



CHERISHED MOMENTS

Actor Deepika Padukone said working with SRK and Rohit Shetty in ‘Chennai Express’ was an experience

LEISURE P2



BIG TEST AHEAD

Ahead of the Rajasthan Assembly session, CM Ashok Gehlot appealed to all MLAs to stand with the truth

TWO STATES P7



LEBANON MINISTER QUITTS

Lebanon's information minister resigned Sunday in the aftermath of a devastating blast

INTERNATIONAL P10

11 DIE IN ANDHRA COVID CARE CENTRE FIRE

AGENCIES

Vijayawada (AP), August 9: As many as 11 patients died at a star hotel converted to a coronavirus treatment centre here Sunday when panic-stricken inmates tried to flee a fire suspected to have been caused by a short circuit, the government said.

Eleven people were killed in the mishap, Vijayawada Police Commissioner B Srinivasulu said.

All the victims were patients undergoing treatment there, according to Deputy CM (Health) AKK Srinivas.

Twenty people have been rescued.

The hotel leased by a private hospital to treat coronavirus patients had “violated” safety rules, according to Fire Safety Director Jairam Naik.

It will face action as investigation has been initiated, he said. The Andhra Pradesh government announced an ex-gratia payment of ₹50 lakh each to the kin of the 11 victims.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy over the phone and enquired about the incident.

Reddy told Modi that a private hospital had taken the star hotel on lease to treat COVID-19 patients. The PM assured all possible help and support to the families of the victims, a release from the CMO said.

State Home Minister M Sucharita said an electrical short circuit appeared to be the possible cause of the fire mishap in the wee hours of Sunday. There were 40 coronavirus positive



The hotel leased by a private hospital to treat coronavirus patients had “violated” safety rules

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persons undergoing treatment at the private facility. There were 10 staff members of the private hospital that was running the COVID Care Centre (CCC).

According to sources in the AP Disaster Response and Fire Services Department, the fire apparently broke

out due to an electrical short circuit in the hotel's front lobby and spread to the first and second floors.

As there was only one main stairway, the panicked patients tried to escape to safety using the stairway after they noticed the smoke.

“They should have actually used a different stairway on the rear side and that would have saved their lives. Unfortunately, they used the main one in a panicky situation and got caught in the fire,” a Fire official said.

Since there was no other option, the Fire and NDRF personnel used ladders to bring down other people, stranded inside the hotel, to safety.

BLAZE AT COVID CARE FACILITIES

The incident at Vijaywada is not the first of its kind, as eight Covid patients admitted in the ICU of a private hospital in Navrangpura area in Ahmedabad were killed early Thursday (August 6) morning after it caught fire. The eight killed, between the ages of 42 and 82, included three women, and a father and son. The hospital, designated a coronavirus facility May 16, had no fire clearance, Ahmedabad Fire and Emergency Services Chief Fire Officer MF Dastur said. Hospitals have to renew their fire no objection certificates (NOC) every year. Earlier, on May 23, eight patients admitted to Cygnus Orthocare Hospital – a designated Covid-19 care centre – were rescued after a fire broke out at the third floor of the hospital. According to the fire department, a call was received around 5.54pm May 23 about a blaze at the Cygnus Orthocare Hospital. Eight fire tenders were rushed to the spot and rescued all the eight patients safely.

“The fire alarm did not go off at the time of the accident and there was a delay in opening the rear door. Investigation has been initiated and there will be action against the hotel management,” he added.

HOW SAFE ARE CITY HOSPITALS

Recent fires at Covid Care Centres (CCC) in Vijaywada, Ahmedabad and New Delhi have raised concern over the fire safety in the Capital's CCCs and hospitals. Amulya Nayak, a former Fire Department officer, said, “The fires in the COVID Care Centres and hospital are a result of gross negligence and carelessness on the part of the authorities. Fire in hospitals is usually from electrical faults. As the hospitals have an endless list of electrical equipment, they qualify as fire-prone area.” The city has three CCCs with 600 beds and 28 ICU facilities - Hi-Tech Hospital, SIDBI at Jaydev Vihar and PHC at Dumduma. In addition, the city has three COVID Hospital at KILMS, Sum Hospital and Aditya Aswini. However responding to the safety norms at these hospitals, Deputy Fire Officer, Ramesh Chandra Majhi said, “We have been constantly reviewing safety norms at all our hospitals. Detailed meetings were held with the hospitals authorities and we have discussed the safety measures adopted by them to avoid any such mishap.”

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Not possible! International travel is suspended!

SHORT TAKES

Mahinda takes oath as SL PM

Colombo: Sri Lanka's former president Mahinda Rajapaksa was sworn in Sunday as the country's new Prime Minister at a historic Buddhist temple, days after his party won a landslide victory in the General Election. The 74-year-old Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) leader was administered the oath of office for the ninth Parliament by his younger brother and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa at the sacred Rajamaha Viharaya in Kelaniya, a north Colombo suburb. Mahinda Rajapaksa completed 50 years of parliamentary politics in July this year. P10

Maoist camp busted in Bargarh district

Paikamal: In a combing operation conducted by the personnel of Odisha State Armed Police, a Maoist camp was busted in the foothills of Gandhamardan hills under the Paikamal block in Bargarh district, Saturday night. Acting on a tip-off, the police personnel carried out the combing operation in the jungle and spotted the camp. They did not face any opposition while marching towards the camp as it was deserted, a source in the police said. That said, the forces seized walkie-talkies, digital cameras, infrared wildlife cameras, several documents, Maoist camouflage uniforms and some daily need articles from the camp. P5

| WEATHER | | |
|-------------------|--------|--------|
| | BHUB | CTK |
| MAX | 32.4°C | 33.2°C |
| MIN | 25.4°C | 24.0°C |
| Humidity | 88% | 80% |
| Rainfall | Trace | 4.0mm |
| Forecast | | |
| Light rain likely | | |

Heavy rains to lash most parts of state

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 9: A fresh low-pressure area has formed over the Bay of Bengal Sunday, which is likely to trigger heavy rainfall in most parts of the state in next five days, prompting the state government to direct all district administrations to remain prepared to deal with possible water-logging and local flooding.

Under the influence of Saturday's cyclonic circulation, a low-pressure area has formed Sunday over northwest and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal off Odisha-north Andhra Pradesh coast, the Meteorological Centre here said. The low-pressure area now lies over north-west Bay of Bengal off north Odisha- Gangetic West Bengal coast, it said.

Many places in the state have already been battered by heavy downpour in the last few days under the influence of a low-pressure area over north Bay of Bengal and the new one is likely to bring more rainfall of varying intensity in several areas till August 13, it said.

Forecasting strong surface winds with speeds reaching up to 40-50 kmph over west-central Bay of Bengal, the MeT centre here advised the fishermen to refrain from venturing into deep sea till Tuesday.

In view of the weather predicted by the IMD, the state government has directed the district collectors to remain alert and closely monitor the situation. In an advisory, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena said the districts where Orange and Yellow warning has

Under the influence of Saturday's cyclonic circulation, a low-pressure area has formed Sunday over northwest and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal off Odisha coast

been issued should remain prepared to deal with any water-logging and localised flood-like situation, including in urban areas. Advice for fishermen should be strictly implemented.

Issuing a 'Yellow warning' for Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi and Gajapati districts till Monday morning, the MeT office said heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to lash some parts of these districts during the period.

Heavy rainfall may also occur at isolated places in Ganjam, Rayagada, Bolangir, Bargarh, Anugul and Nuapada districts.

The weather office also issued 'Orange Warning' Monday and Tuesday in the districts of Malkangiri, Koraput, Nawarangpur, Kalahandi, Gajapati, Rayagada and Bolangir where heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to occur at some places. Water-logging may take place in low-lying areas in these districts. On Tuesday, heavy rainfall is likely to occur at some places in the districts of Bargarh, Nuapada, Bolangir, Kandhamal, Kalahandi, Nawarangpur and Koraput where the MeT office has issued yellow warning.

KHURDA, CUTTACK SURPASS GANJAM IN VIRAL INFECTIONS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 9: While Ganjam is witnessing a decline in COVID-19 cases, Khurda and Cuttack districts have now turned to be new hotbeds of the pandemic in the state with sudden rise in number of cases.

Khurda district Sunday reported a record number of new cases – 342, while Ganjam, the former hotspot of the pandemic, reported 222 new cases.

In the last three days, Khurda district surpassed Ganjam by reporting a surge in COVID cases. Cuttack too has seen a major shift, as the cases in the district have been rising steadily since the first week of August. The district administrations of Khurda and Cuttack, however, claim that the sudden rise in the number of cases is

a result of active surveillance and increase in testing.

Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Commissioner Ananya Das said that the civic body has expedited testing in the zone and has undertaken a massive antigen-based test of the citizens. Moreover, CMC plans to organise special testing camps for vulnerable groups this week.

Khurda district currently has 6,445 cases of the viral disease – the second highest number of cases in the state. There are 166 COVID cases in Bhubaneswar alone. Cuttack, on the other hand, has the third highest number of cases in the state – 3,130. With the sharp rise in infections in both the districts, it is likely that Khurda and Cuttack would lead the chart of COVID cases in the state unless drastic measures are undertaken soon. P4

301 COVID warriors infected with virus in Cuttack district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 9: The Cuttack district administration Sunday revealed that 301 COVID Warriors from the district have been infected with coronavirus. Most of the infected reportedly contracted the disease on their line of their duty.

Addressing a virtual press meet, Cuttack Collector Bhabani Shankar Chayani released details about the impact of the global pandemic on the district and how the administration is responding to it.

“A total of 301 COVID Warriors have been infected in the district by August 8. They include doctors,

| CATEGORY | INFECTED |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Doctors | 19 |
| Staff Nurse/ANM | 36 |
| ASHA/AWW | 3 |
| Pharmacist | 4 |
| LT/Other Technicians | 129 |
| NDRF/ODRAF/Police/Traffic cops | 6 |
| Others | 104 |
| TOTAL | 301 |

nurses, Anganwadi workers and others. Many of them are engaged in working at the grassroots for screening and surveillance of the disease,” he said.

The Collector said that the high

number of COVID cases reported from the district recently is a consequence of massive surveillance and increasing testing in the district through different methods to screen the infected people.

According to the data made available by Chayani, the district till now they have conducted 44,596 sample tests of which 37,101 samples were tested through the RT-PCR test, while 7,495 tests were antigen-based tests. Chayani said that the recovery rate in the district stood at 66.03 per cent while the mortality rate in the district stood at as low as 0.01 per cent. Chayani also said that a total of 69 people have donated plasma in the district for Plasma Therapy.

Govt stops refund from ineligible KALIA beneficiaries

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 9: The state government has put on hold the move to take back the amount received by ineligible Kuskak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme beneficiaries keeping in view the difficulties faced by people during the pandemic.

An official letter has been issued by the Directorate of Agriculture and Food Processing to the Chief District Agriculture Officer in this regard.

The official communication said, “In view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the Kharif crop season it has been decided to keep the refund activities of KALIA assistance from the ineligible beneficiaries in abeyance, for the present. Therefore, you are requested to inform the field extension functionaries accordingly.”

The government earlier this year had issued instructions to recover the financial incentives received under the KALIA scheme from the ineligible farmers and many such alleged defaulters had also started receiving the letter of recovery from the government.

The decision of asking the farmers of Odisha to return the money did not go well with the people and Opposition parties alike. The Congress and the BJP had launched scathing attacks against the government for the move.

Just before the elections, the BJD government had announced the KALIA scheme and proposed incentives for farmers of the Odisha to lend support to their farming activities.

11 members of Pak Hindu migrant family found dead

The family belonging to the Bhil community had come to India from Pakistan's Sindh province in 2015 on a long-term visa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jodhpur, August 9: Eleven members of a family of Pakistan Hindu migrants were found dead at a farm in Rajasthan's Jodhpur district on Sunday morning, police said.

A member of the family, however, was found alive outside the hut they lived at Lodta village of the Dechu area, over 100 km away from Jodhpur city, an officer said.

“But he claimed to have no idea about the incident, which believed to have happened in the night,” said Superintendent of Police (Rural) Rahul Barhat.

“We are yet to ascertain the cause and means of death. They appeared to have committed suicide by con-



Policemen inspect the site where eleven members of a family of Pakistan Hindu migrants were found dead at a farm in Jodhpur district, Sunday PTI PHOTO

suming some chemical in the night,” Barhat said.

He said there was a smell of some chemical in the hut, suggesting

they consumed something.

The family belonging to the Bhil community had come to India from Pakistan's Sindh province in 2015

on a long-term visa. They had been living at the Lodta village farm, which they had hired for farming, for the past six months.

“There was neither any injury mark on any of the bodies nor any evidences of any foul play,” the SP said. “But we have roped in a forensic team and a dog squad before arriving at any conclusion,” he said.

Preliminary investigation indicated that there was some dispute in the family over some issue.

“Once we interrogate the survivor, we would be in a position to find out what had led to this incident,” he said. According to a police officer, the victims lived under threat from the family of their daughter-in-law, the wife of Kewal

Ram (35), the surviving member of the victim family.

“She has been living with her family in Jodhpur for the past some time due to some dispute,” said the police officer, citing this as a possible trigger for their suicide. According to Kewal Ram (35), they had dinner between 9 pm and 10 pm Saturday night and went to sleep.

“I went to guard our crop from animals and slept there,” he said.

In the morning, when he came back, he found all his family members dead.

“I then called my nephew who rushed to the spot with some other persons and informed police,” said Kewal Ram, expressing his ignorance about the incident.

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'MAKE IN INDIA' PUSH

India halts imports of 101 military equipment

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New Delhi, August 9: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Sunday that India will ban the imports of 101 items of military equipment in an effort to boost local production and improve self-reliance in weapons manufacturing.

Singh said the government is planning to progressively implement the embargo on select military imports between this year and 2024.

The military equipment includes some high technology weapon systems and range from assault rifles and artillery to transport aircraft and light combat helicopters, the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

“Our aim is to appraise the Indian defence industry about the anticipated requirements of the Armed Forces so that they are better prepared to realise the goal of indigenisation,” Singh wrote on Twitter. “This is a big step towards self-reliance in defence.”

In May, India announced that global companies could invest up to 74% in the country's defense manufacturing units, up from 49%, without requiring any government approval. It was hoped the new policy



would attract foreign companies with high-end technologies to set up their bases in the country in collaboration with local industries.

The government then announced that India would stop importing weapons that can be made domestically, in line with the vision to make the Indian economy self-reliant amid the coronavirus crisis. India, a major buyer of military equipment, had depended largely on the former Soviet Union during the Cold War. But it has been diversifying its purchases by opting for US equipment as well. During President Donald Trump's visit in February, the two countries signed a deal for India to buy more than \$3 billion in advanced military equipment, including helicopters.

India was the third-biggest military spender in the world last year after the US and China, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said in a report released in April.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Go with the flow. At least that's what Ganesha suggests where relationships are concerned. You can be your assertive self some other time. Today, you can be large-hearted and fulfill your beloved's wishes, maybe even propose. What say?

TAURUS

You may face conflicts on the personal front and find your thoughts leaning towards aggression today, says Ganesha. There is a possibility of suffering losses due to loved ones. Exercise restraint in arguments with relatives and siblings, advises Ganesha.

GEMINI

It is a good day for you to participate in cultural events and group activities, predicts Ganesha. You are likely to be an important part of some convention or joint venture, but don't get too bogged down by it. In the evening, you may take a fancy to fine arts, such as drawing or classical music.

CANCER

Today, your ability to think clearly in the most adverse conditions will be your key weapon as you get cornered by unrelenting assaults of work and deadlines. The clarity will reflect in your work as you deal with inhuman work pressure.

LEO

Your children's health may be a cause of concern today, says Ganesha. The best way to put your and your family's fears to rest would be by paying a quick visit to the doctor. As always, kids remain a surprise package of delights; the happiness of your children shall double your joy as a parent.

VIRGO

It is more than likely that you will reap financial profits from foreign contacts, predicts Ganesha. You will excel in all the activities that you undertake today. Your dream of establishing a mammoth business enterprise in a foreign country will take flight today.

LIBRA

Lady Luck smiles on you today. With all the good fortune on your side, it's assured to be a day when financial gains come your way, especially if you are in the banking business. Agreed everything is going your way today, but be careful not to let your emotions cloud your reasoning and slow you down.

SCORPIO

Keep your guards up and be wary today, warns Ganesha. A heat seeker meant for someone else may hit you in mid-flight. But all that watchfulness will save you from embarrassment. Like those old fables, these experiences have a lesson in them, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Expect yourself to be hit with religious fervour. You may find yourself in the spotlight for an event or inauguration. Ganesha indicates travelling, so pack your bags for a long-distance business trip.

CAPRICORN

Despite repeated failures, very few realise that the key to success is in having the patience of a saint. Vexation invariably leads to an outburst which, in turn, can ruin your reputation and future prospects in innumerable ways.

AQUARIUS

Get ready for a gala evening as you will party at the smallest excuse! You may toast a friend's success, or may be ecstatic about finding your lost pet. Otherwise it's the usual, says Ganesha.

PISCES

The apple of your eye is what you will have your sights set on today. It is likely that you will find yourself attending a Parent-Teacher meet, says Ganesha. However, fortunately, it is likely only to receive news about how proud your children are making you.



COWELL HOSPITALISED WITH BROKEN BACK

Music mogul Simon Cowell has been hospitalised after breaking his back in an electric bike accident. Cowell broke his back Saturday afternoon while test riding his electric bicycle in Malibu, reports [hollywoodreporter.com](#).

WHEN ROBERT PATTINSON LIED TO CHRISTOPHER NOLAN

Actor Robert Pattinson said he lied to filmmaker Christopher Nolan to make it to the screen test for superhero film, *The Batman*. In an interview to *Irish Times*, Pattinson recalled his attempt to sneak away from *Tenet* set for his Batman audition.



Deepika's unforgettable experience

Mumbai: Actress Deepika Padukone said working with superstar Shah Rukh Khan and filmmaker Rohit Shetty on film, *Chennai Express*, was an unforgettable experience.

Deepika Sunday took to Instagram to share some behind the scenes as the movie clocked seven years. The movie was released August 8, 2013. "Unforgettable! #7yearsofchennaiaexpress #meenamma," she wrote while sharing many happy moments from the set.

In two images, Deepika is seen having a light moment with Shah Rukh, in one she is seen with Rohit during a shoot. In another image, Deepika, Shah Rukh and Rohit are seen enjoying each other's company.

Chennai Express revolves around a north Indian guy Rahul, (Shah Rukh), whose life takes a 180 degree turn when he crosses paths with south Indian girl Meena Lochini, played by Deepika, in the train Chennai Express.

On work front, Deepika is coming together with Prabhas for director Nag Ashwin's next, which will be a science-fiction film. IANS



Fresh addition to Nickyanka family

Los Angeles: Actress Priyanka Chopra and her singer husband Nick Jonas have adopted a new dog, and are already in love with him.

The couple introduced their new family member through Instagram. The 38-year-old actress and the musician, 27, both shared that they adopted a dog, who they have named Panda, reports [people.com](#).

The Quantic star introduced the puppy by sharing a set of photographs of the couple with Panda.

"Our new family portrait! Welcome to the family, Panda," Priyanka captioned her post, adding, "We adopted this little rescue (soon he won't be so little) just a few weeks ago. We can't be sure but he seems to be a Husky Australian Shepherd mix... and those eyes... and the ears!!!"

Nick similarly shared the same set of images and captioned his post, "Welcome to the family Panda! Panda is a Husky Australian Shepherd mix rescue and we're already in love."

Panda, adopted from nonprofit dog rescue Hollywood Huskies, joins their pups Gino and Diana. IANS



Kartik wants to patent his hairstyle

Mumbai: Not only for his looks and acting, actor Kartik Aaryan is also quite famous for his voluminous hair. And it seems he has made the best use of lockdown by growing his hair and beard.

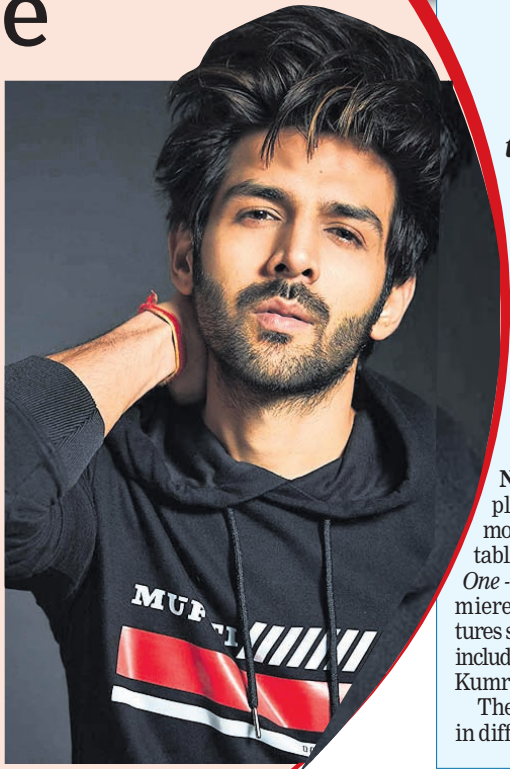
Taking to Instagram, Kartik posted a picture of his messy hair and wrote: Zara pata karo ye look patent hoga (Is it possible to patent this look? kya#HairLikeKartikAaryan2.0.)

Kartik's post has garnered a lot of attention from his fans. "King of hair," a user commented.

Responding to the user, Kartik quipped: "King of hair, captions, and monologues."

"Nobody has better hair than you," another one wrote.

On the film front, Kartik will next be seen in *Dostana 2* and *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2*. IANS



Digital play *One on One - Unlocked* to premiere this week

The drama combines theatre, technology, a theme like COVID, and twenty-two stalwart playwrights, actors and directors all creating stories during a period that has been both isolating and inspirational

New Delhi: A digital theatre play featuring ten diverse monologues written by nine established playwrights, *One on One - Unlocked*, is all set to premiere online this week. It features some of India's finest actors including Rajit Kapur and Aahana Kumra. The lockdown has affected us in different ways - introspective,



THEATRE CORNER

illuminating, irritating, igniting, isolating. Nine gifted playwrights - Abhishek Majumdar, Adhir Bhat, Akarsh Khurana, Anu Menon, Ashok Mishra, Hussain Dalal, Purva Nareish, Raghav Dutt, Rahul da Cunha - write of their experiences, their perspectives of the 150 days of solitude, if not physically, certainly in the mind.

Through the monologues, the audience will meet a range of characters -- an exasperated

Hawaladar, an isolated hipster; a young actress trapped in her flat, an outspoken hospital intern, a philosophical alcoholic, a young working woman forging new friendships, an anxious mother, a wayward boy forced to stay back in a madarsa, a compounder in a quarantine centre, a spunky cable TV repairman. These stories vary from hilarious to heart-warming, from eureka moments to experiential thoughts.

The play is by Paytm Insider's new theatre initiative, Front & Centre, which brings a taste of theatre through digital experiences. It is produced by Rage Productions.

The play has been directed by some of the best in the business - Akarsh Khurana, Anand Tiwari, Gurleen Judge, Nadir Khan, Rajit Kapur, Shikha Talsania, Sukant Goel and Q. The talented cast includes Aahana Kumra, Anu Menon, Gagan Dev Riar, Hussain Dalal, Joy Fernandes, Neil Bhoopalam, Raghav Dutt, Rajit Kapur, Seema Biswas, Veronica Gautam.

According to Rahul da Cunha, Rage Productions, the play combines theatre, technology, a theme like COVID, and twenty-two stalwart playwrights, actors and directors all creating stories in a lockdown - a period that has been both isolating and inspirational.

Tickets priced at Rs 499 are available on the platform. IANS

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

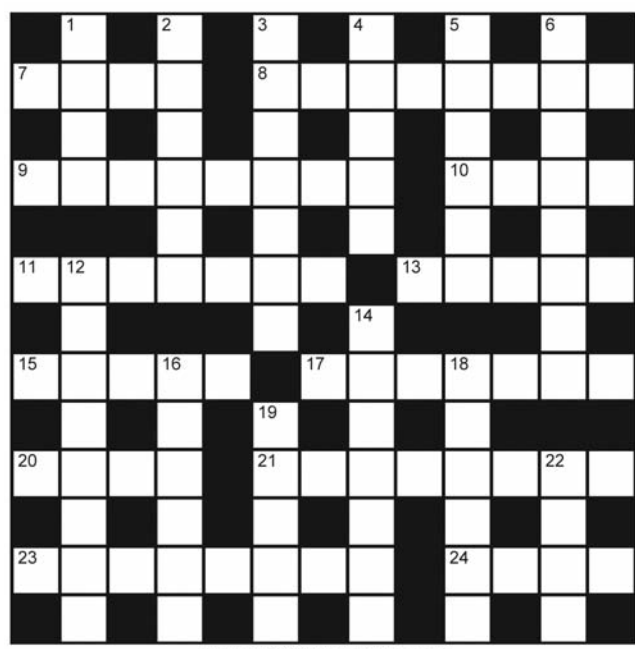


BREVITY



FUN post

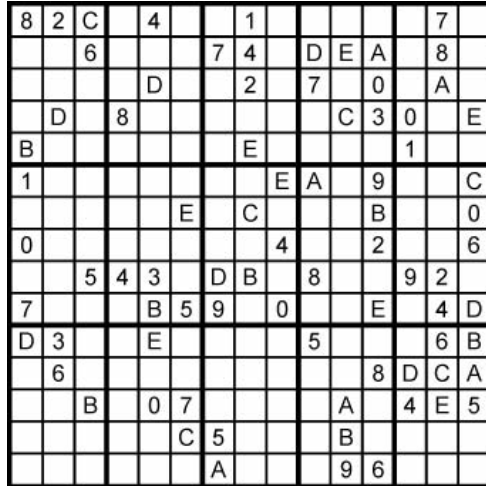
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Kind of chop
 - 8 Coffee flavoured liqueur (3,5)
 - 9 Net income
 - 10 Coffin
 - 11 Swiftest mammal
 - 13 Back street
 - 15 Small terrestrial lizard
 - 17 Permeate
 - 20 Terrarium plant
 - 21 Ballet company
 - 23 Shoes, etal.
 - 24 Souvlaki meat
 - 4 Inclement
 - 5 Cavort
 - 6 Like cell phones
 - 12 French Calvinist of the 16th or 17th centuries
 - 14 Crack
 - 16 Real small
 - 18 Bloop
 - 19 Military wear
 - 22 Peru's capital
- Down**
- 1 Band member
 - 2 Attack suddenly
 - 3 Poem parts

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Highest single-day spike in Covid deaths

13 FATALITIES PUSH COVID-19 DEATH TOLL TO 272; WITH 1,734 FRESH CASES, ODISHA'S CORONAVIRUS TALLY NEARS 46,000-MARK

POST NEWS NETWORK & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 9: Odisha recorded the highest single-day spike of 13 Covid-19 fatalities, which pushed the death toll in the coastal state to 272 Sunday, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

At least 1,734 fresh cases were registered in 29 districts of the state, raising the coronavirus tally to 45,927, said the official.

Of the new cases, 1,075 were from the quarantine centres while the rest 659 were local contact cases.

Khurda district, which encompasses the Capital city of Bhubaneswar, once again surpassed Covid-19 hotspot Ganjam by reporting the highest daily spike in positive cases among all other districts Sunday.

Khurda reported the maximum number of new cases at 342, followed by Ganjam at 222, Cuttack at 177, Sundargarh at 126 and Nayagarh at 106.

"Regret to inform of the demise of thirteen COVID-positive patients while under treatment in hospitals (sic)," the H&FW department said in a tweet.

Of the 13 fatalities, six were reported from Ganjam, two each from Khurda and Koraput, and one each from Balasore, Bargarh and Nayagarh districts.

Puri, too, registered the death of



Policemen inspect commuters near Rasulgarh Square in Bhubaneswar during the weekend shutdown, Sunday

a Covid-19 patient, but the H&FW department attributed the death to a pre-existing ailment.

The total number of coronavirus patients who succumbed to co-morbidities rose to 49.

Meanwhile, 1,543 persons recovered from the disease. The total recovered cases of Odisha now stand at 31,784.

On the other hand, life in many parts of the state came to a grinding halt following a complete week-end lockdown imposed in four

hotspot districts, and the steel city of Rourkela and three to four days lockdown imposed by some other district Collectors in view of rising coronavirus cases.

To strengthen containment measure against COVID-19, the state government has issued a notification for private health institutions for treatment of coronavirus cases. Interested private hospitals having 30 beds or more shall designate a minimum of 10 per cent of all beds to be reserved

Khurda district once again surpassed Covid-19 hotspot Ganjam by reporting the highest daily spike in positive cases among all other districts Sunday

for the COVID-19 patients.

These hospitals must provide all possible treatment as per the guidelines issued by the government and regularly share all information to the government regarding availability of facility, patient information, line of treatment, availability of beds and price charged.

The private hospital, the notification said, should charge reasonable fees from patients and refrain from collecting exorbitant fees, failing which strict action shall be taken against the hospital.

The Capital city of Bhubaneswar Sunday registered 166 COVID-19 cases, taking the tally to 3,929.

Of the fresh cases, 98 were quarantine cases while 68 were local contact ones. As many as 113 persons who had earlier tested positive for the viral infection recovered Sunday, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation said in a tweet.



Youth Congress activists hold a demonstration at Congress Bhawan in Bhubaneswar seeking employment for the educated young men and women on the occasion of August Kranti Diwas, Sunday. (Bottom) AITUC activists stage an agitation in the Capital city to protest the 'anti-labour policies' of the Centre and state government

Incomplete Dandiapali-Garjan bridge turns commuters' bane

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bedabyasha, August 9: Delay in construction of the Dandiapali-Garjan bridge at Lathikata block in Sundargarh district has led to resentment among residents of Dandiapali and Garjan.

Work on the project was started

in January, 2019 by a Rourkela-based private firm under the supervision of Rural Welfare department- (RWC) Rourkela division.

Even as almost one and half years have passed, only 20 per cent of the work has been completed so far on the two-km-long bridge.

What's more worrying is the use of sub-standard materials by the firm which has put the entire project in jeopardy, sources said.

Cracks have surfaced on major portions of the under-construction structure. The cracks are clearly visible on the concrete roof and pillars of the bridge.

With no protection wall at both ends of the structure, more cracks are likely to surface soon. The com-

pany used plaster of Paris to seal the cracks but it did not help, sources added.

As the bridge is at a higher altitude above the sea level, protection walls must be erected to prevent the pillars and roof from weakening further.

People of the two villages have to cross an extra 15 km of roads to reach Rourkela city as they depend on the city for their day to day affair.

A social activist Swagat Swarup Acharya alleged that use of sub-standard raw materials and absence of monitoring by the governmental department concerned are responsible for the plight of the bridge. "A bridge is considered the lifeline of people. The department should constantly supervise the works to address any lapses," he said.

Acharya added that the villagers will meet the Executive Engineer (PWD) Prasant Panda over the issue. Panda said that due to the Covid-19 pandemic the construction work has been stopped.

"We will resume the work soon," he said.



EVEN AS ALMOST ONE AND HALF YEARS HAVE PASSED, ONLY 20 PC OF THE WORK HAS BEEN COMPLETED SO FAR ON THE TWO-KM-LONG BRIDGE

46 pc COVID cases in Cuttack city from containment zones

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 9: The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Sunday said that 46 per cent of the total new cases Cuttack city reported in the last one week was detected from the containment zones alone.

CMC Commissioner Ananya Das Sunday held a virtual press conference and informed the media about the preparedness of the civic body against the global pandemic.

Das said that the city in the last one week reported a total of 641 new cases out of which 298 cases (46 per cent) were from containment zones and majority of the remaining were from home and institutional quarantines.

"Out of the 641 new cases, 46 per cent was reported from containment zones, 33 per cent from home quarantine, 14 per cent from institutional quarantine, while 87 cases (7 per cent) were local contacts."

Das said that the CMC has extended the Malgondown containment zone and included more colonies under it for better and strict surveillance. "Seeing more positive areas in the containment zone, the periphery areas were also screened and we found more cases. We did intensive testing and active surveillance. As this is an economically important centre, we are taking more care," she said. Das added that the CMC has also



A Fire Service personnel sanitises Badambadi police station in Cuttack, Sunday

Besides weekend shutdown, we are also imposing Wednesday shutdown to contain the disease. I would like to request the people to not visit Malgondown area for shopping purposes

taken special measures to regulate Malgondown and it has used differential timings for essential and non essential shops. "Besides weekend shutdown, we are also imposing Wednesday shutdown to contain the disease. I would like to request the people to not venture into the area for retail marketing," she said. Das said that the city has now

4 arrested for stealing computers from school

THE ACCUSED HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS PALESWAR SIPAKA, PRAKASH SAGARIA, NARENDRA, AND MOHAN BHOI

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, August 9: Bolangir police Sunday arrested four persons for stealing 12 computers from information and communication technology laboratory of Jurabanda High School. All of them have been forwarded to court.

The accused have been identified as Paleswar Sipaka, Prakash Sagaria, Narendra, and Mohan Bhoi.

The headmaster of the school Anand Kumar Sethi had lodged an FIR July 13 regarding the loot of the computers.

Acting on the FIR, the cops ini-

tiated a probe and eventually traced the four accused. Meanwhile, another accomplice, identified as Digamber Bhoi, is on the run.

According to a source, the four accused broke open the ICT Lab of the school late night of July 12 and looted the computers which were provided to the school by the State Education department.

Since there was no security guard, four persons had taken advantage of it and looted the computers.

Sethi said the incident came to light in the morning after a peon entered the computer room to clean it.



BLOOD DONATION



A blood donation camp organised at the BJD headquarters in Bhubaneswar on the Occasion of August Kranti Diwas, Sunday. Blood donation camps would be organised across the state till August 15. A target has been set to collect 10,000 units of blood under the 'Odisha Mo Parivar-Jiban Bindu' programme

The 86-yr-old manure man of Loisingha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Loisingha, August 9: Indubitably, farmers in general across the globe have become increasingly dependent on chemical fertilisers to raise their crops. But an 86-year-old farmer here in Bolangir district is religiously collecting cow dung for the last 66 years to prepare manure, a report said.

The farmer is Abadhuta Nayak at Jogisarda village under this block in Bolangir district. Sources said that the use of cow dung as manure has helped him raise good crops year after year despite all adversities. It has also helped in raising the fertility of the soil and in conservation of environment while keeping the air and water bodies clean in the area.

An example for others to emulate, Nayak strongly opposes use of chem-



ical fertilisers on farmland and instead relies on organic manure to raise crops.

He said that chemical fertiliser is bad for health while food crops cultivated with organic manure is good for health. This is the secret of his good health at this age as he has never become ill except some minor ailments like cold and cough till date, he said.

Nayak having only half an acre

of farmland has never felt tired by doing so and has been collecting the cattle waste since the days of his youth. He collects the cow dung and dumps them on his farmland to prepare manure for his crops. The manure he prepares is used on his farmland while he sells the surplus to other farmers and earns some money. Nayak used to work chores to manage his family of three sons, daughters-in-law, grand-

children and his wife. However, he is now living with his younger son's family after the death of his wife while the rest two sons live separately. The ups and down of life have failed to deter him as he goes on collecting cow dung after finishing his daily chores every day.

With decline in cattle population, he is now finding it difficult to collect sufficient cow dung in his village and has to move in the surrounding villages to collect the stuff. He regretted that despite all his work he has never received any assistance from the state government like 35-kg rice or a house under the welfare scheme.

An elderly co-villager Sigson Deep said they have been seeing him doing the work since his youth days but the government officials have never made any attempt to reach him and extend him any help.

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No jobs, migrant returnees head back to other states

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, August 9: Thousands of migrant workers, after losing their jobs due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown, returned to their native places in Bargarh district with the expectation of finding alternative livelihood. Despite reluctance, the migrant workers were bound to come home, that too by facing much hardship.

The central and the state governments had announced assistance for the returnees and promised creation of job opportunities for them.

However, things did not turn out to be favourable for the migrant returnees. The migrants reportedly failed to get livelihood opportunities in their home district.

With the national economy battered due to subsequent lockdowns, the government has started easing restrictions to allow economic activities. Migrant workers from various parts of Bargarh district, seemingly upset over the lack of job opportunities, have started heading back to their workplaces in other states.



After easing of restrictions, middlemen and labour contractors have become active in Padampur

Scores of people in Padampur sub-division usually migrate to Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat in search of greener pastures. Most of them work in brick kilns, cotton mills, and some even in hotels and as security guards.

During the lockdown, there was a stalemate on trafficking of workforce from some pockets to other states.

However, after easing of restrictions, middlemen and labour contractors have become active in Padampur.

According to the district labour department, 14,864 migrant workers had returned to Bargarh from various states during the lockdown period. Of them, 9,054 were working in brick kilns and cotton mills.

Many migrants had returned home without doing registration

officially. Unofficial sources claim, the number of migrant returnees is higher than the official figure.

It was learnt that Rs 2,000 each has been provided to 10,549 labourers while in some cases, they have been provided work under government schemes. Narrating his ordeal, Bijitosh Bariha, a migrant worker, said, "We had migrated to other states in search of work. We return home every four/six months. In

LIVELIHOOD MATTERS

Migrant workers from various parts of Bargarh district, seemingly upset over the lack of job opportunities, have started heading back to their workplaces in other states

Scores of people in Padampur sub-division usually migrate to Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat in search of greener pastures

the lockdown, we have no work. Whenever we asked for work at the panchayat office, only manual labour of earth digging was available. We are not acquainted with this work."

Another migrant Nibash Seth said, "We were earning in other states to make both ends meet. We have no work opportunities here. I want to go out, but have no money. The government should provide loan facility to migrants so that we can do some small business."

Another migrant, Ashok Bariha, pointed out that he has been doing manual labour for several years to feed his family, comprising three daughters. "There is no scope for jobs here. I am exhausted from frequenting to the office for registration as a construction labourer," he added. District labour officer Hemanta Kumar Pradhan said, "The labourers working in cotton mills are not being registered as construction workers. Those who have worked in brick kilns are registered after submission of applications. About one lakh construction workers were registered in the district. They are being provided financial assistance."

Local contact cases soar in Bhadrak dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, August 9: Local contact COVID-19 cases have soared past those from quarantine centres in Bhadrak district, adding to the headache of the administration.

Bhadrak reported 58 new COVID-19 cases Sunday. Of them, while only one is from institutional quarantine centre, all the remaining 57 patients were found to have contracted the virus locally.

With this, the task of controlling the COVID situation in the district has become tougher for the administration.

Meanwhile, the process of shifting of all the patients to COVID-19 hospital has started. Similarly, contact tracing drive is on.

Given the detection of more number of local cases, the denizens here are in fear. With the fresh addition, the district's COVID-19 tally has gone up to 915. While 653 patients have recovered from the disease, 258 are undergoing treatment.

SHUTDOWN IN KAMAKHYANAGAR

Dhenkanal: In view of the increasing number of cases of COVID-19, Dhenkanal Collector Bhumes Chandra Behera declared total shutdown in Kamakhyanagar NAC from August 10 to 12. Out of the 29 fresh COVID-19 cases reported from the district Sunday, Kamakhyanagar NAC accounted for 19 cases. The shutdown will come into effect under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and the Epidemic Disease, Act 1897. The collector has asked the CDM & PHO, Dhenkanal/ block medical officer in-charge, Kamakhyanagar to mobilise the required number of health staff immediately to conduct active surveillance in the NAC. The surveillance will continue from August 10 till 12. The CDMO have been asked to submit day-wise status reports to the collector.

The virus has so far claimed four lives in the district. Swab samples of 22,353 persons have so far been tested in the district.

Maoist hideout busted in Bargarh, ammunition seized after gunfight

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 9: Security forces busted a camp of the outlawed CPI (Maoist) and seized a large number of cartridges after an exchange of fire with the cadres of the outfit in Bargarh district, the police said Sunday.

The gun-battle took place in the Gandhamardan reserve forest in Paikmal police station area Saturday and it lasted for around 30 minutes, a police officer said.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of CRPF and police personnel launched a combing operation during which they noticed the movement of around 10-15 armed



Maoists. The rebels started indiscriminate firing on spotting the security personnel, Bargarh Superintendent of Police Padmini Sahoo said.

The security personnel took defensive positions and appealed to the Maoists to stop firing and surrender, to which they shouted 'Lal Salaam Zindabad', she said.

Left with no other alternative, the security personnel resorted to controlled firing in self-defence. The exchange of fire continued for around 30 minutes. The rebels managed to escape taking advantage of dense foliage and heavy rain, the officer said. During a search operation carried out in the area after the gunfight, the security personnel busted a Maoist hideout and seized a large number of cartridges, she added.

The forces also seized walkie-talkies, digital cameras, infrared wildlife cameras, several documents, Maoist camouflage uniforms and some daily need articles from the camp.

Combing operation has been intensified in the area, the police said.

fence. The exchange of fire continued for around 30 minutes. The rebels managed to escape taking advantage of dense foliage and heavy rain, the officer said. During a search operation carried out in the area after the gunfight, the security personnel busted a Maoist hideout and seized a large number of cartridges, she added.

The forces also seized walkie-talkies, digital cameras, infrared wildlife cameras, several documents, Maoist camouflage uniforms and some daily need articles from the camp.

Combing operation has been intensified in the area, the police said.

Fake Maoists extort money from businessman, 3 held

BHAWANIPATNA: Three persons were arrested Sunday for allegedly extorting money from a businessman by posing as Maoists in Kalahandi district, police said.

They had initially demanded Rs 10 lakh from the businessman, a resident of Badpujhariguda village under Jaipatna police station limits, Saturday after identifying themselves as Maoists, a police officer said.

When the person expressed his inability to dole out the amount it was finally settled at Rs 70,000 and the trio collected the money from the businessman's house Saturday night, Dharamgarh sub-divisional po-

lice officer (SDPO) L Panda said.

The businessman reported the matter to the police and the number from which the extortion call was made could be tracked, leading to the arrest of the three persons.

During investigation, it was found that the persons were not Maoists, the SDPO said.

"They wanted to make money at the cost of the businessman," Panda said. Three mobile phones and Rs 70,000 have been seized from them, Panda added.

Meet 10-yr-old terrace gardener of Bhadrak

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, August 9: The Covid-19 pandemic has brought several activities to a grinding halt. But it has not been able to stop a 10-year-boy of Kulana under Bhanadaripokhari block in Bhadrak district from fulfilling his commitment to the environment by planting varieties of plants on the roof of his house.

Son of Jitendra Kumar Sahoo and Bimalini Sahoo, Omm Prakash Sahoo is a fifth grade student at



Bhandaripokhari Sarada Vidya Mandir. Amid the pandemic schools across the state are closed till August 31. When the friends of Omm are spending their times watching TV and cartoon shows on YouTube, he thought of doing something different and unusual.

Omm searched for how to do terrace gardening on YouTube. After seeing several videos he got a basic idea about the concept of terrace gardening. Then in some small earthen pots he planted lady's fingers, eggplants, cucumber, beans, and five types of chilies, bitter gourd, spinach, coriander and mint.

To give nourishment and natural care to the plants, the composition of his potting include 30 per cent soil, 30 per cent vermin-composting, 30 per cent coco peat and 10 per cent neem cake.

Subarnapur handloom weaver keeps 'Bandha' art alive

A top exponent of the 'Bandha' art, Ghanashyam has extraordinary expertise in weaving sarees, crafting Bandha works, colouring and graphic designing



HE HAS FOUND A PLACE IN THE 'LIMCA BOOK OF RECORDS' IN 2016 FOR DRAWING A BANDHA DESIGN OF 81,000 CONCHES. THAT INCIDENT HAD GIVEN HIM THE INSPIRATION TO SEEK ENTRY INTO THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS

GHANASHYAM MEHER, A 40-YEAR-OLD WEAVER OF TIKIRIPADA VILLAGE ATTRACTED LIMELIGHT, AFTER HE CREATED A DESIGN OF LORD JAGANNATH'S SUNA BESHA (25 INCHES LONG AND 20 INCHES WIDE) AND ANOTHER OF MAA SAMALESWARI'S RAJARAJESWARI BESHA (30 INCHES LONG AND 30 INCHES WIDE)

THESE DAYS, HE IS WORKING HARD TO FIND A PLACE IN THE GUINNESS BOOK OF WORLD RECORDS. TO ACHIEVE THE DISTINCTION HE HAD TO MAKE 1,20,000 CONCHES IN BANDHA DESIGN. HE HAS COMPLETED THE TASK AND IS SATISFIED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sonepur, August 9: Ghanashyam Meher, a 40-year-old weaver of Tikiripada village under Subalaya police limits in Subarnapur district, is a top exponent of the 'Bandha' art. He has extraordinary expertise in weaving sarees, crafting Bandha works, colouring and graphic designing. Presently, he is staying in Bargarh town and sells exquisitely designed saree to handloom weavers of Bargarh, Subarnapur, Bolangir and Boudh districts.

Ghanashyam attracted limelight, after he created a design of

Lord Jagannath's Suna Besha (25 inches long and 20 inches wide) and another of Maa Samaleswari's Rajarajeswari Besha (30 inches long and 30 inches wide). These Bandha designs were lauded and the Odisha government felicitated Ghanashyam in 2006. It was for the first time that his work was recognised. These days, Ghanashyam is working hard to find a place in the Guinness Book of World Records. To achieve the distinction he had to make 1,20,000 conches in Bandha design. He has completed the task and is satisfied. "I will officially apply for registration in

the book after COVID-19 cases subside in the days ahead," Ghanashyam said.

Earlier, he found a place in the 'Limca Book of Records' in 2016 for drawing a Bandha design of 81,000 conches. That incident had given him the inspiration to seek entry into the Guinness Book of World Records, said the weaver.

Ghanashyam is the second son of Rabi Meher and Malati Meher. A Class-X pass out, Ghanashyam got attracted to 'Bandha' art from his childhood, when he was assisting his father in this traditional family occupation.



meet their household expenses for a year, from whatever they earn during the festive season. Amid the lockdown restrictions, the clay idol makers pass through tough times and their fiscal standings have been staggered badly over the past four months. Local puja committees give no advance for making idols any longer. Chances of pujas being celebrated in the coming festive season are bleak. "If such a situation persists in the days ahead, we may not be able to provide a square meal a day to our family members. Our occupation is seasonal; hence, it would become too difficult for us to survive under these circumstances," idol makers of Banarpal block -- Antaryami Muduli, Dambardhar Muduli and Kailash Muduli -- lamented.


ive season are bleak. "If such a situation persists in the days ahead, we may not be able to provide a square meal a day to our family members. Our occupation is seasonal; hence, it would become too difficult for us to survive under these circumstances," idol makers of Banarpal block -- Antaryami Muduli, Dambardhar Muduli and Kailash Muduli -- lamented.

| OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, R.W.S.&S. DIVISION, JAJPUR, AT: CHANDIKHOL | |
|---|--|
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| 7. Availability of bids on-line: | 11 hour of 24.08.2020 to 17.00 hours of 07.09.2020 |
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| 9. Date & time of opening of Technical Bid online: | 11.00 hour of 08.09.2020 |
| 10. Date & time of opening of Financial Bid | To be announced latter |
| Further details can be seen in the website https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.W.S & S Division, Jajpur (at: Chandikhola) OIPR-25027/11/0005/2021 | |

“

Rather hang thyself than belong to the horde of successful imitators.

SRI AUROBINDO



ANY HOUR

The nation coursing through the perils of a pandemic – with infections and deaths rising daily– received good news in the form of the Centre releasing ₹17,100 crore to the bank accounts of over 8.5 crore farmers as part of a periodic pension of a mere ₹2,000 per family. This would however help only in a small way in revving up the countryside caught in a distress situation due to the drying up of money supply in these Covid times. Alongside, another step from the Centre, effecting an import ban on 101 items of defence requirement is significant too.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh who announced the ban on import of certain weapons and ammunition, says his government, alternatively, plans to release ₹4 lakh crore via contracts to boost defence production internally through the Make In India scheme and serve the cause of self-reliance or Atma Nirbhar Bharat scheme. All these schemes have very fancy names and the Ministers are using these slogans to the hilt.

However, developing any weapons system is a time consuming, highly investment intensive and tedious endeavor. A government that has wasted nearly seven years blaming past administrations for all that India has achieved or not achieved till date, seems to have suddenly awakened from deep slumber. In this time period, India's foreign policy was not only being personally supervised but also implemented by Prime Minister Modi and yet all the neighbors of India have turned into aggressive foes in these past few years.

Nepal, a self declared Hindoo Rashtra from its inception as a nation, has changed its Constitution and labeled itself as a secular nation recently. Now Nepal, in its latest government printed map, has shown the audacity of claiming several Indian territories as its own. It has started a whole new conflict in an area that had been undisputed since centuries.

This awakening from slumber that was marked by Rajnath Singh's statement is certainly connected with the unexpected intrusion into Indian territory by the Chinese PLA. The brutal killing of 20 Indian armed forces personnel proves that our military and civilian leadership had no intelligence inputs. Waking up and shouting an oft repeated slogan can, at best, be considered a move to endear an individual to his political boss. Nothing more. This ban on imports may result in immediate damage to the Indian forces. Stopping imported war equipment is not similar to declaring an ill conceived Education Policy. With education, the government has ample scope to fine-tune or alter errors while implementation is in progress. In a battle situation, it is not possible to set things differently when a soldier is facing an enemy attack.

When a nation the size and geographical positioning as of India decides to indigenize its battle equipment, it has to accept collaborations and joint ventures in both research and development. Primarily, that would require friendly and militarily capable nations who would be willing to share their R&D with the recipient country. India did have that advantage in the past decades. The erstwhile Soviet Union had not only supplied numerous squadrons of MiG 21s but it had also shared production technology. This had enabled Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to produce the jets in Sunabeda of Odisha and the complete aircraft at Bangalore. Those aircraft still seem to be the mainstay of the IAF. The five Rafale jets that flew in recently will only become India specific in 2022. Their production will not be done in India neither any technical details be shared. It is like an individual buying an expensive SUV and spending a fortune for regular maintenance service at exclusively authorized showrooms. However, we have demolished our close links with present day Russia and cannot expect them to share manufacturing details of their new fighter aircraft. The Chinese intrusion at Galwan forced Rajnath Singh to rush to Moscow and dust the files on some old order for Russian fighter jets. That trip made it obvious that India had not been following up in payments for the Russian aircraft. This overnight hurry is not something appreciated when purchasing high value defence equipment. It rather exposes the unplanned nature of the Indian government. It may not be out of place to mention that many citizens are still questioning the Modi brokered liaison between Anil Ambani's Reliance Defence and the French producers of the Rafale jets for assembling and later producing them in India. Everyone knows how that very first effort at indigenization through a corporate, neglecting HAL, panned out.

The drive to indigenize defence hardware within India is certainly a welcome decision. However, like everything else in this government, all such slogans and decisions seem to smack of political one-upmanship. There does not seem to be any genuine concern for India's security. That would be visible only if there is a persistent and comprehensive strategy backed by action to make India self-sufficient in its requirements of weapons for the future. On the other hand, the natural speed of delivery to a regular client and an irregular client always varies for any producer or supplier. If India bans certain defence equipment without first building capacity to produce reliable alternatives, it may lead to a dangerous outcome where supplies could get delayed at crucial times of need. Thinking through such situations before such heroic calls is the need of the hour. Any hour, for that matter.

WISDOM CORNER

- “

There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
- “

Do not fear to be eccentric in opinion, for every opinion now accepted was once eccentric.

BERTRAND RUSSELL
- “

What is discipline? Discipline means creating an order within you. As you are, you are a chaos.

OSHO

WORDSWORTH

■ Tatterdemalion

A tatterdemalion is a tattered or ragged person. It's a lively, rattling, machine-gun word, one chosen by many writers as suitable accompaniment to invective or disparagement. Here's Lady Wishfort, in William Congreve's play The Way of the World: "Frippery? Superannuated frippery? I'll frippery the villain; I'll reduce him to frippery and rags, a tatterdemalion!" Or James Joyce, in full flow in Ulysses: "Florry Talbot, a blond feeble goosefat whore in a tatterdemalion gown of mildewed strawberry, lolls spreadeagle in the sofa corner, her limp forearm pendent over the bolster, listening". But where it comes from is open to argument. The first part seems pretty certain to be our English tatter. Some writers trace the second bit to the French mailion, swaddling clothes. Others say it comes from the Italian maglia for undershirt or (British English) vest. Support for this comes from the very earliest use, by Ben Jonson in 1611, which he spelt as tatter-de-mallian, reportedly said as though it were Italian.

LOL

Once a year

Alfred was listening to his sister practice her singing. "Sis," he said, "I wish you'd sing Christmas carols."

"That's nice of you, Alfie," she



replied, "but why?" Alfred replied, "Because then I'd only have to hear your voice once a year!"

FOCUS

AYODHYA

DEALS WITHIN DEALS



Since it is accepted by everybody except perhaps Randeep Surjewala that the Congress is now beyond redemption, the best the Gandhi siblings can do is to recover as a priceless memento that brick which was laid in their father's name in Ayodhya to start a temple for Lord Rama

It reflects on the civilisational power of Lord Rama in this ancient land that Independent India's five Prime Ministers involved themselves in the affairs of his birthplace at Ayodhya. Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajiv Gandhi, Narasimha Rao, Narendra Modi and, tangentially, VP Singh in between. First Prime Minister Nehru learnt his early lessons about the limits to his power when the Rama idols "mysteriously" appeared on the night of December 22, 1949 at the spot where the Lord was supposed to have been born, and the then UP Chief Minister Govind Ballabh Pant refused to have the idols removed despite Nehru's insistence. Secularism was a fine concept but not at the cost of Hindu faith. In the different approaches to Ayodhya are embedded serious divergences within the Congress on the centrality of Hinduism in national life. Not only was Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya the president of the Congress for a record four terms, but he was also a founder of the Hindu Mahasabha. One may quibble on proportions, but there is Hindu Mahasabha in the Congress DNA just as there is the RSS in the BJP. Nehru was a proud "Pandit" but there was a clear mismatch between his elitist tolerance of Hinduism and the all-pervasive Hindu faith in the make-up of most of his colleagues. It turns out, in retrospect, that Nehru's secularism was a huge gamble. It would be thrilling if the secular experiment succeeded to a point where my brother Shanney could revisit relatives in Karachi and regale friends in JNU with the observation which became a classic in the 70s: "Nice place", he said, returning from Pakistan, "but too full of Muslims." Today, this gregarious raconteur finds himself fixed in the pitying gaze of relatives from across the border. I called him in Lucknow on August 5, the day of the Shilanyas. He didn't say much. It is instructive that the top-down secularism of Nehru and Mustafa Kemal Pasha Atatürk faced eclipse within weeks of each other. In his very first speech in Parliament in May 2014, Prime Minister Modi had lamented 1,200 years of foreign subjugation. But after the Shilanyas at Rama's birthplace in Ayodhya, he was specific about the time-line of the Ayodhya struggle, that it had taken 500 years since Babar's arrival, to liberate the hallowed birthplace. There will of course be arguments galore: has the choreography at Modi's Shilanyas brought down the curtain on the old consensus on the Idea of India? Is that what an emotionally pent-up nation's cathartic "victory over Babar" entails? Was it that, a victory? Priyanka Gandhi Vadra must be commended for having endorsed the beginning of a Ram temple, but in doing so she may have slighted her father's memory. Rajiv Gandhi may not have been present at Ram's birthplace for the first bricklaying ceremony on November 9, 1989, but a foundation stone was laid, at the behest of Rajiv Gandhi's government under the official supervision of the District Magistrate of Faizabad, Ram Sharan Srivastava; a more harassed officer I shall never see. Since I was seated next to him, I could virtually peep into the pit where the brick was to be laid under instructions from Rajiv Gandhi, his cousin Arun Nehru and the then UP Chief Minister Narayan Dutt Tewari. It was an underhand, duplicitous operation, totally violative of the Allahabad High Court order which prohibited any construction on the "disputed" land. In a show of force, Ashok Singhal of the VHP, the Hindu body leading the agitation for a temple, threatened "rivers of blood"; he would lay the foundation stone on exactly the spot which the temple plan dictated, namely the "disputed" land. Clandestinely, the VHP was allowed to have its say. But Srivastava was to put out a press note that the brick was laid 100 feet away from the disputed site. Rajiv was fighting for his life against his once-favoured finance minister V. Singh's rebellion, in the 1989 General Elections. He struck a desperate deal with the VHP.

SPECTRUM POLITICS

Centenary year of an underrated PM



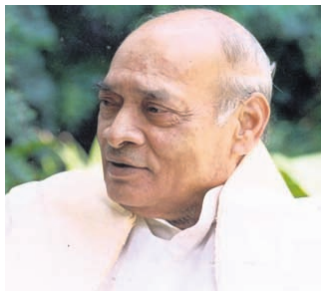
Anita Saluja

WHILE NARASIMHA RAO'S CONTRIBUTIONS IN UNLEASHING ECONOMIC REFORMS WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED, HE HAS COUNTLESS FEATHERS IN HIS CAP

P V Narasimha Rao never dreamt to be the Prime Minister, as he was no lobbyist and did not have the instincts in him to side-step anybody. In fact, after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, he had packed his bags and returned to his home state, the undivided Andhra Pradesh. He was called back and given the responsibility of leading the nation as Prime Minister. As a young journalist, I used to meet him often.

Soon after becoming the Prime Minister, Rao spelt out his plans to transform the nation by liberalising the economy. His Liberalisation-Privatisation-Globalisation programme transformed the Indian economy, as never before. As PM, Rao led the nation for five years, 1991-96, taking it forward on all the fronts, mainly on the economic and the foreign affairs. Yet, he remains the most underrated PM due to his strained relations with Congress president Sonia Gandhi. Rao led the party and the nation on his own terms. Perhaps, this was the reason why Manmohan Singh preferred to kow-tow to Sonia Gandhi when he became PM. Rao was nobody's man and preferred to have no coterie of his own.

This is the birth centenary year of Rao. While his contributions in unleashing economic reforms will



always be remembered, he has countless feathers in his cap. It was during his tenure that the Constitutional 73rd and 74th Amendment Bills were passed in Parliament. They not only conferred Constitutional status on panchayats and urban local bodies, but also provided one-third reservation for women in these bodies. Amid raging social unrest on Mandal Commission recommendations, Rao brought about a peaceful resolution by making the first appointment under reservation formula. Punjab was on the boil due to militancy. However, with careful political and administrative management, Rao brought peace back in Punjab. In the insurgency-hit Jammu & Kashmir, Rao worked hard restoring normalcy. Soon after the Babri Masjid demolition, there was the siege of the Hazratbal Shrine in Srinagar, in 1993. Rao

succeeded in bringing about a bloodless, peaceful resolution. It was during Narasimha Rao's tenure that diplomatic relations were established with Israel. Rao had prior consultations with Palestine leader Yasser Arafat over a breakfast meeting, where he took the PLO leader into confidence on his proposed move. Arafat welcomed it, as he felt India could act as a bridge between Palestine and Israel. Then Rao went ahead and signed the file. The Look East Policy of Rao was a philosophical outreach. It pointed to the World, particularly the West, to the rich religious, cultural civilisational traditions in the East. Apart from the strategic and economic ties between India and the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the two share the Buddhist and the Ramayana Connect. When Indira Gandhi was pushing for Land Reforms at the national level, it was Rao who implemented it in right earnest as the Andhra Pradesh Agricultural Land Ceiling Act, 1973, when he was Chief Minister of the state. This revolutionary measure, in one go, dismantled the Jagirdari-Zamindari structures, empowering the rural landless poor through the redistribution of the surplus land. The then Odisha Chief Minister Nandini Satpathy borrowed a copy of the AP

Agricultural Land Ceiling Act from her Andhra Pradesh counterpart, for replication in Odisha. The only blot in Rao's tenure was the demolition of Babri Masjid, but the real question is whether Rao was really culpable? There was a history to the Babri Masjid issue even before he took office on June 21, 1991. The doors of the Masjid were opened for the Hindus to offer prayers to Lord Ram Lalla idols in 1986. Under Supreme Court orders, the Shilanyas was performed in 1989. The matter was already subjudice, with the Supreme Court fully seized of the matter. According to him, he took all the steps required to ensure that the mishap was prevented, but failed owing to the belligerence of the Saffron brigade. A month prior to the demolition, in November, 1992, Rao moved the Supreme Court with a plea to appoint the Centre as the Receiver for Babri Masjid, which would have given him the locus-standi to deploy police and para-military forces to save the mosque. But, on December 2, four days prior to the demolition, the petition was dismissed by the apex court. The rest, as they say, is history. A multi-faceted personality, Rao had a literary flair. A dazzling polyglot, he was fluent in several Indian and European languages.

Semester exam, Supreme Court

Sir, The July 6 UGC notification on mandatory conduct of final semester examinations either online or offline, or both, by the end of September created ripples among the student community as well as state governments. Prior to this date, many states had declared the examinations cancelled and decided to evaluate the performance based on the internal examination marks. Students too felt relaxed and started preparations for the next academic year and concentrated on online classes and admissions. The mandatory conduct of examinations again brought them back to the same problem. The rising Covid positive cases everyday is putting them in a tight spot. Some states are badly affected by floods. Conducting the examinations in these adverse situations may turn into a nightmare. Various students and teachers' associations submitted applications to the commission for cancellation of the examination, keeping in view the Covid-19 severity, and they feared a risk to their health while appearing for the examination. In states like Odisha, a majority of the students in the remote areas do not possess the required gadgets for online examination. Lack of uninterrupted mobile phone network is another hindrance. Some state governments also urged the commission to have a rethink. Notably, 31 students across universities including a Covid positive student challenged the decision of the commission in the Supreme Court, arguing that the students' health will be at risk if they are to sit for the examinations now. On July 30, the commission told the court that it cannot alter its July 6 guidelines, mandating conduct of examinations by end September. The rationale behind the UGC stand is the importance of the subjects the students read during the final semester. The last semester consists of Discipline-Specific Elective Courses, Generic Elective Courses and Skill Enhancement Courses. "It is essential to conduct the examinations to give value-based/skill-based knowledge to students," was how the commission explained its stand to the court through an affidavit. It also clarified that a special examination may be conducted for the students who fail to appear for the September examinations as and when the situation becomes favourable for the universities. The SC adjourned the case to August 10 and lakhs of students are anxiously waiting for the verdict. Any further delay would result in immense stress for students.

Bhaskar Nath Biswal, Head, Department of Commerce, Nowrangpur College, NABARANGPUR

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

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Stand with truth: Gehlot to MLAs 537 missing minors traced in 2 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaipur, August 9: Ahead of the Rajasthan Assembly session, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot Sunday appealed to all MLAs to listen to the voice of people to save democracy and stand with the truth in the interest of people of the state.

The assembly session in the state, which has been witnessing political turmoil after the rebellion by Sachin Pilot and legislators loyal to him, will start August 14. Gehlot is likely to seek a trust vote during the session.

In a letter to all MLAs, Gehlot sought their cooperation in fulfilling the promises of development and prosperity of the state.

"It is my appeal that you should listen to the voice of people in order to avoid wrong tradition, to maintain people's trust in us and to save democracy," Gehlot said in the letter. Pilot was sacked as deputy chief minister and the president of the state unit of the Congress after he and some MLAs loyal to him rebelled against Gehlot. Many believe that Gehlot still has an edge in the numbers game and is confident of a majority.

"You may be a legislator from any political party, you should ensure and take a decision after understanding voter's feeling that how a people's elected government continues to work strongly for state's welfare," he said, emphasising that efforts to destabilise government are not successful.

The chief minister expressed faith that legislators will act in the larger interest of people of the state and will cooperate in fulfilling the promises of development and prosperity. Ahead of the session, half a dozen BJP MLAs from Rajasthan have shifted to Porbandar in Gujarat. BJP MLA Nirmal Kumawat had alleged that the Congress government in Rajasthan was "harassing" opposition MLAs, and said they were on a pilgrimage to Somnath to seek mental peace.

Congress MLAs are currently holed up in a Jaisalmer hotel as the party has accused the BJP of horse-trading following the revolt by Pilot and 18 MLAs loyal to him.

New Delhi, August 9: With Delhi Police now focusing its efforts to trace and rescue missing children in the wake of involvement of hundreds of juveniles in recent crime incidents in the capital, 537 minors have been recovered in the last two months.

The police feels that if missing children are not rescued in time, they may fall into the hands of criminals, who will in turn push them into criminal activities ranging from burglary to heinous crimes like murders.

According to the Delhi Police's half-yearly statistics, as many as 325 juveniles have been apprehended for heinous crimes, and 1,014 for non-heinous ones in the last six months.

Delhi Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava has made it clear that now the extra focus would be on cases of missing children.

Police officials are being encouraged to put in extra efforts to find out and rescue these missing children.

A clear message has gone down from the top brass to the lower hierarchies to tighten the noose on criminals who recruit or use juveniles in criminal activities.

The rescued juveniles are engaged in constructive activities through YUVA initiative of Delhi Police to upgrade their skills and make them self-dependent in future.

"In the last two months, 724 minors went missing in Delhi, while 537 children were rescued during the period. Policemen who rescue at least 50 children in a year will be given out-of-turn promotions. This will help curb crime," Shrivastava said.

The alarming data on the involvement of juveniles in crime has highlighted the preference given to them by gangsters and other criminals since it is easy to lure them into the world of crime and also for the fact that they are sent to juvenile/correctional homes if caught and not jails.

At least 20 children go missing in the national capital daily.

The modus operandi of organised rackets involved in the kidnapping of children is to sell the minors to organised gangs and other criminals.

‘BJP RIDDEN WITH FACTIONALISM’

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot questioned the shifting of BJP MLAs to Gujarat, saying the opposition party was ridden with factionalism.

His comments came in the wake of the BJP herding its 18 MLAs in the past two days to party-ruled Gujarat ahead of the Rajasthan assembly session beginning August 14. The BJP had claimed that their MLAs were being harassed by police and the administration at the behest of the Congress govern-

Enriching habitats of zoo inmates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 9: The Delhi zoo has undertaken an enrichment campaign to provide its animals conditions similar to their natural habitats and improve their physical and mental health.

The exercise aims at stimulating curiosity among animals, and encouraging natural behaviour, as in the wild, an official said.

One of the enrichment techniques is cognitive enrichment. As part of this technique, animals are required to solve a problem to obtain food.

For bears, a bamboo puzzle feeder has been prepared. The animal is encouraged to climb up and explore the sections of bamboo filled with honey and bananas, the official said.

"Another way is habitat enrichment. In this, the habitat is made more dynamic, and full of fun. For example, a tire swing has been hung from a tree for monkeys. A rope ladder has been placed for lion-tailed macaques. Perches are created for animals to climb and sit on. They love it," he said.

Food enrichment involves new food and different ways for animals to get it. This is done so that the animal does not get bored of eating the same food and indulges in activity.

"For example, the food is put inside a cardboard box for lions. The animal has to find it and work for it. In the case of monkeys, food items are hidden in leaves in a corner of the enclosure or in a box full of straw. This makes the animal more active and alive to the surrounding environment," the official said.

Social animals are grouped or housed in the same enclosure for social enrichment. "For instance, we have paired lion Sundaram and lioness Hema, and leopards Bunty and Bubbly, and Tajas and Bunty," the official said.

Saturday, Union Minister of State for Environment Babul Supriyo visited the zoo and praised the staff for the enrichment work being done by them.



PASCHIM VIHAR SEXUAL ASSAULT Accused was released in 2015

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 9: The man arrested for allegedly assaulting a 12-year-old girl sexually and physically in Paschim Vihar was released from jail in a 2006 murder case after completing his sentence and not because of "good behaviour", Delhi Prisons officials said Sunday.

The 33-year-old man, identified by police as Krishan, had told police that he was released from jail due to his good behaviour. However, police had said that they were verifying the facts. Krishan was arrested for fatally attacking a woman during a burglary in Sultanpuri.

"In 2006, he was arrested in the said case, which was registered under section 302 (murder). In 2013, he was convicted for life. However, the accused appealed in the high court against the conviction," said Director General (Prisons) Sandeep Goel.

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sexually assaulted the 12-year-old girl at her home in Paschim Vihar and also hit her on the face and head with a sharp object, police said. He told police that he had entered the house for burglary but the girl saw him and raised an alarm. He then took a sewing machine and threw it on her. The girl tried to fight, following which he caught her and stabbed her with a pair of scissors several times and fled the spot. The girl's rectum and intestines were injured severely by some kind of impalement and had to be operated upon at AIIMS, according to a senior doctor at the hospital.

The minor is on ventilator and she continues to be critical, AIIMS sources said Saturday.

A case has been registered under Indian Penal Code Section 307 (attempt to murder) and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act at Paschim Vihar West police station.

Shekhawat slams Raj govt over Pak migrants' deaths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 9: Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat Sunday slammed the Rajasthan government over deaths of 11 members of a Hindu migrant family from Pakistan, saying the incident reflects the "working style" of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

Eleven members of a Hindu migrant family from Pakistan and belonging to the Bhil community were found dead at a farm in Rajasthan's Jodhpur district Sunday.

"The deaths of nearly a dozen refugees from Pakistan put a question mark on @ashokgehlots1's working style. "The deceased include two men, four women and five children. One after other, very frightening incidents reflecting the deteriorating situation of the state, are coming to the fore. The government should swing into action and clear the picture," Shekhawat tweeted. One member of the migrant family, however, was found alive outside the hut they lived at Lodta village of Dechu area, an official said in Jodhpur.

"But he claimed to have no idea about the incident, which believed to have happened in the night," said Jodhpur's Superintendent of Police (Rural) Rahul Barhat.

"We are yet to ascertain the cause and means of death. But apparently, all the members appeared to have committed suicide by consuming some chemical in the night," Barhat said.

SIX BJP MLAs LEAVE FOR UNKNOWN DESTINATION

They reached Somnath from Porbandar Saturday evening, with one of them telling reporters that the Congress govt was 'harassing' opposition MLAs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmadabad, August 9: Six BJP MLAs from Rajasthan who had arrived in Gujarat ahead of the crucial Assembly session in that state starting on August 14 left for an undisclosed location in the early hours of Sunday.

The Congress government in Rajasthan under Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot is in strife after Deputy CM Sachin Pilot rebelled and was sacked from the post.

The six BJP MLAs had reached Somnath from Porbandar Saturday evening, with one of them telling reporters that the Congress government in Rajasthan was "harassing" opposition MLAs, and that they had come on a pilgrimage to Somnath to seek mental peace.

Speaking on the issue, Gir Somnath BJP general secretary Mansingh Parmar said, "The MLAs left the guest-house by morning. I have no clue where they went. My responsibility was to receive them"

MANSINGH PARMAR | BJP'S GENERAL SECRETARY, GIR SOMNATH

left the guest-house by morning. I have no clue where they went. My responsibility was to receive them when they reached Somnath from Porbandar Saturday, and get them to the guest-house. I had left after dinner. They were supposed to stay here for two days."

The six MLAs, Nirmal Kumawat, Gopichand Meena, Jabbar Singh Sankhla, Dharamveer Mochi, Gopal Lal Sharma and Gurudeep Singh Shahpini, left between 2am-3am accompanied by local BJP leaders to an undisclosed location, guest-house sources said.

Kumawat had told reporters on Saturday that the Gehlot government lacked a majority in the Assembly and that "he is harassing and putting mental pressure on BJP MLAs using SOG (Special Operations Group) and departmental raids".

EV MAKERS URGE GOVT TO INCLUDE LITHIUM SCOOTERS IN POLICY

The new EV policy seeks electric vehicles to account for 25% of the total new vehicle registrations in the city by 2024

REDUCING POLLUTION

The policy states that two-thirds of new vehicle registrations in Delhi comprise two wheelers with the most popular segments being motorcycles between 110 and 125 cc and scooters between 90 and 125 cc

"Any attempt at electrification of Delhi's vehicle fleet needs to address these segments to achieve significant reduction in air pollution," states the EV policy

The demand generation incentives under the policy, for electric two wheelers will be based on battery capacity used in vehicles

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 9: Electric vehicle manufacturers have hailed the new electric vehicle policy of the Delhi government and hope it will look into exclusion of e-scooters with speed of upto 25 kms per hour from the incentive scheme.

As per the policy, only electric two wheelers with minimum top speed of 40 Km per hour will be eligible for incentives.

Shohinder Gill, Director General of the Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV), said the electric vehicle (EV) policy of the Delhi government extensively covers key measures required by the industry to move in the right direction. "However a small missing point in the policy is that it does not support the lithium battery e-scooters with speeds upto 25 km per hour that are particularly popular with Delhites because of their attractive prices and extremely low running costs," Gill said.

With a bit of support of the Delhi government the adoption of such e-scooters would have grown manifold, he said hoping the government would look into it and make some amendments in the future. The EV policy of the Delhi government aims to replace two wheelers in the standard category that have bulk users, to cut pollution level, said Jasmine Shah, vice chairman of Delhi Dialogue and development Commission who has been closely associated with shaping of the policy.

"Resources of a government are limited and need to be spent judiciously and as such the EV policy incentivises those regular two wheeler users who replace their vehicles with cleaner alternatives and thus help reduce air pollution," he said.

The EV policy launched by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal earlier this week, seeks that electric vehicles account for 25 percent of the total new vehicle registrations in the city by 2024.

The policy states that two-thirds of new vehicle registrations in Delhi comprise two wheelers with the most popular segments being motorcycles between 110 and 125 cc and scooters between 90 and 125 cc. "Any attempt at electrification of Delhi's vehicle fleet needs to address these segments to achieve significant reduction in air pollution," says the EV policy.

The demand generation incentives under the policy for electric two wheelers will be based on battery capacity (energy content measured in kWh) used in vehicles.

The incentives will be available only for the electric two wheelers with advanced batteries and subject to a maximum incentive of Rs. 30,000 per vehicle.

A purchase incentive of Rs 5,000 per kWh of battery capacity will be provided per vehicle to the registered owner and subject to maximum incentive of Rs 30,000 per vehicle, as per the policy.

of the day uote

Import embargo is high sounding jargon. What it means is we will try to make the same equipment (that we import today) in 2 to 4 years and stop imports thereafter!

P CHIDAMBARAM | CONGRESS LEADER

The increase in the number of cases by 506 on Sunday is the highest spike in a single day in the state. We are

discussing the issue with the chief minister, who has already announced that Goa will get a second COVID-19 hospital

VISHWAJIT RANE | GOA HEALTH MINISTER

The solatium announced for landslide victims was an interim one and the state government will hold together those who have lost everything

PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CM

SHORT TAKES

K'taka minister contracts Covid

Bangalore: Karnataka Health Minister B Sriramulu Sunday said he has tested positive for coronavirus and has been hospitalised here. "Following fever, I got myself tested and found to be infected by coronavirus," Sriramulu tweeted Sunday. He has been admitted to the Government Bowring hospital in the city for treatment. The minister said he is praying to God to heal him soon so that he can get back to public work at the earliest. Sriramulu is the fifth minister in Karnataka to have tested positive for coronavirus.

12 Naxals surrender

Raipur: Twelve Naxals, five of them collectively carrying a reward of ₹6 lakh on their heads, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district Sunday, police said. The cadres turned themselves in before police and the CRPF officials in Dantewada town saying that they were impressed by the rehabilitation campaign being run by the local police and disappointed with the hollow Maoist ideology, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava said. Dantewada MLA Devti Karma was also present on the occasion, he said.

Thai woman gangraped

Chandigarh: A woman from Thailand was allegedly gang-raped in a hotel in Haryana's Hisar town, police said Sunday. Two people, including the hotel's owner, have been booked for the crime that was reported on Thursday night, and one accused has been arrested. The woman, around 40 years old, had come to Delhi on March 3, and subsequently visited Hisar town, some 300 km from here, with friends. The woman complained that she was drunk when the hotel owner entered her room and raped her. She said another person also tried to sexually assault her.

1 killed, 7 hurt

Pune: A man was killed Sunday when the wall of his flat collapsed after liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) leaking from a cylinder in his neighbour's house exploded in Pimpri Chinchwad Township in Maharashtra's Pune district, police said. Seven persons from both the families were injured in the incident which occurred in morning, an official said, adding that the LPG cylinder remained intact. Prima facie, the blast occurred after a woman switched on an electric switch in her house located in a housing society in Dighi area, he said.



The Modi government's decision of demonetisation and its faulty implementation of GST and the lockdown have destroyed the economic structure of the country

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

2,914 COMPLAINTS IN JULY

The NCW received 2,914 complaints of crimes committed against women in July this year, the highest since November 2018 when the #MeToo movement was at its peak in the country



Sushant case: Raut smells conspiracy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 9: Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut Sunday claimed "pressure tactics" were being used in the case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death and the issue was being politicised as part of a conspiracy against Maharashtra.

It is wrong to see the unfortunate suicide of the actor from a political angle, Raut said in his weekly column 'Rokhthok' in the party mouth-piece 'Saamana'. Rajput, 34, was found hanging at his apartment in suburban Bandra on June 14.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) recently took over the probe in the case, based on a Patna police FIR related to alleged criminal conspiracy and abetment to suicide against Rajput's girlfriend and actor Rhea Chakraborty.

"If one wants to indulge in politicisation and pressure tactics, anything can happen in our country. It looks like the script of Sushant's case was already written. Whatever has happened behind the curtains is a conspiracy against Maharashtra," Raut said.

When it is decided to politicise an incident, one cannot say to what extent it can be done and "this is what is happening in the unfortunate suicide of Rajput", he said. Raut said the Bihar government alleged involvement of top political,



film and business personalities and it claimed Mumbai Police will not investigate the case properly. "That government demands CBI probe which is accepted in 24 hours. Attorney General Tushar Mehta tells the Supreme Court that the Centre has decided to hand over the probe to the CBI," Raut said, claiming this was a "direct attack on a state's autonomy".

Describing Mumbai Police as the "best investigating agency in the world" and a professional force, he said, "It investigated the Sheena Bora murder case where some top names were involved and sent all to jail. The Mumbai Police probed the 26/11 terror attack which resulted in the hanging of the accused Ajmal Kasab," the Rajya

Sabha member said.

The Centre's "interference" in Rajput's case was an insult of the Mumbai Police, he claimed, adding the CBI may be a central agency, but it "wasn't independent and impartial". "Even Narendra Modi and Amit Shah had earlier questioned the Enforcement Directorate and the CBI. They had said the Godhra riots case shouldn't be handed over to the CBI because it was a political weapon in the hands of those ruling at the Centre. If the same view is aired now, what's wrong in that," the executive editor of 'Saamana' said.

"Prima facie, Sushant Singh Rajput's case is that of suicide. There is no basis for repeated allegations that he had been murdered," he said.

ED grills Rhea's brother

Mumbai: Continuing its probe in the Sushant Singh Rajput case, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has grilled Showik Chakraborty, brother of actress Rhea Chakraborty, for the second time in connection with their financial transactions. Showik, who went to the ED office around noon on Saturday, was seen leaving after more than 18 hours around 7 am on Sunday. According to officials, he has reportedly given "evasive or unconvincing replies" to the ED team quizzing him and is likely to be summoned again on Monday. Besides, Rhea Chakraborty will also be summoned by the ED for another round of questioning on Monday. She had first been questioned for over eight hours on Friday. Among other things, the ED is investigating the money-laundering angle in the Sushant case after the late actor's father Krishna Kishore Singh lodged a complaint with Patna Police to question certain financial matters pertaining to his son. On June 14, Sushant's body was found hanging at his Bandra flat.

Kerala landslide toll rises

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi/Idukki, August 9: Rains continued to lash many parts of Kerala Sunday amid predictions of extremely heavy rainfall in six districts, raising concerns of aggravated flood situation in low lying areas, even as the death toll in the recent massive landslide in Idukki district rose to 43 with 17 more bodies being retrieved from the debris.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted extremely heavy rainfall in Kasaragod, Kannur, Wayanad, Kozhikode, Malappuram and Alappuzha districts. Sounding a red alert, the IMD said these districts are likely to receive over 20 cms rain in the next 24 hours. IMD officials said almost all districts north of Alappuzha are likely to receive over 20 cms rains. There is likely to be a reduction in rainfall from Tuesday, they said. Three days after the settlements of estate workers were swept away by devastating

landslides at Pettimudi near Rajamala, various agencies engaged in the rescue operations on Sunday recovered 17 bodies.

Despite adverse weather conditions in Pettimudi, rescue operations by NDRF, fire and police department personnel are continuing to recover bodies of more people feared trapped in the landslide, officials said. While 12 people were rescued, 43 bodies were found.

Meanwhile, incessant rains, landslides and opening of shutters of dams across rivers have led to rise in water levels in rivers and streams in central Kerala, aggravating the flood situation. Six shutters of Pamba dam in Pathanamthitta district were opened Sunday afternoon after its water level rose to 983.45 meter mark, raising concerns about floods in Ranni, Chengannur and Kuttanad regions. The shutters were opened to bring down the water level in the dam to 982 meters in nine hours, Pathanamthitta district officials said.

2,100 kg bell for Ram temple

While Dau Dayal, 50, was primarily responsible for making the 'ashtadhatu' bell, Iqbal Mistri, 56, was in charge of the designing, grinding, and polishing work

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Etah (Uttar Pradesh), August 9: A team of artisans at Jalesar town in Etah district of Uttar Pradesh have forged a bell weighing a whopping 2,100 kg for the new Ram temple in Ayodhya and are preparing to give it final touches before sending it to the holy town.

While Dau Dayal, 50, was primarily responsible for making the 'ashtadhatu' bell, Iqbal Mistri, 56, was in charge of the designing, grinding, and polishing work. Both pointed out that it was the first time in their lives that they were working on a bell of this size.

"When you work on a bell of this size, the challenges are greater. It is really hard to ensure you do not make a single mistake in the process," said Dau Dayal. Explaining the process, he said: "What is unique is that the bell is in one piece -- no



multiple pieces welded together. This is what makes the task much more difficult. The whole effort will go to waste even if there is a delay of five seconds in pouring the molten metal into the mould."

The casting of the bell involves many lengthy steps -- determining the shape and measurements painstakingly, cutting out wooden templates to make the mould, preparing metal, tuning, grinding,

and fitting the clapper. A crane was used to pour the alloy into the mould.

The 'ashtadhatu' bell is a combination of eight metals -- gold, silver, copper, zinc, lead, tin, iron, and mercury. A team of around 25 workers, both Hindus and Muslims, worked for a month for eight hours a day to make what would be 'among the largest bells' in the country.

"This piece, one of the largest bells in India, will be donated to the Ram temple," said Vikas Mittal, Chairman of Jalesar Municipal Council and owner of the workshop where the bell has been made.

The Mittals got the order to prepare the bell from the Nirmohi Akhara -- one of the litigants in the Ayodhya title dispute -- immediately after the matter was decided last November by the apex court, paving the way for the construction of the temple.

I-DAY REHEARSAL



A contingent of Kolkata police rehearses for the upcoming Independence Day Parade, during Unlock 3.0, at Red Road in Kolkata, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

WAIT FOR POWER ENDS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 9: Negotiating months of heavy snowing and the COVID-19 lockdown, the Kupwara district administration connected three villages located along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Keran area to the national electricity grid, ending a wait since Independence for power supply.

The job was not easy, officials said, recalling the acute shortage of manpower for the work after restrictions were imposed following the abrogation of Article 370 last year and the imposition of lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is an arduous five hours journey to Keran from here on a fair-weather road that meanders through apple and walnut orchards of the Kashmir Valley and the Pherkian Pass at 10,000 feet in the Shamasbari Ranges.

Keran remains cut-off for nearly six months due to heavy snow which can reach heights of

nine to 12 feet. For three hours of electricity, the Keran area, with a population of 14,000 in four panchayats, was till recently dependent on three old diesel gen-

erator (DG) sets, for which fuel was transported from the district headquarters.

"Installed over a decade back, the three DG sets were prone to frequent breakdowns further disrupting the meagre power supply, more so in winters when conducting repairs are next to impossible," Deputy Commissioner, Kupwara, Anshul Garg, said.



Kashmir doctor dies of Covid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 9: A senior doctor in Kashmir who was on the forefront of the battle against COVID-19 died at a hospital here Sunday after contracting the disease, officials said.

Dr Mohammad Ashraf Mir, a resident of Pampore area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district, passed away in the morning at the SKIMS hospital in Soura here, they said. The officials said Mir had been treating COVID-19 patients for the past four months and in the process, contracted the virus.

The doctor tested positive for COVID-19 and was admitted to the hospital with bilateral pneumonia. He was later shifted to an intensive care unit as he could not maintain oxygen saturation and passed away this morning, they added.



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha expressed his condolences to the family of the doctor, who was working as a medical officer in Pulwama. In his message, the Lt Governor prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul of the great corona warrior and strength to the bereaved family members, an official spokesman said.

He said Sinha also conveyed his deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Mir. Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president G A Mir also expressed condolences over Mir's demise, saying the deceased sacrificed his life while serving his patients.

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) said Mir was a hero, and the party was deeply saddened by his death. "Deeply saddened to hear about the demise of Dr. Mohd Ashraf Mir sb due to Covid. He was working round the clock since the pandemic began. May his soul rest in peace & his family find the courage to bear this irreparable loss. Our sincere condolences to the bereaved. He's a hero," it said in a tweet.

Man goes missing, returns to find he is 'dead and buried'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh), August 9: When Ahmad Hassan quarrelled with his wife Nagma a week ago and went missing for a few days thereafter, little did the couple or their family knew they would soon be faced with a mystery over an unidentified body.

On August 2, Ahmad Hassan of Colonelganj area of Kanpur went missing after arguing with wife Nagma. The family filed a missing complaint at the Chakeri police station when he did not return home

for two days. On August 5, police found a body and called the family for identification. They identified the body as Ahmad's and performed religious rituals and buried it.

To the utter surprise and shock of the grieving family, Ahmad returned home on August 7 -- alive. Evidently, he too was shocked to find that he had been taken to be dead and buried.

"I left home after a spat with my wife. On the way, a man helped me and I worked in a factory. I came back home on Friday after getting paid for my work. My house was

SURPRISE AND SHOCK

August 2, Ahmad Hassan of Colonelganj area of Kanpur went missing after arguing with wife Nagma

The family filed a missing complaint at the Chakeri police station when he did not return home for two days

August 5, police found a body and called the family for identification. They identified the body as Ahmad's and performed religious rituals and buried it

locked when I reached home. But my neighbours recognised me and called the police. Later, I was taken to the police station. I came to know

that a body identified by my brothers as mine was buried, but I am alive," said Ahmad.

Nagma was elated at the return

of her husband. She claimed that it was just a petty fight. "We had a verbal spat on a petty issue. He became angry and left the home in the evening. He did not come back for two days. We lodged a missing complaint. The police found a body and asked us to identify. We could not recognise the body even though the face was similar to my husband's. I was in doubt, but his brothers confirmed that it was him. I am happy that my husband has come back. We all are happy," she said.

While the family is happy, the Chakeri police is now in a quandary

-- who is the man whose body was buried by the family?

Kanpur Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Preetinder Singh said: "The body was identified as Ahmad's by his family but he has returned alive. We do not think that there is a need to take action against the family as they did it in confusion. We are now putting up posters at various places to identify the buried man. I have asked the police officials to see if doctors have drawn DNA samples for testing from the body or not while conducting post-mortem."

of the day quote

The sub-district hospital in Ponda in north Goa will be converted into a COVID-19 facility

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

The increasing attacks on party workers in Kashmir valley shows Pakistan's frustration

RAVINDER RAINA | J&K BJP PRESIDENT

Political leaders and people's representatives should follow norms for safety from COVID-19 and set an example for the public

KIRAN BEDI | LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF PONDICHERY

SHORT TAKES

■ BJP activist injured in J&K

Srinagar: A Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) activist was injured on Sunday when militants fired at him in Jammu and Kashmir's Badgam. Police sources said Abdul Hamid Najar was on a morning walk when the militants fired at him near the railway station. Najar, the president of Badgam BJP OBC Morcha, has been shifted to Srinagar for treatment, sources added. Earlier, militants killed a BJP Sarpanch, Sajad Ahmad Khanday in Qazigund area of Kulgam district on August 6.

■ Couple killed

Aurangabad: In a suspected case of honour killing in Bihar's Aurangabad district, a 19-year-old woman and her 22-year-old boyfriend were stabbed to death allegedly by her family members and an attempt was made to cremate the two bodies, a senior police officer said Sunday. Two persons have been arrested in this connection, and at least three others detained for questioning, Aurangabad Superintendent of Police (SP) Pankaj Kumar said. The victims, residents of Kapasia village in Mufassil police station area of the district, were in a relationship for the past two years, he said.

■ 6 die in J'khand

Deoghar: Six persons died Sunday after inhaling poisonous gas inside a septic tank in Jharkhand's Deoghar district, a senior police officer said. Two labourers had got into the septic tank of a private home in the morning to clean it. When they failed to return, the house owner's two sons entered the tank, Superintendent of Police Piyush Pandey said. As all four of them did not respond to calls, the house owner raised an alarm following which two neighbours went in, the SP said.

■ Four killed

Mahasamund: Four people were killed and five injured Sunday when their multi utility vehicle crashed into a stationary truck on National Highway 53 in Chhattisgarh's Mahasamund district, police said. The incident took place in the early hours of the day near Teka village under Pithora police station limits when the Tata Sumo was on its way to Maharashtra from West Bengal, said NK Swarnkar, station house officer (SHO) Pithora police station. "The driver apparently lost control of the vehicle and it ramed into a stationary truck after hitting a road divider near an eatery. While three occupants died on the spot, the fourth died while being shifted to a local hospital," he said.



Lack of sense of belonging to each other and unity of purpose and action had led to long subjugation and exploitation of India. Learning from this, all Indians need to be bound by the shared sense of Indianness while pursuing their respective cultural values and ethos

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

'INDEPENDENCE DAY WALK'

BSF has directed organising an 'Independence Day walk' at all its borders posts and field units along the Pakistan and Bangladesh fronts August 15, officials said Sunday



IWT MEET

India suggests video-conference

In a letter last week, the Indus Commissioner of India told his Pakistani counterpart that it is not conducive to hold the meeting at the Attari Joint Check Post due to the pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 9: India has suggested to Pakistan that the talks for discussing pending issues under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) be held through video-conferencing in view of the coronavirus pandemic, but Islamabad has been insisting that the parleys be conducted at the Attari check post, sources said Sunday.

In a letter last week, the Indus Commissioner of India told his Pakistani counterpart that it is not conducive to hold the meeting at the Attari Joint Check Post due to the pandemic. On Pakistan's request, a meeting was scheduled in last week of March to discuss pending issues under the Indus Water Treaty. However, it was deferred due to current pandemic.

Considering the fact that it may take some time for the situation to normalise and international travel to resume, the Indian Commissioner, in the first week of July, proposed to hold the meeting through video conference or any alternative means, sources said. In response, the Pakistan Commissioner, in his letter sent in last week of July, insisted on holding the conventional meeting at Attari Joint Check Post instead.

"The Indian Commissioner responded stating that the situation in India is still not conducive for travelling of his delegation and holding the meeting at Attari JCP as proposed by his counterpart and may take some time to allow such meeting at Attari JCP or New Delhi as desired by Pakistan," a source said.

The Indian Commissioner also



requested the Pakistan side to consider holding a virtual meeting as a viable option to discuss the pending and new issues, sources added. They noted that even the diplomatic talks with other countries have been taking place through virtual meetings and the Indus meeting can take place in a similar manner.

Currently, one of the pending issues between the two sides is the disagreement over the Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectricity projects. The Kishenganga project had been in operation since 2018 while work on Ratle stands abandoned since 2014 due to a contractual dispute between the Jammu and Kashmir government and the contractor.

After prolonged negotiations, India in 2016 sought appointment of a neutral expert to resolve this issue while Pakistan made a request for appointment of a Court of Arbitration (COA).

In November 2019, after a meeting of the Indian delegation headed by Jal Shakti Ministry Secretary with the World Bank to explore a way forward, it was agreed that the matter may be discussed by the two commissioners as per the Treaty provisions to decide the mode of resolution -- by the CoA or a neutral expert.

Tharoor's advice: Find new chief fast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 9: The Congress must expedite the process of finding a full-term president to arrest the growing public perception that the party is "adrift and rudderless", senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said Sunday.

Tharoor also said that he certainly thinks Rahul Gandhi has the "mettle, capability and aptitude to once again lead the party", but if he does not wish to do so then the party must "take action" to elect a new chief. His comments assume significance as they come just ahead of Sonia Gandhi completing one year as interim chief on August 10, with the party yet to find her successor: "I certainly believe we should be clear about our leadership going forward. I welcomed Sonia ji's appointment as interim president last year, but I do believe it's unfair to



her to expect her to carry this burden indefinitely," Tharoor said in an interview.

"We also need to arrest the growing public perception, fuelled by a dismissive media, that the Congress is adrift and rudderless, incapable of taking up the challenge of a credible national Opposition," the former Union minister said.

That is precisely what the Congress needs to urgently address

Sonia to remain interim chief for now: Cong

New Delhi: The Congress Sunday said Sonia Gandhi will continue as interim president till such time a "proper procedure" is implemented in the "not too distant future" to elect a party chief. Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi, during an online media briefing, said it was true that Sonia Gandhi's tenure as interim chief comes to an end on August 10, one year after she assumed the post, but it did not mean that the seat automatically falls vacant that day. "Sonia Gandhi is the president, she will continue till such time as a proper procedure is implemented and it will be implemented in the not too distant future," he said. "Yes, her tenure comes to an end on August 10. But be rest assured that there is a process which goes through the CWC (Congress Working Committee). This will be followed in the near future and a result will emerge," he said. The procedure is written in the Congress' constitution and the party is committed to follow it, Singhvi said, adding that it was being done and information will be shared on it soon.

by expediting the process of finding a full-term president, through a participatory and democratic process that will offer the winning candidate a legitimate mandate and the credibility that will be indispensable in ushering in much needed organisational and structural revival of the party, Tharoor

said.

Asked about growing voices in the Congress that Rahul Gandhi must come back as party chief and if it was the best possible scenario that he returns, Tharoor said, "Of course, if Rahul Gandhi is ready to resume leadership, all he has to do is to withdraw his resignation."

FESTIVE SPIRIT



A clay artist makes an idol of Lord Krishna as a part of preparation ahead of the Janmashtami festival, during Unlock 3.0 in Kolkata, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

RECORD 64,399 NEW CASES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 9: With a highest single-day spike of 64,399 cases, India's COVID-19 tally zoomed past 21 lakh Sunday, while the death toll climbed to 43,379 with 861 more fatalities, the Health Ministry said.

The number of recoveries surged to 14,80,884 with record 53,879 more people recuperating in the past 24 hours, taking recovery rate to 68.78 per cent. The case fatality rate has dropped 2.01 per cent, according to the ministry data.

There are 6,28,747 active cases of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), comprising 29.20 per cent of the total caseload in the country. The total coronavirus cases have mounted to 21,53,010, including 43,379 deaths, it said.

This is the third consecutive day that the COVID-19 cases have increased by more than 60,000. India had crossed the 20-lakh mark on Friday. As many as 7,19,364 samples were tested on Saturday, the highest in a day. A total of 2,41,06,535 samples have been tested so far, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research.

"India is performing around 500 tests for detection of COVID-19 per minute and the per-day testing ca-



The number of recoveries surged to 14,80,884 with record 53,879 more people recuperating in the past 24 hours, taking recovery rate to 68.78 per cent

capacity has increased over five lakhs," scientist and ICMR media coordinator Lokesh Sharma said.

Of the 861 more deaths, 275 are from Maharashtra, 118 from Tamil Nadu, 97 from Andhra Pradesh and 93 from Karnataka. Fifty-one more people died from the pathogen in West Bengal, 47 in Uttar Pradesh and 23 each in Punjab and Gujarat.

Delhi registered 16 more fatalities, followed by 15 in Madhya Pradesh, 13 in Bihar, 11 in Rajasthan and 10 in Jammu and Kashmir. Eight fatalities have been reported from Assam, seven from Haryana, five each from Puducherry and Uttarakhand, and four each from Jharkhand, Kerala and Tripura.

Two persons each succumbed to the contagion in Chhattisgarh and Goa, while Chandigarh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Manipur and Meghalaya have registered a fatality each. Of the total 43,379 deaths, Maharashtra has reported the maximum of 17,367, followed by 4,808 in Tamil Nadu, 4,098 in Delhi and 3,091 in Karnataka.

There have been 2,628 fatalities in Gujarat, 2,028 in Uttar Pradesh, 2,005 in West Bengal, 1,939 in Andhra Pradesh and 977 in Madhya Pradesh. A total of 778 people have died in Rajasthan due to the pandemic, followed by 627 in Telangana, 562 in Punjab, 474 in Haryana and 459 in Jammu and Kashmir.

Drive-in concept to combat corona this Durga puja

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, August 9: With little more than two months to go for Durga puja, festival committees in the city are brainstorming ways to ensure the safety of pandal-hoppers amid the COVID-19 crisis, while offering them a glimpse of the goddess.

Three Durga puja committees in the city, all crowd-pullers and located within one-km stretch in south Kolkata, have joined hands to introduce a drive-in 'darshan' concept - an arrangement which would allow people to slow down their car to take a look at the pandal and the Durga idol without having to alight from their cars.

"As maintaining physical distance is mandatory, we had to think of a concept that would avoid crowding near the pandals. Our patron, Texas-based Mrindul Pathak, came up with this drive-in concept during a video conference. Shortly after, we set the ball rolling," Kapil Dev Pathak, an officer-bearer of Badamtala pujo committee, said.



Sanitiser will be sprayed on the cars before every puja pandal, he said. "The drive-in route has been mapped in a certain way... Revellers will get to catch a glimpse of the Badamtala puja decoration, before proceeding westwards to 66 Pally, and finally the Nepal Bhattacharya Street Durga Puja at the end of the trail," Pathak explained.

The organisers have decided to pay tribute to auteur Satyajit Ray this time, he said. "As this year marks Ray's birth centenary, we chose Apu trilogy as the theme for the three marquees. Badamtala will portray scenes of 'Pather Panchali', 66 Pally of 'Aparajito' and Nepal Bhattacharya Street Pujo will depict 'Apu's Sansar'," he added.

ULTRA KILLED, TWO INJURED

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jammu, August 9: A terrorist was killed and two others injured as the Army foiled their infiltration bid on Sunday from across the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district.

Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Devender Anand said: "A group of terrorists attempted to infiltrate in the Krishna Ghati Sector but alert Indian troops detected them close to the LoC and engaged them, resulting in the killing of one terrorist and serious injuries to two others."

He said that security forces are maintaining a robust counter-infiltration grid along the LoC to foil any nefarious design of Pakistan. The spokesman added that Pakistan troops violated ceasefire at many locations on Sunday.



PM targets China at bhoomi puja

It went unnoticed. But Modi passed a snide remark against China by saying that there cannot be any love without the fear-factor. Modi invoked Lord Ram while addressing the gathering of saints and leaders and used the couplet, "Bhay bin ho na priti" (There is no love without fear). Though he did not name China per se in this context, the couplet reflected the ongoing Sino-Indian military tensions on the LAC. Modi has been following a tough policy while dealing with the border nation ever since the crisis

erupted. In fact, his speech mentioned five south-east Asian nations -- Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia -- and neighbouring Nepal and Sri Lanka where Lord Rama is being worshipped in more ways than one. He was indirectly wooing a Muslim country like Indonesia while praising Lord Ram's reach and his teachings. Then came the China moment when Modi said references to Lord Ram were found in China as well as Iran. He said in these countries the cultural influence of the ancient epic Ramayana is still felt. And then he significantly added that "when a nation is strong; it is able to ensure peace."

Govt plans gold amnesty scheme

As the revenues are taking a big hit; be it Income Tax collections, GST, Customs or otherwise, a worried Modi government is now planning to garner resources. The PSU selling route is not succeeding either due to slump in the market and with no

buyers. Thus, the Modi government has revived an old plan to bring a Gold Amnesty Scheme. Under the scheme it will ask people with unaccounted holdings of the yellow and white metal to declare it to tax authorities and pay levies. It was first envisaged by the Modi government long before it demonetised notes. Modi had unveiled three state-backed plans in 2015 to try to tap the world's largest private gold stash of about 25,000 tons held by households and institutions to trim physical demand, and reduce imports by providing people with alternative avenues for investment. The programmes failed to generate interest as a section of the people didn't want to part with their gold, usually in the form of jewellery and worn on special occasions, while others feared being penalised by tax authorities.

Dream fulfilled

August 5 will go down in the annals of history as PM Modi was instrumental in

fulfilling the dreams of millions of Hindus by commencing the construction of Ram Temple during his tenure. If he was the chief guest at the 'bhoomi puja', he may also inaugurate the "Bhavya Ram Temple" in 2023. He categorically told the temple trustees and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath that he wants the temple to be completed within the stipulated time frame. The Central government will not provide any money for the Trust and funds would be collected through a world-wide campaign. A corpus of Rs 5,000 crore will be created for the temple and allied activities.

Yogi's political graph rising

Ever since he rode to power in Uttar Pradesh and donned the mantle of UP Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath's political graph has been rapidly rising in the party. Away from the glare of the Lutyen's Delhi, Yogi is working hard in UP and also for image makeover. He may be a saffron-clad

Yogi but his ideology and Hindutva has not come in the way as an administrator. He has emerged as a tough task master. The political class and the elite may differ with his style of working and some may dub him anti-Muslim. Some even blame him for promoting casteism. But he has made room for himself in the party. He fought his way and is an established Chief Minister among his veteran peers. Obviously, now he is way ahead of even Shivraj Singh Chouhan too. Insiders in the BJP say that he is now the "third pillar" -- the first two being Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. The Ram Temple ceremony list of invitees is an indication that Yogi is even ahead of many top notches in Delhi. If reports are to be believed he is exploring the possibility of visiting the USA in September-October. He wants to address the same constituency that Modi once cultivated abroad. Some have advised that he should go to the USA only after the presidential polls in January. The final word on the issue is yet to be written.

of the day quote

Some precious moments with the Honourable PM of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern @indiannewslink event Aug 6, 2020. She paid a short visit to Radha Krishna Mandir and enjoyed a simple Indian vegetarian meal -- Puri, Chhole and Daal



Because of economic loss and uncertainty, many families are confronting the wrenching decision to pull their children out of Catholic schools



We had hoped to bring two of the fugitive killers to justice in 'Mujib Year' during Bangabandhu's birth centenary celebration. We have been able to catch one. We hope we will get another



SHORT TAKES

Storm hits Greek island

Athens: Five people, including an elderly couple and an 8-month-old baby, have been found dead as a storm hits the island of Evia in central Greece, authorities said Sunday. Two others are missing, and dozens have been trapped by flood waters in their homes and cars.

S'pore PM calls for resilience

Singapore: Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong Sunday called for resilience in the face of severe economic downturn on the 55th National Day. When delivering his National Day message, Lee said Singaporeans are understandably anxious and worried as business closures, retrenchments and unemployment are all likely to go up in the coming months, reports said..

Belarus holds presidential vote

Minsk: Tensions were high in Belarus as the country held a presidential election Sunday. Eight staff members for the main challenger to the authoritarian president were reportedly detained by police and one of the campaign's leading figures fled the country. The election pits President Alexander Lukashenko, who has held an iron grip on the ex-Soviet nation since 1994, against four others in an atmosphere charged with wide public dismay over the country's deteriorating economy, political repression and Lukashenko's brushoff of the coronavirus threat.

Nine killed in Egypt car crash

Cairo: A car crash Sunday left at least nine people dead and seven others injured north of the Egyptian capital, Cairo, the state-run news agency said.

Volcano erupts

Jakarta: Indonesian authorities issued a flight alert following the eruption of the Sinabung volcano in North Sumatra province. The National Volcanology Agency said that the 2,475-meter high volcano located in Karo district spewed a 2-km high column of volcanic ash, reports said.



US troops in Afghanistan would be reduced to less than 5,000 by the end of November

MARK ESPER | US SECRETARY OF DEFENCE

DEADLIEST DAY

Australia's second-most populous state, Victoria, reported its deadliest day of the COVID-19 outbreak Sunday, with 17 people dying, as police thwarted a planned anti-mask rally in the capital of Melbourne



Nagasaki urges nuke ban on 75th anniv of US atomic bombing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, August 9: The Japanese city of Nagasaki Sunday marked its 75th anniversary of the US atomic bombing, with the mayor and dwindling survivors urging world leaders including their own to do more for a nuclear weapons ban.

At 11:02 am, the moment the B-29 bomber Bockscar dropped a 4.5-ton (10,000-pound) plutonium bomb dubbed "Fat Man," Nagasaki survivors and other participants stood in a minute of silence to honor more than 70,000 dead. The August 9, 1945, bombing came three days after the United States dropped its first atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the world's first ever nuclear attack that killed 140,000. On August 15, Japan surrendered,



ending World War II. At the event at Nagasaki Peace Park, scaled down because of the coronavirus pandemic, Mayor Tomihisa Taue read a peace declaration in which he raised concern that nuclear states had in recent years retreated from disarmament efforts. Instead, they are upgrading and miniaturizing nuclear weapons for easier use, he said. Taue singled out the US and Russia for increasing risks by scrapping the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. "As a result, the threat of nuclear weapons being used is increasingly becoming real," Taue said. Noting that the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty entered into force 50 years ago, Taue urged the US and Russia to show a (asterisk)workable way(asterisk) towards their nuclear disarmament at the NPT review process next year.

US tops 5 million confirmed virus cases

AGENCIES

Rome, August 9: With confirmed coronavirus cases in the US hitting 5 million Sunday, by far the highest of any country, the failure of the most powerful nation in the world to contain the scourge has been met with astonishment and alarm in Europe.

Perhaps nowhere outside the US is America's bungled virus response viewed with more consternation than in Italy, which was ground zero of Europe's epidemic.

Italians were unprepared when the outbreak exploded in February, and the country still has one of the world's highest official death tolls at 35,000. But after a strict nationwide, 10-week lockdown, vigilant tracing of new clusters and general acceptance of mask mandates and social distancing, Italy has become a model of virus containment.

Yet, more than four months into a sustained outbreak, the U.S. reached the 5 million mark, according to the running count kept by Johns Hopkins University.

PAVING WAY FOR PEACE TALKS

Afghan govt to release 400 Taliban prisoners



Afghan President Ashraf Ghani at the Loya Jirga, a grand assembly

AGENCIES

Kabul, August 9: Afghanistan agreed Sunday to release 400 "hard-core" Taliban prisoners, paving the way for the beginning of peace talks aimed at ending more than 19 years of war.

Under election-year pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump for a deal allowing him to bring home American troops, the war-torn country's grand assembly, or Loya Jirga, Sunday approved the release, a controversial condition raised by the Taliban militants to join peace talks. "In order to remove an obstacle, allow the start of the peace process and an end of bloodshed, the Loya Jirga approves the release of 400 Taliban," the assembly said in a resolution.

Minutes later, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said, "Today, I will sign the release order of these 400 prisoners."

Last week Ghani invited some 3,200 Afghan community leaders and politicians to Kabul amid tight security and concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic to advise the government on whether the prisoners should be freed. With the release, the Afghan government will fulfil its pledge to release 5,000 Taliban prisoners. Talks between the warring Taliban and government will start in Doha this week, Western diplomats said. Ghani ap

pealed to the hardline Islamist group to pledge to a complete cease-fire ahead of talks.

Deliberation over the release of last batch of Taliban prisoners, accused of conducting some of the bloodiest attacks across Afghanistan, had triggered outrage among civilians and rights groups who questioned the morality of the peace process. In 2019 alone, more than 10,000 civilians were killed or injured in the conflict in Afghanistan, putting total casualties in the past decade over 100,000, a United Nations report said last year.

Ahead of the Loya Jirga, Human Rights Watch cautioned that many of the prisoners had been jailed under "overly broad terrorism laws that provide for indefinite preventive detention". Ahead of November US elections, Trump is determined to fulfil a major campaign promise of ending America's longest war.

The drawdown will bring the number of US troops to "a number less than 5,000" by the end of November, Defense Secretary Mark Esper said in an interview broadcast on Saturday.

In a February pact allowing for the withdrawal of US troops, Washington and the Taliban agreed on the release of the Taliban prisoners as a condition for the talks with Kabul.

US begins highest level Taiwan visit in decades

AGENCIES

Taipei, August 9: US Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar arrived in Taiwan Sunday in the highest-level visit by an American Cabinet official since the break in formal diplomatic relations between Washington and Taipei in 1979.

Beijing has already protested Azar's visit as a betrayal of US commitments not to have official contact with the island. China claims Taiwan as its own territory, to be brought under its control by military force if necessary.

Azar is due to meet with the island's independence-leaning President Tsai Ing-wen along with health officials during a three-day visit aimed at highlighting cooperation in the fight against the coronavirus.

Taiwan's government-run health care system has been credited with keeping the number of coronavirus cases to under 500 with just seven deaths, despite its close proximity to China where the virus originated.

China sees Taiwan as a key irritant in its troubled relationship with Washington, with whom it is also at odds over trade, technology, the South China Sea and China's response to the virus pandemic.

The US maintains only unofficial ties with Taiwan in deference to Beijing, but is the island's most important ally and provider of defence equipment.

Azar is the first health secretary to visit Taiwan and the first Cabinet member to visit in six years. In 2014, then-Environmental Protection Agency administrator Gina McCarthy visited Taiwan, sparking

protests from Beijing.

Azar's office said he will hold discussions on COVID-19, global health and Taiwan's role as a supplier of medical equipment and technology. Azar's visit was facilitated by the 2018 passage of the Taiwan Travel Act, which encouraged Washington to send higher-level officials to Taiwan after decades during which such contacts were rare and freighted with safeguards to avoid roiling ties with Beijing.

China has cut contacts with Tsai over her refusal to recognise China's claim to the island and has brought increasing diplomatic, economic and military pressure against her, including by poaching away several of its remaining diplomatic allies and excluding it from international gatherings including the World Health Assembly.

Lebanon minister resigns in wake of deadly Beirut blast

Her resignation comes as about half a dozen lawmakers offered their resignation in protest over government performance

AGENCIES

Beirut, August 9: Lebanon's information minister resigned Sunday as the country grapples with the aftermath of the devastating blast that ripped through the capital and raised public anger to new levels.

The resignation comes after a night of demonstrations against the ruling elite, blamed for the chronic mismanagement and corruption that is believed to be behind the explosion in a Beirut Port warehouse.

Hundreds of tons of highly explosive material were stored in the waterfront hangar, and the blast sent a shock wave that killed at least 160 people, wounded nearly 6,000 and defaced the coastline of Beirut — destroying hundreds of buildings. Manal Abdel-Samad said in her resignation letter that change



Manal Abdel-Samad

remained "elusive" and she regrets failing to fulfill the aspirations of the Lebanese people.

Local media also reported that another minister, and a close advisor to Prime Minister Hassan Diab, was also expected to resign. Diab met with his Cabinet reportedly to discuss the resignations Sunday, but there were no comments after the meeting. "Given the magni-

tude of the catastrophe caused by the Beirut earthquake that shook the nation and hurt our hearts and minds, and in respect for the martyrs, and the pains of the wounded, missing and displaced, and in response to the public will for change, I resign from the government," Abdel-Samad wrote. In the country where civil war raged for 15 years, few, if any, have been held accountable for it and most of the warlords remain in power or leading powerful political factions. On Sunday, France's ambassador to Lebanon said his country is taking part in the investigation of the Aug. 4 blast. Bruno Foucher tweeted that 46 officers are operating as part of the judicial investigation. That probe was started by a French prosecutor after a national of France, Jean-Marc Bonfils, was killed in the blast and others injured.



A couple smile as their faces covered with coloured powder during the Holi Festival in Kyiv, Ukraine

PTI PHOTO

No parties, no trips: Colleges set Covid-19 rules for fall

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chicago (US), August 9: As they struggle to salvage some semblance of a campus experience this fall, US colleges are requiring promises from students to help contain the coronavirus — no keg parties, no long road trips and no outside guests on campus.

No kidding. Administrators warn that failure to wear masks, practice social distancing and avoid mass gatherings could bring serious consequences, including getting booted from school.

Critics question whether it's realistic to demand that college students not act like typical college students. But the push illustrates the high stakes for

universities planning to welcome at least some students back. Wide-scale Covid-19 testing, quarantines and plexiglass barriers in classrooms won't work if too many students misbehave. "I think that the majority of students are going to be really respectful and wear their masks, social distance, keep gatherings small," said incoming Tulane University senior Sanjali De Silva. "But I fear that there will be a distinct group of students that will decide not to do that. And it'll be a big bummer."

Tulane students have already received a stark warning from the school in New Orleans, an early pandemic hot spot.



MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA: LANKA'S MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

The 74-year-old has returned to power, with his newly-formed Sri Lanka People's Party scripting history by becoming the political party with the shortest life span to gain absolute power in the island nation's political history

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, August 9: When two-time President Mahinda Rajapaksa lost Sri Lanka's presidential elections in 2015, many thought the shrewd leader, who crushed the Tamil Tigers in a brutal military campaign, was a spent force.

But five years later, the 74-year-old has returned to power, with his newly-formed Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) scripting history by becoming the political party with the shortest life span to gain absolute power in the island nation's political history.

Rajapaksa was sworn in as the Prime Minister for the fourth time

Sunday by his younger brother and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa at the Rajamaha Viharaya in Kelaniya, an ancient Buddhist shrine that has often been associated with the rise and fall of Sri Lanka.

His party bagged a total of 150 seats with its allies in the 225-member assembly, securing two-thirds majority in Parliament needed to effect key constitutional changes to consolidate the powerful Rajapaksa clan's control on power. The Rajapaksas want to repeal the 19th Amendment to the Constitution which had curbed the presidential powers. However, it has not been a smooth sailing for Rajapaksa, a street-fighter politician who en-

tered Parliament when he was just 24, becoming the youngest lawmaker. After losing the seat in 1977, he focused on his law career until reentering Parliament in 1989.

He served as labour minister (1994-2001) and minister of fisheries and aquatic resources (1997-2001) under President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who appointed him as prime minister after the general election of April 2004, when the United People's Freedom Alliance won a majority.

He was chosen as the Sri Lanka Freedom Party's presidential nominee in November 2005. Shortly after his victory in the election, Rajapaksa announced his inten-



tion to crush the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which had established a de facto government in northern Sri Lanka.

The Rajapaksa family has dominated Sri Lankan politics for two decades. His domestic popularity appeared to wane during 2014 because

of rising prices and concerns of corruption and abuse of power, and, in an attempt to secure another presidential term before losing support, he again called for an early presidential poll. But his political gamble backfired and he was defeated by former ally Maithripala

Sirisena in the elections in 2015.

During his tenure as President, Rajapaksa concluded several key infrastructure deals with China, raising concerns in India and the West. Critics say it was due to Rajapaksa that the country has fallen into the "Chinese debt trap". The strategic Hambantota port, which was funded by a Chinese loan during his regime, was leased to Beijing on a 99-year debt-for-equity swap in 2017 after the country failed to pay off the debt. In 2015, Parliament restored a constitutional two-term limit on the presidency barring Rajapaksa from contesting again. In August, Rajapaksa was elected to Parliament.

of the day quote

It pains me that 90% of the focus of industry bodies is on major industries in big cities. There is seldom any focus on rural, tribal and remote areas. There is a need to change it. Advance sector wise planning is the need of the hour to make India a super power



NITIN GADKARI | ROAD TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND MSME MINISTER

Coal-related and mining-related businesses are becoming an increasingly insignificant part of the group's portfolio



JUGESHINDER SINGH | CFO, ADANI GROUP

GeM 4.0 aims to offer a unified system that is smarter, better unified, more intelligent and inclusive. This involves a technology roadmap that enhances each and every step of the user experience on the portal: creating unified and seamless user journeys for buyers and sellers



TALLEEN KUMAR | CEO, GEM

SHORT TAKES

■ CBDT issues guidance note

New Delhi: Indian authorities will not deviate from the resolution order passed by statutory appellate body ITAT in cross-border tax disputes which are undergoing simultaneous resolution through mutual agreement procedure (MAP), the I-T department has said. MAP is an alternative dispute resolution process under the tax treaties, under which competent authorities of two countries enter into discussions to resolve tax related disputes.

■ 'Railways, GeM portal to integrate'

New Delhi: Indian Railways is committed to integrate with the government e-marketplace (GeM) portal to move all its procurement to the platform, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said Sunday. The railways' direct procurement of goods for its operations or its PSUs stood at about ₹70,000 cr-₹75,000 cr, the Railways Minister said. "I am happy to share that GeM and Indian Railways are burning the midnight oil, working day and night to ensure this entire ₹70,000 cr procurement on the GeM platform," Goyal said.

■ OMCs hold fuel prices

New Delhi: Oil marketing companies (OMCs) continued to keep automobile fuel prices unchanged Sunday, with diesel prices across the four metros remaining untouched for the ninth day in a row. Petrol prices have not changed for over 40 days now in the country. In the national capital, diesel was priced at ₹73.56 per litre Sunday. Petrol price in Bhubaneswar was ₹81.03 p/l, the same since June 29 while diesel's was ₹80.03 p/l.

■ Aramco's Apr-June profit down 73%

New Delhi: Energy giant Saudi Aramco has reported a 73% fall in its profit, or the net income, for the April-June quarter to \$6.6 billion amid the pandemic. During the same period of 2019, the company had reported a net income of \$24.7 billion. For the first half of 2020, it has reported a net income of \$23.2 billion, compared to \$46.9 billion reported during the corresponding period a year ago, the company said.



Down the road, as the economy is continuing to open up, if we see that inventories are accumulating rapidly then that would be a clear sign that there is a demand deficiency problem. At that point, I think stimulus would be very useful

ARVIND PANAGARIYA | FORMER VICE-CHAIRMAN, NITI AAYOG

'INDIA ATTRACTIVE PROPOSITION FOR UK'

India is an attractive option for UK businesses looking for alternatives to China, in view of the prevailing sentiments globally, the UK-India Business Council (UKIBC) has said. UKIBC's first Indian Group CEO Jayant Krishna said he expects to see growth in UK-India trade as both countries come out of the nCoV crisis



PM launches ₹1L cr financing facility

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 9: Asserting that the government's agri-reforms are focussed on empowering small farmers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday launched a financing facility of ₹1 lakh crore under the Agri-Infra Fund that will help create post-harvest infrastructure in villages and generate jobs.

He also said the country does not face problems in farm production but in post-harvest losses, and therefore efforts are being made to strengthen post-harvest infrastructure facilities and ensure better income for farmers.

Legal hurdles are being removed and major push for agri-reforms are being given to encourage investment in rural India for creating post-harvest linkages, he added.

Modi launched the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund through a video conference on the auspicious occasion of 'Balram Jayanti', a day when farmers worship plough. Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and farmers from some states also participated in the video conference.

"On this auspicious occasion, a special fund of ₹1 lakh crore has been launched to create agriculture-related infrastructure facilities in the country. This will help in creating better storage facilities and modern cold storage chains in villages. Many employment op-

AGRI-INFRA FUND



On the auspicious occasion of Balram Jayanti, a special fund of ₹1 lakh crore has been launched to create agriculture-related infrastructure facilities in the country, which will help in creating better storage facilities and modern cold storage chains in villages, creating employment opportunities

NARENDRA MODI, PRIME MINISTER

portunities will get created in villages," Modi said after the launch.

The prime minister reiterated that India has a huge opportunity to invest in post-harvest management solutions like warehousing, cold chain and food processing, and

build a global presence in areas such as organic and fortified foods.

He also mentioned that this scheme provides a good opportunity for startups in agriculture to avail the benefits and scale their operations, thereby creating an ecosys-

BIZ BUZZ

CAIT launches campaign to boycott Chinese goods

New Delhi: On the anniversary of Quit India Movement, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) Sunday launched a campaign 'China Quit India' to boycott Chinese goods. The trader's body said there is an urgent need to check "China's growing footsteps in India and import of Chinese goods". Adding a new dimension to its nationwide campaign "Bhartiya Saamaan-Hamara Abhimaan", CAIT said it has launched the movement to boycott Chinese goods and held a protest dharna at about 600 places in different states. Expressing concerns over Chinese investment in various Indian companies, startups and digital apps, CAIT said there is a need to take necessary action in this regard. It said that Chinese investments in government projects and various sensitive construction works should be put under government scanner.



US senators mull 'Make Billionaires Pay Act'

New York: Three Senators, led by Bernie Sanders, have attracted global attention for introducing the "Make Billionaires Pay Act," aiming to tax US tech's top leaders tens of billions of dollars in wealth made during the coronavirus pandemic. The "Make Billionaires Pay Act" would impose a one-time 60 per cent tax on wealth gains made by billionaires between March 18, 2020, and January 1, 2021. Riding growing global despair about inequity, the Senators suggest that funds would be used to pay for out-of-pocket health-care expenses for all Americans for a year. Besides Sanders, the Senators are Ed Markey and Kirsten Gillibrand.



DGTR recommends CVD on steel imports

New Delhi: The Commerce Ministry has recommended imposition of provisional countervailing duty (CVD) on certain steel products from Indonesia to guard domestic manufacturers from subsidised imports. The ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) in its preliminary findings has recommended the duty after concluding in its probe that 'Flat Products of Stainless Steel' have been exported to India from Indonesia at subsidised prices. The domestic industry has suffered material injury due to subsidisation of the product and therefore it is necessary to recommend imposition of provisional countervailing duty on these imports, the DGTR has said in a notification. It said that the directorate is of the view that imposition of provisional countervailing duty is required to offset subsidisation and injury, pending completion of the investigation.



All you need to know about home insurance

Our home is where we belong, where we painstakingly build our dream home and take measures to protect it by installing security doors, cameras or essential locking systems to ensure that our loved ones are safe. Now, one of the best ways to protect one's house is also Home Insurance which is fundamentally an insurance cover one takes to safeguard his/her home against unknown adversities which cause substantial financial losses.

On an average, we spend most part of our lives in paying our home loans but we forget one essential protection measure which is home insurance. Overall insurance penetration in India is less than 1% which is considerably lower and hence we see a dismal contribution made by home insurance as well.

Who can buy home insurance and what is covered?

Anyone who is the owner or occupant of a property can purchase a home insurance policy. Individuals who have rented a property can also apply for a home insurance policy. An or-

ganisation who is an owner of the property can also now take a home insurance policy. Home insurance provides coverage against fire and allied perils, burglary, theft, terrorism, etc. for building, contents, jewellery & valuables, curios and works of art.

Why is home insurance important?

■ Security against natural calamities:

One of the biggest losses in any natural calamity is the loss of one's home. During such calamities a drastic difference has been noted between the incurred economic loss and the insured losses. Thus, opting for a home insurance is a step towards protecting your home against natural



TAPAN SINGHEL

The overall insurance penetration in India is less than 1% which is considerably lower and hence we see a dismal contribution made by home insurance as well

■ Covers risk arising due to fire and theft:

In case of incidents such as fire, a home insurance policy not only helps you with the cost of construction as per your policy terms and conditions, but also offers add-ons such as re-settlement cover for situations when you need to relocate due to severe damages at your home. In case of a theft in an insured's home, a home insurance policy can cover stolen or damaged contents as well.

■ Protection towards liabilities:

- At times, physical or property loss of a third person caused by some accident at your home, for instance- a cylinder blast or per-

haps a repair activity at your home may cause a loss to your neighbor's property. All such contingencies can be effectively covered under home insurance by opting for public liability coverage.

■ Flexible valuation:

Home insurance provides the flexibility to choose one's preferred type of insurance like on agreed value basis where the loss is settled by the insurer on the value of the property or content agreed by the insured at the time of purchasing the insurance policy or Reinstatement basis where the insurer will settle the loss by replacing the damaged property or item with a new one.

■ Add-on covers: Home insurance also has add-on covers like loss of rent, temporary resettlement cover, public liability, dog insurance cover, ATM withdrawal cover, lost wallet cover, key and lock replacement cover which provides wider protection for your home.

(The writer is the MD & CEO of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance)

Twitter keen to buy TikTok ops in US

REUTERS

New York, August 9: Twitter Inc has approached TikTok's Chinese owner ByteDance to express interest in acquiring the US operations of the video-sharing app, two people familiar with the matter told Reuters, as experts raised doubts over Twitter's ability to put together financing for a potential deal.

It is far from certain that Twitter would be able to outbid Microsoft Corp and complete such a transformative deal in the 45 days that US President Donald Trump has given ByteDance to agree to a sale, the sources said Saturday.

The news of Twitter and TikTok being in preliminary talks and Microsoft still being seen as the front-runner in bidding for the app's US operations was reported earlier by the Wall Street Journal.

Twitter has a market capitalization of close to \$30 billion (23 billion pounds), almost as much as the valuation of TikTok's assets to be divested, and would need to raise additional capital to fund the deal, according to the sources.

"Twitter will have a hard time putting together enough financing to acquire even the US operations of TikTok. It doesn't have enough borrowing capacity", said Erik Gordon, a professor at the University of Michigan.



It is far from certain that Twitter would be able to outbid Microsoft Corp and complete such a transformative deal in 45 days

"If it (Twitter) tries to put together an investor group, the terms will be tough. Twitter's own shareholders might prefer that management focus on its existing business", he added. One of Twitter's shareholders, private equity firm Silver Lake, is interested in helping fund a potential deal, one of the sources added.

Twitter has also privately made a case that its bid would face less regulatory scrutiny than Microsoft's, and will not face any pressure from China given that it is not active in that country, the sources said.

NINL's fate at stake as promoters deny funding

The Officers' Association of NINL earlier had urged the Centre to review its decision to disinvest 100% equity in NINL



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 9: After the decision of strategic disinvestment of 100% shares in Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd (NINL) taken by the Central Government, the fate of the company at a stake. Major promoter MMTC as well as other minor promoters have stopped further funding for running of the plant leading to suspension of production of all units from March 2020 during COVID-19 lockdown period.

The Officers' Association of NINL earlier had urged the Centre to review its decision to disinvest 100% equity in NINL and demanded that major promoters infuse funds for running of the steel plant at the optimum level.

Rajya Sabha MP Amar Pattnaik urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi for merger of Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd (NINL) with SAIL/RINL/NMDC.

NINL has been producing and exporting pig iron and in fact it was the largest exporter of pig iron since 2002. It also produces billets, LAM coke, crude tar, fertiliser and sinter among others. The present capacity of the plant is 1.1 Million Ton per annum.

The state government allotted an undisputed 2,500 acre land with iron ore mines of 110 Million Ton reserve. The plant has all infrastructure facilities to enhance its capacity to 10 MTPA without any hassles as regards to availability of land and raw material supply.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 9: India's coal import fell 43.2% to 11.13 million tonnes (MT) in July this year on account of high stockpile of the dry fuel at pitheads, plants and ports. The country had imported 19.61 MT of coal in July 2019, according to a provisional compilation, by mjunction services limited, based on monitoring of vessels' positions and data received from shipping companies.

Mjunction, which is a joint venture between Tata Steel and SAIL, is a B2B e-commerce company that also publishes research reports on coal and steel verticals.

"Imports in July 2020 stood at 11.13 million tonnes (provisional). Earlier, coal and coke imports in July 2019 stood at 19.61 MT," it said.

During April-July 2020, total coal imports were recorded at 57.27 MT, which is 35.76 per cent lower than 89.15 MT imported during April-July 2019, it said.

Commenting on the current trend in coal imports, mjunction MD and CEO Vinaya Varma said, "Import demand continued to be weak amidst high stockpile of coal at pitheads, plants and ports. The



market participants seem to have adopted a wait and watch approach and are currently looking for a direction. We do not expect to see any significant variation in volumes in the short-term."

During April-July 2020, non-coking coal imports stood at 38.84 MT as compared to 60.97 MT imported in the corresponding period last year.

'E-auctioning dates likely to be extended'

Kolkata: The dates for submission of bids for online auction of coal blocks for commercial mining could be further extended due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, sources said Sunday. The Centre had earlier extended the dates for submission of technical bids. According to the revised schedule, the last date for submitting a technical bid is 2 pm of September 29, and e-auction would be carried out for qualified bidders between October 19 and November 9.

SHORT TAKES

Manitombi dead

Kolkata: Former India defender and Mohun Bagan captain Manitombi Singh died Sunday at the age of 39 at his native village near Imphal in Manipur, club sources said. Manitombi was suffering from prolonged illness and breathed his last in the early hours of Sunday. He is survived by his wife and an eight-year-old son. “Mohun Bagan family is deeply saddened by the untimely demise of former club captain Manitombi Singh,” the club posted on their Twitter handle. Manitombi was a key member of the Stephen Constantine-coached India under-23 side that lifted the LG Cup in 2003 by defeating Vietnam 3-2 in Ho Chi Minh City.

Ready to roll

Lexington: Serena Williams is ready and raring to go. She is preparing for the inaugural Top Seed Open tennis tournament which starts here Monday. It is an event which is being seen as a build-up to this month's US Open in New York. Other top stars in the event are Venus Williams, Victoria Azarenka, Sloane Stephens and Coco Gauff. However, the main attraction is Serena, currently World No. 9. Serena has a history of blood clots and pulmonary embolisms that have affected her lung capacity. She said she is ‘super, super careful’ in avoiding exposure to COVID-19. The 38-year-old acknowledged during Saturday's virtual news conference that she's been ‘a bit of a recluse’. “I've been a little neurotic to an extent, but that's just what I have to be right now,” Serena said.

Juve appoint Pirlo

Turin: Italian midfield great Andrea Pirlo has been appointed as the new head coach of Serie A champions Juventus. He will replace Maurizio Sarri, who was sacked after the Champions League exit. Pirlo, the 41-year-old former World Cup winner was announced as his successor. “Andrea Pirlo today signed a two-year contract until 30 June 2022,” said Juventus in their statement, Sunday. The decision also comes just nine days after Pirlo was announced as the coach of the Juve's under-23 squad. This will be the first managerial job for Pirlo, who retired from football in November 2017. Juventus was the last club Pirlo played for in Italy after a highly successful 10 years at AC Milan.

Stadium named

Chandigarh: The Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) has decided to name its new stadium in Mullanpur after the last ruler of erstwhile Patiala state, late Maharaja Yadavindra Singh, who played a Test match for India in 1934. He was the father of present Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh. The decision to name the new stadium after the maharaja was taken during a meeting Saturday. It was attended by PCA president Rajinder Gupta and secretary, Puneet Bali apart from other office-bearers of the association. “The idea was proposed by the PCA president and has been given approval,” Bali said. The PCA has also started the process of renovating the existing IS Bindra Stadium to turn it into an international cricket academy.

Knight gutted

London: England captain Heather Knight said that she was ‘gutted’ that the 2021 Women's World Cup in New Zealand has been postponed by a year. She is hoping it doesn't turn out to be an excuse for boards to put women's cricket on the backburner for the next 12 months. The decision to postpone the event was taken Friday by the ICC. “Pretty gutted to be honest. I know tough decisions have to be made right now and it would have taken a lot of work (and \$\$), but it was feasible in NZ (New Zealand). Hopefully it's not an excuse for boards to put women's cricket on the backburner for the next 12 months with no WC to prepare for,” the 2017 World Cup-winning captain tweeted.

AGENCIES

BARCELONA BOOK CHAMPIONS LEAGUE LAST 8 SPOT RIDING ON MESSI'S BRILLIANCE

Napoli ‘Messimerised’

AGENCIES

Barcelona, August 9: A fired-up Lionel Messi led Barcelona to a 3-1 win at home to Napoli here Saturday for a 4-2 aggregate victory. The win took the club into the Champions League quarterfinals for the 13th consecutive season where they face Bayern Munich.

The Catalans had a shaky start but took the lead in the 10th minute with a powerful header from a corner by Clement Lenglet before Messi scored a superb second in the 23rd minute. He saw off four defenders to curl the ball into the far bottom corner.

Messi had the ball in the net again soon after following a superb team move but the goal was harshly ruled out for handball by the Argentine following a VAR review. However, Messi was not done for the night. He won a penalty which Luis Suarez converted for Barca's third.

Napoli got one back when

Lorenzo Insigne converted a spot-kick at the end of the first half. They were the better side after the interval but Barcelona survived to set up a mouth-watering clash with Bayern in the ‘Final Eight’ tournament beginning in Lisbon next Friday.

“We got the result we wanted. We've spent two weeks preparing

for the game, knowing how difficult it would be and so it proved as they made it tough for us in certain moments,” said Suarez after the game. “We were taken by surprise at the start but we scored first. If they had scored it would have caused uncertainty but we managed the game well,” the Uruguayan added.

Messi had sounded the alarm after Barcelona's rusty performance in the 1-1 draw in the last-16 first leg back

in February. He then said they stood no chance of winning Europe's top prize, which has eluded them since 2015, unless they improved.

Messi would have been worried by Barca's stuttering start which saw

Napoli swarm all over the home side's area and Dries Mertens clip the crossbar in the second minute with

a scuffed shot.

But Napoli's slack defending allowed Lenglet to score with a free header which settled Barcelona nerves while Messi effectively killed the tie off with his goal and by winning the penalty by chasing down Kalidou Koulibaly in the area and earning a foul.

However, the fact Napoli ended the game so well, with Hirving Lozano hitting the post and Arkadiusz Milik's header ruled out for offside, will certainly be a cause of concern for Barcelona. However, they always can fall back on ‘Messimagic’ to guide them through.

| RESULTS | |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Barcelona 3 | Napoli 1 |
| Bayern Munich 4 | Chelsea 1 |

“

It will be tough for us because they (Bayern) had an excellent season. It will be difficult for us but also for them. They are an excellent team, but so are we

QUIQUE SETIEN | BARCELONA COACH

GERMAN GIANTS IN CL QUARTERS

Lewandowski leads Bayern's goal rush



GOAL HUNGRY: Robert Lewandowski scores from spot during the Champions League game played Saturday against Chelsea

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Munich, August 9: The coronavirus pandemic has changed almost everything about the Champions League (CL) – empty stadiums, games in August and a tournament in Portugal. However, one thing hasn't changed. Bayern Munich keep winning, and Robert Lewandowski keeps scoring.

The Poland striker scored twice and set up two more goals as Bayern Munich hammered Chelsea 4-1 Saturday for a 7-1 win on aggregate here to book a ticket to Lisbon.

Bayern Munich have won 18 straight competitive games going back to February and hasn't lost since December. Next up is a quarterfinal against Barcelona which is expected to be a mouth-watering clash.

“We wanted to win the game and show we were picking up where we left off,” Bayern coach Hansi Flick told ‘Sky Sports’. “As with

any opponent, we have the requisite respect for Barcelona and we're going to prepare well,” Flick added.

Lewandowski has 13 goals in seven Champions League games this season and 53 in 44 across all competitions.

Bayern started with a 3-0 lead from the first leg in February. They went ahead after 10 minutes when Lewandowski scored from the penalty spot after he'd been tripped by goalkeeper Willy Caballero when through on goal. Lewandowski then provided the perfect pass to play in Ivan Perisic for Bayern's second goal.

Corentin Tolisso added another for Bayern in the 76th when he was left unmarked to meet a cross from Lewandowski.

Then Lewandowski headed in the fourth off an assist from Alvaro Odriozola eight minutes later. In between Chelsea got a goal just before the interval through Tammy Abraham. But then even the writing was clear on the wall for the English side.

ENGLAND WIN SERIES OPENER AGAINST PAKISTAN

No negative thoughts for Buttler

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Manchester, August 9: With just a half century to boast about in 13 earlier innings, Jos Buttler feared he might be playing his last Test in the match against Pakistan. However, the keeper-batsman laid those doubts to rest with a crucial knock under pressure to guide England to a memorable three-wicket win.

Buttler (75, 101b, 7x4, 1x6) shared a 139-run partnership for the sixth wicket with Chris Woakes (84 not out, 120b, 10x4) to fashion a memorable win for England after the hosts had been reduced to 117 for five after lunch. Yes Woakes did put the icing on the cake with the winning shot, but it was Buttler who had got the counter-attack going to unsettle Pakistan.

Buttler had been had been struggling with the bat for quite some time. Lapses with the wicket-keeping gloves at Old Trafford only added to the scrutiny around him, with critics calling for his head.

“At times there's been some lonely nights thinking about it. Definitely thoughts go through your head. Potentially if I don't score any runs, I've played my last game. These are the kind of things that are in



TIMELY KNOCK: Jos Buttler raises his bat after reaching his half century against Pakistan at Old Trafford, Saturday

Stokes ruled out

Manchester: England's star all-rounder Ben Stokes will miss the remainder of the three-match Test series against Pakistan due to family reasons, ECB said Sunday. It however, did not specify the exact reasons for his pullout. “Stokes will leave the UK later this week and travel to New Zealand. He will miss England's two Test matches against Pakistan at the Ageas Bowl starting Thursday 13 August and Friday 21 August,” the ECB statement said.

your head,” Buttler said Saturday after the win against Pakistan in the series opener here. “I'm aware I did

n't keep well. I missed some chances and at this level you can't afford to do that no matter how many runs you score. You've got to be better, I know that,” Buttler added.

Buttler said he kept believing in himself and was pleased to have made a contribution to the team's cause. “You've got to try and shut them (negative thoughts) out and focus on the here and now and play the situation. I'm pleased that I was able to do that,” Buttler said. **Brief scores:** Pakistan 326 and 169 (Stuart Broad 3/37) lost to England 219 and 277 for 7 (Chris Woakes 84 n o, Jos Buttler 75, Joe Root 42, Yasir Shah 4/99) by three wickets.

SOME IMPORTANT TOURNEYS TO BE SCRAPPED

BCCI eyes Nov 19 to start domestic events

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 9: The BCCI is mulling November 19 as tentative date for start of the domestic season with Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament. However, Indian players in various IPL teams won't be able to play first few rounds due to quarantine protocols in place.

The delay in the beginning of the domestic season due to COVID-19 pandemic means that only Mushtaq Ali Trophy and Ranji Trophy (December 13- March 10) comprising 245 games will be played now. There will be no Vijay Hazare Trophy, Duleep Trophy or Challenger Series this year and as of now there is no provision for Irani Cup also.

“This is a tentative list that has been prepared and it has gone for approval of president Sourav

Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah,” a senior BCCI official said.

Regarding quarantine the official said, “That's an issue primarily for the uncapped players. Now even if a player's team are knocked out before play-offs, he won't be back before November 3 and till November 17 will be in quarantine.”

It was learnt that unlike the last two years where five teams with most points qualified from group A and B, this year, top two teams from group A, B and C (eight team groups) will qualify for quarterfinals. The seventh quarterfinalist will be the best third placed team (in terms of quotient) from all three groups.

The eighth side will be the winner of a play-off game between champions of group D (comprising minnows and relegated teams) and group E (six Northeast teams).

IPL-13 TITLE SPONSORSHIP

Vivo exit doesn't bother BCCI boss

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 9: BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has described the suspension of the IPL title sponsorship deal with Chinese mobile phone company Vivo as just ‘blip’, dismissing talk that it might lead to a ‘financial crisis’.

The BCCI and Vivo decided Thursday to suspend their partnership for the 2020 IPL beginning September 19 in the UAE. This decision was taken amid the clamour to boycott Chinese products.

The title sponsorship is a significant part of the IPL's commercial revenue. Vivo annually pays ₹440 crore to the BCCI for the IPL sponsorship. The deal is till 2022.

“I wouldn't call it as a financial crisis. It's just a little bit of a blip,” Ganguly said during a webinar Sunday. “BCCI has made this game so strong that it is able to handle all these blips,” Ganguly added. He informed that the BCCI always has a ‘Plan B’ for this kind of situations.

“You keep your other options open. It is like Plan A and Plan B. Sensible people do it. Sensible

Kohli excited as IPL-13 gets closer

Mumbai: India captain Virat Kohli took to social media Sunday to share his excitement at the prospect of leading Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in the 13th edition of the IPL which begins September 19 in the UAE. The Bangalore-based team have reach the finals thrice but failed to win the title. “Loyalty above everything. Can't wait for what's to come,” Kohli said in a tweet with video snippets of his time at RCB. Kohli also said that he and his great friend South Africa batting great AB de Villiers have never thought about leaving RCB. “I can never think of leaving this team. Till I am playing IPL, I am never leaving this team. We know we both want to win the title,” Kohli had earlier said on Instagram.

brands do it. Sensible corporates do it,” said the former India captain. “Big things don't come overnight. And big things don't go away overnight. Your preparation for a long period of time gets (you) ready for losses and for gets you ready for successes also,” Ganguly added.

PANDEMIC-FORCED HIATUS FOR TOP INDIAN BADMINTON PLAYERS ENDS

Saina begins training with hubby Kashyap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 9: Shuttler Saina Nehwal has resumed training at a separate facility in Hyderabad after the coronavirus-induced break. She is likely to join the national camp at the SAI Pulella Gopichand Academy in a couple of weeks.

Saina is one of the eight Olympic hopefuls who have been allowed by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) to resume training at the academy from August 7. This came after the Telangana government's approval August 1 on the proposal.

However, the former World No. 1 has, for the time being, decided to train with shuttler husband Parupalli Kashyap and 2014 Commonwealth Games bronze medalist RMV Gurusaidutt at a different centre near the Gopichand academy. “We have been training at a centre near the Gopichand Academy for a week now. It is a



BACK ON TRACK: Saina Nehwal trains with husband Parupalli Kashyap PHOTO COURTESY: SAINA NEHWAL INSTAGRAM

small facility. We started with the basics as it was after a long time that we were hitting the court,” Kashyap, a former Commonwealth Games champion, informed Sunday. “Saina has just joined. She will

“Saina has just joined training. She will join the Gopichand Academy after a couple of weeks. She wants to reach a decent level of fitness before going there

PARUPALLI KASHYAP

probably start training at the Gopichand Academy in a couple of weeks. She wants to get fitter and reach a decent level. She has sought permission from Gopi sir and discussed it with new Indonesian coach Agus Dwi Santoso,” Kashyap added.

Kashyap said the Gopichand Academy is equipped with enough courts to accommodate a few more players. They can start training there by following social distancing and other regulations laid down by SAI.

“Quite a few players are not in Hyderabad. So basically only 4-5 players are training. There are