



TOP HONOUR

Actor Divya Dutta bags Best Actor award for her film *Sheer Qorma* at Dallas-Fort Worth South Asian Film Festival, US

LEISURE P2



1 CR FULLY VACCINATED IN STATE

The state government Monday achieved the milestone of 1 crore double dose vaccination against Covid-19

DOWNTOWN P3



COLIN POWELL NO MORE

Colin Powell, the first Black secretary of state, died Monday of Covid-19 complications. He was 84

INTERNATIONAL P10



YET ANOTHER LIFER FOR DERA CHIEF

Chandigarh: Self-styled godman and Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh, who is already serving a 20-year jail sentence for raping two of his disciples and a life term for a journalist's killing, was Monday sentenced to life imprisonment for murder of a former sect manager nearly two decades back. Special CBI court judge Sushil Garg in Haryana's Panchkula pronounced the verdict in a jam-packed court, sentencing him and four others for murdering Ranjit Singh, in 2002. The CBI had sought the death penalty under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code for Ram Rahim, while the Dera chief pleaded for mercy, appearing via video conference from Rohtak jail, where he is serving sentence in two cases of rape and for the murder of a journalist.



HEAVY RAIN WARNING FOR STATE

Bhubaneswar: Parts of the state braced for heavy rain as a low-pressure area (Lopar) formed over Gangetic West Bengal Monday. Fisherfolk have been advised not to venture into deep sea off the Odisha coast till Tuesday as squally weather with wind speed of 40-50 kmph and gusting up to 60 kmph is likely over north Bay of Bengal. Under the influence of a cyclonic circulation in the morning, a Lopar formed over West Bengal and adjoining north Odisha, the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said in a release. It issued an orange alert of heavy to very heavy rainfall at one or two places over Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts till 8.30 am of Tuesday. P4

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Earlier we were not allowed to buy land in Kashmir... now we can't even sell golgappas!!

Train services massively hit

■ The 'Rail-Roko' called by Samyukt Kisan Morcha against the three new farm laws and the Centre's inadequate action on Kheri violence received support from Congress, Left and AAP

60 TRAINS HALTED IN NORTHERN RLY ZONE

New Delhi/Chandigarh/Jaipur: Farmers squatted on rail tracks at several places Monday morning as part of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha's six-hour 'rail roko' protest over the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, hampering train movement in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. The stir affected 150 locations in the Northern Railway zone and hindered the running of 60 trains causing inconvenience to passengers who could be seen waiting for long hours with their baggage. In the North Western Railway (NWR) zone, rail traffic was affected in some sections in Rajasthan and Haryana with 18 trains cancelled, 10 partially cancelled and one diverted due to the protest. On Monday, the SKM claimed its leaders were arrested at several places during the protest in which thousands of farmers peacefully participated. P9

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Train services Monday were affected in the East Coast Railway division of Odisha for around 30 minutes to one hour owing to the 'rail roko' agitation by farmers, demanding the dismissal and arrest of Union minister Ajay Mishra for his alleged involvement in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence earlier this month. The agitation called by Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) - an umbrella union of the farmers - received support from the Congress, the Left and the AAP in Odisha. The SKM, which is spearheading the demonstration against the Centre's three farm laws, gave a call for the six-hour-long 'rail roko' across the country in protest against the Lakhimpur Kheri violence in Uttar Pradesh that led to the death of eight people. In Odisha, however, the agitation continued for around 20 minutes at most stations, barring Gorakhnath, where demonstrators sat on the tracks for at least 50 minutes. According to an ECo official, as many as 12 trains came to a halt at the stations, causing problems for the daily commuters, even as the agitators refused to vacate the tracks. The trains were allowed to move only after the protesters left the stations, he said. Senior CPI(M) leader Suresh Panigrahi claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'silence' on the UP violence and his minister's alleged role in the incident has fuelled anger among people. The Congress, too, sought Mishra's dismissal and arrest. "We have extended our support to the agitation as we know that the investigation won't be neutral if Ajay Mishra continues to be a minister," Congress MLA Suresh Routray claimed. The legislator also demanded immediate withdrawal of the three contentious farm laws. BJP leader and former MLA Pradip Purohit, on his part, said that the farmers' body should be held responsible for the death of people in Lakhimpur Kheri. Four of the eight people killed in the violence October 3 were farmers, who were allegedly knocked down by a vehicle carrying BJP workers. Angry farmers then reportedly lynched some people in the vehicles.

The deceased were identified as Gobind Kumbhar, 25, of Panaspadar village, Sima Majhi, 25, of Panchali village while the identity of another deceased is yet to be established. A pall of gloom descended on the area after reports of the death spread. Locals alleged that the workers were working at the site without wearing safety gears. The unidentified person is a native of Kansariguda village. Locals rescued the critical labourer while Tikiri fire personnel failed to rescue the deceased labourers as they lacked modern equipment. The fire personnel said the death of the three labourers might have occurred due to asphyxiation as there was lack of oxygen inside the tank. Tikiri police are monitoring the situation. The fire brigade said the bodies will be recovered after modern equipment arrives from their Rayagada office. The incident occurred when the casual labourers went inside the septic tank to strip the false ceilings of the newly built tank of Jagabandu Garada in Panchali village. However, they failed to come out after a long time. A labourer, who was working outside called them by their name but failed to get response. He tried to look inside the tank but fell unconscious. Locals rescued him and admitted him to the Tikiri hospital for treatment.



Protesters have blocked a railway line in Bhubaneswar, Monday OP PHOTO



LIFE IN SEA

Illegal migrants brought to shore after being intercepted by Libyan coast guards at the Mediterranean Sea in Garaboli Libya, Monday

UNI PHOTO

20 HINDU HOMES IN B'DESH TORCHED

■ Communal tensions have flared up in the neighbouring country over alleged blasphemy at a Puja venue

AGENCIES

Dhaka, Oct 18: A mob has damaged 66 houses and set on fire at least 20 homes of Hindus in Bangladesh over an alleged blasphemous social media post amidst protests by the minority community against temple vandalism incidents during the Durga Puja celebrations last week, authorities said Monday. The arson attack by the mob of over a hundred people happened late Sunday on a village in Rangpur district's Pirganj upazila, about 255 kms from here, the bd-news24.Com reported. The police rushed to a fishermen neighbourhood as tension mounted over a rumor that a young Hindu man of the village had 'dishonoured religion' in a Facebook post, Assistant Police Superintendent Mohammad Kamruzzaman told reporters. "The incident took place after 10 PM yesterday but fire fighters doused the blaze within a short period (and) the situation is now under full control," he said. No casualties were reported but 66 houses were damaged and 20 burnt during the attack, the officer said. As many as 52 suspects have been arrested while a manhunt was launched for more suspects under a "combing operation" in collaboration with other security forces, he added. As the police stood guard around the man's home, the attackers set fire to other homes nearby, the report said. The Fire Service Control Room said that their report from the scene indicates that 29 residential houses, two kitchens, two barns and 20 haystacks belonging to 15 different owners were torched in Pirganj's Majhipara, it said, adding that an 'unruly crowd' has been identified as the cause of fire. The fire service received a report of the fire at 8:45 pm and finally put it out by 4:10 am. The arson incident occurred amid rising communal tension over an alleged blasphemy incident at a Durga Puja venue in Cumilla which led to attacks on Hindu temples and clashes between vandals and the police.



Class X (Term-1) to begin from Nov 30, Class XII from Dec 1

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 18: The first term board exams for Class 10 will begin from November 30, while the exams for Class 12 is scheduled from December 1, the Central Board of Secondary Education announced Monday. According to examination controller Sanyam Bhardwaj, the announced date sheet is for major subjects while the schedule for minor subjects will be sent to schools separately. The exams for minor subjects for Classes 10 and 12 will begin from November 17 and November 16 respectively. Bifurcating the academic session, holding two term-end exams and rationalising the syllabus were part of the special assessment scheme for Classes 10 and 12 CBSE board exams for 2021-22, which were announced in July in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. The CBSE offers 114 subjects in Class 12 and 75 subjects in Class 10. Out of these 19 are major subjects in Class 12 and nine in Class 10. For Class 10, the first exam for major subjects is scheduled November 30 (social science) followed by science December 2, home science December 3, mathematics standard and mathematics basic December 4, computer application December 8, Hindi courses A and B December 9 and English December 11. According to the Class 12 exam schedule, first exam will be of sociology (December 1) followed by English core December 3, mathematics December 6, physical education December 7, business studies December 8, geography December 9 and Physics December 10. Psychology exam will be held December 11, accountancy December 13, chemistry December 14, economics December 15, Hindi core and elective December 16, political science December 17, biology December 18, history December 20, informatics practices and computer science December 21 and home science December 22. The CBSE had last week said that the first-term board examinations for Classes 10 and 12 will be conducted offline in November-December.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	61765.59 ↑ 459.64
NIFTY	18477.00 ↑ 138.50
DOLLAR	75.41 ↑ ₹0.08
EURO	87.39 ↑ ₹0.35
GOLD	₹47,409 ↑ ₹196
SILVER	₹63,348 ↑ ₹77

Kerala couple arrives on cooking vessel for marriage

■ Massive floods fail to play spoilsport in the marriage of a couple in Kerala who travelled 500 metres on a copper cooking vessel to tie the nuptial knots

AGENCIES

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 18: Nothing could deter a young couple in Kerala as they braved the floods to reach in time for their marriage, travelling nearly 500 metres on a traditional copper cooking vessel for their wedding held in a local temple at Thakazhi near Alappuzha Monday morning. Since torrential rains hit the

state Friday afternoon which continued partly till Sunday, the Kuttanad area of Alappuzha had submerged due to severe rains, the roads in the area were completely submerged Monday. The bride, Aishwarya, and the groom Rahul, both hailing from the same locality, had fixed their wedding to be held in the local temple at Thakazhi. On Monday, things went for a toss as by then the roads had disappeared and water was flowing all over the area. Generally in Kerala, the bride and groom come to a temple or the wedding hall in a car but it was not the case for Rahul and Aishwarya. All decked up to reach the temple, the couple came into a tradi-



tional rice cooking copper vessel and arrived at the temple and as per the planned 'muhurthum' (auspicious time for a wedding) to become husband and wife. There were a handful of relatives present and the marriage hall was flooded, too, but not the stage where the marriage ceremony took place in presence of the temple priest. "We were not scared to travel in the vessel," said an excited Rahul while Aishwarya said, "We all are happy that the wedding took place at the planned auspicious time." A relative who organised the 'vessel' trip said, "Some areas near the temple were almost submerged but we managed to bring both the bride and the groom on time."

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	30.4°C	30.3°C
MIN	23.8°C	24.5°C
Humidity	100%	97%
Rainfall	0.1mm	2mm

Forecast: Light rain very likely

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today even if you are alone, you may not really feel lonely. You will desire to listen to your inner self, so that you can express yourself more imaginatively. Ganesh says spend the evening with your beloved who can listen to your voice in your silence also.

TAURUS
Today, you need to take hold of your emotions. Ganesh urges you to not get carried away by your feelings. Instead, you should try to maintain a practical, sensible frame of mind. Women are like to feature prominently in your life during the day. Try to be magnanimous and open hearted.

GEMINI
You will think about the issues faced by other people as well as about increasing your social standing and elevating your social esteem. It is an extremely profitable day for those in the retail business and hence make the most of it, says Ganesh.

CANCER
There may not be many opportunities visible on the horizon today. And, chances are that you may end up getting embroiled in some complicated situations, without even a fault of yours. Relax! Given your people skills and lively spirits, you will be able to sail through.

LEO
You have to let go of your stubborn and obstinate streak. You will need to compromise according to the situation. If you do not have such an attitude, arguments and confrontations with your business partners, friends and family members are possible. You do not like delays, however you will be forced to postpone important events, says Ganesh.

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

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will be able to show your love and appreciation for your beloved. Small issues will crop up and keep you tensed and uncomfortable today. Just remember good days and old memories and life will seem good again. It is essential to have confidence in yourself if you want to go ahead in life and be happy.

SCORPIO
You will see every colour of the kaleidoscope today – people with different temperaments and different attitudes, many of whom will surprise you with their reactions. You may be shocked at the way your colleagues or close friends react to your strategies or success. Ganesh advises you to handle people with tact and diplomacy rather than being indifferent or arrogant.

SAGITTARIUS
You may have been experiencing hair loss in the past due to back-breaking stress, but things will begin to clean up today. As complex issues begin to fall in place, you are likely to receive some good news about a promotion or increment. At the end of the day, you will feel content in your comfort zone in the company of near and dear ones.

CAPRICORN
You will be overpowered with nostalgia and may long to get in touch with old pals. And as Ganesh says, chances are that you may take a liking to your ex-lover, while simultaneously strengthening your social standing. All in all, the day will be a productive one.

AQUARIUS
You may huff and puff, but today is not the day when you'll finish what you started. Don't lose heart, the future is promising. Take a break, says Ganesh, you've worked enough. The results are on the way.

PISCES
Needless rigidity only serves to imprison you within outmoded walls of faulty reasoning. Inculcating some flexibility will give you some much-needed wriggle room to manoeuvre things your way for good, says Ganesh.



SARAH SNOOK GOT HITCHED SECRETLY DURING PANDEMIC

Succession actress Sarah Snook secretly married her 'best mate' Dave Lawson last year. Snook always had a 'platonic' relationship with Lawson but after she and the comedian both found themselves single amid the coronavirus pandemic last year, things turned romantic between them, admitted the 33-year-old beauty.

CHRIS MARTIN CAN'T AFFORD SPACE TRIP

Coldplay frontman Chris Martin wants to go into space - but despite an estimated worth of £125 million, he doesn't think he can afford it. The Sky Full of Stars hitmaker is quoted by the Daily Star newspaper as saying: I don't think I can afford it.



Was molested by optician at young age: Neena Gupta

Mumbai: Neena Gupta has been a part of the film industry for over three decades. Post the recent blockbuster success of *Badhaai Ho* in 2018, she has been on a new career high with a wide range of films and performances. But her journey hasn't been an easy one. In her autobiography *Sach Kahun Toh* that released in June 2021, Neena has shared some shocking incidents of her life with her fans. She recounted one such horrific incident about being molested as a child by an optician and how she didn't tell this to her mother. "The doctor started with examining my eye and then went down to check out other areas that were unconnected with my eye. I was scared stiff while it was happening and felt disgusted all the way home. I sat in a corner in the house and cried my eyes out when nobody was looking. But I didn't dare tell my mother about this because I was so scared that she would say that it was my fault. That I had probably said or done something to provoke him," Neena Gupta wrote in her biography.



I only compete with myself: MEERA

Mumbai: An actor's life might look all glitz and glamour, but the reality is quite different. Much like any other profession, they also need to hustle. While there are opportunities, so is the competition. Meera Deosthale has her own way to deal with all the good and bad that are a part and parcel of this profession. "I only compete with myself. I don't like comparing myself to anyone. Those who have been doing well, have done some amazing work in their careers inspire and motivate me. Having said that, what I can do, many can't. And what they can do probably I can't," says the actor, who appeared in shows such as *Dilli Wali Thakur Gurls*, *Udaan* and *Vidya*. There is no one particular person that Meera looks up to in her profession. "I learn something from everyone. One woman, who is a wonderful actor, and is absolutely stunning at everything she does, is Meryl Streep. Whenever I see a film of hers, I feel elated and I want to be as gracious and easy like her in terms of acting and looks," she shares.

Top honour for Divya at film fest in US

Mumbai: Divya Dutta is an exceptional actress, who can singlehandedly breathe life into her films. She's one of those gifted actors of showbiz, who perfectly understands the pitch of her characters and fittingly executes them as per the tone of the film. The actress was recently feted with the Best Actor award for her short film *Sheer Qorma* at Dallas-Fort Worth South Asian Film Festival, US. The film has been travelling to film festivals across the globe for quite some time and has been winning accolades on the international canvas. Helmed by Faraz Ansari, *Sheer Qorma* is one of the few films that represent the LGBTQ+ community with a heartwarming story at its core. The film also stars veteran actress Shabana Azmi and Swara Bhasker. An extremely elated Divya spoke about attending the event, "I am very excited to be here in Dallas physically and receive the award. Most of the film festival participation for *Sheer Qorma* so far, happened virtually. This time Faraz took special permission and we could travel."

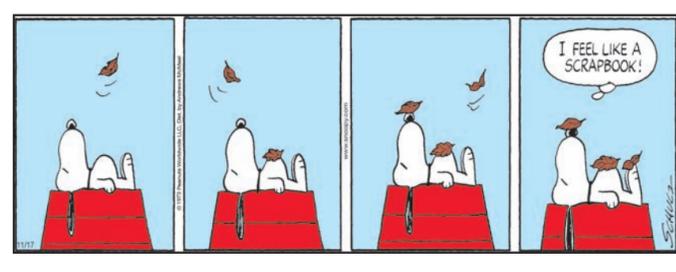
'Ocean adventure was scary'

The world-famous adventurer Bear Grylls and Ajay Devgn travelled to sea full of sharks and eventually moved towards uninhabited islands. Ajay Devgn, one of the top actors of Hindi film industry has opened up on his trip to the Indian Ocean with Bear Grylls for the survival skill-based reality show *Into The Wild*. The *Singham* actor shared: "It was my first trip *Into The Wild* with Bear Grylls. I've done dangerous things in films from the start of my film career 30 years ago. But what I did during the ITW trip with Bear was altogether different. It was scary, thrilling, adventurous, exhilarating and so much more." The world-famous adventurer Bear Grylls and Ajay Devgn travelled to sea full of sharks and facing harsh weather conditions eventually moved towards uninhabited islands. He shares his most difficult moments from the journey: "Well, there was so much nervous energy within me when I was doing my stunts with Bear; I can't recollect each moment separately. Overall, I can tell you when I was in the middle of the deep ocean and Bear was trying to come in a helicopter to rescue me and take me to an island nearby, the waters were perilous. The wind of the chopper machine and the pressure of the water in which I was immersed neck deep were very dangerous. Of course, I had full faith in Bear but I must confess, I could barely keep my head above the water." Ajay adds that he loves forests but more challenging was the ocean: "I love the forests, so that bit was much easier. Bear knows his way around the wild, he is a natural. I just followed him, but it was the ocean that presented challenges."



Ajay Devgn and Bear Grylls rowing in Indian Ocean during *Into The Wild* shoot

PEANUTS



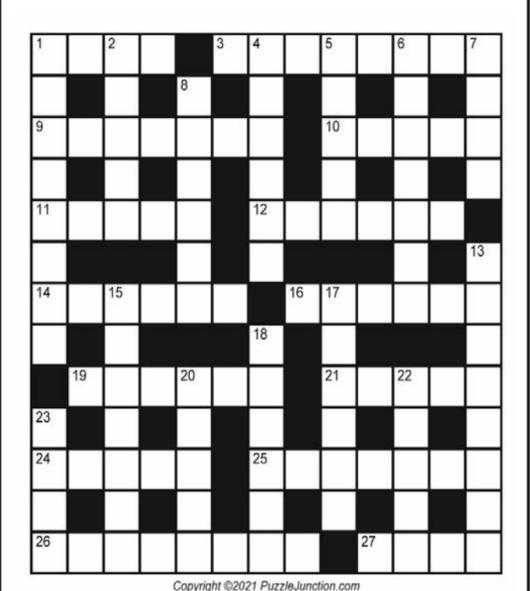
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across
- 1 Hunter's target
 - 3 Place to buy a crumpet
 - 9 They're found on vessels
 - 10 Haven
 - 11 Cow catcher
 - 12 Lowlife
 - 14 Collar
 - 16 Echo
 - 19 Hang around
 - 21 Part of a joint
 - 24 Extreme
 - 25 Artsy one
 - 26 Reaps
 - 27 Swindles
 - 6 Aggressive
 - 7 Nuisance
 - 8 Stations
 - 13 Wasps and bees, e.g.
 - 15 Hen house figure
 - 17 Heir's concern
 - 18 Passionate
 - 20 Business
 - 22 Poverty-stricken
 - 23 Hurry

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.

9	4							1
3								9
				1	6			5
1								
	3	7		2				
4	9	8						2
5		1	8	3				7
8	9	5	6					4

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

D	R	A	B	T	R	I	L	L	G
E	N	L	I	L	L	G			
B	I	G	B	A	N	G	A		
T	L	T	O	M	U	A			
M	E	R	E	U	N	A	R	M	E
U	S	R		P	D				
S	A	L	U	T	E	A	R	G	Y
U	A			T	O				
R	A	N	C	O	U	R			
Y	C	Z	E	O	I	E			
Z	E	R	O	A	C	C	E	S	S
R	N	T	O	L	G				
B	E	R	T	L	D	E	F	Y	

SUDOKU

4	1	8	6	2	3	9	7	5
6	3	5	1	7	9	8	2	4
7	9	2	4	8	5	6	1	3
2	7	4	3	9	8	1	5	6
1	5	9	7	4	6	3	8	2
3	8	6	2	5	1	7	4	9
8	6	3	5	1	4	2	9	7
9	4	7	8	6	2	5	3	1
5	2	1	9	3	7	4	6	8

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

Pact inked for studying engineering in Odia



Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and other dignitaries on the occasion

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Institute of Odia Studies and Research (IOSR) at IIT Kharagpur Extension Centre here Monday for introduction of engineering courses in Odia medium.

Addressing the gathering, Union Education and Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said the collaboration would help develop study materials for engineering education in Odia language. "One of the biggest recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 is imparting education in mother tongue," said Pradhan.

He said NEP stresses invoking critical thinking in a child, which can only be possible through local language. "Engineering study in local languages will also open gates for innovation and large scale employability," the Union Minister added.

Citing the examples of developed countries, Pradhan said, "There should not be any misconception that studying in mother tongue gives us disadvantages. All the developed countries, be it Japan, China, Italy or Germany, promote and use their local languages only and they are highly developed."

He also proposed to develop a Centre of Excellence for Foreign Languages in Bhubaneswar. "Such a centre will be able to generate a lot of employment for our youths," he added. The minister said IOSR and AICTE took up the project in a philanthropic mode. "IOSR is rightly defining the meaning of 'Siksha Daan'. Both the institutes will work together and will de-

1.4 kg gold, necklace worth ₹24 lakh seized

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Vigilance sleuths have seized 1,440 gram gold and a designer necklace worth ₹24.25 lakh from the house of Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Panigrahy, an official said.

The vigilance, after 23 hours of search at Panigrahy's, his relative and associates' houses said, "During the course of searches... 1,440 gm gold and a branded designer necklace worth ₹24.25 lakh were found in the house of Dr Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy and seized."

VIG RAIDS ON PRADEEP
Steps are being taken for their attachment, the statement said, adding that measures are also being taken for freezing the bank accounts of Panigrahy and his family members.

"The documents found during the searches will be examined by the officers of the financial wing of vigilance and professional chartered accountants and banking consultants. The cyber cell of the vigilance will examine all electronic evidence/documents found during the searches," the vigilance said.

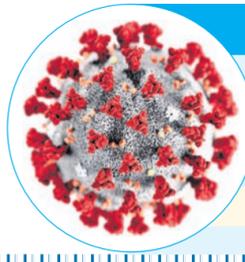
Examination of witnesses, suspects, and accused shall be carried out in due course of time, the official said, adding that the investigation was continuing. Earlier, a case was registered against Panigrahy October 4 following a direction from the Lokayukta.

Searches were conducted at 15 places in Bhubaneswar and Ganjam district Sunday. Documents relating to the purchase of land, jewellery, bank passbooks, credit/debit cards, laptops, mobile phones and other articles were seized during the raids carried out by the SP of the vigilance cell, two additional SPs and 17 DSPs, the official said.



FOR A CATCH

A youth mends a fishing net at Jobra in Cuttack, Monday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	24,15,78,403	21,87,99,695	49,16,254
India	3,40,81,315	3,34,39,331	4,52,290
Odisha	10,35,417	10,22,780	8,290

1cr fully vaccinated in state

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: The state government Monday achieved the milestone of 1 crore double dose vaccination against Covid-19. As per data available on CoWIN portal, Odisha now has 1,00,26,166 completely vaccinated population.

Govt ready for aid to Covid victims

Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra Monday said the Odisha government, as directed by the Supreme Court, will provide financial assistance of Rs 50,000 to the kin of those who died of Covid-19. He directed the officials concerned to ensure that the relief money reaches the beneficiaries without disruption. The kin of the deceased can apply offline and online to the Collector after which they will be processed through software prepared by OCAC.

Informing this, state Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department tweeted, "Odisha has achieved another milestone in COVID-19 vaccination with over one crore



citizens fully vaccinated with two doses of vaccines." As per the portal, altogether 3,43,32,480 people have been administered Covid-19 vaccines. While 2,43,06,314 have taken the first dose, 1,00,26,166 received both the shots. On Monday, 2,11,800 people were inoculated at 1,887 vaccination centres, including 37 private facilities, in the state. Earlier, H&FW director Bijay Panigrahi had said that the government has set a target to complete first dose vaccination of all people in the state by December this year.

"Bhubaneswar and Berhampur Municipal Corporations have completed first dose vaccination of all of its residents. Moreover, 3,540 villages, including Rimal, Tikabali, Raikia, G Udaygiri and Belguntha have achieved 100 per cent first dose vaccination," Panigrahi said. "Messages are being sent to people whose second dose is due. On the other hand, ASHA and Anganwadi workers are being rewarded for their work in the fight against Covid-19. Those who are unable to visit vaccination centres are being jabbed at their homes," he added.

Single-day recoveries exceed new nCoV cases

Single-day recoveries outnumbered fresh Covid-19 cases in Odisha Monday as 508 more people recuperated from the disease, while 340 new infections were reported, a Health department official said. The fresh coronavirus cases pushed the tally in the state to 10,35,417, he said, adding that altogether, 10,22,250 people have been cured of the disease so far. Of the new cases, 199 were reported from quarantine centres and the remaining 141 detected during contact tracing, he said. Khurda district, which comprises the state Capital Bhubaneswar, recorded the highest number of fresh cases at 149, followed by Cuttack at 43. At least 50 children are among the new patients, the official said. The daily test positivity rate stood at 0.59 per cent as the fresh

cases were detected from 57,293 samples tests, the official said. The infection ratio among people below 18 years of age stood at 14.70 per cent. Nine districts – Boudh, Gajapati, Jharsuguda, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Keonjhar, Malkangiri, Subarnapur and Nuapada – did not register any new case in the last 24 hours, the official said. Five fresh fatalities – two from Sundargarh and one each from Bargarh, Jharsuguda and Khurda – raised the coronavirus death toll to 8,295, he said. Fifty-three other Covid-19 patients have died due to comorbidities so far. Odisha now has 4,824 active cases, the official said. The state has so far conducted over 2.11 crore sample tests, and the overall positivity rate currently stands at 4.90 per cent, he said.

GODDESS OF PROSPERITY



An artisan gives finishing touches to the clay idols of Goddess Laxmi at Unit-I in Bhubaneswar, Monday

PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

Sangram Mohapatra new Khurda Collector

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: In a minor reshuffle, the state government Monday transferred Collectors of Jagatsinghpur and Khurda districts.

According to a notification issued by General Administration & Public Grievances department, 2015-batch IAS officer and deputy secretary to Works department, Parul Patawari has been appointed Jagatsinghpur Collector. Similarly, Sangram Keshari Mohapatra, who is serving as Jagatsinghpur Collector, has been transferred and posted as new Collector of Khurda.

Khurda Collector Sanat Kumar Mohanty has been posted as Director of TE & SCERT, Odisha. Mohanty will also remain in additional charge of State Nodal Officer for Mid Day Meal (MDM) in addition to his own duties. IAS officer Gangadhar Sahoo has been appointed the director public grievances.

NGT seeks details of people behind Khurda stone mining

The environment watchdog says the affidavit filed by SEIAA is not legible and at least 2 pages are completely blank and the remaining are smudged

New Delhi, Oct 18: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Khurda Collector to file an affidavit with details of the illegal miners carrying out laterite stone mining in the district and the amount of environmental compensation imposed and recovered from them. It wanted to know at whose behest the illegal mining was being carried out.

A bench of Judicial Member B Amit Shalekar and Expert Member Saibal Dasgupta also asked the Collector to bring on record the comprehensive action plan for restitution and restoration of the environment in the area. The green body rejected the affidavit filed by State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) citing that "the affidavit is not legible and at least two pages are completely blank and the remaining pages are smudged and therefore not legible". The tribunal asked the SEIAA to file a fresh affidavit. "We direct the Collector, Khurda to file his personal affidavit giving details of the illegal miners, determining as to at whose behest the alleged illegal miners, alleged truck operators were operating in

state is as to at whose behest the truck operators carrying the crushed laterite stone material etc were operating," the bench said. Earlier, the NGT had constituted a four-member committee comprising a senior scientist from Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Khurda DM, SEIAA member secretary and a member of SPCCB to investigate the allegations related to illegal mining of laterite stone in the district and how much damage was caused to the environment. It is to be mentioned here that an application has been filed in the tribunal alleging illegal mining of laterite stone by rat hole mining

method without following the standard operating procedure (SOP) for mining and other environmental laws. It is stated that there are at least 40 different sites in Khurda district of Odisha where such mining is going on that covers 500 acres bringing within it several villages namely Tapanga, Anda and Jhinkijhari under Nijigarh Tapang Panchayat. The areas said to involve Cashew Jungle, Gramya Jungle and Gochar land. No environmental clearance or consent to operate was stated to have been obtained. A large number of trees have been felled during the mining operations.



FILE PHOTO

the lifting of the laterite stone and the amount of the environmental compensation imposed and recovered as well as the cost of the laterite stone illegally mined causing loss to the state exchequer," the tribunal said. The tribunal noted that the illegal miners have not been allowed to operate by the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) in Puri. "What this affidavit does not

method without following the standard operating procedure (SOP) for mining and other environmental laws. It is stated that there are at least 40 different sites in Khurda district of Odisha where such mining is going on that covers 500 acres bringing within it several villages namely Tapanga, Anda and Jhinkijhari under Nijigarh Tapang Panchayat. The areas said to involve Cashew Jungle, Gramya Jungle and Gochar land. No environmental clearance or consent to operate was stated to have been obtained. A large number of trees have been felled during the mining operations.

Jail inmates can now talk to relatives over phone

PRISONS DIRECTORATE PLANS TO PROCURE DRONES FOR ENHANCED SURVEILLANCE INSIDE JAILS IN 2022-23 FINANCIAL YEAR. THE JAILS IN STATE WILL ALSO HAVE VIDEO WALL SYSTEM

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Prisoners lodged in several jails in Odisha can now legally speak to their relatives over phone as the Prisons Directorate, taking a cue from Bihar jail, has decided to launch Prisoners' Calling System (PCS) in November this year.

The system, which will be introduced in Jharpada Special Jail here and Choudwar Circle Jail on a pilot basis, will be implemented in other jails later. Under the scheme, four booths including one for women prisoners will be opened at each of the two jails. The booths will have bio-metric system to record the thumb impression of the prisoner willing to call from the booth. Each inmate will be allowed to make calls to two phone numbers submitted by the prisoner earlier. The prison officials will verify the numbers before allowing the inmates to dial. Each inmate can talk for only 5 minutes by paying Rs 5. The call will be cut off automatically at the expiry of the duration. The Prisons Directorate hopes to control the illegal use of mobile phones and landline numbers inside the prison with the introduction of the PCS in state. This apart, the directorate also plans to procure drones for enhanced surveillance inside the jails



ESTD 1964

Four booths including one for women prisoners will be opened at Jharpada Special Jail and Choudwar Circle Jail. The booths will have bio-metric system to record the thumb impression of the prisoner willing to call from the booth. Each inmate can talk for only 5 minutes by paying Rs 5. The call will be cut off automatically at the expiry of the duration.

various jails in a passed manner. Inmates using smart cards will purchase goods from jail canteens as per the prescribed ceiling every month. Sources at the Prisons Directorate claimed that 20 body-worn cameras are being procured to be used in Jharpada and Choudwar jails on pilot basis.

Naveen felicitates Balasore man with unique records

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Lieutenant Colonel Laxmidhar Bhuyan Monday called on Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at his residence here. Bhuyan, a native of Bangur village in Balasore district, has several world records for his performances in skills like longest time hitting on hips by heels on headstand and blindfolded 100-metres run carrying Indian flag in semicircular track.

Naveen appreciated his fabulous feats and awarded him Rs 10 lakh. It may be mentioned here that on Army Day, January 15, 2021, Bhuyan had performed 13,725 times hitting on hip by heels on headstand Yoga position for 1 hour 7 minutes and 10 seconds despite his 20 per cent disability. He has entered his name in several prestigious books of records such as Guinness Book of World Records, International



Naveen appreciated the fabulous feats of Lieutenant Colonel Laxmidhar Bhuyan and awarded him Rs 10 lakh

Book of Records, Asia Book of Records, India Book of Records, Limca Book of Records, Best of India Records and Golden Book of Records. He also holds eight world records in 'blindfolded 100-metres run with national flag in semicircular track in just one minute', followed by 'blindfolded climbing of 20 feet ladder in 5 seconds' and 'blind folded nonstop 13,986 times hitting on hips by heels on headstand on top of 20 feet ladder'.

PRARAMBH: CP's answer to kidnapping, elopement



Bhubaneswar DCP Umashankar Dash, Kandhamal MP and KISS founder Achyuta Samanta, Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi, actor Rahul Bose and Additional Police Commissioner Rekha Lohani at the event

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: The Commissionerate Police (CP) Monday launched a special initiative Preventive and Restorative Assistance for Rescued Adults and Minors in Bhubaneswar (PRARAMBH) to create awareness among vulnerable groups to stop rampant elopement and kidnapping cases involving minor girls in City.

Addressing the media, Commissioner of Police Saumendra Priyadarshi said, "As we found majority of the kidnapping cases dealt by City police to be incidents of elopement, we decided to sensitise the vulnerable groups. We also identified the families down the economic ladder as the most vulnerable group in view of the girl elopement cases."

Priyadarshi also asserted that extensive use of social media platforms makes the most vulnerable as they get carried away and make mistakes, and later get sexually, socially and economically exploited.

"Elopement of minor girls has major social consequences. The girl

The Commissionerate Police will launch campaigns on social media and various media platforms to bring awareness among young girls and boys under PRARAMBH

The cops will visit different slum areas in City to sensitise parents of minors to keep strict vigil on their wards

Similarly, workshops will be organised at schools and colleges to sensitise students for 'responsible use of social media'

is minor and there is a danger of her landing in an exploitive place. Secondly, the future career/family life of the girl gets affected, and the boy on the other hand is treated as criminal," informed a press statement issued by twin city police.

The Commissionerate Police will launch campaigns on social media and various media platforms to bring awareness among young girls and boys under PRARAMBH. The cops will visit different slum areas in City to sensitise parents of minors to keep

As we found majority of the kidnapping cases dealt by City police to be incidents of elopement, we decided to sensitise the vulnerable groups. We also identified the families down the economic ladder as the most vulnerable group in view of the girl elopement cases

SAUMENDRA PRIYADARSHI | TWIN CITY POLICE COMMISSIONER

strict vigil on their wards. Similarly, workshops will be organised at schools and colleges to sensitise students for 'responsible use of social media'.

This apart, cops will continue to provide counselling and assistance to the rescued victims of elopement as well as their family members.

The Kidnapping and Man Missing Cell opened at the DCP of office will be strengthened. Priyadarshi informed media that the cell managed to rescue 241 missing girls and disposed of 295 kidnapping cases in the last six months.

A helpline number, 2545445, was launched by the Commissioner through which any minor and her family members can seek police help in kidnapping and elopement cases. The victims and family can contact police on the number between 10am to 5pm every day.

PRARAMBH has been launched with the assistance of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), and SN Mohanty Foundation. Commissioner Priyadarshi thanked Achyuta Samanta, Kandhamal MP and founder of KISS, and famous Hindi movie actor Rahul Bose for helping City police form and deploy the initiative.



Members of the youth wing of state Congress stage a demonstration near Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, Monday, condemning the skyrocketing fuel prices

MeT issues orange alert for Balasore, Mayurbhanj

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Parts of Odisha braced for heavy rain as a low-pressure area (Lopar) formed over Gangetic West Bengal Monday.

Fisherfolk have been advised not to venture into deep sea off the Odisha coast till Tuesday as squally weather with wind speed of 40-50 kmph and gusting up to 60 kmph is likely to prevail over north Bay of Bengal.

Under the influence of a cyclonic circulation in the morning, a Lopar formed over West Bengal and adjoining north Odisha, the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said in a release.

It issued an orange alert of heavy to very heavy rainfall at one or two places over Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts till 8:30am Tuesday.



The Met office warned of rise in the water level in Budhabalanga and Subarnarekha rivers. Heavy showers are expected at one or two places in the districts of Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Deogarh and Jajpur till 8:30am Tuesday, the department said.

Heavy showers are expected at one or two places in the districts of Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Deogarh and Jajpur

Tuesday morning, there is a likelihood of downpour at one or two places in Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Balasore districts.

The MeT also forecast thunderstorms at some places in Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Khurda, Puri, Ganjam, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Angul districts till Tuesday.

Class VIII reopening guidelines issued

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: The School and Mass Education (S&ME) department Monday wrote to the headmasters of all schools to strictly follow the standard operating procedures (SOPs) and guidelines laid down for reopening of Class VIII from October 25 for the academic year 2021-22.

As per the SOPs, the headmasters have been asked to intimate the District Education Officers (DEOs) about the sanitisation of schools a day before the opening.

Similarly, there will be no classes for the first two days as teachers and managing committee members would be holding discussions with the students.

There will be special examinations October 27, 28 and 29 and attempts will be made to develop amiable environment in schools. Classes will be held from 9 am to 12:30 pm, the notification read.

To ensure social distancing and queue management inside and at the entrance of the premises, specific markings on the ground with a gap of 6 feet will be done.

There must be adequate soap (solid/liquid) and running water in all washrooms and toilets. Hand sanitisers for the teachers, students and staff will be mandatory in each classroom.

MANISH ANURAG MURDER

Cops to recreate crime scene

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Infocity police Monday brought on remand the three accused involved in the murder of Manish Anurag Das, son of senior journalist Navin Das. Earlier, the JMFC court had granted permission to take the trio on a 4-day remand for further probe.

DCP Umashankar Dash in a presser asserted that Manish was killed by his friends in a scuffle during the wee hours October 10



Sources revealed that the Commissionerate Police (CP) would recreate the crime scene with the trio Tuesday. The trio will be interrogated to join missing links in the murder case.

Meanwhile, Navin raised questions on the claims of Commissionerate Police regarding his son's murder. Recently, DCP Umashankar Dash in a presser asserted that Manish was killed by his friends in a scuffle during the wee hours October 10.

However, Das in his weekly YouTube programme castigated police for failing to take any action

against the police official who is running the bar on lease. He claimed the conspiracy to murder his son was hatched at the bar that was open till midnight flouting Covid-19 guidelines on that fateful day. Police are yet to take any action against the accused cop who is also the secretary of the Bhubaneswar Havildar and Constable Association.

Medical O2 plant launched at Rly Central Hospital

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: East Coast Railway (ECoR) General Manager Vidya Bhushan Monday inaugurated a 600-litre capacity oxygen generation plant at Railway Central Hospital, Mancheswar here.

This oxygen plant will make ECoR Central Hospital self sufficient in supply of the life saving gas, required for Covid and other serious patients. The ECoR General Manager also dedicated 24 oxygen concentrators that would be used at Mancheswar Central Hospital and Divisional Railway Hospitals at Khurda Road, Waltair and Sambalpur.

Shortage of medical oxygen was a major issue at various locations in the country during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Keeping this in view, the oxygen generation plant has been established for self-sufficiency in Railway hospitals.

Seasonal tickets back in 7 more spl trains

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: For the convenience of daily commuters, the East Coast Railway (ECoR) has reinstated monthly season tickets (MSTs) and quarterly season tickets (QSTs) in seven more pairs of passenger special trains.

These trains are 08431/08432 Puri-Cuttack-Puri Special, 08412/08411 Bhubaneswar-Bhadrak-Bhubaneswar Special, 08461/08462 Cuttack-Paradeep-Cuttack Special, 08454/08453 Cuttack-Bhadrak-Cuttack Special, 08404/08403 Puri-Khurda Road-Puri Special, 68050/68049 Bhadrak-Kharagpur-Bhadrak Special and 08004/08003 Bhadrak-Howrah-Bhadrak Special.

Earlier, ECoR had reinstated MSTs and QSTs in 08428/08427 Puri-Angul-Puri Special, 08456/08455 Khurda Road-Kendujhargarh-Khurda Road Special, 08522/08521 Visakhapatnam-Gunupur-Visakhapatnam Special, 08528/08527 Visakhapatnam-Raipur-

2 Odia girls chosen for prestigious UK scholarship

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Bringing laurels to the state, two girls from Odisha have been selected for the UK government's coveted Chevening Scholarship for higher studies in prestigious universities like Cambridge and Oxford in England.

Hailing from Bhubaneswar, Neelima Mishra and Preeti Pratishruti Dash are the two among 24 students from across India who have been selected by the UK government for their international award scheme. Aimed at developing global leaders, the highly competitive scholarship is funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Its recipients are personally selected by the British

Embassies from around the globe and are awarded an all-expense paid education grant.

"I'm extremely grateful for being selected to avail such opportunity and would like to credit DV Swamy (IAS) and my professor CP Kala, who recommended my name. I'm also thankful to my mentors Navneet and Sumit, former Chevening scholars, for helping me during my preparations. Lastly, nothing would have been possible without constant encouragement and morale boost from my husband, family and friends," said Neelima.

An avid environmentalist, Neelima, who is a consultant to the Odisha government, has earlier left the country's shores while on an expedition to the Arctic Circle



to understand the impact of climate change. Pursuing MPhil in Environmental Policy at the prestigious Cambridge University, Neelima aims to bring a broader understanding of the environmental changes happening in Odisha and creating awareness on waste management.

Selected after rigorous review procedures, Chevening applicants are expected to use their skills and networking to bring a positive change in their countries after completing their graduation. Once done with selection of their choice of course and university, the candidates are then asked about their specific goals which they aim to achieve.

Working on similar lines, Preeti

Neelima, who is a consultant to the Odisha government on environment, has earlier left the country's shores while on an expedition to the Arctic Circle to understand the impact of climate change

Preeti, an assistant professor of Law at National Law School, Bangalore in her different researches has highlighted the need for change in laws regarding death penalty, crime against women and sexual harassments at workplace

"Amidst the raging media trials, it's important to impart judicial processes against the accused that gives due regard to substantive requirements of sentencing. I am grateful to be selected for the Chevening scholarship and I aim to advocate the need for granting fair trials and availability of legal procedures for minorities in India," said Preeti, who is pursuing her Masters in Criminology at Oxford University

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Nayagarh: Parties eye Zilla Parishad zone 17

Political activities have intensified after the notification of the draft list for seat reservation of the Panchayati Raj elections a few weeks back

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Oct 18: The post of Zilla Parishad (ZP) chairperson in this district has been reserved for women in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category. In 2017, however, the seat was reserved for women from the general category.

In fact, political activities have intensified after the notification of the draft list for seat reservation of the Panchayati Raj elections a few weeks back.

The ZP Zone 17 in Nuagaon has also been reserved for ST women. All political parties have set their sight on this ZP seat as the ST woman candidate who will be elected will have the maximum chance to become the

chairperson. Other elected women candidates can also become the chairperson, but the one elected from the Nuagaon ZP seat has the maximum chance.

Workers and frontline leaders of Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress are all working on strategies to boost their poll prospects in the ZP seats reserved for women in the upcoming three-tier panchayat elections.

The government has set October 25 as the deadline to receive complaints from people and leaders regarding the draft list of reservation of ZP chairman post for ST women. Similarly, the last date for complaints regarding the women-reserved seats has been fixed for Monday. All the parties have been eagerly waiting for the publication of the final list of seat reservation.

There are 24 ZP zones in the district. Of them, three seats have been reserved for the SC category, two for ST, six for OBC candidates and 13 are unreserved. The 12 ZP seats have been reserved for an equal number of men and women candidates.

FESTIVE FERVOUR



An artisan working on a silver tableau ahead of the Lakshmi Puja at Ganesh Bazaar in Dhenkanal, Monday

OP PHOTO

Woman strangles alcoholic hubby

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jharbandh, Oct 18: A woman allegedly strangled her husband to death following a fight over regular consumption of liquor by the latter at Kusumdarha village under this police limits in Bargarh district, Sunday night.

The deceased was identified as Sadashiv Bariha, 47, and the accused as Samari Bariha, 40. On being informed, Jharbandh IIC Anil Kumar Pradhan reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem. The woman was taken to the police station and interrogated in this connection. She was arrested after she confessed her crime. A case was registered in this connection over a complaint filed by the deceased's brother.

Police said that Sadashiv had promised not to consume liquor again. However, he again returned home drunk Sunday which led to a fight between the couple. The two soon came out on the road and fought with each other. Suddenly, Sadashiv fell down on the road and failed to get up. Seething with anger, Samari strangled his neck with a napkin and dragged him to a distance, which ultimately led to his death.

Women in Mayurbhanj most vulnerable

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Oct 18: Violence against women is on the rise in tribal-dominated Mayurbhanj district as it accounts for the highest number of cases such as witch hunt, gangrape, murder, minor rape, bridal torture and a host of others, a report said.

Things have come to such a pass that miscreants are not sparing any woman when it comes to unleashing their atrocities and ferocity against the fairer sex. Girls as young as three year old and even elderly women over 50 and 60 years of age are subjected to sexual harassment like rape. As a result, protection of women has become a matter of concern in the district.

The increasing cases of violence against women have sparked concern but hardly anything has been done to stem the rot. This is happening despite the Centre and state taking a host of measures for protection of women. Despite a spike in crimes against women, the administration and the state government have hardly taken any effective measures to protect them from the perpetrators.

During the last three years, the district has become infamous for registering the highest number of cases of murder and rape of women



CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

IN THE LATEST INCIDENTS, A GIRL STUDENT WAS GANGRAPE IN A JUNGLE NEAR KALMA SQUARE UNDER BAISINGA POLICE LIMITS FRIDAY LAST, WHILE A WOMAN WAS GANGRAPE BY TWO YOUTHS ON THE PRETEXT OF GIVING HER A LIFT ON THEIR BIKE UNDER RARUAN POLICE LIMITS ON THE SAME DAY

RAPE CASES REGISTERED IN 2019, 2020 AND TILL JUNE 2021 WERE 203, 258 AND 145 RESPECTIVELY. OUT OF THEM, MINOR RAPES CASES WERE 117,102 AND 73 RESPECTIVELY IN 2019, 2020 AND 2021

THE DISTRICT HAS 32 POLICE STATIONS AND A WOMEN AND CHILD DESK IS FUNCTIONING IN EVERY POLICE STATION. HOWEVER, THIS HAS NOT HELPED IN CONTROLLING CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

in comparison to other districts of the state. Similarly, cases like dowry torture and bride harassment are quite serious in the district. Observers pointed out that lack of awareness among the residents and superstition are to be blamed for the spike in violence against women.

In the latest incidents, a girl student was gangraped in a jungle near Kalma Square under Baisinga police limits last Friday, while a woman was gangraped by two youths on the pretext of giving her

a lift on their bike under Raruan police limits on the same day.

Sources said that the population of women is more than that of men in Mayurbhanj district. According to the 2011 census, the population of women was 12,63,525, while the male population stood at 12,56,738 in the district. The district has 32 police stations and a women and child desk is functioning in every police station. However, this has not helped in controlling crime against women.

Reports said that many of the

posts in these police stations are lying vacant for which police have failed to control the increasing cases of crime against women.

The gravity of the situation can be gauged from the reply of Dibyashankar Mishra, Minister of State for Home, made in the State Assembly, September 6. Mishra, in his reply to a non-star question of Congress MLA Santosh Singh Saluja, said that the rape cases registered in 2019, 2020 and till June 2021 were 203, 258 and 145 respectively. Out of them, minor rape cases were

117,102 and 73 respectively in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Similarly, 86, 104 and 57 women were murdered in these three years respectively. Among them, five, seven and six were dowry murder cases respectively.

On the other hand, torture cases of women for dowry were 167, 197 and 149 respectively in these three years. Torture of women in other cases were 162, 294 and 185 during the period. It is apprehended that rape cases may rise to 300 if the total number of women who were raped is taken into account in last six months. This year, no case of women trafficking has been registered in any police station, while it was four and five respectively in 2019 and 2020.

Badasahi MLA Sanatan Bijuli blamed the incompetence of the state government for the spike in crimes against women. He said that tribal women are the major victims of these crimes due to free flow of country liquor and rising unemployment problem among the youths. Hemant Das, district president of Congress, said the state government should first fill up the vacant posts in police stations and carry out awareness drive on mass scale to protect the women from such crimes.

Bandh in Nuapada over 'violation' of OBC rights



POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuapada, Oct 18: Accusing the state government of violating constitutional rights of backward classes, members of the Zilla OBC Manch in this district observed a 12-hour bandh Monday.

The Manch had given a bandh call from 6am to 6pm alleging that the state government has slashed the reservation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in the upcoming panchayat elections from 27% to 2.8%.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Panchayati Raj department had published the draft list for reservation of Zilla Parishad posts for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backward Classes and women in all the dis-

tricts of the state October 16. The Zilla Parishad president posts of four districts - Angul, Keonjhar, Khordha and Gajapati - have been allotted to the Other Backward Classes as per the notification of the draft list issued by the Panchayati Raj Director.

As per provisions in the relevant laws, the public can submit objections or suggestions within 10 days of the notification of the draft list on allotment of reservations by 5.30pm of October 25 via email to dir-pr.od@gov.in or prsec.or@nic.in.

The notification has stated that the state government on the basis of objections/suggestions received within the stipulated period will take a final decision on the draft list on reservations.

DEATH OF A RIVER

Communities unite to revive Sukapaika

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: The disappearing Sukapaika river has left a mark on the health and well-being of the people living around it. Not only the fisher folk, but also thousands of farmers are now unable to sustain agricultural activities, caught between water scarcity, flooding and stagnation.

Water level in the region has depleted considerably with the drying of the river. Almost all the ponds, wells and tube wells, which used to draw water throughout the year, go dry by January. With the freshwater flow disrupted, salinity is increasing in the land and water bodies rapidly.

The water from wells and tube-wells here is unfit for consumption due to excessive iron and arsenic content. On the other hand, according to Ananta Mallick (66), a farmer of Narada Goudagaon village, every year more than 1,000 acres of farmland in this area remain submerged for about a month-and-a-half during the rainy season as there is no drainage channel. The crops decompose in the stagnant water.

"We are sick of water weeds (hyacinths) that cover the stagnant water on the riverbed like a thick mat. They have not only turned the water into a breeding ground for mosquitoes and flies, but also a habitation of poisonous snakes," said Sd Sajid Ali (48) of Praharajpur.

Roshan Rath, reckoned anecdotally that he hears of at least 10 cases of snakebite every year.

Raising concerns over the growth of hyacinths on the river bed, Prasad K Dash, a scientist of Odisha Biodiversity Board, said these invasive species are an indicator of bad ecological health. Hyacinths create an environment conducive for the growth of pathogens, insects and mosquitoes by obstructing sunlight



that is vital for aquatic life. He maintained that it is difficult to get rid of the weeds and freshwater flow may prove beneficial.

Encroachments

As these multi-faceted ripple effects were unfolding, encroachment was growing along the river.

"Unscrupulous people have erected brick kilns, developed ponds and other structures including houses on the riverbed," said Sajid Ali. "Many people have even acquired 99-year lease pattas through illegal means." The patta land on the river would amount to more than 500 acres along the entire length of the river, he added. Activists and journalists who have tried to raise the issue met with silence.

RTI activist Prashant Pradhan, a native of riparian Kamarpada village in Dharina panchayat, had applied to the Kishan Nagar tahsildar under the Right to Information Act in 2003 and then again in 2010 about the legal standing of these leases. However, he is yet to get any response. Sushant Jena, a correspondent of a vernacular daily, had also sought to know the encroachment status on the Sukapaika river bed under the RTI in 2019 and then recently in June 2021. He also hasn't heard back.

In January 2021, a team of officials from the Revenue and Water Resources departments, led by district Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayini, visited the river in its 27km stretch - from its origin till the river joins the parent river Mahanadi - to take stock of the situation. Chayini directed the concerned revenue authorities to take immediate steps to clear the encroachments. The SBA also moved the Water Resource Department Secretary Anu Garg in February 2021, following which, the department officials visited the river and prepared an action plan of ₹44 crore for its revival, pointed out Rath.

In a review meeting presided over by Cuttack MP Bharatuhari Mahatab July 2 this year, Chayini had directed the Water Resources department to prepare a detailed project report to carry the revival plan forward.

While the Cuttack district Collector and the concerned engineer could not be contacted for their take on the issue, those fighting for the river know that clearing the encroachments is going to be the government's biggest challenge. According to Dr Rath, many people have obtained pattas on the river bed by greasing the palms of some officials.

The community members are cautiously optimistic to see their efforts starting to move some pieces on the



board, but they are aware it's going to be a difficult fight and close to home. The villagers have warned that they will take to the streets if the government fails to revive the river with immediate effect. They have already lost too much.

Proforma 10.01
PUBLIC NOTIFICATION
No.: GCMP/TAL/2021-22 Date: 11.10.2021
Notice is hereby given to all users of Railway lines and premises situated on the complete section of the Extension of GCMP/L Siding at Talcher of Khurda Road Division of East Coast Railway that the 25,000 Volts, 50 Hz, A.C. Over Head Traction Wires will be energized on or after the date specified against the section, on and from the same date the Over Head Traction Lines shall be treated as live at all times and no unauthorized person shall approach or work in the proximity of the said Over Head Lines.
SECTION:- Electrification of Extension & modification of Global Coal & Mining Pvt Ltd (GCMP/L) siding at Talcher of Khurda Road Division.
Managing Director
M/s. Global Coal & Mining Pvt Ltd
Talcher

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, UPPER INDRAVATI RIGHT CANAL DIVN. NO.-I
No. A-521 At/P.O.: Mukhiguda, Dist.- Kalahandi, Odisha, PIN - 766026
e-mail address: eeuricd1@gmail.com
1. Type of Work : Canal & Building works
2. Total No. of Works : 16 Nos.
3. Estimated Cost : Rs.21.30 lakh to Rs.07.84 lakh (excluding GST)
4. Period of Completion : 04 (Four) Calendar Months
5. Class of Contractor : 'D', 'C' & 'B'

Procurement Officer	e-Procurement No.	Bid Amount	Availability & Submission of Bids Online
Superintending Engineer, Upper Indravati Right Canal Division No.-I, At/P.O. - Mukhiguda, Dist.- Kalahandi, Odisha, PIN - 766026	SE, RCD-I-12 (01-16)/ 21-22 (Excluding GST)	Rs.21.30 lakh to Rs.07.84 lakh (Excluding GST)	From 22.10.2021, 10 A.M. to 01.11.2021, 05.00 P.M.

Date of Opening of Bid: Dt. 02.11.2021 at 10.00 A.M. in the O/o. the Superintending Engineer, UI Right Canal Division No.-I, Mukhiguda, Kalahandi, Odisha, PIN - 766026.
Further details can be seen from the Govt. website www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Sd./- Superintending Engineer, UI Right Canal Division, No.-I, Mukhiguda, Kalahandi
OIPR-32193/11/0004/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA Mail ID: ee_nimapara@yahoo.co.in
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, NIMAPARA
No.- Tender Online-Divn.NPR-06/2021-22 Date: 11.10.2021
e-Procurement NOTICE
1. Name of the work : Road Works for the year 2021-22.
2. Total No. of Projects : 03 (Three) Nos. of project.
3. Estimated cost of projects : Varies from Rs.2.65 lakh to Rs. 15.03 lakh
4. Class of contractor :
A) Estimated Cost more than Rs. 40.00 lakhs and upto Rs. 300.00 lakhs. : "B" Class & "A" Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant Class of other licensing authorities.
B) Estimated Cost more than Rs 20.00 lakhs and upto Rs. 40.00 lakhs. : "C" Class & "B" Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant Class of other licensing authorities.
C) Estimated Cost upto Rs. 20.00 lakhs : "D" Class & "C" Class (of Odisha PWD) or relevant Class of other licensing authorities.
5. Mode of Submission of tender : Tender should be submitted online only in website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
6. Period of Completion : As per TCN
7. Other details.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender Online for bidding	Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date, time & venue of opening of tender	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Nimapara	Tender Online - Divn. NPR- 06/2021-22	28.10.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	08.11.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	06.11.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	11.11.2021 at 11.00 A.M. Office of the E.E., R.W. Division, Nimapara

Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in.
Sd./- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Nimapara
OIPR-25099/11/0005/2122

FOCUS GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX, 2021

SPECTRE OF HIDDEN HUNGER



The GHI 2021 report brings out how COVID-19 has affected healthcare services, immunization, treatment of malnutrition and antenatal care. While the effect of the pandemic on child nutrition has not yet been comprehensively measured, estimates suggest sizeable impact

The Millennium Development Goal 4 had set a target of halving the percentage of population suffering from chronic hunger. By the end of 2015, this target was met by 73 countries (including India). Yet 800 million still did not have enough to eat, including 270 million in India. The Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) have set an ambitious target of Zero Hunger based on a utopian premise that freedom and fundamental right to food equally belongs to all humanity. The World Hunger Report (2021) brings out that a toxic cocktail of COVID-19, climate crisis and protracted conflicts have cast a shadow on the fight against hunger. India sadly ranks 101 among 116 countries with a score of 27.5. The GHI score is calculated on four indicators, undernourishment, wasting and stunting of children and child mortality. The report has suggested four priorities, namely an agile approach based on understanding of local context, commitment to working in partnerships to bring together local actors, national government and international organisations, integrate ways of working along human-development-peace nexus and need based multi-year financing.

The report brings out how COVID-19 has affected healthcare services, immunisation, treatment of malnutrition and antenatal care. About 60-70% disruptions in immunisation services have been reported. While the effect of the pandemic on child nutrition has not yet been comprehensively measured, estimates suggest sizeable impact. The report estimates an addition of 9.3 million children are wasted and 2.6 million stunted.

The GHI report highlights the pernicious impact of 'hidden hunger', which affects nearly 2 billion people or 30% of the global population. For instance, deficiency of iodine causes brain damage in newborns, retards mental capacity and results in goiter. Close to 1.8 billion are deficient in iodine. Deficiency of iron causes anaemia, impairment of motor

and low birth weight. Around 1.6 billion people suffer from this deficiency. Lack of adequate vitamin A results in visual impairment and blindness and 190 million children suffer from this deficiency. Lack of adequate intake of zinc causes weak immune system, frequent infection and stunting. Close to 1.2 billion people suffer from this deficiency.

The UNICEF has calculated the economic cost of all forms of micro nutrients to the order of 2% -7% of GDP. In the case of India, the loss is estimated at 1% of GDP. As per Copenhagen Consensus, vitamin A, zinc, fortification of food with iron and iodine, and bio fortification are the top five investments to be made for long-term economic development. Torequo (2012) estimated that \$1 invested in salt iodization generates \$81 in benefits.

Fortifying commercial foods with iodized salt has brought down iodine deficient countries from 54 (2003) to 32. Sadly, India is not

a part of this success story. Addition of vitamin B, iron and zinc to wheat and flour and vitamin A to cooking oil and sugar has been very helpful. Supplementation of vitamin A to every child (6-59 months) every six months can bring down child mortality significantly. Therefore, iron folate supplementation is critical for pregnant women.

David Nabarro observes that people do not live in compartments but complicated spaces where food, health, sanitation and livelihood challenges come together. Naomi Hossain observes that uneven distribution of hunger and malnutrition in the world is rooted in inequality of socio-economic power. He calls for fostering democratic governance of national food system, increasing support for small scale producers and provision of educational and social safety nets.

The Indian Constitution enjoins upon the states to raise the level

of nutrition of its people as a primary duty (Article 47). Provision of Early Childhood care till the age of six (Article 45) is also one of the directive principles. The ICDS scheme inked in 1975 and 14 lakh Anganwadis under its panoply provide supplementary nutrition to around 80 million children and 8 million nursing and expecting mothers. The latest NFHS report 2020 clearly brings out how stunting and wasting amongst children and anaemia among the age group of 15-49 years of women is abnormally high. A state like Bihar has 36.8% children stunted, 43.9% wasted and 56.1% women suffering from anaemia. Even in a developed state like Gujarat, 55% women suffer from anaemia, and 32.4% children are stunted. Kerala shows better records with 20.1% children stunted and 16% wasted, but 33.6% of women there suffer from anaemia. Eight leading economists have recently brought out that greatest development good would come from micro nutrient intervention of vitamin A given to children every 4-6 months along with zinc supplementation for combating diarrhoea.

The government has flagged the Poshan Abhiyan since 2018 in collaboration with the World Bank to reduce stunting @ 2% per year and anaemia @ 3% per year as against a rate of reduction of 1% per year in the past. The objective is to foster multi-ministerial convergence by leveraging technology and inducing large-scale behavioural changes. The evidence so far is disappointing with huge underspend of allocation and more of hype and less of concrete realisation on ground. Famous biologist EO Wilson wrote: "We have stumbled into the 21st Century with stone age emotion, medieval institution and god like technology". Thus, India's nutrition challenge requires better convergence, higher empathy and combating hidden hunger which is a precursor to myriad health handicaps later on.

The writer teaches Economics & Constitutional Law in a University. Views are personal.



Prof SN Mishra

INDIA'S NUTRITION CHALLENGE REQUIRES BETTER CONVERGENCE, HIGHER EMPATHY AND COMBATING HIDDEN HUNGER WHICH IS A PRECURSOR TO MYRIAD HEALTH HANDICAPS LATER ON

Unfriendly Neighbourhood

The great are strongest when they stand alone; a God-given might of being is their force.

SRI AUROBINDO



What has been happening in Bangladesh since the commencement of Durga Puja was only waiting to happen following the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban. The day the religious bigots captured Kabul and the Afghanistan government abjectly surrendered to them, it was clear to the international community that Moslem fanatics across the globe would regroup and advance their skewed religious-political agenda. What is surprising is that the zealots, as a Bangladesh minister has identified the mastermind of the frenzy in the country, could strike so early when the Taliban are still trying to get legitimacy of their rule through international recognition. Though the Bangladesh government has acted fast and taken steps to douse communal passion, it is rather strange that there was apparently no intelligence feedback about such a backlash. Already five people belonging to the Hindu minority population have lost their lives, over a hundred sustained injuries and reports of homes being ransacked and molestation are pouring in. In the context of the Taliban's re-emergence, it was only natural for a credible administration in the subcontinent to be extra cautious during religious festivals involving millions of people such as Durga Puja. Obviously, the Bangladesh government was caught unaware that a conflagration of such magnitude would be engineered by vested interests "with foreign links".

Now, the Bangladesh administration has deployed paramilitary forces in 34 of 64 districts, which only shows how the perpetrators widened their network before orchestrating the communal violence. According to one report, the incident of alleged sacrilege in Cumilla that triggered the frenzied attacks was the handiwork of zealots who sneaked into a puja pandal when the security guard was asleep, did the mischief, took a photograph and made the image viral. Bangladeshi media reported that on October 17 alone, at least 20 homes belonging to Hindus were torched in Rangpur city's Pirganj neighbourhood. Tension in the area mounted following allegations that a Facebook post of a man belonging to the minority population hurt majority sentiments. The incident occurred a day after some 10,000 protesters - many of them carrying banners of Islamist political parties - took to the streets outside Dhaka's main mosque. The crowd chanted "Down with the enemies of Islam" and "Hang the culprits".

Temples in Chandpur's Hajiganj, Chittagong's Banshkhali, Chapainawabganj's Shibganj and Cox's Bazar's Pekua were attacked and Hindu devotees thrashed. According to a spokesman of the minority population, at least 60 makeshift temples had been attacked. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina met leaders of the Hindu community and assured them that no one, whatever his/her religious affiliation, would be spared and the culprits would be "hunted down." These are reassuring words indeed as is her exhortation to the Indian government to make sure nothing happens on this side of the border that may strengthen the hands of the trouble-makers in her country. Her Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud said the trouble had been engineered by the Jamaat-e-Islami with support from the Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). He also hinted at a foreign hand.

In the port city of Chittagong, the Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council has announced a sit-in and hunger strike from October 23 in protest against the attacks on Hindus. The protests will take place at Dhaka's Shahbagh that became an iconic venue for mass movement in the recent past, and Chittagong's Andarkilla. A six-hour bandh was observed by this organisation in Chittagong October 17.

The speed with which the communal frenzy was organised does indicate a well planned strategy. Whether there was a 'foreign hand', as alleged by a minister of the Bangladesh government, is difficult to ascertain. However, it is not difficult to understand that the reference of 'foreign hand' being made is to Pakistan, which has aided and abetted the Taliban for the past two decades to regroup and finally capture Afghanistan. By creating religious disturbance causing a serious law and order problem in Bangladesh, Pakistan would be like killing two birds - India and Bangladesh, as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has good relationship with the Indian government - with one stone. It has long been nursing the wounds of the formation of Bangladesh carved out of its eastern territory. Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League are stumbling blocks to its goal of propping up a puppet government in Bangladesh. The emergence of the Taliban has come as a boon for Pakistan as Islamist groups in Bangladesh have got a shot in their arm. The current communal attacks are the first tell-tale manifestation of this design.

The Government of India has to take careful note of the change in the atmosphere all around the neighbourhood. A casual glance at a map of Asia will show to anybody who cares to see that there are no friendly nations around us anymore. The only non-Moslem nations on our borders namely Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Nepal have all entered into deep pacts with China. Seemingly on the surface, their relation with China is primarily economic but when scrutinized properly, all of them turn out as strong military-economic packages. Therefore it can be stated that India's internal politics has now gathered international ramifications. Apart from garnering votes for temporary political successes, India's present day leadership and the politics they play out, based on hate and persecution, seems to have had an undesirable impact on foreign policy that could take decades to shake off. Only time will tell how deep the wounds run.

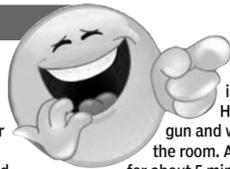
WISDOM CORNER

I now tried a new hypothesis: It was possible that I was more in charge of my happiness than I was allowing myself to be. MICHELLE OBAMA

Unsuccessful people make their decisions based on their current situations. Successful people make their decisions based on where they want to be. BENJAMIN HARDY

If you hear a voice within you say 'you cannot paint,' then by all means paint and that voice will be silenced. VINCENT VAN GOGH

LOL



FBI INTERVIEW
The FBI had an open position for an assassin. After all the background checks, interviews and testing were completed, they had narrowed the field down to 3 possible agents. For the final test, the FBI agents took one of the men to a large metal door and handed him a gun. "We must know that you will follow your instructions no matter what the circumstances." "Inside the room you will find your wife sitting in a chair... we need you to kill her." The man said, "You can't be serious. I could never shoot my wife." The agent said, "Then you're not the right man for this job. Take your wife and go home." The second man was given the same

instructions. He took the gun and went into the room. All was quiet for about 5 minutes. The man came out with tears in his eyes, "I tried, but I can't kill my wife." The agent said, "You don't have what it takes. Take your wife home." Finally, the last man was given the same instructions, to kill his wife. He took the gun and went into the room. Shots were heard, one after another. They heard screaming, crashing, banging on the walls. After a few minutes, all was quiet. The door opened slowly and there stood the man, wiping the sweat from his brow. "Some idiot loaded the gun with blanks," he said. "I had to strangle her to death."

SPECTRUM IMMUNIZATION

How much EPI has expanded in India?

Dr Satyajit Pattnaik

STARTING WITH VACCINE AGAINST SIX DISEASES, NOW OUR UNIVERSAL IMMUNIZATION PROGRAMME PROVIDES FREE OF COST VACCINES AGAINST 12 VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES

In 1974, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched its "Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI)" against six most common, preventable childhood diseases, viz. diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis and measles. "Expanded" in the WHO definition meant adding more disease controlling vaccines in the immunization schedules, extending coverage to all corners of a country and spreading services to reach the less privileged sectors of the society. The Government of India launched its EPI in 1978. In this article we will see how much has EPI "expanded" in India as per the objectives of WHO.

Let us first discuss the initiation and addition of new vaccines to the immunization basket. In 1978, EPI was launched in India with vaccines against six diseases, viz. tuberculosis, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, poliomyelitis and typhoid. In 1985, EPI was renamed as Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) with addition of vaccine against measles and removing typhoid vaccine. Thus the total numbers of diseases covered remain the same, six. After that new vaccines were slowly added to the immunization schedules; Hepatitis-B (2002), Japanese

encephalitis (2006), Haemophilus influenzae (2011), Rotavirus (2016), MR which included rubella vaccine for the first time (2017) and recently vaccine against pneumococcal pneumonia (2021) was launched in a phased manner.

So starting with vaccine against six diseases, now our UIP provides free of cost vaccines against 12 vaccine-preventable diseases. Most of these new vaccines were added in the last 15 years. This is indeed a commendable job. There is scope for further expansion and addition of new vaccines, especially since the Indian Association of Pediatricians (IAP) recommends vaccination against 20 vaccine preventable diseases. Many of these additional vaccines for children are available in the private market. We hope to see government including some of these vaccines in the National Immunization Schedule for free vaccination of all children.

The second objective of "expansion" was intended to extend the vaccine coverage to all parts of the country. Almost all vaccines are being provided to all parts of the country in a phased manner. Despite steady progress, routine childhood vaccination has not reached all children. As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) - 1992-93,

the proportion of "fully vaccinated" children in the country as a whole was just 32%. This has steadily increased to 42% (NFHS-II in 1998-99), 43.5% (NFHS-III in 2005-06) to 62% (NFHS-IV in 2015-16). Although the full data for NFHS-V (2019-20) is still not out, it is expected that this figure will go up considerably. But there is a significant regional variation in "fully vaccinated" children. Almost all southern and eastern states have figures above national average. But most western and north-eastern states have figure much below national average. Even within the states there are variations with some districts having very low proportion of "fully vaccinated" children.

Coming to the third and final aim of expansion to all sections of the society, especially the less privileged. A study done by Basant Panda (IIPS, Mumbai) showed that there is considerable variation in different regions as well as among various wealth quintiles. In the southern region, 63 per cent of children from the poorest wealth quintile were fully immunized compared to 36 per cent in North Eastern region. There is a significant narrowing of the gap between rich and poor children in each vaccination over time. But in

spite of this, the richest children are 1.5 times likely to be fully vaccinated in comparison to poorest children. Moreover, the children from urban areas were reported to be better immunized as compared to their rural counterparts. Although the gender difference in immunization is still there in favour of boys, the gap has considerably narrowed almost to the point of convergence.

The Government of India launched Mission Indradhanush (MI) in 2004 to target underserved, vulnerable, resistant and inaccessible population. In October 2017, MI was upgraded to Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI), which aimed to reach 90% full immunization coverage in districts and urban areas with persistently low levels. Subsequently IMI 2.0 and 3.0 were undertaken to improve the immunization coverage of the unvaccinated. Such targeted campaigns along with strengthening routine immunization activities will improve the coverage and achieve the aim of "expansion" of EPI.

The writer is a Professor of Community Medicine, GEMS Hospital, Srikakulam (AP). Views are personal.

Renewable energy

Sir, Coal crisis is currently plaguing the country and it has severely affected Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi where some of the thermal power plants have already been shut down. The reasons for coal shortage in India are not difficult to find. First, due to increasing prices of coal in international market, India has reduced its imports. Secondly, though import of the coal was falling, its production did not go up because coal is now in the hands of big corporates. Thirdly, the Ministry of Power had issued a statement that some states did not have sufficient coal stock with them before the onset of the monsoon. According to data made available October 4, of the 135 thermal power plants, coal stock in 108 was critical or super-critical. In the next few days, we may have severe power cuts in Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. In this situation, we need to reduce our dependence on coal and switch to renewable energy. Solar energy, wind energy, hydro energy, tidal energy, geothermal energy, and biomass energy need to be explored and promoted. Some time back, the Union Minister for Renewable Energy had announced that the country had crossed a new milestone of 100 GW renewable energy capacity. Unfortunately, all the natural resources are now in the hands of the corporates. Had it been in the hands of the government, the minister could have handled this problem.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Time to bleed blue

Sir, The most entertaining and richest T20 league concluded with super exciting drama and this time in a two-phased manner. Undoubtedly, the IPL is one of the toughest and most popular sports tournaments in the world. We mocked, we trolled, and we fought with each other for our favourite IPL teams. Now we are straight into another exciting and most probably the most important T20 tournament, which is the seventh edition of T20 World Cup. Now the Indian stars, who sweat out for different franchises during the IPL, will be seen wearing deep blue jerseys and trying their best to bring the trophy back home for the second time and look to end the eight-year wait for an ICC trophy. Now the time has come for us to forget the rivalries we saw in the last few weeks and back our team. Now it's time to support our nation, it's time to bleed blue.

Deba Prasad Nayak, CUTTACK

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

Health workers carry Covid swab samples on passenger boats

POST NEWS NETWORK

Krushnaprasad, Oct 18: The state government has strictly laid down a number of norms to ensure that people stay safe during Covid-19 pandemic.

However, its own Health department is ignoring the norms and putting the lives of others at risk.

The matter came to the fore after healthcare workers from Krushnaprasad block of Puri district were seen carrying Covid swab samples of patients on a regular passenger boats in Chilika lake despite the Health department hiring a special boat for the purpose.

It is apprehended that the passengers might contract the virus if any of the swab samples test positive for Covid-19. It is alleged that by carrying the swab samples in a passenger boats a section of un-

scrupulous Health department officials are siphoning off the money allotted for hiring a special boat.

This has sparked sharp resentment among the residents as they condemned by the Health department for carrying the swab samples in a passenger boats instead of special boat hired for the purpose.

Reports said that the Health department had engaged a special boat for carrying patients and medical accessories from Krushnaprasad block during the pandemic period as boats are the only means of transport in the area.

The boat has been hired to ensure safety and convenience of the health workers in transporting medicines, medical accessories as well as patients. The boat used to ferry the health workers from Satpada to Janhikuda and health workers in Chilika Nuapada under

Krushnaprasad block used the boat to carry out the necessary works.

This apart, the special boat was properly cleaned and sanitised every time before the health workers boarded it. It was learnt that the boat was disengaged from the duty some time back. This has forced the health workers to use the passenger boat.

A health worker on board the boat carrying the swab samples said on the condition of anonymity that he has been instructed by the officials to carry the samples to Satpada on a common boat as the special boat has been disengaged from service. Efforts to contact the medical officer of Nuapada community health centre in Chilika over phone proved futile.

A passenger expressed concern on the issue stating he is scared to sit near the health worker carrying the swab samples.



PLEDGE FOR CLEANLINESS



Women taking a pledge to keep their surroundings clean while taking up a cleanliness drive at MV-16 village under Tandapalli panchayat in Malkangiri district, Monday

Elderly woman walks 3km to get old-age pension

POST NEWS NETWORK

Champua, Oct 18: In a heart-wrenching incident, an elderly woman Monday had to cover a distance of three kilometers just to collect her old-age pension from Badanai panchayat office under Champua block in Keonjhar district.

The woman beneficiary, identified as Gula Pradhan, is unable to stand properly and has hunched forward due to old age. The plight of the woman can break anyone's heart.

According to sources, the elderly woman resides at Gaudasahi



village. She walks with the support of a three-foot-long wooden stick. Every month, she receives a

pension of Rs 500 from the state government under the Madhu Babu Pension Yojana of Social Security & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD).

The local administration has a provision to hand over the pension amount to the beneficiaries' homes for the people who are very old and critically sick. However, the elderly woman walked all the way to the panchayat office all by herself this month, the source added.

On being contacted, Badanai sarpanch Himanshu Sekhar Sae

said, "The elderly woman was previously being handed over her pension money of Rs 500 either by panchayat extension officer (PEO) or the panchayat office peon."

"At times, the elderly woman's son comes and collects pension from panchayat office. Today, she could not give a convincing answer as to why she came by walking such a long distance," the sarpanch stated.

However, necessary arrangements were made soon and the aged beneficiary was handed over her pension, the sarpanch added.

Key posts in Keonjhar forest div lying vacant

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Oct 18: Protection of the mines and forests in Keonjhar district is being seriously affected owing to the absence of Range officers in Barbil and Champua forest ranges under the Keonjhar Forest Division of this mineral-rich district. While these posts have been lying vacant for last one month, the Deputy Ranger of Champua range has been given the additional charge of Barbil range. This is creating hurdles in the operations.

As per reports, mineral and timber smuggling has turned into a daily affair in Champua and Barbil forest ranges adjoining the Jharkhand border. Thus the Forest department has been focusing on these forest ranges. Elephant herds from Jharkhand continue to take lives and destroy livelihoods in this area round the year. Consistent

Elephant herds from Jharkhand continue to take lives and destroy livelihoods in this area round the year

man-animal conflicts have resulted in loss of lives of both elephants and humans. The regular movement of elephants in large numbers has been a headache for the Forest department, especially in the absence of enough officials.

Last year, many timber and mineral ore-laden vehicles were seized and mafia arrested by conducting raids in these two ranges having a dense forest cover. But during the last couple of months, no raids have been conducted in this range, the unhappy locals said. It is not at all convenient for a single Deputy Ranger to carry

out the responsibilities of two forest ranges. Environmentalists have, thus, demanded recruitment of range officers, transfer of officials who have been in the same office for long years and filling up of all the vacancies in these forest ranges. Due to lack of proper surveillance, illegal mining is rampant inside the forest, while smuggling of timber is a common affair. As a result, the government is incurring huge losses and, at the same time, the forest is being destroyed.

When contacted, Dhamdir Dhanraj, Divisional Forest Officer, Keonjhar forest division, said that mines in this area are of much importance for industries. Jumbo menace has also been consistent throughout the year in these ranges. He said that he has written to the Forest department for immediate fresh recruitment to these vacant posts.

MISSING TEACHER CASE

Accused school prez flees custody

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Oct 18: The president of the school managing committee, who is a key accused in the missing lady teacher case, was detained five days ago for his alleged involvement in the matter. However, he escaped from the custody of Titlagarh police in Bolangir district late Sunday night.

The accused has been identified as Gobinda Sahu and president of Sunshine English Medium School at Mahalinga locality under Sindhekela police limits of Kalahandi. According to reports, he had gone to the toilet on the pretext of washing his hands and fled from the Titlagarh police barrack where he was detained for interrogation over missing of the teacher Mamita Meher.

According to an official, the lady teacher Mamita has been missing for the last 11 days. The



victim's family earlier alleged that Sahu is involved in her disappearance. Acting on an FIR lodged against him by the lady teacher's brother Bunty, police had detained Sahu.

In the FIR, Bunty had alleged that Sahu was operating a sex

The accused has been identified as Gobinda Sahu and president of Sunshine English Medium School at Mahalinga locality under Sindhekela police limits of Kalahandi

racket in the school which his sister had vehemently opposed and warned to expose. Sahu also used to force women employees in the school to keep illicit relationship with him.

Sahu was detained under the supervision of an officer and four armed policemen. Three policemen were suspended Monday by Bolangir SP Kusalkar Nitin Dagudu on charges of dereliction of duty.

Body of missing security guard recovered

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Oct 18: A security guard posted at Balimela hydro-electricity project, who was missing for the last two days, was found dead Monday.

The deceased security was identified as Manas Pattnaik posted at the project site by a consultancy agency. His body was recovered from the powerhouse canal in Chittrakonda area.

Manas was working with the OHPC security services. His family members had lodged a complaint in Orkel police station regarding his missing and sought the police to trace his whereabouts.

After this, Orkel police launched a search operation. Some locals informed the police about Manas' bike which was parked near a canal.

Korakunda Fire personnel reached the spot on being informed by the Orkel police and launched a search operation. In the morning, locals spotted his body floating in the canal and informed the police.

Bomb attack on Keonjhar MLA: Prime accused held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Oct 18: The Keonjhar Town police Monday arrested Raghunath Panda, the prime accused in the alleged bomb attack on Keonjhar Sadar MLA Mohan Charan Majhi's car October 10.

It is pertinent to mention here that five persons were arrested in this regard. The five have been

identified as Pratap Rout, Bidyadhar Parida alias Buta, Manmohan Das alias Muna, Sarat Chandra Jena alias Mitua and Sikhul Sheikh.

BJP legislator Majhi had a narrow escape when the miscreants hurled bombs at his car. Town police had seized two crude bombs and a motorcycle. The five were booked under Section 307 of Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Explosive

Substances Act, 1908 and Arms Act.

Two persons came close to Majhi's car riding on a motorcycle and consecutively hurled two bombs at the vehicle. The MLA was going to a place near Mandua in Keonjhar after attending a public meeting.

"I reached the meeting venue at around 11.00 am and the miscreants hurled bombs at my car at around 11:50 am. After hurling a bomb, the

miscreants fled from the spot. However, they returned again just after a few minutes and hurled the second one," the MLA had said.

PSO of the legislator Bidyadhar Mahanta chased the miscreants to nab them, but in vain as the road was narrow. They drove the motorcycle towards railway station and fled, Majhi had informed.

ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING

COPS RESCUE 26 MIGRANT LABOURERS, NAB 2 AGENTS

EVERY YEAR THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE FROM KHAPRAKHOL AREA LEAVE FOR ANDHRA PRADESH, TELANGANA AND TAMIL NADU TO WORK AS MIGRANT LABOURERS AT VARIOUS HAZARDOUS UNITS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khapraakhol, Oct 18: Khapraakhol police rescued 26 bonded labourers, including 11 women and a minor, and arrested two middlemen during raids at two places under this police limits in Bolangir district Sunday night.

In the first case, a team of police personnel on patrolling duty at Harishankar Square intercepted a jeep and rescued 11 migrant labourers from the vehicle. All the rescued labourers are residents of Chabripalli village under Bhanpur panchayat. A middleman Rajendra Kathar was also arrested and produced in court, while the vehicle was seized.



Similarly, while patrolling, another team intercepted a jeep at Kapsipali village and rescued 15 migrant labourers of Lakhna village in Nuapada district from the vehicle. A middleman Kharas Majhi, 45, was arrested and produced in court, Khapraakhol police station IIC Ramakant Sahu said.

As per reports, all the labourers had been paid in advance by the two middlemen and were being trafficked to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to work in brick kilns and other units.

Sunday, as many as 42 bonded labourers, including 15 women and three minors, were rescued by Kantabanji Police from a railway station while they were waiting to board a train to neigh-

bouring Andhra Pradesh. The police also arrested a middleman from the spot.

Notably, every year thousands of people from Khapraakhol area leave for Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu to work as migrant labourers at various hazardous units. There they are made to work without being paid wages and forced to live on insufficient food. Many of them manage to return home, while some who are not so fortunate, die while working in these units. The state government and Centre have launched and implementing various projects like MGNREGS to check migration. However, all these have failed to check rampant migration from the district.

WILL TO TRIUMPH



Visually impaired persons taking out a rally as part of International White Cane Day, October 15 in Berhampur, Monday

OP PHOTO

After nCoV, dengue cripples Delhiites

Delhi has recorded the first death due to dengue in 2021 Monday morning

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 18: The national capital has reported the first death due to dengue this year, while the number of cases of the vector-borne disease has mounted to over 720, according to a civic body report released Monday.

Of the total count of dengue cases recorded in Delhi this year, 382 have been reported this month till October 16.

The total number of cases this year till October 9 had stood at 480. So, 243 fresh cases have been logged in one week.

The number of cases reported for the January 1-October 16 period in the previous three years were 395 (2020), 644 (2019) and 1020 (2018), according to the report.

A total of 1,072 cases and one death was logged in the entire year in 2020, according to the report released by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, the nodal agency for tabulating data on vector-borne diseases in the city.

The number of deaths due to dengue in years preceding 2020 had stood at two (2019); four (2018); 10 (2017); and 10 (2016), according to the official tally maintained by

the SDMC.

The 382 cases reported in October till date are by far the highest number of cases recorded in a month this year.

The month-wise distribution of dengue cases in 2021 stands as January (0), February (two), March (five), April (10) and May (12), June (seven), July (16) and August (72), as per the report.

In September this season, 217 cases were logged, the highest count for the month in the last three years. Last year, 188 dengue cases were reported in the entire month of September, and 190 in 2019. In preceding years, the corresponding figures had stood at 374 (2018), 1103 (2017), 1,362

(2020). Malaria, dengue and chikungunya are accompanied with high fever and therefore, doctors feel that people might suspect that they have contracted Covid-19.

Civic bodies in Delhi have intensified measures to prevent outbreak of vector-borne diseases. The East Delhi Municipal Corporation Sunday had said that a new anti-dengue awareness campaign via radio stations will be set in motion from Monday.

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation had run an intensive week-long campaign from October 2-7 to keep vector-borne diseases under control.

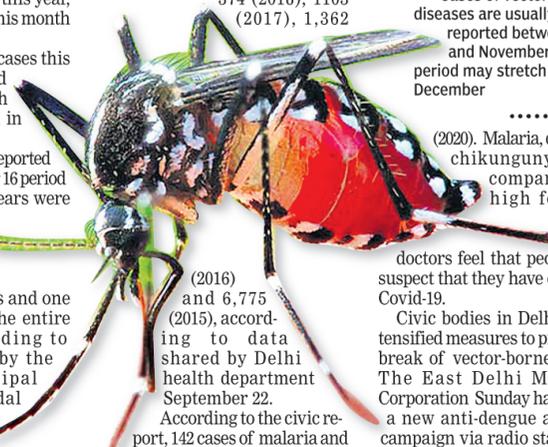
According to the civic report, 142 cases of malaria and 69 cases of chikungunya have also been reported till October 16 this year in Delhi. In the previous years, the total dengue cases reported were 4431 (2016), 4726 (2017), 2798 (2018), 2036 (2019) and 1072

FRESH HEADACHE

According to the report on vector-borne diseases released Monday, one death due to dengue and a total of 723 dengue cases have been recorded this season till October 16, which is highest case count since 2018 for the same period

Dengue mosquito larvae breed in clear, standing water, while those of malaria thrive even in dirty water

Cases of vector-borne diseases are usually reported between July and November but the period may stretch till mid-December



Wettest Oct in Delhi since 1960

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: The month of October this year has been the wettest in the city since 1960, when the national capital had recorded 93.4 mm of rainfall.

This year, 94.6 mm of rainfall has already been recorded in the city in October.

According to data shared by the India Meteorological Department, the month of October in 1910 had recorded 185.9 mm of rainfall, 238.2 mm of rainfall in 1954, 236.2 mm of rainfall in 1956 and 93.4 mm of rainfall in 1960. In 2004, 89 mm rainfall was recorded in October.

On Sunday, the national capital recorded 87.9 mm of rainfall, the fourth highest in a day, according to data. In 1910, Delhi had recorded 152.4 mm of rainfall on a single day in October while 172.7 mm of rainfall was received in 24 hours in 1954. In 1956, the national capital had recorded 111 mm of rainfall in a single day.

GOLDEN HOUR



Clouds hover over the Raisina Hill in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

BANGLADESH VIOLENCE

Intel alert in all Bengal border districts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Oct 18: The West Bengal government has alerted its district administrations, particularly those bordering Bangladesh, against the misuse of social media and circulation of fake news related to the recent spate of attacks during Durga puja in the neighbouring country, and urged them to take measures to maintain law and order, a top official said Monday.

All state agencies have been asked to be on toes to combat any attempt to create disturbances anywhere in Bengal amid the on-going idol immersion ceremonies and observance of Fateha-Dwaz-Daham, he said.

"The government has asked dis-

Some people are spreading wrong information that bombs were hurled at Puja pandals and damage was done, giving the (incidents) communal colour and trying to disturb peace in the area. Strong legal action will be taken for spreading such wrong and misleading information

ASANSOL-DURGAPUR POLICE

trict administrations, especially those bordering Bangladesh, to exercise caution against fake news circulation on the violence and vandalism in the neighbouring country. All agencies have been

told to keep vigil and thwart attempts to create tension," the official added. A similar word of caution was also issued to senior police officers by Additional Director General (Intelligence Branch).

"Since 13.10.21, social media platforms have been flooded with posts of vandalism of Durga Puja pandals in Bangladesh. Centering these issues, districts along Indo-Bangla border have become hyper sensitive and the leaders of different Hindu fundamentalist organisations of India pro-active."

"You are requested to sensitise you officers and men under your control and keep sharp vigil to avoid any untoward incident," the message by the ADGP said. On Sunday, the West Bengal Police

Public figures appeal to Hasina to take action

Prominent public figures in West Bengal, including educationists, theatre personalities, writers, film actors, directors, political leaders have issued an appeal to the Sheikh Hasina government to track those involved in the vandalism at Durga Puja pandals in Bangladesh and punish these elements

had retweeted posts by the Asansol-Durgapur police and Purba Medinipur SP, warning people with the intention of spreading misinformation of severe consequences as brawls were reported over multiple issues in the two areas.

No major impact of stir in Eastern, SE Rlys

An Eastern Railway spokesperson said that more than 100 demonstrators gathered at Saktigarh railway station in the Howrah-Bardhaman chord line section of West Bengal and blocked train movement for a little over an hour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Oct 18: Protestors belonging to Left parties Monday resorted to 'rail roko' stir at some railway stations in support of the nationwide agitation by an umbrella union of farmers demanding the dismissal and arrest of Union minister Ajay Mishra for his alleged involvement in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence.

An Eastern Railway spokesperson said that more than 100 demonstrators gathered at Saktigarh railway station in the Howrah-Bardhaman chord line section of West Bengal and blocked train movement for a little over an hour.

"The agitation took place from 10.10 am to 11.15 am. There was no



Representational image

damage to any railway property," he said. The spokesperson said that four trains were delayed owing to the agitation. The Samyukti Kisan Morcha (SKM), which is leading the agitation against the Centre's three farm laws, gave a call for a six-hour-long 'rail roko' across the country in protest against the

Lakhimpur Kheri violence in Uttar Pradesh that led to the death of eight people.

An official of South Eastern Railway said that demonstrators carrying banners and flags resorted to sloganeering at Tatisilwai in Ranchi division and Roxy in Chakradharpur division of

Jharkhand. "However, train movement was not affected," he said.

There was no impact of the agitation on the SER's operations in West Bengal, he said. Demonstrations and sloganeering were also reported from Mallarpur in Birbhum district and Bumadpur in Dakshin Dinajpur district.

'RED LIGHT ON, GAADI OFF' CAMPAIGN STARTS IN DELHI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: The Delhi government kicked off its month-long 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' campaign across 100 crossings in the city Monday to reduce vehicular emissions.

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai visited the ITO crossing and appealed to the public to extend their support to make this fight against pollution a success.

Vehicular emissions and dust are significant contributors to the air pollution of any city, the minister said.

"This is a public campaign. We all will have to fight together to beat pollution. I appeal to the public to follow the campaign," he added. Rai said pollution levels were within safe limits in September. The spike in pollution levels in winters is due to the change in weather and the cases of stub-



ble burning in neighbouring states, the Delhi environment minister added. As many as 2,500 civil defence volunteers will be deployed in two shifts of 8 am to 2 pm and 2 pm to 8 pm across 100 traffic junctions in the city for the campaign. According to officials, these civil defence volunteers will hand out pamphlets carrying information on Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's three appeals to the public.

To reduce vehicular pollution, the Delhi government has started a 'Red Light On, Gaadi Off' campaign from today (Monday). Data by the Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) shows that if people follow the exercise of switching off engines at traffic signals, pollution can be cut down by 13-20 per cent

GOPAL RAI | DELHI ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

DELHI: MAJOR FIRE INCIDENT AVERTED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: The seminar room in the seven-storey Emergency Block of the LNJP Hospital where a fire was reported in the early hours on Monday was locked when it had happened, and alertness and presence of mind shown by the staff of the facility averted a major incident, a senior official said.

The 1,500-bed facility is the largest hospital run by the Delhi government, and also the nerve centre of the city's battle against the coronavirus pandemic.

"The incident took place around 12:30 am and some of our staff saw smoke coming out of the seminar room, which was locked. Showing alertness, they opened the room immediately and used small fire extinguishers to put it out as much as possible, until the fire tenders arrived," a senior official of the hospital said in a statement.

The fire had broken out in the seminar room. No casualty was reported, Delhi Fire Service officials said earlier in the day.

Unesco report highlights pathetic condition of WB schools

ACCORDING TO THE REPORT ON SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRY, WEST BENGAL IS RANKED THIRD WITH TOTAL 1,10,000 VACANCIES CUMULATIVELY IN PRIMARY, UPPER PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

AGENCIES

Kolkata, Oct 18: With more than 1 lakh vacancies for teachers in several schools, mostly in rural areas, across West Bengal, a report by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) has highlighted the pathetic condition of the schools in the state.

According to the report on school education in the country, West Bengal is ranked third with total 1,10,000 vacancies cumulatively in primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary schools.

The report also says that of these total vacancies, 69 per cent are in the rural areas. Uttar Pradesh with 3,23,000 and Bihar with 2,20,000 vacancies are ranked first and second, respectively. Bengal's education department sources said that the indication of this pathetic state of affairs first became evident a couple of years ago when the Union



Representational image

Human Resources Ministry forwarded some queries on the student to teacher ratio in the schools of the state.

"At that point of time, it was revealed that the number of vacant teachers' posts for four important subjects in the science stream,

namely mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology in the state, had already reached an alarming stage then.

During the Covid-19 lockdown when the students had to depend mostly on the internet, the connectivity in the schools of West Bengal were severely low

The number of vacant teachers' posts were 3,123 for mathematics, 1,795 for physics, 1,787 for chemistry and 2,178 for biology," said a department official on the condition of anonymity.

The problem is even more pathetic because the state government has been pulled up by the Calcutta High Court on the question of teachers' recruitment.

The recruitment in primary, upper primary and secondary section has been in question because there have been allegations of nepo-

tism and corrupt practises in the recruitment pattern.

As several cases of teachers' recruitment are pending before the court, the problem of filling up the vacancies hardly shows any signs of dying down.

Not only in cases of teachers' recruitment but there are several other areas where the state has performed abysmally low.

During the Covid-19 lockdown when the students had to depend mostly on the internet, the connectivity in the schools of West Bengal were severely low.

According to the Unesco report, only 9 per cent of the schools mostly in the urban areas have net connectivity making it obvious that the students in the rural areas were left out of the online class facilities during the lockdown period.

Tripura with 3 per cent, Meghalaya with 4 per cent, Chattisgarh with 5 per cent and Bihar with 6 per cent ranked below West Bengal.

national

of the day quote

The country's pluralistic culture has the power to unite people, going beyond various social divisions



M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

Had promised that those wearing 'hawai chappals' (slippers) will travel by airplane. But the BJP government has hiked the prices of petrol and diesel so much that now it has become difficult for those wearing 'hawai chappals' and the middle class to travel even by road



PRIYANKA GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

Won't accept Centre's decision on BSF's jurisdiction



CHARANJIT CHANNI | PUNJAB CM

SHORT TAKES

Former TN minister raided

Chennai: Tamil Nadu's anti-corruption bureau and the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) officials carried out search operations at former Health Minister Dr C. Vijayabaskar's residence and other places Monday. According to officials, searches are being conducted across 43 places belonging to Vijayabaskar and his relatives in Chennai, Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram, Coimbatore, Trichy, and Pudukkottai. This came a day after the DVAC registered an FIR against Vijayabaskar and his wife Ramya for amassing wealth to the tune of Rs 27.22 crore in his name and in the names of his dependents and business firms between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2021.

Man arrested

Bhopal: Bhopal police Monday arrested an accused for allegedly raping a 13-year-old girl. The matter came to light after a police complaint was registered. The accused has been arrested under sections 376 and 501 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). According to the police, the accused is known to the victim. He runs a grocery store where the victim used to visit to purchase goods. According to the victim's complaint lodged at Bhopal's Sukhi Sevaniya police station, the accused invited the victim to his home Saturday and allegedly raped her. He also threatened her of serious consequences if she told anyone about the incident.

Narrow escape

Hyderabad: Passengers of a Hyderabad-bound private bus had a narrow escape when the vehicle caught fire in Telangana's Jangaon district in early morning hours of Monday. The private bus, which was moving towards Hyderabad from Chhattisgarh with 26 passengers, caught fire near Raghunathapally village in Jangaon district on National Highway 163. Noticing fumes emanating from the engine of the bus, the driver immediately stopped it and all passengers got down safely with their luggage. The bus was completely gutted which was allegedly caused due to a short circuit. A fire tender rushed to the site to douse the flames.

Alert in Assam

Guwahati: The Assam Police have sounded an alert over possible terror strikes by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and terror outfit al-Qaeda over alleged persecution of Muslims in the state. A circular issued by the Assistant Inspector General of Police (Law and Order) on Saturday said the alert has been issued following reports received from the Special Branch of the state police.

Lawyer killed in UP court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shahjahanpur (UP), Oct 18: A lawyer was shot dead allegedly by another on the district court premises here Monday afternoon over an old rivalry, following which four cops were suspended for negligence, police said.

The victim, Bhupendra Singh (58), had filed two dozen cases against Suresh Gupta. Upset over this, Gupta allegedly killed him, they said. Taking strong exception to a serious crime like murder on the court premises, four police personnel, including an inspector, have been placed under suspension, Assistant Superintendent of Police (City) Sanjay Kumar said.

Advocate Bhupendra Singh of Jalalabad tehsil had gone to the third-floor office of ACJM-I of the district court in the afternoon to meet a clerk in connection with some case when a gunshot was heard and he was found dead. Quoting the clerk Singh had gone to meet, Superintendent of Police (SP) S Anand had earlier said that an illegal 315 bore pistol was found near the body.

A case of murder was registered against advocate Suresh Kumar Gupta and his two sons Gaurav Gupta and Ankit Gupta. The accused advocate has been arrested, the police said. Advocates in the district had launched an indefinite strike, demanding the killer's immediate arrest.

Bar Association general secretary Aneet Kumar Trivedi, who had led the protest, said that since the accused has been arrested, the organisation would meet at 11 am Tuesday to decide on further course of action.

Meanwhile, political parties like the Congress, Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) attacked the state government over the incident.

WOMAN RUN OVER, COP HELD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, Oct 18: One girl was killed and another seriously injured after they were run over allegedly by a police inspector in a village in Punjab's Jalandhar district Monday officials said, adding the accused has been arrested.

The incident took place in Dhanowali village on the Jalandhar-Phagwara highway, they said. The girls were standing on the roadside on the highway when the car being driven by inspector Amrit Pal Singh ran over them, killing one girl on the spot, they added.

The deceased has been identified as Navjot Kaur, who worked at a local car showroom. Singh, posted at Punjab Armed Police headquarters in Jalandhar, has been arrested.

A video posted on the internet shows the two girls standing on the road. They can be seen taking steps backward after seeing the car approaching them. But within moments, the car hit them. Following the incident, traffic on the highway was blocked by locals who sat on dharna, asking for the registration of a murder case against the accused police official.



Raid with a difference

This Income-Tax raid was different. Normally, I-T raids are conducted on detractors of the BJP or big scamsters. But I-T raids in Bangalore this time were conducted on people and premises connected with the former Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa's PA Umesh and his associates. The Income-tax department conducted these raids for almost five days and claimed that it detected an undisclosed income of about Rs 750 crore. Out of this, an aggregate amount of Rs 487 crore has already been admitted by those whose



I am with the people who are being cheated for the benefit of Modi's friends and will continue to raise their voices

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

ARMY CHIEF TO REVIEW SECURITY

Army Chief General M M Naravane is on a two-day visit to the Jammu region where the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of White Knight Corps will give him an update on security situation and operational preparedness, the Indian Army said Monday



UNEASE AND FEAR

Non-local workers flee Kashmir

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Oct 18: Panic has gripped non-local workers in Kashmir after a series of attacks against them and many have now started fleeing the Valley.

A group of non-local workers Monday gathered at the Srinagar railway station to go back to their native states. Dinesh Mandal, 60, from Bihar's Bhagalpur has decided to leave. He had been coming to Kashmir regularly for the past 40 years to sell ice creams.

"The situation is bad. Non-locals are being targeted. Vendors and labourers are being targeted. We cannot stay back in Kashmir in these conditions," he said. "Everybody is scared. Earlier vendors were targeted on the roads, but now people are being attacked in their rooms. We decided to leave after two non-local persons were killed in Kulgam on Saturday," Satish Kumar, another ice cream seller, said.

"Local people tell us to stay back, but how can we stay back in Kashmir when there is a threat of getting killed even in our rooms. If this thorn is taken out and there is



Migrant workers arrive at a railway station as they leave Kashmir after recent incidents of killing of non-locals allegedly by militants, in Srinagar

A group of non-local workers Monday gathered at the Srinagar railway station to go back to their native states

The migrant workers say their families back home are urging them to return

Some of those heading home said they will think of returning to the Valley only after the situation improves

peace, we will think of returning to Kashmir," said Kumar.

"There is a lot of fear among the non-local migrants. Our families back home are crying and asking us to return soon. We are very scared after we heard the news of the killing of migrant workers. After every few days people are getting killed here," said a labourer, who did not wish to be named.

The migrant workers say their families back home are urging them to return. Some of those heading home said they will think of returning to the Valley only after the situation improves. In the past few days, many civilians have been targeted in Kashmir. On Sunday, two non-local persons were killed and a third person was injured by terrorists in South Kashmir's Kulgam district.

Farmers protest Lakhimpur killings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Chandigarh/Jaipur, Oct 18: Farmers squatted on rail tracks at several places Monday morning as part of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha's six-hour 'rail roko' protest over the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, hampering train movement in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The stir affected 150 locations in the Northern Railway zone and hindered the running of 60 trains causing inconvenience to passengers who could be seen waiting for long hours with their baggage. In the North Western Railway (NWR) zone, rail traffic was affected in some sections in Rajasthan and Haryana with 18 trains cancelled, 10 partially cancelled and one diverted

BJP WORKER AMONG FOUR NABBED

Lakhimpur Kheri: The Uttar Pradesh police Monday apprehended four more persons, including a BJP worker, over the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, taking the number of arrests in the episode to 10, said officials. Union Minister Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra along with others accused in the case were also sent into judicial custody from police custody Monday, the officials said. "Four persons were arrested on Monday by the Crime Branch of the Lakhimpur Kheri police along with the SWAT team. The SIT investigators and other senior officials are interrogating the accused and further probe is underway," the UP police said in a statement. Those held have been identified as Sumit Jaiswal, Shishi Pal, Satya Prakash Tripathi alias Satyam and Nandan Singh Bisht, the police said.

due to the protest.

Agitations were held at Punjab's Ludhiana, Amritsar, Jalandhar, Moga, Patiala and Ferozepur, and Haryana's Charkhi Dadri, Sonapat, Kurukshetra, Jind, Karnal and Hisar. In Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) workers halted the Amritsar-Delhi and the Jalandhar

Express trains by staging a dharna on rail tracks. Trains were halted at Meerut and Greater Noida's Dankaur stations by the protesters, BKU media in-charge Dharmendra Malik said. In Ghaziabad's Modinagar, farmers staged a demonstration in front of a goods train which already reached its destination.

Bengal BJP leader shot dead

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, Oct 18: A youth BJP leader of Itahar in West Bengal's North Dinajpur district, Mithun Ghosh, was shot dead by some unidentified miscreants just in front of his home in the Rajgram village. The BJP alleged that Trinamool Congress anti-socials were behind the murder.

Trinamool Congress, however, has denied the allegation. The incident happened at 11 pm Sunday when Ghosh was standing in front of his house in Rajgram village. Some unknown miscreants on two motorbikes shot him in his stomach from a close range. Ghosh was immediately rushed to the Raiganj medical college and hospital where he was declared brought dead.

The death of Ghosh triggered political debate in North Dinajpur

when BJP district leadership alleged that the murder was a result of the Trinamool-sheltered goons. BJP Uttar Dinajpur district president Basudeb Sarkar said, "Mithun Ghosh was the district secretary of the Party's youth front. His home is in Rajgram of Itahar Assembly constituency. He was threatened on the phone at different times. We also verbally complained to the police that people from a particular political party were threatening Mithun. He was harassed in many ways but no action was taken by the administration."

"We got the news of his death around 11.30 p.m. Sunday. Mithun was at his home. Someone called him and when he came out of his house he was shot. He died on the way to the hospital. We are definite that the Trinamool Congress goons are behind the murder," he alleged.

BJP slams Cong for 'vilification' of Patel

As BJP leaders attacked the Congress, the opposition party dismissed the reports with its chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala alleging that "spreading lies and canards" has become a norm for some

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: The BJP Monday accused the Congress of committing a "sin" over reports that a leader at the recent CWC meeting made critical remarks about Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and asked if the party leadership will take action against him.

As BJP leaders attacked the Congress, the opposition party dismissed the reports with its chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala alleging that "spreading lies and canards" has become a norm for some.

INCESSANT DOWNPOUR

Red alert for 10 dams in Kerala

A red alert was sounded in respect of 10 dams in Kerala, two shutters of Kakki dam in Pathanamthitta were opened and pilgrimage to Lord Ayyappa temple in Sabarimala has been put on hold for now, state Revenue Minister K Rajan said



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: Heavy rains Monday lashed several parts of north India, including Uttarakhand, where five people were killed in rain-related incidents, while a red alert for 10 dams was issued in Kerala due to incessant downpour in the southern state.

In Delhi, the month of October this year has been the wettest since 1960, when the city had recorded 93.4 mm of rainfall, according to data shared by the India Meteorological Department (IMD). Heavy rainfall also lashed several parts of Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana.

Due to heavy downpour, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan postponed his campaign tour to Khandwa for the upcoming Lok Sabha bypoll there, while in Uttar Pradesh, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's rally had to be cancelled in Budhana town as the venue was submerged in rainwater.

Authorities in Uttarakhand ad-

vised Chardham pilgrims, who arrived in Haridwar and Rishikesh by Sunday, not to proceed to the Himalayan temples till the weather improves. Five people, including three labourers from Nepal, were killed and two others injured in rain-related incidents in the state.

The labourers were staying in a tent at Samkhal near Lansdowne in Pauri district when rubble flowing down from a field above due to the rains buried them alive, District Magistrate Vijay Kumar Jogdande said, adding that the injured were admitted to the Kotdwar base hospital.

In Selkhol in Champawat district, two people were killed when their house collapsed, following a landslide, the State Emergency Operation Centre said. Passenger vehicles are not being allowed to cross the Chandrabhaga bridge, Tapovan, Lakshman Jhoola and Muni-ki-Reti Bhadrakali barriers in Rishikesh.

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami visited the state disaster control room at the secretariat in Dehradun to take weather updates and know the conditions of roads and highways.

SHARP ATTACK

"villain" while praising Nehru. Slamming the reports, Surjewala claimed that they are aimed at giving cover fire to the Modi government to "justify lies-driven press conferences" while the BJP dispensation is "never" questioned.

The Congress, Patra alleged, is reduced to being a party of a family and works to advance the family's rule. "What sort of mindset is this that one family has done everything and others have done nothing. What the CWC has done is a sin," he said.

He noted that Karra also batted for Rahul Gandhi to take over as the Congress chief while lauding the contribution of the Nehru-Gandhi family and criticising Patel. "This is the height of sycophancy," he said.

landslide win, Arvind Kejriwal's 'Delhi Model' is also making waves though silently. Kejriwal's 'Delhi Model' ensured the defeat of BJP for two consecutive terms, in 2015 and 2020 during the Assembly polls. Incidentally, it was Nitish Kumar also who stopped BJP's 'Ashwamedh Yagna' in Bihar in 2017. But he could succeed only with the help of RJD's Lalu Prasad Yadav. It is also ironic that the Modi-Amit Shah duo and late Arun Jaitley won over Nitish Kumar ensuring there is no political force in North India worth a salt to challenge Modi. The Congress has not taken off since 2014 due to a variety of reasons. Even Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra headed by Uddhav Thackeray is no serious pain in the neck of Modi per se. Mamata Banerjee also gave a huge humiliation to the BJP in West Bengal. But her appeal is limited in the country as a whole at least for now. Therefore, it is in this context that Kejriwal's emergence is a worry. Though the BJP leadership dismisses him as a leader of a tiny

Union Territory but it knows inside out that his 'Delhi Model' has created a huge buzz in many states particularly in Punjab, Uttarakhand and Goa which are going to polls.

What is the 'Delhi Model'?

It has been proven time and again that the 'Modi Model' sells during the Lok Sabha polls. But Kejriwal's 'Delhi Model' has a huge undercurrent in three states of Punjab, Goa and Uttarakhand. Delhi is a cosmopolitan city and people from across the country come here seeking jobs, trade and traveling. They go back carrying the tales of Kejriwal with them as how he has made the difference to the lives of common man. For the past several years, Kejriwal has been talking less politics and focused more on giving one facility after the other to the citizens. This is despite all obstacles put forth by Central agencies, police, BJP and the Lieutenant Governor.

G-23 leaders keep away from UP

The Lakhimpur Kheri incident exposed chinks in the Congress armory rather wide open. The most significant was the absence of Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in the aftermath of the death of eight persons. While the Chief Ministers of Punjab and Chhattisgarh, Charanjit Singh

Kejriwal's 'Delhi Model' clicking

Modi's 'Gujarat Model' clicked with the masses in 2014 Lok Sabha polls giving the BJP a

international

of the day quote

The party would not be bullied into backing a net zero target and ruled out support for a more ambitious 2030 target

BARNABY JOYCE
AUSTRALIA'S DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

On behalf of Sweden I promise that we say - never again, and mean it. We will continue to take action to combat anti-Semitism in all its forms, to make sure that we never forget

ANN LINDE
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF SWEDEN

The interlinked crises of pollution, climate change and biodiversity act as threat multipliers, amplifying conflicts, tensions and structural inequalities, and forcing people into increasingly vulnerable situations

MICHELLE BACHELET | UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SHORT TAKES

SL records over 7K tourist arrivals

Colombo: Over 7,000 tourists have arrived in Sri Lanka so far this month, giving a boost to the country's tourism industry which took a blow due to the Covid-19 pandemic, local media reported Monday. According to official figures, 7,096 tourists arrived in Sri Lanka from October 1 to 13, reports Xinhua news agency.

Saudi eases Covid curbs

Riyadh: Saudi Arabia has started easing precautionary measures against Covid-19 as the country has witnessed a reduction in fresh cases. The General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) announced the operation of all airports at full capacity, the Saudi Press Agency reported.

Fire erupts at Kuwait oil refinery

Dubai (UAE): A fire erupted Monday at a major oil refinery in Kuwait, the state-owned oil company said, reporting that some workers suffered from smoke inhalation and other light injuries. The blaze at the key Mina al-Ahmadi oil refinery along Kuwait's Persian Gulf coastline north of its border with Saudi Arabia did not affect the electrical supply or oil exports, according to Kuwait's National Petroleum Company.

Floods hit Thailand

Bangkok: Heavy rains in central and northeastern Thailand caused new flooding Monday, with authorities forced to release water into an already swollen river after a reservoir reached full capacity, and others facing the same possibility. Authorities in the central province of Suphan Buri said flood warnings were in effect for communities along the Tha Chin River after water was released into it from the Krasiao reservoir. More than 38,000 households have been affected by flooding in the province so far this year, according to the Suphan Buri governor's office.

2 quakes hit Nepal

Kathmandu: Two earthquakes, both measuring 4.7 magnitude on the Richter scale, hit Nepal Monday, however there were no reports of any immediate damage, senior officials from the National Seismological Research Centre said. The tremors were felt in Central Nepal Monday afternoon and the epicentre was traced to Panphung area of Sindhupalchowk, 114 km east of Kathmandu.



The New Zealand government is making a four-fold increase in the support it provides to countries most vulnerable to the climate emergency
JACINDA ARDERN | NEW ZEALAND PM

GOOD INITIATIVE

A country-wide polio vaccination drive will begin in Afghanistan November 8 for the first time since the Taliban took over the country in August, the Unicef announced Monday



India, Israel to resume negotiations on FTA

AGENCIES

Jerusalem, Oct 18: India and Israel Monday agreed to resume negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) from next month with an aim to conclude the long-pending deal by next June as External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held "very productive talks" with Alternate Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid.

"Our officials have actually agreed on the resumption of the India-Israel free trade negotiations starting in November. They are very confident that we would be able to conclude the negotiations by next June," Jaishankar announced after he met Lapid.

Discussions around the FTA have been going on between the two sides for more than a decade but it is the first time that a definite deadline has been set, providing seriousness to the process.

Several announcements on the issue have been made by the two sides over the years but the agreement has remained elusive.

"Very productive talks today with APM and FM @YairLapid. Discussed a wide range of regional



Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar lays a wreath in the Hall of Remembrance at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem

and global issues. Agreed to resume FTA negotiations next month. Agreed in principle on mutual recognition of Covid vaccination certification," Jaishankar later tweeted. On his part, Lapid also stressed that the FTA will be "finalised as fast as we can" in the interest of both the countries and business communities. "I am looking forward to deeply strengthening friendship between our countries," he said, describing India as "one of our most, not only a strate-

gic partner but also a friend." "We see India as an important ally for many years," Lapid stated. "India also brings new opportunities for cooperation." The two ministers also discussed further cooperation in the areas of water and agriculture. "I finished a meeting with Indian Minister of External Affairs @DrSJaishankar & Minister of Energy @KELharrar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We decided to renew negotiations on a free trade agreement between

our nations, and on mutual recognition of vaccination certificates," Lapid tweeted.

He thanked his "friend" Jaishankar for his visit to Israel, a visit preceding events which will take place next year to mark 30 years of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Israel has also joined the International Solar Alliance (ISA), a global initiative that India has spearheaded, with Jaishankar and Israel's Energy Minister Karine Elharrar signing on the agreement. "First of all let me say what a great pleasure it is to see Israel joining the international solar alliance. I think you bring a lot of value to the table and as we approach COP 26, it is very important in our growing agenda and green road, green economy," Jaishankar said as welcomed Israel as the newest member of the ISA.

Israel's former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in November last year had said that his country is a partner to India in its quest for less carbon and less pollution while attending a digital conference of the ISA at the personal invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

WHO seeks more info for Covaxin approval

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations/Geneva, Oct 18:

The WHO's technical advisory group will meet October 26 to consider the emergency use listing of India's Covaxin which is being used in the country's nationwide anti-Covid-19 vaccination programme, according to the global health agency's chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan.

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech, which has developed Covaxin, had submitted EOI (Expression of Interest) to the World Health Organisation April 19 for its vaccine.

Swaminathan, the WHO's Chief Scientist, said on Twitter Sunday that the technical advisory group will meet October 26 to consider the Emergency Use Listing (EUL) for Covaxin.

"@WHO has been working closely with @BharatBiotech to complete the dossier. Our goal is to have a broad portfolio of vaccines approved for emergency use and to expand access to populations everywhere," she said in the tweet.

Earlier this month, the WHO said that Bharat Biotech "has been



submitting data to WHO on a rolling basis and submitted additional information at the WHO's request September 27. The WHO experts are currently reviewing this information and if it addresses all questions raised, the WHO assessment will be finalised next week."

The Geneva-based WHO said it began rolling data of the vaccine on July 6. Rolling data allows the WHO to start its review right away, as information continues to come in to accelerate the overall review process. According to the WHO, submissions for pre-qualification or listing under the emergency use procedure are confidential.

If a product submitted for assessment is found to meet the criteria for listing, the WHO will publish the results widely.

Russia suspends its mission to NATO

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, Oct 18: Russia's foreign minister said Monday that the country is suspending its mission to NATO.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that the move is in response to last week's expulsion by NATO of eight members of Russia's mission to the military alliance.

NATO said that they were secretly working as intelligence officers and halved the size of Moscow's team able to work at its headquarters. Lavrov also announced that NATO's military liaison and information offices in Moscow would be closed. "As a result of NATO's deliberate moves, we have practically no conditions for elementary diplomatic work and in response to NATO's actions we suspend the work of our permanent mission to NATO, including the work of the chief military envoy, probably from November 1. Or it may take several more days," Lavrov said.

The Foreign Ministry said in a separate statement that NATO's actions "confirm that they are not interested in an equal dialogue and joint work to deescalate military-political tensions. The alliance's line towards our country is becoming more and more ag-

gressive. The Russian threat' is inflated in order to strengthen the internal unity of the alliance, to create the appearance of its relevance' in modern geopolitical conditions."

Lavrov said that contact between the Western alliance and Moscow could be done through the Russian embassy in Belgium. The Russian mission isn't based at NATO's headquarters, but in a leafy neighborhood in the south of the Belgian capital, Brussels.

NATO suspended practical cooperation with Russia in 2014 after it annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, but has kept channels open for high-level meetings and for military-to-military cooperation. But the NATO-Russia Council, their preferred forum, has only met sporadically since then.

Russia and NATO also have been at odds over Moscow's nuclear missile development, aerial intrusions into NATO airspace and the buzzing of allied ships by fighter planes. Official talks between them have been limited in recent years.

BIG DECISION

THE KREMLIN IS ALSO CLOSING THE ALLIANCE'S LIAISON MISSION IN MOSCOW

The announcement comes after NATO expelled eight members of the Russian mission to the military alliance



Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov



A boy flies a kite during the 4th edition of the International Kite and Wind Festival in the village of Gharb on the island of Gozo, Malta

'Lankan Muslims facing discrimination'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, Oct 18: Sri Lanka's Muslim minorities have suffered consistent discrimination, harassment and violence since 2013, culminating in the adoption of government policies explicitly targeting them, human rights group Amnesty International has said.

The report 'From Burning Houses to Burning Bodies: Anti-Muslim Harassment, Discrimination and Violence in Sri Lanka,' was published Sunday by the UK-based human rights agency.

It asserts to trace the development of anti-Muslim sentiment in Sri Lanka, "amid surging Sinhala-Buddhist nationalism." The document cites "series of mob attacks committed with impunity", forced

cremation of Muslim Covid-19 victims, ongoing proposals to ban 'niqab' (face veil) and 'madrasas' (religious schools) and other such discriminatory measures, as steps consistent with harassment and violence on the minority group.

"While anti-Muslim sentiment in Sri Lanka is nothing new, the situation has regressed sharply in recent years. Incidents of violence against Muslims, committed with the tacit approval of the authorities, have occurred with alarming frequency. This has been accompanied by the adoption by the current government of rhetoric and policies that have been openly hostile to Muslims," said Amnesty International, deputy secretary general Kyle Ward.

"The Sri Lankan authorities must break this alarming trend

and uphold their duty to protect Muslims from further attacks, hold perpetrators accountable and end the use of government policies to target, harass and discriminate against the Muslim community."

The report says incidents of violence towards Muslims have risen in frequency and intensity since 2013, with a series of flashpoints in which attackers and those responsible for hate speeches have enjoyed impunity for their actions.

This escalating hostility began with the anti-halal campaign when Sinhala Buddhist nationalist groups successfully lobbied to end the halal certification on food items, which marks foods permissible for consumption by Muslims in accordance with Islamic scripture and customs.

CHINA DENIES REPORT OF MISSILE TEST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Oct 18: China Monday said it recently tested a hypersonic "vehicle" and not a nuclear-capable hypersonic "missile" as reported by a leading British newspaper which also said that the missile missed its target by about two-dozen miles.

The Financial Times reported Sunday that China tested a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile in August that circled the globe before speeding towards its target, demonstrating an advanced space capability that caught US intelligence by surprise.

Five people familiar with the test said that the Chinese military launched a rocket that carried a hypersonic glide vehicle which flew through low-orbit space before cruising down towards its target, the FT report said.

The missile missed its target by about two-dozen miles, the report said, quoting three people who briefed it on the intelligence. But two said the test showed that China had made astounding progress on hypersonic weapons and was far more advanced than US officials realised, according to the report.



Asked for his reaction to the report, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here that a test of a hypersonic vehicle was carried out.

"It is a vehicle not a missile," Zhao said. "As we understand this test, it is just a routine space vehicle test to verify the repeated use of technology of the vehicle."

Colin Powell, first black US Secy of state, dies of Covid

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, Oct 18: Colin Powell, who blasted through racial barriers to become the US' first African American Secretary of State, National Security Adviser, and the top military officer and was a one-time favourite for President, died at the age of 84 Monday from Covid-19-related complications despite being vaccinated, according to his family.

The son of Jamaican immigrants, he showcased America's opportunities for immigrant families. Growing up in the impoverished Harlem section of New York City, he attended a local college where he excelled in the Reserve Officers Training Corps - the equiv-

alent of the NCC - leading to a distinguished army career that led him to the military's highest position of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

He served two tours of duty as a young military officer in Vietnam winning several military honours.

Powell made several visits to India as the National Security Adviser; when he conferred with his then-counterpart Brajesh Mishra, and as Secretary of State when he met then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee many times.

In a trip in 2003 to both India and Pakistan, he sought to keep the situation in the subcontinent spinning out of control after a massive suicide attack in Srinagar by the Islamabad-backed Jaish-e-



Mohammad. George W Bush, who appointed his Secretary of State, said in his tribute: "Many Presidents relied on General Powell's counsel and experience." The African American leader's career reached

its heights during the terms of Presidents belonging to the Republican Party.

George HW Bush appointed him to the top Pentagon position. As the Joint Chiefs Chairman, he de-

veloped what came to be known as the "Powell Doctrine" learning from the US debacle in Vietnam, the makings of which he had witnessed first hand.

Its three elements were that military force should be used only when diplomacy and politics had failed, the force should be the maximum in order to quickly defeat the enemy with minimal US casualties, and the action should have wide public support.

The doctrine was effective as he led the 1989 invasion of Panama to overthrow President Manuel Noriega - a small operation - and in repelling the 1990 Kuwait invasion by Iraq under Saddam Hussain with an overwhelming deployment of force against Baghdad's forces.

That lesson was lost on Bush's son who mired the US in an unwinnable war by invading Iraq in 2003.

He left the military in 1993 amid differences with the administration of Democratic President Bill Clinton, including over the US military role in the Balkans.

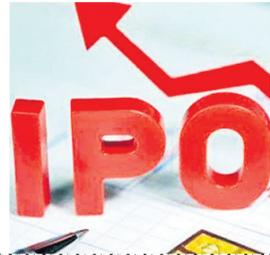
As the acknowledged hero of the Kuwait war where he led the US to a swift decisive victory, there was a clamour for him to run for President as the Republican candidate in 1996 against Clinton, but he declined saying that he had no passion for politics and did not hear a "calling" to seek the office. The Iraq invasion under the younger Bush was in fact a negation of the Powell Doctrine and the US paid a colossal price for it.



Further efforts toward investment liberalisation aided by structural reforms could help deepen India's integration in global value chains and its post-pandemic recovery
ALFRED SCHIPKE | SENIOR RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHINA, IMF

SIX COS GET SEBI'S NOD TO FLOAT IPOs

As many as six companies, including Nykaa, Adani Wilmar and Star Health & Allied Insurance, have received capital markets regulator Sebi's go-ahead to launch initial share-sales. Apart from these, Penna Cement Industries, Latent View Analytics and Sigachi Industries too received Sebi's clearance to raise funds through the initial public offerings



of the day quote

The challenge I will face, and the teams are also watching in the ministry, is the way the fuel prices are leading to a big crest. This uncertainty is a big element for me
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

The advent of 5G technology opens whole new opportunities to address challenges of urban growth and provide end-to-end solutions to support sustainable creation of smart cities, in the future
ABHJIT KISHORE | CHIEF ENTERPRISE BUSINESS OFFICER, VI

Investments continue to be robust across the solar sector. This will end up as one of the best years for solar financing since 2010. As the push toward the energy transition picks up speed worldwide, solar is benefitting enormously
RAJ PRABHU | CEO, MERCOR CAPITAL GROUP

India takes up high oil prices with OPEC

Petrol and diesel prices have shot up to record highs across the country after relentless price increases since May



International benchmark Brent crude has rallied to \$85.67 per barrel, which was \$19 per barrel in April last year as demand evaporated with most nations clamping lockdowns

- Most countries has begun the transition towards cleaner fuels such as electric-powered vehicles and hydrogen
- Oil exporters such as Saudi Arabia and Iraq provide a 30-day credit period, that is, payment for oil bought has to be made in 30 days. India wants this period to be raised
- India is 85% dependent on imports to meet its oil needs and relies on overseas shipments to meet 55% of its gas requirement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, has told Saudi Arabia and other OPEC nations that high oil prices will hurt the nascent economic recovery the world is witnessing after the devastating pandemic and that they have to price oil at reasonable levels, a top official said Monday.

India, which imports almost two-thirds of its oil needs from West Asia, has told crude oil producers, including the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), that high oil prices will hasten the transition to alternate fuels and such rates will be counter-productive for the producers, the official said.

"Oil prices have to strike a balance between the interests of the producers and consumers. Right now they are really high because the demand is more than the supplies," the official, who wished not to be named, said.

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has in recent weeks flagged the issue of high oil prices to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, the US, Russia and Bahrain, the official said.

Puri, in his meetings with the Secretary-General of OPEC and

his counterparts in Saudi Arabia and other nations, conveyed India's serious concerns over crude oil price volatility.

He conveyed India's strong preference for responsible and reasonable pricing which is mutually beneficial for consumers and producers, the official said.

It is the only nation that is seeing growth in oil demand on a sustained basis and without it the producers will also suffer, the official said. Not just price, India also wants better commercial terms like optional volumes in yearly supply contracts and larger time to pay for oil bought.

State-owned oil firms have term contracts -- guaranteeing a fixed volume of oil in a year -- with national oil companies of West Asian nations for the import of crude oil. They want favourable terms like the inclusion of optional quantities in term contracts and enhancement of credit limit to oil PSUs in the crude oil import.

India is again likely to raise the issue of high oil prices when global leaders meet for the India Energy Forum by CERAWEEK later this week. Saudi and UAE oil ministers besides the OPEC secretary-general are expected to participate in the meeting.

Oilmeal exports down 36% in Sept

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 18: Export of oilmeal, used as animal feed, declined 36 per cent year-on-year to 1.83 lakh tonne in September on account of the domestic shortage of the oilmeal products, industry body SEA said Monday.

To meet local shortage the government has allowed the import of genetically modified (GM) soyameal, and it should give some relief to the poultry industry, it said in a statement. Oilmeals are used as animal feed in poultry and other sectors. Oilmeal exports stood at 2.87 lakh tonne in September 2020.

According to the latest data released by the Solvent Extractors' Association (SEA), soyameal exports declined sharply to 5,831 tonne in September this year from 68,576 tonne in the year-ago period. India is currently outpriced for export of soybean meal and unlikely to revive till we have the new crop in October-November, the industry body said. Export of castor seed meal declined to 34,881 tonne from 45,483 tonne a year ago.

Similarly, the export of rapeseed meal declined to 62,725 tonne in September this year from 1,40,830 tonne in the year-ago period, while that of rice-bran extraction shipment rose to 80,188 tonne from 32,068 tonne.

CHINA'S Q3 ECONOMIC GROWTH FALLS TO 4.9%



AGENCIES

Beijing, Oct 18: China's GDP grew by 4.9 per cent in the third quarter, down from 7.9 per cent in the second, confirming the slowdown of the world's second-largest economy which was under pressure from the crisis-hit property sector, curbs on energy and tardy recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Early to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, China's economy in the first few months this year staged impressive recovery but caught up in numerous headwinds, including a property sector slump, power crisis, increasingly weak consumer sentiment and soaring raw material costs.

Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the third quarter (Q3) grew 4.9 per cent year on year, slower than the growth of 18.3 per cent in Q1 and 7.9 per cent in Q2. The Q3 belied surveys of predicting five per cent growth. Releasing the Q3 data, spokesman of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) Fu Linghui said that consumption contributed around 64.8 per cent to China's economic growth in the first three quarters of the year.

"We must note that the current uncertainties in the international environment are mounting and the domestic economic recovery is still unstable and uneven," Fu said.

"The overall national economy

maintained the recovery momentum in the first three quarters... however, we must note that the current uncertainties in the international environment are mounting, and the domestic economic recovery is still unstable and uneven," the Hong Kong-based South China Morning quoted Fu as saying.

According to the official data, China's retail sales of consumer goods went up 16.4 per cent year on year in the first three quarters this year. The country's retail sales of consumer goods totalled around 31.8 trillion yuan (about USD 4.9 trillion) in January-September period as per the data.

China's value-added industrial output went up 11.8 per cent year on year in the first three quarters, while fixed-asset investment went up 7.3 per cent year on year during the period. The country's surveyed urban unemployment rate stood at 4.9 per cent in September, 0.5 percentage points lower than the same period last year.

During the January-September period, China added 10.45 million new urban jobs in the first three quarters, achieving 95 per cent of the target for the whole year, the NBS data showed.

SHORT TAKES

Diesel sales fall in Oct by 9.2%

New Delhi: India's gasoil consumption fell in the first half of October from the same period in the previous year, preliminary sales data showed. Diesel sales by the country's state fuel retailers came in at 2.4 million tonne during Oct 1-15, a decline of about 9.2% from last year and down 0.9% from the same period in 2019, the data showed. October gasoline sales were up 8.3% from the same period in 2019 and rose by 2% from September, the data showed.

RBI slaps fine of ₹1cr on SBI

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Monday imposed a monetary penalty of ₹1 crore on the country's biggest lender State Bank of India (SBI) and a ₹1.95 crore fine on Standard Chartered Bank for the violation of various guidelines. Fine levied on SBI for non-compliance with the directions contained in "Reserve Bank of India (Frauds classification and reporting by commercial banks and select FIs) directions 2016". These monetary penalties have been imposed in exercise of powers vested in RBI under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the statement said.

Axis Mutual Fund unveils new offer

Bhubaneswar: Axis Mutual Fund announced the launch of their new fund offer - 'Axis AAA Bond Plus SDL ETF 2026 Maturity FoF'. The benchmark index has a maturity date of April 30, 2026. The fund of fund (FoF) is an extension to the 'Axis AAA Bond Plus SDL ETF - 2026 Maturity' which was launched in May 2021. The offering aims to provide passive long-term debt investment solution for investors with a 5-year investment horizon. The FoF will deploy its assets predominantly in the underlying ETF which invests across AAA corporate bonds and SDLs.

HP brings all new Chromebook PCs

Bhubaneswar: A leading tech giant, HP announced its latest Chromebook laptop, the first AMD powered HP Chromebook, in India. The latest notebook HP Chromebook x360 14a caters to the needs of the students aged 4-15 years, to help them stay connected, motivated, and creative whether at home or in the classroom. The new model comes with extended battery life of up to 12 1/2 hours (HD) and fast charging facility,

BIZ BUZZ

Tata Motors launch sub-compact SUV Punch

New Delhi: Automobile major Tata Motors Monday launched sub-compact SUV 'Tata Punch' with a starting price of ₹5.49 Lakh (ex-showroom Delhi). According to Shailesh Chandra, President - Passenger Vehicles Business Unit (PVBU), Tata Motors: "With Punch, we have created an entirely new category altogether to address a growing need for small-in-size cars with a true SUV character." As per the company, Tata Motors Design Studios in India, UK, and Italy collaborated to design this vehicle. The vehicle built on the proven and modern Agile Light Flexible Advanced (ALFA) Architecture is available both in 'Manual (MT) and Automatic' (AMT) transmission options. It is powered by 'New Gen 1.2L Revotron B56 Engine' latest 'Dyna-Pro' technology. In addition, the vehicle has an ARAI certified 'Fuel' efficiency of 18.97 km per litre on 'MT' and 18.82 km per litre on 'AMT'.



Startups raise \$10.9bn in funding during July-September

Mumbai: Indian startups received a record funding of \$10.9 billion across 347 deals in the third quarter of 2021, according to a PwC India report. This is twice the amount of funding received in Q3 of the calendar year 2020 and an approximate increase of 41 per cent compared to the second quarter of 2021. An increase in funding activity was witnessed across all sectors in terms of value and volume. However, FinTech, EdTech and SaaS are the top three hot investment sectors in the calendar year 2021 (CY21), together accounting for approximately 47 per cent of the total funding activity, the report - Startup Perspectives - Q3 CY21 - said. In the first three quarters of 2021, investments worth \$4.6 billion in the FinTech space were recorded, which is an increase of approximately three times from \$1.6 billion in 2020. Investments worth \$2.5 billion for 53 deals closed in the FinTech segment were recorded in the third quarter of CY21 alone across various stages of investment, it said.

AMID COAL CRUNCH



MCL scales record high in supply

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 18: Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL), the leading coal producer, Sunday, dispatched over 5.47 lakh tonne of coal to consumers, breaking its own record of 5.45 lakh tonne within a fortnight.

The company dispatched the highest ever 103 rakes of coal to the consumers, with 65 rakes coming from Talcher coalfields while 38 rakes were supplied from

Ib Valley coalfields.

MCL CMD PK Sinha congratulated the officers and workers for their consistent and coordinated approach to maximise coal supply to consumers. "It's all your determination and hard work that has made unachievable achievable. Coal Indians in MCL have always remained at the forefront to face the challenges and achieved newer milestones in the pursuit of energy security to the nation," said Sinha.

Asserting that MCL has sufficient coal stock to feed the consumers, CMD said, "For the month of October, the coal production, dispatch and overburden (OB) removal at MCL have registered a growth of 26.5 per cent, 34.3% and 71.7% respectively as against same period during last financial year."

Recording an impressive double-digit growth during the current fiscal, MCL has produced 78.5 million tonne coal, register-

ing a growth of 12.16%, while dispatched 89.65 million tonne dry fuel to the consumer, as against 74.33 million tonne supplied during the same period last year.

Overburden (OB) removal at MCL has also registered a significant growth of 22.2% at 101.02 million cubic meters during the current fiscal. This would ensure sufficient availability of exposed resources to extract coal and meet the market demands.

POST PANDEMIC

Investment in clean energy to tackle job crisis

THE PANDEMIC WIPED OUT ABOUT 255 MILLION FULL-TIME JOBS LAST YEAR AND WORKERS GLOBALLY LOST INCOME TOTALLING ABOUT \$3.7 TRILLION, ACCORDING TO THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

AGENCIES

Washington, Oct 18: As the world grapples with rising heat and more extreme weather, as well as an employment squeeze, going green offers the chance to tackle both problems at once, researchers said.

Investing in clean energy can help economies recover from the slowdown caused by the Covid-19 pandemic as it will add more jobs than backing fossil fuels, researchers said Monday.

Green investments can be an important part of recovery packages, lead to job creation and positive economic outcomes, and help address climate change, said a report from the World Resources Institute (WRI), a US-based think-tank.

Yet in a bid to spur growth after millions lost work during coronavirus lockdowns worldwide, governments are spending more on carbon-heavy industries that neither address climate change concerns nor offer stability to workers, it warned.

Analysing more than a dozen studies conducted over the past decade, the WRI report projected that \$1 million in green investments would create more near-term jobs than the same amount invested in roads and fossil fuels.

But the quality of jobs created in climate-positive sectors must be protected by ensuring fair wages and working conditions, the report stated, calling on governments to engage with labour unions and employers on the issue.



"Investing in climate is not a cost but an economic opportunity," said Joel Jaeger, lead author of the WRI report.

Industries reliant on fossil fuels have garnered \$334 billion in government investment compared to

\$276 billion for renewable energy and public transport, according to data from Energy Policy Tracker cited in the report.

PANDEMIC GAINS

Climate-friendly industries have

already offered work and better wages during the pandemic, the report added. For example, electric-vehicle manufacturing in China has attracted people due to higher pay, and in Pakistan, a state investment of \$135 million in tree planting and forest protection created 85,000 daily wage jobs in the last year.

More broadly, investing in solar-photovoltaic equipment manufacturing creates 1.5 times as many jobs as the same amount spent on fossil fuel production, while for wind power the figure is 1.2 times, showed the studies analysed by WRI. Installing solar panels or retrofitting a building to make it more energy efficient are labour-intensive activities that have the potential to create more jobs, re-

searcher Jaeger said. Communities and workers dependent on fossil fuels should be re-trained and offered alternative ways to make a living as the world shifts to clean energy while ensuring the quality of jobs created in renewable energy, the report urged.

We need to avoid a race to the bottom where the falling costs of green technologies are achieved by cutting wages, job security or working conditions, the report said.

Backers say the shift from coal, gas and oil to green energy will create millions of new jobs, making up for those lost in dirty sectors. But the transition faces political hurdles as well as opposition from people whose livelihoods depend on fossil-fuel mining and extraction.

Norrie, Badosa triumph

Batters lift India in practice tie

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Indian Wells, Oct 18: A handful of tennis' superstars skipped the coronavirus-delayed BNP Paribas Open. A rash of upsets sent other big names packing, too. Left standing at the end as champions were two players ranked outside the Top 25.

Britain's Cameron Norrie beat Nikoloz Basilashvili 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 Sunday, giving the tournament its first men's winner ranked outside of the Top 25 since 2010.



CAMERON NORRIE



PAULA BADOSA

Paula Badosa of Spain edged Victoria Azarenka 7-6(7-5), 2-6, 7-6(7-2), becoming just the third woman to win in her Indian Wells debut.

Norrie, ranked 26th, had the only two breaks of the final set and won when Basilashvili's backhand sailed long on match point. Basilashvili, ranked 36th, was the first player from the former Soviet

republic of Georgia to reach an ATP Masters 1000 final.

Norrie, Ivan Ljubicic in 2019, Alex Corretja in 2000 and Jim Courier in 1991—all were ranked 26th—won the title while ranked outside the Top 25 since the tournament moved to Indian Wells in 1987. Larry Stefanki was ranked 143rd when he won in 1985 at nearby La Quinta.

Badosa joined Bianca Andreescu in 2019 and Serena Williams in 1999 in winning the title in her first appearance. It was Badosa's second title of her career, having won in Belgrade earlier this year.

Badosa and Azarenka struggled for over three hours, trading back-to-back service breaks five times. The last time Azarenka broke for a 5-4 lead in the third, and Badosa broke right back for a 5-all tie.

Badosa missed a backhand that allowed Azarenka to hold at 6-all. Badosa dominated the tie-breaker, racing to a 6-2 lead. Azarenka dumped a forehand into the net to give Badosa match point.

Badosa cracked a forehand winner, then collapsed at the baseline. She lie face down, crying and shaking, before getting up. Azarenka came around the net and hugged the 23-year-old Spaniard.

Badosa came into the tournament ranked 27th. Badosa is projected to rise to a career-best 13th in Monday's WTA Tour rankings.



KL RAHUL



ISHAN KISHAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Oct 18: KL Rahul's (51, 24b, 6x4, 3x6) brutal yet elegant fifty sealed the second opener's debate while his opening partner Ishan Kishan (70 ret'd., 46b, 7x4, 3x6) also grabbed the opportunity as India warmed-up nicely with a

Rahul was gone.

India in the first game ticked some boxes that includes two senior pacers Jasprit Bumrah (1/26) and Mohammed Shami (3/40) hitting the straps straightaway with some fast and accurate deliveries. The third angle to this 'triangle'—Bhuvneshwar Kumar (0/54), however, went for runs.

Kohli (11) didn't score much but that would be least of concerns for the Indian team. Rishabh Pant (29 n o) smashed the bowlers, while Suryakumar Yadav (8) did look a bit scratchy. Hardik Pandya scored an unbeaten 16.

Earlier, England posted 188/5, mainly due to Jonny Bairstow (49, 36b, 4x4, 1x6), Moeen Ali (43 n o, 20b, 4x4, 2x6) and Liam Livingstone (30). Besides the pacers, R Ashwin (0/23) bowled brilliantly despite being wicketless, while leggie Rahul Chahar (1/43) went for runs.

BRIEF SCORES
England 188/5 (Jonny Bairstow 49, Moeen Ali 43 n o; Mohammed Shami 3/40) lost to India 192/3 (Ishan Kishan 70 ret'd., KL Rahul 51) by 7 wickets.

Fati shines in Barca's victory over Valencia



ASSOCIATED PRESS

their losing streak by rallying to beat Valencia 3-1 in La Liga.

Memphis Depay and Philippe Coutinho also scored for Barcelona, who handed debut to Sergio Aguero, as it moved to seventh place, five points behind leaders Real Sociedad and with a game in hand.

Fati returned to action last month after being sidelined for more than 10 months due to knee injury, coming off the bench in three matches before getting his first start Sunday and giving fans more hope that the club can rebuild around him after Messi's departure to PSG.

Barcelona were coming off two defeats before the international break—0-2 at Atletico Madrid in the league and 0-3 at Benfica in the Champions League. They had won only once in their last six matches in all competitions.

Madrid, Oct 18: Ansu Fati is quickly becoming Barcelona's go-to player in the absence of Lionel Messi. The 18-year-old Fati made his first start for Barcelona after a long injury layoff Sunday, scoring a goal and earning his team a penalty as the Catalan club halted

News in brief

ADITYA, PANKAJ, LAXMAN SEAL VICTORIES

MUMBAI: Three Indian cueists, including national champion Aditya Mehta and Pankaj Advani, claimed successive victories in their respective first two round-robin 'Y' Camp (1st leg) matches of the GSC World Snooker Qualifiers here Monday. Aditya started in rousing fashion as he uncorked a 94-break in the first frame and went on to outshine Neeraj Kumar (RSPB) 4-0 (114(94)-14, 60-53, 67-22, 61-09) in his opening best-of-7-frame match late Sunday night, a release said. In the second match, Aditya faced a bit of resistance from Telegana's Himanshu Jain before managing to script a 4-3 (108 (53)-14, 39-69, 97-34, 26-66, 55-68, 72(72)-8 and 59-46) win. Pankaj, India's most illustrious cueist and owner of 24 World crowns, scored his first win defeating Himanshu Jain 4-2 (91-17, 67-73, 66-61, 37-68, 101-36, 83-06).

WINTER GAMES FLAME LIGHTING DISRUPTED

ANCIENT OLYMPIA: Three activists protesting human rights abuses in China broke into the archaeological site where the flame lighting ceremony for the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics was being held Monday and ran toward the newly lit torch holding a Tibetan flag and a banner that read "No genocide games". The protesters climbed over a fence to enter the grounds and attempted to reach the Temple of Hera, where the ceremony was being held. They were thrown to the ground by police and detained. "How can Beijing be allowed to host the Olympics given that they are committing a genocide against the Uyghurs?" one protester said, referring to the treatment of Uyghur Muslims in China's northwest region of Xinjiang. The flame was lit at the birthplace of the ancient Olympics in southern Greece under heavy police security.

FENCER BHAVANI WINS IN FRANCE

NEW DELHI: Fencer Bhavani Devi, who made history at the Tokyo Olympics by becoming the first Indian to compete in the sport at the Games, has won the Charlevalle National Competition in France in the individual women's sabre event. The 28-year-old fencer tweeted about the same. "Won the Charlevalle National Competition, France in the Women's Sabre individual. Many thanks to coach Christian Bauer, Arnaud Schneider, and all teammates. Congratulations to all for a great start of the season," she tweeted after winning the competition. At the Tokyo Olympics, she won her round of 64 match 15-3 against Tunisia's Nadia Ben Azizi before going down to eventual bronze-medallist, Manon Brunet of France in the round of 32. She is currently ranked 50th in the world.

Campher takes 4 in 4 as Ireland beat Netherlands



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thanks to Campher's exploits with the white ball, Ireland bundled out Netherlands for 106 after the Dutch had decided to bat. Ireland chased down the target with as many as 29 balls to spare at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium. Gareth Delany (44) and Paul Stirling (30 n o) were the significant contributors with the bat for the Irish team.

Earlier, bowling the 10th over, the 22-year-old Campher left the Netherlands innings in disarray when he dismissed Colin Ackermann, Ryan ten Doeschate, Scott Edwards and Roelof van der Merwe off successive balls.

Netherlands were in all sorts of trouble at 51/6 after Campher's multiple blows but opener Max O'Dowd (51) battled on amid the slide at the other end. Pacer Mark Adair (3/9), too, returned with excellent figures.

Abu Dhabi, Oct 18: Johannesburg-born seamer Curtis Campher (4/26) became only the third bowler to claim four wickets in four balls in T20Is as a superior Ireland beat Netherlands by seven wickets in their first round Group A T20 World Cup match here Monday.

Campher did what only two people could do before him in T20Is before him, joining Lasith Malinga and Rashid Khan.

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