu said, "This protest is to oppose Thirumavalavan for his comment against women. I used to address him only as elder brother and had so much respect for him. But, I don't know how I could address him so after his remark." She said she and other BJP workers were arrested as soon as their vehicles entered Chengelpet district.

of the day quote

The situations that we are seeing in the streets (Poland) and which amount to acts of aggression, vandalism, attacks, are absolutely inadmissible, should not be taking place at all

MATEUSZ MORAWIECKI | PRIME MINISTER OF POLAND

Kamala Harris is smart as a devil, has a backbone like a ramrod and is vastly experienced

JOE BIDEN | DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Corruption remains a problem. I will concentrate the last remaining years of my term fighting corruption

RODRIGO DUTERTE | PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Pak to boost ties with Afghan

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has said his government has decided to strengthen relations with Afghanistan "no matter who is in power" in Kabul. Inaugurating a two-day seminar titled 'Pakistan-Afghanistan Trade and Investment Forum' here Monday, Khan reaffirmed Pakistan's strong resolve to continue to play its role for peace and stability in Afghanistan.

Japan to provide free nCoV vaccines

Tokyo: Japan's cabinet approved a plan Tuesday to use public funds to provide novel coronavirus vaccines to the public for free. The plan also calls for the government to bear the cost of any health damage caused by a vaccine, according to a document posted on the health ministry's website.

HK arrests three activists

Hong Kong: Three members of a former student group advocating independence for Hong Kong were arrested Tuesday under the city's new national security law on suspicion of publishing content inciting secession on social media platforms. The arrests of the three were confirmed on the now-disbanded group's Facebook page.

Indian Army chief to visit Nepal

Kathmandu: Indian Army chief General M M Naravane will arrive in Kathmandu November 4 on a three-day official visit during which he will meet Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli, who is also holding the defence portfolio. Gen Naravane will be visiting Nepal from November 4 to November 6 at the official invitation of the Nepalese Army chief, according to a statement issued by the Nepal Army headquarters here.

Barack Obama to campaign for Biden

Miami: Former President Barack Obama will attend a drive-in campaign rally for Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden in Orlando Tuesday, his second appearance in Florida, a major battle ground state, in just three days. Obama had October 24 addressed a socially-distanced crowd at a rally in Miami in an effort to garner further support for Biden, who was his Vice President from January 20, 2009 to January 20, 2017.



International cooperation is the only way to defeat the pandemic, the climate emergency, rising inequality and the spreading of hatred

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

AIR POLLUTION UPS nCoV DEATHS

In a major global study, researchers have revealed that long-term exposure to air pollution may be linked to 15 per cent of COVID-19 deaths worldwide



Stop sowing discord, China tells Pompeo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Oct 27: China Tuesday urged US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to stop sowing discord between Beijing and countries in the region, undermining the regional peace and stability, amidst his visit to India for a high-level dialogue aimed at further ramping up their overall defence and security ties, and boost strategic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

Pompeo arrived in India Monday along with Defence Secretary Mark T Esper for the third edition of the US-India 2+2 dialogue with their counterparts, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. After his India visit, Pompeo is due to visit Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Asked about Pompeo's visit to India and other South Asian countries during which the top US diplomat's focus would be on China's threats, Chinese



Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here that "Pompeo's attacks and accusations against China are nothing new." He repeated time and again, Wang said. "These are groundless accusations which reflect that he is clinging to the Cold War mentality and ideological biases. We urge him to abandon the Cold War and the zero-sum game mentality and stop sowing discord between China and regional countries as well as un-

dermining the regional peace and stability," Wang said.

His remarks came amidst India and the US signing the landmark Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) that will allow sharing of high-end military technology, classified satellite data and critical information between the two countries. In August, Pompeo said that China poses a threat to the West that is in some ways "worse" than that posed by the Soviet Union

during the Cold War. "What's happening now isn't Cold War 2.0. The challenge of resisting the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) threat is in some ways worse. The CCP is already enmeshed in our economies, in our politics, in our societies in ways the Soviet Union never was," he had said in a speech to the Czech Senate. In July, Pompeo criticised China for its aggressive moves against its neighbours, including "instigating" a deadly confrontation with India in eastern Ladakh, saying Beijing cannot threaten countries and bully them in the Himalayas. "The recent clashes initiated by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) are just the latest examples of the Chinese Communist Party's unacceptable behaviour. It's important that democracies like ours work together, especially as we see more clear than ever the true scope of the challenge posed by the Chinese Communist Party," he said.

France tightens security

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, Oct 27: France is increasing security at religious sites as the interior minister said Tuesday that the country faces a "very high" risk of terrorist threats, amid growing geopolitical tensions following the beheading of a teacher who showed his class caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad.

French diplomats are trying to quell anger in Turkey and Arab nations amid anti-France protests and calls for boycotts of French goods in response to President Emmanuel Macron's firm stance against Islamism in the wake of the October 16 beheading.

European allies have supported Macron, while Muslim-majority countries are angered by his defense of prophet cartoons they consider sacrilegious.

RAGING INFERNO



A firefighter battles the Silverado Fire in Irvine, Calif. as a fast-moving wildfire forced evacuation orders for 60,000 people in Southern California

Senate confirms Barrett to Supreme Court

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, Oct 27: US President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nomination of Amy Coney Barrett has sailed through the Senate winning a life-time appointment and firming up the conservative hold on the bench.

She received 52 votes of the Republican Party senators on Monday, just eight days before the presidential election, with one defecting to the Democratic side recording 48 votes in opposition.

The nine-member Supreme Court bench will have six conservatives when Barrett joins the bench, three of them nominated by President Donald Trump as his lasting legacy.

Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts is scheduled to swear her in as a justice Tuesday.

Barrett succeeds Democratic President Bill Clinton's nominee Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who had built up a record of liberal verdicts, whether they held or were outvoted. She died at age 87 in September after a 27-year career on the bench. Barrett, a mother of seven, two of them of African de-



scent adopted from Haiti, is only 48 years old with the possibility of a long stint on the nation's highest court. Democrats had opposed the appointment of Barrett so close to the election citing the Republicans scuttling former President Barack Obama's nomination of Merrick Garland to the Supreme Court in an election year claiming that it should be the prerogative of the new president.

The Democratic Party's vice-presidential nominee Kamala Harris, a member of the Senate who voted against Barrett, tweeted that the confirmation was "an illegitimate process" which "we won't forget". The Republican Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell

flipped from his 2016 stand this time asserting the legal right of the sitting president to make nominations and for the Senate to approve it. "By any objective standard, Judge Barrett deserves to be confirmed to the Supreme Court. The American people agree," McConnell said before the vote.

Democrats have suggested enlarging the size of the court and adding more judges should their nominee Joe Biden win the presidential election to reverse the conservative dominance.

Biden, who has not quite affirmed either way, has said that he would appoint a commission to look into the issue.

One of the worrisome factors for the Democrats is that court may be called on to resolve cases involving the November 3 election as it had in the close election in 2000 in which Republican George W. Bush was declared the winner over Democrat Al Gore despite polling fewer popular votes.

The court refused to get involved in a Florida court decision that helped Bush get the electoral college votes to get the presidency.

Afghan civilian casualties drop by 30% this year: UN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kabul, Oct 27: The number of civilian casualties in Afghanistan has dropped by 30 per cent in the first nine months of this year, the lowest since 2012, the UN mission in the country said in a report Tuesday.

The report by the UN mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) said that 2,117 were killed and 3,822 others injured from January 1 to September 30, TOLO News reported. It said that Anti-Government Elements (AGEs) remain responsible for the majority of civilian casualties (58 per cent).

The report said that the number of civilians killed attributed to the Taliban increased by 6 per cent in the first nine months of 2020. It added that the overall number of civilian casualties – killed and injured – attributed to the Taliban dropped by 32 per cent. "High levels of violence



continue with a devastating impact on civilians, with Afghanistan remaining among the deadliest places in the world to be a civilian," the report said.

"The peace talks will need some time to help deliver peace. But all parties can immediately prioritize discussions and take urgent, and frankly overdue, additional steps to stem the terrible harm to civilians," TOLO News quoted Deborah Lyons, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan, as saying in the report.

Belgium's once hidden princess meets royal father

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Belgium, Oct 27: The once secret princess of Belgium has met former king Albert for the first time since her legal battle to be accepted as his daughter, the palace said Tuesday.

A photograph distributed with the announcement shows Princess Delphine de Saxe-Cobourg, sitting smiling alongside Albert II and his wife, Queen Paola, in their Brussels residence.

Delphine, now a 52-year-old artist, was the child of an affair the former king of the Belgians had with a Baroness, and he long refused to recognise her.



BATTLE AGAINST PANDEMIC

Antibodies 'fall rapidly' after infection: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Oct 27: The hope for long-term immunity from COVID-19 was thrown into doubt on Tuesday as a large UK study concluded that protective antibodies in people fall "quite rapidly" after a coronavirus infection.

Imperial College London's research, which tested more than 365,000 people in England, found that antibody response to the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19 wanes over time, which indicates that any level of immunity could last only a few months.

"Seasonal coronaviruses that circulate every winter and cause common colds can re-infect people after six to 12 months," said professor Wendy Barclay, a virologist who was one of the researchers on the study. "We suspect that the way the body reacts to infection with this new



coronavirus is similar to that," she said. Antibodies are a key part of the body's immune defences and stop viruses from getting inside the body's cells. The Imperial College London team found the number of people testing positive with a finger-

prick test for antibodies has fallen by 26 per cent between June and September. "Our study shows that over time there is a reduction in the proportion of people testing positive for antibodies," said professor Paul Elliott, director of the pro-

gramme at Imperial College London. "Testing positive for antibodies does not mean you are immune to COVID-19. It remains unclear what level of immunity antibodies provide, or for how long this immunity lasts. If someone tests positive for antibodies, they still need to follow national guidelines including social distancing measures, getting a swab test if they have symptoms and wearing face coverings where required," he said.

The downward trend was observed in all areas of England and age groups, but not in health workers, which could indicate repeated or higher initial exposure to the virus, the authors suggest.

"This very large study has shown that the proportion of people with detectable antibodies is falling over time. We don't yet know whether this will leave these people at risk of reinfection with the virus that

causes COVID-19, but it is essential that everyone continues to follow guidance to reduce the risk to themselves and others," said professor Helen Ward, one of the lead authors.

The decline was largest in people aged 75 and above compared to younger people, and also in people with suspected rather than confirmed infection, indicating that the antibody response varies by age and with the severity of illness. The decline was largest in people who didn't report a history of COVID-19, dropping by almost two-thirds (64 per cent) between rounds one and three, compared to a decrease of 22.3 per cent in people who had an infection confirmed by lab testing.

UK Health Minister Lord Bethell said the research would help inform the government's continued response to the disease.

of the day quote

We are glad to be able to consistently expand our international network and widen our global presence, despite the current challenging times



LESLIE THNG | CEO, VISTARA

We welcome the proactive steps taken by Chief Minister of Goa Pramod Sawant for resumption of mining activities in the state wherein he had meeting with the PM



MANOJ CACULO | PRESIDENT, GCCI

We are exploring the possibility of setting up a unit in SEZ for the golf cart project. It is in the proposal phase. We are promoting electric three-wheelers



SULAJJA FIRODIA MOTWANI | CEO, KINETIC GREEN

SHORT TAKES

New norms to boost skilling

New Delhi: The government Tuesday unveiled a set of guidelines for recognising and regulating awarding bodies and assessment agencies, to improve the outcomes and standardise the processes under the Skill India Mission. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), in collaboration with its unified regulator National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET), unveiled the guidelines and operation manuals. The norms have been developed for the recognition and regulation of awarding bodies and assessment agencies.

Highway project works underway

New Delhi: Union minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday laid foundation stones of nine highway projects in Tripura to be built at a cost of over ₹2,752 crore. Upgradation and development of national highways (NHs) will improve connectivity to all the districts and major cities, the road transport minister said. Gadkari "virtually laid the foundation stones of nine national highway projects worth over ₹2,752 crore in Tripura today," the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said.

Tata Motors net loss at ₹307 cr

Mumbai: Tata Motors Tuesday reported a consolidated net loss of ₹307.26 crore for the second quarter ended September 30. The auto major had reported a net loss of ₹187.7 crore during the July-September period previous fiscal. The company's total revenue from operations declined to ₹53,530 crore in the second quarter as against ₹65,431.95 crore during the same period last fiscal, Tata Motors said in a regulatory filing. The company posted a net loss of ₹1,212.45 crore for the September quarter.

Ceat Q2 profit surges four-fold

New Delhi: Tyre maker Ceat Tuesday reported over four-fold increase in its consolidated net profit to ₹182.18 crore for the second quarter ended September 30. The company had posted a net profit of ₹43.64 crore in the July-September period previous fiscal. The tyre maker's revenue from operations during the second quarter stood at ₹1,978.47 crore as compared to ₹1,691.55 crore in the year-ago period. The company continued to focus on the wellbeing of its people and partners, he added.



Sharing best practices, knowledge and engaging investors from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation member nations will help strengthen startup ecosystem

PIYUSH GOYAL | UNION COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

MARKETS BUCK GLOBAL TREND

Domestic equity benchmarks shrugged off bearish global cues to end with smart gains Tuesday, propelled by heavy buying in Kotak Mahindra Bank



Credit interest waiver by Nov 5

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Oct 27: The Reserve Bank on Tuesday asked all lending institutions, including non-banking financial companies, to ensure that the scheme of waiver of interest on interest for loans up to ₹2 crore for the six-month moratorium period is implemented by November 5, as decided by the government.

Last Friday, the government had announced the scheme for grant of ex-gratia payment of difference between compound interest and simple interest for six months to borrowers in specified loan accounts. The lending institutions have been asked to complete the exercise of crediting the amount in the accounts of borrowers by November 5.

Housing loans, education loans, credit card dues, auto loans, MSME loans, consumer durable loans and consumption loans are covered under the scheme.

The scheme mandates ex-gratia payment to certain categories of borrowers by way of crediting the difference between simple interest and compound interest for the period between March 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020 by respective lending in-



The scheme is also applicable on those who have not availed the moratorium scheme and continued with the repayment of loans

stitutions.

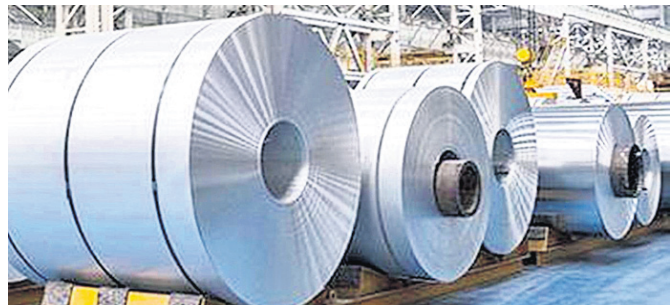
"All lending institutions are advised to be guided by the provisions of the Scheme and take necessary action within the stipulated timeline," the RBI said in

a notification.

In a tweet, office of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said "RBI advises all lending institutions to be guided by the provisions of the scheme for grant of ex-gratia payment of difference between compound interest & simple interest for 6 months to borrowers in specified loan accounts & take necessary action within the stipulated timeline".

The finance ministry had issued the operational guidelines on October 23, in the backdrop of the Supreme Court's direction to implement the interest waiver scheme.

Long-steel makers stare at huge loss



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 27: Secondary long-steel producers may sustain their credit profiles this fiscal despite facing up to 100 basis points decline in profitability because of two supportive factors - Central government spending (on rural and urban housing, and infrastructure, including roads) and leveraged balance sheets (stemming from low capital expenditure), rating agency Crisil said Tuesday.

Domestic long steel sales volume is seen declining 12-15 per cent in the current fiscal following the Covid-19 pandemic, according to a study of 125 CRISIL-rated secondary long-steel manufacturers. Long-steel consumption is prominently linked to housing projects being implemented through schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and construction of roads. While capital expenditure by Central government will prop demand from these segments at healthy levels, declining spending by state governments and weak demand from the real estate sector will affect the overall offtake, the sectoral analysis by Crisil said.

Consequently, volume could drop 12-15 per cent this fiscal, the analysis added.

Even on lower volume, average steel realisation is expected be

steady at ₹40,000-41,000 per tonne on stable supply, given capacity expansion has been minimal over the past couple of years. But with sales volume also foreseen declining, revenue growth, too, will be curbed.

Nevertheless, lower revenue may not materially dent operating profit margin because of favourable cost structure. Variable cost - iron ore and coal - comprise three-fourths of the cost of production. As a result, operating margins tend to be somewhat protected in this business.

Mohit Makhija, Director, CRISIL Ratings, said: "For secondary steel makers, operating margin will test the lower range of 5.5-6.5 per cent marking a fall of nearly 100 basis. This is largely due to the pandemic-driven shutdown in the first quarter of this fiscal, which led to a near-complete shutdown of operations for many producers."

Secondary long-steel makers haven't undertaken large capex between fiscals 2016 and 2021. Most of the ₹5,000 crore spent in the period was to improve efficiencies through backward integration and use of captive power.

"Leaner balance sheets and improvement in cost efficiencies will help secondary long-steel makers navigate the pandemic. Interest coverage is expected to improve to 3.4 times this fiscal from 2 times in fiscal 2016," said Jaya Mirpuri, Director, CRISIL Ratings.

'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' will create global cos: PM

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 27: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday called upon exporters to create "globally competitive" enterprises in India in the spirit of his flagship mission, 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'.

In his message to the EEPC India, Modi said: "Aatmanirbhar Bharat is about creating globally competitive enterprises in India."

The Prime Minister's message was aired during the inauguration of the engineering exporters' apex body, EEPC India's first virtual exhibition, 'India Subcontracting Expo 2020' for overseas buyers.



Through his message, the Prime Minister conveyed that science and engineering have a major role in realising the objectives of the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' programme.

He said that India is creating the right ecosystems for local manufacturing and supply chain.

Modi said that technology has become an enabler in the wake of challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Digital tools have guided and helped in transforming such challenges into opportunities. The world requires skilled hands and we in India have the talent to cater to these global needs," he said.

According to an EEPC India statement, nearly 100 engineering exporters would be showcasing their products and technologies to major buyers from Europe, including the UK through a virtual exhibition, seeking to bag manufacturing contracts, giving a boost to the 'Make In India' and

'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' programmes.

The four-day virtual expo opened on Tuesday.

The virtual exposition platform sports several features like 24x7 access for buyers and sellers, virtual B2Bs, chat rooms, among others.

This forum would deliberate on emerging technological challenges and collaboration opportunities in the wake of the pandemic. At present, Indian companies are making their presence felt through greenfield investments and land-mark acquisitions globally. In addition, the forum will discuss areas like technology transfers, trade business and investment.

E-comm cos sell goods worth \$4.1bn



New Delhi: E-commerce companies reported a 55 per cent jump in sale goods to USD 4.1 billion (Rs 29,000 crore) across platforms during the first week (October 15-21) of festive sales, research firm RedSeer said on Tuesday. RedSeer, in its report, said the comparative number stood at USD 2.7 billion last year. RedSeer in its pre-festive sale had forecasted that platforms will clock USD 4 billion worth of sales this year. Smartphones led the sale accounting for 47 per cent of total festive sales, driven by new launches and affordable models with ₹1.5 crore worth of smartphones being sold every minute across the online platforms in the first week of 2020's festive sales.

Airtel losses narrow to ₹763 cr in Sept

New Delhi: Telecom operator Bharti Airtel Tuesday reported substantial narrowing of losses for the second quarter ended September 2020 at ₹763 crore. The losses were significantly lower than Q2FY20, when it stood at ₹23,045 crore, after the company had made provisions of ₹28,450 crore in the immediate aftermath of the Supreme Court ruling on statutory dues. The company posted revenues of ₹25,785 crore for the September 2020 quarter, up 22 per cent over the corresponding period last year "with strong growth across the portfolio - geographies and segments", a company statement said. The net loss (before exceptional items) for Q2 FY21 was at ₹744 crore, while loss (after exceptional items) stood at ₹763 crore.



Hero, Harley join hands for Indian market

New Delhi: The country's largest two wheeler maker Hero MotoCorp and US bike maker Harley-Davidson Tuesday said they have joined hands for the Indian market. As per the distribution agreement, Hero MotoCorp will sell and service Harley-Davidson motorcycles, and sell parts and accessories and general merchandise riding gear and apparel through a network of brand-exclusive Harley-Davidson dealers and Hero's existing dealership network in India, the companies said in a joint statement.

Further, according to a licensing agreement, Hero MotoCorp will develop and sell a range of premium motorcycles under the Harley-Davidson brand name, the statement added. "These actions are aligned with Harley-Davidson's business overhaul, The Rewire, and the company's announcement in September," the statement said.

Future Retail sees liquidation if Reliance deal fails

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 27: The face-off between Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and Jeff Bezos-run behemoth Amazon over the retail assets of Future Group in India has once again exposed the ambition of the so-called "gatekeeper for e-commerce" to keep the reins of a growing retail market in the country in its hands.

The legal battle in Singapore aims to stop Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL), a subsidiary of RIL, from dominating the burgeoning retail market in India - estimated to reach \$1.1-\$1.3 trillion by 2025, from \$0.7 trillion in 2019, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9-11 per cent (according to the latest report by Boston Consulting Group and the Retailers' Association of India).

That Amazon does not like new and direct competition to its busi-



ness in any country and will do anything to somehow scuttle it, was conveyed earlier this month by the US House Judiciary Antitrust Subcommittee examining the health of competition in digital markets and the business practices of Amazon, Apple, Facebook and Google.

"Amazon has engaged in exten-



sive anticompetitive conduct in its treatment of third-party sellers. Publicly, Amazon describes third-party sellers as 'partners'. But internal documents show that, behind closed doors, the company refers to them as 'internal competitors'," the US House panel report stressed.

According to industry experts, in a post-pandemic era, India's digital economy is all set to get a significant thrust, with e-commerce becoming highly competitive.

"As India's largest offline retail player, Reliance has a significant war chest that enables it to forge ahead to corner household spending across urban and aspirational India," Prabhu Ram, Head-Industry Intelligence Group (IIG), CMR, told IANS.

"To do so, Reliance is now seeking to expand aggressively with an intent to dislodge the incumbents that control close to 70 per cent of the online market, including Amazon," he added.

Reliance Retail reacted to Amazon in a rather bold statement that it has entered into the transaction for acquisition of assets and business of Future Retail Ltd under proper legal advice and the rights and obligations are fully enforceable under Indian law.

"RRVL intends to enforce its rights and complete the transaction in terms of the scheme and agreement with Future group without any delay," it said.

Amazon is also facing anti-trust probes in other countries along with the US.

Germany's competition watchdog in August began a fresh investigation into whether Amazon is abusing its dominant market position in the country.

The battle in India, however, is different as it is not between Amazon and the government but with another behemoth, which is growing fast across the spectrum and controlling the domestic retail and online shopping space is their biggest bet.

JioMart has continuously been adding new products, features, brands and varieties each day, offering a whole new experience and extensive bouquet of choices to its customers every time they shop.

FB INDIA'S HEAD OF PUBLIC POLICY QUILTS COMPANY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 27: Facebook's India head of public policy Ankhi Das -- who was in the eye of storm over alleged bias in blocking of hate content on the social media platform, has quit the company.

Ankhi has decided to step down from her role in Facebook to pursue her interest in public service. Ankhi was one of our earliest employees in India and played an instrumental role in the growth of the company and its services over the last 9 years, Ajit Mohan, managing director of Facebook India, said in an e-mailed statement.

Quizzed by Parliament panel, FB skirted posers on sharing Indian users' data. The resignation comes weeks after Facebook and Das faced questions internally from employees over how political content is regulated in its biggest market, India.



200 EUROPEAN AIRPORTS FACE INSOLVENCY: ACI

REUTERS

Berlin, Oct 27: Nearly 200 airports in Europe will face insolvency in the coming months if passenger traffic does not start recovering by the end of the year, airports body ACI Europe said Tuesday.

An estimated 193 European hubs are considered "at-risk airports", ACI said.

Airports at risk are mainly smaller regional ones with fewer than 5 million travellers each year, where closure would have an outsized impact on local jobs, an ACI spokeswoman told Reuters.

Larger European airports are also burning through cash at an unsustainable rate, with the top 20 European airports having added 16 billion euros (\$18.91 billion) of debt.

SAHA, WARNER, RASHID LIFT SRH

AGENCIES

Dubai, Oct 27: The onslaught by Wriddhiman Saha (87, 45b, 12x4, 2x6) and skipper David Warner (66, 34b, 8x4, 2x6) followed by a spell-binding spell by Rashid Khan (3/7) helped Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) seal a comprehensive 88-run win over Delhi Capitals (DC) here in their IPL encounter, Tuesday.

Chasing a mammoth 220, DC were bundled out for a paltry 131 in 19 overs. Rishabh Pant (36) was the top scorer for DC, while Ajinkya Rahane (26), Tushar Deshpande (20 n o) and Shimron Hetmyer (16) were the other DC batsmen to reach double-digit scores. For SRH, T Natarajan (2/26) and Sandeep Sharma (2/27),

besides Rashid, bowled well. Earlier, Saha and Warner's exploits followed by a final flourish by Manish Pandey (44 n o) helped SRH post 219/2 after being invited to bat.

Sent in to bat, both Warner and Saha went after the Delhi bowlers from the word go. Fully capitalising on the field restrictions, the duo smashed boundaries every over to collect 77-runs in the first six overs, the best Poweplay figures of the season.

In the sixth over, Warner smashed the tournament's leading wicket-taker Kagiso Rabada (0/54) for four boundaries and a six, helping the SRH reach 100 runs in just 8.4 overs.

Till Warner was taking on the bowlers, Saha played the second fiddle to perfection. The Australian

celebrated his 34th birthday with a half century.

To DC's relief Ravichandran Ashwin (1/35) broke the 107-run opening stand in the 10th over as he dismissed danger man Warner. With Warner gone, Saha hammered the Capitals bowlers all around the park.

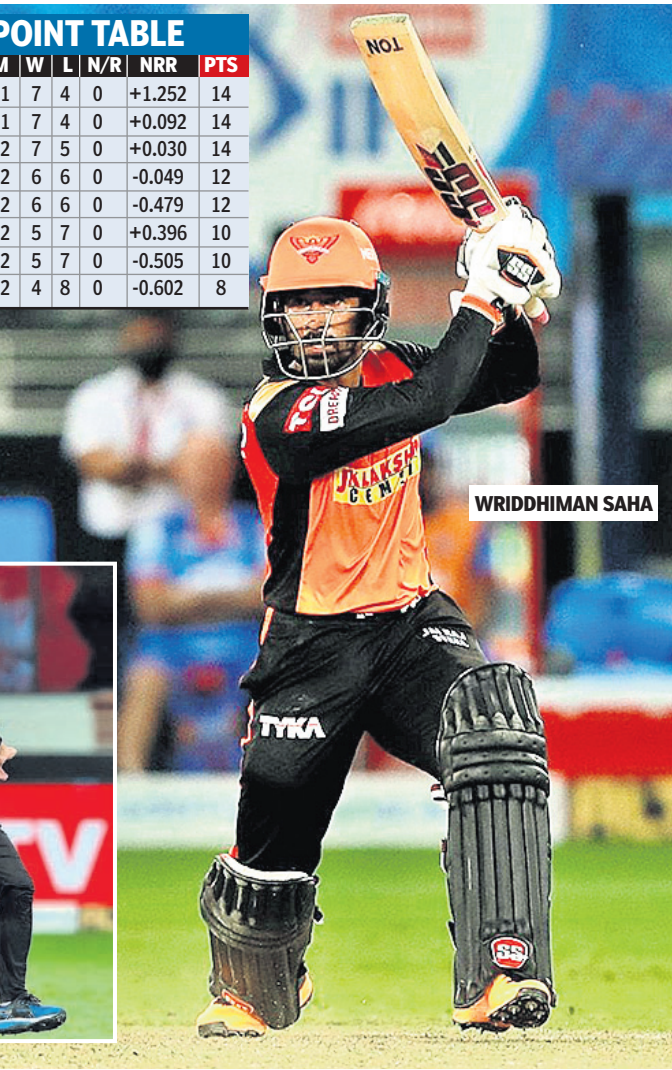
He was perished off a Anrich Nortje (1/37) delivery. Pandey and Kane Williamson (11 n o) continued the assault on a listless Delhi bowling unit.

BRIEF SCORES: SRH 219/2 (Wriddhiman Saha 87, David Warner 66, Manish Pandey 44 n o) beat DC 131 (Rishabh Pant 36; Rashid Khan 3/7, T Natarajan 2/26, Sandeep Sharma 2/27) by 88 runs.

POINT TABLE							
TEAM	M	W	L	N/R	NRR	PTS	
MI	11	7	4	0	+1.252	14	
RCB	11	7	4	0	+0.092	14	
DC	12	7	5	0	+0.030	14	
KXIP	12	6	6	0	-0.049	12	
KKR	12	6	6	0	-0.479	12	
SRH	12	5	7	0	+0.396	10	
RR	12	5	7	0	-0.505	10	
CSK	12	4	8	0	-0.602	8	



DAVID WARNER & RASHID KHAN (INSET)



WRIDDHIMAN SAHA

MI, RCB target play-off berths



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



Abu Dhabi, Oct 27: Rohit Sharma is likely to miss his third game in a row when Mumbai Indians (MI) face Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) here Wednesday with both teams aiming to secure their spot in the IPL play-offs.

While Mumbai are sitting on top of the table despite their eight-wicket hammering by Rajasthan Royals with 14 points, Virat Kohli-led RCB too remain on 14 following their loss to Chennai Super Kings Sunday. A win for either side Wednesday should be enough to take it to the play-offs.

Rohit's fitness has become a subject of unwanted attention ahead of the game. Having missed the last two games due to a hamstring injury, Mumbai Indians skipper returned to the nets Monday, a day when he was not named in the India squad for the Australia series.

There is still no conclusive update on his fitness from either Mumbai Indians or the BCCI. In Rohit's absence, Mumbai would persist with both Saurabh Tiwary and Ishan Kishan, who has played some scintillating knockouts.

Quinton De Kock (374 runs) had a rare failure against Rajasthan and he would be keen to make an impact. Kishan (298 runs) and Suryakumar Yadav (283 runs) are among the leading run-scorers who can go on the offensive against any attack.

The six-hitting prowess of Hardik Pandya (224 runs) was on display in the RR game, when he plundered seven maximums. Along with stand-in captain Kieron Pollard (214 runs) and Krunal Pandya (85

runs), he can take any attack to cleansers and their hard-hitting ability could prove to be the difference between the two sides.

Mumbai bowlers would be more than keen to forget the hammering they received from Rajasthan's Ben Stokes and Sanju Samson.

Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah have been lethal both at front and at the death, accounting for 33 wickets amongst themselves. For the third pacer spot, MI could choose between James Pattinson and Nathan Coulter-Nile.

For RCB, Kohli (415 runs) would like to continue his splendid run in the tournament. Australian Aaron Finch (236 runs), young Devdutt Padikkal (343 runs) and AB de Villiers (324 runs) need to be more consistent and support their skipper. De Villiers has shown time and again, why he is regarded as one of the best T20 batsmen by turning the clock back on few occasions. If the RCB top order fires in unison, then they can pummel the MI attack into submission.

The likes of Chris Morris, Moeen Ali and Gurkeerat Mann, who form the lower-middle order, can also chip in with useful cameos.

But for the southern team there is injury scare on the bowling front with pacer Navdeep Saini suffering a split webbing. There is no clarity on his participation for the game against Mumbai.



TODAY'S MATCH

MI VS RCB

AT 7:30 PM

TELECAST: STAR SPORTS

Mandeep recalls late father's wish

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sharjah, Oct 27: Kings XI Punjab (KXIP) opener Mandeep Singh, who is grieving the recent death of his father, said he is glad to have fulfilled one of his wishes in the ongoing IPL – remaining unbeaten while steering the side to a win.

"My father used to tell me that 'you should remain not out in every game' and that is what I wanted to do today," Mandeep told the IPL's official website.

"Even before the game I spoke to Rahul

that 'let me play my game, even if I take few balls I can win games for the team'. I think my father would be really happy that I finished the game," he said.

Mandeep's father, Hardev Singh, died Friday after battling a liver ailment at a Mohali hospital. The cricketer was lauded by no less than Sachin Tendulkar for playing on despite the tragedy.

Mandeep has shown exceptional mental toughness by staying back in the UAE despite losing his father and was given the responsibility of opening the innings in

the absence of an injured Mayank Agarwal.

He, Monday, stayed till the end to take the team through. "I opened in the last game (vs SRH) as well, they wanted me to have a go in the first six overs," Mandeep said.

"I told (skipper) KL Rahul that let me play my game, even if I take a few balls, I know I have the belief that I can win games for the team. That's what I did. I took some balls initially, but even in the middle overs, I was thinking that if I bat till the end I will win this game for the team," he said.



It feels surreal, Varun says on India call-up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sharjah, Oct 27: "It feels surreal," said the architect-turned-mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy after he got a maiden India call-up for the T20 series in Australia following his exploits for KKR in the ongoing IPL.

The 29-year-old, who only started taking his spin bowling seriously in 2018, said he was not expecting to be picked in the national team. He has played only 12 T20s and featured in a lone First-Class game.

"After the match got over I got to know (of my selection into the Indian team). I keep using the same word again and again, it feels surreal," he told BCCI.tv after the game against Kings XI Punjab Monday night.



"My basic goal was to play in the team regularly and perform and contribute to their wins. Hopefully I'll be able to do the same for India. I am not very active on social media and I have to thank the selectors for keeping their faith in me. I don't really have words."

Varun took a five-wicket haul against Delhi Capitals earlier in the competition, forcing the national selectors to take notice.

"I pretty much started my spin bowling in 2018, that's when I got my breakthrough in TNPL, it's been high and lows – last year, I didn't get many chances and I injured myself, I'm grateful for making a comeback this year," he said.

"I have been working hard, but the motivation and faith has come from a lot of people around me," Varun had said at the post-match presentation after the game against Capitals.

"Around 2015, when I was not making a lot of money (the switch from being an architect to becoming a cricketer), was freelancing and wasn't able to meet my needs, I thought I would do something different, that's when I turned to cricket. I still do it, I like that as well (being an architect)," he had said.

Jayaram makes winning start at SaarLorLux Open



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Saarbrücken (Germany), Oct 27: Indian shuttler Ajay Jayaram notched up a dominating straight-game win over Belgium's Maxime Moreels in the men's singles open-

ing round of the SaarLorLux Open Super 100 tournament here Tuesday.

The former World No.13 beat Maxime 21-8, 21-8 in just 19 minutes at Saarländhalle Saarbrücken.

Jayaram will next face the Netherlands' third seed Mark Caljouw.

Jayaram was 6-0 up quickly and then moved to an 11-4 advantage at the break. He kept dominating the proceedings to easily pocket the opening game.

In the second game, Maxime had made it to 4-6 but crumbled after that as Jayaram registered 11 straight points to reach 17-6. Without much ado, he closed out the game.

Son lifts Spurs to 5th in PL standings

REUTERS



Burnley, Oct 27: Son Heung-min's prolific start to the season continued with his 76th minute header giving Tottenham Hotspur a 1-0 win at winless Burnley in the Premier League Monday and moving Jose Mourinho's side up to fifth.

The South Korean was left unmarked at the back post to nod home his eighth league goal of the season after Harry Kane had flicked on an Erik Lamela corner to give Mourinho's side a third win in six games. vKane had saved Spurs minutes earlier with a fine piece of defending as he cleared a goal-bound James Tarkowski header off the line.

Although Spurs always looked more comfortable on the ball it was Sean Dyche's side, who have just a point from their opening five games, who had come the closest.

Ashley Barnes had a 20th minute drive ruled out for offside and then Spurs keeper Hugo Lloris got down well to stop a low drive from Ashley Westwood. Son is now the top scorer in the Premier League and Kane is becoming a leading creator with the assist his eighth of the campaign so far.

Mourinho's approach of asking Kane to play in a deeper role, often operating just behind Son and Lucas Moura, has produced the most potent attack in the league with 16 goals in six games.

AC Milan play out stalemate with AS Roma



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Milan, Oct 27: AC Milan's perfect start to the Serie A season ended with a 3-3 draw against AS Roma but the Rossoneri still moved two points clear of Napoli and Sassuolo.

Roma defender Marash Kumbulla Monday equalised six minutes from time following an unintended assist from Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who was trying to clear a corner and instead redirected the ball toward the far post where Kumbulla rushed forward to pound it in.

Roma is ninth, five points behind Milan. Edin Dzeko and Jordan Veretout, with a penalty, also scored for Roma. Ibrahimovic scored twice for Milan, which also got a goal from Alexis Saelemaekers with Rafael Leao setting up two of the Rossoneri's scores.

Ibrahimovic needed only one touch to find the net following Leao's pass over the top less than two minutes in at the San Siro.

Dzeko made it 1-1. Milan custodian Ciprian Tataruanu failed to bat away a corner, allowing the ball to reach Dzeko, who leaped over Alessio Romagnoli for a header by the far post. Saelemaekers scored Milan's second after the break following strong work down the left flank and an expert cross from Leao. Veretout equalised for Roma with a penalty in the 71st following a debatable foul from Ismael Bennacer.

Ibrahimovic then thought he had sealed victory with a penalty in the 79th following an equally dubious foul by Gianluca Mancini. But the Swedish superstar was to blame for the final goal from Kumbulla, who also scored the winner in Roma's 2-1 comeback win at Young Boys in the Europa League last week.

It was the first match since a new decree came into effect banning fans at stadiums due to a second wave of coronavirus infections.

JUVENTUS TEST AHEAD OF BARCA

AGENCIES

Turin, Oct 27: Arguably the stand-out fixture of the 2020-21 Champions League group stage takes place here Wednesday night as Juventus host Barcelona in a repeat of the 2015 final.

Coronavirus may deny fans a much-anticipated reunion between Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, but it will still be a star-studded occasion between two clubs with legendary figures as their new managers, both looking to make their mark.

Wednesday's mouth-watering showdown will be Juventus' 200th Champions League outing and victory would see them become the first Italian team to chalk up 100 wins in the

competition – both landmarks which they would relish reaching against a team of Barcelona's quality.

Andrea Pirlo will not need reminding about his last showdown with the Blaugrana, which also happened to be his final appearance in a Juventus shirt as Barcelona beat the Italian giants in the 2015 Champions League final.

Now the World Cup winner is in the Juventus dugout and preparing for his first Champions League home game as a manager, and he does so with questions already being asked of him.

The Bianconeri were not entirely convincing on matchday one, although Alvaro Morata's second-half brace got their Group G campaign off to a winning start away to Dynamo Kiev.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo will undergo a test 24 hours before kickoff to

determine his availability for this match. Juve will justifiably expect to seal their place in the knockout rounds once again, but it is their double-header against Barca which is likely to determine first and second spot, and subsequently an easier route through the knockout rounds.

The Italian giants have won their last four Champions League home games and have only lost four of their 42 European outings at the Allianz Stadium, although three of those have come in their last 10 such matches.

The hosts may feel that this is the best possible time to face a Barcelona side still reeling from such a tumultuous 2019-20 campaign on and off the field.

New boss Ronald Koeman initially looked to have steadied the ship by beating Villarreal and Celta Vigo by an aggregate scoreline of 7-0 in

his first two games at the helm, but crisis has quickly engulfed the club once again since.

Amid a backdrop of wage rows and dressing-room divisions, Barca have picked up only one point from their subsequent three La Liga outings, including back-to-back defeats at the hands of Getafe and, Saturday, Clasico rivals Real Madrid at Camp Nou. A home defeat to your biggest rivals is always a significant blow, and one that leaves Barcelona once again in a state of flux within weeks of the start of a new era.

A convincing matchday one victory over Ferencvaros, when five different players were on the score-sheet, is their only victory in their last four outings across all competitions, but they will face a much sterner test in Juventus. Barca have never won away from home against Juventus, although their overall record against Italian

teams is far more impressive – no defeats in their last six and just two defeats from their last 18.

The Spanish giants have a formidable record in the group stages too, going undefeated in their last three campaigns and losing only one of their last 17 such matches on the road.

However, in European matches as a whole Barca have only won six of their last 17 away games, and they have not won one by more than the odd goal for over two years now.

Considering their form heading into this one, hopes will not be too high of that changing here, although this is a contest between two European giants who are used to winning a lot more frequently than they have managed so far this term.



BARCELONA: Marc Andre ter-Stegen, Gerard Pique & Philippe Coutinho.
JUVENTUS: Giorgio Chiellini, Matthijs de Ligt & Alex Sandro.

MAJOR DOUBTS

HEAD-TO-HEAD

This will be the 14th competitive meeting between these two sides, 11 of which have come in UEFA competition, with Barcelona just about edging the head-to-head record.

Juventus have failed to even score in the last three meetings, but they are unbeaten in their six previous home games against Barca – their joint-best undefeated total against a side in European competition.

The two sides were most recently paired together in the 2017-18 group stages, when Barcelona won 3-0 at Camp Nou and drew 0-0 in Turin.

