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**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

This speech can make me lose elections... all this talk on peace, love & harmony!

**MARKET WATCH**

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	58247.09	↑ 69.33
NIFTY	17380.00	↑ 24.70
DOLLAR	73.98	↓ ₹0.06
EURO	87.17	↑ ₹0.20
GOLD	₹47,063	↑ ₹155
SILVER	₹63,218	↓ ₹81



## Goods train derails, falls into Nandira

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** At least nine wagons of a goods train running on the Angul-Talcher Road route of East Coast Railways derailed in the early hours of Tuesday and fell into a river. The wagons carrying wheat plunged into the river around 2.30 am, but the loco pilot and other staff were reported safe as the engine remained on the track, officials said. Heavy rain in the wake of a deep depression may have caused the accident on a bridge over river Nandira when the goods train was on its way from Firozpur to Khurda Road. The ECoR has cancelled 12 trains, diverted routes of eight others and short terminated another. Accident relief trains from Sambalpur and Khurda Road have been rushed to the spot.

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## MANY RIVERS IN SPATE, TOLL FIVE

People in 20 districts were affected by heavy rain. Over 13,500 persons were evacuated while 2,870 houses damaged. SRC asks DMs to submit damage reports by Sept 22

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** With record-breaking rainfall in several parts of the state for the third day, thousands of people were marooned in 20 districts of the state Tuesday. The Special Relief Commissioner office said over 20.46 lakh people in 111 blocks and 27 urban local bodies of 20 districts were affected by rainfall. They included Angul, Bargarh, Balasore, Boudh, Cuttack, Deogarh, Jagatsinghpur, Jajpur, Ganjam, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Kendrapara, Keonjhar, Khurda, Koraput, Nayagarh, Nuapada, Puri and Sonepur. The government has evacuated 13,534 people from affected areas in seven districts while 2,870 houses have been damaged. With the death of another person due to wall collapse in Ganjam district, the toll rose to five. Meanwhile, SRC PK Jena asked all District Collectors to submit damage reports within a week. Though water level in the Mahanadi river is rising, it is flowing below the danger level. The SRC ruled out any flood in the Mahanadi river system. However, due to heavy rain in the upper catchment areas of the river, six to seven gates of the Hirakud reservoir would be opened to keep the reservoir safe. Jalaka river is flowing above the danger mark and so is Baitarani but the situation is not grave.

# 4 DRDO staff held for espionage

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** Odisha Police Tuesday arrested four contractual employees of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Chandipur in Balasore district on charge of leaking classified defence secrets to foreign agents, police said. "We have credible inputs that a few

people are sharing sensitive information, which is important in view of national security, to foreign agencies. The Balasore police have apprehended four persons and interrogation is on," Inspector General of Police (eastern range) Himanshu Lal told media. A case has been registered at Chandipur police station (76/21) Tuesday under Sections 120-B (punishment for criminal conspiracy), 121-A (conspiracy to wage war against India) and 34 (act done with common intention) of the IPC and Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Official Secrets Act, the police said. The case was registered for the offence of causing serious harm to the security, sovereignty and in-

tegrity of the nation. Further interrogations of the detainees and some others will unearth more evidence in the case, police said. "In this case, we got credible intelligence that some persons are wrongfully and willfully communicating classified defence secrets to foreign agents, appearing to be Pakistani agents, being contacted from various ISD phone numbers and in exchange, they were getting monetary benefits from them," the police further said. Based on these inputs, multiple police teams were formed to apprehend the culprits. During raids, the police have recovered several incriminating materials. Sources said the accused

were working as manual operators at the defence installation. While answering to queries, DGP Abhay Tuesday refused to share details in this regard keeping in view the national security related issues. He informed the press that revealing further details could hamper the probe which is at a nascent stage now. In January 2015, a former DRDO worker, Iswar Chandra Behera, a videographer, was held on charge of spying for ISI. He was convicted with life imprisonment in February this year. Behera was held following a 10-month long probe. He had confessed to have shared defence secrets with Pakistani spying agents.

DSPL--146

Ajay Kumar Das  
4189872XXXX

ଓଡ଼ିଶା ସରକାର Government of Odisha  
ବିଜୁ ସ୍ୱାସ୍ଥ୍ୟ କଲ୍ୟାଣ ଯୋଜନା  
Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana

**Shri Naveen Patnaik**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha  
**announces**  
**New Smart Health Card**  
**with New Guidelines of**  
**Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana**

**Before 1<sup>st</sup> September**  
**70 Lakhs Families**

**More than 3 crore 50 lakh people covering 96 lakh 50 thousand beneficiary families in Odisha will be benefited**

**After 1<sup>st</sup> September**  
**96.5 Lakhs Families**

Each beneficiary family will get health coverage of Rs.5 lakhs and additional Rs.5 lakhs for the women members of the family per annum in empanelled private hospitals

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OIPR-1000113/0030/2122

# leisure



## M SHYAMALAN'S OLD TO RELEASE IN INDIA SEPT 17

Indian-origin Hollywood filmmaker M Night Shyamalan's upcoming thriller mystery film *Old* is all set to release theatrically in India September 17. The movie, made in Hindi and English, is based on the graphic novel *Sandcastle* by Pierre Oscar Levy and Frederik Peeters.

## CAMILA TO NOT SACRIFICE MENTAL HEALTH FOR CAREER

Singer Camila Cabello has learned to prioritise her mental health and put herself first. Speaking about her work, Cabello said: "If it's affecting my mental health in a negative way, I'll say no and do it another way."



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today, you will turn an attentive ear to your inner voice. As a result, you will be able to execute all your plans with precision. Besides being cheerful, you will even take disappointments with a pinch of salt. Why just today, says Ganesh, you can have this rare quality for keeps.

**TAURUS**  
As a manager, you may be able to outclass your colleagues by a great margin, predicts Ganesh. You will soften your approach with time and move towards a more democratic style of decision-making rather than the arbitrary protocol that you are used to. With this, you will taste success and prove your mettle in adverse situations, feels Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Interactions with member of the opposite sex may yield positive and pleasurable results today. Public servants will get the much-needed encouragement and moral support from bosses and family members. In academics, you will be able to solve whatever problem you set your mind to.

**CANCER**  
Today, you are likely to remain open-minded while dealing with others. However, it doesn't mean that you will always be soft on others. Later in the day, your approach may be different and stubborn. In the evening, you will enjoy the company of family and friends.

**LEO**  
Few and rare are the days when creativity takes flight. After all, even Picasso couldn't make a masterpiece every day. So make the most of this auspicious day, urges Ganesh, during which your imagination peaks and touches new heights. Especially those in the media shall hit upon a new level in their imaginative capabilities. Just remember, says Ganesh, confidence is the key.

**VIRGO**  
A single-headed mission to be the master of your destiny will drive you ahead. Your management skills will be immaculate, and the fire to succeed will get you up and running. Your skill in the managerial post will be accentuated by your quick decision-making and superior analytical ability, says Ganesh.

**LIBRA**  
Wedding bells are ringing, and you are about to get very lucky! Ganesh foresees a plethora of marriage proposals coming your way on this day full of special occasions, as you turn up your charisma and sweep the enthralled opposite sex off their feet with your charm. You may end up spending quite a bit on fun and entertainment, but it's all for a good cause. All things will fall into place as per planetary plans. Ganesh wishes you a long and happy married life.

**SCORPIO**  
Friends in influential positions will be of much help today. You may plunge into a new business venture without much ado. Appreciation for your abilities and efforts will fly in thick and fast. Your reputation is sky-rocketing among the opposite sex.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
The pressing needs of your loved ones call for extra attention today. You may have a few family friends over for lunch or dinner, and end up chatting a good deal with them. Ganesh says an intimate tête-à-tête with your better half would fare you well.

**CAPRICORN**  
The day will sail smooth, but your mind will wreak havoc by forcing you to act on the spur of the moment, says Ganesh. However, this will not ruin your reputation with bosses and peers. You may also see some of your dreams come true, but don't fly too high; you may climb up the ladder of success but with every step you leave behind there is always one more to go. Concentrate on your work a little more and the goal will certainly seem closer.

**AQUARIUS**  
Your dream house or car may well be on its way! The stars proclaim that it's a good time to acquire new assets. So bring out those attractive brochures and check out your loan prospects. A perfect way to end an exciting day will be an evening at a quiet temple, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
A good day awaits you. You will finish your work and beat your deadlines by miles on account of the luck favouring you. There are chances that a family holiday, which has been in the planning for a long time, will eventually come to fruition today, says Ganesh.

## Sanju remembers his first shot

MUMBAI: Actor Sanjay Dutt has reminisced about his first shot ever of his career for his debut film *Rocky* which released in 1981. He said he was nervous and faced a lot of pressure being a newcomer.

On the sets of a reality show, Sanjay was asked about *Rocky* being his first film and his experience.

"The shooting was in Kashmir and my first shot was to scream and jump, shouting 'help'. Mr Suresh Bhatt (choreographer) was there and he didn't think I could pull off the stunt in one go."

Sanjay added: "I assured him I can, saying, 'yes Suresh uncle' and he replied saying not to refer to him as 'uncle' but 'Master Suresh'. I looked at my dad and he told me 'look at him and hear what he is saying'. There were around 50 to 60 people there and I was very nervous."

Opening up on performing his stunts in his debut film, he said: "I have done all my stunts myself. All the heroes of that time had this thing where they all wanted to do their own stunts. Be it going through a glass or to ride, fall, etc. I have jumped from 65 feet, there were boxes there (no airbags)."

Sanjay's upcoming slate of work includes *Toolsidas Junior*, *Shamsher* and *KGF Chapter 2*.



## Have been living as Mirabai: Lavina

MUMBAI: The ongoing track of *Vighnaharta Ganesh* highlights the past and present life of Mirabai where in both her lives, she is a dedicated devotee of Lord Krishna and worships him religiously. Essaying the pivotal role of Mirabai is actress Lavina Tandon.

While talking about the preparation work she has done for the role, she reveals: "When I got to know that I am playing the character of Mirabai, I started researching on Mirabai and read stories about Lord Krishna and Radha. My creative team has been very helpful and pro-

vided me with the Dohas and Bhajans beforehand so that I can get enough time to practice them."

"The icing on the cake is that when sitting in front of Lord Krishna idol I feel there is some connection. When I have to look into his eyes and say a particular dialogue it comes so naturally. I ask my production team to hand over that idol of Lord Krishna. Since the time I have been shooting I don't think I have been living as Lavina, but as Mirabai," she concludes.



## Second Covid-19 int'l film fest concludes

Bhubaneswar: The second Covid-19 International Film Festival (CIFF) came to an end Monday with the presentation of awards to the winners in various categories.

The award for best foreign films went to *The Scar* directed by Marwen Seimi from North Africa while *Mountain Hockey* directed by Debasis Mohapatra and *Ma Pari Kie Haba* directed by Hitesh Kumar (both from Odisha) shared Best Indian Films award.

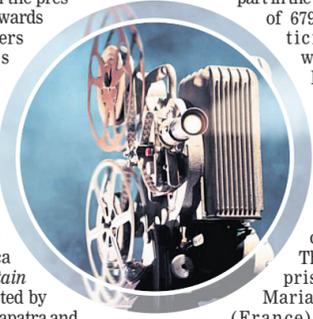
In a bid to overcome challenges posed by coronavirus, JBS Education and Entertainment Corporation in collaboration with Orifarming launched CIFF, an online int'l film festival in 2020.

Elaborating more, festival chairman Satyabrata Jena said, "Filmmakers from 25 countries including Pakistan, Afghanistan,

Iran, Iraq, Israel, Russia, Africa, the UK, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Algeria and Bangladesh took part in the festival. Out of 679 films participated, 75 were short-listed for screening. The films were viewed by 21 jury members from 11 countries. The jury comprises actress Marianne Borgo (France), actor Quadrathualh Tagbhi (Afghanistan) and filmmaker Richard Thumito(US)."

"Movies that couldn't be part of this festival will be screened offline at Utkal Kalinga International Film Festival-2021 towards the year end in Bhubaneswar," said festival head (media)Bivash Bandyopadhyay.

Festival chief Jagannath Pani said "This type of festival promotes brotherhood and gives us exposure to different culture of the world."



## Odia Sakharam Binder to hit screens Sept 17

BHUBANESWAR: *Sakharam Binder*, one of the famous plays of playwright Vijay Tendulkar written in Marathi, is all set to be reenacted in Odia as a cine play September 17 on OTT platform Vtunes Pro. Actor Ashiit Kumar Patra, apart from playing the protagonist, will be seen donning the director's hat.

Talking about the project, Ashiit who has so far appeared more than 200 plays, says, "*Sakharam Binder* is one of Tendulkar's most naturalistic plays. The play was banned in 1972 following its stage premiere due to alleged vulgarity. The Bombay High Court, however, lifted the ban in 1974 and the play was translated into several languages and staged across the globe. I loved the story of *Sakharam Binder* when I watched it and thus translated the story into Odia."

He continues: "It is basically a play presented on screen as cin-



Actors Pintu Nanda and Reshmanjali in a scene from *Sakharam Binder*

ema while keeping its dramatic soul alive and original essence intact. That's why it is called as a cineplay. It's a new con-

cept in Odisha. The play is divided into four parts and each part is of 40-minute duration. The first part will be released

*Sakharam* is a bookbinder who picks up women such as castoff wives who would otherwise be homeless and takes them in as domestic servants and sex partners

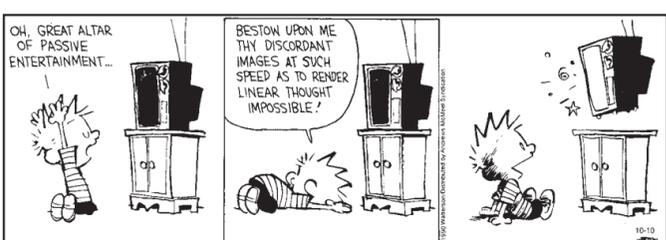
September 17." Talking about the plot, Ashiit says, "Sakharam is a bookbinder who picks up women such as castoff wives who would otherwise be homeless, destitute and takes them in as domestic servants and sex partners. He rules his home like a tinpot tyrant, yet each woman is told that she is free to leave whenever she likes. He will even give her a sari, 50 rupees and a ticket to wherever she wants to go."

Apart from Ashiit, the Odia version of *Sakharam Binder* features Shweta Acharya, Reshmanjali, Sujit Paikray and Pintu Nanda. Sunil Patnaik has co-directed the play which is being produced under the banner of Brajalaxmi Movies.

### PEANUTS



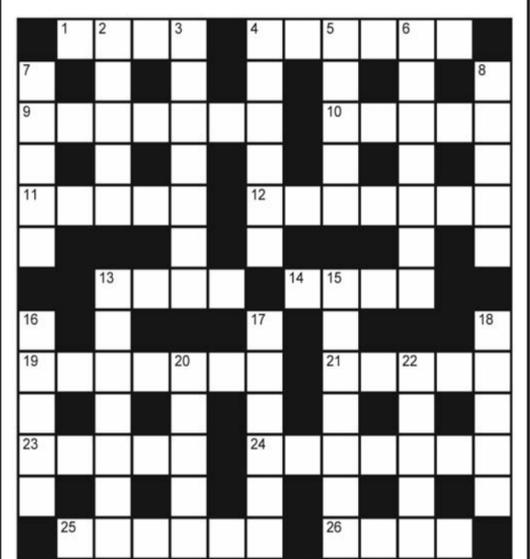
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



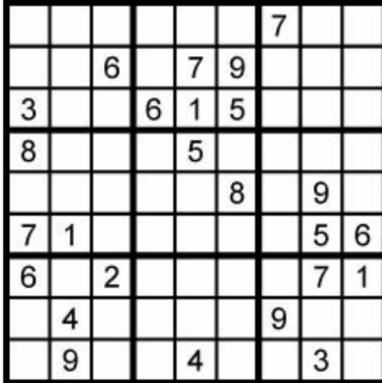
### FUN post CROSSWORD



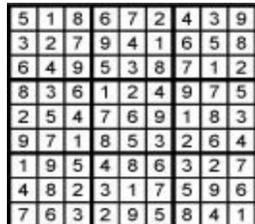
- Across**
- 1 Trade punches
  - 4 Sky sights
  - 9 Arctic deer
  - 10 Motivate
  - 11 African language
  - 12 Place for a soak
  - 13 Chums
  - 14 Fortneteller
  - 19 Sully
  - 21 Obstreperous
  - 23 Oomph
- Down**
- 2 Big name in Argentina
  - 3 Bounce back
  - 4 Morsels
  - 5 Damp
  - 6 Tout
  - 7 Kind of diver
  - 8 Cover story?
  - 13 Coffee maker
  - 15 On the way (2,5)
  - 16 Rocket section
  - 17 Fencing move
  - 18 Harps
  - 20 Heartthrobs
  - 22 Small songbirds

### SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



### SOLUTIONS

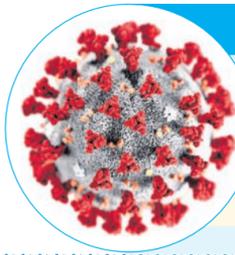


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**WITH UTMOST CARE**

An artisan paints clay idols of Lord Vishwakarma at Kumbhar Sahi in Cuttack, Tuesday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	22,62,91,713	20,29,50,405	46,56,059
India	3,32,89,579	3,24,84,159	4,43,213
Odisha	10,17,261	10,02,810	8,108

**POLITICKLE by MANJUL**



# Scientists unravel mystery behind state's 'black tigers'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 14:** The enduring mystery behind the 'black tigers' of Similipal in Odisha may finally have been resolved with researchers identifying a single mutation in a gene that causes their distinctive stripes to broaden and spread into their tawny pelt, occasionally appearing entirely dark.

Considered mythical for centuries, the 'black tigers' have long been a subject of fascination. Now, a team led by ecologist Uma Ramakrishnan and her student Vinay Sagar from the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore, have discovered that the coat colouration and patterning that make the wild cats appear dark boil down to a single mutation in the Transmembrane Aminopeptidase Q (Taqppe) gene.

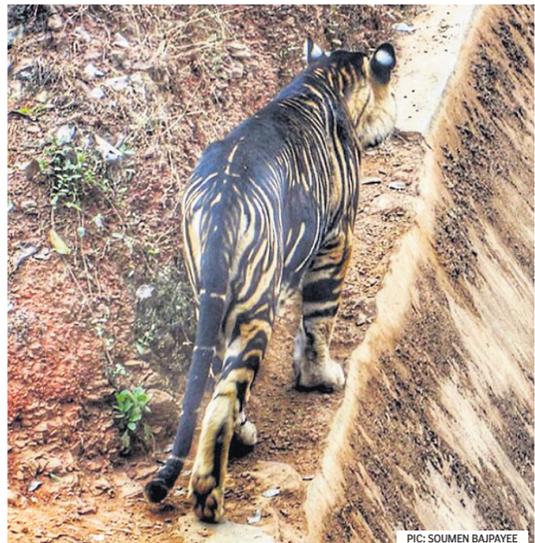
"Ours is the first and only study to investigate the genetic basis for this phenotype (look). While the phenotype has been talked about and written about earlier; this is the first time its genetic underpinnings were scientifically investigated," Ramakrishnan, professor at NCBS, told PTI.

The researchers combined genetic analyses of other tiger populations from India and data from computer simulations to show that the Similipal black tigers may have arisen from a very small founding population of tigers and are inbred, providing an answer to the question that had perplexed so many.

The study, published in the journal 'Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences' Monday, noted that tigers in Similipal Tiger Reserve are an isolated population in eastern India, and gene flow between them and other tiger populations is very restricted.

The researchers noted that this has important implications for tiger conservation as such isolated and inbred populations are prone to extinction over even short periods of time.

"They (the black tigers) have not been found in any other places in the wild to the best of our knowledge. Nowhere else in the world," Sagar, a PhD student in



PIC: SOUMEN BAIJAPYEE

**GENETIC ANALYSIS**

- The researchers combined genetic analyses of other tiger populations from India and data from computer simulations to show that the Similipal black tigers may have arisen from a very small founding population of tigers
- The researchers noted that this has important implications for tiger conservation as such isolated and inbred populations are prone to extinction over even short periods of time

Since the late 1700s, reports of black tiger sightings and supposed captures in central and northeast India have been recorded by locals and British hunters.

"There are several camera trap pictures. In fact, camera trapping was carried out in 2021 in Similipal," Ramakrishnan told PTI.

According to the 2018 tiger census, India has an estimated 2,967 tigers. Photos captured from Similipal in 2018 showed eight unique individuals, three of which were 'pseudomelanistic' tigers, characterised by wide, merged stripes.

The researchers at NCBS teamed up with tiger experts nationally and in other countries and found out that pseudomelanistic coat came down to the genes.

They found the black tigers are mutants and are Bengal tigers with a single base mutation.

Different mutations in this gene are known to cause similar changes in coat colour in several other species of cats, including cheetahs. Further genetic analyses and comparisons with a total of 395 captive and wild Indian tiger populations indicate that the muta-

tion in Similipal tigers is very rare. The only other black tigers outside of Similipal in India exist at the Nandankanan Zoological Park in Bhubaneswar, Ranchi Zoo and Chennai's Arignar Anna Zoological Park, where they were born in captivity.

Within Similipal, the mutation is present at a high frequency of 0.58; this means that if you pick any tiger from Similipal, the chance that it carries the mutant gene is almost 60 per cent.

Researchers also carried out investigations to understand why this mutation occurred at such a high frequency in Similipal alone.

One hypothesis is that the darker coat colour of the mutants offers them a selective advantage when hunting in the dense closed-canopy and relatively darker forested areas of Similipal as compared to the open plains of most other tiger habitats.

However, the results of additional genetic analyses coupled with computer simulations indicate that a small founding population and prolonged isolation from other tiger populations in India is likely to be the main reason for the occurrence of these black tigers.

Due to this geographic isolation, genetically related individuals have been mating with each other for many generations in Similipal, leading to inbreeding, the researchers noted.

A combination of these inter-related factors is the likely evolutionary forces that have created Similipal's unique population of black tigers.

"It is amazing that we could find the genetic basis for such a striking pattern phenotype in wild tigers, and even more interesting that this genetic variant is at high frequencies in Similipal," said Ramakrishnan.

The drastic change in patterning and colouring of the black tigers' coat is caused by just one change in the genetic material DNA Alphabet from C (Cytosine) to T (Thymine) in position 1360 of the Taqppe gene sequence, the researchers said.

# At 112.9, Odisha tops in rate of crimes against women

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** Odisha is in news again though for wrong reasons as the rate of crimes against women in 2020 is stated to be the highest in the country. This was revealed by the annual report released by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Tuesday which pegged the overall crime rate against women at 112.9 for 2020.

The Odisha police registered 25,489 cases on charges of crimes against women in 2020 while it stood at 23,183 in 2019, the NCRB data claims.

As per the report, Odisha police registered 12,605 cases for assault on women, with intention to outrage the modesty which includes sexual harassment,

**NCRB REPORT**

The Odisha Police registered 25,489 cases on charges of crimes against women in 2020 while it stood at 23,183 in 2019

The crime rate related to assault on women stood at 55.8 in 2020, shamefully way ahead of other states

voyeurism and stalking. The crime rate related to assault on women stood at 55.8 in 2020, shamefully way ahead of other states.

Similarly, Odisha recorded registration of 3,232 cases on the allegations of disrobing women in 2020.

The NCRB report also revealed that the state with 615 cases stands third when it comes to cases related to insult to the modesty of

women in 2020.

Meanwhile, the state with 3,775 cases also figures among the top 10 states of the country in kidnapping and abduction of women last year. Odisha recorded third highest rate of kidnapping among all the states in 2020.

Similarly, 526 cases related to cybercrime offences against womenfolk were registered in the state which is also highest in the country

With 292 cases for publishing sexually explicit material, the state stood at second place in the country in 2020.

Likewise, as many as 234 cybercrime cases were registered in connection with blackmailing, defamation and morphing of women, highest as compared to other states.

# BH SERIES REG BEGINS TODAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** In a bid to facilitate interstate movement of vehicles, the Bharat (BH) series introduced by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) will come into effect in the state from September 15.

The application along with the specified fee and taxes shall be made in electronic form through the portal <https://parivahan.gov.in>.

Government employees (state or Centre) would have to furnish official identity cards.

For private sector, an employee of a company that has offices in at least four states/UTs is eligible to get the BH number on voluntary basis. One has to apply by filling up Form 60.

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX	29.8°C	29.4°C
	MIN	24.4°C	23.2°C
	Humidity	97%	94%
	Rainfall	13.0	3.2
	Forecast	Light rain very likely	

# Temple debris removed from Mahanadi riverbed, NGT told

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, Sept 14:** In deference to a direction issued by the National Green Tribunal (NGT), the Cuttack administration has removed the debris of Panchamukhi Hanuman Temple, which was demolished from Mahanadi riverbed September 2 following the order of the tribunal.

In an affidavit filed Tuesday, the Collector-cum-District Magistrate of Cuttack submitted that pursuant to the direction of the tribunal, the officials of the district were directed to take immediate action to remove the muck, construction and demolition waste from the embankment of river Mahanadi at Ratilo under Kishan Nagar tehsil of Cuttack.

"This is humbly submitted that muck, construction and demolition waste from the embankment of river Mahanadi at Ratilo were completely removed and the riverbed has been restored to its original state," the Collector submitted to the NGT.

Significantly, a bench of NGT comprising Judicial Member B Amit Shalekar and Expert Member

**COLLECTOR'S SUBMISSION**

In an affidavit, the Cuttack Collector-cum-DM submitted that pursuant to the direction of the tribunal, the officials of the district were directed to take immediate action to remove the muck, construction and demolition waste from the embankment of river Mahanadi at Ratilo under Kishan Nagar tehsil of Cuttack

The Cuttack Collector told the NGT that the muck, construction and demolition waste from the embankment of river Mahanadi at Ratilo were completely removed and the riverbed has been restored to its original state

Saibal Dasgupta had asked the Cuttack Collector to clear the debris from the riverbed and file a compliance affidavit by September 13.

Earlier, the Supreme Court had dismissed an appeal by Panchamukhi Hanuman Temple Trust against the order of the NGT wherein the tribunal had directed the demolition of the temple from the riverbed.

**NEW SESSION**



Admission for Plus II courses underway at BJB Junior College in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

# PLUS II OFFLINE TEST BEGINS OCTOBER 1

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** A day after the first cut-off list for Plus II admissions was out, the Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE), Odisha Tuesday said that the offline Plus II examination will be held from October 1 to 11.

Students, who are not satisfied with the marks awarded to them against the cancelled Plus II examination through an alternative assessment system, will appear for the offline test.

It is pertinent to mention here that the marks obtained through the alternative assessment will become obsolete for students appearing for offline exam.

As per sources, altogether 13,043 students have applied for the offline exam.

Earlier, CHSE had invited online applications for the Plus II of offline exam September 3.

As many as 1,86,685 regular students passed in the Arts stream while 89,951 passed the exam in Science stream. Similarly, a total of 23,292 students passed the Plus II exam in the Commerce stream.

As many as 55,468 students secured first division, 16,943 got second division and 14,631 third division.

The Higher Education department had earlier notified that for the offline exams, the department will hold special admission for Plus III courses after the exam results are declared.

Earlier, the School and Mass Education (S&ME) department Monday released the same on the website [www.samsodisha.gov.in](http://www.samsodisha.gov.in).

As many as 4,35,092 students had applied for admissions, out of which 3,86,464 have been selected in the first phase including 2,47,906 students in Arts stream, 24,560 in Commerce & 1,07,037 students in Science.

# Honey bees to prevent elephants from straying into villages

The Forest and Environment department and the Khadi and Village Industries Commission have jointly conceived the project to check the high number of deaths in man-jumbo conflict

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** In a bid to reduce man-elephant conflict, the state government has decided to use honey bees to prevent the pachyderms from straying into human habitations, a senior Forest official said Tuesday.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Sashi Paul said that the RE-HAB (Reducing Human-

Elephant Attacks Using Bees) project will be launched in Athmallik forest division of Angul district in the first phase.

"Beehive boxes will be strategically placed on the periphery of forests and routes usually taken by elephants to enter human habitations. A wire will be tied to the boxes. When the pachyderms pass through the routes and stamp on the wire, the honey bees will attack and drive them back into the forests," he said.

The joint project of the Forest and Environment department and the Khadi and Village Industries Commission was



conceived keeping in view the high number of fatalities in man-elephant

conflict. While over 900 people have been killed in elephant attacks in the last one decade, 282 pachyderms have died in only the last three

years due to several factors including poaching, the official said. Similar projects have succeeded in South Africa and other countries, and in states like Uttarakhand and Karnataka, he said.

A meeting was organised with residents of three villages lying on the periphery of Athmallik forest and they are ready to cooperate with the government for the successful implementation of the project, the official said.

Paul said that human-elephant conflicts mostly happen during the harvest season from September to March and the project will be launched in this period. "The government will closely monitor and study the impact of the project on the elephants," he said.

The administration also plans to fit radio collars on specific

marauding elephants that create nuisance in human habitations on the periphery of Chandaka Sanctuary, Badampahar Forest Range and Similipal National Park.

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru has been assigned the job of putting radio collars on three elephants this week, he said.

Paul said that the Forest department has also decided to commence 'Gaja Sathi Yojana' (Friend of Elephants) programme by involving volunteers of Van Suraksha Samiti to provide early inputs on the movement of the pachyderms.

Five members of each samiti will be engaged as Gaja Sathi and will be provided with firecrackers, lights and other equipment to track and drive elephant herds away from the human habitations. Each Samiti will be provided with an annual assistance of ₹25,000, he said.

PIPLI BYPOLL

# 3 Union ministers among BJP's star campaigners

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** Three Union ministers and national president of BJP's Kisan Morcha are among the 20 star campaigners for the September 30 Pipli byelection, a constituency of the saffron party said.

The BJP's list of star campaigners, submitted at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), include Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw and MoS Jal Shakti and Tribal Affairs Biswaswar Tudu.

The national president of BJP's Kisan Morcha Vijay Pal Singh Tomar will also be campaigning for party candidate Ashrit Pattnaik.

BJP's state president Sameer Mohanty, national vice-president Bajiyant Panda, Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi, state in-

### The Election Commission of India has allowed a maximum of 20 vehicles for electioneering by a candidate

charge D Puramndeswari, national spokesperson Sambit Patra and other senior leaders of the saffron party will also participate in electioneering.

Campaigning for Pipli Assembly segment will begin September 20 by adhering to Covid-19 guidelines and end 72 hours before polling.

The counting of votes will be held October 3. Though 10 candidates are in the fray, the contest is mostly confined among BJD candidate Rudra Pratap Maharathy, BJP nominee Ashrit Pattnaik and Congress candidate Bishwokeshan

Harichandan Mohapatra.

The bypoll to the Assembly constituency was necessary due to the death of sitting BJD MLA Pradeep Maharathy in October last year. The byelection to the Pipli constituency was deferred thrice earlier.

Initially, it was scheduled April 17, but was countermanded following the death of Congress candidate Ajit Mangaraj due to Covid, just three days before the poll date.

The polling date was later fixed May 13, which was again rescheduled to May 16 in view of Eid-ul-Fitr festival. It was postponed again in view of the rising number of Covid-19 cases, officials said.

The Election Commission of India has allowed a maximum of 20 vehicles for electioneering by a candidate or a political party (excluding star campaigners) with 50 per cent of the capacity in each vehicle.

## Vig glare on crorepati Anganwadi worker

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** The Vigilance Directorate Tuesday unearthed assets worth over Rs 4 crore during search operations at the houses of an Anganwadi worker here.

The raids were launched following allegations that Kabita Mathan, who works at Koradakanta Anganwadi Centre in Bhubaneswar, possesses assets disproportionate to her known sources of income, the directorate said in a release.

The raids were conducted at six places in Khurda, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur districts by Vigilance teams, comprising 10 deputy superintendents of police, five inspectors and other staffers, the release said.

Movable and immovable properties worth over Rs 4 crore have been unearthed during the house searches, the release said.

She owns seven buildings, 14 plots, including 10 in Bhubaneswar, one four-wheeler and gold ornaments worth over Rs 6.36 lakh, according to the release.

# State logs 428 fresh Covid cases, four more fatalities



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** The daily Covid-19 caseload maintained its downward curve in Odisha, which recorded 428 infections Tuesday, the lowest single-day spike in five months, a Health department official said.

The state's coronavirus tally stood at 10,17,261, while four more fatalities pushed the death toll to

8,108, he said. On Monday, the coastal state had reported 471 cases. The daily test positivity rate (TPR) stood at 0.89 per cent.

Khurda district, comprising state Capital Bhubaneswar, recorded the highest number of new infections at 179, followed by Cuttack (46) and Jajpur (21).

Eight districts - Bolangir, Boudh, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Koraput, Nabarangpur

and Subarnapur - did not register any new case in the last 24 hours, the official added.

Out of four fatalities recorded, two were reported from Khurda and one each came from Cuttack and Puri districts.

The coastal state currently has 6,290 active cases, and 10,02,810 patients, including 682 since Monday, have recovered from the disease so far.

Odisha has conducted over 1.89 crore sample tests for Covid-19, taking into account 48,086 such clinical examinations Monday. It has administered more than 2.56 crore vaccine doses so far.

## 2 nabbed with brown sugar worth ₹1 crore

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** Brown sugar worth Rs 1 crore has been seized and two alleged interstate drug peddlers have been arrested in Cuttack, police said Tuesday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of the Special Task Force (STF), Bhubaneswar, conducted a raid near Rasulgarh crossing here and apprehended two individuals with 1.025 kg of brown sugar along with other incriminating materials, an official said.

The accused persons could not produce any valid authority in support of the possession of the contraband goods and were arrested. They have been identified as Rakibul Laskar, 30, and Sudhanya Gayen, 44. Both hail from south 24 Pragana district of West Bengal. The accused have been booked under Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act (1985) and will be forwarded to the court of District and Sessions Judge, Bhubaneswar, the official added. During preliminary investigation, West Bengal link and interstate ramification have been established. Investigation is on to arrest other interstate drug peddlers involved in the case.

Since 2020, the STF, in its special drive against narcotic drugs, has seized more than 40 kg of brown sugar/heroin, and more than 86.81 quintals of ganja/marijuana. More than 100 drug dealers and peddlers have been arrested during this special drive, the official stated.

## SPCB celebrates 38th foundation day

**BHUBANESWAR:** The State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) celebrated its 38th foundation day Tuesday. On this occasion, an online monitoring control room, centre for air quality management system and the newly built extension of the office building were inaugurated by Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha. He congratulated the SPCB for being ranked No.1 amongst all the pollution control boards and pollution control committees in the country in Transparency Index Rating.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

I hitherto known as Duryodhan Swain, S/o Hadubandhu Swain, R/o Kamakantia, Bhogapattali, Puri, Odisha-752105 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Mark Swain. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

# No change in height of idols, restraint called



*The Health dept said that if the state exercises some restraint and celebrates the festivals in adherence to Covid norms, all would be safe*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** The Health department Tuesday urged the people of the state to refrain from celebrating the upcoming festivals in a grand manner and also justified the cap on idol heights as announced by the government earlier.

State Health Services director Bijay Mohapatra told media persons

that restraint is of paramount importance during these critical times. "With the euphoria of festivities already here, we also need to take measures to thwart the chances of contracting Covid-19 infection. If we make the festivals bigger, there are high chances of large gatherings and thus spread of infection," he said.

The official said that many states too have adopted the same strategies to contain the spread of the virus. "The congregations are likely to increase the chances of spread of the disease. States like Maharashtra, Karnataka and Delhi have either stopped or imposed ceiling on the height of idols during festivals," he said.

Mohapatra said that the state would be celebrating the festivals but with caution. "The restrictions

## ROW REACHES HIGH COURT

**CUTTACK:** The row over capping the height of Durga idols at 4 ft for the upcoming Dussehra festival, Tuesday, reached the Orissa High Court as Balu Bazar Puja Committee in the Silver city filed a petition seeking permission to worship an 8-ft-tall idol of the goddess.

In its petition, the puja committee, one of the oldest in Cuttack, claimed that restriction imposed on the height of Durga idols will damage its 500-year-old tradition for Dussehra celebration.

"Bal Bazar Puja Committee has a tradition of worshipping

imposed by the governments in other states were planned keeping in mind the welfare of public health. Whatever decision has been taken by the government on the issue is based on scientific data and all possible angles related to Covid-19," he said.

The Health Services director said that if the state exercises some restraint and celebrates the festivals in strict adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour and norms, all would be safe.

"The government has released norms on how to celebrate festivals with curbs and we all should abide by that. We are in a good position now and need to be in a better position in the coming days and thus restraint is important," Mohapatra said.

## DUSMANTA DEATH CASE

# Police summon two scribes of web portal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Sept 14:** The Mangalabag police Tuesday summoned the city reporter and input coordinator of a web portal operating from Bhubaneswar in connection with the alleged suicide of Dushmantha Das near Odisha Assembly September 8.

The web portal's city reporter Asit Rout and input coordinator Dipti Sethi were told to appear at Mangalabag police station Wednesday.

According to sources, the web portal was regularly publishing reports on Dushmantha three days prior to his death. Besides, the city reporter of the portal had reportedly dialed Dushmantha September 8.

"We have summoned the reporter and input coordinator of the portal as part of our investigation into the case. We will record the duo's statements," said Mangalabag police in-charge Amitabh Mahapatra.

Das, a resident of Jagatsinghpur district, had slit his wrist and consumed poison in an attempt to end his life to protest against the alleged denial of treatment under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY). As per reports, he died while being treated at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack.

The Kujang police in Jagatsinghpur had registered a



murder case in connection with the incident on the basis of a complaint lodged by Das's mother Basanti Das.

In her complaint, Basanti had alleged that an unidentified person, who took her son to Bhubaneswar, might be involved in the incident.

The murder case registered at Kujang police was transferred to Mangalabag police station as Das's death occurred under the latter's jurisdiction.

Notably, Das had met with an accident March 22, 2020 and sustained grievous injuries on his left leg. He was admitted to SCB Medical College and Hospital. Das underwent surgeries March 23 and June 19, 2020. However, the doctors allegedly discharged him from the hospital July 15 in the wake of Covid-19 situation.

Das had alleged that the authorities of SCB refused to admit him when he visited the hospital again. However, the hospital authorities denied Das's allegations.

## Atibadi Jagannath Das Jayanti observed

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** The Odia Language Literature and Culture department and Odisha Sahitya Akademi Tuesday observed Atibadi Jagannath Das Jayanti.



On the occasion, guests including Odish Sahitya Akademi president Hrushikesh Mallick paid floral tributes to Atibadi Jagannath Das at Sanskriti Bhawan.

A special programme was also organised by the Sahitya Akademi at the birthplace of the legendary poet in Puri district. Another event was organised at Rabindra Mandap in the Capital City in the evening.

Atibadi Jagannath Das had written Odia Bhagabata. The religious book is very much popular among the people of Odisha. Many villages in Odisha used to have a hut known as Bhagabata/Tungi. Villagers used to gather at this hut to listen to the recitation of Odia Bhagabata.

# Open university study centre at Jharpada jail

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** Odisha State Open University (OSOU) Tuesday opened a study centre for the inmates of Jharpada Jail here.

At least 15 inmates of the jail are studying in different subjects under the OSOU. They will be provided free education at the newly-opened study centre, OSOU sources said.

On this occasion, OSOU Vice Chancellor Arka Kumar Das Mohapatra said, "Age and place can't bar anyone from receiving education. The OSOU is trying to provide education to people from all walks of life. The university had launched an initiative to educate inmates and staff of jails."

Now, the university is providing free education to prisoners at Choudwar Circle Jail, Sambalpur Circle Jail, Berhampur Circle Jail and Jharpada Circle Jail. "We have planned to open study centres at all circle jails of state. The OSOU is assisting jail inmates who are keen to pursue their higher studies. We are ready to educate prisoners in



different streams and subjects. Our aim is to bring them to the mainstream of the society," said the OSOU VC.

According to him, lecturers visit jails and take classes for the prisoners. The inmates are being provided with education and study materials free of cost. The prisoners are allowed to sit for the examinations on the jail premises, Mohapatra said.

Director General of Prisons Santosh Kumar Upadhyay said, "Education is the most powerful weapon to break the vicious circle of poverty. It is the key to success. I would request the jail inmates to utilise the newly-opened study centre to change their life for good."

## 'Missing' delivery boy found with lady in MP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** The sensational abduction case of a delivery boy from City outskirts Tuesday took an interesting twist with the recovery of the man along with his alleged paramour at Katia Railway station in Madhya Pradesh. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) officials handed over the duo to a team of Commissionerate Police that reached Katia Tuesday afternoon.

Police sources claimed that the delivery boy Patitapabana Prusty has been in a relationship with a girl of Gop area for the last seven years. Prusty had planned elopement with the lady and hatched the fake kidnapping plot to mislead police as well as his family members. The call records of Prusty's mobile phone provided strong hints to the cops about his relationship with the girl and the false abduction plot.

Meanwhile, sources informed police that a missing case was also filed by the girl's father at Gop police station September 12, which confirmed the suspicion of the police. Her father claimed that she was missing since September 11 evening.

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# Naveen raises demand for AIIMS in Sundargarh



congratulated Olympians Birendra Lakra, Amit Rohidas, Deep Grace Ekka and Namita Toppo.

During the day, the Chief Minister also inaugurated several developmental projects worth ₹580 crore in the district.

Sundargarh is the second district after Malkangiri to get smart health cards. The cards were first distributed in Malkangiri district August 20.

On the demand for an AIIMS in the district, the Chief Minister said, his government has been repeatedly raising the demand with the Centre and has also made its stand clear in the Odisha Assembly.

The state government has moved the Centre seeking the establishment of the state's second AIIMS in the already constructed building of the NTPC's Medical College and Hospital project in Sundargarh town.

The state government has plans to make NTPC's Medical College and Hospital in the district operational from 2022-23.

Last week, state Health and Family Welfare Minister NK Das had said in the Assembly that the state was ready to provide 200 acres of land, DMF (district mineral foundation) funds, and other necessary support to set up the AIIMS at Sundargarh.

**The state government will continue its efforts for establishment of the state's second AIIMS in tribal-dominated Sundargarh district**  
NAVEEN PATNAIK | CHIEF MINISTER

Sundargarh who made immense contribution for the growth of hockey in India, have justified and genuine rights to get healthcare service of AIIMS standard."

Highlighting that hockey players hailing from the district have brought laurels to the state and the country, the Chief Minister

## RIVER IN SPATE



Water in Jalaka river flowing 6.22 metres above the danger level of 5.50-metre at Mathani in Balasore district Tuesday following incessant rain triggered by formation of low pressure over the Bay of Bengal

## Tribal hamlets want revenue status

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, Sept 14:** Over the years, hundreds of tribal families residing in Hadagada Reserve Forest under Hataadihi block in Keonjhar district have been leading a miserable life in the absence of any development activities. As these villages have not been granted revenue status, development agenda is not a priority here, local tribals say.

According to reports, hundreds of tribal families reside at Mallipasi, Sarmundi, Kanlai, Balipal, Mayurachana and Bhanr hamlets in Balipal panchayat. Development has failed to reach these inaccessible villages inside the Hadagad sanctuary.

When the Hadagad project was executed, these tribals were displaced. They were rehabilitated at different places where they could not avail basic facilities. As a result, they started staying inside the forests again. It was alleged that the panchayat headquarters village itself has been deprived of revenue village status.

Over the last 50 years, they have been living inside the reserve forests. Later, the area these tribal families inhabited became a part of the wildlife sanctuary.



"Since our villages are not tagged as revenue villages, we are deprived of development and welfare schemes," they pointed out.

The district administration has prepared a list of revenue villages, non-survey villages and old settlements, but the names of these villages have not been included, they lamented.

They have expressed their displeasure over the issue. They pointed out that the administration focuses on revenue villages when it comes to carrying out various development works and implementing welfare schemes.

Some villagers including Sriram Naik, Dabendra Naik, Mitu Naik and Naba Naik have urged Governor Ganeshi Lal to direct the government to accord revenue status to their villages.

## Smugglers opt for passenger buses to transport cannabis

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, Sept 14:** After using various means of transport to smuggle ganja, it seems that these days the smugglers are finding passenger buses as a safer mode to transport contraband consignments in this district.

An incident that occurred Monday laid this bare.

MV 79 police was undertaking a regular vehicle checking duty in front of their police station. Seeing a passenger bus, named Gupta (CG 17-KV 9719), approaching the checking post very

speedily, cops on duty there tried to stop it. Ignoring the police directive, the bus went past the checking post at the same speed.

The cops immediately passed the information to Motu police station and the bus driver could not escape the clutches of Motu police. Following a thorough checking, the police stumbled upon 25 kilograms of cannabis. Registering a case (Case No.78/21) under Section 20B of NDPS Act, police arrested the helper of the bus and his associate after they failed to produce documents supporting their innocence in the matter.

## TOP MAOIST LEADER LAYS DOWN GUN

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** A top Maoist leader, who was involved in several dreaded attacks on security forces, surrendered before the DIG (South Western Range) at Koraput Tuesday. The surrendered ultra has been identified as Sonal Madvi alias Kiran. He is a resident of Meddaguda under Pamed police station area in Bijuapur district of Chhattisgarh.

Madvi was reportedly carrying a reward of ₹20 lakh on his head.

He was working as the Area Committee Member (ACM) in the Gumma Area Committee under the Odisha Border Special Zonal Committee (AOBSZC) of CPI (Maoist), a banned outfit. Madvi's wife, Talse Huika had surrendered before the state police before months back.

## Malkangiri villagers face drinking water crisis even in rainy season

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, Sept 14:** Kusumguda is a village in Tandiki panchayat under Sadar block of Malkangiri district where the villagers are struggling to get a pitcher-full of drinking water even in this rainy season.

The village is inhabited by over 30 families. Every morning, one can see the villagers going towards a pit carrying buckets and earthen pots. The pit is not far from their village, but they complain that the consumption of water collected from the pit is not safe.

Years ago, after several complaints, the well at the entrance of the village was converted into a tube-well, but it did not function properly. As a result, people had to



wait near the tube-well for hours to get a pitcher-full of water. "This is why we are forced to collect water from the pit. Since people wash their clothes and also bathe in the same pit and even wild animals quench their thirst there, many villagers have already fallen ill after consuming its water. We are worried but are left with no option," observed Aita Durua, Deba Durua, Mangulu Durua and Ishwar Durua of the village.

They have urged the administration to sink another tube-well in their village at the earliest.

## Village youths construct road, set example

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, Sept 14:** Fed up with government apathy, youths of Mpv-44 villages of Bhubanpalli panchayat under Kalimela block in Malkangiri district took up the stupendous task of building a road all by themselves.

The villagers have since been heaping praises on these youths for taking up the task to end their years-long sufferings. They said that these youths have set an example for others to emulate.

The length of the road is 1.5 kilometres. It had been in a pathetic condition and dotted with puddles, giving a nightmarish experience to the commuters. During the rainy season, their miseries increased manifold. Yet, the villagers had no option but to use the road to go to the panchayat office to get pensions and bring PDS items like rice and kerosene.

The villagers had been demanding that a concrete road be laid to replace the existing kuchcha road. They had even taken up the issue with the concerned authorities on several occasions and every time the latter would give only assurances.

Fed up with the apathy, the youths of the village joined hands to end the sufferings of the villagers. They came out of their houses with spades, crowbars and baskets Sunday morning and started working on constructing the road.

While some dug up the ground, others carried the material in baskets and dumped them on the road. Some others leveled the road with the help of spades. Youths who volunteered include Buddhes Biswal, Tapas Mandal, Prapt Halder, Bipul Halder, Abhishek Mali, Sujol Bodal, Amit Das and others.

Seeing the road in a comparatively good condition, the villagers said that earlier school-going children and Anganwadi workers faced a lot of difficulties due to the road's bad condition. When contacted, block development officer Umashankar Dalei said, "The youths have done a commendable job indeed. The road would soon be inspected and converted into a pucca one."

## HELPING HAND



Railway officials of Sambalpur Railway division distributing water and other essentials to train passengers in Bolangir following derailment of a goods train in Angul

# Tribal couple makes hay from red okra farming

Cultivation of red okra has changed the lives of Baidhar Samal and wife Benga Samal of Kendrapara for the better

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Mahakalapara, Sept 14:** Okra, commonly known as lady's finger, is one of the popular and nutritious vegetables relished by foodies. This vegetable is on the menu of every household as it is a rich source of antioxidants and vitamins A and C.

But now, a tribal couple from Baraja village under Ramnagar panchayat of Mahakalapara block in Kendrapara district has given a new twist to the vegetable by growing red lady's finger or 'lal bhindi' on their farmland, a report said. The cultivation of red lady's finger has helped them reap good profit and improve the financial health of their family.

The cultivation of this new variety of the vegetable is special for the couple. There is high demand for red

okra in the market as the vegetable offers high resistance power against various diseases.

While normal okra is available at ₹20 per kg in the state, this variety of the vegetable is sold at a very high price in various parts of the country. It is sold at prices between ₹400 and ₹800 per kg in the international market. It is reportedly being sold at ₹75-80 to ₹300-400 per 250 gram/500 gram even in some malls in the country.

The couple, Baidhar Samal and wife Benga Samal, claims that the red variety of okra is healthier compared to the natural variety. It is said to be more beneficial and nutritious than the green lady's finger. According to some studies, red okra is highly beneficial for people with diabetes, blood pressure and high cholesterol levels.

To start with, the couple pur-



chased the seeds of red okra from Kolkata. Initially, they planted 200 saplings on 10 decimal of sandy soil and harvested around 10 kg of okra daily from their farmland. They sold their produce at ₹40 per kg at

the local Ramnagar market. The couple claimed that some traders visit their house to buy the vegetable at a lower price and sell it at a premium by transporting it to Kolkata for sale. Many people

suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure visit their house daily and purchase the vegetable from them, Baidhar said.

According to the local intelligentsia, farmers in the region would be interested to cultivate red okra if the state Horticulture department provides them with proper training, seeds, pump sets for irrigation and sprayers for applying insecticides.

A village elder, Dhadi Samal, said the taste of red okra is good compared to the natural green variety. People through the house of Baidhar to buy this vegetable as it has medicinal properties. Traders from various regions visit his house to buy the vegetable, which is rich in nutrients. Consuming red okra may help people to ward off various ailments, environmentalist Samarendra Mohanty said.

EAST COAST RAILWAY	EAST COAST RAILWAY
e-Tender Notice No. ETCPMIIBBS 2021047, Dated: 08.09.2021	e-Tender Notice No. ETCPMIVSKP 2021050, Dated: 09.09.2021
<b>NAME OF WORK :</b> FLASH BUTT WELDING OF 20 RAIL PANELS/FREE RAIL/S/ RAIL PANELS/3 RAIL PANELS OF ALL RAIL SECTIONS (NEWSH) AT SITE (IN SITU/CESS) USING MOBILE FLASH BUTT WELDING PLANT IN ENTIRE JURISDICTION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.	<b>NAME OF WORK :</b> JAGDALPUR-KORAPUT DOUBLING PROJECT : PROVISION OF TRACK CROSSING BY MEANS OF LIMITED HEIGHT SUBWAY BETWEEN MANABAR - JARATI STATIONS AND CONSTRUCTION OF LADIES DRESS CHANGING ROOMS AND DOG KENNELS FOR RAILWAY PROTECTION FORCE DEPARTMENT AT VARIOUS STATIONS OF WALTAIR DIVISION, EAST COAST RAILWAY.
<b>Approx. Cost of the Work :</b> ₹ 2083.92 Lakhs, Completion Period of the Work : 24 (Twenty Four) Months.	<b>Approx. Cost of the Work :</b> ₹ 333.37 Lakhs, Completion Period of the Work : 05 (Five) Months.
<b>Tender Closing Date &amp; Time :</b> At 1200 hrs. of 11.10.2021.	<b>Tender Closing Date &amp; Time :</b> At 1200 hrs. of 01.10.2021.
No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">http://www.ireps.gov.in</a>	No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration. Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">http://www.ireps.gov.in</a>
<b>Note :</b> The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.	<b>Note :</b> The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigenda issued for this tender.
<b>The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of Tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-C/5 &amp; G1 duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.</b>	<b>The tenderers should read all instructions to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of Tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-C duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.</b>
Chief Administrative Officer(Con)/ Bhubaneswar PR-60/CE/21-22	Chief Administrative Officer(Con)/ Bhubaneswar PR-62/CE/21-22

**CUTTACK MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE  
No. C-961 Tender No: 2021\_ORULB\_71061  
Tender Call Notice No. 5101 (PW) Date: 13.09.2021  
Name of Works : Provision of Power Supply and Construction of 11KV link line, Installation of additional 500KVA Transformer for the work Rehabilitation and Resettlement of persons affected due to expansion of Taladanda Canal Road (Both Side) from Ranihat Bridge to NH-16 and Ring Road widening at Bali Sahi, Nuapada (2nd Phase for 400 Nos. Slum Dwellers).  
Bid Value : Rs.60.89 lakh  
Period of Completion : Twenty Days  
Date and Time Schedule :

Start	End	Opening
3.00 P.M. on Dt. 14.09.2021	5.00 P.M. on Dt. 21.09.2021	11.00 A.M. on Dt. 24.09.2021

Tender details can be seen from the procurement portal: [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).  
Superintending Engineer, City Div.-I  
OIPR-13031/11/0031/2122

No.B-391  
Government of Odisha  
"E" Procurement Tender Notice  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RAYAGADA (R&B) DIVISION NO - II**  
E-mail ID: [eeprwd765017@gmail.com](mailto:eeprwd765017@gmail.com); Phone:(06856)233066  
Bid Identification No: RC (RANDB) RGD No-II 05/2021-22 (Online tender)  
No. 4674 Dated.08.09.2021

- Total No. of the works : 01 no. Building work
- Approximate estimated Cost: - Rs 58.53 lakh
- Period of completion : - 6 (six) calendar months
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal:- 11.00 Hrs. of Dtd 17.09.2021 to 17.00 Hrs. of Dtd.29.09.2021 for online bidding.
- Last date/Time for receipt of bids in the portal: - Up to 17.00 Hrs. of Dt. 29.09.2021.
- Name and address of the officer inviting BID: - Executive Engineer, Rayagada (R&B) Division No-II
- Date of opening of Bid at 11.00 Hours on Dt. 30.09.2021
- Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal: [www.tendersodisha.gov.in](http://www.tendersodisha.gov.in)
- Further Addendum/Corrigendum if any will be hosted in the above website only.

Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rayagada(R&B) Division No-II  
OIPR-34040/11/0003/2122



Higher always higher! Let us never be satisfied with what is accomplished.

THE MOTHER

# Myanmar Offensive

It is an irony of history that when the world has responded with alarm, alacrity and legitimate concern to the humanitarian crisis gripping Afghanistan following the Taliban's return to power, the sufferings of Myanmar nationals persecuted and hounded out by the military junta are not getting the global sympathy they deserve. This is all the more unfortunate since the Tamtadaw – the military rulers of Myanmar – not only staged a coup February 1, but have given tell-tale evidence of their ruthless repression through indiscriminate firings and bombings. The crisis in Myanmar has once again attracted headlines after a few hundred people from the country's Chin state crossed over to Mizoram in the past few days following airstrikes by the military. This has ominously given rise to fears of another spell of influx of Myanmar nationals into Mizoram which began enrolling some 400 refugee children in schools over a week ago.

The current military offensive in Myanmar is believed to be the fallout of the call for a nationwide uprising given by the country's National Unity Government in exile. According to reports emanating from Myanmar, the military junta used fighter jets to bomb a village called Lungler near the Mizoram-Myanmar border. The information was shared by Mizoram's Home Minister Lalchamlana. He expressed fear that more refugees would pour into Mizoram if the airstrikes and other military actions continue. Six districts of the state – Champhai, Sajah, Lawngtlai, Serchhip, Hnahthial and Saitual – share a 510-km long porous border with Myanmar. Official reports suggest about 10,000 refugees have already sought shelter in four of these districts since March. They are lodged in community and public halls and school buildings. Local villagers are providing shelter to the refugees and taking care of their daily needs as the Mizos and Myanmarese people share deep cultural bonds that don't admit of citizen-refugee divide.

Since Myanmar's military coup early this year, over a hundred thousand Myanmar nationals have fled the country either to India or Thailand to escape the brutal crackdown by the junta. Among them are politicians, police and military personnel, with the latter two refusing to carry out the junta's orders to suppress the popular revolt with an iron hand. According to unofficial reports, over 16,000 Myanmar nationals have crossed over to the four Indian border states of Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal.

The Indian government's response to the human tragedy unfolding in Myanmar is mired in ambiguity, prevarication and even confrontation with the state government of Mizoram. This is because of multiple factors, including the BJP-led Union government's narrow politics of bias against the Rohingya Muslims bearing the brunt of the genocide in Myanmar. The situation has become even more complicated with the Mizoram government defying the Centre's fiat not to give shelter to Myanmar nationals fleeing the country so as not to rub the junta the wrong way. The Centre's argument is that India can ill afford to antagonise the rulers of Myanmar for security and trade reasons, especially when China wields far greater influence on the running of Myanmar. Incidentally, China has refused to call the military takeover of Myanmar a 'coup'. That only legitimises the blatant subversion of the democratic process by the junta. Though Myanmar has embraced a sort of hybrid democracy where the military has a big say in the country's management and governance under a constitutional system, the last election gave an overwhelming mandate to the NLD to rule. But, the junta did not allow the NLD to form its government fearing that the latter might adopt constitutional reforms that would minimise the junta's role in governance and weaken the huge financial clout that families of the top military rulers enjoy.

India's reaction to refugee influx falls far short of the need in the absence of a proper legal framework that is followed by most countries in this regard. As per the latest estimates of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), India has more than 200,000 legally documented refugees, including Tibetans, Bangladeshis, Chakmas and Tamils from Sri Lanka. In fact, refugees have come to India from all over the world, including Afghanistan, Somalia, Congo, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Sudan and Syria.

But, India's reaction to every refugee situation has always been guided by political considerations and not by any constitutional policy. India is not a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention or the UN Convention on Statelessness. As such, it is not obliged to provide rights laid down in the conventions to refugees. Its decisions on granting long-term visas to refugees are merely ad hoc measures. The legal status of any 'foreigner' in the country is governed by two pieces of legislation, the Foreigners Act 1946 and Passports (Entry into India) Act 1920 and the rules issued subsequently under these acts. The absence of a proper legal framework for refugees has led to a situation where India can neither accord wide-ranging benefits to refugees nor get funds from the UN for maintaining refugees.

The exodus from Myanmar once again lays bare the inadequacy of the Indian system and the scope for bias by the government of the day against the hapless people fleeing their native land for their life.

## WISDOM CORNER

- “Yesterday's the past, tomorrow's the future, but today is a gift. That's why it's called the present.” **BIL KEANE**
- “Time is what we want most, but what we use worst.” **WILLIAM PENN**
- “Time is nature's way of keeping everything from happening at once.” **JOHN ARCHIBALD WHEELER**

## WORDSWORTH

### Pecksniffian

We are in the company of Messrs Pumpkinskull, Sweedlepipe, Bumble, Tappertit, Honeythunder, Pumblechook, and Muddlebranes, whose names all came out of the mind of Charles Dickens. His ability to create memorable and frequently sarcastic names for his characters, his villains in particular, is surely unmatched in literary history. Pecksniffian derives from his Martin Chuzzlewit of 1844, in which Seth Pecksniff is a land surveyor and architect, though the author remarks that the only surveying of land he did was of the view of the countryside from his windows and that “of his architectural doings, nothing was clearly known, except that he had never designed or built anything.” In truth, Mr Pecksniff, though in appearance the most upright of men who prated about high moral principles and benevolence, was an awful hypocrite, full of meanness and treachery. Dickens remarked scathingly that “Some people likened him to a direction-post, which is always telling the way to a place, and never goes there.” In common with some other Dickens' characters, including Gradgrind, Micawber, Podsnap, Scrooge and Uriah Heep, Pecksniff has become an archetype. He was turned into an adjective, meaning unctuously hypocritical, as early as 1851 and later became a noun, Pecksniffery.

## LOL

### The warning

A farmer and his pig were driving down the road when a cop pulled him over. The cop asked the farmer, “Didn't you know it is against the law to ride with a pig in the front of you truck?” The farmer replied, “No, I didn't know that.” The cop asked the farmer where he was going and he said, “To Memphis.” The cop said, “I will let you off the hook this time if you promise to take



the pig to the zoo when you get to Memphis.” So the farmer promised

he would. Several days later the cop spotted the farmer with the pig driving down the road and he pulled him over again. The cop said, “I thought I told you to take this pig to the zoo when you got to Memphis” and to this the farmer replied, “I did and we had so much fun, I'm taking him to the circus.”

# WORLD BANK'S WRONG TURN

FOCUS CONCESSIONAL LENDING

The International Development Association is the part of the World Bank that is meant to help the world's poorest countries. Its explicit mission is “to reduce poverty by providing zero to low-interest loans and grants for programmes that boost economic growth, reduce inequalities, and improve people's living conditions.” The IDA provides around a quarter of its financing in grants, and the rest in concessional loans that can be repaid over 30-40 years, including a grace period of up to 10 years.



As long as the World Bank's International Development Association can be an important source of recovery funds for the poorest economies, those resources must be used effectively. This will require closing the IDA's Private Sector Window and instead providing resources directly to governments

Jayati Ghosh & Farwa Sial

UNFORTUNATELY, THERE IS A HIGH RISK THAT IDA FUNDS WILL BE USED IN PART TO FAVOUR PRIVATE-SECTOR ACTORS, INSTEAD OF ENABLING GOVERNMENTS TO SUPPORT POOR PEOPLE DIRECTLY

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, the IDA committed nearly \$30.5 billion to low-income countries. Next month, the IDA's 173 member states will meet to agree on its latest disbursement of funds, estimated at \$94 billion for the two-year 2021-23 period. In annual terms, this is not much of an increase, especially given the massive economic devastation that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused in low-income countries.

Developing countries have been ravaged by a combination of the pandemic-driven health crisis, collapsing exports, rising global food prices, domestic economic contraction, falling fiscal revenues, and external debt overhang. The World Bank estimates that 97 million more people – many of them in Africa – will fall into extreme poverty in 2021. This could well be an underestimate, because it does not take into account higher food prices, increasing inequality, and the impact on the poor in South Asia.

Providing even the most basic support to people in increasingly precarious circumstances in the poorest countries will take a lot more than \$47 billion per year. Researchers at the International Monetary Fund estimate that low-income countries will need around \$200 billion over the four years until 2025 simply to recover from the pandemic and a further \$250 billion to catch up with advanced economies. But even a smaller amount of IDA financing could provide some relief, especially in terms of governments' fiscal space, and is important because of the low-interest terms.

But how much of this money will actually go to governments that desperately need to increase public spending on health and social protection, and to promote economic recovery? Unfortunately, there is a high risk that IDA funds will be used in part to favour private-sector actors, instead of enabling governments to support poor people directly.

This is because the World Bank Group, in line with its 2017 'Cascade' approach, introduced a 'private finance-first' model that prioritises private financing options over the use of public resources in development projects. As part of this broader strategy, the IDA launched its own Private Sector Window (PSW) in 2017 to mobilise private investment in recipient countries.

The PSW places donor aid resources under the direct control of the World Bank's private-sector investment arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and its private-sector guarantee arm, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). This means IDA funds are being used to subsidise private-sector projects supported by the IFC and MIGA in low-income countries and fragile and conflict-affected states.

This redirection of development funds can be criticised on several counts. For starters, some have

accused the World Bank Group of a lack of transparency for subsidising firms through a non-competitive process on the basis of unsolicited proposals. The bank has also failed to demonstrate sufficient development impact, because the criteria for evaluating the PSW and demonstrating the 'additionality' of private-sector finance are complex and technical and do not explicitly consider development effects. In fact, the PSW's effectiveness appears to be limited to its role in underwriting risks associated with IFC and MIGA operations, rather than demonstrating private finance's contribution to economic growth and sustainability. Lastly, some have criticised the PSW's poor targeting of development-related projects in the context of responses to COVID-19.

Even the World Bank's own PSW mid-term review noted that “the question of whether a project can take place without PSW support does not always have a simple answer.” The basic goal of introducing the PSW in developing countries – to bring private finance into development projects – also has not been realised. The 2021 assessment by the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group shows that, on the whole, the PSW has mobilised even less private capital than other blended-finance instruments like the MIGA

Guarantee Facility.

The World Bank's persistence with a private finance-oriented strategy – despite the glaringly obvious need for increased public spending – may in part reflect the IDA's governance structure. The body's establishment in 1960 represented a compromise accepted by developing countries, many of which had instead demanded a United Nations multilateral fund operating on the basis of “one country one vote” to help meet development needs. The United States' influence in the World Bank prevented that, and the IDA's 74 recipient countries now have less than 16 per cent of the voting power. This democratic deficit at the multilateral level, along with a lack of accountability at evaluation stages, further reduces developing countries' scope to influence decision-making.

The ongoing pandemic-induced reversal of positive development trends needs to be addressed through stable financing channels in developing countries. These channels should emphasise grants supporting essential public services like health and education, as well as infrastructure. Given the PSW's inherent limitations, subsidising the private sector to invest in public goods and services through the IDA will only exacerbate the pandemic's harmful consequences.

As long as the IDA can be an important source of recovery funds for the poorest economies, those resources must be used effectively. This will require closing the PSW and, instead, providing resources directly to governments and developing alternative approaches to strengthen public finances and public services. We can no longer afford solutions that worsen the problem.

Jayati Ghosh is Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a member of the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation. Farwa Sial is an economist and Senior Policy and Advocacy Officer at the European Network on Debt and Development.

©PROJECT SYNDICATE

## IN JEST THIS

# Benefits of WFH are too enticing



Mevin Durai

I WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THAT 75 PER CENT OF REMOTE WORKERS WANT TO STAY HOME SO THEY CAN SPEND MORE TIME WITH THEIR PETS

Millions of people around the world were forced to work from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of them normally work in an office, but took advantage of Zoom, Skype and other online platforms to work remotely. Some have already returned to work, but others are still at home, enjoying their last days of freedom.

Yes, even if there's a lot of work to be done, doing it at home means enjoying a lot of freedom: the freedom to take breaks whenever you want, the freedom to watch TV while you work, and best of all, the freedom to put your boss on mute.

If you don't believe me, just look at some of the results of a recent online survey of 1,000 remote workers who wished to continue working remotely. Commissioned by the website Digital.com, the survey uncovered some of the reasons these workers preferred working at home.

I was surprised to find that 75 per cent of remote workers want to stay home so they can spend more time with their pets. I wonder how the pets feel about this. Pets like to have a little freedom too. Our dog, for example, tries to look depressed when we're leav-

ing her alone at home. But the moment we leave, the party begins. She explores the kitchen, tries to open the refrigerator, then sniffs the houseplants to see if any of them is edible. She finally sits on the couch and tries to squeeze some flavour out of an object she found in the bedroom: one of my socks.

It's less surprising to me that 72 per cent of remote workers want the freedom to nap or exercise during the day. I like to do both: take a nap and dream about exercising. I totally understand this desire. Most workers have very short lunch breaks, barely enough time to eat lunch, let alone take a nap or exercise. The only exercise you might get, if you're lucky, is walking to a restaurant and back. It would be wise for companies to give workers extended breaks, so they can do a little yoga after lunch, for example. Flexible



hours for flexible workers. It's also not surprising that 73 per cent of remote workers say they want to watch TV while working. Most workplaces, unfortunately, do not have enough TVs. Employers do not seem to understand how important it is for workers to keep up with cricket. It's not just cricket, of course. It's also other sports, as well as TV shows. Not every employer is like Verve Logic, the Jaipur-based IT company that recently gave employers a holiday so they could enjoy the release of Money Heist 5 on Netflix.

You may believe that watching cricket while working means that the work will suffer. But not watching cricket while working means that the worker will suffer.

Another major reason for workers preferring to stay at home is appearance. Concerned about their own appearance, they're reluctant

to make an appearance at work. Sixty-two per cent of workers cited this reason in the survey. Some have gained weight during their home stay and are concerned that they might not fit in the office cubicle. Others are concerned that their work attire of the past year – seldom-washed floral-patterned pajamas – will not be acceptable in the office.

When workers were asked for the most important factors in their desire to stay at home, two were most prominent: spending time with children, and saving time and money on the daily commute to work. These are quite understandable. Employers need to be more flexible. Perhaps they can allow workers to bring their children to work Mondays, their pets Tuesdays, their TVs Wednesdays, their exercise bikes Thursdays, and their pillows Fridays.

## 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

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

### Legitimate demand

Sir, Bhubaneswar is the temple city of India. It is also a smart city. It is an educational hub and an investor's paradise. It is a beautiful place for peace and pleasure and for rest and recreation. Barring Bhubaneswar, almost all state capitals are districts in India. Now, Bhubaneswar is the sub-divisional headquarter of Khurda district. Bhubaneswar fulfils all the criteria to be declared a separate administrative district. This will facilitate citizen centric governance and lessen the gap between the public and the administration. This has been a long-standing demand of the inhabitants of Bhubaneswar. A strong political will is the need of the hour.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

### Stressed students

Sir, In a shocking incident, a medical profession aspirant from Tamil Nadu committed suicide a day ahead of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET). A year ago a similar tragedy had occurred in the state when three students committed suicide. These shocking incidents again expose the way how entrance exams are causing severe mental agony among young students. They highlight how much mental tension students endure and expose flaws in the exam system and the prevailing societal beliefs which focus only on marks, ranks and success. Parents and teachers can play a vital role in shaping and guiding the youngsters. Let them also understand that other than the conventional professional careers - engineering and medicine - there are hundreds of courses which have very good scope for the younger generation and which aptly suit their interest and capability. Career counselling should be made part of school education.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

### Centre unyielding

Sir, The Centre stuck to its guns and refused to file a detailed affidavit on whether it used the Pegasus software to snoop on journalists and members of the civil society. The Centre contended it didn't want matters of national interest to be part of public discourse or judicial debate through an affidavit as it is detrimental to national security. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta also claimed that he had already filed an affidavit saying there was no unauthorised interception. However, the Supreme Court put the government in the dock, saying it does not want the government to disclose anything that compromises national security but expects only a limited affidavit. It gave the government a few days to rethink its stand while reserving its interim order on the issue.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

# Andhra conducts public hearing camp in Kotia

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Pottangi, Sept 14:** Although a case regarding Odisha and neighbouring Andhra Pradesh's claims on territorial jurisdiction over Kotia panchayat under this block in Koraput district is sub-judice in the Supreme Court, the latter continues to intrude into different villages of the panchayat in utter disregard of the apex court, a report said.

Officials of various departments in Andhra Pradesh are regularly visiting Kotia panchayat and explaining the benefits of various welfare schemes launched by the Andhra government to the residents. They are trying to lure people by including their names in various welfare schemes of the neighbouring state.

The matter came to the fore after Andhra Pradesh officials accompanied by their police organised a public hearing camp at Neredibalsa



THE ANDHRA OFFICIALS ACCOMPANIED BY POLICE PERSONNEL OF THEIR STATE ARE TRYING TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS OF THE LOCAL PEOPLE BY HOLDING PUBLIC HEARING CAMPS AT REGULAR INTERVALS

THE VIZIANAGARAM DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION HAS APPOINTED A FULL-TIME SENIOR POLICE OFFICIAL FOR KOTIA PANCHAYAT, WHO WAS IDENTIFIED AS CIRCLE INSPECTOR ROHIN PATHI

village, Monday. The camp was held on the verandah of the ITDA meeting building. People welcomed the Andhra officials on their arrival and highlighted their drinking water problem, dilapidated road condition, lack of bus service and healthcare issues as well as education facilities before them.

According to reports, the officials accompanied by police officials of their state are trying to address the problems of the local people by

holding public hearing camps at regular intervals. This has brought them closer to the people and instilled a sense of confidence among regarding the eagerness of the Andhra government to uplift their lot. During these camps locals also highlighted their problems by submitting written complaints to them.

As part of their move, the Vizianagaram district administration has appointed a full-time senior police official for Kotia pan-

chayat. The official was identified as Circle Inspector Rohin Pathi for Kotia panchayat.

Meanwhile, the Andhra Pradesh government is making all efforts to keep the Kotia panchayat under its jurisdiction. Recently, they have announced delivery of rations at the doorsteps of people, while the police officials have started organising public hearing camps in the panchayat from September 6.



RAIN FURY

Communications to and from six villages was disrupted after a connecting road was washed away, Tuesday, at Batrakhol under Athamalik block in Angul district following incessant rain due to low pressure in Bay of Bengal

# 24-hours on, traffic on NH-59 remains disrupted

Traffic on NH-59 was hit after a transit bridge on a bypass road at Sulumaha was washed away due to incessant rain

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Daringbadi, Sept 14:** Low pressure-induced rain during the last three days has thrown life out of gear and wreaked havoc in various parts of the state, a report said.

Daringbadi in Kandhamal district is no exception, as traffic on National Highway-59 was severely disrupted after a transit bridge on a bypass road at Sulumaha here was washed away due to incessant rain, Monday. The highway connects Gopalpur in Ganjam district with Raipur in Chhattisgarh.

Reports said that the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has taken up the expansion of the highway for which a small bridge and bypass roads are being constructed at different points of the highway. However, residents have a different opinion as they alleged that the bridge was washed away due to sub-standard works.

Twenty-four hours have passed since then but traffic on the route continued to remain disrupted even Tuesday. The low pressure has re-



sulted in heavy rainfall Sunday and Monday and continued in various parts of the state even Tuesday.

As the bridge was washed away, vehicular service from Baliguda via Daringbadi, Berhampur, Bhanjanagar and Sorada has snapped. Some passenger buses have taken up different routes to reach their destinations, while the passenger bus service from Daringbadi to Simanbadi in the district has been discontinued. A disruption in bus service from Daringbadi and to Simanbadi has left the students worried as they could not attend their classes in

schools and colleges.

The disruption in traffic continues as the highway authorities are yet to repair the bridge or open any alternative route for the vehicles. The consultancy agency, in the past, had repaired the bridge on various occasions but the frequent collapses of the bridge has sparked concerns among the local residents. Meanwhile, the local administration and police reached the spot and tried to control the situation. The NHAI has also started repairing of the bridge but it is not yet clear when it will be open for traffic.

# Odisha cops nab 3 fraudsters from J'khand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhawanipatna, Sept 14:** The Odisha Police has arrested three people from Jharkhand's Jamtara district for impersonating as customer care operators of different companies and duping people of lakhs of rupees across the country.

Acting on a complaint by a trader in Kesinga, the Kalahandi police had conducted raids at a few villages in Karmatar block of Jamtara last week.

The trio - Mohd Sajjad (26), Abdul Ansari (22) and Raees Ansari (18) - were arrested Monday and brought to Odisha, a police officer said.



The accused placed advertisements under various brand names, mentioning their phone numbers as those of customer care agents, he said. When gullible customers shared their bank details, the miscreants used the details to withdraw money from their accounts, police said. The trio changed their phone numbers and SIM cards often to avoid detection, they added.

# Hirakud dam to open 6 sluice gates to release rain water

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sambalpur, Sept 14:** Dam authorities in Odisha's Sambalpur district have announced that the sluice gates of the Hirakud dam will be opened Tuesday to release surplus water from the reservoir following incessant rain in the upper catchment areas.

Six gates will be opened in total, but phase-wise. Siren will be blown from 3 pm and the water will be released at 5 pm.

People have been urged by the authorities not to enter the river during this time. The water released from the dam is expected to reach Mundali in Cuttack within 36 hours.

Following considerable rainfall across the state due to a depression in the Bay of Bengal, water levels in major rivers of Odisha are rising. Water level in the Jalaka river has already crossed the danger mark, resulting in flood-like situation in various regions.

According to latest information, Jalaka was flowing at 6.22-mark and rising at Mathani in Balasore district at 9 am against the danger level of 5.50 metres. Similarly, Baitarani river was flowing at 17.84-mark and rising at Akhuapada at 9 am against danger level of 17.83



meters. Mahanadi, Devi, Brahmani, Ib, Budhabalanga, Subarnarekha, Vansadhara and Rushikulya are among the other rivers which experienced rising water level.

Inundation and water-logging have occurred in several low-lying locations due to incessant rainfall. Talcher received the highest rainfall of 394 mm during the last 24 hours.

Special Relief Commissioner PK Jena has instructed all district Collectors to evacuate people from water-logged areas.

The officials have been directed to undertake evacuation and make prompt arrangements in case water enters the villages and habitations.

According to the relief code, they have also been asked to provide cooked or dry food and other basic necessities to the affected people.

The district Collectors have also been directed that in case of any damage to communication/roads occurs, the same be forthwith restored for effecting communication at the earliest.

The Collectors have further been told that if there is any damage to communication or roads, they must be repaired as soon as possible to resume communication at the earliest. Since Sunday morning, heavy rains have affected over 19.53 lakh people in 11 districts across Odisha.

# 4-yr-old girl killed, 2 critical

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dharakote, Sept 14:** A four-year-old girl was killed, while two other children sustained critical injuries after a rain-soaked wall collapsed on them at Ramchandrapur village under Badagad police limits of this block in Ganjam district, Tuesday.

The deceased was identified as Lipi Naik, daughter of Tiku Naik in the village. The injured were identified as Prasant Naik, 6, and his sister Tulasi, 12, both son and daughter of Purna Naik.

The mishap occurred after a wall of a house which had soaked in the low pressure-induced incessant rain collapsed on them while they were playing. The injured siblings were admitted to Dharakote community health cen-



tre (CHC) and are currently undergoing treatment there.

Sources said rain was ponding the area since the last three days due to formation of low pressure over the Bay of Bengal. The mud wall of Tiku Naik's house was soaked in the rain. The three children, including Tiku's daughter, were playing near his house Tuesday when the soaked wall suddenly collapsed on them.

On being informed, Fire department personnel from Dharakote reached the spot and rescued the three children trapped under the debris of the mud wall. The three were rushed to the Dharakote hospital where the doc-

tors pronounced Lipi dead and admitted the two other children for treatment.

Badagad police IIC Suraj Kumar Jhankar reached the spot and started an investigation. The body was handed over to her family members after post-mortem. A case has been registered in this connection.

Tehsildar Kabiraj Pradhan also visited the spot and took stock of the situation. He said that compensation will be provided to the family of the deceased on the basis of government guidelines.

BJD state women's wing advisor Nandini Devi condoled the death of the girl and met her family members at the hospital. She also enquired about the health condition of the two children undergoing treatment at the hospital.

# LOAN MELA



A beneficiary receiving loan at a 'loan mela' under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Antyodaya Yojana at a programme held at Hinjilicut Municipality premises, Tuesday

# e-Mulakat a boon for prison inmates, their relatives

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, Sept 14:** Online mulakat or e-mulakat is becoming increasingly popular among the family members and relatives of the prisoners as the facility has made it easy for them to hold meetings with their near and dear ones lodged behind bars.

This novel facility is being provided through the National Prisons Information Portal (NPIP). The Malkangiri sub-jail, where this facility has been launched recently, has so far received numerous requests through the portal from the family members and relatives of the prisoners lodged there.

Informing this, the superintendent of Malkangiri sub-jail said that so far they have received over 100 applications through the portal. "With the introduction of the e-facility, the family members and relatives of the inmates are no longer visiting the sub-jail. This way, they can not only save money but also save their valuable time. Sitting in their homes, they



can now interact with their friends and relatives who are behind the bars with the help of laptops, computers or smart TV. This facility has proved to be a boon for the prisoners as well as their relatives as presently face-to-face meetings have been restricted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This service is being provided two days in a week.

Notably the Odisha government had launched the service at Jharpada jail in Bhubaneswar and Choudwar jail in Cuttack district July 26. The Prisons Directorate had then said in a statement that the facility would be started at all district jails and circle jails from August 15 and subsequently, it would be extended to all sub-jails.

# Sonepur Spinning Mill in urgent need of succour

THE ONLY INDUSTRY IN SUBARNAPUR DISTRICT IS GASPING FOR SURVIVAL AS MISMANAGEMENT AND IRREGULARITIES HAVE LED TO THE CLOSURE OF THIS ONCE PROFITABLE VENTURE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sonepur, Sept 14:** With the only industry in Subarnapur district - Sonepur Spinning Mill remaining closed since January this year, the labourers and workers of the mill are spending their days in penury. Keeping their fingers crossed, they are hoping that the mill would reopen soon and alleviate their problems.

The mill was established in the year 1982 during the tenure of Janaki Ballabh Patnaik as the Chief Minister of Odisha. Being the only industry in the erstwhile undivided Bolangir district, people were hopeful that it would make a difference in providing employment to the youths of the region and help eradicate poverty. Set up at a cost of ₹5,00,00,000, the industry, as per expectation of the people, had provided employment to over 1,000 people from the locality.

In the initial years, everything was going well. But later on, the plant started incurring losses owing

to alleged mismanagement and the lackadaisical attitude of the staff. Initially, the mill was managed by the Industrial Development Corporation of Odisha Limited alongside two other spinning mills at Baripada and Aska. In 1990, the mill was handed over to ABS Spinning Orissa Limited with the hope of better management and higher production.

Surprising everyone, the mill was handed over to traders in 1992. Cotton traders would supply cotton and in turn procure threads. From 1992 to 2001, the mill was run by signing agreements with KK Spinner, OSM, HR International and ODMPL. These arrangements proved profitable for the companies but not for the mill. Its condition started deteriorating and its earning was not in commensurate with its production. The situation came to such a pass that the workers did not receive their salaries on time. Nor could electricity bills be paid on time. At one



point of time, the electricity connection was cut off after the outstanding bill amount touched ₹1,20,00,000. Many employees were forced to take VRS.

Eventually, the mill was closed down in 2001. Following the closure of the mill, employees as well as the local people resorted to demonstrations and strikes demanding

the reopening of the mill. Consequently, Vijay Agarwal, owner of Firoza Spinning Mill of Kolkata, was entrusted with the responsibility to run the mill in 2007 and production resumed in 2010. The mill's name was also changed to Balaji Ganapati Spinning Mill. The number of employees was downsized and there were only 150 regular

workers and 100 trainees.

It has been alleged that the present owner has shifted several costly machineries from the mill to elsewhere. And since outstanding electricity bills are not being paid regularly, the plant's power connection has been snapped again, forcing the closure of the plant at regular intervals. At present, the mill is running with only 60 workers the mill is running. Talking to this correspondent, Jogendra Prasad Panda and Dhableswar Kumbhar of the mill's workers' union said that the plant authorities have deducted EPF amounts from their salaries but not deposited it in their accounts. "We have informed this to the mill authorities and district administration in writing," they added.

Meanwhile, it has been alleged that the present owner is not interested in running the mill but is actually eyeing on the 100 acres of land adjacent to the plant. A petition has been filed in the court in this regard.

# Taliban, 'Abba Jaan' emerge as poll narrative in UP

EXPECTEDLY ISSUES LIKE GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT HAVE TAKEN A BACKSEAT IN THE COUNTRY'S MOST POPULOUS STATE WHERE ASSEMBLY POLLS ARE DUE EARLY NEXT YEAR

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, Sept 14:** As the count-down to the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections due early next year begins, issues like governance and development are expectedly taking a backseat and it is 'Abba Jaan' and Taliban that are emerging as the latest poll narrative in Uttar Pradesh. State Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Sunday said that prior to 2017, "those who say 'Abba Jaan' used to devour the free ration sent for the poor and cornered government jobs meant for the poor by indulging in corruption."

The speech had the desired impact and non-BJP political parties promptly objected to the use of 'Abba Jaan' - an endearment for father - for political gains. Though the chief minister did not name any particular party, it was clear that he was referring to the Samajwadi Party since he had earlier referred to Samajwadi patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav as 'Abba Jaan' in a TV programme.

The chief minister also said that leaders like Akhilesh Yadav earlier did not visit temples for the fear of offending their Muslim vote-bank.

Taliban was added to the narrative after Samajwadi MP Shafiqur-



Rehman Barq termed Taliban as 'freedom fighters'.

The BJP leaders have been referring to his remarks to consolidate its Hindu vote bank and are using Taliban to underline the SP's affinity for 'Abba Jaan' (read Muslim). The result of this developing situation is that key issues like development have been put on the backburner and almost all political leaders are now bending backwards to establish their Hindu credentials-much to the glee of the BJP leaders.

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MP Satish Mishra was the first one to

visit Ayodhya and claim that the grand temple would be completed in the Mayawati regime.

When Mayawati addressed her party meeting in Lucknow recently, she was greeted with chants of 'Jai Shri Ram' - something unheard of in BSP till now. She was even presented with a 'trishul' on stage.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders Manish Sisodia and Sanjay Singh, Monday, offered prayers at various temples in Ayodhya while Priyanka Gandhi Vadra visited a Hanuman temple in Rae Bareilly during her recent visit.

"We have forced these leaders to

## CASE FILED AGAINST CM YOGI IN BIHAR

**PATNA:** A youth in Bihar's Muzaffarpur has filed a petition in the district court against Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for his recent 'Abba Jaan' remarks at a public meeting in Kushinagar. The complainant Tammannah Hashmi, a native of Ahiyapur locality in Muzaffarpur, filed the complaint on Monday alleging that Yogi Adityanath, who is occupying a constitutional post, has targeted a particular community to polarise voters ahead of the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly election. Yogi publicly said the people who say 'Abba Jaan' used to eat the ration of poor people during the previous governments in Uttar Pradesh. Now such a practice has been stopped by his government.

rush to temples. It was the Congress that had rejected the existence of Lord Ram. The SP had fired at Ram Sewaks. Why are they now trying to project a Hindu-friendly image?" said state BJP president Swatantra Dev Singh.

The BJP is clearly setting the tone for the next elections using the issue of national security on the Taliban issue and putting non-BJP parties in the dock over the Muslim appeasement.

The content being shared on on party-run social media handles and groups on WhatsApp, show that around one-fourth of the posts in the last two weeks were Taliban related referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "strong personality" and projecting Chief

Minister Yogi Adityanath as a strong Hindutva brand against these forces.

"It is unfortunate that the BJP is trying to veer the election narrative on communal lines. We have to stand up against it or else they will succeed in their designs. The BJP does not want people to talk about unemployment, inflation and Covid mismanagement," said Congress leader Acharya Pramod Krishnam.

On the other hand, SP spokesperson Juhie Singh said that the BJP had always diverted the attention of the people from the core issues of the state. The situation during Covid-19, inflation, unemployment, and social injustice have never been the party's priority, she said.

# 'Govt by-passing crucial clause of Assam Accord while bringing in CAA'



Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) members protest 'Jatiya Gorjan' demanding implementation of clauses 5 and 6 of the Assam Accord and repeal of CAA, in Guwahati, Tuesday.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, Sept 14:** The Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP) Tuesday accused the Assam government of sidelining the "crucial" clause 5 of the Assam Accord, which deals with cut-off date for identification of illegal foreigners by bringing in the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

AJP president Lurinjyoti Gogoi and general secretary Jagdish Bhuyan, in a press statement, alleged that the BJP party-led government was working to reduce the Assamese people to a minority status in their own state in order to appease "foreigners" who will be turned into voters through provisions of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

"Clause 5 of the Accord specifies the cut-off date for identifying foreigners. But it will become irrelevant when the CAA is implemented. It will tantamount to killing the Assam Accord and its spirit," they said.

This vital clause has been ignored by the government when it recently formed a committee to implement the Accord, they added.

The state government had September 7 announced a committee with its ministers and representatives of the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), which was a signatory of the Accord as member to prepare a roadmap within three months to implement the Assam Accord.

The Chief Minister's Office in a statement the same day had said that the meeting decided to prepare an "implementation framework to implement the provisions of Assam Accord with special reference to Clause 6, 7, 9 and 10".

Clause 5 of the Accord sets March 25, 1971, as the cut-off date for detecting and deporting illegal aliens from Assam.

The AJP alleges that the contentious CAA violates the Assam Accord as it seeks to provide Indian

citizenship to Hindus, Jains, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Parsis who came to India on or before December 31, 2014 from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan after five years of residence here.

The AJP leaders also alleged the percentage of Assamese-speaking population will decrease by 10 per cent over a 20 year period.

"The percentage of Assamese-speaking population in Assam was 47 per cent as per 2011 Census. It is predicted to come down to 37 per cent by 2031. Once the Assamese-speaking population becomes a minority, it will be no good trying to protect their identity," they said.

They demanded action from the government in the form of proper implementation of clause 6, which deals with Constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards to protect, preserve and promote the culture, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people, before it is too late.

The AJP leaders also said the recommendations of the Justice Biplab Kumar Sarma-led Committee on implementation of clause 6 are being ignored by the government.

February 25 last year, the Justice Sarma-led High-Level Committee of the Ministry of Home Affairs had submitted its report to the then Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal for handing it over to the Union Home Minister Amit Shah, but no action has been taken on it yet. Gogoi and Bhuyan also alleged that the BJP party has grabbed power by playing communal politics but is keeping mum on the matter of the Assamese speakers being on the verge of losing their mother tongue.

Pledging intensified agitations to protect the identity of the Assamese people, the AJP leaders said the 'Jatiya Garjan' programme observed by the party and its supporters across the state Tuesday was a part of this plan.

# UP suffers worst dengue outbreak in yrs; 60 dead

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Sept 14:** An outbreak of dengue fever is suspected of killing dozens of people in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh since the start of September, and authorities have launched a campaign to destroy mosquito breeding grounds.

Dinesh Kumar Premi, the chief medical officer in Firozabad, the most affected district in the state, said that 60 people, many of them children, had died in his district alone, raising fears that Uttar Pradesh is in the midst of its worst dengue outbreak in years.

"We are taking preventive measures and 95 health camps across the district have been operating in order to contain the spread of this fever," Premi said.

A government official said on the condition of anonymity that many

children may have died as their poor parents first took them to fake medical practitioners, or quacks, before their condition worsened.

While mosquito-borne dengue is the suspected cause of the deadly viral fever outbreak in Uttar Pradesh, it has only been confirmed as the cause of death in three cases, but an audit is underway to determine if it is to blame for more, Ved Vrat Singh, Uttar Pradesh's top public health officer, said.

Authorities in Firozabad have formed teams to check households for water logging, and fumigate areas at risk, while they have also released thousands of Gambusia, or mosquitofish, into water bodies to eat the mosquito larvae.

Dengue deaths nationally fell to a multi-year low of 56 last year. Uttar Pradesh reported 42 dengue deaths in 2016, its highest since 2015.



# After locks, Aligarh will now secure Indian borders: Modi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Aligarh, Sept 14:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Tuesday that Aligarh, which was known to manufacture locks for securing houses, will now play an important role in securing the country's borders.

Inaugurating the defence node here, the Prime Minister said the foundation of the defence node of Aligarh was being laid on the auspicious occasion of Radha Ashtami which made the occasion all the more pious.

He said that till now importing defence equipment was a rule but with the establishment of the defence corridor, India would soon be in a position to export defence equipment.

"India will not only become self-reliant in defence matters but will also become a major exporter in this sector," he said.

The Prime Minister, who also laid the foundation stone for the Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh state university, said that the university will focus on modern education and emerge as a hub for defence studies and defence research.

Talking about Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh, the Prime Minister said that he was a freedom fighter who had been forgotten by the previous governments. "Every youth who has dreams, should know about Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh and can learn from his life. Today,



we are trying to acquaint the new generation with these icons even as the country celebrates Amrit Mahotsav," he said.

The Prime Minister said that the defence node in Aligarh and the Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh University would transform western Uttar Pradesh soon.

Lauding the Yogi Adityanath government for creating a new work culture and acting as a catalyst for development, the Prime Minister said that the chief minister had given a new face to Uttar Pradesh which was earlier known only for corruption and scams.

Recalling an anecdote from his childhood, the Prime Minister said that a Muslim man would visit his village every three months to sell locks from Aligarh.

"As a child, I knew about Aligarh because of the locks and about

Sitapur because everyone used to go to Sitapur for eye treatment. Today Aligarh is poised to make a name in a much larger field," he said.

The Prime Minister also remembered former chief minister late Kalyan Singh and said that his absence was being deeply felt.

Earlier, the Prime Minister viewed the models of the proposed defence node and the state university. The university is being established by the state government in the memory and honour of the great freedom fighter, educationist and social reformer, Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh. The university will be set up in a total area of over 92 acres in the Lodha village and Musepur Kareem Jarouli village of Aligarh's Koli tehsil. The university will provide affiliation to 395 colleges of the Aligarh Division.

# Assam man returns home after 56 months in Bangladesh custody

AGENCIES

**Agartala, Sept 14:** After languishing for over four-and-a-half years in Bangladeshi jail, Assam youth Mukul Hazarika returned to India Monday after a series of diplomatic and administrative efforts.

Hazarika, a resident of Hodapara village in western Assam's Darrang district, returned after he was handed over to the Border Security Force (BSF) and Belonia police by the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) through Tripura's Belonia checkpoint on the India-Bangladesh border.

A rickshaw puller by profession and father of three children, Hazarika (35) inadvertently went to Bangladesh in February 2017, where he was arrested by security forces. A local court then sent him to imprisonment in Feni jail. "Bangladesh jail police tortured me in prison. They did not give me food regularly. After completing a three-year jail term, they did not allow me to come back to my home in Assam," Hazarika told the media at the border.

Hazarika's presence in Bangladesh first became known in 2019 after the officials of the Indian High Commission in Bangladesh informed the Assam government that he was lodged in Feni jail.

# Assam organisations up in arms against NHPC project



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Guwahati, Sept 14:** More than 22 organisations in Assam have threatened to launch a joint movement against the mega 2,000 MW capacity hydropower project being set up by the state-owned National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) along the Arunachal Pradesh-Assam border from September 20.

Asom Jatiyatibadi Yuba Chatra Parishad (AJYCP) leader, Palash Changmai on Monday said more than 22 organisations have decided to launch a series of protests, including blockade of the project site, against the NHPC.

The AJYCP, an anti-Bharatiya Janata Party organisation, Saturday organised a public meeting where various experts, including geologists and hydrologists, had high-

lighted a threat to downstream areas of the Subansiri river. The AJYCP leader said work on the project was resumed without consulting 965 villages across four districts in the downstream of the hydroelectric project.

These districts in eastern Assam adjoining Arunachal Pradesh include Biswanath, Dhemaji, Lakhimpur and Majuli. The 22 organisations, which are opposing the mega power plant, include the influential All Assam Students' Union and All Assam Adivasi Students' Association whose leaders had attended the Saturday meeting.

Commissioning of the 2,000 MW Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric project at Gerukamukh was started in 2006 but work had been stopped in 2011 following agitations fearing ecological damage and loss of livelihood.

# Proposed amendments in tobacco law likely to increase illegal trade: Survey

AGENCIES

**Guwahati, Sept 14:** The proposed amendments in the law regarding cigarettes and other tobacco products are more likely to increase illicit trade as a country-wide survey conducted by a consumer rights organisation revealed that over 77 per cent of the respondents prefer untaxed tobacco products, even if they are of low quality.

Regulating unorganised tobacco trade and bringing in "enabling laws" instead of "punitive and aggressive legislation" are more needed, claimed the survey report prepared by Consumer Online Foundation (COF), a not-for-profit organisation.

The proposed COTPA (Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act) Amendment Bill, 2020, seeks to disallow retail sale of loose sticks of cigarettes, prohibits sale of tobacco products to persons below 21 years, put controls on in-shop advertising and promotion, among others.

In a statement, COF said it conducted the survey among 5,116 people across the country between April and July to analyse ground realities, opinions, concerns and



voice of consumers.

On the findings of the study, COF founder trustee Bejon Misra said it "brings to the fore that the proposed amendments in the tobacco control law are more likely to increase illicit tobacco trade in the country thereby encouraging tobacco consumption instead of discouraging it."

As many as 77.50 per cent of the respondents indicated a preference for smuggled but untaxed and low-quality tobacco, as per the report. The illicit tobacco trade is a major cause of concern for the government and law enforcement

agencies, with a significant amount of this trade happening through the unfenced border that the North-eastern states have with countries such as China, Myanmar and Bangladesh, it said.

"There is a strong need to regulate unorganised tobacco trade and bring equitable taxation policies to safeguard Indian consumers from inferior quality tobacco products. We need enabling laws and not punitive and aggressive legislations that can cause mental agony and depression," Misra said.

The focus of the Bill is mainly on cigarettes while the World Health

Organisation (WHO) has said the most prevalent form of tobacco consumption in India is smokeless tobacco and commonly used products are 'khaini', 'gutkha', betel quid with tobacco, and 'zarda', the report added.

It said the survey findings also revealed that 'beedi' and chewable tobacco comprise over 75 per cent of tobacco consumption in India, followed by cigarettes at 20.89 per cent. The report said though the Bill proposes to enhance punishments for failure to adhere to the law and envisages tackling black marketing and smuggling of tobacco products, it does not assign any guidelines for the law enforcers in this regard. As per the survey, 66.50 per cent of the respondents feel inconvenienced by second-hand smoke (a mixture of the smoke from the burning tip of a cigarette and the smoke exhaled by a smoker) and 64.40 per cent think that designated smoking rooms are indeed helpful.

This implies that the proposal to shut down designated smoking areas in airports, restaurants and hotels will increase the exposure of people to second-hand smoke, the statement said.

# national

## of the day quote

How can one even expect sensitivity from a government that is not concerned about women's security and safety? The anti-women mentality of the chief minister who has said 'women should not be given freedom' is known to everyone

PRİYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

In the past 17 months, 840 acres of land has been allotted to 384 units despite the coronavirus pandemic. With this, Rs 11,000 crore capital investment will be made and 22,000 people will get employment

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

The state government is working towards putting in place a system in which pension can be disbursed to government employees on the day of retirement itself

HIMANTA BISWA SARMA | ASSAM CHIEF MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Sat to be working day now in Kerala

**Thiruvananthapuram:** After withdrawing the night curfew and stringent lockdown measures Sundays, which were imposed in the wake of rising Covid-19 cases in the state, the Kerala government Tuesday decided to restore Saturdays as working days, wherever applicable. "All employees are instructed to report for duty (Saturdays) accordingly," an order issued by the Disaster Management Department said. It said that August 4, all government offices, quasi government, public sector undertakings, companies, autonomous bodies and commissions were allowed to work from Monday to Friday with full attendance.

### Overloaded boat capsizes

**Mumbai:** At least 11 people were feared drowned after a boat capsized in Varada river in Maharashtra's Amravati district Tuesday, police said. Teams from the police and district disaster management authority have fished out three bodies, including that of a minor girl, from the river so far, an official said. The incident took place around 10.30 am at Hatrana village, under the jurisdiction of Benoda police station, where a boat carrying 11 people from three families capsized, he said.

### Ex-KPCC Gen Secy quits Cong

**Thiruvananthapuram:** In a setback to the opposition Congress, which is making all efforts for a strong comeback after the drubbing in the Kerala Assembly polls, senior leader and KPCC former general secretary K P Anil Kumar Tuesday quit the party and joined the ruling CPI (M), days after another leader P S Prashant resigned and went to the Marxist party fold. He said he was ending his 43 year-long relationship with the Congress and would co-operate with the Marxist party now onward without any condition.

### Rains lash Guj

**Ahmedabad:** Heavy rains in Rajkot and Jamnagar districts of Gujarat have led to evacuation of over 7,000 people, officials said Tuesday evening. Rains also lashed Junagadh district during the day, they said. Newly sworn-in Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Tuesday visited rain-hit parts of Jamnagar city and district and assured help to those affected by the floods.



I met Devendra Fadnavis and Union Minister of State for Railways Darshana Jardosh, who is the assistant in-charge for Goa polls. I discussed the political scenario in Goa with them  
PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

### LJP MP PRINCE RAJ BOOKED FOR RAPE

Lok Janshakti Party MP from Bihar's Samastipur, Prince Raj, was booked by the Delhi Police for raping a party office-bearer and destroying a related evidence, the police said



## No reopening ruling on promotion quota for SCs/ STs, says SC



AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sep 14:** The Supreme Court Tuesday said it would not reopen its decision on granting reservation in promotions to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) as it was for the states to decide how they implement it.

Taking up various pleas pertaining to alleged hurdles in granting reservation in promotions to SCs and STs in various states, a three-judge bench headed by Justice Nageswara Rao directed the Advocate on Records of state governments to identify issues peculiar to them and submit those within two weeks.

"We are making it very clear that we are not going to reopen Nagraj or Jarnail Singh (cases) because the idea was only to decide these cases in accordance with the law laid down by the court," said the bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna and B R Gavai.

The top court noted that in its earlier order, the state governments were directed to finalise the issues which are peculiar to them so that court can proceed in the matter.

The issues framed by the Attorney General KK Venugopal and the ones circulated by others are enhancing the scope of cases,

it said. "We are not willing to do that. There are certain issues which are already decided in Nagraj that also we are not going to take up. We are very clear that we are not going to permit any arguments for reopening of cases or arguing that law laid down from Indira Sahney is wrong because the very scope of these cases is to apply the law as laid down by this court," the court said.

Venugopal submitted before the apex court that nearly all these issues have been covered by judgments of the top court and he would give a background of all the cases on issue of reservation since the Indira Sawhney case. Senior advocate Indira Jaising contended that the issue which remains open is benchmarks for adequacy on how a state will decide on which groups are backwards.

"It is not a question of disputed facts any more. In some cases HCs have struck down on the ground that backwardness has not been shown. How any state will establish that representation is adequate and in that sense there will have to be benchmarks for adequacy which will require detailed consideration," she said. Responding to the submission, the bench said, "We are not here to advise the government what they should do. It's not for us to tell the government how to implement policy. It has been specifically held as to how the states have to implement it and consider backwardness and representation. States have to decide what to do subject to judicial review." Senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan said he does not want to get into the question of representation as Indira Sawhney judgment is clear that it's not proportionate representation.



A volunteer immerses an idol of elephant-headed Hindu god Ganesha in the Arabian Sea on the 5th day during the Ganesh festival in Mumbai

PTI PHOTO

## A day after NEET, TN girl kills self

*Kanimozhi is the 16th medical aspirant from Tamil Nadu to end her life fearing outcome of the test*

AGENCIES

**Jayamkondam (TN), Sept 14:** A day after she appeared for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test, a 17-year old girl died by suicide at a village near here, police said Tuesday. The girl, Kanimozhi, took the extreme step when her parents were away Monday night and they returned home to find her hanging, a police official here said.

Daughter of a lawyer, Kanimozhi is the 16th medical aspirant from Tamil Nadu to end her life fearing outcome of the test, coupled



with dejection that their dream to pursue medical education may not fructify.

She appeared for the national test Sunday and had told her parents that some questions were tough and that she was concerned about the outcome, he said adding "investigation is still on."

Another official told PTI that police received information early today and the body was sent for post-mortem to a government

hospital and later handed over to the family.

In a major step against the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), the Tamil Nadu government Monday had passed a bill in the State Assembly seeking exemption from the centralised exam, and making Class 12 exam marks the basis for medical admissions for undergraduate courses.

All parties, with the exception of the BJP, supported the new Tamil Nadu Admission to Undergraduate Medical Degree Courses Bill, 2021. In the statement of objects and reasons, the Tamil Nadu government has said this bill is being moved as the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test is not a fair or equitable method of admission, and that it favours the rich and elite sections in society.

## 27 offices of defence ministry to move to new buildings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 14:** Over 7,000 employees belonging to 27 different offices of the defence ministry and the three services will move from their current workplaces in and around the Raisina Hills area to two new swanky buildings, officials said Tuesday.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to inaugurate the two office complexes Thursday, they said. The two new multi-storey buildings, one at the Kasturba Gandhi Marg area and another at Africa Avenue, have been constructed at a cost of Rs 775 crore by the defence ministry, the officials said. The two buildings have a total space of 9.60 lakhs sq feet as against 9.22 lakh sq feet vacated by the 27 offices in various hutments and office complexes, they said.

Fourteen offices are being relocated to the KG Marg complex having a built-up area of 4.52 lakh sq feet while 13 offices are being relocated to the Africa Avenue building that has a total built-up area of 5.08 lakh sq feet, the officials said.

The process of shifting the existing offices to the new buildings will start in the next few days, they said. The new buildings, constructed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development as part of its Central Vista project, provide a modern eco-friendly, green building environment, the officials said.

The total land parcel required for the new office complexes is 13 acres as against 50 acres where the existing offices are spread across.

## PAK BASED TERROR MODULE BUSTED

*The Special Cell informed that one person out of the six arrested was given the task to identify locations in major cities of the country where they could carry out the terror attacks during the forthcoming festival season*

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 14:** The Special Cell of Delhi Police said Tuesday that it has busted a Pakistan-based terror module and arrested six persons, including two people who were trained in Pakistan.

Furnishing details of the multi-state operation, a Delhi Police Special Cell official said that they had received inputs from the central agencies that a conspiracy was being hatched to conduct terror strikes in major cities of the country.

After receiving this input, the Special Cell constituted a team under the supervision of DCP Pramod Khushwaha and ACPs Hridya Bhushan and Lalit Joshi. "After analyzing human and

technical inputs, we realized that it was a very big network that was spread in different states. On Tuesday morning we concluded this operation by conducting multiple raids in different states," Special Commissioner of Police, District Cell, Neeraj Thakur, said at a press briefing.

The first person named Sameer, hailing from Maharashtra, was arrested from Kota while he was travelling in a train while two other were nabbed in the national capital. From more human and technical inputs, the Special Cell in close cooperation with the Uttar Pradesh Anti Terrorist Squad (UP-ATS) conducted raids in the state and arrested three more people.

Thakur said of the six arrested,



two had been taken to Pakistan via Muscat where they were trained to use explosives and firearms, including AK-47. "The training con-

tinued for 15 days after which they returned to Muscat. They revealed that during their training in Pakistan, there were also 14-15 Bengali speaking persons in their group," the special cell official said.

Thakur said that it seems like the terror operation was closely coordinated from across the border. He said the module was divided into two teams. "One team was given to the underworld which was being coordinated by Dawood Ibrahim's brother, Anees Ibrahim. Their task was to get the arms from across the border into India and keep them concealed. The second team was asked to arrange funds via Hawala," the officer said.

The Special Cell informed that one person out of the six arrested was given the task to identify lo-

cations in major cities of the country where they could carry out the terror attacks during the forthcoming festival season.

"The Special cell is interrogating the suspects and a further probe is on," the official added.

The underworld operative Sameer, a close contact of Anees Ibrahim, who is brother of Dawood Ibrahim, was tasked by a Pak-based person connected with underworld operatives hiding in Pakistan, to ensure smooth delivery of improvised explosive devices (IED), sophisticated weapons and grenades to different entities in India.

Anees Ibrahim, who is presently based in Pakistan, is stated to be the underworld connect of this module, police said.



### Uneasy calm prevails in BJP

An uneasy calm prevails in the BJP as many prominent leaders of the party in UP, Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab and elsewhere are pressing for an amicable solution to the demands of the agitating farmers. These voices were earlier confined within the four walls of the party but are now finding their way in the public. At least two prominent leaders of UP, including a Union Minister and Lok Sabha MP, have expressed the view that talks with the farmers should be held. A number of BJP leaders belonging to Western UP have conveyed to the party high command that a deadly combination of MJGAR (Muslim, Ahir, Jat and Gujjar) once created by late Chaudhary Charan Singh in the 1970s may resurface. This may create a political havoc

in the Assembly polls in February-March next year. A recent internal survey conducted by the BJP had not painted a rosy picture either despite Modi-Yogi leadership remaining invincible. Haryana Deputy Chief Minister in the BJP-led NDA government, Dushyant Chautala has publicly sided with the agitating farmers. Similar sentiments have been expressed by party leaders in Punjab where the BJP has already lost a crucial ally in Shiromani Akali Dal. In Rajasthan, the BJP got its biggest jolt when it suffered a huge defeat in Panchayat Samiti polls at the hands of the Congress after seven years. The BJP could get only 550 Panchayat Samiti seats compared to Congress' 670 seats. The BJP is already facing its Waterloo in Rajasthan as it is split between the pro and anti Vasundhararaje factions.

### Delhi tops in bankruptcy

Maharashtra may have the maximum registered and functioning companies in India. But when it comes to companies going bust, Delhi tops the list. It is learnt that under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI), 283 firms were admitted to the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) until

December 2020. Of these 283 companies, as many as 189 were sent for liquidation under the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP). Surprisingly, Delhi topped the ladder with 58 companies followed by Maharashtra (37) and Gujarat with 36 companies. There were none in Odisha, while just 3 in West Bengal. If Haryana had 1 company to be liquidated, Punjab had 4. In the case of 128 companies, the cases were closed due to withdrawal or settlement. Even here, 38 belonged to Delhi, while the number of companies in Maharashtra was 20. There were 76 companies where issues were resolved through a mutually discussed mechanism. Even here, Delhi topped with 19 companies followed by Maharashtra with 16 companies. In addition to 283 companies, 30 corporations were dissolved and went under liquidation process or sold as going concern while 59 corporations were dissolved under voluntary liquidation process. The number would have run into thousands had the government not raised the thrash-hold limit of NPAs and default. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) raised the threshold of default under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 to Rs 1 crore from the existing threshold of Rs 1 lakh to aid the functioning of corporates which might face default

owing to the economic slowdown and unprecedented situation due to Covid-19.

### BJP not to project Dhami as CM face

If the Congress is witnessing public spat in some of the states, the ruling BJP is also facing its Waterloo in a couple of poll-bound states. Of the five states that are scheduled to go for polls in March next year, it is comfortably in power in four barring Punjab. But the party is facing a peculiar situation in Uttarakhand where it changed three Chief Ministers in the past six months beginning with Trivendra Singh Rawat in March and Tirath Singh Rawat in July to install Pushkar Singh Dhami. It now transpires that Dhami will not be projected as the BJP's Chief Ministerial face in the ensuing Assembly polls. Instead, the BJP will go to the polls in the state under the sole leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Of course, there will be campaign posters of several prominent state leaders including Trivendra Singh Rawat, Tirath Singh Rawat, Pushkar Singh Dhami and BJP state chief too. But there may be a new name in the posters i.e. BJP's media department head Anil Baluni. The low-profile leader who is a member of the Rajya Sabha and works from behind

the scenes. Some of the recent poll surveys conducted by TV channels showed him more popular in the state than any of the leaders. The BJP also conducted its own surveys and decided that it should fight elections under the "collective leadership formula".

### Nadda looks to fill vacancies

BJP president JP Nadda has a huge problem in hand to accommodate 11 of the 12 sacked ministers, including 6 Cabinet Ministers, in the organisation. Of the 12, Thaarwar Chand Gehlot had already been appointed Karnataka Governor. Others are cooling their heels. No party work has been allotted to them though none of them attained the retirement age of 75. What is important is that newly appointed minister Bhupendra Yadav continues to hold two important portfolios and also the post of the party general secretary. Now he is in charge of Manipur too. But Nadda who recently underwent a knee procedure, could not get his own team of general secretaries and office bearers. It is now becoming clearer that he may not get his own team at least until the Assembly elections in UP and 4 other states are over.

# international

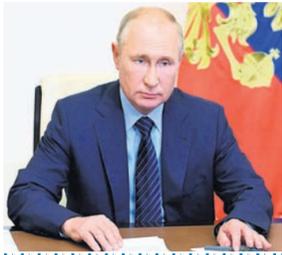


It (Pakistan) is one that is involved hedging its bets constantly about the future of Afghanistan, it's one that's involved harboring members of the Taliban... It is one that's also involved in different points cooperation with us on counterterrorism

ANTONY BLINKEN | US SECY OF STATE

## PUTIN ISOLATES SELF

Russian President Vladimir Putin is self-isolating as a precaution after several members of his entourage fell ill with Covid-19, but is "absolutely" healthy and does not have the disease himself, the Kremlin said Tuesday



## of the day quote

The United States has no hostile intent towards the DPRK. We hope that the DPRK will respond positively to our multiple offers to meet without preconditions

Given the shared threat of climate change and India's growing need for electricity, there is a strong case to be made for strengthening the US-India clean energy partnership

Singapore welcomes China's continued contribution in our part of the world, and will continue working with China to build a more harmonious and peaceful world

# IN A FIRST US to host in person Quad Summit

In March, Prez Biden hosted the first-ever summit of the Quad leaders in a virtual format that vowed to strive for a free, open, inclusive Indo-Pacific region that is anchored by democratic values and unconstrained by coercion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

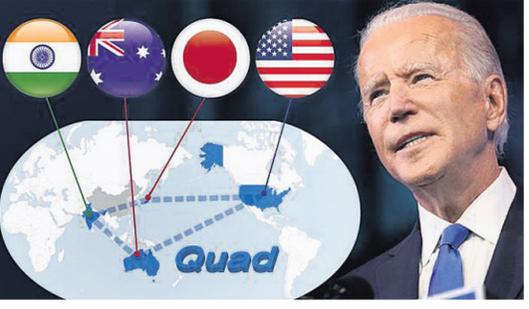
Washington, Sept 14: US President Joe Biden will host the first-ever in-person Quad summit September 24 that will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison and Japanese premier Yoshihide Suga, the White House has announced.

The four leaders would discuss promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific, addressing the climate crisis and deepening their ties and advancing practical cooperation on areas like combating Covid-19, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said Monday.

They will also discuss partnering on emerging technologies and cyberspace.

"President Joseph R Biden Jr will host the first-ever Quad Leaders Summit at the White House September 24. President Biden is looking forward to welcoming to the White House Prime Minister Scott Morrison of Australia, Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, and Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga of Japan," she said.

The Biden-Harris administration has made elevating the Quad a priority, as seen through the first-ever Quad Leaders-level engagement in March, which was virtual, and now this Summit, which will be in-person, Psaki said.



## DRAGON DENOUNCES UPCOMING SUMMIT

BEIJING: China Tuesday hit out at the upcoming first-ever Quad summit to be hosted by US President Joe Biden, saying the formation of "exclusive cliques" targeting other countries runs counter to the trend of the times and is "doomed to fail".

In March, President Biden hosted the first-ever summit of the Quad leaders in a virtual format that vowed to strive for an Indo-Pacific region that is free, open, inclusive, anchored by democratic values and unconstrained by coercion, sending a message to China which has been behaving aggressively in the region.

March 12 and discuss regional issues of shared interest. The Summit would provide a valuable opportunity for dialogue and interactions among the leaders, anchored in their shared vision of ensuring a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, the MEA said in a press release Tuesday.

## SHORT TAKES

### 2nd Chinese city sees delta outbreak

Beijing: A second city in southeastern China has seen a jump in Covid-19 cases in a delta variant outbreak that started late last week.

### Japan, US, S Korea call on North Korea

Tokyo: Senior diplomats from Japan, the United States and South Korea Tuesday called North Korea to return to talks over its missile and nuclear development, a day after Pyongyang announced it successfully tested new long-range cruise missiles.

### Oz capital extends Covid-19 lockdown

Canberra: Australia's capital city of Canberra will remain locked down for a second month after the local government reported 22 new coronavirus infections.

### Putin and Assad meet in Moscow

Damascus: Russia's Vladimir Putin and Syria's Bashar Assad have held talks in Moscow on the cooperation between their armies and how to continue operations to gain control of rebel-held areas in Syria, state media in Damascus reported Tuesday.

# Opposed to UNHRC initiatives: Sri Lanka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Sept 14: Sri Lanka Tuesday said that it is opposed to the UNHRC initiatives adopted through its latest resolution on the country's human rights accountability, stressing that any such move will polarise the society.

Foreign Minister GL Peiris made the comments during an oral submission at the ongoing 48th session of the UNHRC, which got underway in Geneva Monday.

"We reject the proposal for any external initiatives purportedly established by Resolution 461 while domestic processes are vigorously addressing the relevant matters. This will polarise our society, as we experienced with Resolution 301," Peiris said via a video link.

We reject the proposal for any external initiatives purportedly established by Resolution 461 while domestic processes are vigorously addressing the relevant matters. This will polarise our society, as we experienced with Resolution 301

GL PEIRIS | FOREIGN MINISTER, SRI LANKA



A general view shows the Mulino training ground during the active phase of the military exercises 'Zapad-2021' staged by the armed forces of Russia and Belarus in Nizhny Novgorod Region, Russia

# F1 fan mistaken for mafia don

The Hague, Sept 14: A Formula 1 racing fan from Liverpool was arrested at gunpoint after being mistaken for one of world's most wanted mafia boss. Dutch police believed the 54-year-old, referred to as 'Mark L' by his lawyer, was Sicilian crime lord Matteo Messina Denaro (59)

and he was nabbed in a restaurant in The Hague by armed cops, according to sources. Denaro is accused of several murders and has been at large since 1993. Italy has issued a European arrest warrant for the mafia boss who remains one of the most wanted criminals in the world. An old picture of what the

suspect could look like has been widely circulated by both Italian and Dutch media outlets. The lawyer said it had been a case of mistaken identity. It has now been established that the man is not the wanted Italian fugitive and has since been released, according to the public prosecution service in the Netherlands.

## #MeToo

### Chinese plaintiff's 2nd court hearing could be her last

AGENCIES

Beijing, Sept 14: The plaintiff in a high-profile Chinese #MeToo case headed into a second closed-door hearing in Beijing Tuesday in what she said could be her last time in court in her lawsuit against a prominent state TV host.

Prior to entering the court, which was surrounded by dozens of uniformed police and other unidentified plain-clothes security personnel, an emotional Zhou Xiaoxuan clutched a bouquet of flowers as she thanked supporters.

Zhou in a series of social media posts in 2018 accused television personality Zhu Jun at state broadcaster CCTV of groping and forcibly kissing her in 2014 when she was



Zhou Xiaoxuan

# Record killings in deadliest country for climate activists

A record 65 environmental defenders were killed in Colombia in 2020, according to a report published Monday by advocacy group Global Witness, nearly one-third of the worldwide total

AGENCIES

Putumayo Province, Sept 14: An environmental activist in southern Colombia's steamy jungle province of Putumayo was preparing to run some errands earlier this year when she received a warning from a contact, she said.

He wrote me a message saying, 'It's better I don't go outside... They've sent someone to kill you three times already, she recalled, referring to crime gangs operating in her village.' Reuters could not verify the content of the message.

The woman, who has protection from government bodyguards, is one of scores of activists under threat in Colombia, the world's most dangerous country for environmentalists.

She fled her village last October after her activism and opposition to drug crops that damage the Amazon rainforest made her a target for crime gangs.

For her protection, Reuters has not named the activist nor the criminal group, though her story was corroborated by a UN Development Program team.

A record 65 environmental defenders were killed in Colombia in 2020, according to a report published Monday by advocacy group Global Witness, nearly one-third of the worldwide total.

Colombia's government is working across departments, including efforts from the environment ministry and attorney general's office, to mitigate conflict and tackle violence, the environment ministry said in a statement.

The environment ministry will work to provide the country with solid management mechanisms for prevention, protection and guarantees for non-repetition (of violence), the statement said.

Colombia's government has blamed crime gangs and leftist rebels involved in drug trafficking for the rise in activist killings. Reuters was unable to contact the



armed groups. Globally, the number of murdered environmentalists and land defenders hit 227 last year, surpassing the previous 2019 record of 212. Global Witness says its annual tally is likely an underestimate because many killings in rural places,

as well as some entire countries, go unreported. It marks the second year in a row Colombia registered the most killings, despite government promises to increase security in rural areas and offer activists protection. President Ivan Duque could leave

office next year with environmental activist killings having more than doubled during his term, according to Global Witness' annual tally.

Killings of environmental activists dipped briefly in the two years after a 2016 peace deal between the government and the leftist guerrilla group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), according to Global Witness figures.

The peace deal led to a general decline in violence, but the FARC's demobilization opened a power vacuum in some areas.

Some environmental activists are also ex-FARC guerrillas, making them potential targets for their former brothers-in-arms who reject the peace deal and reap hefty profits from coca and illegal mining, activists, the government and advocacy groups say.

an intern working for him, allegations he denies. Zhou's accusation quickly went viral and she sued Zhu for damages three years ago, although the first hearing of the case was not held until December 2020, also behind closed doors.

It was unclear if Zhu was present in the court Tuesday. A lawyer for Zhou could not immediately be reached. Zhou told supporters and reporters near the court that this could be the last time she would pursue this case, without elaborating.

One of a dozen or so supporters briefly held a placard reading 'Let's stand together' before a police officer snatched it away. Unidentified plain-clothes security personnel also recorded reporters' interviews with some of the supporters.

"There has not been a significant women's movement in China as there has been in, for example, the United States or the United Kingdom, so the society still I believe behaves and thinks in a way which resembles the patriarchy. Women are still prey," said a supporter outside the court called Fei.

# business



**“We believe the outlook can only get better because of India's improving ease of business, which includes fiscal benefits and other reforms. These positive steps further convince me that India is moving towards its ambition of a \$5T economy”**  
PUNIT RENJEN | CEO, DELOITTE GLOBAL

## ZOMATO CO-FOUNDER QUILTS

Online food delivery major Zomato's Co-founder Gaurav Gupta has resigned from the company after a six-year stint. In an email to everyone in the company he said: "I am taking a new turn in my life and will be starting a new chapter, taking a lot from this defining chapter of my life - the last 6 years at Zomato"



## of the day quote

**I sincerely hope more and more investors from the US will come and invest in the road and highways projects in India which is the gold mine for all the stakeholders**  
NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

**We are excited to be empanelled to process Ayushman Bharat cards and play an integral role in this initiative. Our deep penetration in tier-II and tier-III cities will help the GOI to service the rural and underserved population of the country**  
SHIKHAR AGGARWAL | JOINT MANAGING DIRECTOR, BLS INTERNATIONAL

**We need to focus on greater air connectivity to enhance tourism in unexplored areas of ASEAN countries. In addition to these we are also looking at early review of the agreement which will help achieve the true trade potential between the two sides**  
SARBANANDA SONOWAL | UNION MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### Bol concludes Hindi month celebration

**Bhubaneswar:** Bank of India (BoI), Bhubaneswar Zone concluded its Hindi month celebration, Tuesday. Hindi month celebration started from August 15, 2021. To mark the celebration, eight competitions like extempore speech, news reading, comic poetry recitation, e-mail contest, were organised in Hindi. The winners were rewarded with certificates throughout the month. Zonal Manager Priyabrata Pattanayak, Deputy Zonal Managers KL Sethi and RC Das were present on this occasion.

### WPI inflation rises to 11.39 pc in Aug

**New Delhi:** The wholesale price-based inflation rose marginally to 11.39 per cent in August, mainly due to costlier manufactured goods, even as food prices softened. Snapping the two-month easing trend, WPI inflation rose in August and remained in double-digit for the fifth consecutive month. "The high rate of inflation in August 2021 is primarily due to rise in prices of non-food articles, mineral oils; crude petroleum and natural gas; manufactured products like basic metals; food products; textiles; chemicals and chemical products etc as compared the corresponding month of the previous year," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said in a statement.

### Amazon boosts hourly pay to \$18

**Washington:** Amazon.com Inc (AMZN.O) hiked its average starting wage to \$18 per hour Tuesday and said it plans to hire more than 125,000 warehouse and transportation workers in the United States. The world's largest online retailer also said it would pay a sign-on bonus of \$3,000 in some locations and the hourly wage could go up to \$22.50. Amazon was among the first few retailers to set a \$15 an hour minimum wage in 2018.

### 11 states meet Q1 capex target

**New Delhi:** Eleven states have achieved the capex target set by the finance ministry in the 1st Quarter of 2021-22 thereby getting permission to borrow an additional amount of ₹15,721 crore as an incentive. The 11 states include Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

# India, S'pore to link their fast payment systems

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Sept 14:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) have agreed on a project to link their respective fast payment systems - Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and PayNow.

This will allow users of each of the two fast payment systems to make instant, low-cost fund transfers on a reciprocal basis without a need to get onboarded onto the other payment system.

The UPI-PayNow linkage is a milestone in the development of



infrastructure for cross-border payments between India and Singapore, and closely aligns with the G20's financial inclusion pri-

orities of driving faster, cheaper and more transparent cross-border payments. The linkage builds upon the earlier efforts of NPCI

**The linkage is targeted for operationalisation by July 2022**

International Private Limited (NPL) and Network for Electronic Transfers (NETS) to foster cross-border interoperability of payments using cards and QR codes, between India and Singapore and will further anchor trade, travel and remittance flows between the two countries.

This initiative is also in line with RBI's vision of reviewing

corridors and charges for in-bound cross-border remittances outlined in the Payment Systems Vision Document 2019-21. UPI is India's mobile based, 'fast payment' system that facilitates customers to make round the clock payments instantly using a Virtual Payment Address (VPA) created by the customer.

PayNow is the fast payment system of Singapore which enables peer-to-peer funds transfer service, available to retail customers through participating banks and Non-Bank Financial Institutions (NBFIs) in Singapore.

# IPO-bound OYO to become public limited company

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 14:** Shareholders of Oravel Stays Pvt Ltd, the parent company of hospitality firm OYO, have approved the conversion of the company from a private limited company to a public limited company, according to a regulatory filing.

Subject to receipt of any necessary approvals from any government, statutory or regulatory authority, the name of the company be and is hereby changed from Oravel Stays Private Limited to Oravel Stays Ltd, as per a Registrar of Companies (RoC) filing by the company.

The company intends to list its equity shares on one or more stock exchanges to enable shareholders with a formal marketplace for dealing with equity shares.

For this purpose, the company proposes to undertake an initial public offering, it added. In order to undertake the offer, the status of the company is required to be changed from a private company limited by shares to a public company limited by shares, the filing said.

This seems to be the last significant permission from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, to enable OYO to apply to markets regulator Sebi an application for public listing.

Last week, the board of Oravel Stays Private Limited had approved an increase in the authorised share capital of the company from ₹1.17 crore to ₹901 crore.

OYO is likely to file its draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with Sebi in the next couple of months, according to sources.

OYO has initiated discussion with investment banks like JPMorgan, Citi and Kotak Mahindra Capital to manage its \$1.5-billion public issue, slated to raise \$1.2-1.5 billion at a valuation range of \$14 to 16 billion, the sources said.

# 'Gross NPAs of banks to cross ₹10 lakh cr by March 2022'

*The study also highlighted that risk management practices of Indian banks, especially public sector banks, have scope for improvement*

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 14:** The gross non-performing assets (GNPAs) of banks are expected to cross ₹10 lakh crore by March 2022, an ASSOCHAM-Crisil joint study had said.

"NPAs are expected to rise to 8.5-9 per cent by March 2022, driven by slippages in retail, micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) accounts, besides some restructured assets," according to the study titled, "Reinforcing the code," conducted by The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) jointly with credit rating agency Crisil.

The effectiveness of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) will be tested by the potential spike in NPAs as the standstill on initiation of fresh insolvency cases



for a year ended in March 2021 and as most of the pandemic-induced policies or measures are unlikely to be continued said the study.

The ASSOCHAM-Crisil study also noted that the expected increase in NPAs of both banks and non-banks this fiscal because of the pandemic will provide an opportunity for players in the stressed

assets market through resolution via various routes, with IBC likely to be the most preferred.

The study noted that the current asset quality stress cycle will be different than that witnessed a few years back. "NPAs then came primarily from bigger, chunkier accounts. This time, smaller accounts, especially the MSME and retail segments, are expected to be more vulnerable than large corporates, as the latter have consolidated and deleveraged their balance sheets considerably in the past few years."

It, however, said that while the restructuring scheme announced for MSMEs and small borrowers should prevent the NPAs from rising too much, there is an opportunity for stressed asset investors with expertise and interest in these asset classes.

# Banks call on govt to ease pressure on Vodafone Idea

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Sept 14:** Banks led by State Bank of India (SBI) have called on the Indian government to give debt-laden Vodafone Idea (VODA.NS) more time to clear its tax dues and spectrum fees, two bankers and a government official familiar with the matter said.

An Indian court last year ordered the mobile carrier, a joint venture between the Indian unit of Britain's Vodafone Group (VOD.L) and Aditya Birla Group's Idea Cellular, to pay just over \$8 billion to the government to settle long-standing dues. Vodafone has a stake of about 44% in the company and Aditya Birla owns nearly 27%.

In June, Vodafone Idea's then non-executive chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla warned that without a government reprieve the Indian mobile carrier's "financial situation will drive its operations to an irretrievable point of collapse".

Vodafone Idea's gross debt as of June 30 was 1.9 trillion rupees, comprising of deferred spectrum payment obligations of 1.06 trillion rupees and an adjusted gross revenue liability of 621.8 billion rupees, its latest stock exchange filing in June showed. The mobile operator also reported that it owes 234 billion Indian rupees (\$3.18 billion) to financial institutions.

# HMSI President-CEO launches CB200X in City



The President and CEO of HMSI Atsushi Ogata San launching CB200X bike at Gugnani Honda showroom in City, Tuesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** The President and CEO of Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt Ltd (HMSI) Atsushi Ogata San launched, Tuesday, the Honda's premium bike CB200X at Gugnani Honda showroom in City.

Directors of Gugnani Honda Satpal Gugnani and Rajan Gugnani and other dignitaries were present at the launching ceremony. Atsushi Ogata also felicitated the Olympian Hockey players Amit Rohidas and Birendra Lakra and handed over Honda Activa scooter to each as a gift.

The President and CEO also visited Honda BigWing showroom to launch premium bike 500X. Bringing a steady evolution in the 180-200cc segment, HMSI has also started the deliveries of all-new CB200X in Odisha.

The advanced 184cc PGM-FI engine produces 12.7 kW @ 8500 rpm for balanced mid-range torque and sporty power. The available colours of CB200X are Pearl Nightstar Black, Matte Selene Silver Metallic and Sports Red.

## 'We can see more market thrust in next fiscal'

*The President and CEO of HMSI Atsushi Ogata San visited Odisha for the first time to launch the new bike CB200X. In the sidelines of the event, Ogata interacted with Orissa POST and expressed that market momentum in the industry will be back to normal in the next financial year. Excerpts from the interview:*

- **How has been the Bhubaneswar market for HMSI?**
  - Yes, it has been very good. Bhubaneswar is a very exciting city in terms of market. I feel this city is growing rapidly. I am here for the first time. It is a memorable city.
- **The pandemic has paralysed sales across the country. How challenging was it for HMSI?**
  - Yes, the pandemic has impacted the sector and it is not over yet. Of course we saw losses owing to the pandemic. But now the market has opened and current business momentum is good. We are confident enough that everything will be normal.
- **When will the sales be back to normal?**
  - During last six months, we witnessed positive sales due to relaxation in restrictions. I hope that in next financial year, we can see more market momentum in the industry.
- **Any advice to your customers and staff?**
  - The pandemic is still not over. So, I advise to stay safe, wear mask and maintain social distance. We will get over it.



Ogata handing over the keys of the first CB200X bike at PGL Honda to a customer in the City

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 14:** The President of HMSI, Atsushi Ogata San, Tuesday, visited PGL Honda, the largest 4-S (Sales-Service-Spare-Safety) dealership of Honda two-wheelers in Eastern India, located near the Fire Station square.

Atsushi Ogata San also launched CB200X City adventure bike for the Odisha two-wheeler market and handed over the keys of the 1st CB200X bike to a customer. He also inaugurated the website and digital showroom of PGL Honda (www.pgl-honda.com).

MD-CEO of PGL Honda Kamal Sitaram Agarwal explained that PGL Honda always had a very engaging presence in digital media.

"Since the customer expectations had gone very high post Covid, PGL Honda decided to revamp their digital avatar and create a One Stop Digital Showroom through their website," said Agarwal.

# ToneTag completes RBI's first cohort for voice-based retail payments

TESTING WAS DONE IN RURAL AND URBAN AREAS IN KARNATAKA AND BIHAR, INVOLVING TRANSACTIONS UP TO ₹1,000

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 14:** Voice-based financial transaction is soon going to become a reality as the Reserve Bank has given approval to ToneTag, a hardware-agnostic sound wave tech solutions provider, for such payments.

ToneTag has completed the first cohort under the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) sandbox for retail payments, the company said Tuesday.

ToneTag has successfully executed offline voice-based payments via feature phones and smart phones in areas with inconsistent inter-

net connectivity, it said in a release.

It further noted that the technology is already in place, we have received the approval from the RBI, now the regulated entities can easily adopt this technology.

With the successful completion of the cohort, ToneTag is now poised to enable digital payments for more than 600 million (60 crore) feature phone users, it said. It will also offer a secure and seamless payment experience for smartphone users who are not digital savvy.

Through this technology, ToneTag is set to drive financial inclusion across geographies and make dig-



ital payments convenient and available for everyone with a mobile

phone, any make or model, it said. Success of our technology in

ToneTag will benefit the people who are digitally not savvy or find it difficult to use apps for banking or payments

The voice-based retail payment technology is now ready for adoption by the service providers

the cohort will not only bring rural India into the digital payment ecosystem but will also bridge the

gap between conventional and futuristic payment options for millions of customers who currently don't have access to digital payment services, Kumar Abhishek, Founder and CEO, ToneTag said.

ToneTag said it has received multiple Indian and global patents, giving it IP moat for scale up in India and other geographies.

It has also launched RetailPods, a device that allows retailers or other vendors to accept payments through any feature or smart phone and receive voice-based acknowledgement or payment confirmation.

# INTER TEST AWAITS REAL

## No Mbappe, no issue, we have Vinicius: fans

AGENCIES

**Madrid, Sept 14:** Thirteen-time Champions League winners Real Madrid travel to the San Siro Wednesday evening for their opening Group D clash against Serie A champions Inter Milan.

This is the second consecutive campaign in which these two European giants, along with Ukrainian outfit

Shakhtar Donetsk,

have been drawn in the same group of the competition; Los

Blancos beat the Nerazzurri home and away last season, including a 2-0 victory in Milan.

Since their triumphant 2009-10 Champions League campaign under Jose Mourinho, Inter have only ever progressed from the group stage on two occasions, and have qualified for the competition just five times.

The Nerazzurri had previously endured a difficult period in the 2010s with new ownerships and a plethora of managers at the helm, though stability and progress has clearly been noticed in recent seasons and the club are now hoping to reach the heights that they did over 10 years ago.

After winning their first Scudetto in over a decade last season, Inter have begun their title defence with impressive 4-0 and 3-1 victories against Genoa and Hellas Verona respectively, before playing out an entertaining 2-2 draw away at Sampdoria last weekend.

Simone Inzaghi's side were in front on two occasions, with first-half strikes from Federico Dimarco and Lautaro Martinez, though the hosts pegged them back twice to ensure the spoils were shared at the Luigi Ferraris Stadium.

Inter now turn their attention to Europe's elite club competition with an opening fixture against the team who will likely be their toughest opponent in the form of Real Madrid, a club they have actually beaten in four of their six competitive meetings on home soil.

Despite this impressive home record, the Nerazzurri have in fact lost four of their last five games against Los Blancos in a European competition, and will likely be in for a challenging evening Wednesday. Claiming points in midweek,

however, would be highly beneficial for Inter's quest to reach the knockout stages and for them to potentially qualify as group winners.

Seeking their 14th Champions League crown and their first since 2017-18, Real Madrid remain as one of the tournament's favourites, though the competition around them has improved greatly and success this campaign could prove to be a challenge.

Under the tutelage of former boss Zinedine

Zidane, Los

Blancos finished top of their group last season - ahead of both Inter Milan and Shakhtar Donetsk - before beating Atalanta and Liverpool in the knockout stages. Real were ultimately sent packing by eventual champions Chelsea, losing 1-3 on aggregate in the semi-finals.

Los Blancos head into Wednesday's opening group-stage clash on the back of a 5-2 La Liga victory against Celta Vigo, which was the first game played at the Santiago Bernabeu in over 18 months.

Around 25,000 supporters certainly got their value for money, as they saw talisman Karim Benzema score a hat-trick, while Vinicius Junior and summer signing Eduardo Camavinga were also on the score-sheet.

Real, who have now climbed to the La Liga summit with 10 points from their opening four matches, have an impressive record against Italian opposition, winning 12 of their last 13 matches in the Champions League, including their previous two against Inter last season.

Head coach Carlo Ancelotti, who won the Champions League with Los Blancos in 2013-14, has the greatest win percentage (76) of any manager at a single club in the competition's history who has managed at least 20 games.

The Italian will return to familiar territory on Wednesday night, with expectations from the board and supporters high, as they aim to kickstart their campaign with all three points.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Madrid, Sept 14:** Vinicius Junior is quickly helping the Real Madrid faithful to forget about Kylian Mbappe. Madrid fans were frustrated with the failed negotiations to bring in Mbappe at the transfer deadline last month, but a few matches into the new season they have found that they can count on Vinicius.

The fans have embraced Vinicius, and did that literally on Sunday when the young Brazilian jumped into the stands to celebrate with the crowd after scoring in the 5-2 win over Celta Vigo in the Spanish league in the reopening of the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium after more than 18 months.

Vinicius was engulfed by fans, who profusely hugged him before stewards and police officers helped him back onto the field. The visit to the stands earned him a yellow card but was a big hit with fans who hadn't been at the Bernabeu since it was closed because of the pandemic and a massive renovation project.

The 21-year-old Vinicius got off to a great start this season, scoring four goals in the first four matches and being a crucial part of Madrid's attack alongside Benzema.

The Brazilian had been often criticised for his lack of goals but has clearly improved, becoming an even greater threat as he continues to display amazing speed and uncanny skills.

Vinicius, who arrived in 2018 as a teenager from Brazilian club Flamengo for nearly 45 million euros (USD 53 million), will be even more important to Ancelotti in the near future as forward Gareth Bale will be sidelined for a while because of a muscle injury. Madrid has long been after Mbappe to boost their



Vinicius Junior is embraced by fans during Real Madrid's victory over Celta Vigo at the Santiago Bernabeu last week

### TONIGHT'S MATCHES

Besiktas v Dortmund  
Time: 10:30 pm

Inter v Real Madrid

Club Brugge v PSG

Man City v RB Leipzig

Atletico Madrid v Porto

Liverpool v AC Milan

Time: 12:30 am (Sept 16)

attack but couldn't get a deal done with PSG last month despite an offer that reportedly surpassed 200 million euros (USD 235 million). The Spanish club will have to wait until next season to try to bring in the France striker, who will then be a free agent.

Ancelotti is more than happy with Vinicius and Madrid's attack for now, with the team having scored 13 goals in four matches, the most in the Spanish league so far. But the defense, without veteran captain Sergio Ramos, has struggled, conceding six times already. Madrid twice had to come from behind Sunday against Celta.

**IN 11 HEAD-TO-HEAD ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES, THE RECORD IS EXACTLY EVEN. INTER MILAN HAVE WON FIVE GAMES, LOST FIVE AND DRAWN ONE.**

**THE TWO CLUBS LAST FACED EACH OTHER IN THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE LAST YEAR, WITH REAL MADRID BEATING INTER 2-0.**

**INTER COULD BE WITHOUT CENTRE-BACK ALESSANDRO BASTONI. OTHER THAN THAT MANAGER SIMONE INZAGHI IS UNLIKELY TO MAKE ANY CHANGES TO HIS STARTING XI.**

**REAL MADRID COULD BE WITHOUT A FEW PLAYERS - SPANISH MIDFIELDER DANI CEBALLOS, WELSH WINGER GARETH BALE, GERMAN MIDFIELDER TONI KROOS AND LEFT-BACKS FERLAND MENDY AND MARCELO.**



KARIM BENZEMA

## 'Slinger' Malinga 'hangs up' shoes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Colombo, Sept 14:** Sri Lanka pace veteran Lasith Malinga, who terrorised the world's best batsmen with his toe-crushing yorkers delivered from a low and sling-arm action, Tuesday announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.

The 38-year-old, who was captain of Sri Lanka's 2014 T20 World Cup winning team, posted a message on his social media account announcing his decision.

"Hanging up my T20 shoes and retiring from all forms of cricket! Thankful to all those who supported me in my journey, and looking forward to sharing my experience with young cricketers in the years to come," Malinga tweeted.

Malinga had retired from Test and ODI cricket in January this year but was yet to call it quits from T20 internationals.

Last year, he had expressed his

desire to lead Sri Lanka in the T20 World Cup, which was originally scheduled to be held in Australia in October-November 2020 but will be held next month after a COVID-forced postponement.

"I am looking forward to help youngsters and guide them in the coming years," he said as he thanked his national team and all the franchises that he has played for, including IPL team Mumbai Indians.

"I want to give 100 per cent rest to my T20 shoes. While my shoes will rest, my love for the game will never ask for rest," a smiling Malinga added in the video.

Malinga, who has played a staggering 122 IPL matches, has 170 wickets to his credit, the highest in the cash-rich league, with the best bowling figures of 5/13. He picked up 107 wickets in 84 T20 Internationals, 338 scalps in 226 ODIs and 101 wickets in 30 Tests.



## Cantlay PGA Tour Player of the Year



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Washington, Sept 14:** Patrick Cantlay was voted PGA Tour player of the year on the strength of his four victories, including a one-shot advantage at East Lake that made him the FedEx Cup champion.

Tuesday's announcement was another big step for Cantlay, a 29-year-old Californian who went from being the No. 1 amateur in the world to being unable to play for some three years because of a career-threatening back injury.

Now he has the Jack Nicklaus Award after a big finish to his best season. Cantlay won four times this season, capped off by the FedEx Cup. No one else won more than twice.

The PGA Tour does not release vote totals or how many players even voted. It presumably was a tight race between Cantlay and Jon Rahm, the No. 1 player in the world.

Rahm finished one shot behind Cantlay at the Tour Championship, where the Spaniard started the tournament four shots behind. He picked up his first major this year

**Will Zalatoris, 25, has been voted PGA Tour rookie of the year, the first player in 20 years to receive the award without being a full PGA Tour member**

at the U.S. Open with a birdie-birdie finish. Rahm also had a six-shot lead going into the final round of the Memorial until having to withdraw with a positive COVID-19 test.

Cantlay wound up winning the Memorial for his second win of the season, and then he set himself apart at the end. He won the BMW Championship at Caves Valley with as clutch a putting performance as there has been all year to beat Bryson DeChambeau in a playoff, and then he won the Tour Championship to collect the FedEx Cup and its USD 15 million prize.

Rahm, meanwhile, won the PGA of America award as player of the year. That's based on points, with triple value for winning a major.

## INDIA LEAVE FOR ASIA U-18 GIRLS' RUGBY SEVENS CHAMPIONSHIP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Sept 14:** The Indian junior girls rugby team left for Uzbekistan Tuesday to participate in the Asia U-18 sevens championship, scheduled to be held in Tashkent September 18-19. The team comprises 14 players and five officials, including coaches, physio and manager.

A total of five countries from across Asia including Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, United Arab Emirates (UAE), India and the hosts Uzbekistan will vie for top honours at the championship.

A total of 52 girls from 13 States/UTs across India were short-listed based on their performance at last sub-junior national championships, national school games rugby championships and their fitness and skill test results.

The short-listed girls attended the national training and selection

camp which was conducted at the KIIT University campus in Bhubaneswar from August 14 to September 13.

"We are thankful to Societe Generale, the Govt. Of Odisha, KIIT and all our partners for their commitment and kind support towards Rugby India's High Performance initiatives in preparation for the Asia Rugby Championship," Vikram Ahuja, President, Rugby India said in a release.

## World T20, Ashes priority for Woakes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Sept 14:** England pacer Chris Woakes says it would have been extremely hard to play in three back-to-back tournaments so he chose the T20 World Cup and the Ashes series over the Indian Premier League (IPL).

Woakes, who plays for the Delhi Capitals in the IPL, pulled out of the popular and cash-rich T20 league along with compatriots Jonny Bairstow (Sunrisers Hyderabad) and Dawid Malan (Punjab Kings).

"My inclusion in the World Cup squad, I didn't know was going to happen - especially a couple of months ago. The IPL has been rescheduled and thrown on to the end of our summer," Woakes was quoted as saying by 'The Guardian'.

"With the World Cup and the Ashes, it would have been too much in a short space of time. I would

have loved to have been part of the IPL but something has to give," Woakes, who will play for Warwickshire this week, said.

Woakes said the T20 World Cup, set to begin in the UAE and Oman after the conclusion of the IPL, and the Ashes series assume significance which is no less than England's summer of 2019.

"A World Cup and an Ashes tour, it's almost as big a winter as our summer was in 2019. It's a shame with what's going on Covid-wise that it's not going to be as normal as everyone would like. But, from a cricket perspective, it's very exciting."

Woakes has shown keen interest in travelling to Australia for the Ashes when a lot of British players are unsure of going Down Under due to expected stringent restrictions. It is expected that Australia will not allow players with their families on the Tour.