

ECO-CONSCIOUS MANUSHI
Actor Manushi Chhillar celebrates an eco-friendly Ganesh Chaturthi with plant seeds embedded in her idol **LEISURE P2**

₹116CR FOR SWABHIMAN
Odisha sanctions ₹116.09 cr under Socio-Economic Transformation and Upliftment for 'Swabhiman Anchal' **DOWNTOWN P3**

NAVALNY IN GERMANY
Navalny, a Russian opposition figure who fell ill after poisoning, arrived in Germany from Siberia **INTERNATIONAL P10**

IRREGULAR by MANJUL
Not a single word of hate... I spoke only about human values, brotherhood, and social harmony in my election speech

Tablighis made 'scapegoats'

It is high time authorities concerned repented this action against the foreigners..., observes the Bombay High Court



AGENCIES

Aurangabad, August 22: Quashing FIRs against three dozen Tablighi Jamaat followers, the Bombay High Court has said that there is a possibility that those who were present in the organisation's Delhi headquarters were chosen to be made scapegoats. The court slammed the media propaganda to blame them for the Covid-19 spread.

"It can be said that due to the action taken, a fear was created in the minds of those Muslims. There is a smell of malice to take action against these foreigners and other Muslims for their alleged activities," the court said in a ruling Friday.

Bombay High Court (Aurangabad Bench), Justice TV Nalawade and Justice MG Sewlikar quashed the First Information Reports registered against six Indians and 29 foreigners who were present at the Jamaat congregation in Delhi in March.

"There was virtually a persecution of these foreigners. A political government tries to find the scapegoats... and circumstances show that there is a probability that these foreigners were chosen to be made the scapegoats," the court ruled.

Making strong observations, the court said that there was a "big propaganda in the print and electronic media against these foreigners and attempts were made to paint a picture that these foreigners were responsible for the spread of coronavirus in India."

"The propaganda against the so-called religious activity was unwarranted as records and submissions proved that it had been going on for over 50 years," said Justice Nalawade and Justice Sewlikar.

However, these circumstances and

MARK COURT'S WORDS

- A FEAR WAS CREATED IN THE MINDS OF THOSE MUSLIMS
- THE CENTRE TOOK ACTION MAINLY AGAINST MUSLIMS WHO ATTENDED THE NIZAMUDDIN MARKAZ OF THE TABLIGHI JAMAAT
- IT WAS INDICATED THAT EVEN FOR KEEPING CONTACT WITH THE MUSLIMS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST THEM (INDIAN MUSLIMS)

the latest figures of the spread of the infection in India show that "such action against the present petitioners should not have been taken."

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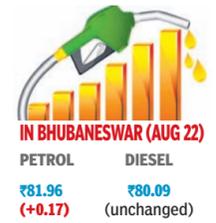
Petrol prices hiked six times in a week

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 22: State-run oil marketing companies increased the price of petrol for the third consecutive day Saturday. With this it was the sixth time that the fuel price was raised in seven days.

Petrol prices were raised by 16 paise in Delhi to ₹81.35 a litre; in Mumbai, it stands at ₹88.02 a litre. Diesel prices, however, continued to remain steady for 23 days in a row, just like it was for petrol prices in July.

Petrol prices were kept on hold since June 29, while diesel prices were revised irregularly throughout the period. Petrol prices were revised August 16 after a long



SHORT TAKES

Bhadrak MP is COVID-19 +ve

Bhubaneswar: Biju Janata Dal MP from Bhadrak Lok Sabha constituency, Manjulata Mandal has tested positive for Covid-19. She said that her health condition was stable and she was under home quarantine. "After developing symptoms of Covid-19, I got the test done and the report came positive. My health is stable and I'm under home quarantine," tweeted the MP. She requested all the people who had come in contact with her recently to isolate themselves and get tested. **P5**

ISIS operative held in Delhi

New Delhi: A major terror strike was averted with the arrest of a suspected operative of the ISIS, armed with two pressure cooker IEDs, from central Delhi's Ridge Road area following a brief exchange of fire, Delhi Police officials said Saturday.

Mustaakem Khan, alias Abu Yusuf, a resident of a village in UP's Balarampur district, who was under watch for over a year, planned to carry out a "lone wolf" strike at a high footfall area in the national capital, said PS Kushwah, DCP (Special Cell).

Bagala land not sold 'to anyone'

Puri: Amid a raging controversy over the alleged sale of Bagala Dharmashala land in the Holy City here, the district administration Saturday claimed that it had not sold the shelter house land to anyone. It said it has only rehabilitated a few evicted Srimandir servants and other individuals at the Dharmashala land for the smooth implementation of the heritage corridor project around the 12th century shrine. **P4**

CITY MAY SEE 5K CASES BY SEPT 15

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: Observing an exponential increase in Covid cases here, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Saturday, stated that the city has now entered "critical" phase. It projected that the state capital will have 5,000 active cases by mid-September.

Addressing a press conference here, BMC Commissioner, Prem Chandra Chaudhary said that they are working out two scenarios; the first: active cases are expected to increase to 3,429 by August end. According to the second scenario there could be 5,000 cases by September 15.

"Positivity rate under the BMC jurisdiction has risen to 10 pc with more than 300 cases being observed daily. COVID in Bhubaneswar has attained its peak and coming one month will be critical. The rise in cases is mainly due to increased testing and commercial activities resuming," Chaudhary highlighted.

Detailing about the preparedness against the upcoming surge, the Commissioner stated that the BMC has done a backhand calculation of the available COVID facilities. He further informed that the city is "in a comfortable position" as far as availability

- BMC targets to keep 40 to 50 pc cases in home isolation by Aug-end
- Under the civic body jurisdiction, 4,151 beds at different COVID hosps, CCHs and DCHs ready
- 38 pc beds occupied by BMC patients, 21 pc beds by non-BMC patients
- 41 pc of the beds unoccupied

While antibody development across other cities has been found close to 29 pc on average, it remains only 1.24 pc here

PREM CHANDRA CHAUDHARY
COMMISSIONER, BMC

of beds is concerned.

Comparing Bhubaneswar with other cities on basis of sero-surveillance results, Chaudhary mentioned that the city still remains the "best protected capital cities."

"While antibody development in the survey in other cities has been found close to 29 pc, it remains only 1.24 pc here," he said.

However, describing the coming period as challenging, the Commissioner requested denizens to strictly follow the COVID guidelines of social distancing and wearing masks. "Ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi, mass violations were observed. Thus, I advise people to personally adhere to COVID norms for their own safety," he concluded.

MASKED UP



Children wear masks of Lord Ganesha on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi festival, at an orphanage in Birpur of North 24 Parganas in West Bengal, Saturday

Expectant mother crossed river on boat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Udala, August 22: An expectant mother, Sukanti Hembram of Balama village under Udala block in Mayurbhanj district had to cross a river in spate on a boat in order to reach a nearby hospital Friday.

Seeing her in pain, Sukanti's family members called an ambulance (Janani Express) to take her to the hospital. However, the ambulance had to wait on the other side of river Sanja—a tributary of river Balama that flows down from



The woman was first carried on a bicycle for up to 2 km on road as the ambulance couldn't reach her as river Balama was flooded

waiting ambulance on the other side of the river. Later, the expectant mother was admitted into Udala community health centre.

"Despite running from pillar to post, the administration shows no interest in building a bridge and a pucca road," said Sukanti's husband Thakura Hembram.

On being contacted, Udala sub-Collector Bhagaban Behera said, "I will write to the district administration. Steps will be taken in this regard after getting a nod from the departmental higher-ups."

Covid pandemic may 'vanish' faster than Spanish-flu

AGENCIES

Geneva, August 22: Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), said that the ongoing global coronavirus pandemic could be over within two years. Addressing a virtual press briefing from Geneva Friday, the WHO chief said that the Spanish flu of 1918 had also taken two years to overcome, but current advances in technology could enable the world to halt the Covid-19 pandemic "in a shorter time," the BBC reported.

"Of course with more 'connectivity', the virus has a better chance of spreading," he said.

"But at the same time, we have also the technology to stop it, and



The Spanish flu of 1918 had also taken two years to overcome

"However, corruption related to PPE... for me it's actually murder. Because if health workers work without PPE, we're risking their lives. And that also risks the lives of the people they serve," the BBC quoted the Director-General as saying.

Tedros also said that the pandemic has given new impetus to the need to accelerate efforts to respond to climate change, Xinhua news agency quoted him.

"Throughout history, outbreaks and pandemics have changed economies and societies, this one will be no different."

Noting that the global health crisis "has given us a glimpse of our world as it could be: cleaner skies and rivers... Building back better means building back greener."

In May, WHO published its Manifesto for a Healthy Recovery from Covid-19, with six policy prescriptions for a healthy and green recovery – protecting nature, investing in water and sanitation, promoting healthy food systems, transitioning to renewable energy, building liveable cities, and stopping subsidies on fossil fuels.

Since then, over 40 million health professionals from 90 countries have sent a letter to G20 leaders, calling for a healthy recovery from the pandemic.

The WHO chief reiterated that "Covid-19 is a once-in-a-century health crisis. But it also gives us a once-in-a-century opportunity to shape the world our children will inherit – the world we want."

As of Saturday, the overall number of global coronavirus cases stood at 22,864,873, while the fatalities rose to 797,787.



TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | DIRECTOR-GENERAL, WHO

Similarly, orange warning has been issued for the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Deogarh, Angul, Sambalpur and Sundargarh as heavy to very heavy rain is likely to occur in these places August 25. Some places of Puri, Khurda, Sonepur, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Boudh, Nabarangpur, Malkangiri, Koraput, Jharsuguda and Bargarh may witness heavy rain on this day, the Met Centre added.

Besides, heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at few places in the districts of Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Bargarh, Bolangir, Sonepur, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Keonjhar, Nuapada, Boudh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Malkangiri, Koraput and Kandhamal August 26.

It will rain cats and dogs from tomorrow: Met

Orange warning issued for several districts across the state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: Many parts of the state will receive heavy rainfall for three days under the influence of a low pressure likely to form over the north-west Bay of Bengal around August 24.

One or two places in the districts of Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Cuttack, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Kandhamal and Boudh will witness rain Sunday. However, very heavy rainfall will occur in between August 24 and 26, said director of Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre, HR Biswas here Saturday.

Predicting heavy rain for three days, the Met Centre has issued orange warning (be prepared) for several districts across the state. Some



places of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Angul, Deogarh, Sundargarh, Kalahandi, Kandhamal and Mayurbhanj district may experience heavy rain August 24.



DOGS MAKE GREAT CHARACTER: AMANDA

Actress Amanda Seyfried says dogs make great characters on screen. "It's their wide-eyed innocence, their playfulness, and their curiosity. They just want to love you and live in the present and we could all learn that," Seyfried said while talking about why dogs make for great characters.

MEGAN TO PERFORM HER FIRST VIRTUAL CONCERT

Singer-rapper Megan Thee Stallion will be performing her first paid livestream concert August 29. The event is produced by Live Nation and choreographer/dancer JaQuel Knight is attached as creative director. Live Nation shared the details of the event on Instagram.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you may just want to delve deep into yourself. You realise the importance of polishing the mirror of your soul and Ganesh approves. Spontaneity is important too, and spending time with children is an excellent way to keep in touch with it.

TAURUS
You are likely to remain unconquerable and unassailable throughout the day. Caution: Stay focussed and avoid frittering away your time and energy. You may face stress at work or in some ongoing project.

GEMINI
You may meet with stiff resistance in all your efforts. You should not let it bother you; just keep moving forward. This will help you maintain a good rapport with your bosses. You are likely to taste success in your interim objectives.

CANCER
A very hectic day for you! Today, you may have too much work to do, and taking even a coffee break may not remain an option. You will be forthright in dealing with issues and nothing will escape your sharp observation.

LEO
The tiny voice inside us always tells us a lot of things. If only we were more in sync with ourselves, we could avoid so many troubles, says a retrospective Ganesh. Well, today it seems you are going to have no qualms in listening to your inner voice as you strive for excellence in all your efforts.

VIRGO
You don't need to be one of the Mafia to realise the importance of family, says Ganesh. Your better half will try spicing up the relationship in the afternoon sometime. So keep fueling the fires of love - a wildfire isn't always bad now, is it?

LIBRA
There are indications that today, you may want to take a break from your humdrum routine in order to recharge your batteries. It is an essential change that we all need from time to time, says Ganesh. Finances may improve sometime later in the day.

SCORPIO
Family members would want to talk about important matters with you today, says Ganesh. Time at work will be comfortable. Take special care of new assignments though. You are likely to bear expenses on account of tours and services today, predicts Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
A mixed bag of fortunes in store today, says Ganesh. At work, expect the unexpected and overlook the expected. Don't you worry if you stumble there, says Ganesh, for the evening promises to be ecstatic and a fitting finale to a rather muddled day.

CAPRICORN
Don't be surprised if you are suddenly showered with attention at work. Ganesh says it's your lucky day today, for you will leave no room for complacency and rewards for this may come by way of special treatment from your colleagues and even your boss.

AQUARIUS
It is not everyday that work is rewarding. So, if your boss praises you, feel good about it. You may even begin something new. A joint venture? Go ahead, says Ganesh. You are exceptionally talented.

PISCES
A day wherein you will be busy socialising in the company of your near and dear ones, or childhood buddies. Refurbishing and refurbishing your home is also likely to be on the agenda. You may find yourself visiting a holy place as well, says Ganesh.

Manushi believes in eco-friendly festivity

Mumbai: Actress and former beauty queen Manushi Chhillar is celebrating Ganesh Chaturthi at home for the first time consecrating an eco-friendly idol of the elephant god.

"My parents always wanted me to experience different cultures and celebrate them. I'm from Haryana but Mumbai is my home too. I was fascinated by the Ganpati celebrations in the city when I first experienced it," she said.

Enamoured by Ganesh puja, Manushi decided to bring Ganpati home.

Manushi believes in an eco-friendly celebration. "The Ganpati I'm keeping at home is an eco-friendly one. It has seeds embedded in the idol so I'm going to do the



Visarjan at home in a clay tree pot. I'm looking forward to nurture the seeds well so that life sprouts out of it," she said.

"We are definitely in the middle of a huge ecological crisis. It is high time we acknowledge it," she added.

The actress is gearing up for her Hindi film debut opposite Akshay Kumar in the upcoming movie *Pritiviraj*.

IANS



Mumbai: Actor Ranveer Singh is in a classic black mood, going by his new social media post.

The actor has posted a new picture on Instagram, where he exudes vintage style in a classic black

Fans gush over Ranveer's classic look

suit accessorised by a crisp white shirt, neatly groomed beard, and gelled hair. He strikes an intense pose, looking out the window.

He captioned the picture with a yin and yang emoji.

Ranveer's fans could not stop gushing over the image.

A user wrote: "Bahut hard." "U look dashing," said another.

A fan tagged him as a "handsome boy".

A netizen questioned: "Why you so bomb?"

Ranveer is awaiting the release of his much-hyped next, Kabir Khan's '83, which narrates the story of India's first-ever cricket World Cup victory in 1983. In the film, he essays the role of Kapil Dev, who captained an underdog team to World Cup glory.

IANS

Odia girl's poem to be part of British Library

Olivia's composition 'Eggy's Description' has featured in an anthology 'Poetry Monsters', released by UK publishing house Young Writers

POST NEWS NETWORK

during her school hours. Her parents Deepak Bhadra, an IT professional in an Indian MNC and

Bhubaneswar: Olivia Bhadra, a seven-year-old Odia girl studying in Charles Darwin Primary School, Norwich in the UK has not only made her parents and school proud, but also the people back home at Baripada, their birth place in Odisha, with her poem *Eggy's Description* becoming part of an anthology *Poetry Monsters*.

Published by Young Writers, a copy of the book will also be sent to the British Library, London for reference.

The publishers have also made a small video on Olivia and how her poem was short-listed among thousands of entries that came from across the UK for this prestigious publication.

The little girl, who will be in her third year (Y3) this September at Charles Darwin Primary School, has also hobbies like drawing, crafting and swimming. But writing is her passion. So much so, that she could manage to complete the lines of *Eggy's Description*

Naimisha Bhadra who works for a UK company are natives of Baripada. They are currently in UK on international assignments and live in Norwich.

Olivia has also written a number of short stories such as *Dex's wrong choice*, *The fire and the water spirit*, *Whistle less*, *The legendary pencil*, *The rainbow birds' dream* and *Stuck inside bubble*.



Netflix apologises after thousands sign petition to remove Cuties

San Francisco: Netflix has apologised for the material it used to promote the controversial French film, *Cuties* after thousands of people signed a petition demanding the removal of the movie from the streaming platform.

Directed by Maimouna Doucoure, the movie is about an 11-year-old who hopes to join a dance crew.

The petition at Change.org which has now amassed over 225,000 signatures alleges that the movie is 'disgusting' as it 'sexualizes' an 11-year-old for the 'viewing pleasure of paedophiles'.

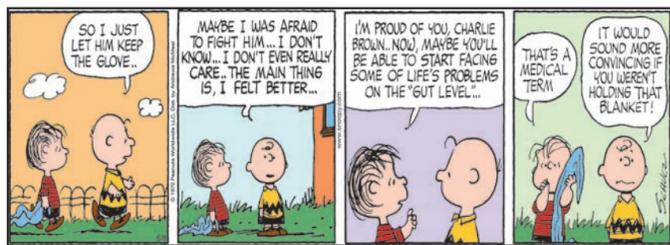
The petition is accompanied by a screenshot of the original plot summary of the movie which introduced the central character as Amy, 'who becomes fascinated with a twerking dance crew' and starts to explore her femininity.

The movie was originally titled *Mignonnes*.

"We're deeply sorry for the inappropriate artwork that we used for *Mignonnes/Cuties*," Netflix said in a statement this week, adding, "We've now updated the pictures and description." In a recent interview with Cineuropa, the director of the film revealed that *Cuties* is partly based on her own experiences of growing up.

IANS

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

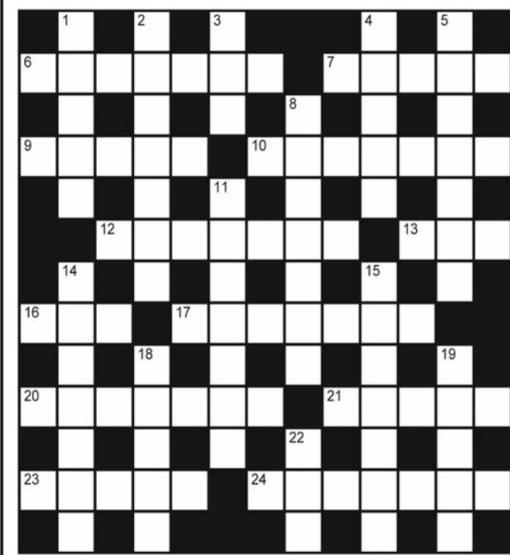


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

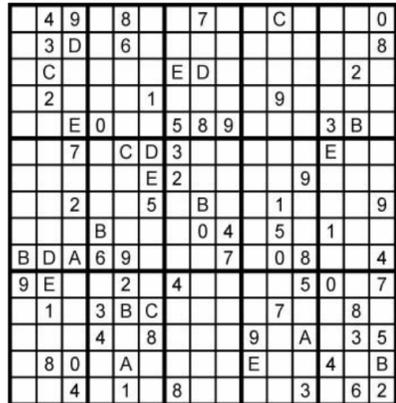


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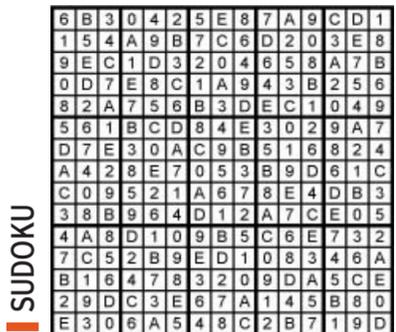
- Across**
- 6 Leashes
 - 7 Sachet scent
 - 9 Off-center
 - 10 Characteristics of ground
 - 12 Reflects
 - 13 Put to the test
 - 16 Tourist's aid
 - 17 Sweet Italian wine
 - 20 Comped thing
 - 21 Toss out
 - 23 Lay to rest
 - 24 Omnivorous insect (4,3)
- Down**
- 1 Skein formers
 - 2 Legendary Arabian bird
 - 3 French vineyard
 - 4 Unit of petrol
 - 5 Firearm gauge
 - 8 Make unhappy
 - 11 Sign on a fruit stand
 - 14 Drifter
 - 15 Raincoat
 - 18 Small three-masted vessel
 - 19 Animal life
 - 22 Tease

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



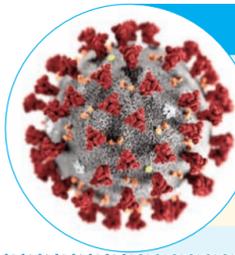
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



WAR AGAINST VIRUS

Buses parked alongside the Link Road in Cuttack during the weekend shutdown over Covid-19 pandemic, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	2,32,36,072	1,58,00,928	8,05,300
India	29,75,701	22,22,577	55,794
Odisha	75,537	52,277	399

BARFI project may come under NGT lens

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: The ambitious Baliyatra Riverfront Improvement (BARFI) project of the state government to beautify and add more amenities to the Mahanadi riverfront may run into rough weathers in the light of recent order of National Green Tribunal (NGT).

The NGT in a latest order has asked the Joint Inspection Committee, formed after the earlier order of the NGT, to visit the areas close to new SCB Medical College campus and Baliyatra ground and examine the encroachment on the land in contravention of norms.

City man duped of ₹1.05Cr

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: The Commissionerate Police has launched a manhunt to nab a brother duo who has been on the run after duping a person of over ₹1 crore by selling a mortgaged plot here. The victim, Sudhir Ranjan Nayak, a resident of Market Building area, has lodged a complaint with Sahid Nagar police in this regard.

As per the complaint, the accused brothers persuaded Nayak to purchase a plot at Laxmisagar recorded in the name of one of the accused. Nayak agreed to buy the said plot and paid ₹15 lakh in advance to the duo following an agreement at the office of Sub-Registrar May 6, 2013.

Subsequently, he purchased the land paying the remaining ₹90,65,

000 as per the deal struck February 24, 2015. However, Nayak received a shock few months later when he came across the mention of the plot in an advertisement for auction issued by the Punjab National Bank (PNB) April 14, 2016.

Later, he found that the said plot had been mortgaged by the duo for a loan declared as NPA (Non Performing Asset) by PNB. The outstanding amount pending against the plot was ₹10.76 crore. Later, Nayak purchased the land participating in the auction meeting June 18, 2016. The duo first agreed to pay back the amount taken from Nayak but later started avoiding him. Recently, Nayak found that both the siblings have fled away without returning his ₹1.05 crore.

₹116Cr pumped in for Swabhiman Anchal

DC SEEKS PROGRESS REPORTS ON PROJECTS SANCTIONED UNDER SETU SCHEME

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: The state government has sanctioned ₹116.09 crore during three years under Socio-Economic Transformation and Upliftment (SETU) scheme for the development of 'Swabhiman Anchal' (erstwhile cut-off region) of Malkangiri district.

According to official sources, ₹49.23 crore was sanctioned in financial year 2018-19, while ₹3.77 crore was released during FY 2019-20 and ₹63.09 crore in the current financial year.

The government has allotted ₹18.78 crore to SC and ST Development department for construction of an integrated education complex in the area and ₹8.66 crore to School and Mass Education department for development of educational infrastructure during the three years.

Similarly, ₹5 crore provided to Malkangiri Collector for promotion of livelihood in 'Swabhiman Anchal'. The government has also allocated ₹10 crore for livelihood support to self-help groups (SHGs) and ₹1.23 crore to provide additional cost of ₹1.5 lakh for construction of 82 Anganwadi centres.

For strengthening the power infrastructure in the undeveloped area, the government has re-



File photo of CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurating Gurupriya Setu in 2018

leased ₹15.88 crore during the three years whereas ₹8.04 crore was provided for procurement and release of fingerlings in Balimela Reservoir for providing livelihood support to 2,000 fishermen families. Likewise, about ₹20 crore was sanctioned to Rural Development department for construction of 21 roads and five bridges, the source said.

The government has sanctioned ₹9.39 crore for construction of 169 intra-village cement-concrete (CC) roads in nine gram panchayats (GPs) of the backward region in the southern district. Similarly, ₹1.79 crore was allotted

to provide additional ₹20,000 per unit for construction of houses under rural housing schemes. Besides, ₹12 crore was released to Works department for construction of roads and bridges in the area.

Beneficiaries of the cut-off area are getting ₹1.50 lakh for construction of pucca houses, sources said. In the first phase, the government has identified 895 people in the area to be covered under the rural housing schemes.

The government is also mulling to provide incentives to teachers, healthcare workers and Anganwadi workers posted in

BRIDGING REGIONAL DISPARITY

Rs 49.23 crore was sanctioned in FY 2018-19, while ₹3.77 crore was released during FY 2019-20 and ₹63.09 crore in current fiscal year

For strengthening the power infrastructure in the undeveloped area, the government has released ₹15.88 crore during the three years

About ₹20 crore was sanctioned to Rural Development dept for construction of 21 roads and 5 bridges

Govt is mulling to provide incentives to teachers, healthcare workers and Anganwadi workers posted in the region

the region because many are reluctant to work in the Maoist-prone area, they said. Meanwhile, Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mohapatra has asked various line departments to submit the detailed financial and physical progress made in the projects sanctioned under SETU scheme.

In July 2018, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had inaugurated Gurupriya Setu over Janbai River and announced ₹100 crore for development of the area on the other side of the bridge, which was cut off for around five decades.

ଦୁଆଁଖାଇ ଉତ୍ସାହ

ପଶ୍ଚିମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଗଣପର୍ବ ପବିତ୍ର ନୂଆଖାଇ ଅବସରରେ ଆମେ ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଶୁଭକାମନା ଜାପନ କରିବା ସହ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ସୁଖମୟ ବର୍ଷ ଓ ସମୃଦ୍ଧ ଜୀବନର କାମନା କରୁଅଛୁ ।

ମାଁ ସମଲେଶ୍ଵରୀ ସମସ୍ତଙ୍କ ମଙ୍ଗଳ କରନ୍ତୁ ।

ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ସହ : ବେଦାନ୍ତ ଲିମିଟେଡ୍, ଝାରସୁଗୁଡ଼ା

ପଶ୍ଚିମ ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ଗଣପର୍ବ ପବିତ୍ର ନୂଆଖାଇ ଅବସରରେ **Bhushan power & Steel Ltd.** ତରଫରୁ ସମସ୍ତ ଓଡ଼ିଶାବାସୀଙ୍କୁ ହାର୍ଦ୍ଦିକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ । ନୂଆଖାଇ ଜୁହାର

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New equipment for safe train journey

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: In a bid to ensure accident-free journey for passengers, ECoR has started using two modern equipment - token-less block instrument with double lock safety feature and data voice logger.

The main purpose of the first instrument is to avoid collision and arrival of two trains on one track and interference from any unauthorised persons in the system.

This instrument is being provided with double locking feature to ensure correct, authorised opening to attend in case of requirement in block. This lock's key is operated by two departments - Operating department and Signal & Telecom (S&T) department.

The voice logger instrument works like a black box in airlines, records the conversation between section controller and station master which plays a vital role in case of derailment or accident.

Nod for ₹602-crore forest projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: Forest and Environment department has decided to execute projects worth ₹602 crore under MGNREGA during financial year 2020-21. The MGNREGA Convergence Committee has approved the projects. Last year, the department had spent ₹70 crore in forestry projects under the job guarantee scheme.

Forest and Environment Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha said plantations & nurseries, soil moisture conservation work, digging of trench around forest, timber, forest road and other works are normally carried out by the department utilising MGNREGA funds. The forest road repair works are being taken up for the first time under MGNREGA. Funds to the tune of ₹65 crore has been utilised and 35 lakh man-days have been created till August 15 this fiscal year against the previous year's ₹86 crore.

Generation of more number of man-days under MGNREGA would cater to the large number of migrant labourers.

ସମ୍ବଲପୁର ଜିଲ୍ଲା ସମବାୟ କେନ୍ଦ୍ର ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ଲିଡ୍, ବରଗଡ଼

ପବିତ୍ର ନୂଆଖାଇ ଉପଲକ୍ଷେ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କର ସେବାଞ୍ଚଳ ବରଗଡ଼, ସମ୍ବଲପୁର, ଝାରସୁଗୁଡ଼ା ଓ ଦେବଗଡ଼ ଜିଲ୍ଲାର ସମସ୍ତ ଜମାକାରୀ, ଗ୍ରାହକ, ପୁସ୍ତକୋତ୍ତର, ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ତଥା ଅଞ୍ଚଳବାସୀମାନଙ୍କୁ ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ତରଫରୁ ଅନେକ ଅନେକ ଶୁଭେଚ୍ଛା ଓ ମଙ୍ଗଳ କାମନା । ମାଁ ସମଲେଶ୍ଵରୀ ସମସ୍ତ ପରିବାରରେ ହସଖୁସି ବାଣ୍ଟିଦେବା ସହିତ ସଦାସର୍ବଦା ଶୁଭପୂର୍ଣ୍ଣ ରଖିଥାନ୍ତୁ, ତାଙ୍କରି ନିକଟରେ ଏହି ପ୍ରାର୍ଥନା । ନିଜ ପରିବାରର ତଥା ଅଞ୍ଚଳର ଆର୍ଥିକ ଓ ସାମାଜିକ ଉନ୍ନତି ସାଧନ ନିମନ୍ତେ ଏହି ବ୍ୟାଙ୍କ ପ୍ରତି ଆପଣମାନଙ୍କର ଅନୁଷ୍ଠ ସହଯୋଗ ଆହର କାମ୍ୟ ।

ଶ୍ରୀ ସୁବ୍ରତ୍ କୁମ୍ଭ ବାବୁ
ମୁଖ୍ୟ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟନିର୍ବାହୀ ଅଧିକାରୀ

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Lower courts to function normally: HC

COVID-19 TALLY 75,537

HC functioning will remain restricted till September 19 instead of August 21 as declared earlier

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 22: A full-bench of Orissa High Court decided to normalize the functioning of lower courts in the state while abiding by Covid-19 restrictions, a report said. However, the functioning of the Orissa High Court will remain restricted till September 19 which was earlier set at August 21. The decision has been taken in view of the sharp rise in Covid positive cases in the state, the report said.



Lower courts and tribunals in areas where there are no Covid restrictions can conduct physical hearing of cases. However, all has to abide by the social distancing norms and other restrictions and regulations in force for the Covid-19 pandemic

BY ORDER

The bench has asked lower courts to direct lawyers and their clients to file their arguments in writing which will help in reducing the timings of hearings. The arguments in writing can be filed in cases relating to undertrial prisoners, old cases, various applications, domestic quarrels and marriage disputes

Lawyers and clients have been asked to inform the deputy registrar (judicial) about the new cases filed in the high court. All new cases can be filed through e-filing, e-mail or drop box methods while lawyers and their clients could participate in the hearing from home through video conferencing methods

All lower courts will start functioning from now on as per their usual timings of 10 am till 4 pm. Earlier, the high court had restricted the functioning of the lower courts due to the pandemic.

The bench has asked lower courts to direct lawyers and their clients to file their arguments in writing which will help in reducing the timings of hearings. The arguments in writing can be filed in cases relating to undertrial prisoners, old cases, various applications, domestic quarrels and marriage disputes. The list for hearing of cases and the next date of hearing of cases will have to be regularly published on the websites of district courts.

cases in the high court will be done through virtual mode or video conferencing till September 19, the bench in its order said. The high court register has been asked to prepare a list of cases to be heard in the virtual mode in the high court.

Similarly, the lawyers and clients have been asked to inform the deputy registrar (judicial) about the new cases filed in the high court. All new cases can be filed through e-filing, e-mail or drop box methods while lawyers and their clients could participate in the hearing from home through video conferencing methods. Similarly, the affidavits will be received through e-filing, e-mail or through drop box systems.

All the lower courts and tribunals will function as per their regular timings. The court work will remain normal while stress will be given on hearing through the virtual mode. The lower courts and tribunals will only opt for physical hearing in case hearing through virtual mode is not possible.

Lower courts and tribunals in areas where there is no Covid restrictions can conduct physical hearing of cases. However, all has to abide by the social distancing norms and other restrictions and regulations in force for the Covid-19 pandemic.

The lower courts can hear cases of undertrial prisoners, civil cases, record the statement of witnesses and old cases. The lower courts

will not pass any adverse orders, if the lawyers, petitioners, defendants and witnesses fail to appear in hearing due to some reasons.

The bench has asked not to produce the accused in court in case there is no urgency. However, the accused has to be produced before the magistrate in the court. The court work will remain restricted in areas where lockdown or shutdown has been announced.

The court work in those areas will also remain restricted if lockdown or shutdown is announced there in coming days. Such courts will only take urgent matters for hearing. The district judge has to inform the high court from time to time about the prevailing situation in their area, the bench added.

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 22: Odisha's COVID-19 tally rose to 75,537 Saturday with 2,819 fresh cases, while nine more fatalities pushed the death toll to 399, a health department official said.

Three deaths were reported from Cuttack, two from Sundargarh and one each from Bolangir, Ganjam, Malkangiri and Rayagada districts, he said.

"Regret to inform the demise of nine COVID positive patients while under treatment in hospitals," the Health and Family Welfare department said on Twitter.

The fresh coronavirus cases were reported from 29 of the 30 districts of Odisha, including the highest number of 443 infections from Khurda followed by Cuttack (257), Mayurbhanj (219) and Ganjam (192). Likewise, Balasore reported 105, Bargarh 136, Angul 23, Bhadrak 77, Bolangir 56, Boudh six, Dhenkanal 100, Gajapati 62, Jagatsinghpur 48, Jajpur 120, Jharsuguda 63, Kalahandi 55, Kandhamal 44, Kendrapara 62, Keonjhar seven, Koraput 81, Malkangiri 83, Nabarangpur 43, Nayagarh 64, Nuapada one, Puri 109, Rayagada 147, Sambalpur 145, Sonepur 14 and Sundargarh 57.



Fire personnel sanitising an apartment at Jharpada canal road in Bhubaneswar

Caseload touches 7,015 in Capital

BHUBANESWAR: As many as 295 new COVID-19 cases were detected under the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) limits in last 24 hours, BMC said Saturday.

While 153 of them were reported from quarantine centres, the remainder are local contact ones. Meanwhile, 158 persons who earlier tested positive for the disease recovered during the same timeframe. "Contact tracing is still continuing. Primary con-

tacts & nearby houses are being quarantined, sanitised and will be under active surveillance," BMC said. It added that all positive cases have been shifted to dedicated COVID hospitals.

According to a notification issued by the civic body, as of Saturday, 7,015 persons have tested positive for COVID-19 in Bhubaneswar out of which 4,219 have recovered. While there are 2,754 active cases, 33 persons succumbed to the disease.

A total of 1,691 cases were recorded in quarantine centres and the remaining were detected positive during contact tracing. Odisha now has 22,808 active COVID-19 cases, while 52,277

patients have so far recovered from the disease.

The state Friday conducted 61,379 tests, taking the total number of such clinical examination to 12,33,805, the official added.

Babus, netas eyeing Dharmasala land: Patra



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) national spokesperson, Sambit Patra, Saturday attacked the state government over its alleged move to sell Bagala Dharmasala land in Puri to private hoteliers. He alleged that many government officials and MPs/MLAs had eyed the segregated plots of the land to get commercial benefits. He also lambasted the government for selling the donated land in con-

travention of established laws.

"I have been told by the people of Puri that different government officials and MPs, MLAs are trying to grab the plots from the heritage building which was meant to serve the poor. This is a huge conspiracy," Patra told reporters.

He said the Dharmasala was built in 1905 and was donated. "There are established laws which prevent sale of Dharmasala received from donations. It has a historic significance and was used by the people in Puri at very low

BAGALA LAND HAS NOT BEEN SOLD TO ANYONE: ADMIN

PURI: Amid a raging controversy over the alleged sale of Bagala Dharmasala land in the Holy City here, the district administration Saturday claimed that it had not sold the shelter house land to anyone.

In a press statement, the administration claimed that it has only rehabilitated a few evicted Srimandir servitors and other individuals at the dharmasala land for the smooth implementation of the heritage corridor project around the 12th century shrine. The state government has approved a rehabilitation policy for

the evicted locals.

"Bagala Dharmasala has 2 acre and 738 decimal land in Puri. A few evicted servitors and others have been rehabilitated on 12 per cent of the land of the shelter house," said the press statement.

The administration said many Srimandir servitors and locals have donated their ancestral land to facilitate the heritage corridor project. It claimed that the landed properties of Bagala Dharmasala were earlier under the ownership of Lodging House Fund Committee but the properties were brought under the control of the revenue

department recently.

"Bagala Dharmasala had the capacity to provide shelter facility to only 200 devotees. The state government is constructing a pilgrim centre at the dharmasala to provide shelter to at least 2,000 devotees from poor financial background," said the administration.

The administration further claimed that the state government will make arrangements for accommodation of additional 8,000 devotees in Puri. "The state government has planned to provide shelter facility to around 10,000 poor devotees in the Holy City," it added.

Cyber crooks dupe govt employee of ₹1.63 lakh



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: Cyber fraudsters duped a government employee of more than Rs 1 lakh on the pretext of providing lottery money. The victim, Giri Raj Derji, 42, has been staying at the staff quarters of Institute of Minerals and Materials Technology (IMMT), a reputed central government-owned scientific institute, here at Acharya Vihar area under Sahidnagar police limits.

As per sources, the victim used to buy Ayurvedic medicines regularly online from one website, 'extreme pleasure shopping', for her ailing sister who was suffering from arthritis from 2015 to 2018. On 29 July, he received a message on his mobile phone in the name of the shopping website. The message informed Giri Raj that he has

won a lottery prize of Rs 8.5 lakhs organised by the company.

The cyber crooks also informed him about winning the lottery and the process to fetch the prize money. Subsequently, they asked him to deposit different amounts of money on the pretext of registration fees, late fine, transfer charges, TDS charges. Accordingly, Giri Raj deposited Rs 1, 63,300 through eight different installments in the account given by the miscreants.

Later, the accused again asked him to deposit another 18 per cent GST charges to get TATA Nexon Car or cash Rs 8.5 lakh under the lottery scheme. However, Giri Raj, smelling a rat, lodged a complaint with Sahid Nagar police. Police have started investigations into the matter after registering a case based on the complaint.

Lokayukta releases annual report

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: Odisha Lokayukta has released its annual report for 2019. As per the report, as many as 1,132 complaints in connection with irregularities in various government authorities were lodged at the Lokayukta between

March and December 2019. The cases include some high profile ones involving several top bureaucrats like Bishnupada Sethi in Rs 9 lakh medical bill from the funds of Odisha State Cooperative Bank, former Sundargarh Collector Rashmita Panda in Rs 70 lakh of official residence renovation scam.



Ganesh Chaturthi a low-key affair amid pandemic

No organisation, club or group is allowed to celebrate the puja in public places, Bhubaneswar Deputy Commissioner of Police Umashankar Dash said. Cuttack Collector Bhawani Shankar Chayani said that the festival is not being celebrated in public places as the COVID-19 situation is yet to improve in the district. Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan and a host of dignitaries have greeted people on the occasion. Wishing all happiness and prosperity, the Chief Minister in a message expressed hope that the coronavirus crisis will soon wither away with the blessings of Lord Ganesh. "Hon'ble Governor wishes everyone a very happy #GaneshChaturthi and prays for the blessings of the Lord to ease peo-

ple's troubles & pain due to COVID-19 pandemic & to bestow good health, wealth, peace and prosperity upon all.

#GanpatiBappaMorya," said the official Twitter handle of Lal. In a message, Union Petroleum and Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan wished peace, happiness

and prosperity for all. "Greetings on the auspicious festival of Ganesh Chaturthi. May the blessings of Bhagwan Shri Ganesh always be upon us. May there be joy and prosperity all over," Union Minister of State for MSME Pratap Sarangi tweeted. The business of idol makers was

affected as no community puja was allowed because of the COVID-19 pandemic and many people chose to hold the puja at home without idols. "We had to make fewer idols this time compared to previous years and sell them at a very low price," said an idol maker in Bhubaneswar.



Children worshipping at Shastri Nagar in Bhubaneswar. PHOTO: BIKASH NAYAK

HIT BY PANDEMIC

Hundreds of pandals are erected every year to celebrate the Ganesh puja with much fanfare in the twin cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar which were missing this year

Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan and a host of dignitaries have greeted people on the occasion

The business of idol makers was severely affected as no community puja was allowed to be held at public places because of the Covid-19 pandemic

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FOCUS GEOSTRATEGY

CHINA ALONE



As long as the costs of expansionism remain manageable, Xi will stay the course, seeking to exploit electoral politics and polarisation in major democracies. The Indo-Pacific's major democratic powers must not let that happen, which means ensuring that the costs for China do not remain manageable for long

In his most recent New Year's speech, Chinese President Xi Jinping declared that 2020 would be 'a milestone.' Xi was right, but not in the way he expected. Far from having "friends in every corner of the world," as he boasted in his speech, China has severely damaged its international reputation, alienated its partners, and left itself with only one real lever of power: brute force. Whether the prospect of isolation thwarts Xi's imperialist ambitions, however, remains to be seen.

Historians will most likely view 2020 as a watershed year. Thanks to COVID-19, many countries learned hard lessons about China-dependent supply chains, and international attitudes toward China's communist regime shifted. The tide began to turn when it was revealed that the Communist Party of China hid crucial information from the world about COVID-19, which was first detected in Wuhan – a finding confirmed by a recent US intelligence report. Making matters worse, Xi attempted to capitalise on the pandemic, first by hoarding medical products – a market China dominates – and then by stepping up aggressive expansionism, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. This is driving rapid change in the region's geostrategic landscape, with other powers preparing to counter China.

For starters, Japan now seems set to begin cooperating with the Five Eyes – the world's oldest intelligence-gathering and sharing alliance, comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. A new 'Six Eyes' alliance would serve as a crucial pillar of Indo-Pacific security. Moreover, the so-called Quad – comprising Australia, India, Japan, and the US – seems poised to deepen its strategic collaboration. This represents a notable shift for India, in particular, which has spent years attempting to appease China.

As US National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien recently noted, "the Chinese have been very aggressive with India" lately. Since late April, the People's Liberation Army has occupied several areas in the northern Indian region of Ladakh, turning up the heat on a long-simmering border conflict. This has left Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi with little choice but to change course.

Modi is considering inviting Australia to participate in the annual Malabar naval exercise with Japanese, American, and Indian forces later this year. Australia withdrew from the exercise in 2008 when it involved only the US and India. Although Japan's participation was regularised in 2015, India had hesitated to bring Australia back into the fold, for fear of provoking China. Not anymore. With Australia again involved in Malabar, the Quad grouping will have a formal, practical platform for naval drills.

Already, cooperation among Quad members is gaining some strategic heft. In June, Australia and India signed the Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement to increase military interoperability through bilateral defense activities. India has a similar pact with the US and is set to sign one with Japan shortly.

Japan, for its part, recently added Australia, India, and the UK as defense intelligence sharing partners by tweaking its 2014 state secrets law, which previously included exchanges only with the US. This will strengthen Japanese security cooperation under 2016 legislation that redefined Japan's US-imposed pacifist post-war constitution in such a way that Japan may now come to the aid of allies under attack.

Thus, the Indo-Pacific's democracies are forging closer strategic bonds in response to China's increasing aggression. The next logical step would be for these countries to play a more concerted, coordinated role in advancing broader regional security. The problem is that American, Australian, Indian, and Japanese security interests are not entirely congruent. For India and Japan, the security threat China poses is much more acute and immediate, as shown by China's aggression against India and its increasingly frequent incursions into Japanese waters. Moreover, India is the only Quad member that maintains a land-based defense posture, and it faces the very real prospect of a serious conflict with China on its Himalayan border.

The US, by contrast, has never considered a land war against China. Its primary objective is to counter China's geopolitical, ideological, and economic challenges to America's global preeminence. America's pursuit of this objective will be President Donald

Trump's most-consequential foreign-policy legacy. Australia, meanwhile, must engage in a delicate balancing act. While it wants to safeguard its values and regional stability, it remains economically dependent on China, which accounts for one-third of its exports. So, even as Australia has pursued closer ties with the Quad, it has spurned US calls to join naval patrols in the South China Sea. As its foreign minister, Marise Payne, recently declared, Australia has 'no intention of injuring its relationship with China.'

If China continues pursuing an expansionist strategy, however, such hedging will no longer be justifiable. Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono recently declared that the 'consensus in the international community' is that China must be 'made to pay a high price' for its muscular revisionism in the South and East China seas, the Himalayas, and Hong Kong. He is right – the emphasis is on 'high.'

As long as the costs of expansionism remain manageable, Xi will stay the course, seeking to exploit electoral politics and polarisation in major democracies. The Indo-Pacific's major democratic powers must not let that happen, which means ensuring that the costs for China do not remain manageable for long. Machiavelli famously wrote that, "It is better to be feared than loved." Xi is not feared so much as hated. But that will mean little unless the Indo-Pacific's major democracies get their act together; devise ways to stem Chinese expansionism, reconcile their security strategies, and contribute to building a rules-based regional order. Their vision must be clarified and translated into a well-defined policy approach, backed with real strategic weight. Otherwise, Xi will continue to use brute force to destabilise the Indo-Pacific further, possibly even starting a war.

The writer is Professor of Strategic Studies at New Delhi-based Centre for Policy Research and Fellow at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin. @PROJECT SYNDICATE

Trump's most-consequential foreign-policy legacy.

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Care not for time and success. Act out thy part, whether it be to fail or to prosper.

SRI AUROBINDO



Not a popular govt's record

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has deputed five teams to investigate the death of an actor who killed himself. I do not know why the CBI is investigating it nor do I understand why there is such great public interest in this issue. I have been told that this is because of some political reason linked to the election in Bihar. If there is, I am not able to understand what it is. Bihar is the oldest political entity in India going back to the time of Chandragupta Maurya and Chanakya.

Are Biharis so naive as to vote based on this sort of material? Perhaps they are and I will be disappointed to know that this is the case. Bihar is one of the poorest parts of the world. They have been governed by two parties that have been in charge for a decade. Will the voter determine whether or not to vote for them based on a Bollywood event? If so, it is amazing. Two other reasons have been put forward as possible reasons for the pushing of this story. First that it is targeted at the son of the Maharashtra Chief Minister. Second that it is aimed in some fashion at the Muslim actors of Bollywood. That seems to me to be more reasonable given our times. This government is hostile to Muslims and will use any lie to attack them including this one.

But to return to the question of voter interest, it was written this week by my friend Shekhar Gupta that the Prime Minister would return to power in 2024 unless he inflicted damage on himself. Gupta's argument so far as I have understood it is that the damage inflicted on the voter is not relevant because the voter doesn't care about such things as the collapse in the economy, the record unemployment, the occupation of our land by China and the inability of this government to contain the Covid epidemic.

Gupta did not explain in detail how he had come to this conclusion but he said that a survey that had a previously good track record showed that Modi was at the peak of his popularity. Again, I do not know if this is the case but it would be quite interesting if this were to be so. Our GDP has been declining since January 2018 for nine successive quarters, based on Modi's own data. Unemployment has been the highest that it has ever been recorded in India, again according to the government's own data. It is unclear who believes Modi when he says that there has been no Chinese intrusion, I hope it is not the Prime Minister himself because that would be a sign of delusion.

We are currently engaged with the Chinese in trying to get them to withdraw from our land and our generals have had half a dozen meetings with them already. Presumably these meetings are being held because what Modi says (or believes) is untrue. There is no reason to negotiate with them if they are not on our property.

On Covid the data is clear: We are number three in the world in terms of the number of cases, we are number one in terms of the number of daily cases and we will likely end up with the most infected people in the world.

This is not the record of a government and a Prime Minister who is popular. In another nation this would signal disaster politically. Is it the case that for all or most Indian voters, their political affiliation is unrelated to their actual life? Could it be that we vote as we do a Facebook like or Twitter forward? Is our political action through voting and support of a party based not on its performance but on its image? Surely this is not true and even if it is true for many, it cannot be true for all. Certainly it is not true for me.

But how many people think normally in this way? If there were many, then we would not have the circus that we do on an actor's death at a time which is the worst that I can remember, and I am not a young man. I cannot remember a time in my life when we had such economic strife, such levels of unemployment, a national epidemic and the enemy inside our house and such little interest in these and a focus on Bollywood and temples and such things.

Is this who we really are as citizens, individuals and voters? I should hope not. I do not think that our young generation of this time certainly or the next will be so unconcerned about their politics. The question is whether the current generations of our time do not care about the nation's security, their health, their employment and their future and whether they are more interested in Bollywood. I do not have the answer to this but it is an answer that we will know for certain fairly soon.



Aakar Patel
Is it the case that for all or most Indian voters, their political affiliation is unrelated to their actual life?



Brahma Chellaney

HISTORIANS WILL MOST LIKELY VIEW 2020 AS A WATERSHED YEAR. THANKS TO COVID-19, MANY COUNTRIES LEARNED HARD LESSONS ABOUT CHINA-DEPENDENT SUPPLY CHAINS, AND INTERNATIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARD CHINA'S COMMUNIST REGIME SHIFTED

SPECTRUM SOUTH ASIA

Afghan peace process affecting India

S.B. Asthana

INDIA HAS TO BE WATCHFUL OF THE IRAN-PAKISTAN-CHINA AXIS DEVELOPING IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF AFGHANISTAN, WITH TENTACLES IN THE FORM OF TERROR GROUPS INSIDE IT

The Loya Jirga assembled in Kabul two weeks ago gave the go-ahead for the release of the last of the 400 Taliban prisoners. After the recent release of 80 prisoners, a temporary halt on the release of the remaining 320 is in effect, as a few more countries (France and Australia) shared the apprehensions of the Afghan government and public, that the prisoners in question had conducted violent attacks on Afghans and foreigners.

The release was part of a peace agreement signed between the Taliban and the US February 29 to clear the last hurdle for the beginning of intra-Afghan talks. A quick announcement of US withdrawal of another 4,000 troops, post Loya Jirga's decision, indicated US fulfilment of its obligations as per the deal. The US may commend its Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad, the architect of the deal, but the fact is that the Taliban controls more territory in Afghanistan now than at the time when the US entered the war; and terror groups like al Qaeda, IS, Haqqani Network co-exist with Taliban. The peace deal does not guarantee success of intra-Afghan dialogue; hence all stakeholders

have to wait and see its progress with hope, as well as apprehension.

India, having made significant investments in Afghanistan, will always hope for an Afghan elected, Afghan-led, Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process and a popular democratic government in Afghanistan. However, the Taliban continues to be a force to reckon with. The US-led invasion ousted the Taliban post September 11, 2001 attacks. After losing 2,400 US soldiers, thousands of Afghan troops, Taliban fighters and Afghan civilians and spending more than \$1 trillion, a war fatigue of 19 years for peace of another country, is enough reason to pull out. Besides, there was Trump's election promise to end the war. The Taliban's assurance of not allowing the use of Afghan soil for terrorism seems too good to be true; hence the US defense chief indicated that it will not hesitate to nullify the deal if the Taliban failed to hold its promises.

The Afghan government had no choice but to go along with the deal due to lack of any leverage, as the Taliban refused to talk to them and the election results were not convincing enough to put them in the driver's seat. The Taliban and

Pakistan's promise to renounce support to al-Qaeda and fighting ISIS is unrealistic, because ISKP, AQIS and Haqqani network are already active, with no visible disturbance from the Taliban and continued support from Pakistan. The Taliban will continue to use violence as leverage for a better bargaining position even in intra-Afghan talks. The recent attack by ISKP on the Afghan prison housing Taliban prisoners, the earlier attack on a Gurdwara, and the new Pakistani leader from Haqqani network joining ISKP, indicates close linkages of all terror groups, including Pakistan-based ones. The Taliban will not sit quiet unless it gains power. Even if its leaders put up a facade of giving reasonable governance if brought into the power structure, its cadres are unlikely to settle down without Sharia.

The Chinese are keen to extend the BRI to Afghanistan to get an alternate axis to warm water in Gulf should the CPEC face problems, besides exploiting mineral wealth of Afghanistan. Iran is economically weak and needs Chinese support. The China-Iran strategic partnership fructifying the \$400 billion deal may be an impediment for

Indian entry routes into Afghanistan through Chabahar and further connectivity to International North South Transportation Corridor; although Iran has not given any signals of disruption of these projects.

India has to be watchful of the Iran-Pakistan-China axis developing in the neighbourhood of Afghanistan, with tentacles in the form of terror groups inside it. Since 2001, India has undertaken projects worth \$3 billion in Afghanistan. Besides engaging with all stakeholders, including Taliban, a watch on anti-India nexus of terror groups is in India's interest.

India needs to exercise some smart diplomacy to convince the US that Indian engagement with Iran is as much essential to prevent loss of strategic space of Afghanistan to China, as much as token presence of US troops there. It remains to be seen whether this deal will work, or the US pull back will leave behind a stronger Taliban, growing IS, suffering population of Afghanistan and new challenges for India.

The writer is a Major General (ret'd) and strategic analyst. IANS

WISDOM CORNER

Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, and most people are frightened of responsibility. SIGMUND FREUD

There is nothing noble in being superior to your fellow men. True nobility lies in being superior to your former self. ERNEST HEMINGWAY

The history of science shows that theories are perishable. With every new truth that is revealed we get a better understanding of Nature and our conceptions and views are modified. NIKOLA TESLA

WORDSWORTH

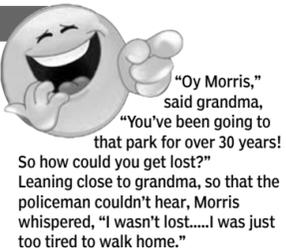
Thaumaturgy

Of all the words in English that refer to the making of magic, this is perhaps the most resonant. It doesn't have the negative associations of words such as sorcery or necromancy because it referred originally to the production of wonders for positive ends rather than any intent to cause someone harm. The origin is the Greek word *thaumatourgos*, miracle working (from *thauma*, marvel, plus *ergos*, work). Though it's not that common a word, it seems to have generated a surprisingly large set of derivatives since it first appeared in English in 1727. There are several words for a practitioner of thaumaturgy, including *thaumaturge* and *thaumaturgist*; another is *thaumaturgus*, which has been given to a number of Christian saints and others who are said to have performed wonders. The verb is *thaumaturgise*. The *thaumatrope* was a Victorian toy, a card with two different pictures on its back and front that magically combined into one when the card was rapidly spun. And aficionados of Terry Pratchett's *Discworld* novels will know that the wizards of Unseen University invented a device with which to measure the intensity of a magic field – what would you call that but a *thaumometer*?

LOL

Lost far from a home

A police car pulls up in front of grandma Bessie's house, and grandpa Morris gets out. The polite policeman explained that this elderly gentleman said that he was lost in the park...and couldn't find his way home.



Battle lines drawn

Sir, The much-awaited battle lines are drawn with the announcement of Joe Biden as the Presidential nominee of the Democrats for the November elections. Biden poses a great challenge to Trump as the former's candidature is well supported by Barrack Obama and Bill Clinton who are held in high esteem by Americans for their contribution to the country's causes in times of need. Adding to Trump's woes is Kamala Harris who has been fielded as Biden's deputy. Harris, an Afro-American, too represents South Asian interests as her mother hails from a South Indian state. However, these factors are crucial as far as the US elections are concerned. One, the American voters have a history of re-electing the incumbent President for the second time. Two, going by the recent Sino-Indian flare-up at the border and the Trump administration's overt support to India, the Indian-origin electorate in the US may prefer to go with the Republicans. This apart, India has been at one with Trump in matters of the spread of coronavirus from the Chinese soil. The point that goes in favour of Biden is that he was instrumental in the safe passage of the historic Indo-US nuclear deal during Obama's tenure. Joe may play this card for the Indians and those supporting India in South Asia. That said, only the results will decide the fate of Trump who has seen troubled times in his tenure, be it his fight against the pandemic or his tackling of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement. Sanjib Das, CUTTACK

Focus on farming

Sir, Covid-19 is a great set back to the whole world. In India, lakhs of migrant labourers have returned to their home states with a bitter experience in their working place. Now is the appropriate time for the states to encourage organic farming. It's a fact that every year production of Ravi crops, like potato, onion, vegetables, and oil seeds is decreasing. This may be due to lack of storage facilities and irrigation. This low production leads to soaring of prices of the essential commodities to a level which is beyond the reach of the common man. Our governments (both state and central) should launch massive publicity by going village to village and motivate farmers by giving support to their agricultural needs. On the other hand, the governments should minimise free food schemes supply as it has serious negative impacts. Indirectly, such schemes persuade the huge man-power to sit idle. Now, the time has come for action. Adequate stress on agriculture may boost the rural economy and reduce the flow of population from rural to urban areas. Ramdas Ray, BHUBANESWAR

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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GUPKAR DECLARATION-II

Nothing about us without us, say J&K parties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 22: Making clear there can be 'nothing about us without us' in Jammu and Kashmir, six mainstream political parties termed abrogation of special status of the erstwhile state as a 'spitefully short-sighted' and 'grossly unconstitutional' move and pledged a combined effort for restoration of the pre-August 5 position of last year.

A resolution termed Gupkar Declaration-II was circulated in media. It was signed by National Conference president Farooq Abdullah, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, J-K Congress chief GA Mir, Peoples' Conference leader Sajjad Lone, state CPM leader MY Tarigami and Jammu and Kashmir Awami National Conference senior vice-president Muzaffar Shah.

This is the first combined statement issued by the political parties after more than a year.

Acknowledging the difficulties in bringing out a resolution of all parties, it said the signatories to the Gupkar Declaration-I, signed August 4, 2019, "have barely managed to establish basic level of communication with each other" in the face of a series of prohibitive and punitive curbs imposed by the government, aimed at impeding all social and political interactions. The limited confabulations held within the constraints imposed have resulted in this unanimous resolution, it



COMBINED EFFORT

- The leaders of J&K's 6 mainstream parties had met on the eve of August 5, 2019 at the Gupkar residence of Farooq Abdullah and a statement, also known as 'Gupkar Declaration', had asked people to maintain calm and peace and urged the Centre not to alter the constitutional status of the erstwhile state
- However, the very next day the government moved a resolution in Parliament and announced abrogation of Article 370, a provision giving edge in residency and jobs to local people, and also bifurcated it into two union territories -- Ladakh, and Jammu and Kashmir
- The parties termed the abrogation of special status of the erstwhile state as a 'spitefully shortsighted' and 'grossly unconstitutional' move and pledged a combined effort for restoration of the pre-August 5 position of last year

said. "We all reiterate that we are bound, wholly by the contents of the Gupkar Declaration and will unwaveringly adhere to it. We are committed to strive for the restoration of Articles 370 and 35A, the Constitution of J-K and the restoration of the state and any division of the state is unacceptable to us. We unanimously reiterate that there can be 'nothing about us without us'," Gupkar Resolution-II said.

The national and regional political parties termed the changes made in the state in August last

year as "unfortunate" which have unrecognisably changed the relationship between Jammu and Kashmir and New Delhi.

"In a spitefully shortsighted and unconstitutional move, Articles 370 and 35A were abrogated and the state was bifurcated and relegated to the status of two Union Territories and its Constitution tried to be made unenforceable," it said. It said the measures undertaken last year were "grossly unconstitutional" and in reality measures of disempowerment and a challenge to the basic identity

of the people of J-K. "The measures attempt to redefine who we are. These changes were accompanied by repressive measures meant to silence people and coerce them into submission, and continue unabated," it said. "We all reiterate our commitment to collectively fight to restore the special status of J-K as guaranteed under the Constitution and the commitments made from time to time," the resolution said, adding these were the testing times and times of pain for the peace loving people of Jammu and Kashmir.

HC moved to know 'real reason' for lion deaths

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gandhinagar, August 22: A PIL has been filed in Gujarat High Court, seeking direction to the state government not to suppress the 'real cause' of death of lions in Sasan Gir, the only abode of Asiatic lions in the world.

The petitioner also has raised questions about the procurement of the Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) vaccine to treat the big cats against the virus.

In his PIL, Varjang Galabhai Karamta, a resident of Maliya Hatina in Junagadh, raised the issue of deaths of lions in recent times and asked why is the state Forest Department not disclosing the real cause, and 'instead giving false information that the lions died due to fighting'.

The PIL has asked the high court to direct the state government to declare data of each and every lion on

the official portal or website of the Forest Department, and reveal the exact cause of death of every lion in the recent times as well as in the past.

The petitioner has also sought a proper investigation of lions' deaths in the past.

Questioning the procurement of CDV vaccine from the US, the PIL said that the Chief Conservator of Forests, DT Vasavda had stated that there was no disease or virus infection in lions, and if "this was true, then why did the state government procure more than 1,100 vaccine doses".

The PIL has also raised questions about the administration of the vaccine. "Sasan Gir does not have adequate number of veterinary doctors and in their absence, forest guards and trackers are administering these vaccines to the big cats which could be very risky," it said.



Disturbed Areas Act extended to more localities in Vadodara



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, August 22: The Gujarat government Saturday brought more areas in Vadodara city under the purview of the Disturbed Areas Act.

The Act bans sale of property by a member of one religious community to that of another community without the district collector's approval.

The Act has been now imposed in areas under the jurisdiction of Harni police station in Vadodara city, an official release said.

Also, more areas from jurisdiction of Karelibaug, Bapod and Varasiya police stations were also

brought under the Act. It was already in force -- after being extended for another five years in September 2019 -- in some areas under these police stations.

The imposition of the Act in newer localities followed a representation by local BJP MLA Manishaben Vakil. The release quoted the Minister of State for Home Pradipsinh Jajeda as saying that it will ensure that a property is not misappropriated through harassment or intimidation.

The Gujarat Prohibition of Transfer of Immovable Property and Provision for Protection of Tenants from Eviction from Premises in Disturbed Areas Act, 1991 was amended in 2019 to stop people from acquiring properties in disturbed areas through illegal means.

COMMUNALLY SENSITIVE

The Act bans sale of property by a member of one religious community to that of another community without the district collector's approval

It is already in force in several communally sensitive areas of Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Bharuch and other towns in Gujarat

The Gujarat Prohibition of Transfer of Immovable Property and Provision for Protection of Tenants from Eviction from Premises in Disturbed Areas Act, 1991 was amended in 2019 to stop people from acquiring properties in disturbed areas through illegal means.

As per the amended Act, violators have to pay a fine of Rs 1 lakh or two per cent of the value of property, whichever is higher, and face imprisonment of three to five years.

It is already in force in several communally sensitive areas of Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Bharuch and other towns in Gujarat.

Zoji La, a tunnel of strategic significance

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 22: In a bid to ramp up infrastructure in the Himalayan region, the government has finalised bids to construct the Zoji La tunnel in the Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh region.

National Highways and Industrial Development Corporation (NHIDCL) opened the bids Friday as the government finally called for the tenders to complete the long-pending road tunnel, which will have to be constructed under critical conditions.

The bid for the project which will be constructed in two sections of about 33 kilometre has been won by the Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited (MEIL). The first section will involve the construction of a 18.50-kilometre road. The second section a horseshoe of 14.15 km Zoji La tunnel as a two-lane road of 9.5 meter width and 7.57 meter height.

The road from Srinagar to Leh in Ladakh is not suitable for vehicular traffic throughout the year. The Srinagar-Ladakh highway is completely closed for six months, especially during the winter season. So much so, that even the military vehicles are unable to move under these conditions.

"The project, in which MEIL has



COMPLEX PROJECT

The tunnel has to be built at 700 meters below the surface

The project is also in the most complex hill terrain and snowstorms are a regular feature

As there is dense snow for at least eight months in a year, the execution will not be easy

What makes it even more challenging is the river flowing adjacent to the proposed project site

become L-1, will be constructed from the Z-Morh tunnel to Zoji La tunnel between Sonmarg-Kargil on national highway-1 in the Zoji La area. This project is the most complex one. The construction of this tunnel will come up facing unprecedented difficulties," said the company that won the bid, in a statement.

The tunnel has to be built at 700 meters below the surface. The project is also in the most complex hill terrain and snowstorms are a regular feature. As there is dense snow for at least eight months in a year, the execution will not be easy, ac-

cepts MEIL. What makes it even more challenging is the river flowing adjacent to the proposed project site. These conditions are going to create severe problems with water and ice pouring during the construction.

The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has decided to improve the road travel facilities to all commuters between Kashmir and Ladakh. As part of this plan, a highway tunnel will also be constructed from Srinagar to Baltal, which will improve the Amaranth Yatra of the pilgrims. Baltal base camp near Kargil is used for

Amarnath yatra. Besides, two snow galleries will come up -- 300 meters and 150 meters each. India is making every effort to ramp up its Himalayan road infra. The total length of these works is 18.475 kilometres.

In Part-2, the construction will include a 0.16 km long cut and cover tunnel along with the above details regarding the tunnel. Even, ventilation cavern, three shafts will also be constructed. Two other shafts called the Longitudinal Ventilation System will then come up, including a special transport ventilation system.

IS module busted in Kashmir

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 22: Five members of the Islamic State of Jammu & Kashmir (ISJK), who had planned to attack an Army camp in Kashmir valley, were arrested by the police from Bandipora district Saturday.

Official sources said that acting on a specific input, the Bandipora district police arrested five terror associates of the ISJK or Wilayah-al-Hind, the regional branch of the pan-Islamist terror group, ISIS.

Four of them are from different places in Bandipora and one is from Srinagar, sources said. Incriminating material including matrix sheets, ISJK flags and ammunition was recovered from their possession.

On preliminary inquiry, police sources said, it was found that these five members of the ISJK carried out a reece of an army camp as they planned to attack it. The module was also providing support to the terror group in the valley and motivating and radicalising youth to join their terror ranks.

Sources said the group was manufacturing flags of the ISJK in Chittibandy Aragam and further supplying them to their associates in Srinagar.

The police has filed a case under Unlawful Activities Prevention Act at police Station Aragam and are further investigating the case.

A small number of youth in Kashmir began supporting ISIS when the terror group assumed

GLOBAL TERROR IN VALLEY



A small number of youth in Kashmir began supporting ISIS when the terror group assumed prominence in 2014 with its use of social media to run their propaganda videos of barbaric executions

Masked youth were frequently seen waving pro-Caliphate ISIS flags in downtown Srinagar

By 2017, black ISIS shrouds began replacing Pakistani green flags which had been used as ceremonies to wrap slain terrorists in their funerals in Kashmir

LAST YEAR, AN ISJK TERRORIST WAS KILLED BY HIZBUL MUJAHIDEEN FOLLOWING WHICH THE ISJK HAD DECLARED THAT PAKISTAN-BACKED TERROR GROUPS IN KASHMIR WERE TRAITORS TO THE CAUSE OF ISLAMIC JIHAD

prominence in 2014 with its use of social media to run their propaganda videos of barbaric executions. Masked youth were frequently seen waving pro-Caliphate ISIS flags in downtown Srinagar.

By 2017, black ISIS shrouds began replacing Pakistani green flags which had been used as ceremonies to wrap slain terrorists in their funerals in Kashmir: Last year, an ISJK terrorist was killed by Hizbul

Mujahideen following which the ISJK had declared that Pakistan-backed terror groups in Kashmir were traitors to the cause of Islamic jihad. ISIS, in an official announcement last year, acknowledged that it has set up its India brancha "Wilayah-al-Hinda" after its operative Ishaq Ahmad Sofi was killed in an encounter with security forces in Shopian in south Kashmir:

90 pc of annual rainfall already recorded in Guj



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, August 22: Gujarat has received over 90 per cent of the average annual rainfall so far, more than half of it in August alone, officials said Saturday.

Water stock in the dams in the state has reached nearly 62 per cent of the gross storage capacity. Against 821 mm of average annual rainfall, the state till Friday had received 754.12 mm or 90.75 per cent rains, the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) said.

It received 403.22 mm rainfall in August alone, it said.

Kutch has so far received 159.12 per cent of average annual rainfall, followed by Saurashtra at 121.60 per cent, south Gujarat at 83.40 per cent, east central Gujarat at 69.58 per cent and north Gujarat at 67.87 per cent.

Devbhumi Dwarka in Saurashtra has received 255.18 per cent rain-

fall, the highest in the state, while Dahod in east-central Gujarat has received the lowest 44.29 per cent rain, it said.

At least 66 out of 206 dams, including 52 in Saurashtra, have reached their full capacity, the state water resource department said.

Dams in the state have reached 61.87 per cent of their gross storage capacity, the department said.

Sardar Sarovar dam, the largest in the state, is 57.10 per cent full. Friday, monsoon remained vigorous over Saurashtra-Kutch region and active across the state, with Valsad in south Gujarat receiving very heavy showers, said the Ahmedabad centre of the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

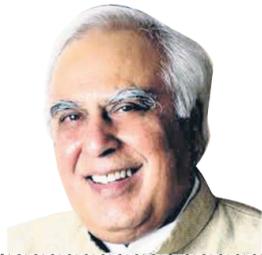
Heavy rainfall was reported on Saturday in Devbhumi Dwarka district of Saurashtra as well as in Mehsana, Aravalli and Panchmahal districts.

SWOLLEN RIVER



Locals look on at the swollen Chenab river, a day after authorities opened Salal Dam reservoir gates following heavy rains, in Jammu, Saturday. PTI PHOTO

national



Contempt power being used as a sledgehammer. Why are courts helpless when institutions that need to protect the constitution and the laws show "open contempt" for both?
KAPIL SIBAL | CONGRESS LEADER

50-KG OVARIAN TUMOUR, HALF THE BODYWEIGHT OF PATIENT, REMOVED

A 50-kg tumour, which was half the bodyweight of the patient, has been removed from her ovary at a Delhi hospital, with the doctors claiming it to be the largest of its kind to be operated in the world



of the day quote

May the blessings of Lord Ganesha be upon the people of Goa so that the obstacles of the COVID-19 epidemic and its negative effects are conquered by the people
BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI | GOA GOVERNOR

How can this powerless government protect the interests of the ordinary people? ...If they cannot, what is the point of such a government in power? Or did the BJP want such riots during the BBMP elections?
HD KUMARASWAMY | FORMER K'TAKA CHIEF MINISTER

...I have strong doubts that my phone calls are being tapped. So I request you to get it investigated appropriately and take necessary action
DK SHIVAKUMAR | K'TAKA CONGRESS CHIEF

COVID-19 cases cross 3 million in India

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 22: India recorded 69,878 new coronavirus cases in a single day Saturday taking the total tally to 30,05,281, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said.

In the last 24 hours, 945 people lost their lives due to COVID-19 infection taking the toll to 55,794, the ministry said.

The total active cases from across the country stands at 6,97,330. The total number of people discharged from hospitals and quarantine centres so far is 22,22,577. In the last 24 hours, 63,631 people recovered. The recovery rate stands at 74.69 per cent.

The government stated that 3,44,91,073 cumulative total samples have been tested up to August 21, and 10,23,836 samples were tested Friday.

Andhra Pradesh, one of the worst hit states, has recorded 87,803 active cases so far. A total 2,44,045 people have recovered from the deadly virus in the state so far. In the last 24 hours, 8,827 people recovered from the infection of the



virus. The state has recorded 3,092 deaths so far and in the last 24 hours 91 people succumbed to the infection

In Karnataka, the total active cases are 83,082. So far 1,76,942 people have recovered from the infection, of whom 6,561 left hospitals and quarantine centres in the last 24 hours, when 93 people succumbed to the disease taking the toll to 4,522 so far in the state.

The state of Maharashtra has

1,64,879 active cases. A total 4,70,873 people recovered from the virus infection and in the last 24 hours, as 11,749 people left hospital after recovering. A total 21,698 people have lost their lives as 339 died in the last 24 hours.

The national capital has 11,426 active Covid-19 cases. So far, 1,42,908 people have recovered, of which 1,082 in the last 24 hours. The capital has reported 4,270 deaths so far as 13 died in past one day.

Recovery rate reaches 74.69%

New Delhi: A record 63,631 patients have recuperated from COVID-19 in a day pushing the recovery rate to 74.69 per cent, while the case fatality rate has dropped to 1.87 per cent, the Union Health Ministry said Saturday. "Record-high recoveries have ensured that the actual caseload of the country, which is the active cases, has reduced and currently comprises only 23.43 per cent of the total cases," the ministry said. "With a higher number of COVID-19 patients recovering and being discharged from hospitals and home isolation, the recovery rate has reached 74.69 per cent. This has also led to declining COVID-19 case fatality rate, which stands at a new low of 1.87 per cent as on date," the ministry said.

SC extends deadline till Sept 30 for verdict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 22: The Supreme Court has extended by a month the deadline for completion of trial in the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition case involving 32 accused, including BJP veterans LK Advani, MM Joshi and Uma Bharti, and said that judgement should be delivered by September 30.

The top court, which had earlier fixed August 31 as the deadline for completion of proceedings including pronouncement of the verdict, took note of the report filed by special judge SK Yadav in the high-profile case.

A bench of justices RF Nariman, Navin Sinha and Indira Banerjee said, "Having read the report of Surendra Kumar Yadav, learned Special Judge, and considering that the proceedings are at the fag end, we grant one month's time, i.e., till September 30, 2020, to complete the proceedings including the delivery of judgment". The order was passed August 19

BABRI DEMOLITION CASE



and was uploaded on the apex court website recently. On May 8, the top court had extended by three months the time for completion of trial in the case and said that judgement should be delivered by August 31. The special CBI court at Lucknow has completed the recording of statements of the 32 accused under Section 313 of CrPC in the case.

The mosque in Ayodhya was demolished December 6, 1992, by 'kar sevaks' who claimed that an ancient Ram temple stood at the same site. Former Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani and BJP veteran MM Joshi, who were among those leading the Ram temple movement at that time, had deposed before the court through video conferencing.

Nagaland BCC warns against Chinese cult 'Church of Almighty'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kohima, August 22: The Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) has warned the church leaders in Nagaland against a cult called the Church of Almighty God from China. The NBCC said this is a dangerous cult as they are actively spreading false Gospel and false teachings.

NBCC general secretary Zehou Keyho in a letter to all executive secretaries and directors of Baptist associations under it, said: "I am writing this with a grave concern concerning a cult, called the Church of Almighty God from China, reportedly making inroads into our land. The Church of Almighty God or Eastern Lightning cult is a well organised group, aggressively moving forward with publications and creating many Facebook pages and colourful artwork that appears biblical and enticing."

The two-page August 19 letter, with the subject "Warning against cult" said that the cult teaches that Lord Jesus has come back to earth as a woman, named Yang Xiangbin, also called Lightning Deng, and the New Testament has been replaced by their new bible, called "The Word Appears in the Flesh".

"They teach that God is speaking through this woman, and they refer to God's speaking through this woman, as utterances, and these utterances are written in their books, as revelations from God, and they are being published and promoted through books, videos, computer generated movies and artwork and many other forms of media."

Keyho in his letter, available with IANS, wrote: "Jesus said in His Word that He would return to earth, not as the almighty who speaks through a woman from China, but as He was, is and ever shall be. Let us beware of this dangerous cult."

National Council for Transgender Persons set up by Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 22: The Centre has constituted the National Council for Transgender Persons to formulate policies, programmes, legislation and projects regarding members of the community for achieving equality and full participation by them.

The council was established by the Centre in exercise of the powers conferred by the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, according to a gazette notification issued late Friday night.

According to the Act, the functions of the council include advising the Centre on the formulation of policies, programmes, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons; monitoring and evaluating the impact of policies and programmes designed for achieving equality and full participation of transgender persons.

Don't restrict inter-state movement: Centre to states

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 22: In view of the reports of restrictions on inter-state and intra-state movement of people and goods, the Centre Saturday directed all states to follow the Unlock 3.0 guidelines and allow such movement without any separate permission or permit.

A letter by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla to all Chief Secretaries draws their attention to "para 5 of Unlock 3.0 guidelines", which states that there will be no restrictions on inter-state and intra-state movement of persons and goods.

Citing the para, the letter mentions that no separate permission, approval and e-permit will be required for such movement of persons and goods for cross-border land trade under treaties with neighbouring countries.

The Home Secretary's letter notes that there are reports that



local-level restrictions on movement were being imposed by various districts and states.

The letter says such restrictions were creating problems in inter-state movement of goods and services and impacting supply chains resulting in disruption of economic activity and employment.

"Such restrictions amount to violation of guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) under provisions of Disaster Management Act, 2005. No restrictions be imposed and it should be ensured that MHA guidelines are followed," says the letter.

The Centre Saturday directed all states to follow the Unlock 3.0 guidelines and allow such movement without any separate permission or permit

A letter by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla to all Chief Secretaries states that there will be no restrictions on inter-state and intra-state movement of persons and goods

The Centre on July 29 issued Unlock 3.0 guidelines - the third phase of lifting of coronavirus-related restrictions across the country, giving relief to inter-state and intra-state movement of people and goods. In the guidelines applied till August 31, the government scrapped night curfew and allowed yoga institutes to reopen.

In the new guidelines, the government said metro rail operations and large gatherings, however, still remain banned. Schools, colleges and educational institutions will remain shut till the end of August.

SHORT TAKES

Four held for 'franchise fraud'

Noida (UP): With the arrest of four men, Noida Police Saturday said they have busted a "franchise racket" run by them to dupe around Rs 30 crore from over three dozen people from multiple states. The police also recovered properties worth around Rs 10 crore, including 3,300 kg gold, Rs 13,54,550 cash and a Mercedes car, from the accused persons, a senior officer said. During a probe it emerged that it was not only one company but there were also four-five more such firms floated by these men for the same purpose.

IAF officer ends life in Jammu

Jammu: A warrant officer in the Indian Air Force (IAF) allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with his service pistol inside a camp here, officials said Saturday. Warrant Officer Inder Pal Singh, 53, a resident of Uttar Pradesh, allegedly shot himself at Air Force Station Kalu Chak on the outskirts of Jammu on Friday, they said. The officials said Singh's colleagues rushed him to a nearby hospital, where doctors declared him dead. The motive behind his taking such an extreme step was not known immediately, the officials said, adding that police have started inquest proceedings and further investigation is underway.

Mukherjee still in deep coma

New Delhi: Former President Pranab Mukherjee continues to remain in a deep coma but his vital parameters are stable, the hospital said Saturday morning. Doctors said attending to the 84-year-old said he is being treated for respiratory infection and continues to be on ventilatory support. Mukherjee was admitted to the Army's Research and Referral Hospital in Delhi Cantonment August 10 and was operated for removal of a clot in the brain the same day.

Shibu Soren, wife test COVID +ve

Ranchi: Former Jharkhand Chief Minister and JMM president Shibu Soren and his wife Roopi, along with seven others in their household, have tested positive for COVID-19, official sources said. All of them are undergoing home quarantine, they said. Samples of 29 people in Soren's household were collected for examination, of which seven were found to have contracted the disease.

Woman alleges rape by 143 people

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, August 22: In a sensational case, a 25-year-old woman has lodged a complaint with the Hyderabad police, alleging that she was sexually assaulted by 143 people since 2010.

The woman, a native of Nalgonda district residing in Hyderabad, lodged the complaint at the Punjagutta police station.

She named people with a political background, student leaders, people from films, media and other walks of life as the accused. Those accused also include a few women.

In addition to 139 people named in the complaint, she alleged that four others whom she does not remember also raped her.

The sensational complaint forced the police to register a 42-page First Information Report (FIR) August 20. The FIR has the names



of the accused on 41 pages.

The police have sent the woman for medical examination and counselling. A police officer said they would verify the complaint and then decide on the future course of action. The woman, residing in the Somajiguda area in Hyderabad, stated in her complaint that three months after her marriage in 2009 her husband, in-laws and other relatives started harassing and assaulting her. She claimed that they sexually

harassed and physically assaulted her for nine months. A divorce took place in December 2010 and after that she went to her mother's house and joined a college for further studies. She alleged that the accused sexually exploited her multiple times. She said they abused her in the name of caste, fished her while sexually assaulting her and threatened to upload the videos and pictures on social media.

The police registered a case under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) for rape, insulting the modesty of a woman, assault or use of criminal force and sexual harassment. The police have also invoked the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.

"We will investigate the complaint and then decide the next course of action," said police sub-inspector D. Nagraju.

Ganesh fest begins on low-key note as COVID-19 dampens spirit

DUE TO THE SUBDUED CELEBRATIONS, SMALL BUSINESSES THAT THRIVE DURING THE FESTIVAL TOOK A HIT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 22: Amid the coronavirus pandemic and restrictions on public movement, the 10-day Ganesh festival started in Mumbai and other parts of Maharashtra Saturday, although the usual pomp and glory was missing this year.

The Maharashtra government has issued guidelines regarding Ganeshotsav celebrations, saying that processions should not be taken out before installing and immersing the idols of the deity.

It also said that the heights of Lord Ganesh idols installed by sarvajanik (community) mandals and at household-level should be limited to four feet and two feet, respec-

tively, this year.

As a result, the number of people coming out in the market to buy Ganpati idols for installation in their houses, housing societies and sarvajanik pandals, was limited. The usual spirit and fervour of the festival was relatively low this year.

Due to the subdued celebrations, small businesses of that thrive during the festival, like flower vendors, sweet shops, outlets selling decoration items, imitation jewellery and transporters took a hit. The pandemic also affected several others, including artists and transporters.

However, in some popular market places like Dadar in central Mumbai, people still came out in large numbers to purchase material required for decoration, puja ritu-



als in the last couple of days. Lalbaugcha Raja, Mumbai's best-known sarvajanik Ganeshotsav

mandal, cancelled the festival this year in view of the pandemic, while Wadala's GSB Sewa Samiti, con-

sidered one of the richest mandals in the metropolis, postponed the celebration to 'Magh Shudh Chaturthi' in February next year.

The usual pandal decorations in the city are missing this year and cultural events have been replaced by public awareness programmes and health camps by the mandals.

Mumbai and the neighbouring areas have been witnessing heavy rains since the last few days. The downpour continued on Saturday morning, but people stepped out to bring home the idols of the deity amid chants 'Ganpati bappa moraya'. In some areas firecrackers were also burst to welcome the Lord.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray also welcomed Lord Ganesh at his official residence

'Varsha'. Some celebrities and political leaders also installed the idols at their places.

The installation of the deity was done as per the rituals in the morning. Meanwhile, security has been beefed up in the city for the festival. Apart from the local police, a company of Rapid Action Force (RAF), three companies of State Reserve Police Force (SRPF), local arms and riot control police have been deployed.

Quick response teams, bomb disposal squads and anti-terrorism cells have also been put on alert to prevent untoward incidents and police will monitor the happenings in the city with the help of 5,000 CCTV cameras and also use drones for aerial surveillance, a police official said.

of the day quote

The case (Sushant Singh's death) was becoming messy...I praise the wisdom of the top court for ordering a CBI inquiry into the matter
SHATRUGHAN SINHA | ACTOR

It (privatisation of airports) violates the pledge made in 2003 that any proposal concerning airport privatisation would be made only in consultation with the state government and must be revoked
MK STALIN | DMK CHIEF

We will not share water from the Sharda-Yamuna Link canal project because Punjab will burn if the state is forced to share water with Haryana
AMARINDER SINGH | PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Threat to blow up Rafale air base

Chandigarh: A letter to blow up the Indian Air Force station in Ambala, Haryana, where the first batch of five Rafale aircraft are stationed, was received by authorities, police said Saturday. The letter was received on Friday after which the authorities lodged a complaint with the nearby police station, a police official said. As a precaution and to ensure safety security has been beefed up at the Ambala station, he added. "The letter appears to be a hoax and the handiwork of some mischief-mongers," a senior police official told IANS.

Six-year-old dies in leopard attack

Guwahati: A six-year-old boy died after being attacked by a leopard in Maligaon area in Assam's Guwahati Friday. According to reports, a leopard attacked the minor boy Friday afternoon while he was playing with his friends near his house. As soon as the leopard attacked the boy, locals raised an alarm but the child was dragged by the beast into the jungle area. Later, locals and family members recovered the child in critical condition and rushed the boy to a nearby private hospital.

Inter-state arms racket busted

New Delhi: The Delhi Police busted an inter-state arms trafficking racket Thursday and arrested a suspect for illegally supplying arms and ammunitions in Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) and western Uttar Pradesh. The accused, identified as Abdul Salaam, is a resident of Meerut in Uttar Pradesh. Abdul Salaam was arrested around 8:30 pm Thursday near Ring Road in Delhi. Police said that 20 semi-automatic pistols along with 40 magazines and 50 live cartridges were recovered from the possession of the accused.

1 terrorist killed in encounter

Srinagar: One terrorist was killed in an encounter with the security forces in North Kashmir's Baramulla district Saturday, police said. "One unidentified terrorist killed in the encounter at Kreeri. Operation is going on," the police added. The encounter erupted after a joint team of the police and the Army cordoned off the Saloosa area following information about the presence of terrorists. As the security forces zeroed in on the spot, they came under a heavy volume of fire that triggered the encounter.



The statement of AYUSH Ministry secretary Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha that non-Hindi speaking participants could leave during a ministry's training session speaks volumes about the Hindi domination being imposed
KANIMOZHI | DMK MP

INDIA CONDUCTS OVER 1 MN COVID-19 TESTS IN A DAY

Keeping its commitment of exponentially increasing daily COVID-19 tests, India has "crossed a significant milestone" of testing more than 10 lakh samples in a day



RLYS SCRAP TENDER FOR 44 VANDE BHARAT TRAINS

A joint venture between China-based CRRC Yongji Electric Company Ltd and Gurugram-based Pioneer Fil-Med Pvt Ltd was a frontrunner for the project



ARESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 22: India has cancelled a tender for making 44 semi-high speed "Vande Bharat" trains, the Railway Ministry said Friday night. It said a fresh tender will be floated within a week and give preference to the Centre's Make In India programme. The move to cancel the tender is a big setback for China as a Chinese joint venture, CRRC Pioneer Electric (India) Pvt Ltd, was the only foreign bidder among the six contenders to supply 44 sets of semi-high speed train. "Tender for manufacturing of 44 semi high speed train sets (Vande Bharat) has been cancelled. Fresh tender will be floated within a week as per Revised Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) order," the Railway Ministry tweeted. Tender for manufacturing of 44 semi high speed train sets (Vande Bharat) has been cancelled. Fresh tender will be floated within

● The move to cancel the tender is a big setback for China as a Chinese joint venture, CRRC Pioneer Electric (India) Pvt Ltd, was the only foreign bidder among the six contenders
● Fresh tender will be floated within a week as per Revised Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) order: Railways

a week as per Revised Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) order. The joint venture was formed between China-based CRRC Yongji Electric Company Ltd and Gurugram-based Pioneer Fil-Med Pvt Ltd in 2015. The railways is keen to ensure that a domestic firm takes the tender and once it was felt that the Chinese joint venture was a frontrunner for the project, it was scrapped, this news agency reported quoting unnamed sources.

BSF kills 5 intruders along India-Pak IB



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh/New Delhi, August 22: The BSF shot dead five Pakistan intruders along the India-Pakistan International Border in Punjab's Tarn Taran district early Saturday, the force said. This is the highest number of intruders killed in a single incident along the over 3,300 km-long border with Pakistan in more than a decade time period, officials said. Punjab shares a 553-km-long frontier with Pakistan, apart from Jammu, Rajasthan and Gujarat, who together constitute the remaining part of the International Border. A BSF spokesperson said troops recovered nine packets containing over 9 kg of heroin, along with an AK-47 rifle, two magazines and 27 rounds, four 9 mm Berretta pistols with seven magazines and 109 live rounds, two mobile phones and ₹610 in Pakistani currency. The spokesperson said after suspicious activity was noticed near the border fence, the force personnel "cordoned the area and challenged the intruders to stop and surrender".

"The Pakistani armed intruders did not pay any heed to the challenge and opened fire on the BSF troops," the official said. "Hence, to stop their further misadventure and in self-defence, the BSF troops retaliated with fire due to which the five Pakistani armed intruders succumbed to bullet injuries," he said. A senior BSF official said the exchange of fire began around 4.45 am near the Dal border post which is close to Bhikhiwind town of the district and is guarded by the 103rd battalion of the Border Security Force under the Ferozepur sector. BSF troops, officials said, first noticed suspicious activity at the border around midnight and launched a "focused" surveillance and set up multiple ambushes after which the "contact was established" early morning, just behind the IB fence. The intruders were seen carrying rifles and were taking the aid of 'sarkanda' or tall grass to sneak into India, they said. A photo collage released by the BSF showed two bodies piled on each other.

Haryana IG held for assaulting women

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, August 22: Haryana Inspector General of Police Hemant Kalson, who is no stranger to controversies, was arrested by the police Saturday for allegedly assaulting two women after trespassing into their houses in Panchkula district, officials said. In April 2019 he had faced suspension for allegedly firing into the air with a constable's semi-automatic gun outside the Circuit House at Ariyalur in Tamil Nadu, while in September 2018 he was assaulted by passers-by in a case of road rage. In the latest episode, Kalson has been booked for two incidents in Pinjore town, some 30 km from here, both reported Friday. In the first incident, a woman alleged that Kalson forcibly entered her house and beat up her daughter. In the second incident, a man in a complaint said Kalson allegedly abused his wife and assaulted him, besides threatening to shoot him. According to the first information report, he was allegedly in an inebriated state at the time of both incidents. Kalson, 55, is currently posted as IGP, Home Guards. In the 2018 incident, Kalson was behind the wheel, accompanied by a friend. They were travelling from Pinjore to Panchkula, when a SUV overtook the vehicle at a high speed. He allegedly chased that vehicle and forced the driver to stop the vehicle.

Girl gangraped, killed, body dumped

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jalpaiguri, August 22: A 16-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped multiple times, killed and the body dumped in a septic tank of a house in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district, police said Saturday. Three persons have been arrested in connection with the incident, and when produced before the court Friday, they were remanded to eight days of police custody. The girl, a resident of Shyanashikata in Rajganj, went missing August 10, following which her family lodged a police complaint, officials said. Police Thursday arrested three persons, and during interrogation, they confessed to have raped and killed the girl August 15, officials said, adding that the body was then dumped in the septic tank. The body was taken out from the septic tank of a house in Pradhan Para later that night, police said. Local TMC MLA Khageswar Roy has met the girl's family and demanded death penalty for the accused. Police said they are investigating the matter and yet to ascertain what led to the incident.

Bloomsbury withdraws book on Delhi riots 2020

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 22: Publisher Bloomsbury India said on Saturday it was withdrawing the publication of its book "Delhi Riots 2020: The Untold Story" planned for September "in view of very recent events including a virtual pre-publication launch organised without our knowledge by the authors, with participation by parties of whom the publishers would not have approved." "Bloomsbury India strongly supports freedom of speech but also has a deep sense of responsibility towards society," the publisher said in a statement. "Bloomsbury India had planned to release 'Delhi Riots 2020: The Untold Story' in September, a book purportedly giving a factual report on the riots in Delhi in February 2020, based on investigations and interviews conducted by the authors. "However, in view of very recent events including a virtual pre-publication launch organised without our knowledge by the authors, with participation by parties of whom the Publishers would not have approved, we have decided to withdraw publication of the book. Bloomsbury India strongly supports freedom of speech but also has a deep sense of responsibility towards society," the statement said. A storm had been brewing since late Friday after a purported invitation on social media, with the Bloomsbury logo at its bottom left, stated that BJP general secretary Bhupendra Yadav would launch the book with party leader Kapil Mishra, besides authors Monica Arora, Sonali Chitalkar and Prerna Malhotra, as also filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri, among others, attending the virtual event. In response to this, Bloomsbury issued a statement Friday evening denying it was involved in the launch, saying: "Bloomsbury India is publishing the book 'Delhi Riots 2020: The Untold Story' by advocate Monica Arora, Sonali Chitalkar, Prerna Malhotra in September 2020. We are not organising any launch event for the book and there are no events being planned yet," the statement said.

OVERCAST SKY



Clouds gather in the sky over Raisina Hills in New Delhi, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

Forced to travel 50 km for online classes, students demand Internet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 22: Around 200 children were forced to travel 50 kilometers everyday to reach an area with Internet connection to attend online classes from their remote coastal villages in Maharashtra after they were hit first COVID-19 lockdown and then cyclone Nisarga. Hit by a pandemic and then a natural disaster, the children from remote villages in Maharashtra had to deal with Internet disruptions since early June when connectivity along the coastal area of Ratnagiri district became scratchy. But when even after a month the situation did not improve, one of the students finally reached out to the top child rights body NCPCR for help. The National Commission for Protection Child Rights, in turn, ensured that the connectivity is restored in the fastest possible manner by reaching out to cellular com-



panies and the district magistrate of the area, NCPCR Chairman Priyank Kanoongo said. In his letter to the district magistrate of the area, Kanoongo stressed that the authorities must ensure that the issue gets resolved at the earliest. "The commission has taken cognizance of a complaint received regarding poor and disrupted network connectivity along coastal area of Ratnagiri District,

Hit by a pandemic and then a natural disaster, the children from remote villages in Maharashtra had to deal with Internet disruptions since early June

panies and the district magistrate of the area, NCPCR Chairman Priyank Kanoongo said. In his letter to the district magistrate of the area, Kanoongo stressed that the authorities must ensure that the issue gets resolved at the earliest. "The commission has taken cognizance of a complaint received regarding poor and disrupted network connectivity along coastal area of Ratnagiri District,

district magistrate and cellular companies and we dealt with it as a policy intervention in which NCPCR has to play a role in helping children. As a result, action was taken on a priority basis and internet connectivity of the village was restored," he said. He further stressed that it is very important to ensure barrier-free Internet facility for the children in these times. "It is very important that if children are dependent upon the Internet for their education then it needs to be ensured that they get barrier-free Internet facility," he said. The nationwide lockdown induced by COVID-19 in March prompted schools and colleges to move to the virtual world for teaching and learning activities. But a weak internet penetration has turned e-education into a distant dream for many children in the rural areas.



There is no legitimate reason to delay the intra-Afghan negotiations that have been postponed over differences on the release of controversial Taliban prisoners by the Kabul government

TIKTOK MULLS ACTION

TikTok is reportedly preparing to legally challenge by early next week the first executive order signed by US President Donald Trump to prohibit its China-based owner ByteDance to do any business in the US, the media reported



of the day quote

Any country sponsoring terrorism should not be allowed to paint itself as a victim of terror



T S TIRUMURTI | PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA TO THE UN

The country is returning to normal following the impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic



JAIR BOLSONARO | BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT

The US has violated both the JCPOA and Resolution 2231 by withdrawing from it, unilaterally reimposing sanctions on Iran, and even punishing those complying with the resolution



MOHAMMAD JAVAD ZARIF | IRAN'S FOREIGN MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Nepal to resume int'l flights

Kathmandu: The Nepal government has decided to resume international flights from September 1 after nearly six months, a Cabinet Minister said. Nepal had suspended international flights on March 22 in an effort to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, reports Xinhua news agency. The country had earlier planned to resume the services from August 17, but it was extended till August 31 amid the resurgence of coronavirus cases.

WWII memory wall defaced

Paris: Vandals have scrawled graffiti denying the Holocaust on a wall in the village that was the site of the France's biggest massacre of civilians by the Nazis during World War II. France's justice minister vowed on Saturday that those responsible would be brought to justice. Officials in Oradour-Sur-Glane, near Limoges in central France, threw up a tarp to cover the graffiti discovered Friday on the wall at the entrance to the Center for Remembrance. The word "Lie" was scrawled on the wall, along with other graffiti, according to the regional paper Le Populaire du Centre. The inscription "Martyr Village" was crossed out. "Shame on those who did this," Justice Minister Eric Dupond-Moretti tweeted.

South Korea mulls nationwide curbs

Seoul: South Korea is considering national restrictions to cope with a resurgence of coronavirus infections that has seen nine straight days of triple-digit increases in newly confirmed cases. The 332 new cases reported Saturday was the second consecutive day surpassing 300. At a briefing, Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said the government is considering expanding to the whole country shutdown measures that have been implemented in the greater Seoul region, which is where the resurgence began.

US buildings closed in Portland

Portland: At least two federal buildings in Portland have been closed and the FBI is investigating after a car bomb threat was made, the officials said Friday. The threat, which was received Thursday, warned of the intention to use a car bomb to target federal property in Portland, according to two law enforcement officials. A number of federal offices in the area have been closed because of the threat, the officials said.

China backs Pakistan on choosing 'independent' path

IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT IT WAS CHINA, WHICH HAD REQUESTED A CLOSED DOOR DISCUSSION ON THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR ISSUE, SECONDING ISLAMABAD'S REQUEST ON THE SAME AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, August 22: China has come out in full support of Pakistan's position and stance on the Jammu and Kashmir issue along with its extended sustenance on Islamabad "independently" choosing a development path based on its "national conditions" in the context of external security parameters.

A joint statement issued after the talks between Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi during Qureshi's two-day visit to Beijing said: "The Chinese side reiterated that Pakistan and China are iron brothers and Pakistan remains China's staunchest partner in the region and that China firmly supports Pakistan in safeguarding its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, and independently choosing a development path based on its national conditions, striving for a better external security environment and playing a more constructive role in international and regional affairs."

The Kashmir issue was also brought into consideration and discussion during the meeting. Qureshi briefed the Chinese side on the sit-



uation in what it calls 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)'. China has seconded Pakistan's stance on Kashmir, declaring the dispute left over from the history between India and Pakistan, urging that the dispute should be resolved peacefully and properly through the UN charter, relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements. "China opposed any unilateral actions that complicate the situation," maintained the Chinese side.

It should be noted that it was China, which had requested a closed door discussion on the Jammu and Kashmir issue, seconding Islamabad's request on the

same at the UN Security Council.

Other than the Kashmir issue, China's support to Pakistan for taking independent decision, in line with its national interests, is signalling alarm to the Arab world, which has been pushing Islamabad to distance itself from China and see its progress in its ties with the US and its allies.

The joint statement has reiterated that there would be no compromise on the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), highlighting that it would continue to pursue the completion of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), brushing aside any pressure Islamabad faces from some external global powers.

Navalny stable after landing in Germany

When German specialists arrived aboard a plane equipped with advanced medical equipment Friday morning at his family's behest, Navalny's physicians in Omsk initially said he was too unstable to move

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Berlin, August 22: Russian dissident Alexei Navalny, who is in a coma after a suspected poisoning, arrived in Berlin on a special flight Saturday for treatment by specialists at the German capital's main hospital.

A representative of the NGO that arranged the flight confirmed that the plane had landed and that Navalny was in stable condition. "Navalny is in Berlin," Jaka Bizilj, of the German organization Cinema For Peace, said. "He survived the flight and he's stable." He said all other information on the 44-year-old's health

would have to come from his family and the German doctors now looking after him. After touching down shortly before 9 a.m. at a special area of the capital's Tegel airport used for government and military flights, Navalny was taken by ambulance to the downtown campus of Berlin's Charite hospital.

Navalny, a politician and corruption investigator who is one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critics, was admitted to an intensive care unit in the Siberian city of Omsk Thursday. His supporters believe that tea he drank was laced with poison — and that the

Kremlin is behind both his illness and the delay in transferring him to a top German hospital.

When German specialists arrived aboard a plane equipped with advanced medical equipment Friday morning at his family's behest, Navalny's physicians in Omsk initially said he was too unstable to move. Navalny's supporters denounced that as a ploy by authorities to stall until any poison in his system would no longer be traceable. The Omsk medical team relented only after a charity that had organized the medevac plane revealed that the German doctors examined the

politician and said he was fit to be transported.

Deputy chief doctor of the Omsk hospital Anatoly Kalinichenko then told reporters that Navalny's condition had stabilized and that physicians "didn't mind" transferring the politician, given that his relatives were willing "to take on the risks."

The Kremlin denied that resistance to the transfer was political, with spokesman Dmitry Peskov saying that it was purely a medical decision. However, the reversal came as international pressure on Russia's leadership mounted.



SECURITY THREAT UK PM FORCED TO CUT SHORT HOLIDAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 22: UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has been forced to cut short his holiday with fiancée Carrie Symonds and their baby son Wilfred and dog Dilyn after the location of their cottage in the Scottish Highlands was leaked, triggering security concerns, according to a media report.

Johnson, 56, had taken time off for a so-called "staycation" within the UK during the peak summer holiday month of August when ministers often take a few weeks off from work.

The UK prime minister had chosen a remote cottage in Scotland but after photographs of the location emerged, he was forced to cut short the break and fly back to Downing Street on Thursday evening, "The Daily Telegraph" reports. A source close to the family told the newspaper their discovery had caused safety concerns and made it impossible for them to stay until the weekend as planned.

Unlike former British Prime Ministers, including David Cameron and Theresa May, who had allowed the press to take images of their summer holidays, Johnson had tried to keep his trip strictly private.

But pictures emerged recently, showing him out and about and also a bell tent pitched in a field next to the holiday home. According to reports, the tent was packed away after the landowner accused Johnson of camping without permission.

Pak puts more curbs on Azhar, Dawood

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, August 22: Seeking to wriggle out of the FATF's grey list, Pakistan has imposed tough financial sanctions on 88 banned terror groups and their leaders, including Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azhar and Dawood Ibrahim, by ordering the seizure of all of their properties and freezing of bank accounts, a media report said Saturday.

The Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) put Pakistan on the grey list in June 2018 and asked Islamabad to implement a plan of action by the end of 2019, but the deadline was extended later due to COVID-19 pandemic.

The government issued two notifications August 18 announcing sanctions on key figures of terror outfits such as 26/11 Mumbai attack mastermind and Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Saeed, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief Azhar, and underworld don Ibrahim.

Ibrahim, who heads a vast and multifaceted illegal business, has emerged as India's most wanted terrorist after the 1993 Mumbai bombings. The Pakistan government has proscribed 88 leaders and members of terrorist groups, in compliance with the new list issued by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) recently, Pakistani daily The News reported.

The notifications announced sanctions on key figures of terror outfits such as the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), JeM, Taliban, Daesh, Haqqani Group, al-Qaeda, and others. The government ordered the seizure of all movable and immovable prop-



Masood Azhar

erties of these outfits and individuals, and freezing of their bank accounts, the report said.

These terrorists have been barred from transferring money through financial institutions, purchasing of arms and travelling abroad, it said. The notifications ratified a complete ban on all leaders and members of defunct Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) hiding in the Pakistan-Afghanistan border areas.

The paper reported that Saeed, Azhar, Mullah Fazlullah (alias Mullah Radio), Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, Muhammad Yahya Mujahid, Abdul Hakeem Murad, wanted by Interpol, Noor Wali Mehsud, Fazal Raheem Shah of Uzbekistan Liberation Movement, Taliban leaders Jalaluddin Haqqani, Khalil Ahmad Haqqani, Yahya Haqqani, and Ibrahim and his associates were on the list.

The notifications said that leadership of the defunct TTP, and other organisations have been banned. Though various sanctions were in place against almost all of those listed by the UNSC, the government through the new notifications consolidated and documented the previously announced measures, the report said.

BELARUS BLOCKS NEWS WEBSITES

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Minsk, August 22: Authorities in Belarus have blocked an array of news media websites reporting on the country shaken by two weeks of protests against authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko.

The Belarusian Association of Journalists said Saturday that more than 20 sites had been blocked, including those of US-funded Radio Liberty and Belsat, a Polish-funded satellite TV channel focusing on Belarus.

Friday, the state publishing house stopped printing top independent newspapers the Narodnaya Volya and Komsomolskaya Pravda, citing equipment malfunction. Protests unprecedented in Belarus for their size and duration broke out after the August 9 presidential election in which official results handed Lukashenko a sixth term in office.

Protesters allege the results were manipulated and are calling for Lukashenko to resign. Police responded harshly in the first days of the protests, arresting some 7,000 people, beating many of them. But the protests have widened their scope, with strikes called at some of the country's main factories.

In an enormous show of defiance, an estimated 200,000 protesters rallied last Sunday in the capital, Minsk.

Lukashenko's main election challenger, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, called for another march this Sunday. "We are closer than ever to our dream," she said in a video message from Lithuania, where she took refuge after the election.



Maintenance workers work on the Jialing River railway bridge in Beibei district, southwest China's Chongqing Municipality. The inspection and maintenance of the bridge was strengthened during flood season to ensure the safe operation of the railway

WASHINGTON ZOO WELCOMES NEW BABY

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, August 22: Delivering a "much-needed moment of pure joy," the National Zoo's giant panda Mei Xiang gave birth to a wiggling cub Friday at a time of global pandemic and social unrest.

An experienced mom, "Mei Xiang picked the cub up immediately and began cradling and caring for it," the zoo said in a statement. "The panda team heard the cub vocalize." Panda lovers around the world were able to see the birth on the zoo's Panda Cam. Zookeepers also were using the camera to keep an eye on mom

PURE JOY



and baby. "Giant pandas are an international symbol of endangered wildlife and hope, and with the birth of this precious cub we are thrilled to offer the world a much-needed moment of pure joy," said Steve Monfort, John and Adrienne Mars Director of the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute. Monfort said Mei Xiang's age —

22 — made her chances of giving birth to a cub slim. "However, we wanted to give her one more opportunity to contribute to her species' survival," he said. She is the oldest giant panda to successfully give birth in the United States. The oldest in the world gave birth in China at age 23.

Mei Xiang has three surviving offspring, Tai Shan, Bao Bao and Bei Bei, that were transported to China at age 4 under an agreement with the Chinese government. The zoo has reopened to visitors on a limited basis, but the Panda House is closed. Mei Xiang gave birth in a small den, where she created a nest out of branches.

Indian-American couple releases campaign video for Biden, Harris

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, August 22: A Silicon Valley-based Indian-American couple has released a musical campaign video targeting Indian-Americans in the battleground states and urging them to vote for Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden and his Indian-origin running mate Senator Kamala Harris.

On the last day of the four-day Democratic National Convention Thursday, Biden, 77, formally accepted the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party. Harris, 55, scripted history in US politics as she became the first Indian-American and Black woman to get

a major party's vice-presidential nomination on the third day of the virtual Democratic National Convention on Wednesday.

"Living in Silicon Valley, we are at heart innovators; we have applied that creativity to rapidly grow the outreach to key South Asian voter groups in support of Vice President Biden. It is extremely important that we all come together as a community to fight for what is right," Vinita Bhutoria said after the release of the video on Friday.

Vinita, along with her tech entrepreneur husband Ajay Jian Bhutoria, starts the video saying, "America Ka Neta Kaisa Ho: Jo Biden Jaisa Ho." The political couple, who had earlier hosted Jill

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE



Biden at their house early this year for fundraising, is currently working on three unique video adverts

in support of the Biden-Harris campaign. The first of the series was released Friday.

"Indo-Americans are the crucial margin of victory in Michigan, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Florida, Wisconsin, and Nevada," said Ajay.

Running into 143 seconds, in the backdrop of music, Indian-Americans in various languages, including Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi, and Bengali, are appealing to their community members in the battleground States to vote and support Biden and his running mate Harris in the November presidential elections.

"As an absolutely essential swing vote, it is essential that Indo-American political representation increases. We have made immense leaps forward, but we will continue working hard

to further push the envelope of what is possible," Ajay said.

The video highlights the culture of Indo-Americans in the USA connecting to mainstream politics and highlights the engagement of all ages of Indo-American community, said Raj, a young Indian-American student from Claremont McKenna College in California. "It shows hope for the future for the Indo American community. The video shows the ocean of political activism and new waves by Indian Americans. The video connects people from different parts of India living in the USA and speaking in multiple languages, all united in the fight to elect Joe Biden and Kamala Harris," Raj said.



COVID has accelerated the pace of digital transformation that was never seen before. Today our education system is not fully equipped to teach the next generation with future-ready tech skills to thrive in the industry

SANDIP PATEL | MD, IBM INDIA/SOUTH ASIA

ICICI LOMBARD TO ACQUIRE BHARTI AXA

ICICI Lombard General Insurance has announced signing a definitive agreement to acquire Bharti Enterprises-promoted Bharti AXA General Insurance in all stock transaction. The proposed Rs 4,600-crore deal will propel ICICI Lombard to become the third largest player among non-life insurers



of the day quote

While expanding globally this year, the company responded to the pandemic by implementing initiatives to drive an integrated focus from all our centres in support of our clients

SANDEEP SAHAJ | CEO, CLEARWATER ANALYTICS

We have taken a big step forward towards serving the saving needs of senior citizens and general public alike with the launch of our firm's Fixed Deposits. We are happy that we continue to offer better interest rates to the senior citizens as well as the regular investors even in these tough times

YS CHAKRAVARTI | MD & CEO, SHIRAM CITY UNION FINANCE

It is good to see that coders are utilising their time to develop new skills. This will eventually help them stand out from the rest of the crowd who don't possess the talent critical for the new normal. It is also interesting to see that they are more focused on getting a permanent job to strengthen their position in future

NARAYAN MAHADEVAN | FOUNDER, BRIDGELABZ

Worldwide spend on public cloud hit \$233 bn in 2019

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 22: The global public cloud services market grew 26% (y-o-y) in 2019 with revenues totalling \$233.4 billion, according to a new International Data Corporation (IDC) report.

The Public Cloud services include Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS) and Software as a Service (SaaS).

The combined revenue of top five public cloud service providers (Amazon Web Services, Microsoft, Salesforce, Google and Oracle) captured more than one third of the worldwide total market, growing

35% y-o-y. "Cloud is expanding far beyond niche e-commerce and online ad-sponsored searches. It underpins all the digital activities that individuals and enterprises depend upon as we navigate and move beyond the pandemic," said Rick Villars, group vice president, Worldwide Research at IDC.

"Enterprises talked about cloud journeys of up to 10 years. Now they are looking to complete the shift in less than half that time."

The public cloud services market has more than doubled since 2016. During this same period, the combined spending on IaaS and



EXPANDING BEYOND NICHE

The combined revenue of top five public cloud service providers that includes AWS, Microsoft and Google captured more than one-third of the worldwide total market, growing 35% y-o-y

THE PUBLIC CLOUD SERVICES MARKET HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED SINCE 2016

SaaS applications remain the largest segment of public cloud spending with revenues of more than \$122 billion in 2019

The IDC expects spending on IaaS and PaaS to continue growing at a higher rate than the overall cloud market

PaaS has nearly tripled. This highlights the increasing reliance on cloud infrastructure

and platforms for application deployment for enterprise IT internal applications as well as SaaS

and digital application delivery. According to Deepak Mohan, Research Director, Cloud Infrastructure Services, cost optimisation and business resilience have emerged as top drivers of IT investment decisions and IaaS offerings are designed to enable both.

"The COVID-19 disruption has accelerated cloud adoption with both traditional enterprise IT organisations and digital service providers increasing use of IaaS for their technology platforms," he said.

SaaS applications remain the largest segment of public cloud

spending with revenues of more than \$122 billion in 2019.

"Although growth has slowed somewhat in recent years, the current crisis serves as an accelerator for SaaS adoption across primary and functional markets to address the exponential growth of remote workers," said Frank Della Rosa, research director, SaaS and Cloud Software.

The IDC expects spending on IaaS and PaaS to continue growing at a higher rate than the overall cloud market over the next several years as resilience, flexibility, and agility guide IT platform decisions.

Centre to develop ₹7,750 cr gas pipeline project in state

JHBDPL, Srikakulam-Angul Pipeline and Dhamra-Haldia Pipeline projects are under construction that will boost gas-based economy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: With an aim to expand the gas pipeline network across the country, the central government is developing around 1,550 km pipeline network for Odisha, under the Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga project, to boost gas-based economy.

Three projects viz., Jagdishpur-Haldia and Bokaro-Dhamra Pipeline (JHBDPL), Srikakulam-Angul Pipeline and Dhamra-Haldia Pipeline are being developed. These projects are being implemented by state-owned company Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL). The whole project is worth (estimated) ₹7,750 crore.

According to Odisha GAIL CGM Dinabandhu Soren, under 2,500 km JHBDPL project, the pipeline network will cover around 800 km for Odisha which is an investment of around ₹4,000 crore. This 800 km pipeline project is being implemented through two projects: Bokaro-Angul Pipeline and Dhamra-Angul Pipeline.

"The Bokaro-Angul section will have a total length of 667 km, of which 367 km will be in Odisha and 300 km in Jharkhand. It will cover five districts in Odisha namely



Angul, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Debagarh, and six districts in Jharkhand Bokaro, Ramgarh, Ranchi, Khunti, Gumla and Simdega," Soren said.

Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) awarded the geographical areas for development of City Gas Distribution networks in these 11 districts to different entities and the Bokaro-Angul section will be catering the supply of natural gas to these areas.

According to GAIL authorities, the JHBDPL project will be completed in Odisha by February 2021. The Srikakulam-Angul Pipeline

project will have a length of around 500 km and it will supply gas to western parts of Odisha. The authorities said that about ₹2,500 crore is being invested to execute the pipeline network expansion. The authorities also stated that gas will be supplied to small and medium industries and other companies. They also said that the project will be completed soon.

On the other hand, Dhamra-Haldia Pipeline project will be of 250 km and it will supply gas to the coastal region of Odisha. It is expected that around ₹1,250 crore is being invested for the completion of this project.

Amazon consumer biz CEO to step down next year

AGENCIES

San Francisco, August 22: Jeff Wilke, the CEO of Amazon's worldwide consumer division, is set to retire early next year after serving the company for over two decades.

Dave Clark, Amazon's Senior Vice President of Retail Operations, will succeed Wilke, Amazon said in a statement on Friday.

In a memo to employees, Amazon Founder and CEO Jeff Bezos called Wilke his "tutor".

Wilke, who joined the company in 1999, is often credited with shaping the logistics system that the e-commerce giant has today.

"When you see us taking care of customers, you can thank Jeff for it," Bezos said in the memo, announcing Wilke's departure from the company.



"Jeff's legacy and impact will live on long after he departs. He is simply one of those people without whom Amazon would be completely unrecognisable," the Amazon CEO said.

In a message to Amazon teams around the world, Wilke said that "it's just time" for him "to take time to explore personal interests that have taken a back seat for over two decades."

OIL IMPORTS

India's Middle East share hits 2-yr high

REUTERS

New Delhi, August 22: Middle Eastern oil accounted for 71.5% of India's oil imports in July, its highest share in 26 months, while imports from Africa fell to 5%, the lowest in at least 14 years, shows the data from trade sources.

Analysts said lower fuel demand and paltry refining margins had driven a preference for Middle Eastern sour grades over sweet African barrels.

India, the world's third-biggest oil consumer, imports more than 80% of its oil needs.

"Since April Indian refiners are trying to save every single penny on crude purchases as refining margins are paltry and fuel demand has crashed. They are forced to cut refiners runs," said Ehsan Ul Haq, an analyst with Refinitiv.

Indian refiners mostly tap spot markets for low sulphur or sweet grades and buy sour grades under term deals with Middle Eastern producers.

"Imports from Middle East help in saving freight cost. Refiners opted to lift committed volumes under contracts with Middle Eastern producers rather than tapping costly Brent-linked African oil that takes more than 20 days to reach India," Haq added.

India's oil imports plunged to their lowest in over 9 years in July,



falling to around 3 million barrels per day as low fuel demand encouraged refiners to shut units for maintenance.

Imports from Opec countries dropped to their lowest in at least 14 years at 67.15% in July, data showed.

Rising imports from the United States also dented Africa's share in Indian imports. The sources declined to be identified as they are not authorised to speak to the media.

India imported no oil from Venezuela for the second month in a row in July, the data showed.

During the month Iraq retained its top oil supplier status to India followed by Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

The United States emerged as the fourth biggest supplier followed by Kuwait, Colombia and Qatar. Nigeria, which was the fifth largest supplier to India in June, dropped to eighth position.

SHORT TAKES

OIL registers ₹249 cr loss

New Delhi: Oil India Ltd, the nation's second largest state oil and gas producer, logged second quarterly loss in its history in April-June after crude oil prices slipped to lower than cost of production. OIL had a net loss of ₹248.61 crore in first quarter of 2020-21 fiscal as compared to a net profit of ₹624.80 crore in the same period of the previous financial year. "This is the second quarterly loss in OIL history. We had a quarterly loss in 2018-19 fiscal," OIL Director-Finance Harish Madhav said Saturday.

'Steel demand to contract in FY21'

Mumbai: India's steel demand is expected to contract in FY21, Fitch Ratings has said. However, the ratings agency said that volumes should continue to improve over the next few quarters, led by rural consumption and government spending on infrastructure, and lead to better margins due to operating leverage. "Higher prices supported by the price rebound in China should also drive margins in 2QFY21 and beyond. Indian prices have started to tick up since late-July, with a lag," said a statement by Fitch Ratings.

UK govt debt hits \$2.6 tn

London: The UK government debt has increased above 2 trillion pounds (\$2.6 trillion) for the first time amid heavy spending to support the economy amid the coronavirus pandemic, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has revealed. Spending on measures such as the furlough scheme means the debt figure now equals the value of everything the UK produces in a year.

Balmer Lawrie to shut one unit

Kolkata: Diversified PSU Balmer Lawrie and Company Limited will be closing down its industrial packaging unit in Kolkata, which was making losses for years because of low demand, from September 1, a top company official said Saturday.



24 proposals worth ₹8,594 cr of stressed NBFCs, HFCs sanctioned

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 22: The finance ministry on Saturday said 24 proposals worth ₹8,594 crore of stressed NBFCs and HFCs have been sanctioned under the special liquidity scheme announced as part of the ₹20.97 lakh crore 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' package.

The scheme, which was launched on July 1, permits both primary and secondary market purchases of debt and seeks to address the short-term liquidity issues of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and housing finance companies (HFCs).

Sharing implementation status update of the ₹30,000 crore Special Liquidity Scheme (SLS), Finance

SPECIAL LIQUIDITY SCHEME

Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in a tweet said that 24 proposals with a total sanctioned amount of ₹8,594 crore have been cleared as on August 21, while 17 more applications seeking financing of up to ₹3,684.5 crore are under process.

"The amount disbursed stood at ₹3,279 crore as on 21.08.2020. Compared to 07.08.2020, there is an increase of ₹2,195 crore in the amount sanctioned & an increase of ₹2,279 crore in the amount disbursed," she tweeted.

NBFCs and HFCs came under stress following a series of defaults by IL&FS group firms in September 2018. NBFCs including microfi-

nance institutions registered under the RBI Act, 1934 (excluding those registered as Core Investment Companies) and any HFC registered with the National Housing Bank under the National Housing Bank Act, 1987, which is complying with certain specified conditions, are eligible to raise funding from this facility.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has provided funds for the scheme by subscribing to government-guaranteed special securities issued by a trust set up by SBI Capital Markets Ltd (SBICAP).

The scheme is being implemented by SLS Trust, the SPV set up by SBICAP. The special liquidity scheme is open for three months for making subscriptions by the Trust.

PNB posts ₹308 cr of net profit in April-June quarter

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 22: Punjab National Bank (PNB), India's second-largest public sector bank announced its financial result for the quarter ended June 30, 2020. The bank recorded a net profit of ₹308 crore. Global Business of the bank reached ₹17,96,612 Crore.

The bank's operating profit grew by 2.5% on a YOY basis to ₹5,280 crore in Q1 FY21. CRAR as on June 30, 2020, improved to 12.63%. Gross NPA ratio is at 14.11% as on June 20 as against 15.49% in June 19.



Net NPA ratio reduced to 5.39% as on June 20 down from 5.51% as on March 20 and 6.97% as on June 19. Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) improved to 80.75% as on June 20 from 70.37% as on June 19. Internet Banking users crossed 233 lakh. UPI transactions increased by 76% YOY to 19.16 crore.

POS installed increased YOY by 17.78% to 88,204. Bharat/BHIM QR Code installed increased YOY by 139% to 1,73,958.

The bank has rolled out a verticalised organisation structure to improve operational efficiency and provide steady growth momentum. Business and control functions have been segregated to have a focused approach for business development and improve customer service.

Global cues to make rupee volatile: Experts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, August 22: Optimism over the development of COVID-19 vaccine along with broad-based growth trends is expected to induce volatility in the rupee's value during the short term.

The US Fed's FOMC minutes, US-China trade talks, and expectations on Q1 GDP rate will be the other key factors steering the rupee.

Last week, the rupee strengthened to ₹74.85 against a greenback.

"Expect next week range at ₹74.60 to ₹75.10 with some appreciation bias," said Sajal Gupta, Head, Forex and Rates, Edelweiss Securities.

"FY21 Q1 GDP numbers are expected to show contraction between 15-20% and any positive surprise could help the market sentiments."



According to Anindya Banerjee, DVP, Currency and Rates, Kotak Securities: "Dollar is going to be range-bound due to lack of

triggers." "The RBI intervention below ₹74.80 and exporter selling above ₹75.30 may keep it between ₹74.50 and

This week the movement in USD/INR spot has mainly been driven and the spot traded in a very tight range. Going ahead, insights into how the US economy is recovering from the pandemic along with uncertainty regarding US' trade talks with China will keep playing out on the USD/INR pair

RAHUL GUPTA | HEAD OF RESEARCH-CURRENCY, EMKAY GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

per dollar for the medium term." The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is known to enter the markets via intermediaries to either sell or buy US dollars to keep the rupee in a

stable orbit.

"This week the movement in USD/INR spot has mainly been dollar driven and the spot traded in a very tight range. Going ahead, insights into how the US economy is recovering from the coronavirus pandemic, optimism over vaccine, along with uncertainty regarding the US-China trade talks will keep playing out on the USD/INR pair," said Rahul Gupta, Head of Research-Currency, Emkay Global Financial Services.

"We expect ₹74.50 to continue acting as crucial support while ₹75.20 will act as a strong resistance. Only consistent trading above ₹75.20 will open the doors for ₹75.50 zone."

Inter fall on own sword as Lukaku own goal helps Spanish League side scrape past Italian club 3-2 for a record sixth Europa League title



The Sevilla League!

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cologne (Germany), August 22: The longest Europa League season came down to a defender's spectacular shot and a striker trying to keep it out.

Instead of blocking Diego Carlos' overhead kick — which was going wide — Romelu Lukaku deflected it into his own net. That handed Sevilla a 3-2 win in the final Friday and a record sixth Europa League title.

And it gave Lukaku the distinction of scoring for both teams. The Belgian striker had given Inter a perfect start with an early goal after winning his first duel with Carlos, who could easily have been sent off in the process.

The Brazilian defender was the last defender when he fouled Lukaku on a counterattack in the third minute but was only given a yellow card.



It was a very emotional game but in the second half we controlled the game a bit better we dug in. He (Diego Carlos) gave away the penalty then he scored that wonderful overhead kick

JULEN LOPETEGUI



Lukaku scored the spot-kick, but Sevilla fought their way back into the game with two headers from Luuk de Jong, setting the stage for Carlos to hit his game-winning kick in the 74th.

The loss extended Inter's wait for a first European trophy since Jose Mourinho led the Italian club to the Champions League title in 2010. Sevilla have won the Europa League in four of the last seven seasons.

The game started at breakneck pace despite being the 54th game of 2019-20 for both teams in a season extended because of the coronavirus pandemic.

After just three minutes Lukaku surged away with the ball when a Sevilla attacking throw-in was cleared, and Carlos pushed him down as he prepared to shoot. Goalkeeper Yassine Bounou had played a key part in Sevilla's run to the final but could do nothing to stop Lukaku's powerful penalty kick into the bottom-left corner.

The lead lasted just seven minutes before De Jong levelled the score with a diving header off a cross from right-back Jesus Navas.

De Jong was rewarded with a start after scoring the winning goal as a substitute against Manchester United in the semifinals. The Dutch striker gave Sevilla a 2-1 lead in the 33rd with a header at the far post at a free-kick, but three minutes later Inter scored in nearly identical fashion, Diego Godin heading in from almost the same position off Marcelo Brozovic's free-kick.

Lukaku could have put Inter back in front in the 65th when he burst in behind Sevilla's defense but Bounou charged out to block his low shot.

After Sevilla reclaimed the lead, Jules Kounde stopped Inter leveling once again when he cleared substitute Alexis Sanchez's shot off the line in the 82nd.

Sevilla coach Julen Lopetegui said he was delighted to win a trophy with Sevilla in his first job since spending barely three months in charge of Real Madrid in 2018. He had lost his job as Spain coach on the eve of the World Cup over his decision to take over Real.

BLOCKBUSTER FINALE

PSG set sight on making history as they face mighty Bayern Munich hurdle in quest of their 'holy grail' — the Champions League title

AGENCIES

Lisbon, August 22: A fresh slice of history beckons here for one of these giants as they face off in club football's most prestigious match, but their past history at this stage of the competition could barely be more different.

Bayern have been here and done it all before — only Real Madrid can top their tally of 11 European Cup and Champions League finals, while only Madrid, AC Milan and Liverpool have got their hands on the trophy more often.

It has not been all triumph and glory for the Bavarian juggernauts, though, and they have lost as many finals as they have won in this competition, Juventus being the only team to have been beaten more often at this stage.

PSG know all about despair in Europe's premier club competition; their recent history has been littered by high-profile failures and it remains impossible to consider their Champions League past without thoughts immediately going back to their Neymar-inspired 6-1 defeat to Barcelona in 2016-17.

Now with Neymar in their ranks and beginning to show the decisive influence PSG have been hoping for since his world-record move, the Ligue 1 giants have the chance to finally banish those memories and the hurt of seven successive seasons in which they failed to make it past the quarterfinals.

The owners have made no secret of the fact that the Champions League is the holy grail for them and, after years of underachievement in the competition, it could be written in the stars for them to pull off their crowning glory in the club's 50th anniversary year.

Success at home is almost a given now for Le Parisiens, who have won 24 of the last 28 domestic trophies available to them, but victory Sunday would see them finally join the top table of Europe's elite.

While that is the biggest and tastiest carrot for the owners, in time PSG's possible achievement of completing a clean sweep of trophies this season may be viewed as even more historic, having already wrapped up the Ligue 1, Coupe de France, Coupe de la Ligue and Trophée des Champions titles this season.

ROAD TO THE FINAL		
PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN		BAYERN MUNICH
PSG 3-0 Real Madrid	Group stage	Bayern 3-0 Belgrade
Galatasaray 0-1 PSG	Group stage	Tottenham 2-7 Bayern
Club Brugge 0-5 PSG	Group stage	Olympiacos 2-3 Bayern
PSG 1-0 Club Brugge	Group stage	Bayern 2-0 Olympiacos
Real Madrid 2-2 PSG	Group stage	RS Belgrade 0-6 Bayern
PSG 5-0 Galatasaray	Group stage	Bayern 3-1 Tottenham
Dortmund 2-1 PSG	Last 16	Chelsea 0-3 Bayern
PSG 2-0 Dortmund	Last 16	Bayern 4-1 Chelsea
PSG 2-1 Atalanta	Quarterfinal	Bayern 8-2 Barcelona
PSG 3-0 RB Leipzig	Semifinal	Bayern 3-0 Lyon

HEAD TO HEAD

These two sides have met on eight previous occasions, with all of those coming in the group stages of the Champions League. It is PSG who boast the superior record in those meetings, winning five compared to three victories for Bayern

Only two of those past meetings have come since 2000, with the two sides trading victories in the 2017-18 group stages — PSG winning 3-0 in Paris and Bayern winning 3-1 in Munich

TONIGHT'S MATCH

BAYERN
vs
PSG

Time
12:30 am

Telecast
Sony Ten channels

Bayern already boasting the best goals-per-game ratio in CL history and needing three more goals to equal Barcelona's all-time record of 45 in a CL campaign — recorded over 16 games in 1999-00.

With such a record, it is easy to forget that Bayern had been in some trouble earlier in the campaign, leading to Niko Kovac being sacked and replaced by Hansi Flick, who has since steered them back on to the right path.

It is not only Bayern's European record which is formidable; German champions for an eighth year in a row, they come into this match having won 27 of their last 28 outings across all competitions including each of the last 19.

Yet there is not quite an aura of invincibility about the team despite the results suggesting otherwise, and PSG will have taken belief from Lyon's performance in the semifinals despite their fellow Ligue 1 side being on the end of a 3-0 defeat.

Sunday represents a tantalising opportunity to make themselves the team to beat, though, and if they are finally able to lift their most coveted prize aloft then there could be no doubting that they are worthy champions.



Contrasting media reactions in Spain, Italy

Spanish newspapers have lauded Sevilla after Julen Lopetegui's side landed their sixth Europa League triumph while Italian papers have cast doubt on Antonio Conte's future at Inter Milan. Spanish newspapers have hailed the efforts of Sevilla and Lopetegui, who lifted his first piece of major silverware as a coach following the triumph in Germany

AS splashed the headline: 'Sevilla League' across their front page Saturday morning, a nod to the club's dominance in the European competition that they have now won six times. Marca opted for the headline: '6!' while listing the club's victories in Eindhoven in 2006, Glasgow in 2007, Turin in 2014, Varsovia in 2015, Basilea in 2016 and Cologne Friday night.

'Conte, are you leaving? Inter lose, Antonio splits' was the headline on the front of Gazzetta dello Sport, with an image of the former Chelsea and Juventus boss looking dejected. Corriere dello Sport went for a similar line with regards to Conte's Inter future, with the headline: 'Conte splits', while Tuttosport wrote: 'No, not like this!' on their front page.



India to host England 'in Feb. 2021': Ganguly



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 22: BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has confirmed to its affiliated units that India will be hosting England for a full series in February next year after playing an away rubber in Australia.

The Board supremo also informed the state units that the 2021 IPL will be played in April, within five months of the upcoming edition, which concludes November 10.

This is Ganguly's second communication to the states in last two months as he seeks to keep the members posted about India's commitments in the Future Tours Programme (FTP).

He said that India is ready to host the T20 World Cup next year and the ODI World Cup in 2023.

"The BCCI and the Indian cricket team will continue to fulfil its FTP commitments. The senior Indian men's team will travel to Australia for its series starting in December this year, and will come back to the country for a series against England starting February next year. This will be followed by IPL 2021 in April," Ganguly said in an email to all the affiliated units.

"The BCCI continues to be the host for the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 and the 50-over ICC Cricket World Cup in 2023."

The former India captain also said that the tours of the Indian women's team are 'under discussion' but did not elaborate on that.

He has assured all state associations that domestic cricket will start as and when the situation is safe amid the COVID-19 pandemic, but did not specify a date for the season's kick-off.

Normally domestic season starts in August but the pandemic has wreaked havoc with the calendar and Ganguly's letter to state associations made it clear that the Board is yet to lock in a date.

The domestic season is now expected to begin with the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament, tentatively from the third week of November.

Buttler-Crawley stand frustrates hapless Pakistan

AGENCIES

Southampton, August 22: Zak Crawley (267, 393b, 34x4, 1x6) and Jos Buttler (140 batting, 290b, 12x4, 2x6) frustrated Pakistan with a 359-run partnership for the fifth wicket as England reached 490/5 at tea on day two of the third and final Test here, Saturday.

The visitors banked on part-timer Asad Shafiq after all their regular bowlers failed to make any impact on the duo, and fortunately the move worked. Crawley, who was trying to get some quick runs, was stumped while going for an expensive shot.

Restuming the at 332/4, both Crawley and Buttler hardly gave any chance which Pakistan could grab for good. Brief showers took the teams off twice during the morning session, resulting in lunch being taken an hour later than scheduled.

Brief scores (at tea): England 490/5 (Zak Crawley 267, Jos Buttler 140 batting) vs Pakistan. Match to continue.



Zak Crawley

CLAMOUR FOR BHARAT RATNA TO DHYAN CHAND GROWS

'1st target semis, then medals at Games'



Actor Babushaan talks to former India player Ashok Kumar during a digital campaign demanding Bharat Ratna for Ashok Kumar

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 22: India's first target should be to reach the semifinals of the Tokyo Olympics. Then India can aspire to win a medal," said former India players Ashok Kumar and Gurbux Singh.

They were speaking in a panel discussion organised by 'Signature 24 Productions' in association with Orissa POST. The discussion was taking place on the first anniversary of the first-ever digital campaign launched demanding 'Bharat Ratna' for the iconic Dhyan Chand.

The event hosted by popular actor Babushaan also saw Harbinder Singh and Yuvraj Walmiki taking part. Incidentally Harbinder and Gurbux were members of the Indian team that won gold at the Tokyo Olympics. Ashok on the other hand was a part of the team that won the World Cup under Ajitpal Singh.

Walmiki had not much to offer on

I learnt by watching his (Dhyan Chand) skills, never got any formal coaching from him. Till the time, I won the World Cup gold medal, he never saw any of my other medals including the Olympic bronze

ASHOK KUMAR

India were in good form. They were beating top teams regularly. Had the Olympics not been postponed due to the pandemic, we were certainly medal contenders. Now the momentum has gone. I am doubtful about how India will fare next year

HARBINDER SINGH

Dhyan Chand. However, he said that during his tenure of eight years in the German Hockey League, people always referred to him as the 'man from Dhyan Chand's country'. It just shows how much the Dhyan Chand Sir was revered," said Walmiki.

Gurbux called Dhyan Chand 'the best-ever player India has ever produced' while Harbinder said 'he was an icon in true sense'. Ashok on the other hand pointed out his dad never wanted him to play hockey "Maybe that is because of the financial hardships he faced during his playing days," said Ashok.

"I learnt by watching his skills, never got any formal coaching from him. Till the time, I won the World Cup gold medal, he never saw any of my other medals including the Olympic bronze," he added.

Discussions also turned towards the Tokyo Olympics. Ashok was quick to point out that Indian

coaches should stop speaking about podium finishes. "In the last 40 years we have not reached semifinals once. So let's first make that target," Ashok asserted. A point to which Gurbux agreed.

It should be stated here that India won their last hockey Olympic gold at Moscow in 1980. However many nations had boycotted the event due to their differences with Russia.

Harbinder on the other hand said that India's medal at the Tokyo Olympics has suddenly suffered due to the postponement of the Games to 2021.

"India were in good form. They were beating top teams regularly. Had the Olympics not been postponed due to the pandemic, we were certainly medal contenders. Now the momentum has gone. I am doubtful about how India will fare next year," Harbinder said.