



PRIYANKA SAYS SORRY
Actor Priyanka Chopra Jonas issues apology over her participation in *The Activist* after it got embroiled in a controversy **LEISURE P2**



SAD HOLDS PROTEST MARCH
Shiromani Akali Dal workers stage a protest march against the farm laws in the national capital **TWO STATES P8**



IRAN JOINS SCO
Iran joins the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation to help it form a mechanism to avert sanctions imposed by the West **INTERNATIONAL P10**

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Over 2 crore vax doses given in 1 day
NEW DELHI: India set a record Friday by administering over two crore COVID-19 vaccine doses, in a major push to the inoculation drive on the occasion of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday. The cumulative doses administered in the country reached 2,00,41,136 at 5.10 pm, according to data on the Co-WIN portal. The total number of doses administered in the country has crossed 78.68 crore. The daily vaccinations crossed the one-crore mark for the fourth time in less than a month. Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said this is the fastest pace at which one crore doses have been administered.



NZ nix Pak tour over security threat
RAWALPINDI: The New Zealand cricket team Friday abandoned its ongoing tour of Pakistan just before the start of the first ODI here, citing a security threat which the host board insisted did not exist while declaring the pullout a unilateral move. This was New Zealand's first tour of Pakistan in 18 years and the series comprised three ODIs and five T20 Internationals. Spectators were also to be allowed at 25 per cent of the stadium capacity keeping in mind the COVID-19 factor. Pakistan Cricket Board chief Ramiz Raja said New Zealand will have to answer for the pullout at the ICC. **MORE P12**

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ENGINEERING DISASTER: An under-construction flyover on Santacruz-Chembur Link Road collapsed in Mumbai, Friday. At least 14 workers were injured in the mishap. **PTI PHOTO**

Low to moderate level flood likely

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: The state administration has been put on alert in view of the low to moderate level of flood likely to be caused in the Mahanadi river system. As per the latest report, Mahanadi at Naraj was flowing at 25.87 metre, which is above the warning level of 25.41 metre. The danger level is 26.41 metre. Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena said around 5.5 lakh cusecs of water was entering Hirakud dam Thursday and it has now come down to 4.22 lakh cusecs with an outflow of 4.73 lakh cusecs Friday at 6 pm. The excess water was released through 28 gates of the dam. "We are expecting a peak flow at Mundali by tomorrow. As per the projection, around 7.5 lakh cusecs of water will pass through Mundali. We hope to keep the flow below 8 lakh cusecs. As per our assessment, there will be no major problem in the tributaries of Mahanadi," Jena said. Meanwhile, Subarnarekha, Baitarani and Jalaka rivers were flowing above danger level. Even though water level in Baitarani and Jalaka was receding, in Subarnarekha it was on a rising streak, said the SRC. "Though there are no threats of any major flood, it is anticipated that the floodwater might enter some low-lying villages in Bhograi and Baliaipal in Balasore districts, Jena said. "The district administration has been put on alert. ODRA, NDRF teams have been deployed to deal with any emergency," the SRC said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Ridiculous! The Olympic medallist has decided not to endorse alcohol, tobacco and politicians!

No GST on petrol, diesel

GST Council again decided to keep petrol and diesel prices out of the GST purview as members say the move will affect revenue collection

AGENCIES
Lucknow, Sept 17: The all-powerful GST Council Friday decided to charge food delivery platforms such as Swiggy and Zomato a tax even as it extended concessional tax rates on certain COVID-19 drugs by three months till December 31. The Council, which comprises the Union finance minister and her state counterparts, decided to continue keeping petrol and diesel out of the GST purview as subsidising the current excise duty and VAT into one national rate would impact revenues. Briefing reporters on the decisions taken by the Council at a meeting here, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said GST has been exempted on muscular atrophy drugs like Zolgensma and Viltepso, which cost crores of rupees. The Council decided to charge services by cloud kitchens and food delivery platforms like Zomato and Swiggy a 5 per cent GST. From January 1, food delivery apps will have to collect and deposit 5 per cent GST with the government, in place of restau-



GST Council felt it was not the right time to include petroleum products in GST... On the direction of court (Kerala HC) it was brought on to table but members spoke very clearly they do not want it to be included in GST
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN, UNION FINANCE MINISTER

- GST Council cuts tax rates on medicines used in cancer treatment from 12% to 5%
- Concessional GST rates on drugs used in COVID treatment extended till Dec 31
- E-commerce operators Swiggy, Zomato to pay GST on restaurant service supplied through them; tax to be charged at point of delivery
- GST rate on biodiesel for blending with diesel cut from 12% to 5%
- Pens to attract single GST rate of 18%; 12% GST on specified renewable sector devices
- National permit fee charged by states for operation of goods carriage exempted

rants, for deliveries made by them. There would be no extra tax burden on the end consumer. The Council extended the period of concessional GST rates on certain COVID-related drugs by three months till December 31 but decided not to give the same benefit to medical equipment. The concessional regime for certain medical equipment will end September 30. Also, the Council cut GST rate

Fuel prices may rise as global rates surge

New Delhi: A surge in international oil prices may translate into an increase in the retail selling price of petrol and diesel in India as oil companies face extreme margin squeeze, sources said. Petrol and diesel prices have remained unchanged for 12 days but now the international rate surge is exerting pressure. Current prices of petrol and diesel in the international market are higher by around USD 4-6 per barrel as compared to average prices during August. However, no increase in retail prices has been affected by oil companies so far, sources said. In case inter-



national prices remain at this level, oil marketing companies (OMCs) will have to increase retail prices of petrol and diesel, they said. Retail prices of petrol and diesel were last increased July 17 and July 15 respectively. Petrol in Delhi currently costs ₹101.19 a litre and diesel is priced at ₹88.62 per litre. The panel decided to levy 18 per cent GST on all sorts of pens. Specified renewable sector devices will be charged 12 per cent tax. GST Council also recommended new footwear and textile rates from January 1.

HC junks plea against limit on idol height

Court says the height of Durga idols cannot be singled out as an essential aspect of a tradition or practice without which the festival itself may not have significance
PNN & AGENCIES
Cuttack, Sept 17: The Orissa High Court Friday dismissed a petition filed by a puja committee and others against the government's decision to restrict the maximum height of Durga idols to four feet in the state, observing that the matter cannot be singled out as an 'essential' aspect of a tradition or practice without which the festival itself may not have significance. A division bench headed by Chief Justice S Muralidhar said the petitioners were not able to convince the court that if the height of the idol is restricted to four feet, then "somehow the sanctity of the occasion, the devotion and fervour associated with the festival, and the religious sentiments of the people would be interfered with in a manner contrary to tradition." The observations by the bench came on the petition filed by the Balubazar Puja Committee in Cuttack and three of its office bearers against the government's order. It also said none of the other Durga Puja committees had found the restriction to be hurtful of public sentiment or interfering with their celebrations. The Odisha government had August 9 directed the puja organisers to ensure that the height of Durga idols would be less than four feet in light of the threat to health and safety of people due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "Durga Puja festival itself is a combination of several elements of celebration, and the idol is but one important component. In respect of these many elements, there has had to be some amount of restriction on the scale and size," the bench said.



MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	59015.89	↓ 125.27
NIFTY	17585.20	↓ 44.30
DOLLAR	73.77	↓ ₹0.03
EURO	86.72	↑ ₹0.02
GOLD	₹45,987	↓ ₹89
SILVER	₹60,308	↓ ₹769

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	33.0°C	34.0°C
MIN	25.0°C	25.2°C
Humidity	94%	100%
Rainfall	4.1mm	22mm

Forecast: Rain very likely

Senior govt lecturers may be promoted to IAS rank

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: Senior lecturers of state's scale of pay may get promoted to the rank of an IAS officer in Odisha. The Higher Education department has written to the General Administration department for inclusion of Odisha Education Service (state's scale of pay) cadre in the list of non-civil services. In its letter, the Higher Education department said the OES (state's scale of pay) cadre has not been included in the list of non-state civil services. As a result, the lecturers of Group-A cadre have been deprived of being nominated for appointment to the Odisha cadre IAS officers. The lecturers of OES (state's scale of pay) usually begin their service as Group-B cadre. They are promoted into the Group-A cadre after completing eight years' of service. Upon their promotion to the Group-A cadre, the lecturers get salaries and allowances at par with OAS officers of Deputy Collector's rank, said the letter. The inclusion of OES cadre in the list of non-civil services list will clear the decks for the nomination of Group-A lecturers for appointment of Odisha cadre IAS officers, added the letter. Many senior lecturers of government colleges had earlier expressed resentment over denial of promotion to the IAS rank. They had raised the issue with the Higher Education department time and again, sources said.

Teen in shorts made to take exam wrapped in curtain

Dubbing the incident as regressive, gender rights activists say it was manifestation of a patriarchal mindset rooted in colonial, medieval outlook of imposing dress and other cultural codes on women to deprive them of equal rights and opportunities
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Guwahati, Sept 17: A 19-year-old girl appearing for an examination in Assam was made to wrap a curtain around her legs by an invigilator who chafed at her wearing shorts, provoking outrage and allegations of gender bias, and prompting university authorities to order an inquiry. The girl's family has, however, decided against taking the matter further in the interest of her mental well-being and academic future. The incident occurred Wednesday when the girl had gone from her hometown Biswanath Chariali to Tezpur to appear for the entrance examination of the Assam Agricultural University (AAU). She had unhindered access to the venue but an invigilator inside the examination hall objected to her wearing short pants. Her father Babul Tamuli told PTI Friday that after the invigilator at Girijananda Chowdhury Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences (GIPS) told her that she will not be allowed to appear for the exam wearing shorts, she took up the matter with the authorities there and insisted no dress code was mentioned on the admit card. She also told them she had appeared in the NEET exams recently in shorts. However, as they were unrelenting, the girl rushed to her father waiting outside the venue. Tamuli made a dash for the nearest market to buy a pair of trousers. But before he could return with trousers the authorities had provided the girl a curtain to wrap around her legs which she did and wrote her paper. "My daughter was traumatised and spoke to a few local journalists about the humiliating incident and the issue became viral on social media. There are many who have condemned the incident but many have attacked my daughter for not following a dress code in an educational institution which has left her more mentally disturbed," Tamuli said. The AAU constituted a three-member committee to inquire into the 'unfortunate incident.' Its registrar Tapan Kumar Gohain said the panel headed by dean of the agriculture faculty will conduct the probe and submit its report in 10 days. The issue left many seething with anger over the 'humiliating incident.' Congress spokesperson Bobbeeta Sarma said: "I feel sorry that society has become so regressive about what a girl wears. Such a mindset is dangerous for the safety and security of girls." Gender rights activist Anurita Hazarika of North East Network dubbed the incident as 'outrageous and a criminal offence.' "Who defines modesty and decides for women? Would a boy be dealt with in the same manner if he had entered the examination hall wearing shorts or was the girl singled out for her gender?" she asked. She said if a curtain was forcibly wrapped around the girl by a male invigilator, it can amount to sexual harassment. She said such behaviour is totally unacceptable.



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE
also told them she had appeared in the NEET exams recently in shorts. However, as they were unrelenting, the girl rushed to her father waiting outside the venue. Tamuli made a dash for the nearest mar-

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

You delight in meeting new people, and today you will find yourself mingling with a lot of intelligent people. Ganesh says you will continue to be a perfectionist. Besides this, you will end up spending a huge sum of money on a gift for your beloved today.

TAURUS

The day is coloured in the shade of arguments and belligerence for most part of today, predicts Ganesh. You may spend the afternoon in lengthy business discussions with friends. Things will look up by evening as you might get some special treatment from your soul mate.

GEMINI

Your mind will be seized with tension on some account. You will be nervous and uneasy as a result. A grave illness may strike some member of your family. However, things should ease out during the later part of the day, says Ganesh.

CANCER

You will focus on near ones and give more attention to them. You will exude charm in your actions. Your kin's response will surprise you. Long-time relations will progress and benefit you.

LEO

You will complete your tasks courageously today. You will have the patience to wait for the fruits of your labour to fall into your lap, so as to say, You will redo those tasks that you are unable to complete to your expectations. Owing to this attitude of yours, you do not need to worry about a thing, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

Personal problems which have been simmering for quite a long time may be resolved today. Ganesh advises you to put in that extra bit of effort. You may plan to start a joint venture. In the evening, you can dedicate your time to some much-needed socialising.

LIBRA

Ganesh says that you will be able to impress people with your extraordinary abilities. You will express your intention to study and go in for higher studies in the evening. This decision will help you understand which career field is best suited for you.

SCORPIO

The chemistry between you and your partner would be electrifying. Ganesh foresees a day full of romantic indulgences. Things at home front would be pretty relaxing. You are on a money saving mission today and your bargaining skills would definitely yield benefits.

SAGITTARIUS

A day full of highs and lows, predicts Ganesh. Heaps of work is likely to keep you on toes today. You experience a stressful day at work. In the evening, you may spend quality time with your beloved and treasure small joys of life.

CAPRICORN

If you are holding an authoritative position at work, today is your day, feels Ganesh. Sincere efforts and honesty will not make the current projects cross finishing line, but also fetch you appreciation and rewards from one and all. Those in the fields other than government, will win the confidence of superiors and may discuss confidential subjects with them.

AQUARIUS

The day will kick start with you deciding to opt for higher education or a personality development course. If you are a businessman or associated with finance, it will be a favourable day for you, foresees Ganesh. Through out the day, you will be occupied with one or the other thing but you will not be complaining.

PISCES

You need to control the vortex of emotions swirling through you. Your savage mood swings could have a bearing on vital decisions you need to take today. You need to guard against being emotional, be more calculative in your dealings, and think lesser about chasing after money, says Ganesh.



HELEN MIRREN TO HOST HARRY POTTER GAME SHOW

Oscar-winning actress Helen Mirren says she is thrilled to be hosting a new quiz show *Harry Potter: Hogwarts Tournament of Houses*, which will air as part of the 20th-anniversary celebrations of the film series.

SHANG-CHI AIMS TO KEEP BOX-OFFICE CROWN OVER CRY MACHO

Canadian actor Simu Liu's superhero movie *Shang Chi* is aiming to lead the international box-office over actor Clint Eastwood's film *Cry Macho*. The superhero adventure is projected to generate roughly \$17 million between Friday and Sunday, which would represent a decline of around 50 per cent from the weekend prior.



Rakul Preet enrolled for medical classes for Doctor G

Mumbai: Actress Rakul Preet Singh, whose look from the upcoming Ayushmann Khurrana-starrer *Doctor G* was unveiled Friday, had to enroll for medical classes to get into the skin of her character in the film.

To essay doctor Fatima, Rakul had to learn medical terminology and also nuances of some important surgical procedures for this family entertainer, directed by Anubhuti Kashyap.

In order to make everything related to the medical world appear authentic on screen, the makers had arranged for experts to conduct special sessions with the cast —Rakul, Ayushmann and actress Shefali Shah and train them as part of their characters' prep.

Rakul said: "Shooting for *Doctor G* has turned out to be an interesting experience. Since I play a doctor, the mannerisms and actions needed to be precise. It was mandatory to learn important things related to the medical world to make it look real on screen."

"The journey of becoming doctor Fatima was an amazing process which I will cherish forever."

Rakul said that she and the makers wanted her character to look authentic.

"We did multiple look tests to get her look right. The idea was for her to look as close to real as possible and bring out the endearing quality of her character. By just wearing the doctor's coat, you suddenly get a sense of responsibility even though I was only playing a character," she said.

The actress added: "While treating patients for scenes, one truly understands how much responsibility doctors have on their shoulders and how difficult their life is." **IANS**



'No Land's Man is a satire on issues the world is facing'

Mumbai: The recently released first look of Nawazuddin Siddiqui on his social media from his first English feature film *No Land's Man* has garnered a lot of attention. The film has already bagged a nomination from Busan Film Festival for Kim Jiseok Award.

In an exclusive conversation with IANS, Nawazuddin shared his excitement for the nomination. "It feels great to receive such a massive response from the audience. I am glad to learn that the viewers are interested in cinema like *No Land's Man*."

"The film is a satire on the issues that we as a world are facing. I am sure that everyone across the globe will connect with the film and the subject that it brings forth," he added.

No Land's Man is directed by filmmaker Mostofa Sarwar Farooki and A.R. Rahman is the music composer and executive producer. Along with Nawazuddin, the other actors featured in the film are Shrihari Sathie, Nusrat Imrose Tisha, Anjan Chowdhury, and Faridur Reza Sagar.

The film also stars Megan Mitchell, Tahsan Khan and Eisha Chopra. **IANS**



Priyanka says sorry for her participation in The Activist



Mumbai: Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas has issued an apology over her participation in the CBS show *The Activist*, after it got embroiled in a controversy and social media backlash. She says she is sorry that her participation in it disappointed many.

Priyanka, who is married to American pop star Nick Jonas, said she has been 'moved' by the criticism. She shared the apology letter on her Instagram.

It read: "I have been moved by the power of your voices over the past week. At the core, *Activist* is fuelled by cause and effect, and when the people come together to raise their voice about something, there is always an effect. You were heard."

The statement further read: "The show got it wrong, and I am

sorry that my participation in it disappointed many of you."

She said that the intention was always to 'bring attention to the people behind the ideas and highlight the actions and impact of the causes they support tirelessly.'

"I'm happy to know that in this new format, their stories will be the highlight, and I'm proud to collaborate with the partners who have their ear to the ground and know when it's time to hit pause and re-evaluate," Priyanka said.

The actress added: "There is a global community of activists who fight every single day and put their blood, sweat and tears into creating change, but more often than not, they are rarely heard or acknowledged. Their work is so important and they too deserve to be recognised and celebrated."

The network CBS had announced a change in format for the show. It would be changed from a competition show to a one-time documentary. *The Activist* was announced as involving six inspiring activists who will team up with three public personalities such as Usher, Priyanka, and Julianne Hough.

The format for the series had six activists representing three causes — health, education and environment — completing challenges to raise awareness about those issues during the initial four episodes.

For the fifth and final episode, three of the six activists were to have been chosen (one representing each area) to go to the G20 summit in Rome at the end of October and meet with world leaders to personally press their causes.

Ajay Devgn recreates Phool Aur Kaante split stunt

Mumbai: Actor Ajay Devgn recreated his iconic *Phool Aur Kaante* split stunt for an ad using trucks and thanked Mahindra Group Chairman Anand Mahindra saying it was great shooting the commercial.

Anand Mahindra posted the ad campaign on his Twitter and wrote: "30 years ago, in his debut Bollywood film, *Phool Aur Kaante*, @ajaydevgn performed his original master act, the split. And now, he does it again, this time for Mahindra. Watch this space for more..."

To which, Ajay has replied: "Thanks Anand, My special feats will always be reserved for Mahindra. It was great shooting this commercial. @anandmahindra @MahindraTruckBus."

Instead of bikes, Ajay recreated his iconic split stunt for the ad using trucks. **IANS**



PEANUTS



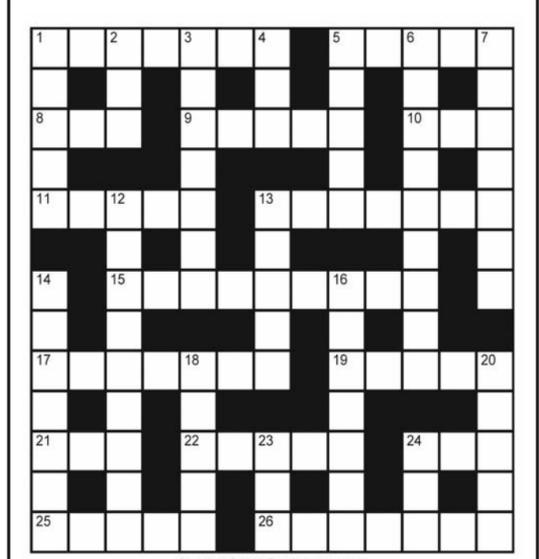
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



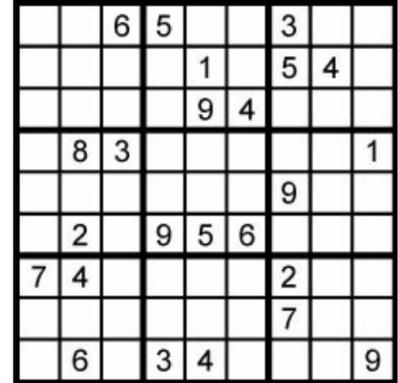
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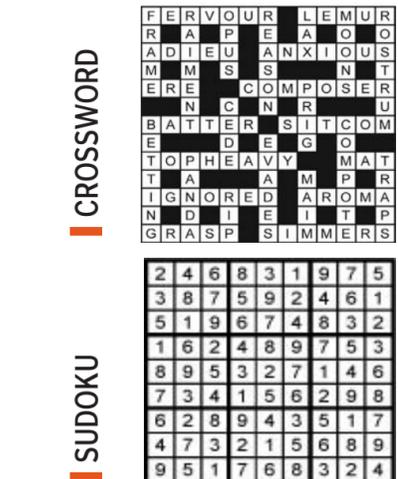
- Across**
- 1 Sled dogs
 - 5 Billiards shot
 - 8 Sitter's handful
 - 9 Bouquet
 - 10 Butter portion
 - 11 Shiraz native
 - 13 On the loose (2,5)
 - 15 Position
 - 17 Sweetened red wine
 - 19 Pillow filler
 - 21 Cousin of an ostrich
 - 22 Drag one's feet
 - 24 Play on words
 - 25 Decorative jugs
 - 26 Shake
 - Down**
 - 1 Port-au-Prince's land
 - 2 Gullible one
 - 3 Put on a pedestal
 - 4 ___ Paulo, Brazil
 - 5 Edible mushroom
 - 6 Apart
 - 7 Main courses
 - 12 Kind of story
 - 13 Top dog
 - 14 Spartan
 - 16 Ross Sea sight (3,4)
 - 18 Tricks
 - 20 Wash cycle
 - 23 Pertinent
 - 24 Saloon

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



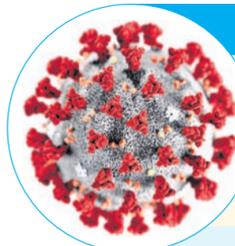
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



DIVINE ARCHITECT

Priests offer puja to Lord Vishwakarma at an office of the Electricity department in Unit-IX area of Bhubaneswar, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	22,80,03,866	20,46,67,407	46,87,152
India	3,33,81,728	3,25,98,424	4,44,248
Odisha	10,18,926	10,05,564	8,122

AP ex-MLA admits he used duped investors' money

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of state Crime Branch managed to elicit vital information regarding chit fund scam by the firm owned by ex-MLA of Visakhapatnam (West) in Andhra Pradesh, Malla Vijaya Prasad during his three days in remand.

EOW sources said that the YSR Congress leader, during the remand period, admitted to have acquired properties like hotels and farm houses using the money invested by gullible depositors from the state in various lucrative ponzi schemes run by his firm Welfare Building & Estates Private Limited.

Prasad allegedly owns landed properties in different parts of the state, including a hotel in Puri. He has reportedly invested the money, illegally fetched through the alluring schemes, in financing some south-Indian movies too.

On Wednesday, the Odisha Protection of Interests of Depositors (OPID) court, Cuttack, had given permission to the EOW sleuths to take Prasad on a three-day remand for further enquiry into the ponzi scam. He will be produced before the court Saturday after the end of the remand period.



The YSR Congress leader allegedly owns landed properties in different parts of the state, including a hotel in Puri

State plans recreation spots near big dams



File photo of Ghodahad dam in Ganjam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: In an aim to ensure that tourists visiting the big dams in the state get a pleasant experience, the government has planned to set up museums and activity centres near such dams.

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

Mahapatra directed the officials concerned to develop the big dams and the adjacent land into learning and recreation spots with museum, audio-visual shows, guided tours, boating and camping facilities.

Since big dams are larger engineering marvels, it can be good spots for learning through pleasure trip activities, more particularly for students, Mahapatra said.

The Chief Secretary directed the officials to set up the museum

with audio-visual equipment for explaining to the students about the scientific knowledge and the technology used in construction of the dam.

The students should also be educated about different utilities of a dam including, its ecosystem, the process of irrigation, power generation etc, he suggested.

Mahapatra further instructed to arrange guided tours of the students to the dams and their peripheries for giving them direct exposure to the practical outcomes of dam projects.

Water Resources secretary Anu Garg said that dam projects like Lower Indra in Kalahandi district, Salia in Khurda, Upper Jonk (Patora Dam) in Nuapada, Upper Kolab in Koraput, Samal Barrage in Angul, Balimela in Malkangiri, Harabhangi in Gajapati, Kuanaria in Nayagarh, Ghodahad in Ganjam, Badanalla in Rayagada,

The Chief Secretary directed the officials concerned to develop the big dams and the adjacent land into learning and recreation spots with museum, audio-visual shows, guided tours, boating and camping facilities

In the first phase, learning-cum-recreation spots would be developed in 3 to 4 such dams

Around ₹4 crore will be spent on the construction of each recreation centre

Bhanjanagar dam in Ganjam, Pitamahala & Kansabahal in Sundargarh, Kanjhari, Salandi & Hadagada in Keonjhar and Indravati in Kalahandi have the potential to be transformed into learning-cum-recreation spots.

In the first phase, 3 to 4 such dams would be taken up and gradually the intervention will be expanded to other popular dams based on the learning from the first phase. It was estimated that around Rs 4 crore would be spent on development of each spot.

Mahapatra also directed boating activities in the reservoirs with proper safety and security measures. Forest and Environment department was asked to finalise the modes of management of the boating facilities either through Vana Suraksha Samitis or through tourism agencies.

Development Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Jena directed the officials to select the dams closer to urban settings and growth centres having good tourism potential.

Puri admin's thrust on free & fair Pipli bypoll



POST NEWS NETWORK

Pipli, Sept 17: The Puri district administration has geared up for the byelection to Pipli Assembly constituency scheduled to be held September 30 with strict adherence to Covid-19 norms.

Puri Collector Samarth Verma Friday presided over a meeting of officials and police personnel who would be deployed during the bypoll.

Verma put emphasis on a free and fair byelection. He asked officials and police personnel to maintain high alert regarding violation of model code of conduct for the bypoll.

"The administration has made all arrangements for a free and fair bypoll. Senior officials of the district administration and police personnel would maintain high alert at all sensitive polling booths in the constituency," Verma said.

This apart, officials of the Revenue department along with police would check vehicles at all entrance points to ensure smooth polling. "Stern action would be taken against people indulged in criminal activities during the byelection. Besides, any violation of Covid norms would also invite action," said Puri Superintendent of Police (SP) Kanwar Vishal Singh.

Among others, Puri Additional Collector and Returning Officer

District Collector Samarth Verma asked officials and cops to maintain high alert over violation of model code of conduct

for the bypoll Pradeep Kumar Sahu, Sub-Collector Bhabataran Sahu, Deputy Collector Jitendra Kumar Patra, Assistant Collector Sumanta Kumar Kar, Pipli BDO Rashmita Nath and tehsildar Sapan Kumar Nanda and Delang BDO Dillip Kumar Sarangi and tehsildar Mahendra Kumar Badhei were present in the meeting.

Campaigning for the byelection will begin September 20 in compliance with 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 Pattanaik 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.

Naveen greets Modi on his 71st birthday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday greeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 71st birthday and wished him good health.

The state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) offered 'diya' (traditional lamp) at Lord Lingaraj Temple here and launched the public outreach programme, 'Seva aur Samarpan', on the occasion of Modi's birthday.

Taking to Twitter, Patnaik said, "Warm birthday greetings to Prime Minister Shri @narendramodiji. Wishing you good health and a long life."

Odisha Governor's office in its Twitter post said, "Hon'ble Governor conveys his best wishes to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri @narendramodiji and wishes him best of health and long life in service of the nation, which needs his able guidance and visionary leadership for years to come."

State BJP president Sameer Mohanty launched the party's 'Seva aur samarpan' abhijan on the occasion of Modi's birthday.

Apart from organising a 'Deep Prajwalan' camp at the Lingaraj Temple here, the BJP's Yuva Morcha also conducted a blood donation camp on the occasion.

Sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik also greeted the Prime Minister with a sand art using 2035 seashells at Puri beach in Odisha.

"Wishing Our Hon'ble Prime Minister @narendramodiji on his birthday. May Mahaprabhu Jagannath bless him with long and healthy life to serve mother India. I've created a SandArt installation used 2035 sea shells with message #HappyBirthdayModiJi at Puri beach, Odisha," Sudarsan said in a Twitter post attaching a picture of the sand art.

15TH FINANCE COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

State gets ₹246 crore central grant for ULBs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: The Union government has released Rs 246.60 crore 15th Finance Commission grant to Odisha for undertaking development programmes in urban local bodies (ULBs).

The Department of Expenditure under the Union Ministry of Finance has released the amount as the first instalment of tied grants for 2021-22 financial year. The grant has been provided for the non-million plus cities (NMPCs). The ministry has sanctioned Rs 2,427 crore to Odisha and 10 other states for development of their ULBs.

The states are required to transfer the grants to the ULBs within 10 working days of the receipt of the same from the Centre. Any delay beyond 10 working days would require the state governments to release the grants with in-



The states are required to transfer the grants to the ULBs within 10 working days

terest, sources said. The 15th FC in its report for the period from 2021-22 to 2025-26 has divided the ULBs into two categories: million-plus urban

cities (excluding Delhi and Srinagar), and all other cities and towns with less than one million population (non-million plus cities) and has recommended separate grants for them.

Out of the total grants recommended by the Commission for NMPCs, 40 per cent is basic grant and the remaining 60 per cent is tied grant. Basic grants can be utilised for location specific needs except for payment of salaries and incurring other establishment expenditure.

On the other hand, tied grants for the non-million plus cities are released for supporting and strengthening the delivery of basic services out of which 50 per cent is earmarked for sanitation solid waste management and the remaining 50 per cent is tied to drinking water, rainwater harvesting and water recycling, the source said.



With the improvement in Covid-19 situation, visitors throng twin hills of Khandagiri and Udayagiri in Bhubaneswar, Friday

BMC jittery as citizens cast caution to the winds

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: Even though the state government has urged people to exercise caution after relaxation of Covid-19 norms, blatant violation of the guidelines under Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) jurisdiction has become a cause of concern.

The state government had August 31 allowed relaxations in Covid protocols as the cases dropped. While most of the commercial activities had been permitted to resume, night curfew in certain cities with high Covid cases is still in vogue. Moreover, the cap on participation of people in events such as marriage and funeral has been increased to 250 and it had been instructed to seek permission from local authorities.

However, people in Capital city were found throwing the norms to the winds. As per sources, the civic body had last week sealed three prominent bars in the city that were found operating during



night curfew. Similarly, a kalyan mandap at Jaydev Vihar was also sealed for conducting 'Silk India' handloom expo on its premises without BMC's approval. The Special Relief Commissioner's (SRC) guidelines bar holding of exhibitions/trade fairs/melas. Moreover, several educational institutions were

found celebrating Ganesh Chaturthi with large gatherings despite the ceiling on number of participants at 20.

Sources also mentioned that the civic body till now has collected Rs 9 lakh in penalties from three zones during the last three months.

About Rs 1.17 lakh has been collected in past two weeks indicating

the rise in Covid violations after relaxation.

While daily Covid cases hovering around 200, the last seven days have witnessed a steady rise in infections. The fresh cases in Capital city stood at 291 Friday.

"The rise in active cases is a matter of grave concern and if the situation is not brought under

The civic body had last week sealed three prominent bars in Capital city that were found operating during night curfew

A kalyan mandap at Jaydev Vihar was also sealed for conducting 'Silk India' handloom expo on its premises without BMC's approval

The Special Relief Commissioner's guidelines bar holding of exhibitions/trade fairs/melas

MAHANADI WATER DISPUTE

ODISHA WANTS ICAR DATA ON DROUGHTS

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Sept 17: The Odisha government has requested the Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal to arrange a meeting with the officials of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) to get documents related to drought at the district level in Odisha and Chhattisgarh for the period 1976-2005.

According to official sources, the Odisha government has requested the Registrar of the tribunal to arrange a meeting with the ICAR. The purpose of the meeting is to hold discussion on district-level drought proneness map considering probability of occurrence of severe and moderate droughts using IMD at grid level (0.5°x0.5°) rainfall data for the period 1976-2005 and any further study period prepared by ICAR for the states of Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

The Odisha government has also sought meeting with two agencies under the Central Water Commission (CWC) - National Water Information Centre (NWIC) and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune. The official sources said that the purpose of the meeting with NWIC is to get command area map of major and medium projects of Chhattisgarh in Mahanadi basin.

According to sources, Odisha would request the C-DAC to share details of real time flood inundation models developed by the CWC for Mahanadi basin for every year's maximum discharge observation in stations upstream of Hirakud dam.

The Odisha government also requested the registrar of the tribunal to ask the CWC to share the nine documents for which the latter had given its consent during the last hearing of the Mahanadi water dispute.

Sambalpur bizman held over ₹6cr subsidy embezzlement



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Crime Branch has arrested a Sambalpur-based businessman for his alleged involvement in embezzlement of government subsidies to the tune of ₹6 crore on the pretext of selling paddy transplanters. The agency has arrested Lenin Choudhury, the proprietor of M/s Khushi Agrotech at Gobindpur in Sambalpur, under Sections 409, 420, 468, 471 and 120(B) of the IPC apart from 66, 66(C) and 66(D) of the IT Act, 2000 Thursday on the basis of a complaint lodged by M/s Varushapriya Agrotech Private Limited director KG Sree Charan. Earlier, the investing agency had arrested Srinath Rana, a former regional manager of M/s Varushapriya Agrotech Private Limited, in connection with the case. In his complaint, Charan has alleged that Rana has fraudulently used the company's login ID to misappropriate around ₹5 crore subsidy amount extended by the government. According to EOW sources, M/s Varushapriya Agrotech Private Limited was supplying paddy trans-

While the cost of a paddy transplanter was between ₹2.33 lakh and 3 lakh, the government was releasing between ₹93,320 and ₹1.50 lakh as subsidy against a unit

Out of the 500 paddy transplanters, 131 transplanters were shown to have been sold by Choudhury's firm

Earlier, the EOW had arrested Srinath Rana, a former regional manager of M/s Varushapriya Agrotech Private Limited, in connection with the case

planters to farmers across the country and also providing services and supplies to the state government under various subsidised schemes to promote agriculture.

In the capacity of a regional manager, Rana was authorised to register the sale of machinery in Odisha and facilitate subsidies to the beneficiaries by accessing the Agriculture department's website—www.agrisnetodisha.ori.nic.in—after using the login credentials meant exclusively for M/s Varushapriya Agrotech Private Limited, the EOW said.

Rana, who is also the proprietor of M/s Tarini Auto Agency in Balasore and the authorised dealer of M/s Varushapriya Agrotech Private Limited, in criminal conspiracy with Choudhury, a resident of Pakelpada under Mahulpali Police station of Sambalpur, and others had fraudulently uploaded the details of more than 500 paddy transplanters with fake engine and chassis details of machineries and showed them as sold by their agencies to farmers.

According to EOW, the accused managed to release around ₹6 crore as subsidy in favour of the farmers by the government.

"Once the subsidy amounts landed the accounts of beneficiary farmers, the accused in criminal conspiracy with others lured the beneficiaries by giving them some token amount and grabbed the subsidy amount," EOW sources said.

While the cost of a paddy transplanter was between ₹2.33 lakh and 3 lakh, the government was releasing between ₹93,320 and Rs 1.50 lakh as subsidy against a unit.

Out of the 500 paddy transplanters, 131 transplanters were shown to have been sold by Choudhury's firm. Against the supply of 131 transplanters, a subsidy amount of ₹1.32 crore was released in favour of the farmers by the government.

"Rana in criminal conspiracy with Choudhury had cheated M/s Varushapriya Agrotech Private Limited as well as the Odisha government and misappropriated the subsidy amount. In the process, no paddy transplanter was purchased, but the entire subsidy amount was siphoned off by the two accused," added the sources.

75 YEARS' JOURNEY



Chief Commissioner of Income Tax Manoranjan Panigrahi speaks at the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav organised by the I-T Department to celebrate the 75 years of independence in Cuttack, Friday. MP Bhartruhari Mahtab, along with other dignitaries, was present on the occasion

Khurda, Cuttack account for over 57% of new cases

Of the 291 new cases reported in Khurda, Bhubaneswar registered 190 infections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: Khurda and Cuttack districts accounted for over 57 per cent of the 628 new Covid-19 cases detected in Odisha Friday, a Health department official said.

Though the overall Covid situation in the state has improved substantially, the detection of a large number of cases in Khurda, and its constituent Bhubaneswar, remains a cause of concern, he

added.

The state's tally rose to 10,18,926 as Khurda reported the highest number of new cases at 291, followed by Cuttack (72). Seven of the 30 districts did not register any fresh infection, while 14 districts recorded cases in single-digit figures.

Of the 291 new cases reported in Khurda, Bhubaneswar alone registered 190 infections. As many as 367 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 261 fresh infections were detected during contact tracing.

Among the new patients, 96 were children. The rate of infection among the 0-18 age group stood at 15.28 per cent, while the daily positivity rate was at 1 per cent.

The state's coronavirus death toll rose to 8,122 as four more people succumbed to the infection in Khurda, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack and Bhadrak districts.

Odisha now has 5,906 active cases, while 10,04,845 people have recovered from the disease so far, including 681 Thursday Fifty-three patients have died due to comor-

bidities to date.

The state has thus far tested over 1.91 crore samples for Covid-19, including 62,238 Thursday. Its cumulative positivity rate stood at 5.32 per cent.

As many as 2.67 crore people have been inoculated so far, of whom 68.30 lakh have been fully vaccinated.

BMC seals 2 govt offices

The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Friday sealed two government offices for two days after several employees tested positive for the infection. The BMC, in a notification, said it has sealed the offices of the sub-collector and tahsildar of Bhubaneswar for two days. "In larger public interest and to contain further spread of the virus, both the government offices have been sealed for two days - September 17 and 18," the order said.

SSEPD dept seeks details of dead pensioners in 7 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: The state Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department has asked all the Collectors to furnish details of deceased pensioners from their respective districts within a week.

The Collectors were asked to prepare block-wise lists of such vacancies and inform the nodal department within a week, in order to prevent misuse of pensions given to the elderly and others. In Odisha, pension is given either by the Centre through National Social Assistance Programme or by the state under Madhu Babu Pension Yojana for elderly, widows, differently-abled.

The SSEPD department's move came after it suspected several ghost pensioners due to non-seeding of Aadhaar on their part, despite multiple requests from the department.

IMD predicts heavy rain

Bhubaneswar: The IMD Friday warned of heavy rain for next three days in the light of formation of a low pressure area over Bay of Bengal. It said northern districts like Bhadrak, Balasore and Mayurbhanj are likely to witness heavy rainfall while light to moderate rain or thundershower are very likely to occur at some places in north Odisha and a few places of south Odisha. Heavy rainfall is expected in 17 districts of the state Sunday which include- Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Khurda, Puri, Nayagarh, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Kandhamal, Malkangiri and Koraput.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

Mrs. Manasi Mitra and Mrs. Manasi Sinha both are same person bearing Pan No. CYNPS5383R. Right now everywhere it will represented as Mrs. Manasi Sinha.

COURTESY CALL



Lieutenant General S Mohan, SM VSM, General Officer Commanding, Madhya Bharat Area, Jabalpur calls on Governor Ganeshi Lal in Bhubaneswar, Friday

Ouat holds curtain raiser for International Year of Millets

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: The Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), Bhubaneswar, Friday held a curtain raiser programme on 'International Year of Millets, 2023' while campaigning on nutri-garden and tree plantation. The programme was organised at OUAT's MS Swaminathan Conference Hall.

Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Kailash Choudhary, Minister of State, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, and Trilochan Mohapatra, DARE and DG, ICAR attended the programme virtually. More than 150 farmers, students, teachers, scientists, Dean and Director of the university participated in the function.

OUAT Vice-Chancellor Pawan Kumar Agrawal highlighted the importance of millets in nutri-cereals, preparation of value-added



products, and its inclusion in daily food habit. He also emphasised on developing nutri-gardens at household level and plantation of fruits and other tree species.

Tomar talked about the significance of India as a leader in promotion of millets as nutri-cereals in the entire world. He said, "We have to see many changes to ensure our food security and nutrition security as well as livelihood security."

Following the meeting, a plantation programme was also observed in the campus.

Secondary school teachers' recruitment exam Oct 4, 5

Bhubaneswar: School and Mass Education (S&ME) department Friday informed that exams for recruitment of teachers for Hindi, Sanskrit and Physical education at secondary schools will be held October 4 and 5. Department Secretary Satyabrata Sahu said that an advertisement notification in this regard was published August 13. The exams will be conducted in 24 districts of the state. The candidates can download the admit card from September 25.

SCB medicine specialist Prabhat Padhi dies at 64

Cuttack: Noted medicine specialist at SCB Medical College and Hospital professor Prabhat Kumar Padhi breathed his last at his Bajrakabati Road residence here, family sources said Friday, adding that he was 64. They said that Padhi complained of breathlessness Thursday night. Within minutes, a healthcare expert visited his house and declared him dead. He was scheduled to retire September 30 this year. People from various walks of life, including several healthcare experts, took to Twitter to condole Padhi's demise.

RAIL KAUSHAL VIKAS YOJANA

ECoR to provide free skill training to 2,500 youths

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: Union Minister of Railways, Communication, Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw Friday inaugurated Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana (Rail Skills Development Scheme) under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (Prime Minister' Skill Development Scheme) on virtual mode from New Delhi.

ECoR GM Vidya Bhushan along with senior officials was present at Mancheswar Carriage Repair Workshop and interacted with the trainees. Training is also scheduled at electric loco sheds of Angul & Visakhapatnam, and diesel loco shed at Visakhapatnam.



Speaking on the occasion, Vaishnaw said that this Rail Kaushal Vikas Yojana (Rail Skills Development Scheme) will be helpful for unemployed youths of this region. They can learn different

skills and make themselves fit for entrepreneurship or for jobs in industries.

This training will provide placement support to the youths of this region. The growth of industrial sec-

tors will require skilled manpower. Promoting skill development will hence facilitate industrial growth. Vaishnaw encouraged various students to take deep interest in training. He also interacted with the

The training will be imparted on welder, electrician and fitter trades at electric loco shed of Angul and Carriage Repair Workshop at Mancheswar with 20 slots each

students through the video link.

In this scheme, unemployed youths having minimum qualification as matriculation in the age group 18 to 35 will be given free training for skill development. On

successful completion of the training, the trainees will be given certificates. ECoR has planned to provide this opportunity to 2,500 youths in this region.

The training will be given on welder, electrician and fitter trades at diesel loco shed at Visakhapatnam, electric loco shed at Angul & Visakhapatnam and at Carriage Repair Workshop at Mancheswar with 20 slots at each location. The training will consist of 100 hours in three weeks.

Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) is conducting the Skill India Mission under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana. In response to the notification issued by ECoR, it has around 900 Applications.

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Many villages in Aul, Rajnagar marooned



A village in Balasore hit by flood from Subarnarekha river

POST NEWS NETWORK

Aul/Rajnagar, Sept 17: Owing to floods from Kharasrota and its distributary Kani river, nearly 50,000 people have been marooned in 10 panchayats located in low-lying areas under Aul block in Kendrapara district.

With villages waterlogged, miseries of people in 10 panchayats have compounded while communications to various parts have been disrupted.

A stretch of about one and a half km of the Manpur-Gobindapur road is under floodwaters. People are seen commuting in country boats in flood-affected villages.

People in Dimiripal were marooned while roads leading to Erdang and Palimi panchayats were inundated. Situation in Potapada and Sidhasingh panchayat have remained grim.

Officials have visited flood-affected areas like Ketuapal, Dosahi, Gobindapur, Potapada and Dimiripal.

Reports from Rajnagar said, four panchayats under this block have remained cut-off from the rest of the world since Wednesday, even as floodwater is making ingress into new areas.

Many villages in Bandhapada, Ostia, Belapal and Rajpur panchayats were flooded by Brahmani river.

Communications to most parts of the block have got disrupted as many roads including Madanpur-Balahadrapur road, Ostia-Nagard road, Balisahipatana-Balichandanpur road, Gobindapur-Tangalaila road, Santhapada-Chakibanka road and Bandhapada-Belapal road were submerged under floodwaters.

Paddy crops and vegetables in hundreds of acres have been damaged.

Digapahandi, Sept 17: In a tragic mishap, two women were killed after an unknown vehicle hit them on Gokarnapur main road, a part of Digapahandi-Berhampur state highway-17 in Ganjam district Friday. The vehicle sped away from the spot after the accident.

The deceased have been identified as Tamal Bindhani and Chinari Bangari Patra of Gokarnapur village. According to villagers, they had gone

Tribals celebrate Karam puja with fun and frolic



POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Sept 17: Karam puja is one of the major festivals of tribal communities in Mayurbhanj and some other districts. It is a festival that celebrates the grandeur of Mother Nature. Tribals sing and dance to the beatings of drums while celebrating the festival.

Thousands of people belonging to Kudumi, Munda, Oram and Bhujimja tribal communities celebrated the festival Friday in rural pockets of Mayurbhanj district with traditional fer-

aged. The block officials have taken stock of flood situation in Rajnagar. Dry food and boats have been made ready.

Thousands marooned in Chandbali

Aradi: Thousands of people in 25 villages under Chandbali block of Bhadrak district have been badly affected by floods from the Baitarani river. Communication between Aradi and Jajpur was disrupted as floodwater flowed over the roads. Most of the flood-affected villages are in Olaga, Sundarpur, Aradi and Nandapur panchayats. Aradi-Jajpur road and Aradi-Chandbali road were submerged under floodwater. Chandbali BDO Jyotibikash Das visited flood-hit areas Friday. Dry food has been provided to 50 families in Bodak, Muan and Santara villages.

Hundreds of hectares of farmlands were submerged under floodwater. The villages which have remained marooned are Palasahi, Raipur, Sahaspur, Dhusuri, Hasanabad, Nadigaon, Arjanpur, Katsahi, Kothari and Bayangdihi under Dhamnagar block. Akhandalmani-Bhadrak road is also under floodwater.

Water level receding in Baitarani

Bhadrak: Water level in Baitarani river is reportedly receding, but there is no let-up in flood situation in parts of Bhadrak district. At Akhuapada, Baitarani flowed above the danger mark Friday.

Reports said, floodwater is spreading in low-lying areas under Dhamnagar and Bhandaripokhari blocks. Five panchayats under Bhandaripokhari block were marooned while paddy saplings in hectares of farmlands were damaged.

Keonjhar: Following low pressure-induced rain that battered Keonjhar district over last few days, a bridge on NH-49 at Shankarpur got washed away Friday stalling vehicular movement in the area.

Road communication was completely disrupted causing utter difficulty to locals. The bridge was in dilapidated condition and villagers had earlier complained about it to the officials concerned.

The rundown bridge over Aradei river is crucial for connectivity point of view as it connects Mumbai and Kolkata metropolitan cities. Locals have demanded immediate construction of a new bridge in its place. "Despite running from pillar to post, the administration has paid no heed to our problem," many residents alleged. Hundreds of residents from Shankarpur resorted to agitation earlier in the day, leading to tension in the area.

When contacted, IIC Sethi said they registered a case (Case No-237/21) and have launched a probe.

to nearby Harini nullah to take a bath in the wee hours of Friday. While crossing the road, the mishap occurred. As the news of the road mishap spread, hundreds of villagers came out and staged a road blockade, putting burning tyres on the Digapahandi-Berhampur main road. They demanded compensation for the deceased's families. All the while, the bodies were lying on the road.

On being informed, local sarpanch Asit Kumar Sahu and Digapahandi inspector-in-charge Basant Kumar

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It is said that floodwater will remain stagnant for three to four days in these low-lying areas.

Subarnarekha over danger level

Balasore: The river Subarnarekha near Rajghat in Balasore district crossed the danger mark Friday, reportedly running at 10.41 metres against a danger limit of 10.36 metres.

According to reports, the flood-situation worsened as the Galudih barrage authorities discharged 6100 cubic metres of water from the reservoir. The excess water has affected 40 villages in Bhograi block and 30 villages in Baliapal block, all of which are located in low-lying areas.

To efficiently manage the surplus water entering the reservoir, Hirakud Dam authorities have opened as many as 28 sluice gates.

Currently, around 4,87,203 cusec water is entering the reservoir and the same amount of water is being released through the 28 sluice gates. While the water retaining capacity of the reservoir is 630 feet, the present water level stands at 628.83 ft.

Water is currently entering the reservoir at a rate of 4,87,203 cusec, with the same amount of water being discharged through the 28 sluice gates. The reservoir's water retention capacity is 630 feet. However the current water level is 628.83 ft.

Keonjhar: Heavy rain washes away bridge on NH-49

Keonjhar: Following low pressure-induced rain that battered Keonjhar district over last few days, a bridge on NH-49 at Shankarpur got washed away Friday stalling vehicular movement in the area.

Road communication was completely disrupted causing utter difficulty to locals. The bridge was in dilapidated condition and villagers had earlier complained about it to the officials concerned.

The rundown bridge over Aradei river is crucial for connectivity point of view as it connects Mumbai and Kolkata metropolitan cities. Locals have demanded immediate construction of a new bridge in its place. "Despite running from pillar to post, the administration has paid no heed to our problem," many residents alleged. Hundreds of residents from Shankarpur resorted to agitation earlier in the day, leading to tension in the area.

SAFELY ANCHORED



A youth scooping out water from a boat in the Mahanadi river in Sambalpur following release of water from the Hirakud dam

OP PHOTO

MLA rescues pregnant woman from flood, earns CM's praise

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 17: A first-time ruling BJD legislator from Balasore district Friday earned Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's appreciation for rescuing a pregnant woman from a flood-hit village in his constituency, following which she gave birth to a baby boy.

Balasore Sadar MLA Swarup Kumar Das, who was elected in a by-election last year, reached Mundadhar village on a speed boat after receiving an SOS call from the sarpanch and rescued Mamata Rout. Das later drove her in his car to a government hospital, where she delivered her child, family sources said.

Rout's family had approached the sarpanch of the village cut-off by the flood after she experienced labour pains. The village headman called up Das, who had earlier circulated his contact number on the social media for any emergency, and sought his help.

Das was making rounds in his constituency on the speed boat



Balasore Sadar MLA Swarup Kumar Das, reached Mundadhar village on a speed boat after receiving an SOS call from the sarpanch and rescued Mamata Rout. Das later drove her in his car to a government hospital

when he received the call from the sarpanch and he immediately reached the village and rescued the woman. Patnaik, who had a few days ago suspended the party's Chilika MLA for his alleged unruly behaviour, promptly appreciated Das.

"Appreciate @SwarupDas_BLS, MLA from Baleswar Sadar constituency for rescuing a pregnant woman from the flood affected Mundadhar village. His selfless service for his constituents has set an example in public service," Patnaik tweeted.

2 poachers held from Debrigarh sanctuary

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, Sept 17: In a major crackdown, officials of Hirakud Wildlife Division have arrested two poachers from Debrigarh Sanctuary while they were trading wildlife articles.

The accused have been identified as Ramanidhi Bhoje (52) and Khamanidhi Pradhan (35) of Mundakiti village, said an official. Wildlife officials have seized five skins of Asian Monitor Lizard and a Sambar antler of 31 inches in length weighing 2kg from the accused during a raid on their houses.

The raid was conducted by the patrolling squad of the Hirakud Wildlife Division. Both Ramanidhi and Khamanidhi are habitual offenders, he added.

According to reports, it was revealed during investigation that the skin of Asian Monitor Lizard is used for making leather bags, homemade accessories and instruments.

The skins seized were dried on a hot chimney to make them free from moisture and smell, the release stated. The offenders have been booked under the Wildlife Protection Act and further investigation is under progress, the release said.

2 women killed in hit and run case

POST NEWS NETWORK

Digapahandi, Sept 17: In a tragic mishap, two women were killed after an unknown vehicle hit them on Gokarnapur main road, a part of Digapahandi-Berhampur state highway-17 in Ganjam district Friday. The vehicle sped away from the spot after the accident.

The deceased have been identified as Tamal Bindhani and Chinari Bangari Patra of Gokarnapur village. According to villagers, they had gone

to nearby Harini nullah to take a bath in the wee hours of Friday. While crossing the road, the mishap occurred. As the news of the road mishap spread, hundreds of villagers came out and staged a road blockade, putting burning tyres on the Digapahandi-Berhampur main road. They demanded compensation for the deceased's families. All the while, the bodies were lying on the road.

On being informed, local sarpanch Asit Kumar Sahu and Digapahandi inspector-in-charge Basant Kumar

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EAST COAST RAILWAY
ENGAGEMENT OF
CONTRACTUAL MEDICAL PRACTITIONER
(INTERVIEW THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING)

Employment Notice No. 02/2021-CMP, Date : 07.09.2021 and Corrigendum, Dt.: 14.09.2021

In view of the exigencies related with the COVID-19 global pandemic and in view of adequate preparedness, it has been decided to engage 04 Nos. of Contract Medical Practitioners (CMP) on temporary basis for a period of six months from the date of such engagement or till 31.03.2022 or till the pandemic of COVID-19 continues, whichever is earlier in Sambalpur, East Coast Railway, which can be extended purely on administrative requirement.

How to Apply : Eligible and willing candidates will send the scanned copy of their application in the prescribed format along with scanned copies of their Certificates/Work Experience Certificates (if any)/Testimonials on mail id cms_sbp@sbr.railnet.gov.in or on before 05.10.2021. After scrutiny of the application, interview through video conferencing would be taken of eligible candidates for which they would be intimated through their e-mail & WhatsApp number. Selected candidate will be intimated through the WhatsApp number/e-mail id of the candidate. While reporting for duty, the candidate will be required to bring all the original Certificates/Testimonials for verification and two passport size photographs. After due verification of the Certificates/Testimonials, the final engagement order will be issued.

NB : For application format, Total No. of Vacancies, Educational qualification / Eligibility, Age, Remuneration and other terms & conditions, please refer to website <http://www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in>

About us → [Division](#) → [Sambalpur Division](#) → [Recruitment](#)

PR-388/M/21-22 Divisional Railway Manager (Personnel)/Sambalpur

CENTRAL SILK BOARD
(Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India)
CSB Complex, BTM Layout, Madivala
Bengaluru - 560 068, Karnataka, INDIA
Phone: +91 80 26282516, 26282517 Fax: +91 80 26681511

Adv. No. CSB/3/2021 **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST** Date: 18.09.2021

CSB invites EOI for hiring of a Recruitment Agency under the Government including Statutory Bodies/Autonomous Bodies, Public Sector Organizations thereunder for undertaking End-to-End recruitment process for filling direct recruitment posts in various cadres under Central Silk Board.

The EOI has been published in E-procure Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app> (Tender ID 2021_CS_623104_1) and also on the website of Central Silk Board at www.csb.gov.in

DAVP: 41109/11/0005/2122 **Member Secretary**

SUNDARAM HOME
Regd Office: No. 21, Patullo Road, Chennai - 600002.
Corporate Office: Sundaram Towers, No. 46, Whites Road, Chennai-600014
Branch Office: A/108, 1st Floor, Banadev Bhawan, Saheed Nagar, Khurda Dist, Bhubaneswar - 751 007. Phone: 0674 - 254 4677

POSSESSION NOTICE

Rule 8(2) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002
Whereas the authorized officer of **SUNDARAM HOME FINANCE LTD** Erstwhile **SUNDARAM BNP PARIBAS HOME FINANCE LTD.**, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice U/s. 13(2) dated 01-08-2017** calling upon the **Borrower Mr. Bishnu Charan Mallick, Co-Borrower, Mrs. Sarojini Mallick** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs. 9,08,906/- (Rupees Nine Lakhs Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Six Only)** being the amount due and payable under the **Loan Account number 66200290** and with Future Interest + Statutory Expenditure + Legal expenses + Incidental charges within 60 days from the date of receipt of the notice.

The Borrower, Co-Borrower having failed to repay the amount in full, notice is hereby given to the Borrower, Co-Borrower and the public in general that the Authorised Officer has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said Rules on this **16-09-2021**.

The borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

The Borrower, Co-Borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of **SUNDARAM HOME FINANCE LTD.**, for an amount **Rs. 7,91,325/- (Rupees Seven Lakhs Ninety One Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Five Only)** as of **16-09-2021** and interest thereon @ 24% p. a. + Statutory Expenditure + Legal expenses + Incidental charges.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY

All that piece and parcel of the property admeasuring Ac. 0.100 dec, comprised in Khata No.541, Plot No.8, which is correspondence to Sabak Khata No.162/8 Sabak Plot No.1/8. Situated at Mouza/Revenue Village: Unit No.01, Chorda, Jajpur Road, P.S.Jajpur Road, Tahasil - Sukinda, Hal Tahasil - Vyasanagar, District Jajpur, Odisha under the Jurisdiction of Sub-Registrar : Dolipur at Jajpur Road. **Bounded on the North : Village Boundary of Chandama, South: Road, East: Plot No.09, West: Plot No.8 (part).**

Date: 16-09-2021 **for SUNDARAM HOME FINANCE LTD., AUTHORISED OFFICER**

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, GUNUPUR
Email: eerwgunupur@gmail.com

E-Procurement Notice/Bid Identification No.: EERWGNP - Online - 03/2021-22
Letter No.: 3632, Date: 07.09.2021

- Name of the Work : Installation of Road Signage
- Total No. of Works : 05 Nos. (Percentage rate tender)
- Estimated Cost : Varies from Rs.6.58 lakhs to Rs.18.95 lakhs
- Class of Contractor : As mentioned in Col .5 of Annexure
- Time of Completion : Specified in DTCN.
- Other details:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of Works	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Date & Time of opening of tender
			From	To	
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Gunupur	EERWGNP Online-03/2021-22	05 (Five Nos.)	20.09.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	01.10.2021 up to 5.00 P.M.	04.10.2021 at 12.00 hrs.

7. The amount put to tender is exclusive of 12% GST. The intending bidder should offer their rates which shall be exclusive of GST applicable as per norms. GST as applicable on works contract shall be paid over the bill amount at the time of payment of bill.

Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in
Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Gunupur
OIPR-25170/11/0003/2122

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, NAYAGARH
At/Po-Nabaganpur, Dist-Nayagarh, Ph-06753-252049, E-mail-nayagarhrw2006@yahoo.in

No. O-704- No.- Tender-Online-NayagarhDivn.-03/2021-22 Date: 09.09.2021

e-Procurement Notice

- Name of the work : Road Work (Procurement & fixing of Road Signages)
- Total No. of Projects : 08 (Eight) Nos. of projects
- Class of contractor : "B" & "A" Class (of Orissa PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities
"C" & "B" Class (of Orissa PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities
"D" & "C" Class (of Orissa PWD) or relevant class of other licensing authorities
- Estimated cost more than Rs.40.00 lakhs & upto Rs.300.00 lakhs
b) Estimated cost more than Rs.20.00 lakhs & upto Rs.40.00 lakhs
c) Estimated cost more than Rs. 1.00 lakh & up to Rs. 20.00 lakh
- Time for completion : 01 (One) calendar month.
- Other details

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding		Date & Time of opening of tender
		From	To	
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Nayagarh	No.: Tender-Online-Divn. NAYAGARH-03/2021-22	22.09.2021 at 10.00 A.M.	28.09.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	29.09.2021 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in
Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Divn., Nayagarh
OIPR-25106/11/0006/2122

FOCUS ENVIRONMENT

INDIA'S GREEN GROWTH VITAL



International observers like Climate Action Tracker and Climate Transparency regard India as one of the few G20 countries to be "2°C compatible" and on track to fulfill its so-called nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris accord

ital investments relative to subsequent operating costs, which is why India's relatively high cost of finance is an important factor. And increased risk perceptions of the country - including climate-related financial risks - make it difficult to reduce borrowing costs for climate investments. Large-scale green investments in India therefore may not provide adequate risk-adjusted returns.

That means India requires interventions from government and inter-governmental institutions to enable finance to flow toward decarbonisation investments. These measures could include creating pooled or specific risk-mitigation mechanisms to "de-risk" finance; shifting investments from banks to financial markets; reducing reliance on credit ratings for lending and investment; measuring, registering, and pricing carbon mitigated incrementally beyond NDC targets; and compensation for additional perceived risks borne by banks and institutional investors.

The risks are indeed high. A long coastline, widely varying seasonal monsoons, and significant dependence on agriculture make India highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This is evident from increasingly frequent cyclones, droughts, and erratic temperatures across the country.

India, therefore, requires climate-adaptation investments that would preserve ecosystems and reduce coastal erosion while protecting livelihoods. Because the private sector usually perceives core adaptation investments as economically unviable, the public sector must lead by making suitable investments and developing public-private-partnership business models to attract private investors.

Indian policymakers should thus regard meeting national climate targets under the Paris agreement as only a first step. The far bigger challenge is to foster sustainable green growth that provides a better future for India's people while also helping to protect the planet.

The writer is India Director at the Climate Policy Initiative and Director of US-India Clean Energy Finance. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

India's commitments under the 2015 Paris climate agreement, which aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels, include three quantifiable objectives. By 2030, the country aims to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33-35%, ensure that renewable energy sources account for about 40% of its installed power capacity and, through afforestation, create an additional carbon sink of 2.5-3 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent.

International observers like Climate Action Tracker and Climate Transparency regard India as one of the few G20 countries to be "2°C compatible" and on track to fulfill its so-called nationally determined contributions (NDCs) under the Paris accord. But even if India achieves its NDC targets and adopts measures to help keep global warming to 1.5°C, on current trends, its CO2 emissions in 2030 could be about 90% higher than in 2015.

India must, therefore, decarbonise more, and fast. But India also needs to invest in manufacturing and infrastructure to improve its competitiveness, create enough jobs to lift one-third of its 1.3 billion people out of poverty, and increase its chances of meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Achieving these objectives without drastically increasing CO2 emissions will require India to pursue a radically different green growth strategy.

This will not be easy. True, with renewable energy sources currently accounting for 140 GW, or 37% of India's 380 GW of installed power capacity, the country looks set to achieve its 40% target by 2030. But only 15.5% of the electricity consumed in India is clean, while the remainder is sourced through fossil fuels. That is primarily because large additions of renewable-energy capacity do not translate into lower CO2 emissions in linear fashion. The effect instead depends on the capacity utilisation of renewable sources, the grid's capability to absorb variable power, and the flexibility of power systems to ramp up during peak loads.

Moreover, while India is the

third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases (GHGs), its per capita electricity consumption is among the world's lowest, at about one-third of the global average. But it is imperative that the country's electricity consumption increases as the economy continues to develop.

The energy sector alone accounts for 78% of India's GHG emissions, while industry is responsible for 7%, and agriculture and land use 10%. Within the energy sector, industry is the biggest consumer of electricity, using 42% of India's output. As the country's low per capita resource consumption rises toward the global average, and with demand for carbon-intensive commodities such as steel, cement, and chemicals expected to grow, electricity consumption is likely to increase at least threefold between 2014 and 2030.

Structurally transforming the Indian economy will entail a shift in the share of GDP from agriculture to industry and services, accompanied by a reduction in energy poverty and improved access to reliable electricity. This would be the required development trajectory for achieving the SDGs, but it would result in India increasing its CO2 emissions.

So, how, and to what extent, can India decarbonise? The solution lies

in deploying clean technology on a large scale, reducing the cost of finance, and pricing and paying for CO2 emissions mitigation.

To promote both decarbonisation and economic development through a green investment and growth strategy, policymakers should consider adopting a sequenced approach. They could start by investing in large-scale renewable-energy projects, before electrifying transportation, and then expanding and integrating distributed green energy for cleaner electricity access.

The next step would be to create additional rural non-farm livelihoods in agro-processing (such as milling, grinding, crushing, and packaging), storage, and warehousing. After that, policymakers should aim to increase energy efficiency in heating, cooling, lighting, and electric motors. India also will need to adopt clean technologies such as carbon capture and storage, hydrogen as a fuel and reducing agent for steel and green cement manufacturing. And, it must expand its forestry-based carbon sinks on a massive scale.

Speeding up decarbonisation in line with India's NDC calls for massive investments totaling to \$2.5 trillion by 2030. Moreover, most emission-mitigation technologies require large upfront cap-



Dhruba Purkayastha

TO PROMOTE BOTH DECARBONISATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A GREEN INVESTMENT AND GROWTH STRATEGY, POLICYMAKERS SHOULD CONSIDER ADOPTING A SEQUENCED APPROACH

HUDCO's endless wait for a CMD

HUDCO, the premier government housing financing corporation, has been without a regular chairman and managing director since September 2019, when Dr M Ravi Kanth resigned from the IAS after an extended tenure. Strangely, the government has been content with temporary CMDs by appointing assorted IAS officers from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, which controls HUDCO.

Three ad hoc CMDs were appointed to keep the corporation ticking but this cannot be mistaken for steering it past the many challenges that it faces. They included the corporation's Director for Corporate Planning, M Nagaraj, Shiv Das Meena and Kamran Rizvi, both additional secretaries in the ministry.

The government's inability to fill the position has, not surprisingly, given rise to rumours and conspiracy theories with some babus convinced that the babus in the ministry are deliberately delaying the appointment, although no one is willing to stick their neck out and go beyond the speculation.

Sources say that the leaderless corporation has performed poorly in the past year despite its IPO having been oversubscribed by 80 times, certainly a first for a public sector company. It is widely believed that it could have built on investor confidence but has chosen to forego its gains for reasons no one seems to know.

A big win for the RS cadre

Dr Parasaram PK Ramacharyu is the first officer of the Rajya Sabha cadre to be appointed as the Secretary-General of the Upper House of Parliament. He succeeds Deepak Verma, who was an IAS officer as were those that preceded him.

This is good news for the RS cadre officers for they had long resigned themselves to be led by the mighty "heaven-born". But curiously Ramacharyu's appointment letter does not define his tenure. This appointment notification issued by the office of the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha states that the appointment is on a contractual basis "until further orders", leaving it open-ended. Babus are wondering whether this implies that Ramacharyu will continue in the post so long as Vice President Venkaiah Naidu remains the chairman of the Rajya Sabha? Or is the Modi sarkar trying to wrest another post from the tight clutches of the IAS?

DKB has learnt that Ramacharyu's candidature was helped immensely by the backing of the Vice President who, reportedly refused to consider any other person for the post. Apparently, some in the government were keen to retain Desh Deepak for another term, but Naidu managed to prevail.

So while the elevation of a Rajya Sabha cadre officer to the top post is a historic step, the government could do well to clarify doubts about the length of his tenure.

Hunt on for new ED chief

A belief is gaining ground within some babu circles in Dilli that the successor to the outgoing chief of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) SK Mishra will not be an IAS officer but someone from the Indian Revenue Service (IRS) or even the Indian Police Service (IPS). But, as we have come to know, decisions on such key appointments are usually made by the PMO+1, and that combo may spring a surprise. So watch this space for updates.

SK Mishra is slated to retire in mid-November and, for once, the government has not left the appointment until the last minute and is visibly and actively scouting for his replacement. Some names are already being talked about as likely contenders for the top post in ED. Among them is senior IRS officer Seemanchal Das, for whom, it is pointed out that a post of Principal Special Director was created within ED, courtesy the then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley. He is said to enjoy the confidence of those who matter in the government.

But there are others too in the fray including Praveen Sinha, a 1988-batch Gujarat cadre IPS officer and currently Special Director in CBI. He briefly officiated as CBI chief. SM Sahai of the UT (formerly of J&K) cadre is also said to be a frontrunner. Another IRS officer Balesh Kumar is now said to be out of the running since he has been appointed as a Member of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, but his hat may still be in the ring, observers note.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

WISDOM CORNER

I've missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life and that is why I succeed. MICHAEL JORDAN

Don't limit yourself. Many people limit themselves to what they think they can do. You can go as far as your mind lets you. What you believe, remember, you can achieve. MARY KAY ASH

We need to accept that we won't always make the right decisions, that we'll screw up royally sometimes - understanding that failure is not the opposite of success, it's part of success. ARIANNA HUFFINGTON

WORDSWORTH

Callithumpian

Callithumpian refers to a band of discordant instruments or a noisy parade. It was first noted in America in 1836. It's possible it may have its origin in a southern English dialect word gallithumpian; the English Dialect Dictionary says this could refer to a heckler or someone who disturbs order at Parliamentary elections (which were then public events, not secret ballots). This probably derives from gally, "to frighten", which turns up in another dialect word gallicrow for a scarecrow. But it's also been said to be a blend of calliope and thump, which sounds plausible as an evocation of a noisy fairground atmosphere, except that unfortunately calliope, in the sense of the steam-driven musical instrument, is not recorded before 1858. The word survives, though it's now rather regional even in the US, for example in the Callithumpian Parade on 4 July every year in Biwabik, Minnesota, and in the names of the Callithumpian Consort, which performs avant-garde music, and Jack Maheu's Fire in the Pet Shop Callithumpian Jazz Band. It has a second meaning in Australia and New Zealand, referring to some unspecified nonconformist religious sect.

LOL

Terrorists' plan

Two terrorists walk in a bar and talk. The bartender asks what the talk is about.



Terrorist 1 - We are going to kill 14k people and a donkey.
Bartender- Why a donkey?
Terrorist 2- See I told you no-one would care about the 14k people.

SPECTRUM CLEAN ENERGY

The path ahead for electric vehicles



Bharat Jhunjhumwala

THERE ARE TWO WAYS OF PROMOTING ELECTRIC VEHICLES - BY PROVIDING SUBSIDY ON ELECTRIC VEHICLES AND MAKE THEM CHEAPER OR BY IMPOSING A CARBON TAX ON PETROL VEHICLES AND MAKE THEM COSTLIER

The world is marching to adopt electric vehicles. The main reason behind it is that the point of pollution shifts from the city to the interiors. Electricity generation from thermal, solar or hydro plants takes place in distant areas, while it is mostly used in the cities. The population of most countries is increasingly concentrated in the cities. Large number of persons living in the cities stand to benefit, while smaller numbers in the periphery stand to lose. Those that are adversely affected could be easily compensated out of the health and other benefits reaped by the city residents. This will help to reduce the overall pollution. Petrol cars often use only 20-30 per cent of the energy. The rest is blown out of the tail pipe. If the wastage is stopped, large thermal plants can attain an efficiency of 60 to 80 per cent. Moreover, we will be able to reduce pollution if we travel the distance in an electric vehicle.

Electric vehicles were much expensive till recently. However, their price is declining rapidly. A study

by the World Economic Forum says that the price of a particular petrol vehicle increased from \$24k in 2019 to \$25k in 2021 and is expected to increase to \$26k in 2025. In contrast the price of a comparable electric vehicle declined from \$50k in 2019 to \$39k in 2021 and is expected to decline to \$18k in 2025. Thus, very soon, electric cars are expected to become cheaper than petrol cars. No wonder, then, that China has sold 500k electric vehicles in the first quarter (January-March) of this year and Europe has sold 450k during the same period. India unfortunately lags far behind having sold only about 70k units during this period.

The Central government as well as many state governments have implemented subsidy schemes to promote electric vehicles. The Central government, for example, gives a subsidy of ₹15,000 per kWh on electric vehicles. The policy is in the right direction. However, there is a better way to do this. We may impose a higher "carbon tax" on petrol vehicles instead. It was found that in Australia 51 of 62 economic sur-

veys were in favour of providing subsidies to electric vehicles. However, six were in favour of imposing a carbon tax instead. Their views need attention even though they are in a minority. There are two ways of promoting electric vehicles. One way is to provide subsidy on electric vehicles and make them cheaper. The other way is to impose a carbon tax on petrol vehicles and make them more expensive. The result will be the same. Electric vehicles will become cheaper than petrol vehicles in both cases. Difference is that imposition of carbon tax on petrol vehicles will beget revenue; while providing subsidy on electric vehicles will impose a financial burden on the government. The question then is: Why should one do a work by incurring financial burden when the same work that can be done by collecting revenue? The case against this proposal is that the cost of petrol vehicles will become high and the consumer will be adversely affected. This argument does not hold. There is no

such thing as a "free lunch" in economics. The expenditure incurred in giving subsidy is collected by the government from the people by imposing taxes elsewhere. Those taxpayers are adversely affected. Thus, the question is whether to impose a cost on the user of petrol vehicle by imposing carbon tax on his vehicles or to impose the same cost on the consumer by collecting taxes elsewhere. The consumer has to bear the burden in both the situations. The difference is that the burden is imposed on the users of petrol vehicles in the form of carbon tax, while the same burden is imposed on all people in general in giving subsidies. I would vote for imposing carbon tax so that only those consumers that contribute to pollution are affected. Why should the hapless citizen of the country who does not use vehicles bear the burden of cleaning up the pollution created by the users of petrol vehicles?

The writer is a former Professor of Economics, IIM, Bangalore.

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

Telecom sector reforms

Sir, The Central government has brought in major reforms to the beleaguered telecom sector. The reforms are expected to boost proliferation of broadband and telecom connectivity, and create an enabling environment for investment in 5G networks. The newly framed policies will benefit all the telecom players, although Vodafone Idea, which is on the verge of collapse, is the biggest beneficiary. It should ensure that the sector does not become a duopoly and encourage companies to invest in customer service and new technology. Reforms in the telecom sector are very crucial, since they play a vital role in the overall development of the country. India's telecom revolution sparked a change in the social, economic and political structures. The launch of mobile phones and then smart phones, led to enhanced connectivity, empowered citizens, expanded access to information, generated economic activity, made India a more attractive destination for foreign investment and democratised society. Last but not least, a healthy and roaring telecom sector is imperative to reach the goals of 'Digital India'.

N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Kohli's 'cover up'

Sir, Cricket is a team game where performance is of utmost importance. Having failed to win a single ICC-sponsored tournament, Indian skipper Virat Kohli is under tremendous pressure to perform at the highest level. The last two defeats in ICC-sponsored tournaments in World Cup 2019 against New Zealand by 18 runs and again in World Test Championship against New Zealand by 8 wickets compelled the team to take drastic steps to improve its performance in overseas conditions. Kohli has not been able to produce the desired results and this was first pointed out by the BCCI president Sourav Ganguly. By quitting the T-20 format, the Indian skipper is trying to play a balancing act and enhance his career in the longest form of the game. Moreover, Indian cricketers always look at individual records and both ODI and Test cricket give ample opportunity to score more centuries, which is very limited in T-20. It is time to have the vice-captain as the captain of the side and make a senior bowler the vice-captain of the T-20 side. Kohli's quitting the shortest form of the game after the T-20 World Cup is just an attempt to cover up his failures in this form of the game.

CK Subramaniam, NAVI MUMBAI

Youth shot dead in Kandhamal dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, Sept 17: A small-time trader was shot dead at Rebingia area of Odisha's Kandhamal district, police said Friday.

The incident took place Thursday night and the deceased has been identified as Nabaghana Sahoo of Bazar Sahi in Rebingia village, about 90 km from here, under Baliguda police station limits.

Police said the accused identified as Bhimasen Behera allegedly entered Sahoo's house at around 8 pm Thursday night and opened fire on him from a country-made gun. Sahoo sustained bullet injuries at chest and belly and collapsed on the spot. He was rushed to Barakhama hospital by family members, where the doctor declared him dead. Preliminary investigation revealed that the incident was a fall out of past rivalry and the accused opened fire under inebriated state. Both were neighbours.

Baliguda Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Monoj Pujahari said police have arrested Bhimasen Behera of Rebingia village on the charge of murder. The accused has confessed to his crime during interrogation, Baba Sankar Saraf, Inspector-in-Charge of Balliguda police station told reporters.

Man kills son, buries body; detained

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, Sept 17: Police Friday exhumed a body from an isolated place in a forest near Pangurumila village under Parampanga panchayat in Kandhamal district.



Chaitanya was a habitual drinker. He had been harassing the family members. Fed up with this, Bhuskar had decided to kill him to get rid of his son

The body has been identified as that of Chaitanya Pujari, younger son of Bhuskar Pujari, a resident of the same village. The police detained Bhuskar and his two sons on charge of killing his youngest

son Chaitanya.

According to sources, Bhuskar had murdered his son September 14 night and buried his body in the forest. And he did not reveal it before anyone, including his family members.

Suspecting Bhaskar's involvement in the mysterious disappearance of Chaitanya, the neighbours informed Parampanga sarpanch Ramesh Chandra Mallik Thursday. And Mallik alerted Baliguda police.

After carrying out an investigation, the police detained Bhuskar and his two sons. During interrogation, the police came to know about the crime. Friday, the police took Bhuskar to the spot and exhumed the body in the presence of magistrate Shasanka Patra.

Chaitanya was a habitual drinker. He had been harassing the family members. Fed up with this, Bhuskar had decided to kill him to get rid of his son.

On the other hand, Bhuskar denied his involvement in his son's death. He said his son had committed suicide by hanging from a tree. After his death, he had only buried his body.



Anganwadi workers and assistants stage protests over their multiple demands in Koraput, Friday

OP PHOTO

Hopes for revival of Amarda airstrip brighten

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada/Rasgobindapur, Sept 17: Hopes for revival of the historic Amarda airstrip at Rasgobindapur in Mayurbhanj district have brightened as a delegation from the Union civil aviation ministry took stock of the condition of the airstrip.

The central team will submit their report to the government within seven days, it was said.

Notably, the airstrip, located 45 km from the district headquarters town, was built during World War-II. It has long been neglected.

The delegation of the civil aviation ministry was led by Union minister of state for water resources and tribal affairs Bisweswar Tudu. The team visited the airstrip area and talked to people's representatives and locals about development of the airstrip.

The airstrip was built at a cost of Rs 6 crore in 1940 by the British government to airlift American and British troops against Japan. Now, this facility is replete with potholes.

A large number of refugees had taken shelter at the airstrip after partition. Former Prime Minister



The airstrip was built at a cost of Rs 6 crore in 1940 by the British government to airlift American and British troops against Japan. Now, this facility is replete with potholes

A large number of refugees had taken shelter at the airstrip after partition. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had landed at the airstrip during his trip to Baripada January 15, 1998

Adelegation from the Union civil aviation ministry took stock of the condition of the airstrip. The central team will submit their report to the government within seven days

Atal Bihari Vajpayee had landed at the airstrip during his trip to Baripada for a public meeting January 15, 1998. He was apprised of its condition.

The airstrip spread over 900 acres. Its runway was of 11,000 ft.

It was considered the biggest airstrip in Asia.

After Independence, the airstrip was used for military and civil services and for DRDO at Chandipur, Kolkata, Jamshedpur and Dhamra areas. But for a long

time, it has been left in disuse.

Various organizations, political outfits have been demanding revival of the airstrip, which has been included in the UDAN scheme of government.

The delegation comprising joint general manager of Bhubaneswar Airport (Civil) Goutam Ray, additional general manager of corporate headquarters in New Delhi Sanjay Kar, Mohammed Nasim of communication navigation services and senior manager (architect-planning) Sunil Singh and local leaders inspected the condition of its runway, extent of encroachments and explored the possibility of air communication from the airstrip.

In December 4, 2020, Morada legislator Rajkishore Das had spoken to then defense minister about the airstrip's strategic location within 100 km radius of Kalaikunda Air Force base and Dr Abdul Kalam Island. He pointed out that a developed airstrip can provide an edge to Indian armed forces in case of a Chinese aggression.

Its revival will provide better connectivity to the district and provide employment and business opportunities to locals, Das added.

Bandh throws traffic into disarray

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, Sept 17: Civic life was partially hit in this town Friday as a local association of truck owners observed 12-hour bandh over their demands based on a four-point charter. The call for bandh was given Thursday by the Sundargarh Truck Owners' Association. Accordingly, all entry points of the town were blocked including SH-10 that connects it with

Rourkela and Sambalpur.

The bandh started at 6 am and continued till 6 pm. The agitators demanded a hike in coal transportation tariff and loading of cargo on a 'first-come-first-serve' basis, an office-bearer of the association said.

Members of the association blocked the Rani Bagicha, College and Toll Gate bypass roads, all access roads to Sundargarh town. It led to huge traffic congestion with hundreds of vehicles

stranded on the Biju Express Highway.

Most of the shops, markets and commercial establishments remained closed in view of the bandh. However, emergency services like medicine shops were allowed to remain open.

After a meeting of the association with District Collector Nikhil Pavan Kalyan seeking his intervention over the issue failed Thursday afternoon, the truck owners had given call for bandh.

Crores spent; Juangas languish sans basic facilities in Keonjhar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Sept 17: In order to bring about a sea change in living condition of Keonjhar district's primitive tribe 'Juanga', Juanga Development Agency (JDA) was formed in 1978 and has since been working in this area. So far, crores of money have been spent, but development has still been a mirage for them.

They are still living in the same penury, in the same dilapidated huts, leaving everything at the mercy of god.

This Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG) mostly lives in jungles of Bansapal, Telkoi, Ghatagoan and Harichandanpur blocks in Keonjhar district. Initially, JDA was working only in 35 Juanga-dominated villages in Bansapal block. Later, such villages in Telkoi, Harichandanpur and Ghatagoan blocks were included.

As per the 2018 census, a total of 5,078 Juanga families are living in 54 villages in those blocks.

JDA has been working for the development of Juanga people since 1978. This period is long enough to bring about strong changes in the lives of these people. But, the real picture tells a different tale. A mere peep into their houses will be enough to know what JDA has done for them during this period. With not being fortunate enough to get pucca houses, many Juanga



families are still living in the dilapidated huts and in unhygienic conditions. In rainy and winter seasons, their difficulties get aggravated. But they are helpless. Having no choice left, they are living with such difficulties.

The fact that JDA has done precious little for the development of Juanga people is evident from their living condition. Similarly, the pathetic condition of roads, drinking water, education and healthcare facilities have also exposed the negligence and apathy of the government towards them.

At a time when the government is trying to wean away tribal people from practicing shifting cultivation, such practice is still followed by Juanga villages. Lack of awareness and job scope under MGNREGS have forced them to continue traditional shifting cultivation. Consequently, this has substantially damaged the forests and the environment.

Mission Jeevika is being executed to help them out. But, due

to want of proper management, the Juangas are not getting much benefit from this. "Besides JDA, Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) and block administration are also working for the tribe's development. Yet, the pictures of Juanga villages and their living condition have not changed as they should have had over the years," lamented social workers and Juanga leaders.

In this regard, when project manager, JDA, Banaj Nayak was contacted, he said, "JDA is not getting them houses. It is the job of the block administration. Similarly, the job of constructing roads in the region also rests with the block administration. JDA is responsible for Mission Jeevika, agriculture, drinking water facility and works under MGNREGS."

Covid assistance money was recently distributed among the Juanga families. But many were left out as the list didn't have their names. The left-out families met the district Collector in this regard.

LEGAL AWARENESS



Women take part in a legal awareness programme and literacy camp at Champua in Keonjhar, Friday

OP PHOTO

Villagers construct wooden bridge, vow to shun polls

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh/Ranapur, Sept 17: The tribal people of Raanla village of Bandhamunda panchayat under Ranpur block in Nayagarh district did something out of box. Tired of waiting for the government to complete the bridge lying half-constructed for five years, they joined hands and constructed a wooden bridge over it. This way, they reminded the government of their responsibility.

They have threatened to boycott the coming panchayat election if the road and the bridge construction works are not completed before the election.

Raanla is a tribal village. Devoid of an all-weather road, the village cannot be reached even by bicycle, let alone motorcycles and four wheelers. During rainy season, a rivulet separates it from the rest of the world.

Maa Khilamunda shrine is in the village and it is a tourist spot. Barring rainy season, tourists and devotees keep visiting the village round the year. In the absence of a pucca road and a bridge over the rivulet, the villagers face innumerable problems. Particularly in rainy season, students are the worst sufferers. They are forced to stop going to schools.

After several strikes and demonstrations, the government had taken steps to get the villagers a bridge five years ago. As the construction work started, the villagers were hopeful that their days of sufferings would end soon. But that did not happen. The construction was left mid-way through, for reasons yet to be known. Had it been completed, besides the Raanla villagers, villagers of Chakundajhar and Dimiribari villages would have



benefitted since the rivulet is presently filled to its brim.

With the government showing little interest to complete the construction work, the villagers decided to give it up and decided to construct a wooden bridge. As of now, the villagers are commut-

ing on this bridge.

Giving vent to his anger, Sameer Pradhan, a Raanla villager, said the government is launching scores of schemes and programmes. But if the advantages of such schemes are still elusive to the people, what is the use of

such schemes and yojanas.

"To go out of the village, we have to trudge on the muddy road and cross the river. We are yet to understand why the government has left the bridge work half-way through. In order to find a way out, the seniors had convened a village

meeting and there it was decided that a wooden bridge would be constructed. Accordingly, the villagers had contributed and the bridge was constructed. The government should realise our problem and understand that the present bridge is only a temporary arrangement. We have urged the government to complete the bridge as early as possible," he added.

Echoing the same, Laxmidhar Jani said, "The village has a famous shrine like Maa Khilamunda. Devotees and tourists visit the shrine round the year. Keeping this in view, the bridge should have been completed. But nothing has been done in this regard. We have taken up the issue with the sarpanch, BDO, District Collector and even the local MLA but to no avail. If the bridge is not completed at the earliest, we may boycott the coming panchayat election."

SAD protests against farm laws SC allows Ker to hold Class XI offline exam

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 17: Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) president Sukhbir Singh Badal and former Union minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal were detained by the Delhi Police Friday as they led a protest march in the national capital to mark the first anniversary of the passage of three contentious farm laws. "The protest march today not only symbolises the farmers' dissent but will also be remembered as a historic event that struck at the root of tyranny. Let's unite to mark this day as the beginning of a renewed revolt to bring justice for farmers," the SAD president tweeted. Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Deepak Yadav said SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal, former Union minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal along with 15 other party leaders have been detained at Parliament Street police station. The protest march led to massive traffic snarls in several parts of the national capital, including Lutyens' Delhi and ITO. Former Union minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal, who resigned from the government last year over the farm laws, said in a tweet that the massive participation in the protest march shows the public anger.

VOICE FOR FARMERS

SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal, former Union minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal along with 15 other party leaders have been detained at Parliament Street police station. According to the police, the leaders were detained for taking out the protest march in violation of Covid-19 guidelines. They were subsequently released.



Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal addresses to party leaders and supporters

The SAD, which walked out of the ruling coalition at the Centre last year over the farm laws, is observing September 17 as Black Day

THE PROTEST MARCH WAS TAKEN OUT FROM GURUDWARA RAKABGANJ TO THE PARLIAMENT HOUSE

"Farmers have been protesting at the Delhi border for a year, but the Centre is keen on quashing them. We are proud to have quit the NDA. Akali Dal will continue to resist despotism," she added. Alleging that the Delhi Police tried to stop their protest march, SAD spokesperson Daljit Singh Cheema said, "It is an undeclared emergency in New Delhi." A section of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh, has been protesting at Delhi border points against

the Centre's three farm laws for over nine months now. The protesting farmers have been demanding the repeal of the laws which they feel will do away with the MSP system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporations. The government has insisted that these laws have given farmers a new opportunity to sell their produce and rejected claims that they are aimed at doing away with the minimum support price regime and farm mandis.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 17: The Supreme Court Friday allowed the Kerala government to hold physical exams for Class 11 amid the Covid-19 pandemic and expressed satisfaction over the steps being taken by it to ensure that no untoward situation is faced by students. The top court said holistic approach has to be taken in the matter and the authorities concerned are conscious of their duties. A bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and C T Ravikumar dismissed an appeal filed by advocate Rasoolshan A, challenging the Kerala High Court order refusing to interfere with the state government's decision to hold offline exams. The apex court said a detailed affidavit has been filed by the state and it is taking all measures related to the coronavirus protocol. "We are convinced by the explanation offered by the state and trust authorities will take all precautions and necessary steps so that no untoward situation is faced by students who are of tender age and appearing for the proposed examination. Dismissed," it said. The apex court said it had intervened on the earlier occasion as there was a possibility of a third wave of corona by September. "Third wave is not in offing immediately," it added.



Representational image

Advocate Prashant Padmanabhan, appearing for the petitioner, submitted that the state government's affidavit does not spell out satisfactory reasons and the questions put forth by the apex court. Padmanabhan said the top court had asked the state's counsel if the decision was taken after taking into account increase in Covid cases in Kerala but the affidavit did not answer that or whether experts have been consulted on the issue. The bench, however, said the Kerala government has given convincing explanations. The Kerala government in an affidavit had told the top court that online ex-

aminations will be a disadvantage for students with no access to laptops and mobile phones. The conduct of examinations through online mode will prejudice a large number of students who have no access to laptops, desktops or mobile phones, it said, adding that students from the lower strata of society depend on mobile phones or tablets for attending online classes. "In many areas, internet connection or mobile data are not available. These students will never be able to write online examinations," the state government had told the court. The apex court had on September 3 stayed for a week

Kerala government's decision to conduct offline exams for Class XI commencing from September 6 amid the rising cases of Covid saying "there is an alarming situation in the state". The top court had observed that "cases in Kerala are about 70 per cent of the country and children of this age cannot be exposed to this risk". Rasoolshan in his plea had argued that compelling minor unvaccinated students of class XI to take part in a public examination amid the possible third wave of corona pandemic in Kerala is "unjust, unfair and unreasonable".

Anti-terror meet at Delhi Police HQ

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 17: A meeting among intelligence agencies and police forces of Delhi and its neighbouring states held in national capital to discuss the security scenario in the backdrop of Pakistan-backed terror module being busted here, officials said Friday. "The Afghanistan situation after the Taliban took over the country is also on the agenda," a senior police official said, adding the meeting was called by the Delhi Police. The meeting was held at the Delhi Police headquarters to discuss the issue of terrorism and the security scenario in the neighbouring states, he added. Several senior officials of neighbouring states and intelligence agencies attended the meeting. On Tuesday, the Delhi Police's Special Cell busted a Pakistan-organised terror module and arrested six men, including two Pak-ISI trained terrorists. The terrorists were allegedly planning several blasts across the country, including Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, during the upcoming festivals of Ganesh Chaturthi, Navratri and Ramleela, the police had said. Pakistan-based Anees Ibrahim, who is brother of Dawood Ibrahim, was connected with the underworld operatives to execute the terror plan, they had said.

Delhi hospitals see rise in seasonal flu cases among kids

Amid fears of a possible third wave of Covid-19, experts said that as flu and coronavirus have similar symptoms, the Delhi government should continue vigorous testing to keep the spread of Covid-19 in check during the flu season

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 17: Various hospitals in the national capital are witnessing a spike in the number of seasonal flu cases among children with some even requiring hospitalisation. Doctors at PSRI Hospital here said 70 per cent of the children coming to OPD have flu-like symptoms. Aakash Healthcare in Dwarka also said they are seeing 50-60 cases of viral illnesses on a daily basis in their OPD. Dr BL Sherwal, medical director of Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya, said the number of children coming to OPD has seen an almost three-fold increase. "Earlier, we would see 500-600 patients but this time 1,700-1,800 cases are coming to OPD. This is because of the heavy rainfall this season and this trend has been continuing since the beginning of September," he said. Talking about the cases, Dr Sarita Sharma, Senior Consultant, Paediatric, PSRI Hospital, said children are coming with symptoms like high-grade fever up to 102 to 103 for three to four days. "Besides cough, cold, poor oral intake, vomiting has also been seen among the children. Cough is dry and spasmodic for small children below five years of age. Few children are also having wheezing problems. This is seasonal Flu caused by a virus affecting the respiratory tract like RSV and Influenza," she said. She said viral illnesses like dengue, gastroenteritis, typhoid and hepatitis are causing diagnostic dilemmas and then there is



Representational image

also the fear of Covid-19. Of all the children coming to the OPD with flu-like symptoms, approximately 15 to 20 percent require hospital admission, she added. According to Dr. Meena J, Consultant, Department of Paediatrics, Aakash Healthcare in Dwarka, there is a spike in fever cases with vomiting, cold and cough. "Especially infants under one year are showing severe symptoms, few of them needed to be hospitalised too. Many of them suffer from temperatures as high as 103-104 degrees and the fever does not decrease after oral medication sometimes. "We are giving them symptomatic treatment like giving heavy fluids for hydration, providing oxygen therapy when the fever is not going away after oral medication," she said. She advised people to avoid crowded places, maintain proper respiratory hygiene, like covering nose and mouth while

sneezing, frequent handwashing, and also suggested that the children should be kept at a distance from the person having cold or fever. "The viral infection passed on from adults to small children can be very severe. In case your child has a high viral fever and he/she is having less oral intake, you should take the child to the hospital. Apart from viral flu, Dr Meena said they are also seeing outbreak of dengue among children this time. "We are seeing three to five positive cases of dengue among children daily from almost two weeks. Children are symptomatic, show fever, body ache, fatigue symptoms and are diagnosed later after tests. "The need for hospitalisation is increasing as some of the patients are coming with reduced blood platelets. Children with dengue are not among severe cases but we have admitted about three to four cases," she said.

'STOP DUST POLLUTION' Pvt construction sites to follow 14-point guidelines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 17: The Delhi government has asked all private construction sites to follow its 14-point guidelines to prevent dust pollution in the city, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said Friday. The AAP-led government had conducted a review meeting with all state-run agencies engaged in construction work in Delhi and they were told to submit their action plans to prevent dust pollution by September 21. "Many private agencies are also involved in construction work in the city. We conducted a meeting with over 50 such companies, including L&T, Shapoorji, among others. "These private construction

sites have been asked to comply with the 14-point guidelines to prevent dust pollution within 15 days," Rai said. The minister further said the government also discussed about the problems faced in the construction work last year. Under the 14-point guidelines, construction sites should be covered from all sides using tin sheds. The sites measuring more than 20,000 square metres will have to deploy anti-smog guns. Vehicles carrying construction material should also be covered. There should be no collection of construction and demolition (C&D) waste on roadside. Besides grinding of stones will also not be allowed in the open, the guidelines stated.



Representational image

MANDATORY STEPS

Under the 14-point guidelines, construction sites should be covered from all sides using tin sheds

The sites measuring more than 20,000 square metres will have to deploy anti-smog guns

Virtual job fair for IT sector

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Sept 17: Prathidhwani, a collective for the welfare of IT employees, which has a presence in all IT parks in Kerala, has organised a first of its kind free virtual job fair through its portal.



IT companies have joined hands with Prathidhwani for the virtual job fair through jobs.Prathidhwani.Org and the candidate registration is open from Friday. "The registration is absolutely free of cost for the candidates and continues till September 21. Through an automated system, the profiles are matched with the job description and the matching profiles will be forwarded to companies. Interview timeline is likely to be from 22nd September to 30th September," Prathidhwani said in a release. Over 100 companies from Technopark in Thiruvananthapuram, Infopark in Kochi and Cyberpark in Kozhikode have already posted more than 2,000 job openings in the portal, the release said, adding that multinational companies such as UST, Allianz, HnR Block, Quest Global and Tata Elxsi are also part of the hiring drive.

Delhi's first pet park to welcome furry guests

A SENIOR SDMC OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE PARK WILL HAVE FACILITIES LIKE DOG TRAIL, SPACE FOR RUNNING, SWIMMING, DIGGING, TRAILING AND TRICKS FOR THE CANINES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 17: Pet owners of the national capital have a reason to rejoice as an exclusive park where their four-legged friends can play, socialise, and get pampered will be launched by March next year, officials said. A brainchild of the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), the park will have space for pet grooming, off-leash area for dogs and cats to stretch, veterinary clinic with facilities for surgery, play area, and stalls selling pet food and accessories. It will also have a day shelter where pets can rest when their owners are away. "This pet park will be developed in a one-acre area near Jangpura in south

Delhi and we have identified two-three sites. We are committed to complete this project by March 2022," SDMC's Horticulture Director, Alok Singh said. Singh said work for the project will be awarded soon as the civic body is making "serious efforts" to give this idea a practical shape. He said the concept to develop such a facility was derived from dog parks in Bengaluru and Greater Hyderabad. Once opened, the pet park will be the first such facility in entire Delhi-NCR, he added. SDMC Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti said it is often seen that people do not let owners walk their pets in parks and gardens in residential localities and many a times such situations lead to verbal duels. "So, it was necessary to create



Representational image

such a facility in the city. With the opening of the pet park, such prob-

lems will be solved. People will have a dedicated park for their

pets. Many pet-friendly facilities and activities will be developed in the

park," Bharti said in a statement. The park will have a dedicated space for defecating and a provision for waste bag dispenser to collect pet poop in the bag. Covered dustbins will be installed to collect such waste, an official said. "The park has a provision of a cafeteria and gazebos for visitors to relax while their pets play and socialise with other pets," the official said, adding there will ample space for parking for the visitors. According to Singh, the visitors will have to pay a fee which is yet to be decided. The concept plan of the park was prepared by the civic body in March this year but the progress remained tardy due to the second wave of coronavirus and subsequent lockdown in the city.

national

of the day quote

Kashmiri migrants constitute part and parcel of Kashmir's composite culture and the Central government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is very keen towards their welfare

SARBANANDA SONOWAL
UNION AYUSH MINISTER

The Rakhi Sawant of Punjab politics -Navjot Singh Sidhu- has received a scolding from Congress high command for a nonstop rant against Capt. Therefore today, for a change, he went after Arvind Kejriwal. Wait till tomorrow for he shall resume his diatribe against Capt with vehemence

RAGHAV CHADHA | AAP MLA

The behaviour of healthcare workers towards the patients is also an essential part of the treatment

MANSUKH MANDAVIYA
UNION HEALTH MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

PM Modi turns 71

New Delhi: President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, NCP leader Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena leaders, and several Chief Ministers, Governors and Bollywood stars on Friday greeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his 71st birthday. Wishing Modi, President Kovind tweeted, "Happy birthday and best wishes to Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi. I wish you good health and long life and continue to serve the nation with your well-known spirit of 'Ahamisham Sevamahe'."

7 ministers face criminal cases

Gandhinagar: The Gujarat Election Watch and the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) Friday published a report on the members of the newly-formed Gujarat Cabinet. The report came a day after newly-appointed Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel allocated portfolios to 24 newly-inducted ministers.

12 more deaths in UP rain fury

Lucknow: Twelve more people died in incidents of wall and house collapse in Uttar Pradesh taking the death toll due to heavy rain in recent days to 24, officials said Friday. The first house collapse was reported Wednesday. Till Thursday, 12 deaths due to rain-related incidents took place in the state, officials said.

Flyover collapses: 14 workers injured

Mumbai: At least 14 workers were injured after a girder of an under-construction flyover at MTNL junction in suburban Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) here collapsed early Friday, civic officials said. The mishap occurred at 4.41 am, they said. The injured workers were taken to the Vile Parle-based V N Desai Hospital, where the doctors said that their condition was stable, the officials added.

Policeman killed

Srinagar: Militants Friday shot dead a policeman in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. "At about 6.05 pm, terrorists fired at a police personnel, identified as Banto Sharma (Follower) of Wanpoh, and injured him," they said. The officials said Sharma was shifted to a hospital but succumbed to injuries.



If we look back in the history, we will find that the Central Asia has been the hub of moderate, progressive cultures and values

NARENDRA MODI
PRIME MINISTER

INDIA, NEPAL TO CARRY OUT MILITARY TRAINING EXERCISE

India and Nepal will carry out joint military training exercise 'Surya Kiran' at Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh from September 20, the Indian Army announced Friday



LADAKH STANDOFF

INDIA CALLS FOR EARLY RESOLUTION

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Beijing, Sept 17: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has told his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi that the two sides should work for an early resolution of the remaining issues along the LAC in eastern Ladakh to restore peace and tranquillity in the border areas as this has been an essential basis for progress in Sino-India ties.

As Jaishankar conveyed his views at a meeting with Wang on the sidelines of the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Tajikistan capital Dushanbe Thursday, a Chinese Foreign Ministry statement Friday said Minister Wang hoped India will meet China halfway to move the border situation towards stability and shift it from "urgent dispute settlement to regular management and control."

Jaishankar also asserted it is essential that China avoid viewing its ties with India through the "lens of a third country" to which Beijing said it "agrees". Observing that Sino-India relations have their own "intrinsic logic", China said the ties do not target any "third party



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi at a meeting in Dushanbe

and are not based on any third party."

In a statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the two ministers exchanged views on the current situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh as well as on global developments. The two sides agreed that military and diplomatic officials of India and China should meet again and continue their discussions to resolve the remaining issues at

the earliest, it added.

The statement said Jaishankar underlined that it was necessary to ensure progress in the resolution of remaining issues so as to restore peace and tranquillity along the LAC in eastern Ladakh as such an atmosphere in the border areas has been an essential basis for progress in the bilateral relations.

Jaishankar also told Wang that India had never subscribed to any "clash of civilisations theory" and

In February, the two sides completed the withdrawal of troops and weapons from the north and south banks of the Pangong lake in line with an agreement on disengagement

Each side currently has around 50,000 to 60,000 troops along the LAC in the sensitive sector

that Asian solidarity would depend on the example set by India-China relations, it added. He also said the two sides need to establish a relationship based on "mutual respect" for which it was necessary that China avoid viewing the ties with India from the perspective of its relations with third countries, the statement said.

On Twitter, Jaishankar said: "It is also essential that China does not view its relations with India through the lens of a third country." While Jaishankar mentioned "a third country", the statement by the MEA talked about "third countries". It is learnt that the two sides also exchanged views on developments in Afghanistan after the Taliban's takeover of the country last month.

'Nearly 90% of people in Mumbai have antibodies'

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Sept 17: Nearly 90% of people in Mumbai are estimated to have Covid-19 antibodies, according to the civic body survey released Friday.

The fifth blood serum survey which tests for antibodies, known as a sero survey conducted between August and early September included 8,674 adults out of which almost 65% of the subjects were vaccinated.

The survey also revealed that more females had Covid-19 antibodies compared to their male counterparts at 88.29% compared to 85.07%.

Sero-prevalence was significantly higher in individuals who had received either first or both doses of Covid-19 vaccine as compared to their unvaccinated counterparts, the survey by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) noted.

"As the sero-prevalence amongst those who are vaccinated is much higher than the unvaccinated counterparts, it is essential to strengthen the ongoing Covid-19 vaccination program," the report mentioned.

India's crowded financial hub Mumbai won plaudits this year



No respite from Covid in Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: There is no respite from high daily Covid tallies for Kerala as on Friday, 23,260 people turned positive after 1,28,817 samples were sent for testing in the past 24 hours and the test positivity rate was 18.05 per cent, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said in a statement. For the past several weeks, Kerala continues to head the tally of new cases in the country.

for tackling the second wave of the pandemic better than any other metropolis in the country.

The report finding comes at a time when concerns around emergence of a third wave remains. India reported 34,403 new Covid-19 cases Friday across the country.

Judicial probe into death of accused in minor's rape-murder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Hyderabad, Sept 17: The Telangana High Court Friday ordered a judicial inquiry into the alleged suicide by P Raju, an accused in a six-year-old girl's rape and murder case here.

A bench headed by Acting Chief Justice MS Ramchandra Rao and Justice T Amarnath Goud was hearing a lunch motion petition (case being heard the same day in case of emergency), moved by Telangana Civil Liberties Committee (CLC) president Gaddam Laxman, seeking a judicial inquiry into the death.

The bench ordered the probe by a local court in Warangal and directed it to submit its report in a sealed cover in four weeks.

The court also directed the state government to hand over the videos of the post-mortem to the principal district judge, Warangal.

The petitioner also sought RS 50 lakh compensation to the family of Raju.

Raju's body was found on a railway track in Jangaon district on Thursday morning.

The incident took place two days after Telangana Labour Minister Ch Malla Reddy said September 14 that the accused in the case would be caught and that there should be an "encounter" against him.

Family members of the accused claimed he might have been killed, even as police said it was a suicide. The girl was allegedly raped and murdered in a neighbouring house at Saidabad here on the evening of September 9.

The incident triggered outrage among the public and political parties. Meanwhile, Telangana Director General of Police M Mahendar Reddy at a press conference dismissed the allegation that the suicide was stage managed.

BIDDING ADIEU



Devotees carry an idol of Lord Ganesha for immersion in the Tawi river in Jammu

PTI PHOTO

Gadkari gets ₹4L royalty per month for YT lecture videos

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bharuch, Sept 17: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari Friday said he gets Rs 4 lakh every month as royalty from YouTube, as viewership of his lecture videos posted on the platform has increased during the pandemic period.

While reviewing the progress of the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway (DME) in Bharuch, Gadkari further said his ministry has started rating road construction contractors and consultants. During COVID-19 times, the road transport and highways minister said, he did two things. "I became a chef and started cooking at home and giving lectures through video conference. I



delivered more than 950 lectures online, including lectures to foreign universities students, which were uploaded on YouTube. "Viewership of my YouTube

channel increased and YouTube now pays me Rs 4 lakh per month as royalty," he said.

Gadkari, who is known for his frank views, said that in India,

those who do good work, don't get appreciation.

The minister also emphasised on the importance of network of modern- and high-quality roads for economic development and creating employment opportunities. He said that in Gujarat, 423 km of road is being constructed at a cost of Rs 35,100 crore. Gadkari added that under this expressway, 60 major bridges, 17 interchanges, 17 flyovers and eight road over bridges (ROBs) will be built in the state. The minister said 33 wayside amenities are also proposed to be build on this expressway to provide world-class transport facilities as well as generate employment opportunities in the state.

IS GALLBLADDER GANGRENE A NEW POST-COVID RISK?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 17: Doctors at Sir Ganga Ram hospital (SGRH) here Friday reported five cases of gallbladder gangrene among people two months after they recovered from Covid-19 infections.

The gallbladder is a small, pear-shaped organ on the right side of the abdomen, beneath the liver. Its function is to store bile needed for the digestion of fats in food. If the bile builds up within the gallbladder, causing cholecystitis, the bile may become infected. Untreated cholecystitis can then cause tissue in the gallbladder to die - gangrene.

In usual cases, stones in the organ lead to inflammation, or

cholecystitis. But, in the absence of the gallstones, the inflammation of the gallbladder is called calculus cholecystitis and it occurs in people admitted for long in the Intensive Care Unit, or those with severe sepsis or diabetes.

However, the patients in this case, had no ICU stay, Dr Anil Arora, Chairman, Institute of Liver, Gastroenterology, Pancreaticobiliary Science at the hospital, told IANS.

They had mild-to-moderate Covid, which required hospitalisation and once they recovered they went home and were fine. After two months, they returned to the hospital with abdominal pain, and vomiting. "These patients had recovered from Covid-19 infection.

But the inflammation was so severe, it led to the gangrene of the gallbladder and four out of the five patients had ruptured gallbladder. And they all needed surgery, and luckily everybody recovered," he said. So can this condition be called a long Covid symptom? No, in long Covid, one continues to have some symptoms, after recovery. But here, these patients were perfectly normal, after recovering from Covid, Arora said.

According to Arora, the condition is caused by the ACE2 receptor - the key for Covid infection. ACE2 receptor is found in lungs, through which SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing Covid-19, enters into the body cells. Similarly the bile duct and the epithelium, as well as the



gallbladder also have the same receptor. "A high concentration of ACE2 receptors is conducive to the

entry of the virus. When the virus enters into cells, it causes dysregulated immune response. We think

this is caused by dysregulated abnormal and weird immune responses due to the Covid antigen which had produced this," he noted. "It's a weird virus one that doesn't know about. Antigen and antibodies produced by the Covid virus can be the reason. Maybe it affects other organs, this cannot be documented without further testing the tissues for Covid," he added.

Among those without Covid, the risk of the condition is due to being long in ICU with prolonged fasting. Because of the fasting state, the gallbladder bile becomes thick, which can cause acute acalculous cholecystitis. Patients with severe sepsis and patients with burns and trauma are also at risk of their condition, Arora said.



I disagree fundamentally with the findings and interpretations of Data Irregularities as it relates to my role in the World Bank's Doing Business report of 2018
KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA | IMF CHIEF

JAPAN ISSUES ALERT AFTER VOLCANO ERUPTS

Japan issued an alert Friday after a volcano in the southwest of the country erupted, jettisoning large rocks hundreds of metres away from the crater, Kyodo news agency reported



of the day quote

The sudden change of the government which surprised everyone, the takeover by the Taliban, and the full withdrawal of foreign forces, has established a new reality in Afghanistan
IMRAN KHAN | PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER

The huge gap in vaccine equity is not closing anywhere near fast enough. It is time for vaccine manufacturing countries to open the gates and help those facing the greatest risk
MATSHIDISO MOETI | WHO REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA

I made it very clear, we had a lengthy dinner there in Paris, about our very significant concerns about the capabilities of conventional submarines to deal with the new strategic environment we're faced with
SCOTT MORRISON | AUSTRALIAN PM

INVESTORS BRACE FOR A GREAT FALL IN CHINA

If Evergrande - which has more than 1,300 real estate projects in over 280 cities - does topple, it will firmly dispel the idea that some Chinese firms are too big to fail

REUTERS

London, Sept 17: International investors that have been piling into China in recent years are now bracing for one of its great falls as the troubles of over-indebted property giant China Evergrande come to a head.

The developer's woes have been snowballing since May. Dwindling resources set against 2 trillion yuan (\$305 billion) of liabilities have wiped nearly 80% off its stock and bond prices and an \$80 million bond coupon payment now looms next week.

What happens then is unclear. Bankers have said it will most likely miss the payment and go into a kind of suspended animation where authorities step in and sell some of its assets, but it could eas-



People gather to demand repayment of loans and financial products at the lobby of Evergrande's Shenzhen headquarter, Guangdong province, China
REUTERS PHOTO

ily get messy. "We will have to see what happens," said Sid Dahiya, head of EM corporate bonds at

abrdn, formerly Aberdeen Standard, in London, which holds a small sliver of the bonds.

"They are probably working on a deal in the background, but we don't have any clarity and we don't really have any precedents, so it is uncharted water." Evergrande warned just over two weeks ago that it risked defaulting on its debt if it failed to raise cash. Since then it has said that no progress has been made with those efforts.

Analysts say the bigger picture is that if Evergrande - which has more than 1,300 real estate projects in over 280 cities - does topple, it will firmly dispel the idea that some Chinese firms are too big to fail. It would probably still apply to big state-linked firms of course, but it comes too after Beijing's clampdowns on big tech firms like Alibaba and Tencent wiped nearly a trillion dollars off its markets earlier in year.

Contagion from Evergrande has largely been confined to China's other highly-indebted "high-yield" firms which have also slumped, but Hong Kong's heavyweight Hang Seng also hit a 10-month low Thursday showing there is some spread.

There are big name global funds involved too. EMAXX data shows that Amundi, Europe's largest asset manager, was the largest overall holder of Evergrande's international bonds although it is likely to have sold at least some before things turned really ugly.

The Paris-headquartered firm had just under \$93 million of a \$625 million bond due for repayment in June 2025 the EMAXX data shows. UBS Asset Management was the number two holder in that issue with \$85 million as well as one of the bigger overall holders.

UK rolls out jabs for children

REUTERS

London, Sept 17: A British study will look into the immune responses of children to mixed schedules of different COVID-19 vaccines as officials try to determine the best approach to second doses in adolescents given a small risk of heart inflammation.

Children aged 12-15 in Britain will be vaccinated from next week, while those aged 16-17 have been eligible for shots since August.

However, while the children will be offered a first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, officials have said that advice about second doses will be given at a later date, while more data is gathered.

Britain's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) initially declined to recommend shots for all 12- to 15-year-olds, citing uncertainty over the long-term impact of myocarditis, a rare side effect of mRNA-based vaccines such as Pfizer's. The heart condition typically resolves itself with mild short-term consequences, health experts have said.

Hong Kong has advised children only get one shot, owing to similar concerns over heart inflammation.

The study, called Com-COV3, will test different vaccine schedules in 12- to 16-year-olds, looking at the immune responses and milder side-effects.

"The concern here is about the risks of myocarditis, particularly with the second dose with Pfizer vaccine in young men," the trial's lead researcher, Matthew Snape of the Oxford Vaccine Group, told reporters.

"This will provide the JCVI with information crucial to informing their advice about immunising teenagers in the UK," he said.

The trial will give all participants a first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. That will be followed eight weeks later by either a second full dose or a half dose of the Pfizer shot, a full dose of Novavax's vaccine or a half dose of Moderna's shot.

Iran joins SCO to avert sanctions imposed by West

In a sign of its growing influence, the body's summit in Tajikistan was the first appearance abroad of Iran's new hardline President Ebrahimi Raisi

REUTERS

Dushanbe, Sept 17: Iran joined a rapidly expanding central Asian security body led by Russia and China Friday, calling on the countries in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to help it form a mechanism to avert sanctions imposed by the West.

The body, formed in the 2001 as a talking shop for Russia, China and ex-Soviet states in Central Asia, expanded four years ago to include India and Pakistan, with a view to playing a bigger role as counterweight to Western influence in the region.

In a sign of its growing influence, the body's summit in Tajikistan was the first appearance abroad of Iran's new hardline President, Ebrahimi Raisi, since taking office in August.

Raisi hailed the opportunity that membership would provide for Iran, as a country along China's "Belt and Road" route, to join important trade links across Eurasia.

Iranian television described Iran's membership as giving it access to huge markets across the continent.

In his speech to members, Raisi compared sanctions on Iran to terrorism, and said the organisation should design a mechanism that helps Tehran avert them.

Russia and China, along with Western countries, are parties of a 2015 agreement between Iran and world powers under which Tehran agreed to curbs on its nuclear programme in return for the lifting of sanctions.

Washington abandoned that deal in 2018 and unilaterally reimposed financial sanctions. Negotiations this year to revive it have been stalled since Raisi's election.

"Nothing can stop Iran's peaceful nuclear activities that are within the framework of international regulations," Raisi said. "Diplomacy is only effective when all parties adhere to it. Threats and pressure tie diplomacy's hands and render it ineffective."



SHORT TAKES

Airstrikes kill 24 Houthis in Yemen

Sanaa: At least 24 Houthi rebels were killed in multiple airstrikes launched by Saudi-led coalition forces in Yemen's Marib province, a government military source said. "Twenty-four rebels were killed and nine weapon-mounted vehicles were destroyed in the coalition airstrikes on the rebel positions and reinforcements in Al-Mashjah frontline," the source told Xinhua news agency Thursday. "The airstrikes were a response to the rebel ground attack on the positions of the (Yemeni) government forces on the frontline," he added.

EU declares new Indo-Pacific strategy

Brussels: The European Union (EU) has unveiled a new strategy for enhancing its economic, political and defence existence in the Indo-Pacific region, vowing to cooperate with all members in the region without seeking confrontation. According to the adopted Joint Communication on the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, the Indo-Pacific region's growing economic, demographic, and political weight makes it a key player in shaping the international order and in addressing global challenges.

9 killed in Pak firing over land dispute

Peshawar: At least nine persons were killed and 10 critically injured in a firing between two rival groups over a land dispute in Pakistan's northwest Khyber Pukhtunkhwa province, police said. The firing between two groups occurred Thursday at a funeral site in the Tormang area of the Dir Lower district of the province, killing nine persons. The police team rushed to the site and cordoned off the entire area and carried out a massive search operation to arrest the fleeing accused.

China astronauts return after 90 days

Beijing: A trio of Chinese astronauts returned to earth Friday after a 90-day stay aboard their nation's first space station in China's longest mission yet. Nie Haisheng, Liu Boming and Tang Hongbo landed in the Shenzhou-12 spaceship just after 1:30 p.m. (0530 GMT) after having undocked from the space station Thursday morning. State broadcaster CCTV showed footage of the spacecraft parachuting to land in the Gobi Desert where it was met by helicopters and off-road vehicles.

CRAVING FOR DEMOCRACY



Fireworks thrown by anti-government protesters, who are demanding a democratic system in the country, explode in front of a line of riot police officers during an anti-government protest in Bangkok, Thailand
REUTERS PHOTO

Taliban introduces Ministry of Virtue and Vice

Female employees said they had been trying to come to work for several weeks only to be told to return to their homes

REUTERS

Kabul, Sept 17: Workers in the Afghan capital Kabul replaced signs for the country's Women's Ministry with those for the Taliban's moral police Friday, as female former employees of the department said they had been locked out of the building.

A sign for the building was covered by a replacement in a mixture of Dari and Arabic, reading "Ministries of Prayer and Guidance and the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice" Friday, according to photographs and Reuters witnesses.

Female employees said they had been trying to come to work for several weeks only to be told to return to their homes, according to videos filmed outside the building seen by Reuters. The gates of the building were finally locked Thursday, one of the women said.



"I am the only breadwinner in my family," said a second woman, who also said she worked in the department. "When there is no ministry, what

should an Afghan woman do?" Taliban spokesmen did not respond to requests for comment Friday. When the Taliban, who seized

control of Afghanistan last month amid the chaos following the withdrawal of US troops, were last in power from 1996-2001 girls were not allowed to attend school and women were banned from work and education.

During that period the Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice became known as the group's moral police, enforcing its interpretation of sharia that included a strict dress code and public executions and floggings. A list of Cabinet posts announced by the Taliban September 7 included an acting minister for the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice and made no mention of a Women's Minister, but the group did not confirm the department had been disbanded.

A senior Taliban leader said earlier this week that women would not be allowed to work in government ministries with men.

END OF 'MERKRON'

European Union's power couple prepares to bow out

ANGELA MERKEL WILL RELINQUISH POWER AFTER GERMAN ELECTIONS SEPTEMBER 26, BRINGING AN END TO HER 16 YEARS IN OFFICE THAT HAS SEEN HER WORK WITH FOUR DIFFERENT FRENCH LEADERS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Paris, Sept 17: French President Emmanuel Macron hosted Angela Merkel in Paris Thursday for the last time before the German Chancellor stands down, spelling the end of a partnership at the heart of the European Union for the last four years.

Merkel is to relinquish power after German elections September 26, bringing an end to her 16 years in office that has seen her work with four different French leaders starting with Jacques Chirac.

Macron, 24 years her junior, has never hidden his admiration for Merkel's longevity, but his sometimes abrasive style and pro-European activism has contrasted with the more cautious approach of his German partner.

In 2019, during a rough patch in ties, Merkel admitted the pair "wrestle with each other" and had "differences in mentality", leading Macron to declare that he believed in "productive confrontation".

"They have very different styles," said Alexandre Robinet-Borgomano,



an expert on Germany at the French think-tank the Montaigne Institute. "The Chancellor is someone who

takes her time, is always looking for compromises, whereas the president is a disruptor, who is prepared to

make bold statements about problems he feels are being ignored," he said.

But EU watchers say the two have managed to form an ultimately effective version of the fabled "Franco-German" locomotive that drives the 27-nation European Union.

"Despite their big differences, their cooperation has worked well," Pawel Tokarski from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin told AFP. And as they spoke to reporters at the Elysee palace before their last scheduled working dinner Thursday, the two leaders were all smiles and charm.

Merkel responded to Macron's "My dear Angela" with "My dear Emmanuel", as they addressed each other with the familiar "Du" and "Tu".

Dinner conversation topics were to range from Afghanistan, climate change and relations with China to EU policy, Merkel said.

"I have no fear of being bored," she said of the evening ahead. During their time together, the "Merkron" tandem managed crises from Britain's departure from the European Union and Donald Trump's norm-shredding US presidency to the Covid-19 pandemic.

There were differences and friction along the way - over EU economic policy, Russian gas, Brexit and arms sales - which were thrashed out in regular phone calls and meetings.

"They are very different, but they both have a methodical character," Europe Minister Clement Beaufort, who has witnessed the pair up close since 2017, told AFP.

business



I can confidently predict that we will complete the India-UK FTA before we see an India-EU (European Union) FTA completed
GERRY GRIMSTONE | INVESTMENT MINISTER, UK

E-AUCTION OF PM'S GIFTS

An online auction is being organized by the Union Culture Ministry where buyers will be able to bid for gifts and mementos received by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The memorabilia will be available on the ministry's website: pmmementoes.gov.in. The auction will be held from September 17 to October 7



of the day quote

About 50 crore people needs to be skilled in next few years... and if we have to take India to the next level, skilling our people is absolutely essential and in this regard the role of our trainers becomes more important

RAVI MITAL | SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SECRETARY

It is my dream to build an electric highway from Delhi to Jaipur. It is still a proposed project. We are in discussion with a foreign company

NITIN GADKARI | UNION ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MINISTER

As we progress to meet our 2050 goal of carbon neutrality and zero carbon emission, we have to think of hybrid energy sources

ALOK NANDA | CEO, GE INDIA TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

WB junks 'Doing Business' report

The decision was taken after a probe of data irregularities by some top bank officials to boost China's ranking in 2017 came to light



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 17: The World Bank Group has decided to discontinue publication of its 'Doing Business' report on country investment climates following allegations of irregularities.

After reviewing all the information available to date on 'Doing Business', including the findings of past reviews, audits, and the report the bank released today on behalf of the board of executive directors, World Bank Group management has taken the decision to discontinue the 'Doing Business' report, the World Bank Group said in a statement Thursday.

The group remains firmly committed to advancing the role of the private sector in development and providing support to governments to design the regulatory environment that supports this, it said.

Going forward, we will be working on a new approach to assessing the business and investment climate. We are deeply grateful to the efforts of the many staff members who have worked diligently to advance the business climate agenda, and we look forward to

harnessing their energies and abilities in new ways, it said.

Observing that the trust in the research of the World Bank Group is vital, it said, World Bank Group research informs the actions of policymakers, helps countries make better-informed decisions, and allows stakeholders to measure economic and social improvements more accurately.

In addition, because the internal reports raised ethical matters, including the conduct of former board officials as well as current and/or former bank staff, management reported the allegations to the bank's appropriate internal accountability mechanisms, it said.

On the other hand, India hopes the massive fraud highlighted in the audit report of Doing Business ranking by the World Bank, which pointed out undue pressure from China to improve its ranking, will help shift manufacturing supply chains to India.

As per the 'Doing Business' 2020 report, India had jumped 14 places to the 63rd position on the ease of doing business ranking. India has improved its rank by 79 positions in five years (2014-19).

Ford's retreat ends US carmakers' Indian dream

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 17: When Ford Motor Co built its first factory in India in the mid-1990's, US carmakers believed they were buying into a boom - the next China.

The economy had been liberalised in 1991, the government was welcoming investors, and the middle class was expected to fuel a consumption frenzy. Rising disposable income would help foreign carmakers to a market share of as much as 10%, forecasters said. It never happened.

Last week, Ford took a \$2 billion hit to stop making cars in India, following compatriots General Motors Co and Harley-Davidson Inc in closing factories in the country.

Analysts and executives said foreigners badly misjudged India's potential and underestimated the complexities of operating in a vast country that rewards domestic procurement.

Many failed to adapt to a preference for small, cheap, fuel-efficient cars that could bump over uneven roads without needing expensive repairs. In India, 95% of cars are



priced below \$20,000.

Lower tax on small cars also made it harder for makers of larger cars for Western markets to compete with small-car specialists such as Japan's Suzuki Motor Corp - controlling shareholder of Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, India's biggest carmaker by sales.

EARLY MISSTEP

Some of Ford's missteps can be traced to when it drove into India in the mid-1990's alongside Hyundai. Whereas Hyundai entered with the small, affordable "Santro", Ford offered the "Escort" saloon, first launched in Europe in the

1960's. The Escort's price shocked Indians used to Maruti Suzuki's more affordable prices, said former Ford India executive Vinay Piparsania.

Ford's narrow product range also made it hard to capitalise on the appeal won by its best-selling EcoSport and Endeavour sport utility vehicles (SUVs), said analyst Ammar Master at LMC.

The carmaker said it had considered bringing more models to India but determined it could not do so profitably.

RISE AND FALL

Ford had excess capacity at

its first India plant when it invested \$1 billion on a second in 2015. It had planned to make India an export base and raise its share of a market projected to hit 7 million cars a year by 2020 and 9 million by 2025.

But the sales never followed and overall market growth stalled. Ford now utilises only about 20% of its combined annual capacity of 440,000 cars.

To use its excess capacity, Ford planned to build compact cars in India for emerging markets but shelved plans in 2016 amid a global consumer preference shift to SUVs. It changed its cost structure in 2018 and the following year started work on a joint venture with local peer Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd designed to reduce costs. Three years later, in December, the partners abandoned the idea.

After sinking \$2.5 billion in India since entry and burning another \$2 billion over the past decade alone, Ford decided not to invest more.

To continue investing ... we needed to show a path for a reasonable return on investment, Ford India head Anurag Mehrotra told reporters last week. Unfortunately, we are not able to do that.

SHORT TAKES

F-15EX Eagle II to be built in India

New Delhi: Aerospace major Boeing has awarded a contract to India-based Dynamic Technologies for manufacturing assemblies for its tactical fighter 'F-15EX Eagle II'. According to the aerospace major, this is a first instance in which aerostructures for F-15EX Eagle II will be made in India. Besides, the contract will give a boost to the 'Aatmanirbhar' programme and strengthens US-India collaboration on aerospace and defence industrialisation.

China plans to join Pacific trade pact

Beijing: Japan said it would have to determine if China meets the "extremely high standards" of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) after the world's second-biggest economy formally applied to join. Commerce Minister Wang Wentao submitted China's application to join the free trade agreement in a letter to New Zealand's trade minister, Damien O'Connor, the Chinese ministry said in a statement.

Free telemedicine helpline by AXA

New Delhi: Global insurance major AXA Friday said it has launched a toll-free helpline with NGO partner Sewa International in Delhi NCR, Haryana, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan to provide telemedicine services. The telemedicine helpline will be for medical ailments and information on the availability of critically needed healthcare supplies in response to the Covid-19 crisis in India. The helpline, Supportive Action Across Telemedicine and Healthcare (SAATH), is a joint corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative between AXA entities.

IndiGo, SpiceJet shares fly high

New Delhi: Shares of Indian airlines IndiGo Aviation and SpiceJet surged Friday after regulatory data showed that passenger growth jumped 136.6 per cent last month as the government started to ease Covid-related travel restrictions. Domestic flights resumed in May 2020, but air travel ever since has had some limitations as the pandemic progressed. Domestic airlines carried 6.7 million passengers in August, compared with 2.8 million passengers in the year-ago period, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said Thursday.

NITI Aayog ties up with BYJU'S

FREE TECH-DRIVEN LEARNING

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sep 17: NITI Aayog Friday partnered with BYJU'S to provide school-going children in 112 districts across the country free access to the edtech company's learning programmes.

Technology has played a key role in helping ensure continuity and a lot of classrooms have moved to an online format. In many ways, this has catalysed the development of innovations in the education space and it is imperative for us to reimagine education and keep pace with these innovations, NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said in a statement.

The collaboration will feature two main components BYJU'S Career-Plus programme, under Aakash+BYJU'S, will identify and provide high-quality test prep coaching to 3000 meritorious students of classes 11 and 12 who aspire to appear for NEET and JEE.

A voluntary programme for children of school-going age, classes 6-12, who can opt in to receive scholastic content from BYJU'S Learning App for 3 years, under its social impact initiative, Education for All.

Through our Education for All programme, we have been empowering and impacting millions of children across the country, and by partnering with NITI Aayog, our efforts are being

strengthened further. Education holds the key to driving society forward, and we believe that every child, irrespective of their socio-economic background, deserves to have access to quality education, Byju Raveendran, Founder and CEO, BYJU'S, added.

For the Career-Plus programme, students will be selected through a pre-designed test and provided teaching and content material, along with mentoring support and guidance.

This initiative will combine the best of classroom and online learning, thus providing a hybrid model of education. Apart from dedicated centres for implementing support, students will also have access to digital infrastructure in the form of electronic devices.

'WTO rules favour developed nations'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 17: The Agreement on Agriculture at the WTO was riddled with deep imbalances, which favour the developed countries and have tilted the rules against many developing countries, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said.

He said that historical asymmetries and imbalances must be corrected to ensure a rule-based, fair and equitable order.

Goyal said this while addressing the G-33 Virtual Informal Ministerial Meeting.

It was organised by Indonesia Thursday to discuss the agricultural priority issues of G-33 and the way forward for the 12th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), scheduled to be held from November 30 to December 3 this year, an official statement said Friday.

Out of a total of 47 G-33 members, representatives from 21 countries, including India, took the floor to make the brief intervention.

In his intervention, Goyal said G-33 must strive for positive outcomes on a permanent solution to



public stockholding for food security purposes, which is of utmost importance, finalisation of a special safeguard mechanism (SSM) quickly and a balanced outcome on domestic support.

He urged the members to work collectively to retain the cohesion of the G-33 coalition and strengthen it further by reaching out to other like-minded developing groups to secure their support for a fair, balanced and development-centric outcome on agriculture at the 12th

conference in Geneva.

The meeting concluded with the adoption of the G-33 joint ministerial statement reaffirming commitment for expeditious resolution of the WTO's mandated issues in agriculture.

The minister highlighted that Agreement on Agriculture at the WTO was riddled with deep imbalances, which favour the developed countries and have tilted the rules against many developing countries, the statement said.

Social media influencers to corner ₹900 cr: Report

THE INFLUENCER MARKETING INDUSTRY IS UNDERGOING A TRANSFORMATION TRIGGERED BY THE PANDEMIC AS WELL AS THE RISE OF BRANDS LOOKING TO CONNECT WITH CONSUMERS DIRECTLY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, Sept 17: With the trend of peddling brands over social media platforms catching up, influencer marketing is pegged to be a ₹900 crore market in India by the end of the year, according to a report by media buyer Groupm.

The fledgling category is expected to grow 25 per cent annually to become a ₹2,200 crore industry by 2025, the INCA India Influencer Report said.

It can be noted that with the growth in internet penetration, the proliferation of social media platforms has grown, which has been seized up by brands by engaging with influencers to



push their message. A self-regulatory body of advertisers has also come out with

operating guidelines for such 'influencers'. The influencer marketing in-

dustry is undergoing a transformation triggered by the pandemic as well as the rise of brands looking to connect with consumers directly, the Groupm report said.

Even before the pandemic, India had 400 million people on social media platforms and the number has skyrocketed during the last 18 months, it said, adding there is a shift in consumer behaviour as well.

The key factor that has got brands interested is the bond of trust and authenticity that influencers share with their audiences, thus helping brands associate with an influencer to leverage the same, Groupm's chief executive for South Asia Prasanth Kumar said.

The report said top four categories - personal care (25 per cent), food and beverages (20 per cent), fashion and jewellery (15 per cent) and mobile and electronics (10 per cent) - contribute 70 per cent volume of influencer marketing.

Interestingly, celebrities corner only 27 per cent of the marketing dollars while a bulk 73 per cent are taken by influencers, it said.

Nearly two-thirds of the Indian population follow an influencer, it said. Brands are able to interpret that influencers and creative storytelling correlate with brand differentiation, a key advantage as attention spans get shorter, the report said.

BIZ BUZZ

Ola e-scooter sales cross ₹1,100 cr in 2 days

New Delhi: Ola co-founder Bhavish Aggarwal Friday said sales of its S1 electric scooters crossed ₹1,100 crore in two days. The executive noted that while the company has stopped the buying process now, the purchase window will re-open November 1, just in time for Diwali. "Day 2 of EV era was even better than Day 1! Crossed ₹1100Cr in sales in 2 days! Purchase window will reopen on Nov 1 so reserve now if you haven't already," Aggarwal said in a tweet. "In total over 2 days, we have done over ₹1,100 crores in sales! This is unprecedented not just in the automotive industry but it is one of the highest sales in a day (by value) for a single product in Indian e-commerce history! We truly are living in a digital India," he said.



Tata launches Safari Gold Edition at ₹21.89L

New Delhi: Tata Motors Friday said it has launched a special edition of its flagship model Safari priced at ₹21.89 lakh (ex-showroom) to further spruce up the range ahead of the festive season. The Safari Gold Edition, which comes in two carefully crafted special colour schemes -- The White Gold and The Black Gold -- is set to be showcased at the upcoming second leg of the VIVO IPL 2021. "In less than five months after its launch, our premium flagship SUV, the new Safari reached the milestone of its 10,000th rollout and today is among the highest selling SUVs in its segment. The Safari has received immense love from our customers and keeping in mind the response, we are delighted to announce the introduction of the prestigious Safari #Gold Edition," Tata Motors Head - Marketing Vivek Srivatsa noted.



Wholesale edible oil prices show decline

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 17: The Centre Friday said prices of eight types of edible oils in the wholesale markets across the country are showing a declining trend over the last week after it took several measures to boost domestic supply and curb hoarding.

The wholesale prices of groundnut, mustard oil, vanaspati, sunflower oil, palm oil, coconut oil and sesame oil declined during the week ended September 14, it said in a statement.

According to Consumer Affairs Ministry, the wholesale price of palm oil fell 2.50 per cent to ₹12,349 per tonne as on September 14 from ₹12,666 per tonne a week ago.

While wholesale price of sesame oil slipped 2.08 per cent to ₹23,500 per tonne, coconut oil eased by 1.72 per cent to ₹17,100 per tonne.

Similarly, wholesale rate of sunflower oil fell 1.30 per cent to ₹15,965 per tonne as September 14 from ₹16,176 per tonne a week ago.

Wholesale rate of groundnut oil dropped 1.38 per cent to ₹16,839 per tonne, while that of mustard oil and vanaspati declined by less than 1 per cent to ₹16,573 per tonne and ₹12,508 per tonne, respectively, in the period.

Although the wholesale prices of edible oils are showing a declining trend, the rates are still higher than the year-ago period.

Spurs share spoils at Rennes

KP warns MI, backs Super Kings for title

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Sept 17: Former England skipper Kevin Pietersen says defending champions Mumbai Indians can ill-afford a typical slow start when the IPL resumes and MS Dhoni-led Chennai Super Kings have a "fantastic shot" at regaining the title after a poor 2020 season. Five-time winners Mumbai Indians, three-time champions Chennai Super Kings, Royal Challengers Bangalore and 2020 finalists Delhi Capitals were placed in the top-four when IPL was suspended in May due to COVID cases in its bio-bubble. The T20 league begins this weekend.



"Everybody will expect the holders of the competition, Mumbai Indians, to go well, but they don't have a good history of hitting the ground running. They tend to lose their first few games and then come good towards the end of the tournament," Pietersen wrote in a blog in betway.com. "We are already towards the end of the tournament now. Mumbai can't afford to lose three or four games before they start playing because there's so little time to play catch-up. "If they are to retain their crown, they must be on it from ball one. Clearly, with the talent they have in their side, they are capable of doing it." The Super Kings, who are called the 'Dad's Army' as most of the players in the side are over 30, endured a poor 2020 when they finished at the joint bottom place but Pietersen feels the Dhoni's team could go all the way this time. "Everybody wrote off the old boys' army of CSK before the IPL started in April, so seeing them go so well was a bit of a surprise. Their overseas players Faf du Plessis, Moeen Ali and Sam Curran, in particular, delivered the goods," he wrote. "But I'm not sure how well this four-month absence will have suited them. It could take them a little while to crank back into gear, particularly the older players. If they are ready, it could be a historic few weeks for the franchise. They have a fantastic shot at winning a title that everybody thought was beyond them." Pietersen, a four-time Ashes winner, also backed the England players after reports emerged that many of the English players could boycott the Ashes due to strict quarantine rules in Australia in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Emerson Royal congratulates Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg (R) after the latter scores Tottenham's equaliser against Rennes, Thursday

Esposito Santo said of the personal situation. "(Bergwijn and Moura) are being taken care of by the medical department. But it's

been tough." Roma went a goal down to Bulgarian club CSKA when Irish midfielder Graham Carey scored

in the 10th minute but hit back strongly with two goals from Lorenzo Pellegrini and one from Stephan El Shaaraawy on the way

to a 5-1 win. After CSKA forward Yanic Wildschut was sent off for a second yellow card in the 80th, Roma scored twice more.

Germany's Union Berlin lost 3-1 to Slavia Prague on their European debut after playing the whole second half with 10 men. Gibraltar had its first team in a European group stage as Lincoln Red Imps lost 2-0 at home to Greece's PAOK.

Roma plays Bulgarian club CSKA Sofia later Thursday. Tottenham and Roma are among the favorites to win the new Europa Conference League, which was set up to give clubs from smaller countries more chances to compete.

Victor Osimhen scored twice for Napoli to surge back from two goals down to draw 2-2 with Leicester. The English club was heading for a win before Osimhen headed in his second in the 87th minute. Leicester then had to hang on for a point when midfielder Wilfred Ndidi was sent off in stoppage time for a second yellow card.

West Ham earned a comfortable 2-0 win at Dinamo Zagreb after Michail Antonio intercepted a backpass for the opening goal and Declan Rice scored in his 150th game for the club. It was Rice's European debut for West Ham, which last played in the 2016-17 Europa League.

Galatasaray beat Lazio 1-0 with a bizarre goal when Lazio defender Manuel Lazzari's attempted clearance shot straight up into the air and goalkeeper Thomas Strakoska fumbled it into his own net as he tried to catch. Real Betis recovered from 2-0 down to beat Celtic 4-3.

Black Caps to return in a chartered flight

OZ PULL OUT OF JUNIOR HOCKEY WC, PRO LEAGUE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sydney, Sept 17: Australia Friday pulled out of several upcoming FIH tournaments, including the junior men's hockey World Cup slated to be held in India later this year, citing COVID-19 related government travel restrictions.

The junior men's World Cup is scheduled to be held in November-December this year. The venue is yet to be confirmed.

Hockey Australia also announced that the Tokyo Olympics silver medalists and their Trans-Tasman rivals New Zealand will also skip season 3 of the Pro League, which starts next month.

"Australia and New Zealand will not take part in Season 3 of the FIH Pro League (scheduled to start in October 2021) as a result of COVID related government travel restrictions and uncertainty in both nations," HA said in a statement.

"All participating countries and the FIH Pro League Council agreed it was untenable for international teams to travel to Australia and New Zealand, as well as for Australian and New Zealand teams to play overseas and return without having to quarantine," it added.

Australia and New Zealand have strict COVID-19 quarantine restrictions in place, making it difficult for them to hosts other teams.

Apart from the tournament in India and Pro League, Australia will also miss the junior women's World Cup in South Africa later this year and the Indoor World Cup in Belgium and the Masters Indoor World Cup in the USA in 2022.

'Depressed' Swapna mulling retirement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Sept 17: Battling depression due to a nagging back injury, Asian Games gold medal winning athlete Swapna Barman has decided to call it quits, a formal announcement of which will be made in a few days.

The decision comes less than 24 hours after Swapna, a North East Frontier Railway athlete, won a gold medal in high jump at the 60th National Open Athletics Championships in Warangal.

"My body is not taking the toll anymore. Mentally, I'm very depressed and it's not easy," Swapna told this agency from Warangal. "I'm a bit confused, but I've mentally prepared 80-90 per cent to call it quits. I will make the 'big' announcement after reaching Kolkata.



"I never wanted to participate, but because of Railway commitments I had to participate here,"

Swapna, who skipped her pet heptathlon event in Warangal, said.

After becoming the first Indian heptathlete to win an Asian Games gold in Jakarta 2018, Swapna, who has six toes on each foot, struggled with injuries and won a silver at the Asian Championships in Doha a year later — her last International competition.

The lockdown triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic meant that Swapna could not take part in any competition in 2020 and while in 2021 she aimed for the Tokyo Games qualifying mark but again injuries and a second wave of the pandemic derailed all her plans.

This year, she took part only in the Federation Cup and at the on-going Open Nationals. "It seems I was not destined for it. I tried hard

but could not make it and struggled a lot with injuries," she said.

Swapna had delayed the surgery on doctors' advice and relied on rehab but she said she had enough of it. "Ultimately I have to go for the surgery, even during this meet I was troubled by the back pain. It does not feel well anymore," an emotional Swapna said with a choked voice.

The Jalpaiguri athlete was also mired in controversy last year after her house was raided by forest department officials for alleged illegal possession of timber as there were wide protests in the area.

"People are jealous of my achievements and my mother is subjected to a lot of harassment. I can't take it anymore. I've to be with my family and deal with it," she concluded.



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, Sept 17: The New Zealand team will fly out of Pakistan in a chartered flight Saturday, even as the cricket community is fuming over the sudden and unilateral decision of the visitors to abandon the tour due to a security threat.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) CEO Wasim Khan confirmed that a chartered flight will be coming Saturday to take the New Zealand team. "It is a very sad thing that has happened today," Khan said.

The cricketing world and Pakistanis were left shocked on Friday after just minutes before the start of the first One-Day International between the two teams at the Pindi stadium, New Zealand Cricket CEO David White announced that they were calling their team back after receiving advice of a serious security threat.

But PCB Chairman, Ramiz Raja and Federal Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed both said that the New Zealand board had not shared the security threat report with them.

Not surprisingly, Pakistan's cricket community was fuming and some former stalwarts waded into New Zealand for causing untold harm to Pakistan cricket.

The Pakistan government and security officials are understandably upset at Friday's development as besides 4000 policemen, commandos of the Pakistan Army's Special Services Group (SSG) were also deployed for the matches in Rawalpindi.

The interior minister said at a press conference that they had even tried to convince New Zealand to play the match without spectators. "But they did not agree to it," he disclosed.

New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, however, said in a statement that nothing was paramount than the safety of players. She said she could understand the disappointment in Pakistan but the security threat was such that it could not be ignored.

England men's and women's teams are now due to tour Pakistan in October.

Davis Cup: Prajnesh loses to Virtanen, India down 0-1

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Espoo (Finland), Sept 17: Prajnesh Gunneswaran yet again lost to a lower-ranked player in the Davis Cup to leave India trail 0-1 in the World Group I tie against Finland, here Friday.

Up against Otto Virtanen, ranked 419 in the ATP rankings, the 165th ranked Prajnesh lost 3-6, 6-7(1-7) in just one hour 25 minutes.

Rankumar Ramanathan now needs to beat Finland's number one player, Emil Ruusuvuori, who is ranked 74 in the world to keep



India in the hunt.

It was a good draw for India with Prajnesh playing first against a lower-ranked player but Virtanen stroked fluently and walked away with an easy win.

Raducanu back in Britain, in demand

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, Sept 17: She's been on American talk shows, attended the Met Gala, ticked off a "bucket list" item by visiting the New York Stock Exchange, and chatted to Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton — a major deal for a big motorsports fan. As for top soccer coach Jurgen Klopp, who manages Premier League team Liverpool, he has described her as the "talent of the century."

Emma Raducanu's life has been turned upside down since winning the US Open title as an 18-year-old qualifier and, nearly a week later, she's still struggling to get to grips with what has happened.

"Sometimes," she said Friday, "I just have random bursts where I think, 'Oh my God, I just won the US Open,' and then I go about as normal as if nothing has happened."

Watching the final for the first time Thursday — the day she returned to Britain after a whirlwind few days in New York — and



trying to relive a few of the moments from her 6-4, 6-3 win over Canadian opponent Leylah Fernandez made it all sink in a bit

more. Almost. "When I was watching it, it almost feels like that that's not me who is playing, who is pulling off some

of those shots," she told the BBC. Her win Saturday turned her into a superstar overnight, putting her in demand in the United States. Everyone wanted a piece of her, with Chanel inviting her to the Met Gala, where she joined a throbbing crowd of celebrities and fashion designers in New York.

That was her highlight of the past few days, especially since she met Hamilton there. "He is such a great inspiration," she said.

The same can now be said of the down-to-earth Raducanu, who had taken 18 months off from tennis to finish her high school education because her parents wanted her to have something to fall back on. One of the subjects she studied was economics and her parents work in finance, explaining why the trip to the NYSE meant so much.

The message she wants to get across is: Dream big and work hard, no matter what your background is. "Even if it's not tennis, even if it's other dreams like in school and being a doctor or any-

thing like that — dream big and anything can happen," she told Sky Sports.

"And for tennis, I just want to get across you can be a normal kid, go to school, have all the normal things and still achieve results."

Raducanu, who has also spoken to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson over the phone, said she slept almost the entire day after getting back home to England and that she wanted to switch off after a grueling two months.

That included a three-week US Open campaign — a week of qualifying and then a main-draw run in which she didn't drop a set to become the first player to win a Grand Slam as a qualifier and the youngest major winner since 2004.

So, when will the world next see Raducanu on a tennis court? She doesn't really know yet — her jump of 127 spots to No.23 in the rankings means she has to revisit her schedule — but she is targeting an appearance at the tournament in Indian Wells from October 6-17.