



STEADY PROGRESS

Priyanka Chopra Jonas says she is grateful to be inducted into Producers Guild of America as a new member

LEISURE P2



WORLD OZONE DAY

Saving the depleting Ozone layer gave mankind a fighting chance in climate crisis

INTERNATIONAL P10



LEO-LESS BARCA LOSE

Barcelona begin post-Messi Champions League era with a 0-3 defeat at home to Bayern Munich

SPORTS P12

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THIRD NEET SUICIDE IN TAMIL NADU

Chennai: A 17-year-old girl in Tamil Nadu allegedly died by suicide Wednesday in the third death linked to the medical entrance exam NEET. This is the third NEET related death in the state in four days. This development comes after the Tamil Nadu government passed a bill Monday exempting the state from NEET. The teen, a daily wage's daughter, had taken the NEET exam for admission to undergraduate medical courses and was worried she would not clear it. She had scored 84.9 per cent in Class XII. Another 17-year-old student had died by suicide after taking the NEET test Tuesday.



8 KILLED IN J'KHAND ACCIDENTS

Ramgarh: Five persons were charred to death as their car caught fire after a head-on collision Wednesday morning with a bus in this district of Jharkhand, police said. The accident happened at Murbanda locality under the Rajrapa police station, officials informed. The driver of the bus was also critically injured and has been admitted to a hospital, police informed. The deceased include four adults - two men and two women, and a teenage boy. In another accident, a few hours later, three more persons were killed when their vehicle turned turtle.

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An Indian Army jawan performs 'Gatka' with flames erupting from his mouth on the occasion of 'Swarnim Vijay' celebrations at the HPCA stadium in Dharamshala, Wednesday

Relief for telecom sector

The telecom sector got a new lease of life with the Cabinet approving moratorium on payment of dues and allowing 100% FDI

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 15: The Union Cabinet approved Wednesday a big bang relief package for the stressed telecom sector. Among the relief packages is a four-year break for companies from paying statutory dues, permission to share scarce airwaves, change in the definition of revenue on which levies are paid and 100 per cent foreign investment through the automatic route.

The measures, aimed at providing relief to companies such as Vodafone Idea that have to pay thousands of crores in unprovisioned past statutory dues, also include the scrapping of Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) for airwaves acquired in future spectrum auctions. Among procedural reforms, shifting from pre-paid to post-paid connections and vice-versa will not require fresh KYC.

Briefing reporters on the decisions taken by the Cabinet, Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said



Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw gestures as he speaks to the media Wednesday

nine structural reforms for the telecos have been approved that are aimed at fostering healthy competition in the sector to provide choice to customers and pave the way for the entry of new players.

The government excluded non-telecom revenues from the definition of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) prospectively. Telecom companies have to pay a pre-fixed percentage of AGR to the government as statutory levies but this will

apply prospectively.

The inclusion of non-telecom revenues had led to thousands of crores of dues piling up on companies like Vodafone Idea, pushing them to the verge of bankruptcy.

For the past dues, the Cabinet allowed a moratorium or deferment of up to four years in annual payments. But the telecom companies will have to pay a small interest during the moratorium period.

"The telecom relief package is

₹26,000 CRORE PLI FOR AUTO SECTOR

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet approved Wednesday a ₹26,058 crore production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for auto, auto-components and drone industries to enhance India's manufacturing capabilities, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said Wednesday. The PLI scheme will incentivize the emergence of advanced automotive technologies' global supply chain in India. It is estimated that over a period of five years, the PLI scheme will lead to fresh investments of over ₹42,500 crore, will create additional employment opportunities of over 7.5 lakh jobs, Thakur said.

revenue neutral for the government," Vaishnaw said.

The Cabinet also allowed 100 per cent FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) in the sector under the automatic route. So far, up to 49 per cent was allowed through the automatic route and anything thereafter had to necessarily go through the government route.

Spectrum user charges have been rationalised and there will be now an annual compounding of rates. Spectrum can now be surrendered as well as shared.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Economy has recovered from Covid impact, sir, but it might take a little longer to recover from your policy decisions!

Medium flood on cards: SRC

Heavy rainfall due to the depression has damaged 7,450 houses, 1.30 lakh hectare of agricultural land and claimed six lives

POST NEWS NETWORK



Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: With all major rivers in spate due to the depression induced heavy rainfall across the state, the Odisha government said Wednesday it expected a medium flood in the Mahanadi river system. This is due to the opening of more sluice gates of the Hirakud reservoir. Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena said that the government expected a low to medium flood in the Mahanadi river system as the upper catchment areas in Chhattisgarh received heavy rainfall due to the depression which crossed Odisha, Tuesday.

Approximately 23.82 lakh people in 24 districts have been affected in Odisha by inundation due to incessant rains triggered by a deep

depression over the Bay of Bengal for three consecutive days. As per preliminary reports, a total of 7,540 houses and 1.30 lakh hectare of agricultural land has also been affected and crops damaged.

The district administrations have been instructed to submit damage assessment reports by September 22, following which the affected people will be given assistance, Jena said. He informed that the toll due to the heavy rainfall has gone up to six and one person each is still missing in Cuttack and Bolangir districts.

Jena also informed that more gates of the Hirakud dam will be opened if the situation demands. "If required more gates will be opened according to the 'Rule Curve' to

maintain water level at the dam. It has been decided to maintain water level at 628 feet against the full reservoir capacity of 630 feet," informed Jena. As per latest reports, 28 gates of the dam have been opened.

The Water Resources department and officials of the district administration lying downstream of Mahanadi however, have been kept on full alert. "We expect low to medium floods to pass through Mahanadi at Mundali near Cuttack. About seven lakh cusecs of flood water is expected to flow through Mundali barrage. So officials have been asked to be on alert," Jena said.

The government has received reports of water logging in several areas due to the devastating rain. "Though there is no flood in the rivers, all water bodies in the nooks and corners in the state are filled with rainwater causing havoc. More than two dozen villages across the state remained marooned, including 20 in Koraput district alone," the SRC informed.

The good news is water level in some rivers including the Baitarini near Akhuapada is receding.

SC notice to Odisha on abolition of OAT

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Sept 15: The Supreme Court issued notice Wednesday to the Union government and the state of Odisha on a petition challenging the abolition of Orissa Administrative Tribunal (OAT). A three-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices L Nageswara Rao, Sanjiv Khanna and BR Gavai sought responses from the Odisha government, Orissa High Court and Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pension within eight weeks.

Significantly, a special leave petition has been filed in the Supreme Court by the OAT Bar Association against the order of the Orissa High Court that upheld a notification issued by the Union government August 2, 2019 regarding the abolition of OAT. The petitioner sought a stay on the order of the High Court as well as the notification issued by the Union government.

The appeal contended that the Centre had issued a notification

SC DIKTAT FOR CENTRE

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court criticised the Centre for 'cherry picking' from its recommendations for tribunals across India. The government has been given two weeks to complete tribunal appointments with the Supreme Court sternly saying: "Return with the appointment letters...and if someone is not appointed, then cite the reason. We are a democratic country. You have to follow the rule of law," Chief Justice NV Ramana said during the hearing in a series of sharp remarks.

abolishing OAT by invoking Section 21 of the General Clauses Act, 1897 (GCA) when the parent Act i.e. the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985 (AT Act) implicitly denied exercise of such power.

"The Centre could not invoke Section 21 of GCA to do indirectly which was prohibited to be done directly under the AT Act, and by upholding the illegal and arbitrary decision of the government, the impugned judgment is liable to be set aside," the OAT said in its plea.

Goutam emerges state JEE topper

The hard-working student with a NTA score of 99.99% wants to study in IIT-Mumbai



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: The National Testing Agency (NTA) declared the JEE (Main)-2021 results for BE/BTech (Paper-I). The tests were conducted by the NTA in four Sessions in the CBT mode. Goutam Das of SAI International School emerged the top scorer in Odisha with 99.99 per cent marks followed by Tanya Dixit who was second with 99.86%.

On account of using unfair means, 20 candidates have been debarred from appearing in future JEE examinations for a period of three years. Their results have also been withheld.

Goutam has qualified for IIT JEE in his first attempt. He wants to study in IIT-Mumbai. He had also qualified for NEST-2021 and was again the topper in the state and sixth at the national level. He had secured 98.6% in Class XII CBSE Examinations-2021.

Goutam who is a meritorious and hard-working guy comes from a simple background. His father Ravindra Das is a businessman in Balasore while mother Madhuma, a house wife. He said that hard work has been the key to his success and he believes that practice makes one perfect. Goutam informed that he had taken more than 180 mock tests to prepare for JEE in a proper manner and it has paid off.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	58723.20 ↑ 476.11
NIFTY	17519.50 ↑ 139.50
DOLLAR	73.78 ↓ ₹0.21
EURO	87.00 ↓ ₹0.16
GOLD	₹46,940 ↓ ₹320
SILVER	₹63,364 ↓ ₹221

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	32.4°C	32.2°C
MIN	25.6°C	25.4°C
Humidity	92%	92%
Rainfall	0.1mm	8mm

Forecast: Rain very likely

Missile-flexing Koreas create tension

Both the Koreas - North and South conducted ballistic missile tests Wednesday much to the concern of Japan and other countries including the US

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Seoul, Sept 15: The rival Koreas test-launched ballistic missiles hours apart from each other Wednesday in a display of military assets that came amid a faltering diplomatic push to strip North Korea of its nuclear programme. The firing of the ballistic missiles clearly demonstrates North Korea's push to build up on its arms stock. South Korea's presidential of-

fice said it conducted its first underwater-launched ballistic missile test Wednesday afternoon. It informed that a domestically built missile fired from a 3,000-ton-class submarine flew a previously set distance before hitting a target.

The statement further said the weapon is expected to help South Korea deter potential external threats, boost its self-defence posture and promote peace on the Korean Peninsula.

South's test followed two short-range North Korean ballistic missile launches detected by the former's military earlier Wednesday. North Korea had earlier said Monday it fired a newly-developed cruise missile in its first weapons test in six months.



South Korea conducts an underwater ballistic missile test Wednesday

It's not usual for South Korea to publicly disclose high-profile weapons tests that some experts say could provoke the North unnecessarily.

North Korean missiles can hit targets 1,500km away, putting all Japan and US installations in the area within reach

South Korea tested the missile to prove that it is ready to give a fitting reply to attackers

Observers say Moon Jae-in's South, may be responding to criticism that it's too soft on the North.

South Korea's military said the North missiles, launched Wednesday, flew about 800 kilometres on an apogee of 60 kilometres before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

The US Indo-Pacific Command said the launches, while high-

lighting the destabilising impact of North Korea's illicit weapons programme, didn't pose an immediate threat to "US Personal or territory, or to our allies".

However, Japan appeared concerned by the new North Korea launches. "The firings threaten the peace and safety of Japan and the region and are absolutely outrageous," Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said. "The government of Japan is determined to further step up our vigilance and surveillance to be prepared for any contingencies," Suga added.

Wednesday's launches were a violation of UN Security Council resolutions that bar North Korea from engaging in any ballistic missile activities.

leisure



NOLAN'S NEW WWII FILM PICKED UP BY UNIVERSAL

Hollywood filmmaker Christopher Nolan's new WWII movie has been picked up by Universal, which marks the end of his tenure at Warner Bros after working with the studio exclusively for 19 years.

'PLAYING FRANKLIN WAS THE SCARIEST THING EVER'

Singer-actress Jennifer Hudson, who stars in a new biopic on late music icon Aretha Franklin, has revealed that it was a 'scary' role to take on. "Playing the queen herself, Aretha Franklin,... it was the scariest thing ever," Hudson said.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Ganesh predicts that there may be some disappointments today. The reason could well be your own carelessness. Ganesh advises you to draw some motivation from your superiors sometimes. It will only be for your own good.

TAURUS
This day will be filled with a lot of emotional intensity. So says Ganesh. Most of the day you will be driven by your feelings and sentiments and remain absorbed in family issues concerns. You will, nevertheless, not lose out on your professional and business affairs.

GEMINI
An auspicious and progressive day awaits you. You will reflect on the problems at the work-place as well as on the home-front. You will try to understand the emotions that lie behind the troubles brewing at home and will try to resolve them.

CANCER
The day begins with worship and havan. In the evenings, guests will throng your house for a celebration. You will feel sad as your trusted ones will not give you a vital clue or some important information promptly. Ganesh advises you keep away from other's affairs.

LEO
You are facing turbulent times, inspite of your hard work. Obstacles to progress are commonplace and should not tie you down. You need to keep working hard and sooner rather than later, the fruits of your labour will fall into your lap, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Good luck will put you up against some friendly ghosts from some bygone era. The afternoon brings with it some wonderful marriage prospects and you will consider them with an open mind. However, Ganesh warns you to be extra careful when making decisions regarding advanced education.

LIBRA
Ganesh says do not have blind faith in your relatives and friends and always remember even your enemies will prove beneficial to you in the long run. There may be people who are jealous of your reputation and may try to put a dent in it.

SCORPIO
At work, you will be able to solve many jigsaw puzzles that are pending since a long time. Also, you feel the love in the air; passionate about your soul mate, you try to express your intense feelings today. Prospective candidates may consider marriage proposals, predicts Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
You seem to be impressed by the handicrafts and plan to take it up as your business. You are a family person and give much attention to your loved ones. You may be smitten by love-bug as passion and intimacy give rise to romance.

CAPRICORN
The first half of the day is not a favourable time to launch anything. If you have already planned a launch, try to postpone it to the second half of the day, feels Ganesh. If you are adamant to launch the product as per the schedule, be ready to face the consequences.

AQUARIUS
You are ambitious. But, flexibility is a virtue you lack and it may hamper your chances to succeed, feels Ganesh. Learn to let go for a larger scheme of life otherwise you may have to regret later on. Consider pros and cons of every situation and proceed ahead with caution.

PISCES
Today there will be some turbulence on the personal front. Due to outside interference you will not be able to concentrate on work or find the time to think and make the necessary decisions. In such situations it might be better to express your candid opinion rather than keep quiet and suffer. Stand firm and keep your faith as your problems will be solved in the coming days, portends Ganesh.

Priyanka excited to be member of PGA

Los Angeles: The Producers Guild of America (PGA) has inducted actor-producer Priyanka Chopra Jonas as a member of the organisation.

According to its official website, the PGA is a non-profit trade organisation that represents, protects and promotes the interests of all members of the producing team in film, television and new media.

The 39-year-old actor expressed her gratitude towards the PGA Twitter Wednesday.

Excited and grateful to be inducted. Thank you @producersguild, Priyanka wrote.

The Indian actor made a name for herself in her home country with movies such as Fashion, Kaminee and Bajirao Mastani.

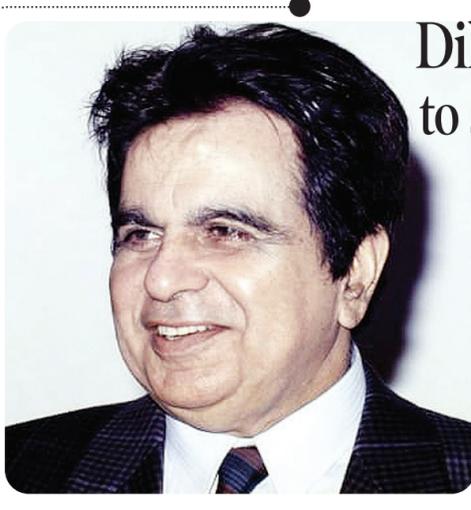
She is one of the few stars from Hindi film industry to have embarked on a successful career in the West with the TV show *Quantico* as well as films, including *Baywatch* and *Isn't It Romantic*.

She also runs a production house, Purple Pebbles Pictures, which has backed the National Award-winning Marathi films *Ventilator* and *Paani*.

Priyanka most recently executive produced and starred in Ramin Bahrani's *The White Tiger*, which was released on Netflix earlier this year. The film, based on Aravind Adiga's 2008 novel of the same name, was nominated for best adapted screenplay at the 93rd Academy Awards.

The actor will next be seen in the highly-anticipated *The Matrix Resurrections*, starring Keanu Reeves, Carrie-Anne Moss, and Yahya Abdul-Mateen II.

Some of her forthcoming projects are the rom-com film *Text For You*, the Amazon Prime Video's thriller series *Citadel*, a film on spiritual guru Osho Rajneesh's aide *Ma Anand Sheela*, and Farhan Akhtar's directorial *Jee Le Zaraa* alongside Katrina Kaif and Alia Bhatt.



Dilip Kumar's Twitter account to shut down, fans disappointed

Mumbai: Late legendary actor Dilip Kumar's official Twitter account is all set to be closed. The announcement was made on his account Wednesday.

Dilip Kumar's spokesperson Faisal Farooqi Wednesday afternoon informed via a tweet: "After much discussion and deliberation and with the consent of Saira Banu ji, I have decided to close this Twitter account of beloved Dilip Kumar Saab. Thank you for your continuous love and support."

The announcement of shutting down the official Twitter account

comes just a couple of months after the demise of Dilip Kumar, who passed away July 7, aged 98.

The veteran actor was battling age-related illness for the past few years and breathed his last at the city's Hinduja Hospital.

Wednesday, reacting to the tweet announcing closure of Dilip Kumar's official Twitter account, his fans and followers expressed their disappointment at the decision. A section of followers also suggested to use the account as a memorial of the late actor and keep sharing his old photos and videos through the same.

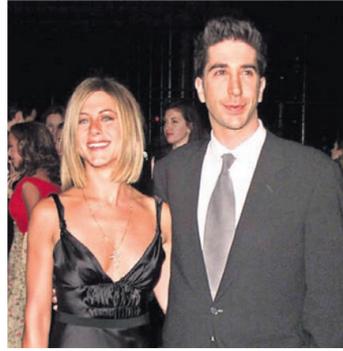
Shriya seeks harmony with nature

Mumbai: Actress Shriya Pilgaonkar says her film *Haathi Mere Saathi* has an important and incredibly relevant story to tell. It explores the delicate relationship shared between humans and the wild.

She says: "For the ecosystem to survive, there has to be a harmonious balance. Us humans have already destroyed a lot of the planet but nature is God and God is nature. This was my first experience shooting in an actual rain-forest and just being disconnected with no network was enough to get into the full feel of the film and what this story stands for."

Shriya is playing the role of Arundhati. On the question how she relates with her character, she says Arundhati always actively seeks the truth and fights for it. "She is someone who can't be silenced. Personally, I think courage in one's life needs to be constantly worked upon in various areas of our life and sometimes the characters I play give me that courage to become the person I seek to be."

Directed by Prabu Solomon, the film talks about the strong bond between humans and animals. The film also stars Rana Daggubati, Pulkit Samrat, Zoya Hussain and Anant Mahadevan.



Aniston on rumours of her dating Schwimmer

Los Angeles: Actress Jennifer Aniston, who played Rachel Green on the popular sitcom *Friends*, has debunked all rumours of dating her former co-star David Schwimmer, who essayed Ross Geller, and termed it 'bizarre'.

However, she knows that fans of the show would love for it to happen one day.

Aniston, who's on-screen character dated Ross on *Friends*, told *Entertainment Tonight*: "That was bizarre. I could not believe that, actually. Like, really? That's my brother. But I understand it, though. It just shows you how hopeful people are for fantasies, for dreams to come true."

The two actors have previously admitted they both had a crush on their co-star during the early days of *Friends*, reports *femalefirst*.

Schwimmer had said: "The first season, we... I had a major crush on Jen."

Aniston had added: "It was reciprocated. I remember saying one time to David, 'It's going to be such a bummer if the first time you and I actually kiss on national television.' And sure enough, it was."

"We just channelled all of our adoration and love for each other into Ross and Rachel."

A source previously suggested that the co-stars grew closer than ever after the *Friends* reunion special.

PEANUTS



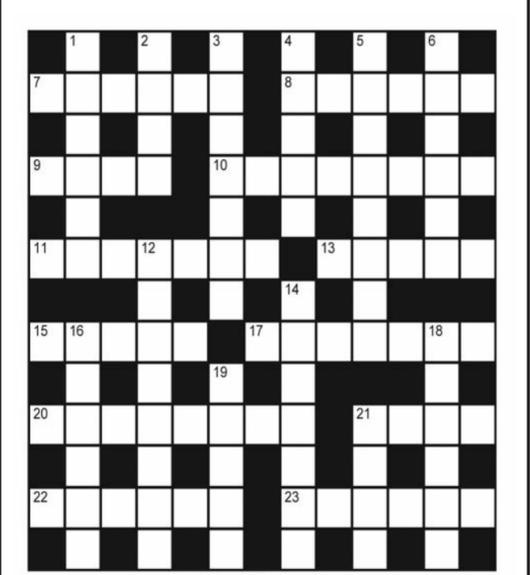
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



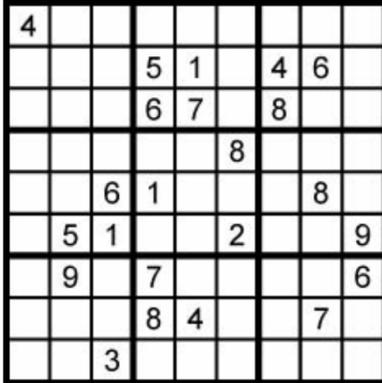
FUN post CROSSWORD



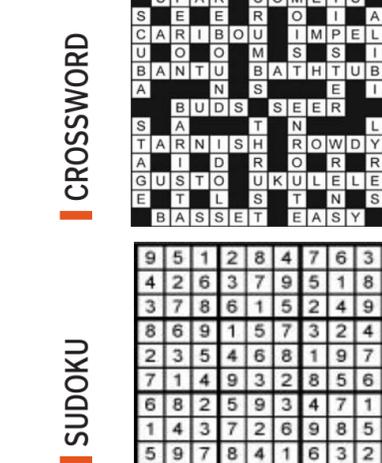
- Across**
- 7 Dense
 - 8 Motifs
 - 9 Big brass
 - 10 Pitiful
 - 11 Chinese dish (4,3)
 - 13 Perspicacity
 - 15 Verse
 - 17 Swiss cheese
 - 20 Putin, for one
 - 21 Lady's escort
 - 22 Air travel bane (3,3)
 - 23 They're fit for a queen
 - 5 Final resting place
 - 6 Pays a bill
 - 12 Fixes up a house
 - 14 Apportion
 - 16 Horse's headgear
 - 18 Model's venue
 - 19 Public persona
 - 21 Pesky insect
- Down**
- 1 Sudden
 - 2 Ambience
 - 3 Japanese dish
 - 4 Utter

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



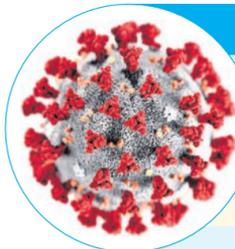
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	22,69,09,244	20,36,70,714	46,66,977
India	3,33,16,755	3,25,22,171	4,43,497
Odisha	10,17,718	10,04,164	8,114

FOR PEOPLE'S CAUSE



The meeting of Cuttack Zilla Parishad underway at the district Collector's conference hall, Wednesday



Emergency helpline 112 receives 8,708 calls in Aug

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: The unified emergency call number '112', which has been operationalised in the state as part of the 5T principles of governance, has received a total of 8,708 calls in the month of August this year.

This was revealed at a high-level review meeting held on digital mode under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, Wednesday.

Mahapatra directed the officials concerned to make the emergency response system fool-proof with least response time. He emphasised on minimising the response time between the receipt of a call and reaching the service delivery point.

In the first phase, emergency numbers 100 of police and 101 of fire services have been integrated with the unified number 112. The Chief Secretary directed the Home department officials to undertake continuous and extensive awareness activities about the new unified number so that people could make use of the system.

The issues relating to integration of 108 ambulance services with the new number was discussed in the meeting. Mahapatra directed to be extra careful regarding service delivery during the process of transition from 108 to 112.

Director of National Health Mission (NHM) Shalini Pandit said that on an average around 30,000 calls per day were being received

DISTRESS MANAGEMENT



Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra directed the officials concerned to make the emergency response system fool-proof with least response time

He emphasised on minimising the response time between the receipt of a call and reaching the service delivery point

IN THE FIRST PHASE, EMERGENCY NUMBERS 100 OF POLICE AND 101 OF FIRE SERVICES HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED WITH THE UNIFIED NUMBER 112

through 108 out of which more than 20,000 calls are related to ambulance service.

Considering the importance of the ambulance service during critical hours of life, the Chief Secretary asked the officials concerned to make the new system fully equipped both in terms of technology, manpower and real time location monitoring of the ambulances. He further directed to appropriately train the personnel at the call centre for handling 108 calls and providing immediate service to the people.

With stabilisation of the new unified system, emergency helpline numbers of other departments would be integrated with it in phases.

Additional Chief Secretary Home, Sanjeev Chopra said that the State Emergency Response Centre (SERC) is now functioning round the clock with 124 call takers with computer-aided systems and 551 vehicles for providing services.

In the month of August this year, a total number of 8,708 calls were registered in the call centre out of which 7,957 relate to police services, 585 relate to fire services and 166 calls were provided through the call centre itself. Besides, 1,915 calls were forwarded to ambulance services.

It was decided during the meeting that more service providing vehicles would be hired to immediately render the emergency services to the people.

PIPLI BYELECTION

BJD, Cong star campaigners' list out

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: A day after the state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) released its list of star campaigners for the upcoming Pipli byelection, the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Wednesday announced its star campaigners for the bypoll scheduled for September 30.

The Odisha unit of Congress party also issued its list of star campaigners for the byelection Wednesday.

Both the BJD and Congress have listed 20 leaders each as their star campaigners for the bypoll.

BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik occupies the top position in the regional party's star campaigners' list. BJD leaders Pranab Prakash Das, Maheshwar Mohanty, Debi Prasad Mishra, Pinaki Mishra, Pratap Keshari Deb, Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak and Sanjay Das Burma have also been included in the list.

The Congress party, meanwhile, named its Odisha in-charge

BATTLE LINES DRAWN



BJD supremo and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik occupies the top position in the regional party's star campaigners' list

BJD leaders Pranab Prakash Das, Maheshwar Mohanty, Debi Prasad Mishra, Pinaki Mishra, Pratap Keshari Deb, Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak and Sanjay Das Burma have also been included in the list

The Congress party named its Odisha in-charge A Chellakumar, OPCC president Niranjan Patnaik, G Rudra Raju, Narasingha Mishra, Chiranjib Biswal, Jaydev Jena and Saptagiri Ulaka among others as party's star campaigners for Pipli byelection

A Chellakumar, OPCC president Niranjan Patnaik, G Rudra Raju, Narasingha Mishra, Chiranjib Biswal, Jaydev Jena and Saptagiri Ulaka among others as party's star campaigners for Pipli byelection.

Earlier, the BJP included Union

Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, Railway Minister Ashiwini Vaishnaw and MoS Jal Shakti and Tribal Affairs Bisweswar Tudu in its list of star campaigners.

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 Baijayant Panda, Bhubaneswar MP Aparajita Sarangi, state in-charge D Purandeswari, 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 necessitated by the death of sitting BJD MLA Pradeep Maharathy in October last year.

The byelection to the Pipli constituency was deferred thrice earlier.

MONSOON WOES



Floodwater from River Mahanadi inundates low-lying areas of Ward No. 55 in Cuttack, Wednesday. Several localities of the city are still under water following three days of incessant rains triggered by a deep depression over Bay of Bengal recently

BJP moves OHRC for probe into Dushmanta's death



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: A delegation of state BJP leaders Wednesday submitted a memorandum to the Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) seeking a thorough probe into the alleged suicide of Dushmanta Das owing to lack of treatment.

Das was a resident of Mantripatna under Kujang block of Jagatsinghpur district who allegedly committed suicide near the state Assembly when the Monsoon Session was in progress. He had accused government hospitals of denying adequate treatment to him.

"There are a few points which raise important questions related to his death. Assuming that the Capital Hospital lacked adequate

facilities or staff for his treatment, he was shifted to another hospital. However, it is difficult to understand the reason behind his shifting to another city while being in a critical condition and not to any other hospital in Bhubaneswar which could have provided him with adequate treatment," the memorandum given to OHRC read.

It also said that Das was admitted to SCB at 4pm after was discharged from Capital Hospital at 1:30pm which the party claimed is suspicious as far as the distance between the twin cities is concerned.

"It is unreasonable to believe that it took the authorities two and half hours to cover the distance of 30km. Despite being in such a critical condition, he was kept in the general ward instead of ICU for his

Cops grill 2 scribes

Cuttack: The Mangalabag police Wednesday interrogated two scribes of a Bhubaneswar-based web portal in connection with the alleged suicide of Dushmanta Das. A police team led by IIC Amitabh Mahapatra interrogated the duo for three hours. The web portal was regularly publishing reports on Das three days prior to his death. One of the two scribes had also spoken to Das over phone September 8. The duo produced audio recording of their conversation before police.

treatment which shows the recklessness of the authorities in handling the case," the memorandum of the party said.

"The party questioned the conduct of the postmortem late at night when it was scheduled for morning. The party also raised the issue of the government officials accompanying the wife and mother of the deceased for the last rites.

"We request you to enquire further into the details of the case while putting together all the details to unveil the truth and ensure justice to the family members of the deceased," the party mentioned in its memorandum.

Grant TR for BSc (Agri) in pvt colleges: HE dept

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: Higher Education (HE) department Wednesday directed the regional directors of education to grant temporary recognition (TR) to BSc course in Agriculture and allied sector in private colleges of Bhubaneswar, Balasore, Berhampur, Jeypore and Sambalpur.

Additional secretary of the department Rajashree Mohanty said it was decided that all the proposals relating to opening/grant of recognition of Agriculture and allied courses shall be dealt by Agriculture & Farmers Empowerment department. The A&FE department has issued guidelines for opening of new colleges/institutions in Agriculture and allied subjects by the private educational institutions. In the said notification, it has been mentioned that they will only deal with issuance of NOC for opening of new colleges/institutions.

Cuttack erupts in protest over capping of Durga idol height



Members of social outfits staging a hunger strike at Saheed Park, Wednesday

OP PHOTOS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Sept 15: The row over capping the height of Durga idols at 4 ft for the upcoming Dussehra celebrations intensified further as members of various social outfits and Congress activists Wednesday staged protests against the re-

strictions imposed on the festival. The protestors urged the state government to ease restrictions imposed on Dussehra celebrations in the Millennium city here.

The members of various social outfits staged a hunger strike at Saheed Park in Machhua Bazar area here and urged the state gov-

ernment to remove the cap on the height of Durga idols.

"We will continue our hunger strike till the state government eases the restrictions on Dussehra celebrations including the cap on the height of idols," said Manoj Panda, a member of Cuttack Samajik Sangha.

The activists of Congress party led by Barabati-Cuttack MLA Mohammed Moquim staged a silent protest near the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Purighat and urged the state government to reconsider its decision regarding the height of Durga idols.

"The Silver city has a tradition of celebrating Dussehra in a grand manner. This tradition is very much associated with the religious

sentiment of lakhs of people. The state government should withdraw the guidelines capping the height of idols at 4 ft. It should consider the pleas of various social outfits, puja committees and citizens' forums on the issue," Moquim said.

The Congress legislator sought personal intervention of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to resolve the issue. "The Chief Minister should allow the puja committees

Barabati-Cuttack MLA Mohammed Moquim sought personal intervention of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to resolve the issue



Congress activists staging a sit-in at Purighat in Cuttack

of Cuttack to uphold their age-old tradition regarding Durga puja. The puja panels can organise the festival by adhering to the Covid norms," he said.

Similarly, the activists of Hindu Jagaran Manch staged a hunger strike at the District Collector's office to protest the curbs on Dussehra celebrations. "Worshipping the deities behind curtains is against the Hindu tradition. The state government should remove the curbs on Durga puja," said Tanmaya Dash, a member of Hindu Jagaran Manch.

CORRECTION

A report headlined 'At 112.9, Odisha tops in rate of crimes against women' on Page 3 of September 15 edition of Orissa POST, quoting the annual report released by National Crime Records Bureau, mentioned that 'the rate of crimes against women in Odisha in 2020 is the highest in the country'. However, it was found incorrect as the crime rate of Odisha is the second highest in the country after Assam. The error is regretted.

— Editor

Single-day recoveries go past new Covid-19 cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: Odisha reported more recoveries than fresh Covid-19 cases for the fifth consecutive day Wednesday with 793 people recuperating from the disease and detection of 457 fresh infections, a Health department official said.

The new cases pushed the tally to 10,17,718, while 10,03,603 people have recovered from the disease.

The single-day recoveries in the last four days were above 680, while the fresh cases were in the range of 420 to 650, said the official.

With an improvement in Covid situation, none of the 30 districts of Odisha is now in the red zone, the official said.

A district with 2,500 or more active cases is classified as a red zone, while an area with 1,000 to less than 2,500 such cases is considered as yellow. Green zones have less than 1,000 active cases.

Khurda was the last district from where the red tag was withdrawn as the number of active cases in the area fell to 2,417, the official said.

The coastal state now has 5,948 active cases.



The state has conducted over 1.90 crore sample tests, including 52,136 Tuesday, for Covid-19, and the overall positivity rate now stands at 5.35%

SIX FRESH FATALITIES—THREE FROM KHURDA, TWO FROM CUTTACK AND ONE FROM JAJPUR—PUSHED THE CORONAVIRUS DEATH TOLL TO 8,114

THE NEW CASES PUSHED THE TALLY TO 10,17,718, WHILE 10,03,603 PEOPLE HAVE RECOVERED FROM THE DISEASE

OVER 2.60 CRORE VACCINE DOSES HAVE BEEN ADMINISTERED TO ELIGIBLE BENEFICIARIES IN THE STATE

Of the 457 fresh cases, 265 were reported from quarantine centres and 192 detected during contact tracing.

As many as 73 children and adolescents are among the new patients, and the daily infection rate among people below 18 years of age currently stands at 15.97 per cent, he said.

Khurda district, which comprises the state capital Bhubaneswar, registered the highest number of fresh cases at 207, followed by Cuttack (44) and Balasore (28).

Four districts—Boudh,

Kandhamal, Nuapada and Subarnapur—did not report any new case in the last 24 hours.

Six fresh fatalities—three from Khurda, two from Cuttack and one from Jajpur—pushed the coronavirus death toll to 8,114.

The state has conducted over 1.90 crore sample tests, including 52,136 Tuesday, for Covid-19, and the overall positivity rate now stands at 5.35 per cent.

Over 2.60 crore vaccine doses have been administered to eligible beneficiaries in the state, the official said.

Vehicles under BH series to attract 8-12% road tax

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: Even as the registration for Bharat (BH) series of centralised registration numbers started in Odisha Wednesday, it has come to the fore that vehicles being registered under the series will be levied road tax for two years and in multiple of two thereafter.

Any employee of the state or Central government can apply for the facility by furnishing an official identity card.

The Union government by amending Rule 47 of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989, has mandated that vehicles bearing the BH registration number will not be required to register in a new state after relocation.

As per an order issued by the State Transport Authority (STA), Odisha, the new system of allotting BH series registration will be completely online.

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

For the private sector, the employee of a company having offices in at least four states/UTs is eligible to avail the number.

Vehicles registering under the

CENTRALISED REG

ANY EMPLOYEE OF THE STATE OR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CAN APPLY FOR THE FACILITY BY FURNISHING AN OFFICIAL IDENTITY CARD

Vehicles registering under the BH system will be levied road tax for two years and in multiple of two thereafter

Two per cent extra charge will be levied for diesel vehicles, while it will be 2 per cent less for electric vehicles

The Union government by amending Rule 47 of the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989, has mandated that vehicles bearing the BH registration number will not be required to register in a new state after relocation

BH system will be levied road tax for two years and in multiple of two thereafter.

The road tax will be charged at 8 per cent in case of the vehicles costing below Rs 10 lakh. For the vehicles costing Rs 10-20 lakh, the charge will be 10 per cent and for those above Rs 20 lakh, it will be 12 per cent.

Two per cent extra charge will be levied for diesel vehicles, while it will be 2 per cent less for electric vehicles, the STA said.

No licence to liquor shops on Lord's land

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Sept 15: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has urged the Excise department to ensure that those who have built liquor shops after encroaching upon Lord's land near Swargadwar do not get licences.

SJTA administrator (development) Ajay Kumar Jena said that a few liquor shops have come up on Srimandir land near Swargadwar illegally.

"The temple administration won't allow anyone to use Lord's land unauthorisedly. Those interested in using the shrine's land must take its ownership legally," Jena said in his letter to the Excise department.

14 police posts created for ICP at Dhamra Port

Bhubaneswar: The state government has created 14 police posts for deployment at Immigration Check Post (ICP) at Dhamra Port in Bhadrak. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has given approval to these new posts which include two inspectors, eight sub-inspectors and four constables. The state government has created the posts to take over the immigration functions after the declaration of ICP at Dhamra Port by the Centre.

Higher Edu dept wants unused laptops back

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: After the Higher Education (HE) department decided to disburse Rs 30,000 each to the accounts of meritorious Plus II pass out students through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), the department Wednesday directed the principals of nodal colleges of the state to shift the undistributed laptops of 2019-20 to the department.

The department, in a letter to principals of nodal degree colleges, said that more than 182 laptops are lying undistributed at different nodal colleges of the state. Therefore, it has been directed that the nodal colleges should shift the undistributed laptops to HE department at Lok Seva Bhawan, Bhubaneswar by September 30 for keeping the gadgets safely and securely.

In March 2021, the HE department decided that instead of distributing the laptops physically under 'Biju Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana', it decided to convert the scheme into a DBT one with effect from financial year 2020-21.

As per the decision, Rs 30,000 will be transferred to the bank accounts of beneficiary student.

OSA CELEBRATES 75 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: Odia Language, Literature and Culture department and Odisha Sahitya Akademi observed 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' here Wednesday.

On this occasion, several poetry recitations on the theme of patriotism were organised by the Akademi at 25 places in five districts—Balasore, Jagatsinghpur, Khurda, Sundargarh and Koraput.

This apart, the Akademi also facilitated several freedom fighters. 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' is an initiative of the Union government to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of independence of progressive India and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' by flagging off 'Dandi March' from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad March 12, 2021. The celebrations started 75 weeks before our 75th anniversary of Independence and will end August 15, 2023.

Derailment in Angul hits services of more trains



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: In view of derailment of a good train in Talcher-Angul Railway section, more trains were affected and several were cancelled Wednesday.

The trains that would remain cancelled from September 15 until further order are: Puri-Durg Special, Durg-Puri Special, Puri-Hatia Tapaswini Special and Hatia-Puri Special.

Six more special trains will remain cancelled September 16, 2021. They are: Rourkela-Bhubaneswar Inter City Special, Bhubaneswar-Rourkela Inter City Special, Bhubaneswar-Bolangir Inter City Special, Bolangir-Bhubaneswar Inter City Special, Rourkela-Puri Special and Puri-Rourkela Special.

This apart, Puri-Jodhpur Special will be diverted via Khurda Road-Jakhapura-Jaroli-Chakradharpur-Jharsuguda-Ib.

Likewise, Puri-Ahmedabad Special will run via Khurda Road-Vizianagaram-Titilagarh-Lakholi and Indore-Puri Special will be diverted on Sambalpur-Titilagarh-Vizianagaram-Khurda Road route. Meanwhile, in view of water-logging on tracks at Hijli station

along with some parts in Kharagpur Railway Division under South Eastern Railway, train services in Kharagpur-Bhubaneswar section has been affected partially. As a result, the following trains were controlled enroute in Waltair Division of East Coast Railway (ECoR) jurisdiction.

At least nine wagons of a goods train on Angul-Talcher Road route of ECoR derailed in the early hours of Tuesday and fell into a river, officials said.

According to sources, some wagons carrying wheat plunged into the river and some got stuck on the bridge around 2:30am Tuesday. However, the loco pilot and other staffers were reported to be safe as the engine remained on the track, they said.

As per latest report, nine wagons of the goods train have already been grounded.

5 trains cancelled for poor occupancy

In view of poor patronisation of trains owing to Covid-19, at least five special trains have been cancelled.

The trains that will be cancelled from September 16 to 22 are: Bhubaneswar-Bhadrak-Bhubaneswar Special, Cuttack-Bhadrak-Cuttack Special, Cuttack-Paradip-Cuttack Special, Cuttack-Bhadrak-Cuttack Special and Puri-Cuttack-Puri Special.

This apart, Puri-Angul-Puri Special will be partially cancelled from September 16 to 22. It will remain cancelled between Talcher and Angul and will run between Talcher and Puri.



Odisha Engineers' Forum felicitates Dr Sukant Kumar Mohapatra with the prestigious Visvesvaraya Award on Engineers' Day at Sarala Bhawan in Cuttack, Wednesday

CUO to receive online applications till Sept 30

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: The last date for submission of online applications for admission into various undergraduate, postgraduate, integrated postgraduate and research programmes offered by the Central University of Odisha (CUO), Koraput, has been extended till September 30.

Now, the students can submit their applications online by visiting www.cuo.ac.in by September 30, CUO sources said. However, the university authorities have urged the students to submit their applications as soon as possible to avoid any kind of inconvenience at the last moment.

Candidates awaiting their results can also submit their on-

Now, the students can submit their applications online by visiting www.cuo.ac.in by September 30

THE VARSITY REOPENED ITS CAMPUS FOR RESEARCH SCHOLARS AND UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS IN A PHASED MANNER SEPTEMBER 13

line applications. But, they have to upload/update the percentage of marks secured in the qualifying examinations at CUO online admission portal before the last date, the university

sources said. The CUO is inviting applications from eligible students for 31 programmes in the current academic year, sources added.

Notably, the varsity reopened its campus for research scholars and undergraduate and postgraduate students in a phased manner September 13. All hostel boarders are required to undergo the mandatory seven-day quarantine period before entering into the allotted rooms.

Earlier, state Higher Education Minister Arun Sahoo had written to Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan asking the latter to instruct the central universities to allow students to submit their undergraduate final semester results/marksheets by September-end.

Two nabbed for abduction, rape

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, Sept 15: The Town police here Wednesday arrested two persons for their involvement in separate kidnap and rape cases.

Town police inspector-in-charge Ranjan Samanaray identified the accused as Sushanta Mallick of Pada Gayajpur under Mahakalapada police limits here and Rakesh Malik of Chahapada under Pattamundai police limits.

Sushanta, a driver, had allegedly raped a 16-year-old girl in November 2018 after kidnapping and confining her in his rented house at Nasidipur village here with the help of a lady.



Although Town police at that time registered a case against Sushanta, but failed to nab him as he was on the run.

Acting on a tipoff, the officials carried out a raid and managed to arrest Sushanta under Section 363, 366(a), 109 and 376(3) of the IPC as well as Section 4 of POCSO Act.

Rakesh, on the other hand, was involved in kidnapping a fellow village girl in May 2017 with the help of four of his associates and raped the girl.

After five years, Rakesh was nabbed.



Former Congress MLA from Kotpad Chandrasekhar Majhi joins Biju Janata Dal in the presence of senior leaders of the regional party in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

MET PREDICTS SCANTY RAIN FOR TWO DAYS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: The regional office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Wednesday hinted at scanty rainfall across the state for two days with no fresh warning of heavy rain in the state.

The IMD claimed that heavy rain is likely to lash the state again from September 18.

The department, however, claimed that light rain could be seen across the state during these days. The department claimed that north Odisha and south Odisha could see light to moderate rainfall Thursday.

"Light to moderate rain or thundershower is very likely to occur at many places over the districts of

north Odisha and at a few places over the districts of south Odisha," said the weather forecast for Thursday.

The Met department claimed that partly cloudy sky with one or two spells of thunderstorm could be seen in the state capital Thursday. The maximum rainfall in the state capital could go upto 33 degrees Celsius. In the rain report, the department said that in the last 24 hours the highest rainfall was recorded in Sundargarh which saw 116mm of rainfall while it was followed by Jharsuguda which saw 76.8mm of rainfall.

The highest temperature in the state was recorded in Nayagarh which saw 33 degrees Celsius while Daringbadi recorded the lowest temperature at 18.5 degrees Celsius.

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DRDO ESPIONAGE

Four accused honey-trapped, CB to take over investigation



EARLIER, A CONTRACTUAL CAMERAMAN NAMED ISHWAR CHANDRA BEHERA HAD BEEN ARRESTED IN FEBRUARY 2015 ON CHARGE OF LEAKING SECRETS TO PAKISTANI INTELLIGENCE AGENCY ISI. HE WAS SENTENCED TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR SPYING AT THE INTEGRATED TEST RANGE (ITR) FEBRUARY 11, 2021

ACCORDING TO POLICE, THE ACCUSED WERE LEAKING SECRET INFORMATION TO PAKISTANI AGENTS. MEANWHILE, THE FOURTH ACCUSED WHOSE IDENTITY HAS PREVIOUSLY NOT DISCLOSED HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS HEMANT MISTRY. HE WORKS AS A DG OPERATOR AND HAD CONNECTIONS WITH A WOMAN SPYING AGENT WHO LURED THE QUARTET TO LEAK INFORMATION

probing team headed by Addl SP Prasant Kumar Bisoyi is heading to @SPBalasore to take charge of investigation.

Earlier, a contractual cameraman named Ishwar Behera had been arrested in February 2015.

information. Police have got evidences about momentary transactions of the accused a woman of Pakistan, the spy agent.

Acting on a tipoff, Chandipur police arrested the four and registered a case. The accused were forwarded to Balasore SDJM court Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the case has been handed over to the state crime branch On the direction of DGP Abhay, a four-member team of the Crime Branch led by Additional SP Prashant Kumar Bisoyi left for Balasore Wednesday to take charge of the probe. A tweet from DGP of office said "As per the order of @DGPOdisha, Crime Branch will take over investigation of Chandipur PS Case No. 76/2021. A four-member

information. Police have got evidences about momentary transactions of the accused a woman of Pakistan, the spy agent.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, Sept 15: Four contractual employees arrested Tuesday over charge of espionage at the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in Chandipur town of Balasore district were allegedly honey-trapped for providing information on secret activities from the missile test facility.

According to police, the accused were leaking secret information to Pakistani agents. Meanwhile, the fourth accused whose identity was previously not disclosed has been identified as Hemant Mistry. He works as a DG operator and had connections with a woman spying agent who lured the quartet to leak

JOY OF FISHING



People fishing in hordes at Lingara canal under Chheliapada bridge in Angul district after Derjang dam closed its gates and stopped discharging water, Wednesday

3 breaches on Brahmani; 58,000 marooned in Jajpur

AS MANY AS 92,000 PEOPLE IN 724 VILLAGES IN THE DISTRICT HAVE BEEN AFFECTED BY FLOODS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur/Bari, Sept 15: Standing crops over 48, 292 hectares of farmland were destroyed after three breaches occurred on the Brahmani river embankment under Bari block in Jajpur district following heavy rainfall, a report said Wednesday.

The breaches have occurred at Sahupada sluice, Mayapada Mirzapur and Bandhadiha gheri embankments near Matiapada. As a result, over 48,292 hectares of farmlands have been inundated, Akshaya Kumar Mallick, additional district magistrate (ADM) of Jajpur, said. Moreover, 92,802 people in 724 villages under 184 panchayats and Vyasanagar Municipality have been severely affected by incessant rainfall over last three days.

However, government officials are yet to reach the spot and provide relief to the marooned residents. The district recorded 5.77 mm of rainfall during last 24 hours. Locals said that in reality five breaches have occurred within one km range of the south embankment of the Brahmani. The breach on the river embankment after the 2020 flood has endangered the lives and livelihood of residents in riparian villages. The 2020 flood is stated to be the biggest flood in two decades. The re-occurrence of a breach is stated to be a major development after the 2020 flood. There were 25 breaches on the river embankment during 2020 flood.

Lack of maintenance of the embankments has led to reoccurrence of breaches. Locals alleged flood occurs year after year due to apathetic attitude of political representatives and the district administration. They claimed that the state government had sanctioned Rs 72 crore in 2011-12 for construction of a gheri embankment in Bari block but it is yet to get completed.

The district administration in coordination with the water resources department had spent around Rs 12.39 crore in repairing



of 25 breaches on the river embankment after 2020.

However, a fresh breach on the river embankment has surprised many. Over 50,000 people in Sahupada, Dharpur, Isanpur, Balia, Swainkhanda, Bandhadiha and Jhalpada panchayats of Bari and Rasulpur block have been marooned. Rice paddy crops in Udayanathpur, Ratalanga, Bodua, Arangabad, Rampha, Balibila, Anyaspur and Kalamatia panchayats have been damaged due to submergence. Communications on Bari-Kalamatia road near the Sai temple to the left of the river has been cut off with floodwaters over three feet overflowing on the road.

It is expected that the flood situation might not deteriorate as water in the river is receding at Jenapur. The floodwater in Brahmani was overflowing at 68.70 feet against the danger mark of 67 feet at Jenapur by Wednesday.

However, it was flowing at 68.10 feet above the danger mark of 67 feet, by 10 pm Tuesday night. The narrow gheri embankment is stated to be the reason behind the occurrence of breach on the river embankment. Swirling floodwaters in the river have left the residents panicky in riparian villages.

According to reports available from the district administration, over 58,800 people of 67 villages have been marooned due to the flood while 410 persons have been reha-

bilitated in six rescue centres. Two teams of fire personnel and 12 medical teams have been deployed for relief and rescue measures.

Incessant rainfall has washed away 27 roads disrupting communications in the area. When contacted, Debashis Pattnaik, executive engineer of Jaraka water resources division, said preparations are afoot for repairing of the embankments after receding of the flood water.

Massive flood likely in Subarnarekha



Jaleswar: Even as rains have lashed upstream areas of the Subarnarekha river, a massive flood situation is looming large on the downstream area like Jaleswar and Basta in Balasore.

Over last four days, the upstream area received 990 mm rainfall. The water level at Rajghat has increased Wednesday. Many panchayats under Jaleswar were waterlogged.

It is said that the water level in Subarnarekha will cross the danger mark by the midnight. Meanwhile, seven gates of Chandil dam were opened Wednesday while seven

gates of Galudhi gates were opened. Sources in the Central Water Commission said flood is most likely to hit Subarnarekha river. It flowed at 9.45 meter at Rajghat.

Rivers in Mayurbhanj in spate Kuamara: Amid heavy rain, Gangahar river in Mayurbhanj district is in spate flooding large tracts of riparian pockets under Gopabandhanagar block. Water level in other rivers in the district is increasing.

As floodwater flows 2 ft above Kauara-Badasahi road, communication to various parts of the block has been affected amid the ongoing rain in the upstream area.

Floodwater is also flowing over Domuhani bridge. Similarly, Nalaha river was full to its brim and the water level is increasing.

Water level in Deo river is also on the rise. Floodwater flowed 3 ft above the Jamghar bridge near Kainsari village. Tangana river also flooded many areas, disrupting communication to Udala, Gopabandhanagar, Jaipur and Berhampur.

Many villages in Nilagiri waterlogged

Sajanagad/Bhadrak: Following heavy rains over three days, Sona river has swelled, leaving scores of areas waterlogged in Balasore. This situation has cropped up after release of water from Sunei dam in Mayurbhanj district.

Many villages under Nilagiri block have remained cut off from the rest of the world.

Villages in Badia, Ayodhya, Karanjia, Sansapal, Sangairi, Todapada, Junakoli and Khadapadia panchayats were surrounded by floodwaters. There has been no communication to Badia and Kolhapal village. An embankment of Jambujhari dam got breached in Mahisapat panchayat. Dambarghati has been waterlogged.

People of the village have taken

shelter at safe place. Officials will visit the affected areas and provide relief to the affected people, it was said. Reports from Bhadrak said that Baitarani river is still flowing over the danger mark while hectares of farmlands have been inundated in the district.

50 stranded as school in Mayurbhanj gets waterlogged

Baripada: Fifty students have been stranded since Tuesday morning owing to excessive waterlogging around a residential high school at Dudhiani village under Karanjia block in Mayurbhanj district.

The hostel of the school had earlier accommodated 90 students, of which only 50 students were residing in view of the second wave of Covid-19 outbreak. Following deep depression-induced rain that battered the district for last couple of days, the school got waterlogged and cut off from the remaining part of Mayurbhanj, a source said.

Construction of an irrigation project in close vicinity of the school raised the nearby land level and caused blockades at several places surrounding the school hostel. As a result, rainwater did not recede leading to severe water-logging, headmaster of Dudhiani residential school Jagamohan Mohanta said.

The contractor built an embankment on one side of the school without information. A previously existing drainage system has become nonfunctional because of the embankment, Mohanta added.

"Our school campus and its nearby areas have been inundated. We have been stranded for more than 48 hours and are in a state of desperation. We appeal to the district administration to take immediate steps and rescue us so that we can go back home," a student said.

Meanwhile, the local administration has taken stock of the situation and assured us that the stranded students will be rescued soon.

Farmers up in arms over farm laws

THEY WILL LAUNCH 'MARCH TO VILLAGE CAMPAIGN' FROM SEPT 22 IN SAMBALPUR



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Sept 15: Farmers' organizations in Sambalpur district are up in arms over various farm issues like faulty paddy procurement, fraud in insurance and subsidy distribution. They have planned to launch 'Gaon Ku Chala Abhiyan' (march to village campaign) from September 22. The agitation planned by the farmers' outfits is said to affect the coming panchayat elections.

The Zill Krushak Sangathan held a meeting at Bishalkunta here Wednesday.

Farmers alleged that the government is trying to hand over the farm sector to private players through new farm laws. The district farmers' unit has supported the central farmers' unions over the latter's bandh call. As per a decision taken at the meeting, farmers will block the NH in front of the Bareipalli market yard for three hours.

Ashok Pradhan, president of the Pashima Odisha Krushak Sangathan alleged that both the state and the central govern-

ments have made laws that go against the interests of farmers.

"Due to faulty procurement policy, farmers have to suffer distress sale of paddy. No government has any concern for the farmers' plight. The government is not paying heed to allegations and opposition from farmers. There is a need for changing the government in order to change the farm laws," he observed.

From September 22, farmers will launch the 'Gaon Ku Chala Abhiyan.' The farmers will fight against injustice being meted out them in various ways and pretexts, they added.

The fight against the government will go on for a long time as farmers will be apprised of farm issues better.

The farmers' organizations have split the district into six zones while a 30-member core committee has been formed to mobilize farmers in villages.

The members of the core committee will visit villages and will organise rallies in all areas, it was said.

TRIBAL FEST



Tribals of Kudumi community celebrate 'Karam' festival in Patana of Keonjhar district, Wednesday

Man killed, houses cave in as rain batters Mayurbhanj

POST NEWS NETWORK

Saraskana, Sept 15: Incessant rainfall triggered by low-pressure over the Bay of Bengal has wreaked havoc here in Mayurbhanj district as a man was killed after his rain soaked thatched house caved in on him during sleep, late Tuesday night.

The deceased was identified as Ram Singh, 47, a native of Asanasol village under Dhangudisola panchayat and this block in Mayurbhanj district. On being informed, Jharpokharia police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem. Saraskana BDO reached the spot and took stock of the situation. He also directed the local sarpanch to provide a house to survivors of the deceased under government welfare scheme.

The death of Singh has laid bare some disturbing facts about the implementation of the government housing schemes for the poor. The state government's promise of converting every kutcha house to a pucca house by 2021 has turned into a farce with the death of Singh. Locals said he will have never died had the administration provided him with a pucca house to live in.

EAST COAST RAILWAY

Tender No.: 23-KUR-TRD-01-2021-22	
Dt.: 09.09.2021	
Name of the Work : DATA ENTRY AND OTHER ASSOCIATED TPC WORKS WITH ASSISTANCE TO TRACTION POWER CONTROL (TPC) ROUND THE CLOCK FOR TWO YEARS IN TRACTION POWER CONTROL (TPC)/KHURDAROAD.	
Approximate Value	₹ 18,29,511.40. Cost of tender document: ₹ 2,360/-
Tender closing date & time : at 1300 hrs. of 07.10.2021.	
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such offer received shall be ignored.	
Complete details & tender documents will be available at website www.irps.gov.in	
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD),	Khurda Road,
PR-379/M/21-22	

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

RURAL WORKS DIVISION-I, GANJAM, BERHAMPUR
Phone-0680-2291405; E-Mail: eerw_gm1@yahoo.co.in
Government of Odisha e-Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. Online Tender // 04 // EERWDG-I // 2021-22
Letter No. 3550 / RWDG-I // BAM / Date: 09.09.2021

1	Name of the Work	Procurement and Fixation of Sign Boards and Road Furniture Works
2	Estimated Cost	Rs. 13.23 Lakh to Rs. 32.56 Lakh
3	Period of Completion	01 (One) Calendar Month as shown in Column No. 05 of Annexure.
4	Date & Time of Availability of Bid Documents in the Portal	From 16.09.2021 at 10.00 AM to 22.09.2021 up to 3.00 PM
5	Last Date/ Time for Receipt of Bids in the Portal	22.09.2021 up to 3.00 PM
6	Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division-I, Ganjam, Berhampur

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal website <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>.
Executive Engineer, R.W Division-I, Ganjam, Berhampur
OIPR-25085/11/0005/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, BALASORE
eerw2_balasore@yahoo.co.in

"e" Procurement Notice for Road Signage Works
Identification Online Tender 07/RWD-II/2021-22 Dtd. 08.09.2021

1	Name of the Work	Road Signage Work as per Annexure		
2	Total Number of Works	07 Nos.		
3	Approximate Estimated Cost	8.44 to 11.69 lakhs		
4	Class of Contractor	'D' & 'C' Class		
5	Period of Completion	As per Annexure		
6	Other details	The details are as follows		
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding	Last Date & Time of seeking Tender clarification.	Date & time of Opening of Bid (Single Cover)
1	2	From	To	5
Executive Engineer, R.W. Division-II, Balasore	07	18.09.2021 at 5.00 P.M.	22.09.2021 up to 5.00 P.M.	21.09.2021 up to 5.00 P.M.
7. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in"				
8. Any other changes / Corrigendum may be seen only in website www.tendersorissa.gov.in				
OIPR-25052/11/0007/2122				
Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division-II, Balasore				

Man in the world's life works out the dreams of God.

SRI AUROBINDO



Financing Food System

The global food system is unsustainable. While it is worth approximately \$8 trillion annually, its negative impact is valued at roughly \$12 trillion. And this is not the system's only contradiction. Around the world, food systems are both affected by climate change (owing to disruptive weather and rising temperatures) and make significant contributions to it (through greenhouse-gas emissions and biodiversity destruction). The millions of jobs they provide are often low-quality and poorly paid. And, most significantly, they fail in their ultimate purpose of delivering affordable, healthy food to all.

Because the global food system is fundamentally unviable, change is inevitable. But the radical reforms needed to create an inclusive, sustainable sector that produces nourishing food for the world's population may have devastating short-term consequences. If we take the wrong approach, incorporating the true costs of production into food systems could trigger widespread bankruptcy, devastate rural unemployment, drive up prices, and increase poverty.

The best way to achieve a rapid, fair, and safe transition to a sustainable global food system that can deliver affordable, healthy food for all is, however, a matter of heated debate. This is reflected in the strident and largely unproductive discussions taking place in the run-up to the United Nations Food Systems Summit, to be held during the UN General Assembly this month.

From a production standpoint, advocates of regenerative farming vehemently oppose a new generation of soilless food production, such as lab-grown 'alternate protein' and vertical farming. But it is tough to scale regenerative farming rapidly. Soilless systems must be a major part of the solution, given their dramatically reduced carbon footprint and water use, minimal impact on biodiversity, and potential for rapidly delivering cheap, healthy food at scale.

The role of finance in this transition is no less controversial. There is some merit to complaints about the undue influence of a limited number of private players on decisions that impact the entire global food system. Financialisation – the drive to maximise risk-adjusted financial returns – is increasing across the global food system, and market concentration is growing. For example, just 10 companies control half of the world's seed market, and four agribusiness firms account for 90 per cent of the global grain trade. Just 1 per cent of agricultural firms own 65 per cent of the available farmland.

Financialisation reinforces the unequal distribution of economic returns, squeezing the incomes of small farmers and communities, while supporting business models that under-supply healthy, affordable food, and over-supply foods containing high levels of salt, sugar, fat, and carbohydrates. Moreover, financialisation amplifies corporate lobbying that externalises public-health costs, maintains perverse agricultural subsidies, and ensures that the costs to the climate and nature do not adversely affect financial bottom lines.

But private capital is absolutely necessary for financing the global food system's transition. We need to harness the massive financial resources managed on our collective behalf by pension funds, banks, and private equity while mitigating the dangers of financialisation.

In a recent report, Making Finance Work for Food: Financing the Transition to a Sustainable Food System, the Finance for Biodiversity initiative maps out the role global finance can play in the needed transition. The report, prepared in association with the Food System Economics Commission, describes four ways financial tools can be used to shape future food systems.

For starters, financial policies and regulation, reinforced by shareholder and public activism, must drive investors' internalisation of the costs to nature and climate in their financing decisions. This change would strand dirty assets, accelerate green-friendly investments, and trigger a shift toward more nutritious food production.

Second, financial innovations, including blended public and private solutions, are needed to accelerate investment in healthy food produced by climate- and nature-friendly forms of farming, thereby driving down costs. Such innovations could involve scalable instruments equivalent to the feed-in tariffs that have been used to great effect in catalysing investment in renewable energy.

Third, policies and public finance are needed to protect and restrain those whose livelihoods are eroded during the transition. The goal should be to provide technology, skill development, and capital to enable them to own and operate commercially viable regenerative and soilless forms of food production.

Finally, we need to create opportunities to empower citizens, especially by harnessing the power of digitalisation. As consumers, they can make an impact by adopting improved, sustainable diets. As investors, pension policy holders, and taxpayers, they can advocate for better uses of their money. Delaying the transition to a more inclusive and sustainable global food system would jeopardise food security, destroy livelihoods, and prevent us from achieving environmental goals. We need to overcome the resistance not only of those who profit from today's systems but also of those who seek to protect the vulnerable. Resetting global finance and harnessing its benefits are necessary to fund a rapid, sustainable, and equitable transition.

The writer is Chair of the Finance for Biodiversity Initiative. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE



Simon Zadek

Just 1 per cent of agricultural firms own 65 per cent of the available farmland



Asad Mirza

CRITICISM IS QUITE RARE AMONG THE LEBANESE WHO STILL SUPPORT THE SECTARIAN POLITICAL FACTIONS THAT HAVE BEEN IN POWER SINCE THE 1990S

While the world it seems has been too occupied with the developments in Afghanistan, another tragedy is in the making in Lebanon – a country facing one crisis after another.

However, the crisis in Lebanon is not new, it's decades old but has worsened over the last two years due to sectarian politics and corrupt politicians, bankers and bureaucrats. The ongoing economic crisis has worsened as the coronavirus pandemic took hold in 2020, followed by the devastating August 2020 Port of Beirut blasts, which have been described by experts as "one of the biggest non-nuclear explosions in history."

Following the Beirut explosions, the crisis worsened exponentially. According to The New York Times, the price of consumer goods has "nearly quadrupled," leaving people with barely any access to necessities like food and medicine. Some healthcare companies have run out of medicines "needed to treat cancer and heart disease" as a result of the country being unable to procure products from foreign importers.

Fuel has become scarce in Lebanon due to the lack of foreign currency to pay energy suppliers, leading to the closure of power plants, hospitals, and water pumping stations. As a result, civilians have been left without electricity and clean water, as well as the ability to heat or air-condition their homes. And those who want to leave are stuck, as there's no fuel available to fill their vehicles.

The ongoing crisis has left almost half of Lebanon's population in poverty, and has prompted more mass protests to remove the political elite "accused of corruption, mismanagement, and negligence," reports the BBC.

In a statement, the UNICEF said: "The needs are massive, and the urgent formation of a new government with clear commitments

FOCUS LEBANON

EXISTENTIAL CRISIS



Fuel has become scarce in Lebanon due to the lack of foreign currency to pay energy suppliers, leading to the closure of power plants, hospitals, and water pumping stations

to reform, is critical to tackle the current crisis through determined and systematic action to protect children's lives and ensure access to water and all basic services."

The crisis-battered country has been run by a caretaker government for more than a year due to a lack of political consensus, making it impossible to carry out necessary economic reforms the international community demands from Lebanon.

Lebanon is heading toward more "chaos and poverty" if a government is not formed immediately, a Lebanese lawmaker warned, with the end of last week marking 13 months since the resignation of Prime Minister Hassan Diab's administration. Diab stepped down in the wake of the port blasts that devastated the capital, but he has stayed on in a caretaker capacity.

President Michel Aoun's term ends in October next year, while the Parliament's term ends in May 2022. On whether the President would seek to remain in power after the end of his term as he did in the 1980s, Vice President of the Future Movement, Mustafa Aloush, told Arab News that "Aoun will not repeat his experience of fleeing from the presidential palace. He is concerned with passing on politics to Gebran Bassil, his son-in-law, and giving him a clear share in the next formulation of authority"

As new Lebanese secular political groups are struggling to organise before the 2022 elections, the sectarian parties are using populist discourse and aid politics to secure the support of their constituencies. Criticism is quite rare among the Lebanese who still support the sectarian political fac-

tions that have been in power since the 1990s. According to researchers and political analysts, despite the vocal social anti-corruption movement that has emerged after October 17, 2019 and the recent wins the "thawra groups" have scored in university student council elections and syndicates, many Lebanese still support the establishment parties.

Being sectarian in design, the political class has played on sectarian sentiment since the civil war. Amal Movement was the defendant of the "deprived Shias," while the Free Patriotic Movement's minister Gebran Bassil presents himself as the protector of "Christian Rights" in his political statements.

Members of new political movements born from the October 2019 protests say that the "us vs them" narrative helps distract attention from real issues at hand – corruption and impunity.

For example, politicians in Christian, Druze and Sunni parties claim Iran as their opponent and Western countries as friends. On the other hand, Hezbollah and its allies claim Israel as an opponent, look at Western states, especially the US, as friends of Israel and accuse them of imposing a blockade on Lebanon, as the fuel crisis in the country deepens.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati has been able to cobble together a 24-member cabinet after negotiating with President Aoun last week, a lineup that is satisfactory for everyone, including an international community that wants sectarian factions to divide portfolios and name a technocratic government. But Mikati admitted last month that the conversation has been less about plans for reforms and policies to recover from the economic crisis, and was focused on who gets what.

The writer is a political commentator based in New Delhi. IANS

SPECTRUM BIODIVERSITY

Following the money is no longer enough

If you want to understand policy choices, it is said, "follow the money." Inspired by that advice, we at The Nature Conservancy crunched the numbers to see what it would cost to preserve biodiversity – the variety and abundance of life on earth.

We found that while the world spends \$124-143 billion per year (as of 2019) on economic activity that benefits nature, it spends much more on activities that damage it. Moreover, to protect and then begin to restore nature, we urgently need to close a \$598-824 billion annual financing gap.

This gap has had devastating consequences. By the start of this decade, the world had failed to achieve a single one of the 2010 Aichi Targets, the world's blueprint for biodiversity conservation. Now, another plan is in the works. Over the past two years, scientists and government officials have been drafting a new global framework of targets for managing nature through 2030, to be adopted at the next conference of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming, China, the first part of which is now scheduled for this October.

The CBD framework, like that of the 2015 Paris climate agreement, will signal government ambition, set clear priorities for action, and indicate what the private sector needs to do to support global targets. Our research shows, however, that stopping the biodiversity crisis will require backing these ambitious

new targets with equally ambitious financing plans.

To that end, our report recommends various ways to find the money needed to rebuild an economy that supports nature. The financing gap must be closed from both ends – by reducing financial need and increasing financial flows. First, we must cease or redirect economic activity that actively harms nature. While governments around the world provide approximately \$30 billion per year in subsidies and price supports for farmers, only 15 per cent of these incentives support sustainable outcomes. Worse, most of them may lead to overuse of fertilizers or land conversion.

Second, we must be more creative about how we generate new funding to protect and restore nature. We also need better regulation to ensure that there is no net loss of nature. As we build the new infrastructure for a low-carbon economy, we must avoid damaging nature as much as possible, and compensate for truly unavoidable effects by restoring or protecting ecosystems elsewhere.

Within the private sector, there is ample room for growth in green finance tools such as environmental-impact bonds and low-interest green loans that fund biodiversity-enhancing initiatives. But to realise this potential, governments must create the right conditions for greater private investment by developing and enforcing mechanisms that require industries to

value nature in their operations and throughout their supply chains.

Finally, we must deploy our current spending more efficiently. Coral reefs, forests, wetlands, and other ecosystems provide healthy, sustainable habitats while also furnishing communities with natural water-management and coastal-protection services. This "natural infrastructure" is sometimes even more cost-effective than engineered "grey" solutions like dams and floodwalls.

Protecting and restoring natural ecosystems not only preserves biodiversity but also helps to absorb greenhouse gases and build resilience against the effects of climate change. The biodiversity crisis is intimately linked to the climate crisis. Natural climate solutions have the potential to cover one-third of the annual emissions reductions needed to keep global warming well below 2° Celsius.

The first draft of the new global biodiversity action plan emphasises the importance of closing the \$700 billion annual financing gap by 2030. It calls for a \$500 billion reduction in harmful financial flows across sectors, and for a mobilisation of \$200 billion more per year in positive financial flows.

These financial targets are a necessary counterpart to targets for sectoral sustainability where the critical areas are agriculture, infrastructure, and financial services. Target 15 of the action plan asks all businesses to "assess and report

on their dependencies and impacts on biodiversity, and progressively reduce negative impacts by at least half and increase positive impacts."

The new biodiversity framework should require countries to develop national biodiversity finance plans that will identify and then close national funding gaps, align all public and private financial flows, and assist with similar efforts beyond their borders when they can. These policy reforms and their associated budgets will need to include specific allocations for indigenous and local communities that contribute to the conservation of biodiversity.

Developing countries will need financial help. This can be provided by doubling foreign aid flows by the middle of this decade, and by allocating up to 30 per cent of climate aid for nature-based solutions, as countries like France and the United Kingdom have already done.

Finally, action on the home front is critical. We need countries to spend more domestically to reduce their emissions, build resilience, protect biodiversity, and spend less overall on activities that harm nature and the climate.

Following the money is no longer enough. We must take an active hand in redirecting it.

The writer is Director of Global Policy, Institutions and Conservation Finance at The Nature Conservancy. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

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WISDOM CORNER

It's the repetition of affirmations that leads to belief. And once that belief becomes a deep conviction, things begin to happen.

MUHAMMAD ALI

There are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long range risks of comfortable inaction.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.

CARL JUNG

WORDSWORTH

Peely-wally

This is a Scots urban word that means to be pale and and colourless in appearance or off-colour and ill-looking. Note that the second half rhymes with Sally, not holly. It can refer to the national skin colour of Scots: With his peely-wally complexion, freckles and shock of ginger hair, Greg Rutherford looks like he could be Scottish (The Herald (Glasgow), 30 July 2014). We know it starts life around the early years of the nineteenth century as the single word peelie for a person who is thin, gaunt or pale. Dictionaries usually suggest it's an imitation of a slight, high-pitched sound, perhaps a noise that someone in distress might make. If so, it's linked to another imitative Scots word, peek, for the feeble cry of a small bird or animal, a whine or whimper of complaint, or an insignificant person with a piping voice. Wherever it came from, peelie became duplicated during the nineteenth century to make peely-wally. Some reference works say that the second half is a nonsense word, but others point to the Scots wally. This isn't the relatively recent English slang term for a silly or inept person (which is pronounced differently), but means something that's made of china (a wally dug is a china dog). It's from an Old English verb meaning to fade. So somebody wally-like was as pale as china. Chambers Dictionary suggests the paleness might be that of old-fashioned dentures, which were once made of porcelain and were commonly called wallies.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Lesson from Japan

Sir, The labour force participation rate (LFPR) of India is one of the lowest in the world. It has declined to 21 per cent today which is not even half of the global average of 47 per cent. A majority of India is still stuck in the 20th century duties for the genders. Women aren't expected to work and the ones that have the courage to try aren't provided with the necessary means to progress. 'Womanomics' is associated with Japan's economic vision. Generous parental leave benefits, gender transparency and work style reforms mandating equal pay for equal work boosted Japan's GDP by 10 per cent in 2019. Given the potential of the women workforce in terms of contribution to GDP, 'Womanomics' is even more imperative in India than anywhere else. India needs to take inspiration from Japan so that women have an equal chance to be as successful as men in the economy. Tejal Kumar, PUNE

GST on insurance

Sir, The pandemic has shown us that medical insurance is a basic necessity, and not a luxury. However, insurance is subject to a very high GST of 18 per cent, further putting a huge burden on the middle class and senior citizens. Healthcare needs to be affordable to all, and the GST burden on medical insurance needs to be reduced to 5 per cent. The government is urged to take immediate action, and ease the lives of millions of Indians. It is essential to develop health-financing systems that improve financial risk protection and help achieve universal health coverage. However, policymakers need to ensure that healthcare and financial burden on the public who go for medical claim policies are adequately addressed. CK Subramaniam NAVI MUMBAI

Punish anti-nationals

Sir, Those who are involved in sharing sensitive information of our country with foreign agencies must not be spared at any cost. They are the enemies of the people of this country. Their sinister designs could jeopardise our security and sovereignty. They deserve capital punishment. The family members of such evil-doers should boycott them and their earnings. Further, the photographs of such people should be pasted in every nook and corner. This is needed to contain such anti-national activities. Paramananda Birganthia, SUNDARGARH

Admin fends off WB's encroachment bid



BORDER ROW WITH BENGL

A face-off between the Administrations of both the states took place as recently as September 7 when officials of West Bengal government tried to initiate an illegal construction inside Odisha territory. Subsequently, they were pushed back after officials of the Balasore district administration reached the spot after being notified by locals

However, West Bengal Irrigation Department officials were back on the same spot Tuesday amid heavy rain to initiate construction on the coastal embankment project

Once again facing opposition from locals and administrative officials including Bhograih tehsildar Kamalakant Panda, Talsari Marine Police and Revenue Department staff, they were forced to go back

ing in tandem with Digha-Sankarpur Development Authority has been making repeated efforts to merge Sahabajipur and Udaipur areas of Balasore district in West Bengal territory.

However, strong resistance by border residents and timely intervention of Odisha government officials scuttled the nefarious designs of West Bengal government.

pushed back after officials of the Balasore district administration reached the spot after being notified by locals.

However, West Bengal Irrigation Department officials were back on the same spot Tuesday amid heavy rain to initiate construction on the coastal embankment project.

Once again facing opposition from locals and administrative officials including Bhograih tehsildar Kamalakant Panda, Talsari Marine Police and Revenue Department staff, they were forced to go back.

The district administration has enforced Section-144 in the area and planted red flags to demarcate the territory.

Locals have been alleging that the West Bengal government, work-

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhograi, Sept 15: Balasore district administration Tuesday repulsed yet another attempt by West Bengal government to encroach upon territory in Odisha, district-level officials said.

According to sources in the district administration, officials from the Irrigation Department of West Bengal government have been trying to illegally occupy land near Udaipur beach under Bhograih block in the district.

A face-off between the administrations of both the states took place as recently as September 7 when officials of West Bengal government tried to initiate an illegal construction inside Odisha territory. Subsequently, they were



Derailed bogies being removed with the help of earthmovers at Bhogabereni near Talcher Road station in Angul district, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

ENGINEERS FORCED TO WALK ON DIRT ROAD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nirakarpur, Sept 15: Two engineers working at Rajua subdivision of Khurda irrigation department filed an FIR Tuesday evening alleging that they were manhandled, scolded and forced by locals to walk on a muddy village road at Bhagabatipada of Lendo panchayat in the district.

The two officials are deputy executive engineer Akshaya Kumar Behera and junior engineer Sishir Kumar Sahoo. According to police, the villagers of Bhagabatipada and Taila mostly depend on Jamujhari canal road to access the embankment of Malaguni river here. Although, the Jamujhari canal road comes under Uikhia irrigation project, the drainage department had been

looking after its maintenance in previous years, the source said.

Subsequently, acting on repeated request of Bhagabatipada villagers, a five-metre long guard-wall is being constructed in the Jamujhari canal by Khurda irrigation department at a cost of ₹60 lakh.

However, as the work has not been completed for several months, local residents are unable to ac-

cess the embankment of Malaguni river. The approach road is filled with slur during rainy season.

The two engineers were allegedly ill-treated when they had gone to the embankment Monday for inspecting it. As the officials could not give any satisfactory answer to instant queries of Bhagabatipada villagers on the ongoing work, the latter became annoyed.

Rajnagar: 1,435 farmers included in Balaram Yojana

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rajnagar, Sept 15: AMLA Dhruva Sahu launched the 'Balaram Yojana' in Rajnagar area of Kendrapara district Wednesday. In the first phase, 1,435 farmers will be provided farm loans in Rajnagar block.

The MLA said the scheme is aimed at providing crop loans to small, marginal and landless farmers so that they would not go to private money lenders for their farming activities.

Under the new scheme, the landless cultivators will get loans through joint liability groups (JLGs). If the JLGs pay off loans in time, they will not have to pay



interests and be provided with more loans.

He also distributed loans to beneficiaries at a meeting in the meeting hall of the block office.

"KALIA and Balia Yojanas are contributions of the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD government to

boost the farm sector and empower the farmers. The central government has followed this scheme. This scheme is being hailed as a good one across the country," he asserted.

Under the 'Balaram' scheme, the government has set a target to provide farm loans to 7 lakh landless farmers in next two years. It has set aside ₹1,040 crore for the purpose.

In the first phase, over ₹3.69 crore has been sanctioned as farm loans in Rajnagar area while 1,435 cultivators of 187 JLGs under 14 primary agriculture cooperative societies were included in the scheme. Loans were released to 33 JLGs Wednesday.

Notably, IMAGE and Agricultural Technology Management Agencies (ATMA) are coordinating the implementation of the yojana at the state and the district levels. In rural and small towns, around 7,000 branches of banks and Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies coordinate the implementation.

As per the scheme, each JLG will get a maximum of ₹1.60 lakh loan. Members of the Odisha Krushak Sathi and agriculture employees help constitute the groups and direct them to banks. The interest rate and subsidy on the loan amount is decided as per the guidelines of the state farm loan rules, it was said.

Locals sore over delay in bridge projects across Mahanadi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagatsinghpur, Sept 15: Panchayat elections are round the corner in the state, the issue of communication in Tirtol constituency of Jagatsinghpur district has come to the fore.

Two major bridge projects across the Mahanadi river in the areas have not yet started. The two proposed bridges assume importance for communication sector in the constituency. The projects are getting delayed due to changes in designs and other factors while locals have expressed unhappiness over the delay.

Reports said, after the death of Tirtol MLA Bishnu Charan Das the bye-election to the Assembly seat was necessitated. Communication is a major issue in the riparian villages along the Mahanadi. Locals had been demanding bridges across the Mahanadi for a long time.

Ahead of the bye-polls, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone for two bridges through video-conferencing – one connecting Tirtol and Posal and another connecting Jaipur and Katikata high level.

After this, people were happy that their long pending demand was fulfilled. Locals lamented that 10 months have passed since their foundation laying, nothing has started as yet.

Rs 118.56 crore has been estimated towards the cost of Tirtol-Posal high level bridge. The 900-meter long bridge will be made of steel.

But its design was changed later.



It was learnt that over 1.5 lakh people living in 28 riparian panchayats of Cuttack and Kendrapara districts will benefit in communication front.

However, the delay in bridge construction has caused resentment among people at a time when the panchayat elections are approaching.

As for the Tirtol-Posal bridge project, Ananta Gopal Satpathy, executive engineer of the rural development department, said that after the tender, an agreement with the contractor concerned has been signed two months ago.

"After rainy season or after Dussehra, its construction work will be taken up. The project will be completed in two years," he added. Meanwhile, tender for the Jaipur-Katikata bridge has been finalized and an agreement with the contractor will be signed soon. Its work will be started after the monsoon, it was learnt.

AGRI-PROMOTION



Artistes performing traditional 'Chadheya' dance to create awareness on agriculture at the launching of 'Krusha Rath' at Oupada in Balasore

OP PHOTO

Development takes back seat in Ganjam NAC

Despite being accorded the status of an NAC, the town lacks basic facilities like education, health and road communication

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ganjam, Sept 15: Absence of basic facilities in the town such as education, health and road communication has pushed the local residents to the edge. Sources said residents are waiting for the municipal election to vent their ire.

Ganjam NAC is one of the prominent towns in Ganjam district. But when it comes to basic amenities, it is far behind Chhatrapur and Rambha NACs. Since practically nothing has been done to improve the health, education and road facilities despite taking up the issues with the administration on several occasions, the residents are forced to live with the problems.

According to local residents, it has been long since the town received NAC status. But it has not progressed as it should have had. "Due to administrative inertia and lack of will power, the NAC has been struggling with dilapidated roads. We don't have even a Kalyan Mandap to hold social functions. A



rest shed for commuters and a public toilet are also in our wish list," said the residents.

Foundation stones for a rest shed and public toilet were laid at Bad Bazaar August 31, 2015. Six years have passed since then, but work on these two facilities is yet to start. A budget of Rs9.5 lakh was sanctioned from backward regions grant fund (BRGF) to carry out the construction work.

Similarly, the foundation stone for a Kalyan Mandap was laid beside the Odia Dhamana Sahi road. Its fate is no different from that of the rest shed and public toilet. The construction of a new Aahaar centre is yet to be completed. While work on some projects is yet to be started, some others have been left half-completed.

With these projects hanging fire, resentment among local residents

is brewing. The residents of the town have already decided to teach a lesson to the authorities in the coming municipality election.

At a time when the government is claiming that it has been giving priority to the basic problems of people, the situation in Ganjam NAC is telling a different story.

All attempts to contact the executive officer of Ganjam NAC Ronit Kumar over his mobile phone

According to local residents, it has been long since the town received NAC status. But the civic body areas have not progressed as it should have had. Due to administrative inertia and lack of will power, the NAC has been struggling with dilapidated roads. We don't have even a Kalyan Mandap to hold social functions, they lamented

Yuva BJD president Sudhir Kumar Padhi said the MLA was apprised of the problems of the town. Projects will be completed soon, he added

for his reaction failed.

Speaking on the issue, NAC Yuva BJD president Sudhir Kumar Padhi said the MLA has been apprised of the problems of the town. "The half-constructed projects will soon be completed and the work on the other projects will also begin," he said.

Water-logging: Cong releases fish on overbridge in Rourkela

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, Sept 15: Members of the Congress party adopted a novel method to protest the crumbling drainage system in Steel City as they released fish on the STI overbridge in the city where accumulation of rainwater posed serious threat to the safety of commuters.

Reports said large craters have come up on the STI overbridge which was constructed in 2019. The formation of craters has led to accumulation of rainwater posing serious threat to the safety of the commuters. Moreover, dividers on the bridge have broken at many places making travelling on the bridge a nightmare for commuters

The protest was led by party leader and former MLA George Tirkey. Tirkey alleged the bridge work was substandard. He staged protests along with his party members against unprecedented water-logging in several residential and commercial areas in the city.

He alleged that due to sub-standard work, rainwater accumulated

NOVEL PROTEST



in the craters leading to creation of artificial ponds on the bridge. The party members demanded necessary action against the consultancy firm and engineers who supervised the bridge work.

The protesters alleged that the civic body has never declogged the drains in the city. President of Congress Seva Dal, Rourkela district, Binod Chandra Rout said commuters have to wade through knee-deep water on the flyover. This has forced them to release fishes in the water to make the authorities understand the dire situation, Rout added. The party leaders threatened to intensify stir against the irregularities in the bridge project.

BJP-Congress face-off intensifies for MP bypolls

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, Sept 15: Even before the announcement of the dates for the byelections scheduled to be held in three Assembly seats and one Lok Sabha constituency in Madhya Pradesh, the political fight between the BJP and the Congress has already intensified.

The BJP has ramped up its efforts for these byelections with party leaders and MP ministers actively working in the areas going to the polls. Byelections are being held in the three assembly constituencies of Raigaon in Satna district, Prithvipur in Niwari and Jobat in Alirajpur district. A byelection is also scheduled in the Khandwa Lok Sabha constituency.

Of the four byelections, Jobat and Prithvipur were held by Congress MLAs while Raigaon was controlled by a BJP MLA and Khandwa too had a BJP MP. These four seats are lying vacant since the death of their representatives.

Apart from the party organisation in-charge, all BJP ministers have also been entrusted with responsibilities in the polls. BJP State President Vishnu Datt Sharma has visited many areas while Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan is trying to reach out to the voters under the 'Jan Darshan' programme.

Chouhan recently held 'Jan Darshan' programmes in several villages of Raigaon and Prithvipur as



semble constituencies and assured the people that the BJP government will work even harder for the welfare of each section of the society. The Chief Minister promised that any complaints against any state government official will immediately be acted upon.

Vishnu Dutt Sharma believes that there is better coordination between the party and the state government due to which the various government initiatives are being successfully implemented with the hard work of the party workers. The state government has achieved huge success during the two phases of the Covid vaccination campaign which has been possible only due to the party workers.

On the other hand, the Congress has taken jibes at Chouhan's aggressive policies. Madhya Pradesh Congress spokesperson Ajay Singh Yadav said that Chouhan only believes in indulging in political drama. Chouhan engaged in political drama

during the Jan Darshan programme and action was taken against the state officials to fool the general public, Yadav added.

"The Chief Minister has suspended state officials over irregularities in the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in Prithvipur. If such strict action is taken against all officials there will no longer be any Chief Minister's Office (CMO) or Tehsildar left in the state. This is because there is not a single municipal corporation and panchayat in the state where corruption and misappropriation of funds has not taken place under the PM Awas Yojana."

According to political analysts, the upcoming Assembly and Lok Sabha bypolls are quite significant in view of the state's politics. While these elections are crucial for the BJP, the Congress, too, has taken these elections seriously. The results of these byelections will have a big impact on the 2024 Assembly elections.

DELHI BANS FIRECRACKERS ON DIWALI

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 15: The Delhi government Wednesday banned the storage, sale and use of firecrackers during Diwali owing to the "dangerous pollution levels" in the national capital around the time of the festival.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that like last year, it was essential to implement the ban in order to save lives.

"In view of the dangerous condition of pollution in Delhi during the Diwali period for the last three years, and like last year, a complete ban is being imposed on the storage, sale and use of all types of firecrackers. So that people's lives can be saved," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

"Last year, a complete ban on firecrackers was imposed late after



assessing the seriousness of the situation. This caused losses to the traders. It is an appeal to all the traders that this time in view of the complete ban, please do not stock," he said.

Environment Minister Gopal

Rai said that the National Green Tribunal had called for a complete ban on firecrackers in poor air quality regions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The data of CPCB for the last three years shows Delhi is almost

in the poor pollution index. Last year, besides Delhi - Rajasthan, Odisha, Sikkim, West Bengal, Chandigarh, 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh had imposed a complete ban on firecrackers," he said.

Rai said that last year, the Delhi government decided in favour of the complete ban on November 6, which was just before Diwali.

"The Delhi Police had already issued temporary licences for sale of firecrackers and because of this, traders and dealers suffered losses. There were also incidents of bursting of firecrackers in Delhi by the residents due to easy availability. To avoid any such situation, we decided that the DPCC, like last year, will issue directions for complete ban on sale, use and storage of all types of firecrackers with immediate effect," he added.

Woman in soup for dancing on zebra crossing

AGENCIES

BHOPAL/INDORE: A video has gone viral on social media, in which a young woman is seen dancing on a zebra crossing at a busy square in Indore when the traffic signal turns red, which prompted the Madhya Pradesh government to order action against her Wednesday.

The 30-second video shows that the woman, dressed in black and also wearing a mask and a cap of that

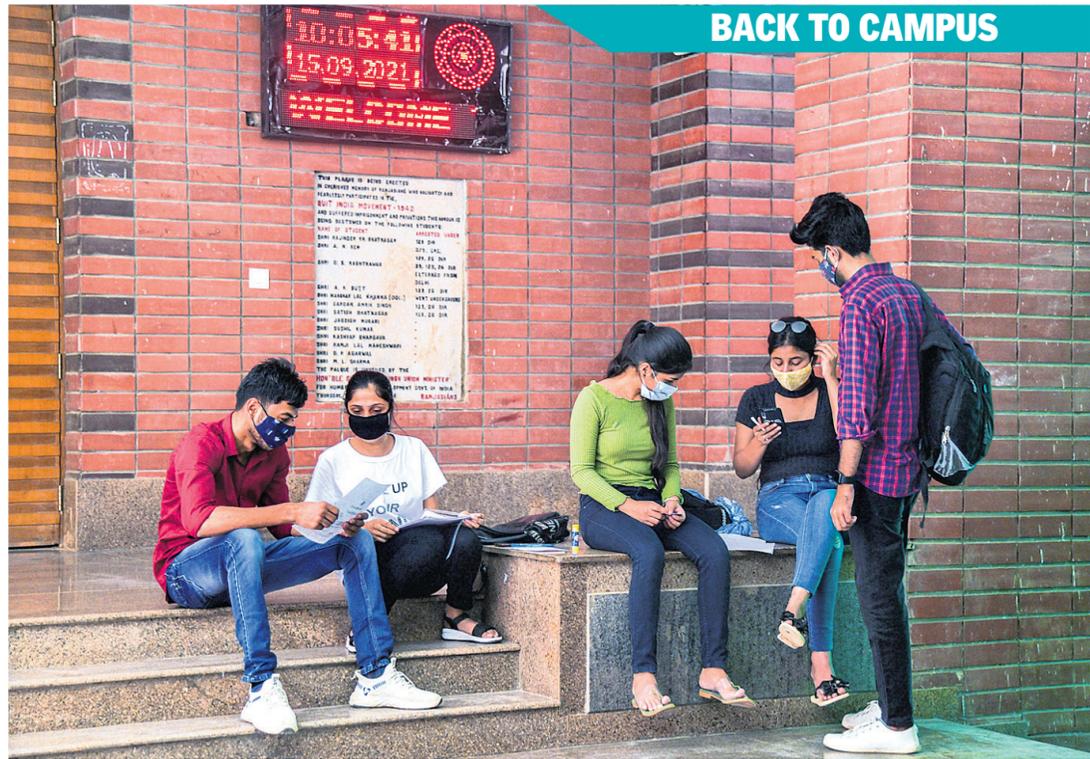
colour, starts dancing to the tune of an English song 'Let me be your woman' as soon as the vehicles stop for the red signal at the junction.

The video is said to be shot at Rasoma Square in the city. However, the authorities are trying to ascertain when it was shot. Home Minister Narottam Mishra said action will be taken against the young woman under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act.

"The issue came to my notice. I

am going to direct the officers to take action as per the provisions of Motor Vehicles Act for dancing at traffic signals in Indore so that such acts can be prevented in future," Mishra told reporters in Bhopal when asked about the video.

Meanwhile, Indore's Vijay Nagar police station in-charge Tahzeeb Qazi said that the police are identifying the woman and action will be taken as per the home minister's directives.



Students inside Ramjas College after DU colleges reopened for final-year students, in New Delhi, Wednesday.

PTI PHOTO

Delhi may earn ₹10,000 crore revenue with new excise policy



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 15: Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Wednesday said the city government has earned 23 per cent less revenue in the current financial year, but it will gain ₹10,000 crore from bidding of liquor shops under the new excise policy.

"We will get ₹10,000 crore revenue from bidding of liquor shops under the new excise policy. We have re-

ceived nearly 225 bids for 32 zones of the city. This will be around ₹3,500 crore extra revenue from what we got in 2019-20. In financial year 2019-20, the government had collected a revenue of ₹6,300 crore from bidding of liquor shops," Sisodia said.

He said the extra revenue is a result of reforms in the excise policy as earlier such revenue was stolen.

The deputy CM also said that the AAP-led Delhi government earned 41 per cent less revenue last year due to COVID-19 pandemic.

"Due to coronavirus-induced lockdown, economic activities are less so tax collection is low. Under value-added tax (VAT), the government earned 25 per cent less revenue in the current fiscal, while in excise it collected 30 per cent less revenue," he said.

The minister added that collections in stamp duty and motor vehicle taxes are also down by 16 per cent and 19 per cent, respectively, for the current fiscal.

4 tribals get ride in MP CM's official chopper



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Alirajpur (MP), Sept 15: It was a dream come true for four tribals from Jobat tehsil in Madhya Pradesh's Alirajpur district Wednesday as they got an opportunity to fly in a helicopter; that too, in state Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's official aircraft.

They were given a ride in the CM's helicopter from Ranbyda to Sejawada in the tribal-dominated Alirajpur district, although the chief minister travelled by road

from (Ranbyda) for a series of programmes in the region as part of his Jandarshan Yatra ahead of the assembly bypoll due in Jobat constituency in the near future, an official said.

"The four tribals were allowed to take a trip in the chopper without Chouhan as he was supposed to travel by road for the scheduled programmes," he said.

Bypoll in Jobat is necessitated following the death of Congress MLA Kalavati Bhuria.

The four tribals - Dariyav Singh,

The tribals were allowed to take a trip in the chopper without the CM as he was supposed to travel by road for the scheduled programmes

Mangal Singh, Ricchu Singh Baghel and Jodh Singh - travelled for nearly half-an-hour in the helicopter, the official said.

Thanking Chouhan for his generosity, they said their dream of flying in a helicopter was fulfilled. During his programmes, Chouhan announced a number of development projects in Jobat area, including a stadium with a focus on having a facility for archery with an estimated cost of nearly ₹5 crore.

He also urged them to protect themselves from COVID-19 by getting vaccinated.

The local tribals accorded a traditional welcome to Chouhan on arrival and he also danced with them on the drum beats.

Delhi terror module: Suspects sent to 14 days police custody



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 15: A Delhi Court has sent six suspects, accused of planning terrorist attacks in Maharashtra, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh during the forthcoming festival season, to 14-day police custody, an official said here Wednesday.

According to the police, the Court granted remand of all the six suspects including Zeeshan Qamar and Mohd Amir Javed who were arrested Tuesday by the Special Cell of Delhi Police.

Tuesday, the Delhi Police had said that they have busted a Pakistan-based terror module and arrested six persons, including two people - Zeeshan and Javed - who were trained in Pakistan.

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

Keeping in view this serious input, the Special Cell of Delhi Police had 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. And Tuesday morning we concluded this operation by conducting multiple raids in different states," Special Commissioner of Police, Special Cell, Neeraj Thakur said in a press briefing yesterday.

Thakur said that it looked like the terror operation was closely coordinated across the border with the whole operation being coordinated by Dawood Ibrahim's brother - Anees Ibrahim. The first person named Sameer, hailing from Maharashtra was arrested from Kota while he was traveling in a train while two other were held 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.

Giving more details, Thakur said of the six arrested, two were taken to Pakistan via Muscat where they were trained to use explosives and firearms, including AK-47.

Lab-made 'alum Ganesha' creates eco-friendly ripples

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Satna (MP), Sept 15: Students of a government school in the Satna district of Madhya Pradesh have prepared eco-friendly Ganesha idols in their chemistry lab from potash alum, a water purifying chemical compound, to spread the message of "science for environment".

The group of eight students from the Venkat Higher Secondary Excellence School No 1 struck on the idea last week during their class with their chemistry teacher Dr Ramanuj Pathak.

The idols, about 1.5 ft tall, were moulded and prepared on Ganesh Chaturthi day September 10.

"We were discussing in the class about how idols, statues made of plaster of Paris and paint pollute the environment and damage the ecosystem after immersion. It was then that we decided to put science into action and hence the idea to create eco-friendly Ganesha idols



Students of the government school and teacher pose with the eco-friendly Ganesha idol made from alum in their chemistry lab during the Ganesh festival in Satna district, Wednesday.

PTI PHOTO

of alum in our chemistry laboratory came about," Pathak told PTI.

Pottasium alum or simply called alum is a water purifier and a dou-

ble-salt chemical compound which not only purifies water but also leaves no harmful residue. Alum also has antiseptic properties and

multiple medicinal uses, he said. "When we immerse idols made of alum into water bodies they are not polluted but instead cleansed," Pathak said.

Those made from plaster of Paris are hard and insoluble in water as they have calcium sulphate and end up polluting and choking the water body.

Even idols made of clay are adorned with wood, varnish, paint, fodder, paper and other items which are not eco-friendly and dirty the water, he said.

The students have now installed the idol created by them in the chemistry lab and plan to immerse it on the Ganesh 'visarjan' day.

"We started the experiment with first heating the alum on the gas burner in the lab and melting it in glass beakers. It was later cooled and put in a cast made of wet flour," Pranshu Gautam, a student, said.

The teachers at the school informed that potash alum melts at

92 degrees Celsius and starts boiling around 120 degrees Celsius. It is then allowed to cool for about 30 minutes after which liquid alum is put in a cast made in the shape of Ganesha.

Pathak said alum can be purchased from the market at around ₹40 per kilogram and one such idol of 1.5-2 ft height can be made for just ₹80.

The crystalline idol looks nice even without using paint or colours, however, organic colours can be used to beautify it, he said.

Pathak said he and his students are looking to take this experiment further and prepare Durga idols during the upcoming Durga Puja/Dussehra festivities "so that the message reaches more people and everyone can come together in the initiative to celebrate our festivals with care for the environment."

Once successful, such idols of Ganesha and Durga can be made on a commercial scale too, he said.

national



The Congress has a different ideology and as a Congress worker, I can compromise with other ideologies but cannot compromise with the ideology of the BJP and the RSS
RAHUL GANDHI | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

MATTER OF CONCERN

India produced the largest amount of social media misinformation on Covid-19 due to the country's higher internet penetration rate, increasing social media consumption and users' lack of internet literacy, according to a new study



of the day quote

Altogether there are 11.66 lakh persons eligible for vaccination in Goa. Till date, we have been vaccinated 11.88 lakh. We have in fact covered 102 % vaccination of the first dose
PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

The prices of all commodities have reached the sky, whether it is rice, pulses, cement, iron, gas, petrol, diesel. Prices have been rising for the last two years continuously. The situation is such that the common man and middle class people are unable to lead their lives
SIDDARAMAIAH | LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION OF THE KARNATAKA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

No Akali leader, especially former Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal, had the moral right to speak on the crisis triggered by the farm laws, which they could easily have averted when they were part of the central government
AMARINDER SINGH | PUNJAB CM

SHORT TAKES

Lt Gen Gurmit Singh new U'khand guv

Dehradun: Lt Gen (Retd) Gurmit Singh was sworn in here Wednesday as the new governor of Uttarakhand. The oath of office was administered to Singh by the Chief Justice of the Uttarakhand High Court Justice R S Chauhan at a simple function held at Raj Bhawan. The function was attended by Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, his cabinet colleagues Satpal Maharaj, Dhan Singh Rawat, Uttarakhand Assembly Speaker Premchand Aggarwal and a number of senior government officials including Chief Secretary SS Sandhu and DGP Ashok Kumar.

RS TMC member Arpita Ghosh resigns

New Delhi: TMC MP Arpita Ghosh has resigned from the Rajya Sabha and her resignation has been accepted by Chairman of the House and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, a notification from the Rajya Sabha Secretariat said Wednesday. The development has taken many of Ghosh's own party members by surprise.

High alert in Punjab

Chandigarh: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has ordered high alert in the state following the arrest of four more members of an ISI-backed terrorist module involved in a bid to blow up an oil tanker with an IED tiffin bomb last month, making it the fourth case of a Pakistani terror module being busted in the state in the past 40 days. Two Pakistan-based men, including a Pakistani intelligence officer, have also been identified and booked in the case, in which one person was arrested earlier, DGP Dinkar Gupta disclosed Wednesday. Those arrested Tuesday have been identified as Rubal Singh, Vicky Bhutti, Malkeet Singh and Gurpreet Singh.

Two fall to death

Bangalore: Two persons were thrown off a flyover here as a car hit their bike from behind and died after falling 30 feet below, onto the surface road, police said. The man and woman, who were on the Tamil Nadu-registered two-wheeler, tumbled in the air before crashing on the road, succumbed to injuries on the spot after the mishap on the Electronic City Elevated Expressway Tuesday night.

INDIA HITS OUT AT PAK, OIC

Referring to comments on J&K by Pakistan at UNHRC, India's secretary claimed that OIC or Pakistan had no locus standi and must refrain from meddling



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 15: India Wednesday castigated Pakistan and the OIC for raising the Kashmir issue at the UN Human Rights Council, saying it does not need lessons from a "failed state" and the "epicentre of terrorism" and chided the 57-nation bloc for "helplessly" allowing itself to be held "hostage" by Islamabad. At the 48th session of the UNHRC, India mounted a blistering attack on Pakistan, saying it has been globally recognised as a country openly supporting, training, financing and arming terrorists including UN proscribed terrorists as a "matter of state policy". India's response was delivered by Pawan Badhe, the first secretary in its permanent mission in Geneva. Exercising the right to reply to comments made by Pakistan and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on Kashmir, Badhe said India does not need lessons from a "failed state" like Pakistan which is the "epicentre of terrorism and worst abuser of human rights". He also said the OIC has helplessly allowed itself to be held hostage by Pakistan, which holds the chairmanship of their Geneva Chapter; to "subserve its own agenda". Badhe said it has become a habit for Pakistan to mis-

use the platforms provided by the council to propagate its "false and malicious propaganda" against India. "The council is aware of Pakistan's attempts to divert the council's attention from serious human rights violations being perpetrated by its government, including in the territories occupied by it," he said. "India, as not only the world's largest democracy but a robustly functional and vibrant one, does not need lessons from a failed state like Pakistan which is the epicentre of terrorism and worst abuser of human rights," he said. The Indian diplomat said Pakistan has failed to protect the rights of its minorities, including Sikhs, Hindus, Christians and Ahmadiyas. "Thousands of women and girls from minority communities have been subjected to abductions, forced marriages and conversions in Pakistan and its occupied territories," Badhe said in his statement. "Pakistan has been engaged in systematic persecution, forced conversions, targeted killings, sectarian violence and faith-based discrimination against its ethnic and religious minorities," he said. Incidents of violence against minority communities, including attacks on their places of worship,

their cultural heritage, as well as their private property have taken place with impunity in Pakistan, the Indian diplomat said. He said a "climate of fear" continues to drastically impact the daily lives of minorities in Pakistan. "Pakistan is a country which has been globally recognised as a country openly supporting, training, financing and arming terrorists including UN proscribed terrorists, as a matter of state policy," he said. "The relevant multilateral institutions have been raising serious concerns on its failure to stop terror financing and lack of effective actions against terror entities," he noted. He said dissenting voices from civil societies, human rights defenders, journalists are muzzled daily in Pakistan, with the support of the government. "Enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, murders and abductions have been used as a tool for subjugation and to muzzle any form of dissent or criticism. The impunity with which such abuses have been carried out exposes the hollowness of Pakistan's commitment to human rights," Badhe added. He also slammed the OIC for raising the Kashmir issue at the council, asserting that the group has no locus standi to comment on the internal affairs of the country. "We once again regret and reject the reference made by the OIC to the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir which is an integral part of India," Badhe said. "The OIC has helplessly allowed itself to be held hostage by Pakistan, which holds the chairmanship of their Geneva Chapter; to subserve its own agenda. It's for the members of the OIC to decide if it is in their interest to allow Pakistan to do so," he said in a statement.

JEE-MAIN RESULT Record 44 candidates score 100 percentile



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 15: A record 44 candidates have scored 100 percentile in the engineering entrance exam JEE-Main this year while 18 candidates have shared the top rank, according to National Testing Agency (NTA). The result for the crucial exam was announced post midnight on Tuesday with the website crashing for several hours after that. The first rank holders included Gaurab Das (Karnataka), Vaibhav Vishal (Bihar), Dugginemi Venkata Paneesh (Andhra Pradesh), Siddhant Mukherjee, Anshul Verma and Mridul Agarwal (Rajasthan), Ruchir Bansal and Kavya Chopra (Delhi), Amaiya Singhal and Pal Agarwal (Uttar Pradesh), Komma Sharanya and Joysula Venkata Aditya (Telangana), Pasala Veera Siva, Karnam Lokesh and Kanchanapalli Rahul Naidu, (Andhra Pradesh), Pulkit Goyal (Punjab) and Guramrit Singh (Chandigarh). Last year, 24 candidates had scored 100 percentile. On account

of using unfair means, a total of 20 candidates have been debarred from appearing in future examinations for a period of three years. Their results have also been withheld. Starting this year, Joint Entrance Exam (JEE)-Main was conducted four times a year to offer flexibility to students and a chance to improve their scores. The first phase was held in February and the second in March. The next phases were scheduled for April and May but those were postponed in view of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic that raged through the country affecting lakhs. The third edition was held from July 20-25 while the fourth edition was conducted from August 26 to September 2. The examination was conducted in 13 languages - English, Hindi, Gujarati, Assamese, Bengali, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. Over 9.34 lakh candidates appeared in four editions of JEE-Main. A total of 2.52 lakh common candidates had appeared for all four editions of the exam.

IT dept 'surveys' Sonu Sood's premises

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Sept 15: Actor Sonu Sood's premises in Mumbai and a company in Lucknow linked to him were raided by the Income Tax department today, sources said. "A recent deal between Sonu Sood's company and a Lucknow-based real estate firm is under the scanner. The survey operation has been initiated on allegations of tax evasion on this deal," sources in the Income Tax department said. The tax raids come days after the actor's high-profile meeting with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who declared him the brand ambassador for his government's mentorship programme for school students in the capital. After the meeting, Sonu Sood denied any plans for a political debut with



Mr Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Sonu Sood's humanitarian efforts endeared him to a legion of fans across the country in the past year. The 48-year-old actor won wide praise for his charity work during the pandemic. He organised special flights and buses home for migrants stranded by last year's lockdown and in April-May, at the peak of the second wave, he organised oxygen for Covid patients. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted that there are millions of difficulties on the path of truth, but truth always prevails.

India considers resuming vaccine exports soon

REUTERS

New Delhi, Sept 15: India is considering resuming exports of Covid-19 vaccines soon, mainly to Africa, as it has partly immunised a majority of its adults and supplies have surged, a source with knowledge of the matter told Reuters. India, the world's biggest maker of vaccines overall, stopped vaccine exports in April to focus on inoculating its own population as infections exploded. The government wants to vaccinate all of its 944 million adults by December and has so far given at least one dose to 61% of them. The resumption of exports deliberations come ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Washington next week where vac-

cines are likely to be discussed at a summit of the leaders of the Quad countries - the United States, India, Japan and Australia. "The export decision is a done deal," said the source, who declined to be named as he was not authorised to talk to media on the matter. "India wants to help out Africa with both vaccines and its Covid operational model." India's ministry of external affairs, one of whose senior officials met with the chief of the World Health Organization on Monday, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The ministry coordinates India's vaccine exports. The WHO said on Tuesday it was in a constant dialogue with Indian officials to resume supplies to global vaccine-sharing platform COVAX.



FEARLESS ACT



Army personnel during a practice session ahead of the celebration of Swarnim Vijay Varsh at Polo ground in Jaipur

Heavy rainfall over east India from Sept 18-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 15: A fresh cyclonic circulation is likely to develop over north Bay of Bengal on September 17 and bring heavy rainfall over eastern India, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Wednesday. The IMD said north and central India are likely to witness intense rainfall activity till Thursday. "A cyclonic circula-

tion (is) likely to develop over north Bay of Bengal on September 17. It is likely to move west-northwards towards Odisha-West Bengal coast during the subsequent three days," the IMD said. "Rainfall activity is likely to increase over Odisha and Gangetic West Bengal with fairly widespread to widespread rainfall and isolated heavy falls over above areas September 18-19," it added. Earlier this week, a deep depression

brought heavy rainfall over Odisha and Chhattisgarh. The IMD added that intense spell of rainfall is likely over Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, east Rajasthan and Gujarat till September 16 and decrease thereafter. It added that scattered to fairly widespread rainfall is very likely over northwest India (excluding Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh) during September 15-17.

India reports average 77 rape cases daily in 2020: NCRB

Overall, 3,71,503 cases of crime against women were reported across the country last year, down from 4,05,326 in 2019 and 3,78,236 in 2018, the NCRB, which functions under the Union home ministry, stated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 15: Nearly 77 rape cases were reported across India on an average every day in 2020, totalling to 28,046 such incidents during the year, the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data issued Wednesday showed. Overall, 3,71,503 cases of crime against women were reported across the country last year, down from 4,05,326 in 2019 and 3,78,236 in 2018, the NCRB, which functions under the Union home ministry, stated.

Of the total cases of crimes against women in 2020, there were 28,046 incidents of rape involving 28,153 victims, according to the NCRB data for the year, which witnessed Covid-19 outbreak and pandemic-induced lockdowns. Out of the total victims, 25,498 were adults, while 2,655 were below the age of 18 years, it stated. The number of rape cases, as defined in Indian Penal Code section 376, stood at 32,033 in 2019, 33,356 in 2018 and 32,559 in 2017. The figure for 2016 was 38,947, according to NCRB data from corresponding years.

Among states and Union Territories, the maximum 5,310 rape cases were lodged in Rajasthan in 2020 followed by Uttar Pradesh (2,769), Madhya Pradesh (2,339), Maharashtra (2,061) and Assam (1,657). National capital Delhi logged 997 such cases during the year, the data showed. Of the total crimes against women last year, the maximum 1,11,549 were under the category "cruelty by husband or relatives", while there were 62,300 cases of kidnapping and abduction also, it showed.



Representational image

Besides rape, there were 85,392 cases of "assault on outrage modesty" and 3,741 cases of "attempt to commit rape", the NCRB data showed. There were 105 cases of acid attack logged across the country during 2020, it added. India also recorded 6,966 cases of dowry deaths with 7,045 victims last year, the data showed. The NCRB, under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, is responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the Indian Penal Code and by special and local laws in the country.

international

of the day quote

To say that it has been a challenging 18-months would be an understatement. Millions have perished; hundreds of millions have been ill; billions have suffered

ABDULLA SHAHID | PREZ OF THE 76TH SESSION OF THE UNGA

The seas that separate us, are also the seas that connect us. India sees itself as a net provider of security in the Indian Ocean Region

TARANJIT SINGH SANDHU | INDIA'S AMBASSADOR TO THE US

Our policies on foreign workers have created many jobs and opportunities. Still, Singaporeans are anxious and concerned about competition from the foreigners working here. We are addressing these concerns and the problems caused by having a large foreign population in our midst

LEE HSIEH LOONG | SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

China backs demand to unfreeze Af assets

Beijing: China Wednesday supported the Taliban's demand that the US should unfreeze Afghanistan's assets and said that America has no legitimate reasons to do so as the Chinese envoy to Kabul called on acting Afghan Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and congratulated the interim government. According to reports from Washington, the US has frozen about USD 9.5 billion in assets belonging to Afghanistan's central bank and stopped shipments of cash to Kabul, in a bid to keep the Taliban government from accessing the money.

7 soldiers, 5 ultras killed in Pak's KPK

Peshawar: Seven Pakistani soldiers and five terrorists were killed in a gun battle in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province bordering Afghanistan Wednesday, the military said. Based on a tip-off, the soldiers launched a cordon and search operation in the tribal district of South Waziristan near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Exchange of fire began near a private compound, where the seven soldiers were killed.

UK bans Chinese envoy from Parl

London: China's Ambassador to the UK Zheng Zeguang has been barred from the UK Parliament over sanctions imposed on some British MPs for their remarks on alleged human rights violations against Uyghur minorities in Xinjiang, triggering an angry condemnation from the Chinese Embassy here. Zeguang was due to attend a meeting organised by the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on China recently, but a letter from the sanctioned members of Parliament and House of Commons Speaker Lindsay Hoyle resulted in its cancellation.

7 die in Brazil plane crash

Sao Paulo: At least seven people were killed when an executive plane crashed in a rural area of the Brazilian municipality of Piracicaba, in southeastern Sao Paulo state, the local fire department said Tuesday. The deaths included the pilot, co-pilot and five passengers, all members of the same family, according to a report by the Sao Paulo state fire department disseminated on social media.



The Montreal Protocol and the Kigali Amendment show us that by acting together, anything is possible. So let us act now to slow climate change, feed the world's hungry and protect the planet that we all depend on
ANTÓNIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

TIME MAGAZINE'S 100 'MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE OF 2021'

Time Magazine Wednesday unveiled its annual list of 'The 100 Most Influential People of 2021', a global list of leaders that includes Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, Xi Jinping, Prince Harry and Meghan, and Donald Trump, Modi, Mamata Banerjee and Adar Poonawalla



Don't leave the Next-Gen a Red-Zone, Save Ozone

The theme for this year's World Ozone Day is "Montreal Protocol - Keeping us, our food and vaccines cool". It seeks to highlight that the Montreal Protocol does so much - such as slowing climate change and helping to boost energy efficiency in the cooling sector, which contributes to food security

The ozone layer, as we know, is a fragile shield of gas, which protects the Earth from the harmful portion of rays of the sun, thus helping sustain life on the planet. World Ozone Day or the 'International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer' offers an opportunity to focus global attention and action and spread awareness on the vital environmental issue of Ozone layer depletion.

With the discovery of holes in this protective shield and advancements in the scientific understanding of ozone depletion and its impacts on human health

and the environment, the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer was adopted in 1985. Under the Convention's 'Montreal Protocol', governments, scientists and industries worked together to cut out 99% of all ozone-depleting substances. It required the control of nearly 100 chemicals. 16 September was selected to commemorate the day in 1987 when the 'Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer' was signed. The most recent amendment, the Kigali Amendment, called for the phase-down of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) in 2016. These

HFCs were used as replacements for a batch of ozone-depleting substances eliminated by the original Montreal Protocol. Although they do not deplete the ozone layer, they are known to be powerful greenhouse gases and, thus, contributors to climate change. Today, the Vienna Convention is still making progress. Thanks to the collaborative effort of nations around the world, the ozone layer

is well on its way to recovery.

Saving O₃ layer gave mankind a fighting chance in climate crisis

The Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) chemicals once commonly used in refrigerators would have driven 2.5C of

absorb CO₂. Hikes in UV can damage plant tissues, restrict their growth and undermine their ability to photosynthesise - the process that sucks carbon from the atmosphere. Without the CFC ban, there would have been 500bn fewer tonnes of carbon stored in forests, vegetation and soil by 2100, the researchers found. This additional CO₂ would have contributed an additional 0.8C of warming, the researchers said, leaving the goals of the Paris Agreement in tatters.

As well as depleting the ozone layer, CFCs are also powerful greenhouse gases. If their use had continued unchecked, by the end of the century they would have boosted global warming by another 1.7C - meaning temperatures would have risen 2.5C over all just from their use.

In 2018, atmospheric scientists spotted a

CFC chemicals once used in refrigerators would have driven 2.5C of extra warming by 2100 if they had not been outlawed, researchers claim

resurgence of levels of CFC-11, traced to rogue insulation production in eastern China. The Chinese authorities confirmed some banned substances were identified during factory inspections but only in very small quantities. Officials said arrests, material seizures and the demolition of production facilities then followed and emissions of CFC-11 have since fallen rapidly.

AGENCIES

Challenges Ahead: Space Tourism

The space race is taking off once again after decades of stagnation. The world witnessed 114 orbital launches in 2018 - the first triple-digit count since 1990. This year, orbital launches are on track to exceed 130 for the first time since the 1970s. With the pursuit to make space tourism a reality, private space entrepreneurs like Blue Origin,

Virgin Galactic and SpaceX are competing with each other to win the race. But will this fresh space boom come at a price to the planet?

Space launches worry some researchers because rockets expel their exhaust straight into the stratosphere, home of the protective ozone layer.

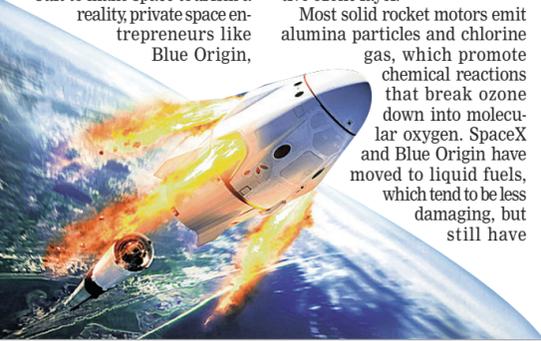
Most solid rocket motors emit alumina particles and chlorine gas, which promote chemical reactions that break ozone down into molecular oxygen. SpaceX and Blue Origin have moved to liquid fuels, which tend to be less damaging, but still have

byproducts, including water vapor and nitrogen oxides that can deplete ozone during the years they circulate in the upper atmosphere.

Scientists are working on a forecast of how the current portfolio of rocket fuels might thin the ozone layer in the not so distant future. The effects of current launches, and those of a speculative scenario in which space tourism proves popular and reliable enough to support a couple of suborbital launches each day and one orbital launch each week, are being studied.

How often the companies will launch in the future remains uncertain. Virgin Galactic says it hopes to eventually operate 400 flights per year. SpaceX envisions Starship shuttling passengers between major cities in under an hour, in competition with commercial airlines.

AGENCIES



A MELTING EARTH



Water falls off an ice sculpture depicting a woman walking to collect water, as environmental and public health campaign group WaterAid highlights the threat posed globally by climate change to healthy water supplies, in London, Britain

WHO REPORTS BIG DROP IN NEW COVID INFECTIONS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Geneva, Sept 15: The WHO said there were about 4 million coronavirus cases reported globally last week, marking the first major drop in new infections in more than two months.

In recent weeks, there have been about 4.4 million new COVID-19 cases.

In its weekly update released on Tuesday, the UN health agency said every region in the world saw a drop in COVID-19 cases compared to the previous week.

Although the worldwide number of deaths decreased to about 62,000, with the sharpest decline in Southeast Asia, there was a 7 per cent increase in deaths in Africa. The highest numbers of cases



were seen in the US, Britain, India, Iran and Turkey and the highly contagious delta variant has now been reported in 180 countries.

WHO also said children and teenagers continue to be less affected by COVID-19 when compared to adults, adding that deaths of people under 24 due to the disease account for fewer than 0.5 per

cent of global deaths.

WHO has previously said children should not be prioritized for COVID-19 vaccinations given the extreme vaccine shortages globally.

Paris Health care workers in France face suspension from their jobs starting Wednesday if they haven't been vaccinated against COVID-19. With about 300,000 workers still not vaccinated, some hospitals fear staff shortages will add to their strain.

Vaccines are now compulsory for medical care, home care and emergency workers in France, and Wednesday is the deadline for such staff to have had at least one shot. Failing that, they face having pay suspended or not being able to work. But a top court has forbidden staff to be fired outright.

4 civilians to circle Earth on 1st SpaceX private flight

It marks the debut flight of Musk's new orbital tourism business, and a leap ahead of competitors likewise offering rides on rocket ships to well-heeled customers willing to pay a small fortune for the exhilaration, and bragging rights, of spaceflight

AGENCIES

Cape Canaveral, Sept 15: The latest in a recent line of space-obsessed billionaires was set for liftoff Wednesday with three less wealthy private citizens along for the ride aboard a SpaceX rocket ship, seeking to become the first all-civilian crew launched into Earth orbit.

The quartet of amateur space travelers, led by the American founder and chief executive of e-commerce firm Shift4 Payments Inc, Jared Isaacman, were due for blastoff as early as 8 pm EDT (0000 GMT) from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida.

SpaceX's senior director of human spaceflight, Benji Reed, told reporters at the Cape Tuesday that "everything looked great" following a final "static" test-firing of the rocket engines Monday morning. "Right now the weather is trend-



ing well" for an on-time launch, he said.

The flight, with no professional astronauts accompanying SpaceX's paying customers, is expected to last about three days from liftoff to splashdown in the Atlantic.

They will fly aboard a gleaming white SpaceX Crew Dragon capsule, dubbed Resilience, perched atop one of the company's reusable Falcon 9 rockets and fitted with a special observation dome in place of the usual docking hatch.

Isaacman, 38, the trip's benefactor, has forked over an undisclosed but presumably hefty sum to fellow billionaire and SpaceX owner Elon Musk to send himself and his three crewmates aloft. Time magazine has put the ticket price for all four seats at \$200 million.

The so-called Inspiration4 mission was conceived by Isaacman mainly to raise awareness and support for one of his favorite causes, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, a leading pediatric cancer center in Memphis, Tennessee.

But those suborbital flights, lasting a matter of minutes, were short hops compared with Inspiration4's spaceflight profile. SpaceX already ranks as the most well-established player in the burgeoning constellation of com-

mercial rocket ventures, having launched numerous cargo payloads and astronauts to the International Space Station for NASA. Two of its Dragon capsules are docked there already.

The four crewmates have spent five months in rigorous preparations, including altitude fitness, centrifuge (G-force), microgravity and simulator training, emergency drills, classroom work and medical exams.

Inspiration4 officials stress that the mission is more than a joyride. Once in orbit, the crew will perform a series of medical experiments with "potential applications for human health on Earth and during future spaceflights," the group said in media materials.

Biomedical data and biological samples, including ultrasound scans, will also be collected from crew members before, during and after the flight.



“We are very much looking forward to strengthen our businesses and investment in West Bengal. Finland aims to become carbon neutral by 2035 and replace 50 per cent of the energy consumption by 2030 and we can jointly do it with India”
RITVA KOUKKU-RONDE
AMBASSADOR OF FINLAND TO INDIA

BIDS SUBMITTED FOR AIR INDIA SALE

The Indian finance ministry said Wednesday that the debt-laden state-run airline Air India has received financial bids for its privatisation process. India's Tata Sons said it had submitted a bid for Air India, while local media reported that SpiceJet also submitted a bid



of the day quote

Indian Banks' Association has a pivotal role to play in terms of research and key banking issues and a significant role to play in the resurgence of the economy in the 75th year of India's independence

DEBASISH PANDA | FINANCIAL SERVICES SECY

On the policy front, the government has introduced a number of reforms, such as the revamped Gold Monetisation Scheme, reduction in import duty of gold, hallmarking, etc which would help the industry to grow to the next level

ANUPRIYA PATEL | UNION MINISTER

India is an important market for MediaTek and we are reiterating our commitment and support to the government's 'Make in India' programme by investing in local Indian talent and scaling capabilities to drive innovation for India and global markets

RITUPARNA MANDAL | GM, MEDIATEK

Auto sector gets ₹26K cr PLI boost

The PLI scheme will incentivise the emergence of advanced automotive technologies' global supply chain in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 15: The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved ₹26,058 crore production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for auto, auto-components and drone industries to enhance India's manufacturing capabilities, Union Minister Anurag Thakur said Wednesday.

Incentives worth ₹26,058 crore will be provided to industry over five years, the minister told reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

"It is estimated that over a period of five years, the PLI scheme for the automobile and auto components industry will lead to fresh investment of over ₹42,500 crore, incremental production of over ₹2.3 lakh crore and will create additional employment opportunities of over 7.5 lakh jobs," said Thakur.

The scheme for the auto sector envisages overcoming the cost disabilities to the industry for the manufacture of advanced automotive technology products in India.

The incentive structure will encourage industry to make fresh investments for the indigenous global supply chain of Advanced Automotive Technology products, Thakur said.

The scheme for the auto sector is open to existing automotive companies as well as new investors who are currently not in automo-



TWO COMPONENTS

CHAMPION OEM INCENTIVE SCHEME

The Champion OEM incentive scheme is a sales value linked scheme, applicable on Battery Electric Vehicles and Hydrogen Fuel Cell Vehicles of all segments

COMPONENT CHAMPION INCENTIVE SCHEME

The Component Champion Incentive scheme is applicable on Advanced Automotive Technology components of vehicles, Completely Knocked Down (CKD)/ Semi Knocked Down (SKD) kits, vehicle aggregates of 2-Wheelers, 3-Wheelers, passenger vehicles, commercial vehicles and tractors

bile or auto component manufacturing business.

This PLI scheme for automotive sector along with the already launched PLI scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cell (Rs 18,100 crore) and Faster Adaption of Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (Rs 10,000 crore) will enable India to leapfrog from traditional fossil fuel-based automobile transportation system to environmentally cleaner, sustainable, advanced

and more efficient Electric Vehicles (EV) based system.

ACMA President Sunjay Kapur said: "Thrust on incentivising new age technologies will facilitate creation of a state-of-the-art automotive value chain in the country and give a much-needed impetus to manufacturing of cutting edge automotive products in India. Further, with global economies de-risking their supply chains, the PLI will aid India in developing into an at-

Law firms reluctant to advise on LIC IPO

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Sept 15: India's plans to list state-run Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) face an unusual problem: domestic law firms are shying away from advising the government, deterred by the low fees on offer at the time of a lucrative boom in corporate stock listings.

The government is scrambling to list the insurance behemoth by March, in an exercise set to be India's biggest IPO, at a probable \$12 billion. As many as 16 global and domestic investment banks recently bid to handle it.

But top law firms that would normally be keen on such big-ticket IPOs to boost their credibility in government circles are hesitant to advise New Delhi, as their teams are stretched by the corporate IPO boom, five law firm partners told agencies.

"Most big law firms in India are overburdened with IPO work," said Nitin Potdar, an M&A partner at top Indian law firm J Sagar Associates. And the LIC IPO would need real big teams of experienced lawyers. LIC's massive size and complex business structure and products make it a nightmare for lawyers to draft the prospectus, he added.

In early September, after an initial lacklustre response, New Delhi limited the timeline of the firms'



In an embarrassing episode, the government has twice revised its offer to attract law firms for the LIC IPO

IPO work to three years.

This week, the government eased its fee payment timetables, to offer 50% payment after the draft IPO prospectus is filed. But the IPO work on LIC is expensive and complex, the law firm partners said, which makes them even less keen.

Law firms must tackle 36 tasks on the government's to-do list for LIC, from drafting the IPO papers, and fielding regulators' queries to reviewing corporate governance and pending litigation, and analysing risks.

The amount of work needed would be as much as for five private IPO deals, and still it won't be remunerative, said one top partner in an Indian law firm.

SHORT TAKES

Flipkart boosts supply chain

Bhubaneswar: Flipkart, India's homegrown e-commerce marketplace is strengthening and expanding its supply chain across the country to cater to the growing needs during the festive season. Odisha is among other states to be part of expansion. The e-commerce giant aims to support market access for lakhs of MSMEs, sellers, artisans, and Kiranas. The platform targets to include Kiranas from Junagarh of Kalahandi district in this festive season. Flipkart has strengthened its Kirana delivery program with more than 100,000 Kirana partners from across the country.

iPhone 13 coming to India Sept 24

New Delhi: Apple's latest lineup of iPhones, including iPhone 13 mini and iPhone 13 Pro Max, will be available in India from September 24 with prices starting at ₹69,900. Apple now has a very aggressive entry point, starting with iPhone SE 2020, going till iPhone 13 Pro Max, says Counterpoint Research Director Tarun Pathak. According to Apple India's website, iPhone 13 mini will be priced between ₹69,900-₹99,900; iPhone 13 ₹79,900-₹1,09,900; iPhone 13 Pro ₹1,19,900-1,69,900; and iPhone 13 Pro Max at ₹1,29,900-1,79,900.

Ola starts sale of electric scooter S1

New Delhi: Ola Electric Wednesday commenced the sale process of its electric scooter S1. The electric scooter, which comes in two trims - Ola S1 and S1+, is available to purchase on the Ola App only currently, and not on the website. While the sale was to start September 8, it postponed the process by a week to September 15, as it faced "technical difficulties" in making the website for purchases live for customers.

SpiceJet launches 38 new flights

New Delhi: Budget airline SpiceJet will launch 38 new domestic and international non-stop flights from September 15, 2021 in a phased manner. "Our new flights will ensure better, easy and seamless connectivity catering especially to the huge demand during the upcoming festive season. SpiceJet will keep enhancing air connectivity by launching new flights," said Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet.

ASIAN COAL PRICES SURGE

Coal India plans to up prices slowly

AGENCIES

Chennai, Sept 15: Coal India Ltd (COALNS) is planning to increase the prices of coal slowly after considering the views of all stakeholders, the state-run miner's chairman said Wednesday, as Asian coal prices hit all-time highs.

Asian coal prices from exporters Australia and Indonesia, and the most-traded thermal coal futures contract on China's Zhengzhou Commodity Exchange touched record highs recently due to robust power consumption.

"We cannot increase the price of coal abruptly. It can only be increased slowly, and that we are planning (to do)," Coal India Chairman Pramod Agrawal told shareholders at the company's annual general meeting.

"Coal India is planning to increase the price but taking the views of all the stakeholders and



getting them on board is essential before we take a decision, because it affects the price of the energy in the country," Agrawal said.

In reply to a question by a shareholder about the possibility of a demerger of Coal India subsidiaries, Agrawal said there was no such plan.

"There is no such thinking even in the government, that some of the subsidies may get demerged from Coal India," he said.

Agrawal also said that the company preferred giving dividends over share buybacks because buybacks attracted double the taxes, as both Coal India and its units were taxed.

5G auctions likely in Feb 2022: Vaishnav

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 15: The 5G spectrum auctions will most probably be held in February 2022, and the government may even try for a January timeline, Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said Wednesday.

"Today's reform package is good enough for ensuring competition, definitely it is good enough for survival of the players and making sure this is a healthy sector where competition stays robust...I honestly believe once we do a little bit of more changes that are there in pipeline, more players will come," Vaishnav said.

"We do not intend to stop," the minister said underlining the government's firm resolve to push ahead with reforms, in order to ensure robust health of the telecom sector.

The telecom minister further said he had spoken to all the key players in the sector after Wednesday's briefing, and that the companies are happy with the broad set of measures that have been announced.



Coal Min Addl Secretary visits Talcher, lauds MCL

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 15: M Nagaraju, Additional Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Coal, visited Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) and expressed that it would be the top performing company in coal sector by the end of current financial year 2021-22.

Reviewing the performance of coal production and dispatch during his visit to Talcher Coalfields, Nagaraju appreciated the company for ensuring growth in coal production and supply to the consumers.



"If you are able to do this, I believe you will be achieving 160-165 million tonne (during the current fiscal), which will be a great achievement. With this achievement, MCL will become the number one coal producing subsidiary (of Coal India) in terms of coal production as well as profits," he said.

The Additional Secretary also visited Lingaraj SILO to inspect the automated coal transportation operations and top performing Bhubaneswari OCP, where he assessed the impact on mining operations due to heavy rains.

He also interacted with Area General Managers from MCL's Ib Valley Coalfields in Jharsuguda and Sundergarh districts and also participated in the review meeting through video conference.

MCL, which had produced 148 million tonne in the last financial year 2020-21, has a target to produce 163 million tonne coal and dispatch 182 million tonne to consumers during the current fiscal.

Cairn, Air India seek stay on NY court proceedings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 15: Cairn Energy and Air India have jointly asked a New York federal court to stay further proceedings in the British firm's US lawsuit targeting the airline for enforcement of a USD 1.2-billion arbitral award.

The move follows the government enacting a law to scrap retrospective taxation in the country, which in effect will result in withdrawal of the ₹10,247 crore tax demand on Cairn, according to court documents reviewed by PTI.

The British company had won an international arbitration award against levy of such taxes and sought to take over Air India assets when the government refused to honour the award and pay it USD 1.2 billion-plus interest and penalty. But, last month, the government enacted the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021, that scraps all such retrospective tax demands and has agreed to refund ₹7,900 crore it had seized from Cairn to enforce such demand.

Cairn has indicated that the refund, without interest and penalty,



was acceptable to it — opening an avenue to settle the seven-year-old dispute. Cairn and Air India in a joint request to US District Judge

legislation that repealed the retroactive tax.

In return for the ₹7,900 crore, Cairn would drop lawsuits threatening court-ordered seizures of Indian government property abroad. They requested the court to stay any further proceedings in this matter through October 31, 2021, and reschedule the initial pretrial conference and, respectively, the deadline for the parties to submit their Joint Pretrial Letter and Proposed Case Management Plan, for new dates in November 2021.

Ecom Express launches programme to empower gig workers

THE PROGRAMME AIMS TO CREATE PART TIME WORK OPPORTUNITIES WHERE INDIVIDUALS CAN WORK IN FLEXIBLE TIMINGS TO MAXIMISE THEIR EARNINGS BY DELIVERING ECOMMERCE PACKAGES TO CUSTOMERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Coimbatore, Sept 15: Ecom Express, a new-age technology-driven end-to-end logistics solutions provider to the e-commerce industry, Wednesday launched its delivery partner program called Ecom Sanjeev Program (ESP).

This flagship program besides empowering gig workforce will help scale the company's delivery capabilities in assuring speed, reliable and effective logistics solutions to deliver online-ordered products safely at customers' doorstep, a company release said here. In Tamil

Nadu, Ecom Express is looking at engaging 1000+ gig workforce as independent delivery partners to handle the upcoming e-commerce festive season shipment load in key cities and districts, it said.

All personal documents for enrollment can be uploaded through the app and the verification will be done at the nearest Ecom Express center, it said. Announcing the launch, Saurabh Deep Singla, EVP and CHRO, Ecom Express, said "The pandemic has pushed more traditional workers towards the gig working culture, especially in the current times when the coun-



try is trying to revive its economy. As we launch the program across

Any individual - fresher or experienced - can take up this part-time job by applying online using Ecom Sanjeev app available on Google Playstore

The delivery partner can be a male or a female, must have passed 10th Standard and possess a valid driving license with two, three or four-wheeler, and must have a smartphone

In Tamil Nadu, Ecom Express is looking at engaging 1000+ gig workforce as independent delivery partners

ties to earn but also enable the company to perform seamless end-to-end last mile distribution. Tamil Nadu is a key market for us and with increasing cases in the state, e-commerce has taken precedence to contain the virus spread. For every delivery person on the street, more than 50 people are safe in their homes," Singla said.

Since its pilot run last year, the program has created opportunities for more than 15000 students, homemakers and individuals looking to supplement and maximize their income by delivering e-commerce packages during their spare time.

THE NEW NORMAL!

Barcelona go down tamely at home against Bayern Munich for the first loss post-Messi era as the Catalan giants fail to hit a single shot on target

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, Sept 15: Bayern Munich showed Barcelona exactly how dreary life will be without Lionel Messi when it dealt the Spanish team their first loss since the exit of the star forward.

Thomas Muller scored a goal and Robert Lewandowski added two more to help Bayern ease to a 3-0 victory at Camp Nou in their Champions League opener Tuesday.

Muller's 34th-minute strike took his career tally to seven goals against Barcelona, including the two he netted in the 8-2 shellacking Bayern dealt Barcelona the last time they met in August 2020.

Without Messi to rely on as it had for years, Barcelona was running scared from the start as it focused on protecting itself from another embarrassing defeat.

The final score hid the total dominance of the Bundesliga powerhouse. Julian Nagelsmann's team turned the once great attacking juggernaut of Barcelona into a jittery bunch hunkered down in their own area.

Lewandowski capitalized on Bayern's complete control with goals in the 56th and 85th, both times putting in rebounds from shots that came off the post to the striker.

Even having their fans back at Camp Nou, which was at 40 per cent capacity for the first time in the Champions League since the start of the pandemic could not muster a better showing from the home squad.



REALITY CHECK: Barcelona midfielder Frenkie de Jong looks disappointed after his side conceded a goal against Bayern at Camp Nou, Tuesday

Barcelona had two wins and a draw in their three previous matches, all in the Spanish league, that it had played this season after its wretched finances had kept it from resigning Messi.

After going undefeated in 38 consecutive Champions League home games until last year, Barcelona have lost three in a row. Bayern, meanwhile, increased their record unbeaten run away from home in the competition to 19 straight games.

When Bayern routed Barcelona in the 2020 Champions League quarterfinals, Barcelona could

count on Messi, Luis Suarez and Antoine Griezmann. They are all gone because the club could not afford their wages.

Barcelona's attack is now spearheaded by Memphis Depay, one of the few bright spots for the club this season. He was joined by new arrival Luuk de Jong, who made his debut after a last-minute move from Sevilla.

Neither, however, could receive a ball in a scoring position

their teammates. Barcelona fell into defending deep inside its area and paid for it when Muller was left alone outside the box. His unchallenged shot took a deflection off Eric Garcia, leaving Marc-Andre Ter Stegen no chance to save.

Barcelona didn't produce a shot on goal in 90-plus minutes. The closest it came to even making Manuel Neuer work was a desperate try by Sergio Busquets from long range that sailed wide shortly before Lewandowski doubled the lead when he put in a rebound from a shot by Jamal Musiala.

Seeing the defeat was assured, Koeman gave Champions League debuts to 18-year-old Yusuf Demir and 17-year-old Gavi. A ham-

string problem that forced Jordi Alba off let 18-year-old Alejandro Balde make his competitive debut.

Philippe Coutinho came on as a late substitute for his first match for Barcelona since a left knee injury he suffered in December.

A loss of possession by Demir led to Lewandowski's double when he again was alone to put in a shot by Serge Gnabry that came off the upright.



CR7 SCORES, BUT MAN UTD LOSE

BERN (SWITZERLAND): Cristiano Ronaldo had done his work when he was substituted in the 72nd minute of another tough Champions League evening for Manchester United here Tuesday.

Ronaldo had scored an early goal — a record-extending 135th in the competition — then forced the Young Boys' goalkeeper to save a stinging shot and almost earned a penalty after breaking clear when the score was still 1-0 early in the second half.

It was 1-1 when he was replaced by Jesse Lingard as United — playing defensively after a red card in the 35th minute for defender Aaron Wan-Bissaka — withstood increasing pressure from the unheralded Swiss champion roared on by most of a noisy 31,120 crowd.

Young Boys deservedly leveled in the 66th when midfielder Nicolas Moumi Ngamaleu met a low and deflected cross into a crowded goal-

mouth with a shot that beat De Gea at his near post.

But there was a late twist as Lingard's misplaced back pass deep into stoppage time teed up a current United States forward — who was sent on by the former US international who coaches Young Boys — to settle the game with almost the last kick.

Jordan Pefok pounced on the loose ball behind the United defense to shoot past goalkeeper David De Gea, handing United a shock 2-1 loss and giving coach David Wagner a stellar start to his first Champions League campaign.

Pefok's goal came from Young Boys' 19th effort on goal, compared to two for United — both from Ronaldo — and none after the 24th minute.

Ronaldo claimed a share of more Champions League history just by playing his first United game in the competition since the 2009 final.

His 177th career appearance in the Champions League proper tied the record held by Iker Casillas, his longtime teammate at Real Madrid. Both Ronaldo and Casillas have played an extra four games in qualifying rounds.



The press in Spain appeared to have labelled Barcelona as 'poor' and 'weak' in the wake of their below-par display.

MARCA's front page shows a picture of Lewandowski and Muller, the two goalscorers, sharing a high-five - and their headline reads 'Poor Barcelona'.

AS also opted for a shot of the in-form Lewandowski, although this time the striker can be seen seemingly consoling Pique. The headline is 'Another bath'. This references yet another poor result for Barcelona against Bayern, who were hailed as being 'again a step above' their opponents.

MUNDO DEPORTIVO, meanwhile, showed a snap of Marc-Andre ter Stegen conceding one of the three goals, which is accompanied by Pique's words, 'This is what there is'.



GERARD PIQUE: Playing at home, it is a bad result, we are not going to fool ourselves. But if you look at the game, I think that in the first half we have competed, they have gone ahead with a deflected goal. In the end I don't know how many 18-year-olds we had on and the team has competed and has shown their face.

Now we are who we are, we are what we are, but I am convinced that as we recover players, we will end up competing. Now we are not favourites, but football changes very fast. Last season nobody saw Chelsea as favourites

JUVENTUS THRASH MALMO 3-0

MALMO (SWEDEN): Juventus claimed their first win of the post-Cristiano Ronaldo era by beating Malmo 3-0 in the Champions League after a flurry of first-half goals. Alex Sandro's 23rd-minute opener was followed by goals in the space of 60 seconds by Paulo Dybala — from the penalty spot — and Alvaro Morata on the stroke of halftime in the south of Sweden Tuesday. Juventus have failed to win any of their three games in Serie A this season, the last two being losses that came after the departure of Ronaldo to Manchester United. A trip to the Swedish champions offered some respite from their domestic problems for Massimiliano Allegri's team, which can take some momentum into a big match in the Italian league against AC Milan Sunday.

10-MAN SEVILLA HOLD SALZBURG IN THRILLER

SEVILLE: Salzburg were left to rue two missed spot-kicks in their 1-1 draw at 10-man Sevilla in a messy Champions League opener that featured four first-half penalties. Salzburg converted only one of their three penalties, all earned by inspired striker Karim Adeyemi before 40 minutes were up in Sevilla Tuesday. Luka Sucic's spot-kick gave the Austrian team the lead in the 21st minute. But Sucic and Adeyemi, both age 19, missed two others in the first half. Ivan Rakitic equalised for Sevilla against the flow of play from a penalty in the 42nd. Sevilla played a man down from the 50th after striker Youssef En-Nesyri got his second booking for simulating a foul in the area.

Lukaku lifts Chelsea

LONDON: Four games... four goals. Just what was expected of Romelu Lukaku. Just what Chelsea missed so often last season. And just what he couldn't produce in his first spell at Stamford Bridge.

The striker who couldn't even get on the field in the Champions League a decade ago for Chelsea is back as the leading targetman.

On his European debut for the club, the 28-year-old Belgian ensured Chelsea made a successful start to their Champions League title defense by clinching a 1-0 victory over Zenit St. Petersburg Tuesday.

The goal showed why Chelsea invested a club-record 115 million euros (USD 135 million in August) in signing from Inter Milan the player it offloaded in 2014 as a peripheral figure.

Lukaku darted into space in the penalty area, evading the defense, to meet a cross from Cesar Azpilicueta and head it into the net in the 69th minute against the Russian champions.

It added to the three goals — including two in Saturday's win over Aston Villa — Lukaku has already scored in the Premier League this season.



Manika left out for Asian Championship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 15: Star paddler Manika Batra was Wednesday left out of the India squad for the Asian Championships beginning September 28 in Doha after she did not attend the mandatory national camp in Sonapat.

In the absence of the world number 56th player, 97th-ranked Sutirtha Mukherjee will lead the women's team. The other members are Ayhika Mukherjee (ranked 131) and Archana Kamath (132).

Veteran Sharath Kamal (ranked 33) will spearhead the men's challenge in the company of G Sathiyam (38), Harmeet Desai (72), Manav Thakkar (134) and Sanil Shetty (247).

Powerhouse China is not taking part in the event, raising medal hopes in the men's team event. Singles and doubles competitions will also be conducted.

The Table Tennis Federation of India had made it clear that any player not attending the camp will not be considered for selection. The team was picked Wednesday and was subsequently published on TTFI website. The federation had

MEN'S TEAM: Manav Thakkar, Sharath Kamal, G Sathiyam, Harmeet Desai, Sanil Shetty.

MEN'S DOUBLES: Sharath Kamal and G Sathiyam; Manav Thakkar and Harmeet Desai.

WOMEN'S TEAM: Sutirtha Mukherjee, Sreeja Akula, Ayhika Mukherjee, Archana Kamath.

WOMEN'S DOUBLES: Archana Kamath and Sreeja Akula; Sutirtha Mukherjee and Ayhika Mukherjee.

MIXED DOUBLES: Manav Thakkar and Archana Kamath; Harmeet Desai and Sreeja Akula.

made attendance in camps compulsory following the Tokyo Olympics.

Manika had informed the federation that she would like to continue training with her personal coach in Pune. The Khel Ratna awardee has also made match fixing allegations against national coach Soumydeep Roy for asking her to throw a match during the Olympic qualifiers. TTFI has formed an inquiry panel to probe the allegations.

Durand Cup: BFC down Blasters



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Sept 15: Former ISL champions Bengaluru FC (BFC) Wednesday registered a 2-0 win over Kerala Blasters to make a brilliant start to their campaign at the Durand

Cup football tournament here. Namgyal Bhutia (45th) and Leon Augustine (71st) turned out to be the heroes for the Naushad Moosa-coached side even as Kerala Blasters were eight men down by the end of the dramatic clash at the

Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan (VYBK).

Kerala Blasters started the game well and dominated the initial part of the first half. They created quite a few opportunities but failed to convert. In the 33rd minute, they had the first real chance at goal when a great shot by Sreekuttan was well saved by Lara.

Again in the 38th minute, Luna had a shot at goal, courtesy a freekick and he almost scored, but the BFC keeper Lara again came to the rescue. In the 45th minute, the deadlock was broken as BFC's Namgyal Bhutia took a brilliant freekick which hit the back of the net as the Blasters' keeper Albino Gomes had no chance.

It all went downhill from there on for the Kerala Blasters as madness prevailed on the ground, causing as many as three red cards for them in the match — all in the second half. RV Hormipam was the first to go in the 64th minute followed by Sandeep Singh and then it was Yendrebam Denechandram Meitei's turn to receive the marching orders.

In the 71st minute, Leon Augustine scored BFC's second goal. A brilliant cross by Harmanpreet was anticipated by Leon and went in after Albino fumbled with the initial gathering.

Limited spectators allowed at IPL ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 15: Limited spectators will be allowed into the stadiums when the much-awaited Indian Premier League (IPL) resumes in the UAE this weekend, the event's organisers announced on Wednesday.

The IPL, which was suspended midway in May due to COVID-19 cases in its bio bubble, will resume from Sunday with defending champions Mumbai Indians taking on Chennai Super Kings at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

"This match will be a momentous occasion as IPL will welcome the fans back to the stadiums after a brief hiatus owing to COVID-19 situation," an IPL statement said. "Matches will be played at Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi with limited seating available keeping in mind the COVID protocols and UAE government regulations," it added.

It will be the first time since 2019 when the IPL will be played in front of an audience. Last year, the lucrative league was played behind closed doors in the UAE

while the first half of the 2021 edition was also played inside a strict bio-bubble across various venues in India.

Although the league organisers did not specify the exact number of fans who would be let in but sources said their presence would be 50 per cent of the stadium capacity.

"Fans can buy tickets starting September 16 for the remainder of the tournament on the official website www.Ipl20.Com. Tickets can also be purchased on PlatinumList.Net," the league organisers said.

After the COVID-19 pandemic had brought the sporting world to a standstill last year, competitive cricket slowly resumed inside strict bio bubbles.

The series between India and Australia from November last year to January was the first time that men's cricket witnessed spectators in-stadia since coronavirus outbreak in March 2020. Fans had also been permitted into stadiums in Chennai and Ahmedabad during India's home series against England earlier this year.