



BIG CLAIM

Actor Shama Sikander says she was the first one to speak about existing casting couch in film industry

LEISURE P2



HURRICANE LAURA

Hurricane Laura is forecast to rapidly power up into a 'catastrophic' Category 4 hurricane

INTERNATIONAL P10



MESSI DROPS BOMBSHELL

An unhappy Lionel Messi informs Barcelona that he wants to leave the club after nearly two decades

SPORTS P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Sorry, sir. As our esteemed panelist you can't appear like this though you can act like one

SHORT TAKES

2 shot to death during protest

Kenosha: A third night of street protests over the police shooting of a Black man erupted into gun violence late Tuesday and early Wednesday in Kenosha, Wisconsin, killing two people and wounding one, police said. Social media videos showed chaotic scenes of people running and screaming amid a volley of gunfire and others tending to gunshot wounds. The bloodshed followed a night of skirmishes that had appeared to turn calm after police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters who defied a curfew. **P10**

Telcos lose 56L subscribers

New Delhi: The telecom industry lost around 56.11 lakh wireless subscribers in May amid the lockdown, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) data reveals. The overall telecom subscriber base for wireless connections stood at over 114.39 crore in May, compared to 114.95 crore in April. Although there was an overall erosion of subscriber base, Reliance Jio continued to lead the subscription race and added over 36.57 lakh subscribers during the month under review taking its total tally to 39.27 crore users.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VARIATION
SENSEX	39073.92	↑ 230.04
NIFTY	11549.60	↑ 77.30
DOLLAR	74.50	↑ ₹0.02
EURO	88.03	↓ ₹0.11
GOLD	₹51,640	↑ ₹716
SILVER	₹65,870	↑ ₹1863

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	26.6°C	27.8°C
TEMP MIN	23.4°C	22.0°C
Humidity	98%	97%
Rainfall	3.3mm	1mm

Forecast: Generally cloudy sky

Draft policy to secure citizens' health data

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 26: All necessary data privacy measures will be put in place to safeguard the confidentiality of sensitive health-related information of individuals under the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) programme, the government has said. The programme is aimed at providing a unique ID to all citizens to map their medical history. The ambitious NDHM programme was announced by PM Narendra Modi earlier this month during his Independence Day speech. As per the draft proposal, everyone enrolled for the mission will get a

North Odisha in deluge

BAITARANI RIVER ABOVE DANGER MARK; CHIEF SECY REVIEWS SITUATION

- The driver of a truck died after the vehicle overturned due to the gushing water of the Sanapalia river, flowing over NH 49 in Mayurbhanj
- A 62-year-old woman goes missing after being swept away by floodwater of a rivulet while crossing a road near Manatri in the Badasahi area
- With this, the death toll in rain-related incidents in the state so far this month rises to seven
- Other major rivers, including Mahanadi, Brahmani, Subarnarekha, Kathajodi and Rushikulya, are flowing below the danger level

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhandaripokhari/Bhadrak/Keonjhar/Baripada, August 26: As predicted by the MeT, heavy rains have been pounding the state for two days now and the situation is turning grim, especially for the northern parts. River Baitarani crossed the danger mark at Akhuapada anicut in Bhadrak district, Wednesday noon, as it received floodwaters from the upper catchment areas.

The river was flowing at 18.27 metre against the danger mark at 17.83 metre. It may be mentioned here that the Baitarani is one of the six major rivers in the state and acts as a source of water for agricultural irrigation.

Following the instruction of Chief Minister, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy held a meeting with district administrations of various coastal and north Odisha districts on flood preparedness. The revenue divisional commissioners (RDCs) of three regions have been instructed to physically inspect the preparedness made to manage possible flood-like situation, Tripathy said. Water resource department engineers have been asked to closely monitor the vulnerable pockets and take steps, if there is any weak point on the embankments, he added. Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department has been instructed to ensure availability of adequate dry foods in the areas.

Teams of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF)



Bay of Bengal turns rough in Jaleswar, Wednesday

have been mobilised in Jajpur, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Bhadrak and Balasore districts for rescue operations in the event of any flood situation, Special Relief Commissioner, PK Jena said.

The district Collectors, particularly of Bhadrak, Jajpur and Kendrapara, have been asked to keep a watch and remain in a state of preparedness, he added. Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Sudam Marndi said the government is monitoring the situation and the Collectors of the districts concerned have been asked to make arrangements for rescue and relief operations whenever necessary.

Apart from Baitarani in Bhandaripokhari, rivers Reba, Kapali and Salandi have also sounded the flood-alarm. Reports from Keonjhar also sounded caution saying that Baitarani there was also flowing above the danger level at Anandpur and the flood was just a matter of time now.

Floodwater from Baitarani was flowing over a bridge at Turumunga, disrupting traffic on NH-49. Hundreds of vehicles on both the ends of the road were stranded or had breakdowns. Water levels in other rivers like Samakoi, Sita, Kanjhari, Ardei, Musala, Kusei, Sona, Murga and Remala were also up, reports added.

Meanwhile, a woman got killed and her daughter seriously injured when the wall of the house they were living in collapsed after heavy rains at Mahilasuli village under Sukruli block in Mayurbhanj. The ac-

PLACE	WATER LEVEL	TREND	DANGER LEVEL
CHAMPUPA	376.82M	↑	376.41M
ANANDAPUR	39.47M	↑	38.36M
AKHUAPADA	18.10M	↑	17.83M



A truck is stranded as river water flows above NH 49 in Keonjhar, Wednesday

cident happened in the wee hours Wednesday. The deceased has been identified as Nandini Munda (60). Her daughter Srimati Munda (40) has been hospitalised. Similarly, following heavy rains, a house in Madhuban Talasahi in Baripada town collapsed Wednesday morning. Luckily, no one was injured.

The MeT Centre has issued a 'Red' warning for eight districts.

Here, if you want PDS ration then undergo Covid test first

THE RULE HAS BEEN 'IMPOSED' AT GOPALPUR SASANA UNDER SORADA BLOCK IN GANJAM WHERE 495 COVID CASES HAVE BEEN REPORTED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 26: In view of the rising coronavirus cases in Ganjam district, the panchayat officer of Gopalpur Sasana under Sorada block has asked the PDS beneficiaries to undergo COVID-19 test before availing ration.

According to sources, panchayat officer Prashant Kumar Behera has 'imposed' the rule for the beneficiaries of three villages of the panchayat where the infections have been recorded to be the highest.

The beneficiaries have opposed the rule of the panchayat officer saying that the only motive here is to deprive them of the PDS benefits in such a critical juncture.

Tutu Pradhan, a local, said, "Sunday morning, I went to the PDS ration shop in our panchayat. There I waited in queue from 6 am to 12 pm for my turn but when my turn came the ration distributor asked me to go for a COVID-19 test before buying the ration."

The panchayat officer, however,



PDS BENEFICIARIES OPPOSE THE RULE

■ PANCHAYAT OFFICER SAYS THE AIM IS TO SPREAD AWARENESS ON COVID AND THE TEST ISN'T MANDATORY FOR ALL

defended the allegations stating that the decision has been taken by the panchayat office to spread awareness about the pandemic.

He added, "It is not mandatory for all to undergo COVID-19 test but it will be better if they do before availing ration. It will be bet-

ter for the health of all the beneficiaries and also the ration distributor. This move is to create awareness about the pandemic among the people."

Notably, Ganjam is known to have reported the highest number of COVID-19 cases so far in the state. If Sorada is taken into consideration, the block, alone, has reported 495 cases of which 26 are active. Four persons have succumbed to the virus in the block, while 465 have recovered from the disease.

Odisha logs 3,371 Covid cases, 13 deaths in 1 day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: The state registered its highest single-day spike in Covid-19 cases Wednesday as 3,371 more people tested positive for the infection. With 13 fresh fatalities, Odisha's coronavirus death toll reached 441, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

The latest deaths were reported from seven districts, including three each from Sambalpur and Sundargarh district, two each from Cuttack and Ganjam districts, and one each from Keonjhar, Khurda and Puri districts. Of the new cases, 2,053 were reported from quarantine centres and 1,318 were local contact cases. Khurda district recorded the highest 547 new cases, followed by Cuttack (357) and Ganjam (196). As many as 11 districts reported over 100 new cases each in last 24 hours, said the official. Meanwhile, Odisha reported its highest ever number of recoveries on a single day, with 3,343 COVID-19 patients having been cured or discharged from hospitals Wednesday, the official pointed out.

HC yes to woman to live-in with her same-sex partner

HEARING A HABEAS CORPUS PETITION, A DIVISION BENCH DIRECTS THE POLICE TO PROVIDE SECURITY TO THE PARTNER OF THE WOMAN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: The Orissa High Court has ordered a 24-year-old girl to live with her same-sex partner after the latter was forcibly separated from her. A petition of Habeas Corpus was filed by Chinmayee Jena in the court when her partner was forcibly kept in the custody of her mother and uncle at Bari in Jaipur district. Initially, the complaint was filed in the police station. But, the couple did not get a good response after which they decided to approach the High Court. Petitioner Chinmayee had filed a Habeas Corpus application under Article 226 and 227 of the Constitution seeking her partner's protection.

August 24, the Division Bench of Justice SK Mishra and Justice Savitri Ratho did a hearing through virtual mode and made



sure if the victim woman wanted to marry her partner or stay with her parents. The woman partner affirmed that she wanted to stay with her partner without any further delay. Following the virtual conversation, her petition got approval from the Bench. After the clearance, the Superintendent of Police was directed to provide protection and also extended protection under the domestic vio-

lence law to the woman partner.

The petitioner had sought court intervention when the family members of the victim had wanted her to do an arranged marriage with someone else and they took her away in their custody against her will. The petitioner claimed that they fell in love when they were in school in the year 2011 and had been into a consensual relationship since 2017. A joint affidavit March 17, 2020 submitted before the Court indicated that both had sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Bhubaneswar, declaring that they were staying together in their live-in relationship.

According to the Orissa High Court's order, Chinmayee has to allow her partner's mother and sister to be in touch with her. The victim would have all the rights under the protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

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30% syllabi slashed; schools, colleges shut till Durga Puja

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: While schools and colleges in the state will remain closed till Dussehra vacations instead August 31, syllabi of Class I to XII students have been reduced by 30 per cent.

In view of the concerns of students and parents in the current pandemic situation, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday announced that the schools and colleges will remain closed till the Puja vacation. Naveen made this announcement while holding a review meeting on Covid situation in the state through video conferencing here.

School and Mass Education minister Samir Ranjan Dash Wednesday informed that the syllabi of Class I to XII students for the academic session 2020-21 will be reduced by 30 per cent.

"Looking at the rapid cases of coronavirus in the state, the government took the decision of reducing the school syllabi of students for the academic year 2020-21," he said.

Dash added that the decision was taken after the expert committee proposals

Chapters that will help students succeed in national-level tests have been retained

SAMIR RANJAN DASH | MINISTER, SCHOOL & MASS EDUCATION DEPT

sent by committee of SCERT, Board of Secondary Education and CHSE. "The state-specific important subjects, which students need to know, have not been omitted from the syllabi," the minister added.

The minister said that the district education officers (DEOs) will inform the headmasters of schools in this regard to teach the students accordingly to the reduced syllabi.

Meanwhile, the students and their guardians/parents opined that the decision could have been taken two months earlier. The CBSE and ICSE boards had taken the decision very early and that helps the teachers in doing their job, they said. "It could have been better for students and teachers of the government schools if the decision was taken two months before," said secretary of Odisha Secondary School Teachers' Association Prakash Mohanty.





BANDERAS RECOVERS FROM COVID-19 AFTER THREE WEEKS

Hollywood star Antonio Banderas has revealed that he is cured of coronavirus after three weeks of strict self-quarantine measures. The actor, who was tested positive for COVID-19 on his 60th birthday August 10, took to social media to give a health update to fans and followers.

OMAR CHAPARRO TO LEAD COMEDY SONY'S TEQUILA RE-PASADO

Mexican star Omar Chaparro, known for his roles in *Pokémon Detective Pikachu*, has been tapped to headline *Tequila Re-Pasado*, an original comedy from Sony Pictures International Productions. According to *Deadline*, Spanish director Maria Ripoll will helm and executive produce the project.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, things may just not turn out to be as you expected. Your investments may seem all wrong, your returns too low. But Ganesh says that life is full of surprises. The stars indicate that you may meet an old friend who will bring much cheer into your life!

TAURUS
It is very likely that you will be poignant and passionate today, predicts Ganesh. You may have a care-free attitude in the afternoon. Those with government jobs will experience satisfactory results for all the hard work they put in.

GEMINI
You will have an emotionally turbulent day. In the afternoon, you will be extra touchy about what others think of you. But by evening, your aesthetic sensibilities will overcome your insecurity and you will be back to your cheerful self after being witness to an exquisite display of performing arts.

CANCER
You will take unusual interest in places of historical significance and destinations not frequented by many, predicts Ganesh. In the afternoon, you will be the centre of attention in a group discussion.

LEO
No matter what you do, on some days, you just can't save the world, even if you were Superman. Remember that, since it looks very likely that today you shall be bringing upon yourself the displeasure of your bosses, and a lackadaisical support from your colleagues.

VIRGO
The day promises to be full of surprises and twists and turns, each of which you will handle with maturity. If anyone makes the mistake of taking you for granted, they will repent for their poor judgement as you are not one to be pushed around.

LIBRA
The day brings with it the gift of passion, and all its various nuances. On the career front, you may take steps today that will establish your identity in office. Later in the day, there are also chances of you having differences with your business associates.

SCORPIO
Your emotions will take a hold over your reasoning today, predicts Ganesh. With your seniors, you should be careful about how you express your perspective to avoid being misunderstood. In relationship matters, Ganesh advises you not to repress your feelings or avoid feeling them as they may bottle up and lead to complications in the future.

SAGITTARIUS
It is very likely that you will pay enough attention to your family members today. Take time out to validate the efforts of others and show consideration when and where required. At workplace, people will admire your honesty.

CAPRICORN
Get ready for a thrilling day ahead, says Ganesh. A lot of unexpected events may bring in happiness, and you may suddenly find yourself delightfully delighted. At work, finding answers to intriguing questions will consume most of your time.

AQUARIUS
This day will play an important part in your future! The much-needed funds for business or education may fall your way today. Your seamless happiness will reflect in the playful mood in which you will interact with your loved ones.

PISCES
Financially, you will be treading cautiously today. Savings will take precedence over indulgences. You are likely to invest in debt instruments over equities. New business proposals may come your way in the afternoon.

TAAPSEE PREPS TO GET ATHLETE LOOK



Mumbai: Actress Taapsee Pannu has started working on her diet to get an athletic frame for the upcoming sports film, *Rashmi Rocket*.

The actress shared a picture of her morning meal on Instagram. "This is how prepping for #RashmiRocket looks like! Starting off my day with this carb-rich breakfast planned by my fussy free @munmun.ganerival. As she says, working to get an athletic bod isn't about eating only proteins. Keeping the right balance is important. On my plate are sweet potato tikkis which @munmun.ganerival recommends for its high fibre content and I recommend for its great taste! Bon appetit," she wrote along with the picture, which shows her enjoying her breakfast.

The actress will start shooting for her film in November.

The Akarsh Khurana directorial is about a runner from the Rann of Kutch, who fights for her identity and becomes an athlete.

Actor Priyanshu Painyuli will be seen playing the role of Taapsee's husband in the project. **IANS**

Odisha born Telugu actress Sindura launches her official website

Bhubaneswar: Popular actress Sindura Rout of Telugu film industry has launched her official website to expand her fan base. The Bhubaneswar-born actress, who was last seen in Telugu movie *Naakide*, made the announcement on social media Tuesday which began trending immediately. She is one of the few actresses in the industry to have her website. Sindura made her debut with *Maro Drushyam* in 2017.

Talking to **Orissa POST**, the actress said "I wanted to connect and interact with my fans for a long time which has become a reality. Now, my exclusive videos, stills and unseen content are just a click away from my followers. They can now have access to my personalised video messages, exclusive live shows and one-on-one interaction by becoming a member of my official website."

The objective of launching the site is to enlarge her virtual family and to entertain its members. Her team will make sure not to promote vulgarity in the name of entertainment, added Sindura. **PNN**



'I was first to speak about casting couches'

New Delhi: Actress Shama Sikander has opened about going through an unsavoury moment of casting couch proposition, adding that she dealt with it as maturely and wisely as she could.

"I think I was the first one to speak about casting couches. Today, you realise it because one MeToo movement happened and it was big enough to shake everybody. So, everybody is now trying to talk about these things but before this none of you even wanted to talk about these things. Everybody was so scared. The media has got power," Shama said.

However, Shama says showbiz is not as bad as many think, adding that she met some of the greatest people here.

"It exists everywhere, but just because our line is under media radar all the time we speak about it. But I have also met some of the greatest people in our line. I cannot disregard that fact," she adds. **IANS**



Shama Sikander

3-day virtual concert Shudh Dhvani concludes



Sushri Aparajita Sharma during her performance

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: *Shudh Dhvani-2020*, a three-day online concert organised by Snehalata Memorial Foundation, a socio-cultural outfit established in 1992 at Rourkela, came to an end Wednesday. Foundation's Delhi unit conducted the event which was participated by many eminent vocalists, musicians and dancers of the country.

On the first day vocalist Subha Ghosh performed Raga - *Puriya Dhanashree* and later Thumri- *Yaad Piya Ki Aye* accompanied by Haridutt Baratdwaj on flute and Diwakar Sharma and Sisir Ghosh on Tabla.

Speaking to **Orissa POST** the singer said, "Music is a great medium to express different kind of emotions which can be felt at this concert." The event is an initiative to disseminate Indian culture across the world, she added.

The second day of the event witnessed a performance by Sushri Aparajita Sharma, a renowned Bharatanatyam dancer and disciple of Guru

Kanaka Sudhakar. She performed *Dharu Varnam*, a traditional Carnatic composition which depicts the impact of Navagrahas on life, composed by N Chidambaram. While Sudhakar choreographed the dance, K Venkateswaran lent his voice. The performance was supported by Tanjavur R Kesavan on mridangam and violin was by Chembari R Shrinivas on violin.

Renowned sarod player Pandit Biswajit Roy Choudhury and table player Durjay Bhaumik also performed Alao Jor, Teen Taal and Madhalaya Raag Sur on day two of the concert.

The concluding day was marked by a vocal recital by vocalist Shounak Chatterjee. He performed Raag Megh Vilambit Jhoomra - *Barkha Ritu Aayi Badarwa Barsan Laagi* accompanied by Vidushi Jayanti Kumaresh on Saraswati Veena.

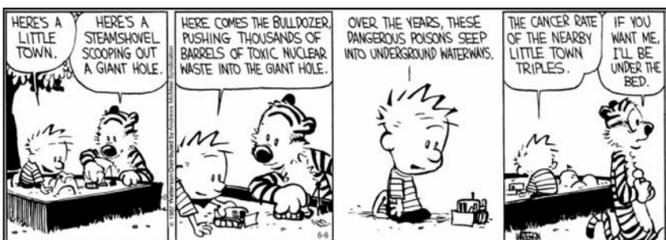
The three-day concert ended on a high note with the organisers promising to take Indian dance, music and culture to every part of the globe. **PNN**

FUN post

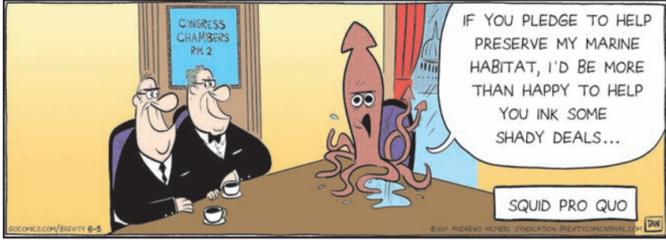
PEANUTS



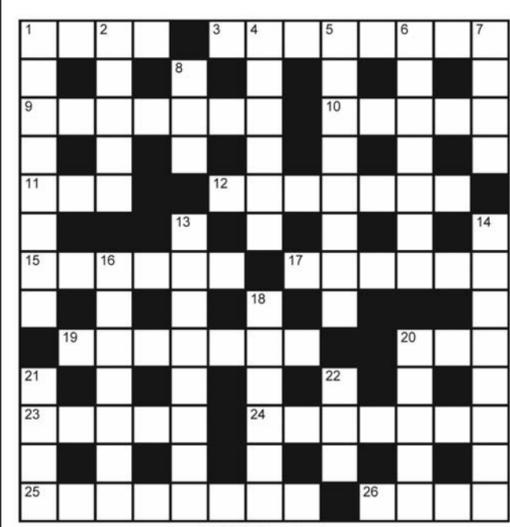
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



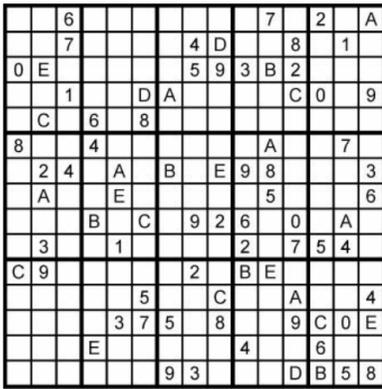
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Resting place
 - 3 Food turners
 - 9 Branch of morphology
 - 10 Factions
 - 11 Morse E
 - 12 Dry red Italian wine
 - 15 Hearsay
 - 17 Puzzle in pieces?
 - 19 Barn area
 - 20 Martini ingredient
 - 23 Flummox
 - 24 Ban on trade
 - 25 Wizard
 - 26 Carpet type
- Down**
- 1 Basic
 - 2 Big spread
 - 4 Subconscious mind
 - 5 Australian state
 - 6 Finds
 - 7 Window frame
 - 8 Gaudy scarf
 - 13 Dart thrower's target (5,3)
 - 14 Last hurrah (4,4)
 - 16 Wander aimlessly
 - 18 Decadent
 - 20 Circumference
 - 21 Distillery items
 - 22 Subside

SUDOKU

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

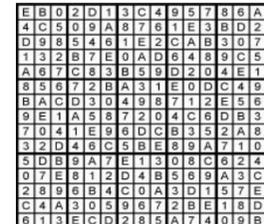


SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

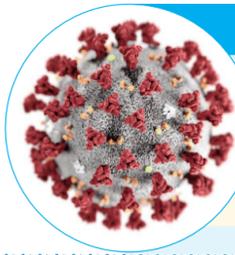


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



SEASONAL TREAT

A fruit vendor sells custard apples alongside a road at Jobra in Cuttack, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	2,41,58,307	1,66,84,716	8,25,418
India	32,34,474	24,67,758	59,449
Odisha	87,602	62,813	441

Dharmendra reviews Talcher Fert Plant



The review meet in progress through videoconferencing

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Bhubaneswar, August 26: Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan, Wednesday, conducted a review on the progress of the coal gasification and urea production projects being executed by the Talcher Fertilizer Plant at a meeting. Union Coal and Mines Minister Pralhad Joshi, Union Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister DV Sadananda Gowda

and Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizers Mansukh L Mandaviya were present at the meeting Wednesday.

At the meeting, Pradhan pointed out various challenges faced by the Talcher Fertilizer Plant and underscored the need for expeditious execution of the project. He asserted that after the Talcher Fertilizer Plant is commissioned, it will make the country self-sufficient in urea production.

Complacency biggest enemy in COVID war: CM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday said complacency is the biggest enemy during the fight against the pandemic. People as well as government servants should remain cautious enough to keep the deadly virus at bay, he added.

Reviewing the Covid-19 situation in the state, Naveen directed officials to emphasise on disbursement of financial assistance (loans) to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME), agriculture, fisheries & animal husbandry and self-help group (SHG) units to help reboot the rural economy.

He directed the officials to provide loans to people who have returned from other states for opening small business units. The Chief Minister advised the officials to procure masks from women SHGs by utilising the MLA Local Area Development fund so that they can earn their livelihood.

Naveen expressed satisfaction over increased COVID-19 testing



MAJOR DIRECTIONS

Naveen directed officials to emphasise on disbursement of loans to MSME, agriculture, fisheries & animal husbandry and SHG units to help reboot the rural economy

The Chief Minister advised the officials to procure masks from women SHGs by utilising the MLALAD fund so that they can earn their livelihood

He instructed the COVID observers of hotspot districts to ensure strict implementation of the localized/specific strategies and work towards a visible improvement in the situation in coming weeks

in the state. He instructed the COVID observers of hotspot districts to ensure strict implementation of the localized/specific strategies and work towards a visible improvement in the situation in coming weeks.

He emphasised on availability of adequate number of ICU beds in various COVID hospitals and directed the officials concerned to leave no stone unturned in keeping government offices infection-free by strictly adhering to COVID regu-

lations. The CM expressed satisfaction with the declining infection rate among Covid warriors and suggested to create awareness about the use of masks and social distance among people. He further directed to pay financial assistance dues to the relatives of martyred Covid warriors by next Friday.

Additional Chief Secretary—Health & Family Welfare department, PK Mohapatra said the recovery rate in the state has increased

to 71.3 per cent while the death rate has dropped to 0.5 per cent and 54 per cent of Covid infected persons are under home isolation.

Cuttack, Balasore and Kendrapara districts have performed well in plasma collection, while the performance of Malkangiri, Boudh and Rayagada districts is better in home isolation. Another plasma bank will be opened in Koraput Thursday. Patnaik also took stock of the flood like situation in the state.

Man wakes up to see cobra on his bed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 26: In a frightening incident, a man from Harirajpur village in Banki area of Cuttack district woke up to a rude shock when he found a cobra on his bed Tuesday night.

Sources said Sarat Panda was asleep Tuesday night when he suddenly realised that something like a reptile is entering his bedsheet which he had used to cover his body. That said Sarat managed to leave his bed in a position so that snake did not bite him. After informing his family members, Sarat informed the snake helpline members regarding the incident.

On being informed, two members of Snake Helpline reached Sarat's residence. The duo initially failed to catch the snake inside the bedroom despite repeated attempts. Moments later, they found again the reptile lying on the bed and immediately caught it.

After checking its health, the helpline members released the snake into a nearby jungle.

BENGAL LOCKDOWN HITS ECoR TRAINS



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: The lockdown in West Bengal continues to affect the train services under East Coast Railway (ECoR) as the trains from Odisha are being cancelled due to total lockdown in the neighbouring state.

Due to complete lockdown in Bengal, Sealdah-Bhubaneswar Duronto Special will remain cancelled August 28 and 31. Similarly, Bhubaneswar-Howrah-Bhubaneswar Jan Shatabdi Special will remain cancelled from Bhubaneswar and Howrah directions August 27.

Similarly, Secunderabad-Howrah Falaknuma Superfast Express leaving Secunderabad August 26 was terminated at Bhubaneswar and will not go up to Howrah.

Howrah-Secunderabad Falaknuma Superfast Express will start from Bhubaneswar instead of Howrah August 27 and will be cancelled from Howrah to Bhubaneswar on the same day.

This apart, the trains such as Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Purusottam Express and New Delhi-Bhubaneswar Purusottam Express leaving from New Delhi August 26 will not have stoppage at Purulia and Hijli from both the directions.

Passengers of above trains should note this and are advised to stay prepared accordingly.

Illegal sand mining raises calamity risk for Puri

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, August 26: Sand dunes which act as natural barriers against cyclones and tidal ingress will soon vanish from the Puri coast due to rampant illegal sand mining on the coast, sources said.

uses heavy vehicles to transport sand to various places at night. After receiving complaints from the locals, the administration occasionally seizes a few vehicles and arrests their drivers by carrying out raids on illegal sand mining on the coast. However, it is yet to take any

two sand lifters managed to flee the spot, sources said.

The police had also busted a major sand lifting racket from Baliapanda area of the city here February 22 last year. Two earth-movers and 15 vehicles were seized and nine drivers were arrested in



PICT FOR REPRESENTATION

The administration has failed to check illegal mining of the minor mineral on the coast and take action against the sand mafia. The illegal sand mining has made many coastal areas of Puri district vulnerable to tidal ingress, locals claimed.

According to sources, illegal sand mining on the coast has been thriving for past several days due to administrative callousness. The mafia

concrete measures to check the illegal extraction of the mineral, sources said.

Recently, some people were lifting sand from a piece of government land close to the dump yard of Puri municipality. On being informed, a team of Baliapanda police raided the spot and arrested three sand lifters. A sand-laden tractor was seized during the raid. However,

MAFIA RULING THE ROOST

ILLEGAL SAND MINING ON PURI COAST IS THRIVING FOR PAST SEVERAL DAYS, THANKS TO ADMINISTRATIVE LETHARGY

THE MAFIA USES HEAVY VEHICLES TO TRANSPORT SAND TO VARIOUS PLACES AT NIGHT

THE ADMINISTRATION IS YET TO TAKE ANY CONCRETE MEASURES TO CHECK ILLEGAL EXTRACTION OF THE MINERAL

connection with illegal sand lifting from the coast, sources added. "Some influential people have been lifting sand from Baliapanda and Sipasarubali areas on Puri coast for last many days. Now, one can find large pits on government lands in these two localities. The sand mafia is minting crores of rupees from the illegal act," said a social activist.

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Jaydev Vihar-KIIT Square road widening on cards

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: With a view to ensuring smooth flow of traffic on Jaydev Vihar—KIIT Square road, the state government has decided to expand the stretch and make it eight-laned.

The Works department has engaged a private agency Arkitechno Consultants (India) Pvt Ltd with a cost of ₹13.20 lakh for preparation of detail project report (DPR) for the project. The government has planned to build flyovers at two busy traffic junctions at Kalinga

Hospital and Damana, official sources said here Wednesday. The department will float tender and execute the work once the DPR is ready. This project will help ease the traffic congestion along the busy stretch, the sources added.

The existing four-lane road failed to control the rush in the wake of rising population in push area of Chandrasekharpur and adjoining areas. The new bridge connecting the Capital city with Cuttack near High Court has added more traffic to the road. Heavy rush most often causes accidents while it takes

long time to reach the destinations.

Following the death of a five-year-old boy after the ambulance carrying him to hospital got stuck in a traffic jam, the Commissionerate Police, in February this year, had proposed the state government to build a six-lane road. But, now, the government has decided to make it eight-lane, they said.

In 2016, the government had planned a flyover over the 14-km road from Raj Bhavan-Nandankanan. However, the project was scrapped due to feasibility constraints.

DIRTY SIDE OF SMART CITY



Baramunda bus stand in Bhubaneswar wallows in neglect after a few days of rain triggered by low pressure, Wednesday

PICS: BIKASH NAYAK

BAGALA DHARMASHALA ROW

Cong: Govt bypassed Assembly resolution



Congress leaders address the media in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: The state unit of Congress, Wednesday, accused the state government of bypassing the official gazette notification issued through a resolution in Odisha Assembly on Bagala Dharmashala.

Congress Spokesperson Satyaprakash Nayak, Wednesday, held a press conference to hit out at Puri district administration for giving two hoots to the Assembly notification.

"The Puri Collector sold off parts of the historic Bagala Dharmashala by ignoring an official gazette notification of the Assembly which had claimed that no decision relating to the site could be taken without publication of another gazette in this regard," he said.

He also added, "In the name of Srimandir Security Corridor, many people evacuated from the area have been looted by the gov-

ernment. The state government indulged in a conspiracy and scam in the whole series of settlements by bypassing all orders," Nayak said.

He said that a letter from Housing and Urban Development Department to the Executive Officer of Puri Municipality had clearly said that such works relate to Bagla Dharmashala.

"The Puri administration has taken over the lands and transferred them to other departments and did its deal without following any terms and conditions in gross violation of directions from the H&UD department," he said.

"You do not have the ownership of the land. The land was meant under ABADHA scheme but the district administration transferred the land to the Revenue department without following the earlier rules and orders passed by the government departments and the Odisha Assembly," he said.

COMPENSATE RAPE VICTIM: NHRC

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/ Kendrapara, August 26: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the Chief Secretary to pay monetary compensation under Odisha Victim Compensation Scheme to a poor tribal woman who was raped in Malkangiri district in 2017.

Adjudicating a petition filed by rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy, the apex rights body asked the Chief Secretary to submit the compliance report with payment proof within six weeks.

The rights body directed Malkangiri Collector to personally appear before the commission December 11 next.

The petitioner alleged that it was August 9, 2017 when Adma Madkami, the accused from neighbouring Chhattisgarh raped a tribal woman on the roadside near MV-84 village in Malkangiri district.

The incident came to light after a video of the crime went viral on social media.

The tribal woman was returning from market when she fell unconscious on the roadside and Madkami committed the crime in full public glare, said the petitioner.

Blaming lack of patrolling and crime control by the government, Tripathy sought stringent action against the culprit, de-addiction measures, compensation to the victim under Nirbaya Scheme or Victim Compensation Scheme with

MALKANGIRI SHAME



The victim, a tribal woman, was returning from market when she fell unconscious on the roadside near MV-84 village in Malkangiri district August 9, 2017

Adma Madkami, the accused from neighbouring Chhattisgarh, outraged her modesty in full public glare

The shameful incident came to light after a video of the crime was found doing the rounds on social media

proper counseling and direction to the government to prevent such incidents in future.

Pursuant to the notice of the NHRC, the Malkangiri police in a report stated that the victim under the influence of liquor was lying on the roadside from Padmagiri to Udupa.

At about 11.30am, the accused Adma Madkami of village Bafawada of Chhattisgarh had committed sexual assault.

The police had registered two cases, one for rape and another for making the video viral. The accused were arrested and circulation of the video stopped.

The investigation wing of the NHRC, which has submitted its analysis of the police report, suggested that the District Magistrate of Malkangiri may be directed to pay compensation to the rape victim and ensure adequate legal aid and appropriate psychological coun-

seling to the victim. The NHRC observed that the victim is entitled to financial assistance and restorative support services. The dignity of the victim has been seriously violated.

Earlier, the District Magistrate of Malkangiri was directed to provide adequate legal aid and appropriate psychological counseling to the victim and submit a report in this regard to the commission.

The commission did not receive any report despite repeated reminders and conditional summons to the District Magistrate of Malkangiri.

Expressing serious displeasure over the lackadaisical attitude of the authority, the NHRC issued summons to the District Magistrate Malkangiri to appear before it December 11 and directed the Chief Secretary to submit a compliance report, along with the proof of payment, within six weeks.

RAINING WOES



Rainwater inundates the sanctum sanctorum of Megheswar temple (left) and the precinct of Baitala temple at Tankapani road in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday. Many shrines in the Old Town area usually witness water-logging during the monsoons. However, no concrete measures have been taken to address the issue

PHOTOS: BIKASH NAYAK

52 cops donate plasma

Cuttack: As many as 52 Odisha Police personnel have so far donated plasma to save lives, an official said Wednesday. According to a note from the state police headquarters, 52 personnel of the state police, who have recovered from COVID-19, have donated their plasma for the noble cause. "Till today, 52 Corona Warriors of Odisha Police have donated plasma at different locations like SCB Medical College and Hospital at Cuttack, IGH at Rourkela and VIMSAR at Burla and saved the lives of other critical COVID patients, (sic)" read the note. The police personnel who donated their plasma include six from OSAP 2nd Battalion in Jharsuguda, five from 3rd Battalion in Koraput and 14 from 8th Battalion in Chhatrapur apart from one each from 4th Battalion in Rourkela and 6th Battalion in Cuttack.

LORD'S IMMERSION



A man carries a clay idol of Lord Ganesh in a rickshaw for immersion in Mahanadi river in Cuttack, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

NORMS ON OLD AGE HOMES TIGHTENED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: The state government issued new norms to govern old age homes, rehabilitation centres for beggars, therapy centres, homes for mentally ill and special schools Wednesday.

The Department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) issued the fresh instructions to all the Collectors to ensure safety of these centres which are managed by the department and host the most vulnerable sections of the society.

The communication from the department to the Collectors said that new entries at such centres should be either entertained with a COVID

negative certificate or with quarantine.

It has also issued instructions to shift any new COVID cases found in the premises to the COVID Hospital and other related institutions. The information has now been disseminated to all the Collectors of the state.

The department has now also instructed all the Collectors to ensure admittance only of such persons with COVID-19 negative certificates and for persons who completed quarantine requirements in such places.

The recent communication from the department to the Collectors said, "In case any inmate in these

institutions tested COVID-19 positive, transfer all such cases to COVID Hospitals and/or quarantine centres immediately for proper care and treatment thereof."

The department also said that the premises of such institutions should be sanitized after detection of any positive case in the institution within 48 hours of such detection and ensure periodic disinfection of the institutions to promote and ensure prevention of COVID-19 infections in future.

The department has also asked all the Collectors to ensure taking all preventive care measures in such centres.

Another COVID care centre in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: With an aim to provide proper isolation and quarantine facility to asymptomatic and mild symptomatic patients, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has set up another COVID Care Centre (CCC) on Wednesday at AKANSHYA - Urban Hostel, Pokhriput, in Odisha capital.

The 50-bedded COVID Care Centre was formally opened today with the visit of Ekamra Bhubaneswar MLA and Hon'ble Minister, Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Department, Ashok Chandra Panda this afternoon in



presence of BMC Commissioner, Prem Chandra Chaudhary.

The new facility is the first COVID Care Centre which was developed with the contribution from the MLA Local Area Development (MLALAD) funds of Ekamra Constituency in Bhubaneswar. The facility was established with an investment of around ₹50 lakh.

SCB central ICU shut for a week

CUTTACK: The central intensive care unit (ICU) of Sriram Chandra Bhanja Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) has been shut for patients for a week after 20 out of the 31 class-3 employees of the unit were tested positive for Covid-19.

Six employees of the central ICU including three pharmacists had been tested positive for the deadly virus a few days ago while 14 others were found with Covid-19 infections

Wednesday, sources said.

"The 30-bed central ICU at the casualty ward of SCBMCH has been shut for a week after some employees were

tested positive for novel coronavirus. The critically-ill patients have been shifted to other ICUs of the hospital. The central ICU would be

thoroughly sanitised as part of a precautionary measure," said anaesthesia department chief Daitari Rout.

Jagannath shrine to come up in UK



Aerial view of the proposed Jagannath temple in the UK

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: London will soon be known as the 'Jagannath Dham' of Europe, with the construction of a grand Jagannath Mandir Temple Complex in the capital city of the United Kingdom. The plans for this project were unveiled by The Jagannath Temple Trust, UK, a charitable organisation founded by eminent UK-based Odias, at the 41st Annual Convention of the Odisha Society of United Kingdom (OSUK) held in the presence of several dignitaries from Odisha and India.

This year's OSUK Convention was held on an online digital platform in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, and was attended by nearly a thousand members of the Odia diaspora living in the UK, USA, Europe, India and other parts of the world.

The UK already has temples to the deities of some of the holy Hindu 'Chaar Dhaams'. However the absence of a dedicated temple to Lord Jagannath has been acutely felt by the Odia Community in the

UK that has an established presence in the UK for well over half a century, with numbers rapidly expanding year-on-year. The Jagannath Temple Trust, UK aims to complete construction of a majestic Jagannath Mandir in the Greater London region by 2024. The Trust is currently finalising an appropriate site in the Greater London region for the temple.

The Founder Trustees of the Jagannath Temple Trust, UK, comprise many eminent Odias. The Trust has been set up with initial funding through generous donations from the Odia community in the UK. The charitable organisation revealed that the project will be a community-led affair, in which the main stakeholders will be devotees of Lord Jagannath, with the UK Odia Community playing a pre-eminent role. The Trust estimates the cost of constructing the Jagannath Mandir to be 4 million British Pounds. It aims to raise these funds entirely through generous donations from the UK Odia and Hindu community.

Concerned citizens want liquor sale to stop

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: Concerned citizens raised their voice online against liquor sale during the ongoing health crisis and quashed rumours surrounding alcohol's immunity-boosting properties here Wednesday.

Most of the people shared fact check messages on various social media platforms and also organised a signature campaign for a blanket ban on liquor sale in the state.

Padma Charan Nayak, President, Milita Odisha Nisha Nibarana Abhijana (MONNA) said, "A few months back, the COVID-19-induced lockdown brought peace in villages across the state. However, the state government's decision to open liquor stores and their online sale will escalate the liquor crisis in the state."

Nayak urged the government to



reconsider its decision. "The nation is celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhiji. Instead of taking steps to fulfil his dream of creating a liquor-free India, the government is clearing the path to deliver liquor at doorsteps. State government, in last 20 years, has increased availability of liquor by 10

MYTHS SURROUNDING ALCOHOL, COVID-19

Myth: Consuming alcohol destroys the virus that causes COVID-19.
Fact: Consuming alcohol will not destroy the virus, and its consumption is likely to increase the health risks if a person becomes infected with the virus. Alcohol (at a concentration of at least 60% by volume) works as a disinfectant on your skin, but it has no such effect within your system when ingested.

Myth: Drinking strong alcohol kills the virus in the inhaled air.
Fact: Consumption of alcohol will not kill the virus in the inhaled air; it will not disinfect your mouth and throat; and it will not give you any kind of protection against COVID-19.

Myth: Alcohol (beer, wine, distilled spirits or herbal alcohol) stimulates immunity and resistance to the virus.
Fact: Alcohol has a deleterious effect on your immune system and will not stimulate immunity and virus resistance.

times," he said. Nayak also said that consuming alcohol will not destroy the virus that causes COVID-19. "Consuming alcohol will not destroy the virus, and its consumption is likely to increase the health risks if a person becomes infected with the virus. Alcohol (at a concentration of at least

60% by volume) works as a disinfectant on your skin, but it has no such effect within your system when ingested," he added.

Milan Nayak, Member of Sambhaba, said, "Liquor consumption has emerged as the biggest problem of the state. Many villages have been destroyed, families have

been shattered and entire generations have been paralyzed due to liquor. But ironically it is promoted by the govt itself. The lockdown was a great opportunity to implement a total prohibition act. However, the govt worsened the issue by making liquor available online."

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People in low-lying areas jittery as rivers in spate

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada/Balasure, August 26: Heavy rains have caused many rivers in North Odisha to swell above the danger marks. Meanwhile, some pockets in Bhadrak, Balasure, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar witnessed water-logging and flood-like situation, reports said.

Incessant rains triggered by a low-pressure over the Bay of Bengal have left several low-lying areas submerged in Baripada municipality of Mayurbhanj district Wednesday. Ganghar river is in spate. A woman was said to be swept away in the river.

Heavy rain affected normal life in the town while communication was completely snapped in



Water level swelling in Budhabalanga river in Balasure

some areas. Meanwhile, a house collapsed in Madhuban Talasahi Wednesday morning.

Reports said Jarali and Sarali canals flowing through the town swelled up following the heavy

downpour. This led the floodwater to enter the town causing severe inconvenience to residents. Flood water from Budhabalanga also entered riverside areas of the town including Madhuban Talasahi forcing 20 families to evacuate.

Reports from Balasure said, due to heavy rains, the water level in Subarnarekha river is swelling. Scores of villages along the river and low-lying areas under Bhograi, Jaleswar blocks were panicked over flood situation amid heavy rains. The administration is keeping a close watch on the situation. Jharkhand is likely to release water from Galudih and another dam.

Akhandalamani's Garbha Gruha gets submerged

ARADI: The 'Garbha Gruha' of the famous Shaivaita shrine in Akhandalamani temple here in Bhadrak district and the presiding deity was submerged by rainwater Wednesday. Due to excessive rains, water entered the temple premises. The Shivalinga remained invisible for a long time as it was submerged under water. The 'Mangal Arati' rituals were performed late Wednesday morning after water was pumped out from the 'Garbha Gruha'.

Such incidents have been occurring every year. The state

archeological department had carried out repair of the 'Garbha Gruha' floor in 2018. However, that has not been of any use as cracks have developed in the new floor within two years of the repair work. Locals said the flooding of the 'Garbha Gruha' is a regular event.

The flooding has triggered resentment among devotees, servants and local residents. They have demanded that the district administration be proactive and take immediate preventive measures.



BRIDGE WASHED AWAY BY FLASH FLOOD

SUNDARGARH: Flash floods triggered by heavy rainfall have washed away a bridge on National Highway 215 near Toda in Koira block of Sundargarh district Wednesday. The bridge had been earlier flooded with rainwater but the present situation has severed the connection between Kalta and Koira areas of the district. Hundreds of vehicles have stranded on both sides of the road, especially trucks laden with iron-ore. While the entire district is experiencing rainfall under the influence of the formation of a low pressure area over Bay of Bengal, the hilly region of Koira is facing extremely heavy rainfall.

Unease prevails in Jajpur's riparian areas



BARI: With flood fears looming large in low-lying areas of Bari block in Jajpur district, residents have been spending sleepless nights for last couple of days fearing the worst.

Due to low pressure induced incessant rains, rivers in the block are already in spate.

Meanwhile, weathermen has predicted that Jajpur district will receive more rains in next four days as yet another low pressure has formed over the Bay of Bengal. More rains would mean a flood like situation in the block.

Riparian villagers and those living in low-lying areas say weak river embankments have been a cause of worry for them.

There are craters on the right embankment of the river Brahmani from Kusabata to Matipada and from Anikana to Krushnanagar. These were the places where there were breaches during floods in past years. Fearing the same this year, villagers are spending the days leaving everything at the mercy of the god. They alleged they have taken

up the problem with the concerned department but to no avail.

While the water level in Dudhei river, a distributary of Kharasota river, keeps increasing, its embankment has not been repaired for many years. This is the reason why residents of many revenue villages in Kalamatia, Anyasipur, Balibila, Arangabad, Angalo, Bodua and Bhanra panchayats are living in constant fear of flood.

The embankment of the Dudhei river has developed craters at places due to the recent low pressure-induced rain that battered the

locality. In view of the possible flood like situation, Bari MLA Sunanda Das, additional tehsildar Bhanumati Majhi and agriculture department officials visited Anyasipur, Balibila, Arangabad and Kalamatia panchayats.

When contacted, MLA Das said people need not be afraid. "At a time when water levels in the rivers are increasing, we are more concerned about people's safety. After discussions with the district administration, appropriate steps would be taken," Das added.

Chhabirani fame judge Krushna Kar dies

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, August 26: Prominent judge Krushna Chandra Kar, known for his unbiased ruling in the high-profile Chhabirani gangrape-murder case of 1980, died due to old age-related ailments at his residence in Kendrapara district, family sources said Wednesday.

He was 90 and is survived by three sons. Kar had served as the district judge in Cuttack, Puri and Bolangir and as the law secretary. After retirement, he used to practice as a lawyer in Kendrapara.

He was well-known in Odisha judiciary for sentencing eight accused in the Chhabirani gangrape-

murder case to life imprisonment despite political pressure.

Both Chhabirani and her husband Nabakishore worked in an Odia daily in Biridi village in present-day Jagatsinghpur and had written about corruption in the PDS. They were targeted by activists of the then ruling Congress and were asked to leave Biridi. However, as the couple, along with their infant child, was leaving the village, the accused blocked their way. Chhabirani asked her husband to take their son to safety and then fought the accused alone. But they overpowered Chhabirani and gang-raped her before killing her on Biluakhai riverbed in 1980.

Kamakhyanager sits on ticking AIDS bomb as cases balloon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kamakhyanager, August 26: Despite a slew of measures, the AIDS situation in Kamakhyanager subdivision of Dhenkanal district continues to remain grim.

As many as 186 AIDS patients have been identified in last 13 years and 54 patients have so far succumbed to the deadly disease. 11 patients were detected this year till July.

In order to control the disease and provide treatment and counselling to the patients, an Integrated Counseling and Testing Centre (ICTC) was made functional at Kamakhyanager sub-divisional hospital in October 2006.

Through this centre, a total of 60,540 patients have been counselled so far till July end this year. It includes 28,967 males and 31,573 females including 23,765 pregnant women. Similarly, after counselling, 26,116 males and 28,953 females including 23,149 pregnant women were tested for AIDS. And, from the 119 males and 67 females including 18 pregnant women were the confirmed cases of AIDS.

The subdivision has so far witnessed 54 deaths over last 13 years. They include 40 males, 14 females including three pregnant women.

Notwithstanding the huge amount of money being spent by the government to control and eradicate the disease, the number of infected patients keeps rising in



IN LAST 13 YEARS, 186 AIDS PATIENTS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED WHILE 54 OF THEM HAVE SUFFERED TO THE DEADLY DISEASE. 11 PATIENTS WERE DETECTED THIS YEAR TILL JULY

THE FEAR OF OSTRACISATION AMONG PATIENTS IS SO INTENSE THAT THEY ARE EVEN NOT AVAILING THE BENEFITS OF HOUSING AND PENSION SCHEMES

Kamakhyanager subdivision and this has been a cause of headache for the health department.

At the ICTC, there is a facility to identify the infected patient. If a patient comes voluntarily for testing, his/her blood sample is collected and tested. There is a strict direction to keep their identities a top secret as they tend to be victims of social stigma.

But the patients after being identified are not turning up for treatment. Shame and fear of ostracisation are said to be the reasons behind their reluctance for continued treatment.

According to Prafulla Kumar Sahu, a counsellor at ICTC, the medicine is being provided free of cost. Yet patients are hiding the disease fearing banishment. While most of the patients are not taking medicine, the ones that are taking are not regular with the treatment.

As many as 115 patients from Kamakhyanager subdivision have been travelling to Angul to avail

antiretroviral therapy (ART) and taking medicine accordingly.

That said, the major cause of worry is: there are 15 such patients in Kamakhyanager subdivision that have never been either to Angul or the ICTC at the subdivision. It is easy to comprehend that these patients are afraid of being identified by friends, relatives and neighbours, said a counsellor.

The fear of ostracisation among them is so intense that they are even not availing the benefits of various schemes such as Biju Pucca Ghar Yojana and Madhu Babu Pension Yojana.

The stigma can be done away with only through the awareness at grassroots level, experts said.

"Awareness should not be confined to the government level only. Organisations, youths, college and school students must be made aware of the disease. This apart, the disease can be defeated through yoga and pranayam," observed social activist Mangatlatl Kataruka.

Modi mentions OP story in Mann Ki Baat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 26: A report in Orissa POST on successful use of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in harvesting stream water for irrigation in Jujumura block of this district was tweeted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday in his Mann Ki Baat Tweeter account.

The Prime Minister, posting the photograph of the published story in his 'Tweeter account' mentioned that conservation of stream water for use in irrigation of farmland in Jujumura block is a successful example of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

This block harvests stream water for irrigation



Notably, the project was set up at Kuturlatia stream about 40 km from Kayakud village under Jujumura block in 2020-21 financial year.



The block administration has constructed a diversion wall, a concrete drain and a canal to canalise the flowing water of the stream into the tank. The stored water is now being used to irrigate over 50 hectares of farmland.

Over the years, MGNREGA has become the main force driving water conservation efforts across rural India. Nearly 60 per cent of the resources under MGNREGA are spent on National Resource Management framework which focuses on ensuring higher income to farmers by improving both the areas under cultivation and yield of crops.

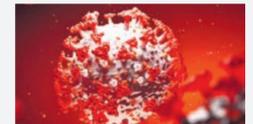
The project has also helped the block administration in providing livelihood to jobless migrant returnees in the area.

Dhenkanal town shut for 4 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, August 26: The district administration announced a four-day shutdown in Dhenkanal Municipality from August 27 to 30 to contain the spread of Covid-19. Collector Bhumesh Chandra Behera ordered the shutdown.

"There will be intensive contact tracing in Dhenkanal Municipality. Contacts of confirmed and suspected cases will be listed, tracked and kept under surveillance at homes for 14 days," the order of the Collector read. During the shutdown, people's movement and non-essential activities will be restricted in areas under Dhenkanal



Municipality and the district administration will conduct a survey in the entire town, expedite testing and isolate the infected detected during the test.

All essential services including medical establishments, movement of ambulances and all medical personnel, district and municipal administration/police/fire services, central & state government officials on emergency duty, telecom services, petrol pumps were allowed.

Sai tests Covid +ve in Raigarh jail

JHARSUGUDA: Ex-Brajrajnagar MLA Anup Kumar Sai has tested positive for COVID-19. Anup is in a jail at Raigarh in Chhattisgarh for seven months in connection with a double murder case. The information of Anup testing positive was shared by jailer NK Tephria.

Anup was hospitalised after he fell sick Tuesday inside the prison. He was initially admitted to the Raigarh district headquarters hospital by the authorities in critical condition

after he complained of chest pain. Later, he was shifted to a private hospital.

Reports said the former MLA is in the ICU after he suffered a massive coronary attack. Anup has been suffering from cardiovascular problems since 2014 and was under medication, family sources said. He was likely to undergo an emergency surgery Wednesday. However, as is the norm these days he underwent a Covid-19 test and his result came out positive.

Jumbos on damaging spree in Patana

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patana, August 26: Elephants are on a damaging spree in Patana range of Keonjhar for last few weeks.

Reports said, a herd of 23 elephants stayed into villages at night causing panic among villagers.

For the last few days, the animals have been unleashing a reign of terror in several villages such as Chatarpani, Gajitangiri, Balitota, Barabeda, Laxmiposi, Jagannathopur and Khuntapada. The animals strayed into Khuntapada and Barabeda and damaged houses.

People in Patana were panicked and are spending sleepless nights even as the forest department has



failed to contain the marauding elephants despite its efforts.

Forest officials are tackling movements of the elephants. 15 of the herd crossed Deo river and entered Karanjia range.

Other elephants have damaged crops in Laxmiposi and Jagannathpur areas Monday.

Villagers have demanded compensation for damaged houses and crops.

Admin concerned over tilting Kapilash temple

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, August 26: Chandrasekhar Mahadev shrine at Kapilash in Dhenkanal district, a prominent Shaivaita shrine, has started tilting towards the ladder way consisting of 1352 steps meant for accessing it atop a hill.

The district administration expressed its concern over this delicate issue at a meeting called to discuss the development of the temple Tuesday afternoon. The shrine could face serious consequences if urgent steps are not taken in time.

It was decided that the matter will be intimated to Archeological Survey of India (ASI) soon. A grant of Rs 1 crore which was earlier sanctioned by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will be utilised for the beautification and development of Kapilash temple.

ASI authorities will be asked to construct concrete walls near the shrine as a supportive measure. In addition to the above,



the sanctioned grant will be utilised for electrification of Barabanka ghat road, completion of a drinking water project, construction of a water tank with a capacity of 2,00,000 litres and erection of 20 toilets at the foothill for tourists including rail-

ings alongside the 1,352 steps. A Yatri Nivas will be constructed near Kapilash zoo which would accommodate at least 300 devotees and visitors. More funds could be needed for the development and beautification which will be borne by the endowment department, official sources informed.

A meeting of the endowment advisory committee in this regard was convened at Sadbhavna hall of Dhenkanal collectorate in the presence of local MLA Sudhir Kumar Samal and was chaired by Collector Bhumesh Chandra Behera.

ASI officials will be asked to attend the next meeting scheduled for the second week of September, Behera expressed.

Dhenkanal endowment officer and Sadar Sub-Collector Saphalya Mandit Pradhan, divisional forest officer Prakashchand Gugnani and project director DRDA Narottam Behera among other senior officials participated in the discussion.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
PUBLIC NOTICE FOR CLOSURE OF MANNED LEVEL CROSSING GATE BETWEEN JAGANNATHPUR-BRAHMAMPUR STATIONS

THE UNDER MENTIONED MANNED LEVEL CROSSING GATE OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION HAS BEEN CLOSED IN LIEU OF CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD OVER BRIDGE (ROB) AND READY FOR OPENING TO PUBLIC.

HENCE, THE USE OF THE UNDER MENTIONED MANNED LEVEL CROSSING GATE FOR PUBLIC IS CLOSED WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT.

Route	Between Stations	LC No.	Railway Kilometer	Class (M/U/M)	Year of Census	Train Vehicles Unit
B	Jagannathpur-Brahmapur	309	599/10-8	"Sp" Class (M)	Aug-2018	158883

COLLECTOR / GANJAM WIDE LETTER NO. 1305/Res./dtd. 15.10.2008 HAS PERMITTED THE CLOSURE OF SAID MANNED LEVEL CROSSING GATE AND PRINCIPAL CHIEF ENGINEER / EAST COAST RAILWAY / BHUBANESWAR HAS ACCORDED ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL FOR THE SAME WIDE LETTER NO. W-4/351/A/PL.VII/231, DATED 04.01.2018. SANCTION OF CRS HAS ALSO BEEN OBTAINED.

PR-223/L/20-21 Sr. Divisional Engineer (South), Khurda Road

TENDER CALL NOTICE

No. K-06: The Superintendent, E.S.I., Hospital, Bhubaneswar-13, invites sealed tenders from the intending suppliers to supply 'Cooked foods' of Rs 125/- (Rupees One Hundred Twenty Five) only for E.S.I. Hospital, Bhubaneswar on or before 16.09.2020 during the office hours (10.00 A.M. to 05.00 P.M.) for a period of one year i.e. from 01.10.2020 to 30.09.2021. The 'tenderer' has to deposit a sum of Rs 2000/- (Rupees Two thousand) only in shape of Demand Draft payable at S.B.I. Govt. Treasury Branch, Bhubaneswar at the time of submission of tender in the office of the undersigned as Earnest Money and the Earnest money so deposited will be refunded to unsuccessful 'Tenderers' after the tender process is over and successful 'Tenderer' will get back his/her E.M.D. soon after the deposit of prescribed 'Security Deposit'. The 'Tender' should accompany with valid and up to date 'Sales tax clearance' 'Income Tax return' 'GST Clearance' 'Solvency' certificate(s) along with samples of 'Cooked food' / 'Dairy articles' at the time of opening of 'Tender'. Successful 'Tenderer' will deposit 'Security Money' of Rs 10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand) only in shape of N.S.C. pledged in favour of the Superintendent, E.S.I., Hospital, Bhubaneswar within 15 days from the date of acceptance of his 'Tender' and execute an agreement to the effect that he/she will be bound with the terms and conditions regarding uninterrupted supply of 'Cooked food'. The sealed 'Tenders' will be opened on 24.09.2020 at 11AM in presence of the 'Tenderers' or their authorized representative(s) and the members of the 'Diet selection committee' in the chamber of the undersigned. Tender papers the 'Cooked food' can be obtained from the office of the undersigned on any working day during the office hours on payment of Rs.1000/- + GST 18 % in shape of the Demand Draft in favour of Superintendent, E.S.I. Hospital, Bhubaneswar payable at S.B.I. Govt. Treasury Branch, Bhubaneswar. The committee reserves the right to accept or reject any or all 'Tender(s)' without assigning any reason thereof. Withdrawal of Tender' after opening of the same will be liable to forfeit the 'Earnest Money' of Rs 2000/-.

Sd./ Superintendent,
E.S.I. Hospital, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-10014/11/0002/2021

FOCUS POLITICS

WAKE-UP CALL FOR CONGRESS



The senior leaders of the 135-year-old Congress remained mum on crucial issues, as they were clueless on what line to follow, thus giving a cake-walk to the ruling BJP to pursue its own Hindutva agenda. So, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to Ayodhya to perform Bhoomi Pujan, the Congress was silent, as they were totally ignorant on the stand to be taken

feel that already enough damage has been done, with the Modi government succeeding to fulfill the Hindutva agenda. In the case of the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests, due to the failure of the political parties to take a stand on a burning issue, the people, on their own, were forced to come out onto the streets and stage dharnas.

Despite persistent persuasion by the party leaders, Rahul Gandhi refused to take up the responsibility of the party president. Sonia Gandhi, on the other hand, was unwilling to hold meetings and guide the party. Priyanka Gandhi only concentrated on the party affairs in Uttar Pradesh and like her brother, mostly spent her time tweeting. It was at such a juncture that the Congress well-wishers (this is what they claim), sprung to action and sought the support of their colleagues to demand an "active and full-time Congress president," who could be visible and accessible to the partymen.

These leaders are not against the Gandhi family. In fact, they would like Rahul Gandhi to assume the post of Congress president, but in case he is not willing, the party should go ahead and hold organisational elections. It has only been thrice in recent times - during the time of Indira Gandhi in Delhi in 1977, under PV Narasimha Rao in Tirupati 1992, under Sitaram Kesri in Kolkata in 1997 - that the party elected CWC members and the Congress president.

In order to inject adrenaline in the party, the rebel group is of the firm opinion that there should be party polls and the deserving candidates should be elected. If elections are held under the leadership of Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi, the process will be smooth. However, much depends on the decision of the Gandhi family. Whatever decision the duo (the mother & the son) takes, it will indeed help the party, to take a step forward. The rebels have made up their mind to set the party in order and they won't rest, until the task is completed.

The writer is a senior journalist.

The spectacle of the Independence Day celebrations at the AICC headquarters this time was a reflection on the state of affairs in the Congress. The unfurling of the flag was performed not by Congress president Sonia Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi, but by veteran leader AK Antony. Within five minutes, the ceremony was complete. Outsiders like us, the journalists who have been covering the Congress for decades, were shocked to witness the plight of the party. There were not more than 50 people at the party office.

The Congress-led UPA government was always accused of policy paralysis, but with the absence of active leadership in the party for more than one year, ever since Rahul Gandhi resigned from the Congress president's post after the party's debacle in the General Election in 2019, the Congress had become moribund.

The rebellion in the party has been gradually increasing, with senior leaders and the upcoming leadership feeling restive, in the absence of any direction and the line to be taken on the policies of the Modi government.

Whether it was abrogation of Article 370, Chinese aggression, or the handling of Covid-19, there were no set party guidelines to be followed. Unlike the earlier tradition of regular Congress Working Committee (CWC) meetings or Congress Parliamentary Board (CPB) parleys, the party became completely directionless. Rahul Gandhi, on his own, used to tweet on every subject, to prove his own point that he was no longer a Pappu.

The senior leaders of the 135-year-old Congress remained mum on crucial issues, as they were clueless on what line to follow, thus giving a cake-walk to the ruling BJP to pursue its own Hindutva agenda. So, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to Ayodhya to perform Bhoomi Pujan, the Congress was silent, as they were totally ignorant on the stand to be taken.

In Parliament as well, both senior and young leaders felt fidgety and incapacitated, as they were ignorant of their party's stand when it came to passing the Triple

Talaaq Bill or abrogating Article 370. In fact, in the absence of any formulation of strategy in the Congress, the ruling BJP always had a field day. The Congress MPs, on the other hand, felt embarrassed and insulted. There were occasions when the Congress leaders took different and divergent stands on the same issue, the very recent being the abrogation of Article 370, where Ghulam Nabi Azad opposed the Bill strongly in the Upper House, while outside Parliament, leaders like Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Sachin Pilot and others took the opposite line.

The discontent in the party has been simmering for long, the reason why young leaders in the party like Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sachin Pilot were feeling suffocated. While Scindia succeeded in relocating himself to the BJP, there are others who were totally opposed to the BJP ideology and instead wanted to set their own house in order. The likes of Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Anand Sharma and Veerappa Moily have spent their

entire life in building the Congress and are therefore keen to ensure that the party is restored to its pristine glory. Similarly, the youngsters like Shashi Tharoor and Manish Tewari are putting in 24x7 efforts in keeping the party alive, but they need proper guidance on the stand to be taken on various important issues.

All the 23 Congress leaders, who have written to the party president, are not rebels, but the well-wishers of the party, who are keen to see a strong leadership at the helm of party affairs and a strong organisation that can take on the formidable ruling BJP dispensation at the Centre and in the states. There are many, who are also on the same page as the dissenters, but they lack courage to openly confront the leadership. Finally, it came to Ghulam Nabi Azad to bell the cat, in the larger interests of the party.

These leaders are not against the Gandhi family, per se, but are keen to put an end to the policy paralysis within the party. They want to rejuvenate the party so that it can take up the challenge posed by the communal forces. They



Anita Saluja

IN ORDER TO INJECT ADRENALINE IN THE PARTY, THE REBEL GROUP IS OF THE FIRM OPINION THAT THERE SHOULD BE PARTY POLLS AND THE DESERVING CANDIDATES SHOULD BE ELECTED



Maneka Gandhi

The majority of Indian city dwellers do not find the stray dog a nuisance

Human-canine bonding in India

In the last two months, three people - two working in a newspaper and one in a magazine - have savagely attacked lakhs of animal feeders who have risked their own health to keep animals alive, and claimed that their feeding has alienated the whole of India. All three have stopped short of asking for them to be killed because they know that, while their ranting is harmless, any suggestion of violence will alienate most of the country from them.

All three have this in common: they keep foreign pedigreed dogs. They should read the paper published in Harvard by Steven L Herman on the relationship between people and dogs in contemporary India. I am going to quote from it extensively. "The canine appears to have been thriving in India since the beginning of recorded time. Recent DNA testing has determined that all Indian dogs, as well as dog breeds from the rest of the world, are from the lineage of Canis lupus chanco, the ancient and unique Himalayan wolf of northwestern India."

The Indian human's relationship with dogs goes back to mythical times. They are the envoys of Yama. Yudhishthira of the Mahabharata refused to enter heaven without his dog and it turned out that the gods were testing him on his compassion quotient - and he passed with flying colours. "Early Vedic literature shows the dog had a far more intimate position in the household than beasts of burden or worshipped animals. The rock carvings at Bhimbetka, near Bhopal, show a man walking a curly-tailed male dog on a leash."

"An interesting contemporary study is the Indian Pariah Dog (aka Indian Native Dog). For some cynologists, a true Pariah, like wolves, must scavenge with a pack. In India, during the past 11 months of observation of hundreds of dogs referred to by locals as strays or Pariahs, I have not seen any that congregate in packs and thus cannot be considered feral. Instead, these dogs exhibit strong territorial behaviour rarely tolerating more than one other dog on their turf. These dogs will 'belong' to a village and are parasitic off scraps of food from the human population." This means that street dogs are not feral but very much part of the large Indian human community.

"The majority of Indian city dwellers do not find the stray dog a nuisance. Among the poorest, bonding between children and stray puppies, both surviving on the streets, may partly explain a higher than average level of tolerance between scavengers of the human and canine varieties in India. While stray dogs are ignored in many places and suffer from a lack of proper veterinary treatment, it is heartening in a country with so much poverty and so many pressing social issues that there is a remarkable amount of volunteerism devoted to animal welfare among the middle and upper classes. In Jaipur, a concerted effort by animal welfare organisations in recent years to sterilise, vaccinate and protect stray dogs had resulted in no further cases of canine-to-human rabies transmission."

"The level of tolerance (for strays) is amazing and could be related to Hinduism," says Dr. AJT Johnsingh, retired dean of the Faculty of Wildlife Sciences of the Wildlife Institute of India. Dr. Johnsingh explains that because stray dogs have access to an enormous quantity of garbage in cities, as long as this food supply is not reduced the number of dogs will not decrease.

The attitude of humans in India regarding dogs is something to which Dr. Amita Singh has given considerable thought. She is the chairperson of the Centre for Study of Law and Governance at Jawaharlal Nehru University. Professor Singh states that there are three types of people in India when it comes to attitudes towards dogs. The first category is those who value dogs for companionship. They are especially evident among the elderly and the poor. "Even if they have hardly any food, they will share it with the dog," she says.

The second type is those who have affinity for dogs based on religious beliefs. The number of people in this category has expanded significantly with the growth of the Sai Baba religious movement. The influential guru preached protection of dogs and that if people feed dogs their sins will be transferred to the animal. "There is a story told in the movement of one devotee who was preparing food for Sai Baba and hits a dog with a stick who tries to eat the food intended for the guru," recounts Dr. Singh. The guru does not appear for his meal and, later, when the man asks why Sai Baba missed his meal the leader replies that he came to eat but "you hit me with a stick."

The third type of dog lover is formed of those trying to emulate India's former colonial masters, whose military leaders "always kept dogs." Some observers, such as Dr. Singh, consider these modern-day emulators of the Raj, who exclusively prefer pedigreed dogs, to be 'selfish' because "while they are nice to pet dogs, they are awful to dogs on the road and even advocate killing of strays." "There are remarkable attitudes concerning dogs among other elements of Indian society. This is likely one of the few countries where 'weddings' between humans and dogs takes place. These so-called marriages usually occur to reverse supposed curses placed on the human spouse. The nature-worshipping Munda tribe marries off girls when their permanent teeth appear, to make them immune to animal attacks."

"From the mythical to the seemingly super-natural, the bond between dog and humans in India has stretched across millennia." And nothing is going to change it. No matter how annoyed our pseudo-western writers get and how keen they are to replace the Indian dog with the Irish Setter and the Pomeranian, this is not going to happen. And this lockdown has just shown that the movement to protect Indian dog is increasing, not decreasing, in strength. Yes, there have been conflicts, there have been poisonings, and some drunken men do beat animals when they cannot beat their wives. But overall, it is a battle that the compassionate are winning.

To join the animal welfare movement contact gandhim@nic.in, www.peopleforanimalsindia.org

WISDOM CORNER

- A straight foot is not afraid of a crooked shoe. **PROVERBS**
- He who talks more is sooner exhausted. **LAO TZU**
- The constant assertion of belief is an indication of fear. **JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI**

WORDSWORTH

The Full Monty

The release of the film with that title in 1997 provoked requests to explain what it means and where the phrase came from. The former is easy to answer: it just means "the whole thing; everything; the whole lot". In the present state of research, it's difficult to say anything much more definitive than "origin unknown". It became common in Britain from the early 90s, but has only a sparse recorded history before then. Perhaps, the first reference, dated 1986, is in a book entitled Street Talk, the Language of Coronation Street (Coronation Street being a long-running British soap based on life in a northern town). The Guardian of September 1989 has this: "What we're after is a live skeleton - the full monty," said the stage manager. One suggestion put forward in a newspaper article is that it was invented in early 80s by Ben Elton, an alternative comedian, possibly after the model of the whole shebang, which has long been known in Britain, though it originated in the US. But this seems rather unlikely, because there are those who say the phrase was around before the 80s; they say they heard it as far back as the 1950s. Alas, nobody can provide any documentary evidence for these dates.

SPECTRUM AVIATION

Wrong runway, miracle escape



Kamal Baruah

LANDING IS ONE OF THE TOUGHEST JOBS OF FLYING. EVERY AIRFIELD IS UNIQUE AND INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS ARE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE LOCAL AREA AND THEREBY FACE TOUGH TIMES

Flying a plane is no easy business. Landing poses its own challenges and risks. Pilots are alerted often with a NOTAM (Notice To Airmen) message on potential hazards along flight route.

Aviation rules are clear as to how to face each situation with care. For one, the alphanumeric characters full of abbreviations are sent across wireless/telecom at short notice. VHF Omni-Directional Range ground navigation aids continuously transmit its airport code in Morse.

To ensure flight safety, it's essential for a pilot to identify the station before using any navigation or approach aid. The recent table-top tragedy at Kozhikode airport has reminded us of the challenges in aviation.

I am reminded of an incident June 2, 1997, when a Boeing 747 of Saudi Arabian Airline wanted to land at Chennai Airport. It was the afternoon shift for us. Suddenly an object was detected by the Airport Surveillance Radar (ASR) screen, which displayed a message on computer. There, an aircraft was swooping down towards the airstrip. No sooner did the ATC Tambaram called up ATC Chennai, the latter tried to contact the air-

craft but could not.

The radar was not operational. ATC placed the Saudi in a holding mode. Very shortly ATC found the aircraft was missing from Flight Information Region (FIR). Since the weather was fine, Captain Khayat sought approach for visual clearance. It turned out that the pilot avoided navigational instrument as he had seen the runway physically. He sighted 05 of Air Force Tambaram strip, instead of 07 of Chennai, and started descending towards threshold for touchdown. The Air Force Controller got panicked and fired four red cartridges in the air, signalling a refusal of permission.

The pilot either didn't see or simply ignored the warning. He ran out of time before he got through another attempt to take off and had to continue with the approach. While the aircraft touched down, the pilot realised a grave mistake at seeing the shorter runway from the cockpit but was prompted enough to jam the brakes to save the lives of 330 passengers and 17 members of the aircrew. It blew four tyres and finally had a stunning escape, to halt at the edge of the runway, barely 100 metres from the huddle of ATC.

Landing is one of the toughest jobs of flying. Every airfield is unique and international flights are unfamiliar with the local area and thereby face tough times. Some rely on what they see out of the cockpit rather than on instruments and charts.

Pilots are often confused also as both Chennai and Tambaram are nearby and have another runway numbering 12-30. Navigators use or deal direction north as 360°. It was a nerve-racking experience for Air Force Tambaram while the fully loaded 747 came down on a 4,700-feet-long runway instead of the 10,000 feet of Chennai.

The base put the area on high alert and sealed the runway and cordoned off the aircraft including passengers. It was a situation resembling Hollywood movies, but all too real. The Air Force, woken up by the emergency state, landed there with a huge jet but without other emergency preparations and permission. Commandos took out loaded guns from the armoury and cocked their weapons ready for firing.

The passengers had no clue while waiting five hours inside the aircraft on the tarmac. They only learned of the miracle after they were safely evacuated. Sabotage was ruled out

after the talk with DGCA and Civil Aviation. But the aircraft remained tucked up for four days as the runway was too short for a take-off and flying again.

The mission as to how to get the aircraft out was deemed impossible. Should it be broken for scrap or towed down on the road to Chennai? Finally it was stripped bare to be lightened by removing the interiors, the air-conditioners and even emptying fuel, to cruise for a few nautical miles. On the fourth day, at 1648Z, the Boeing-trained commander Captain Jam Joom performed a near-miracle after nearly four hours of waiting for favourable wind. He steered the huge plane off the tarmac after running the shortest distance of 3,960 feet, whereas a jumbo jet normally required at least 8,000 feet of strip space for a take-off.

The incident cost the airlines a boatload of Saudi Riyal 1.16 million by way of landing and parking charges. It was just a tentative fine but the damages were far higher. And the big bird had finally flown, shattering the ATC glass-panels spontaneously. After nine minutes, it finally landed in Chennai.

The writer is a former air warrior.

Hail Archana

Sir, Archana Soreng, the first Odia girl to find a place in the United Nations Secretary General's seven-member group on Climate Change, has been receiving huge accolades from various sections of the society including Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. This Tata Institute of Social Sciences-educated girl hailing from Sundargarh district has made a special mark in tackling the climate issues through nature's own route. She points out that our ancestors took to protecting the forests and nature through traditional knowledge and practice, and these hold good even today. The younger generation must take this endeavour forward. Let's hope the UN's mission of checking climatic imbalance is fulfilled when promising youths like Archana, hailing from the Khadia tribe, are up-front.



Sanjib Das, CUTTACK

Transgender rights

Sir, The central government establishing a National Council for Transgender Persons is the right move towards the social security of this community. The council will advise the government on the formulation of policies, programmes, legislations, and projects with respect to transgender persons. It furthermore will work for the protection of their rights and redressing their grievances. I hope that the council empowers transgenders so that they will be able to live a respectable life in society.

Amit Singh Kushuaha, SATNA

Vegans are strong

Sir, Vegetarianism is, in essence, a campaign against violence and cruelty. This is a harmless practice. 'Sattvic' foods are free from toxicity and pollution. They are free from adulteration and harmful chemicals. Vegetarianism promotes longevity, vitality, peace of mind and tranquility. It is the soul of food. It is erroneous to believe that vegans are weak. Vegan diet is easily digestible, more healthy, natural and free from toxic effects. Vegans are more intuitive, creative, passionate, and focused than non-vegans. Killing of animals for satiating one's hunger is unethical and improper. Vegetarianism is practised even in European countries with great passion. 'Sattvic' foods elevate our soul and energise our nervous system. One is free to choose a diet as per his or her tastes, but vegetarianism is beneficial for the mankind. The importance of vegetarianism can't be overemphasised.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

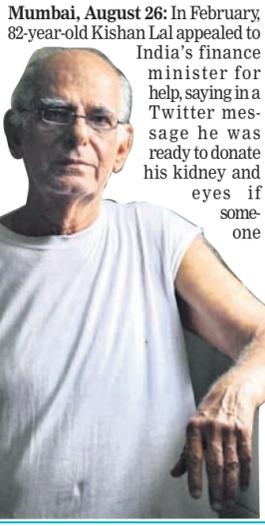
Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email,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

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



No funds available: PMC Bank's depositors survive on loans, charity

REUTERS



Mumbai, August 26: In February, 82-year-old Kishan Lal appealed to India's finance minister for help, saying in a Twitter message he was ready to donate his kidney and eyes if someone could help arrange funds to treat his daughter, who had a brain tumour.

The Lals had enough savings to tide over the medical crisis - more than Rs 2.5 million in Punjab & Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank. But withdrawals were capped at 50,000 rupees from each account at the time because authorities were investigating fraud at PMC. The withdrawal cap is now at Rs 100,000 per depositor. "I just borrowed money from wherever I could, I had to save my daughter," said Lal. "If I had access to my own money, I'd not have been ashamed."

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) took control of PMC last September after it was accused of fraud and concealing non-performing loans. PMC's top officials and the owners of a realty company that received the bulk of the loans were arrested. The withdrawal cap has left many of PMC's over 900,000 depositors in deep difficulty. Some say they are struggling to clear loans or pay their children's school fees, while others say they depend on friends for their groceries.

The coronavirus has hit the broader banking sector hard, raising concerns about soaring bad loans as household and corporate debt rise. Liquidity risks have increased for non-bank financial companies and the state banking system needs to be recapitalised. But some analysts are concerned that the pandemic is likely to have a more pronounced effect on the fragile co-operative banks. "They lend to riskier borrowers who have higher chances of defaulting due to the pandemic," said Jignesh Shial, a banking analyst at brokerage Emkay Global.

Earlier this month, dozens of PMC depositors organised a protest in Mumbai and shouted slogans against the central bank. "Get well soon RBI. Thanks for doing your job so well that we lost all our life savings," read one poster. On Facebook, depositors regularly post videos and photos to amplify their request for help. Each day, hundreds of messages are shared on a Telegram messaging app group of about 4,000 members where depositors discuss next steps, or simply vent. Kishan Lal and his daughter Bony say they remain at the mercy of loans. Lal said he has developed a prostate problem but is not treating it, and is skipping his regular blood-pressure medicines as savings remain blocked at PMC. Bony, 43, is distraught while battling her own illnesses. "It is our hard-earned tax-paid money," she said, "and we are having to literally beg for it."

HEALTH OF CO-OP BANKS

The situation at PMC has also amplified concerns about the health of India's tens of thousands of co-operative banks, which often serve communities in the rural interior and have assets worth around \$220 billion, about 11% of India's total banking sector assets. These banks, many of which are tiny, are subject to less stringent regulation than commercial banks and currently, more than two dozen of them are facing lending or withdrawal restrictions by the RBI because of financial irregularities.

How Bangalore saw its Covid success come undone

REUTERS

Bangalore, August 26: An Indian health education minister June 9 posted an infographic on Twitter showing COVID-19 infections and deaths in Bangalore were running about half the rate in New Zealand, a country acclaimed globally for reining in the virus. The city — which has more than double the population of New Zealand — "stumps the Kiwis," said the caption to the image posted by Sudhakar K. His tweet was liked and retweeted by thousands. But the celebration was short-lived. At the time, only about 450 cases had been recorded among Bangalore's population of more than 12.5 million, compared with more than 260,000 cases across India and about 1,150 in New Zealand.



Software professionals assisting municipal authorities work on their terminals inside a 'war room' focused on tracking the spread of COVID-19 at the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike office.

Thanks partly to a high-tech testing and tracing system monitored by masked officials on giant screens in a city "war room," Bangalore had contained the outbreak better than cities like Mumbai, which had tallied more than 100 times as many cases. Two and a half months on, Bangalore has reported more than 11,000 cases. Where its infections in early June rose by 25 a day on average, the rate is now more than 2,500. In New Zealand, the total caseload stood at 1,339 as of August 25. Sudhakar did not respond to requests for comment, but his tweet remains online. Bangalore's early response was lauded as a model, for its use of health surveys combined with efforts to tap tech expertise and cutting-edge software to analyse the virus spread.

But the lockdown was eased in early June, epidemiologists and government officials involved in the city's response to the pandemic said they realised they had not planned enough. The experience illustrates the extent of the challenge faced by large cities across the globe, showing how rapidly an outbreak can snowball out of control. "The city had three to four months to plan for a surge in cases, but it did not plan for the future. They mostly assumed that the lockdown implementation was sufficient," said Giridhara Babu, an epidemiologist advising Karnataka.

CURFEW AND CONTACT-TRACE

In late March, India enforced one of the world's strictest lockdowns. Karnataka was ahead of that with its own measures. It collaborated with NASSCOM to mobilise 150 employees from half a dozen IT firms to feed 20,000 international traveller records into a central system every day. Karnataka conducted a mammoth health survey. More than 40,000 government health workers roamed the state in pink uniforms and masks, surveying nearly 16 million households. Residents submitted to a curfew that emptied parks, malls and the city's notoriously clogged roads, and officials tapped companies such as Intel, Alphabet's Google and Mumbai-based Fractal Analytics for expertise and tools to help trace, predict and control the spread. Many surrendered personal information: At thousands of drugstores, officials collected contact

details for people who bought drugs like paracetamol, to keep tabs on their health. "THAT MANY PEOPLE" But in June, lockdown restrictions eased. People flooded back to markets that sell fresh produce and flowers. Besides locals, officials say tens of thousands of travellers streamed in from Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, many unwittingly bringing the virus. The neighbouring states have been the worst hit by COVID-19 in India. "We were sandwiched between these two states which already had a very high viral load... so we were bound to get affected," said Pankaj Pandey, health commissioner for Karnataka. An estimated 45,000 people from Maharashtra and another 20,000 from Chennai, streamed into Bangalore in June, he added. Officials from the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike did not respond to queries on whether it failed to address gaps in its modelling systems. But Hepsiba Rani Korlapati, a bureaucrat running the Bangalore "war room" said easing lockdown complicated the city's efforts. Since late June, Bangalore has been sealing areas where cases jump, said Korlapati, noting this involves placing barricades at entry and exit points - in effect quarantining entire neighbourhoods.

The city had three to four months to plan for a surge in cases, but it did not plan for the future. They mostly assumed that the lockdown implementation was sufficient

Karnataka beckons Japanese companies



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, August 26: Karnataka Wednesday beckoned Japanese firms to invest more in the state and enhance the economic and trade relations between India and Japan. "We look forward to increasing investments from Japanese firms and investors in the southern state to strengthen the economic and trade relations between India and Japan," said state Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa here. Addressing a day-long 'India-Japan Business Forum' in a virtual conference, organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the Chief Minister said a 519-acre of the Japanese industrial township has been built near Tumkuru to enable more Japanese investments in the state. Tumkuru is about 70km northwest of Bangalore in the southern state. "Japanese investors and firms can take advantage of the incentives, including 25 per cent capital subsidy offered by us on land to set up their operations in the township across verticals, especially electronic manufacturing," said the Chief Minister. For economic growth and infrastructure development, Yediyurappa said the state encouraged foreign direct investment

(FDI) from Japanese firms across sectors under the India-Japan comprehensive economic partnership pact, signed between the two countries in August 2011. "Japan is an important partner for us to promote growth with equity. The NITI Aayog 2019 Innovation Index placed Karnataka on top owing to availability of quality human resources, reputed educational institutions and thrust on research and development," asserted Yediyurappa on the occasion. FDI from Japan doubled to \$3.2 billion in 2019-20 from \$1.6 billion in 2017-18 across the country. "As we are on the forefront of attracting FDI, we will set up a benchmark post-Covid-19, as the state is first among the states to lift lockdown restrictions gradually for reviving the sagging economy," reiterated Yediyurappa. As knowledge hub, Karnataka and its capital Bengaluru are reputed the world over for strengths in IT, back-office services, biotechnology, machine tooling, aerospace, manufacturing and engineering design. The Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) has set up a Startup Hub in the city in 2018 to identify Indian startups for the Japanese market.

Cops come forward to donate plasma

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangalore, August 26: As the nation continues its battle against coronavirus, several officers and constables of the Karnataka police have come forward to donate their blood plasma to treat COVID-19 patients, state Director General of Police Praveen Sood said. Till now 15 policemen, who have recovered from the viral infection, from state reserve police and state industrial security force have donated their plasma. Sharing the information on Twitter Tuesday, Sood called them not just corona warriors but 'saviours' too. "They are not merely corona warriors but also Saviours. Six



KSISF policemen donated plasma after recovering from COVID-19," the DGP tweeted. He also said nine KSRP personnel have donated their plasma while 40 more came forward to do their bit in the fight against the disease. Besides, many from the regular police force have donated their anti-

body rich plasma. More than 2,000 policemen have been found positive for the virus so far, while a few succumbed to it. As on Tuesday, Karnataka reported 2.91 lakh COVID-19 cases including 2.04 lakh discharged patients, 82,410 active cases and 4,958 deaths.

Phase II human trial of Oxford vaccine candidate begins



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, August 26: The Phase II human clinical trial of the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine candidate, being manufactured by the city-based Serum Institute of India (SII), began at a medical college and hospital here Wednesday. Two male volunteers were administered the vaccine at Bharti Vidyapeeth's Medical College and Hospital, a senior office-bearer of the hospital said. The trial began around 1 pm, he said. "Doctors at the hospital administered the first shot of the 'Covishield' vaccine to a 32-year-old man after his reports of COVID-19 and antibodies tests came out negative," Medical Director of Bharti Vidyapeeth's Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre, Dr Sanjay Lalwani, said. Another 48-year-old male volunteer was also given the vaccine, he added. While the 32-year-old volunteer works for a private company, the other one is associated with the healthcare sector, he said. "Before administering the vaccine, doctors checked their temperature, blood pressure and heart beats," he said. Five volunteers had enrolled themselves for the trial after the doses were received from the SII Tuesday, he added. "The COVID-19 and antibodies tests were conducted on all the five volunteers. Of them, the reports of three volunteers' antibodies test came out positive. So they became ineligible for the trial," Dr Lalwani said. "The two other volunteers, who were administered the vaccines are being monitored," he said. According to Dr Lalwani, in all,

25 candidates will be given the vaccine in the next seven days. SII, the world's largest vaccine maker has signed an agreement to manufacture the potential vaccine developed by the Jenner Institute of Oxford University in collaboration with British-Swedish pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca. Dr Lalwani said vitals of the two volunteers were observed for half an hour after the vaccine jab. "The volunteers are allowed to go home. They will be monitored by our team which is in contact with them. There are no issues so far," he said. Dr Lalwani said the vaccine dose will be repeated on both the volunteers after one month. "Thereafter, the volunteers who have been given the dose of the (potential) vaccine will be observed for any reaction to the vaccine and also for the generation of antibodies against coronavirus," he said. The phase-2 trial will be conducted on 100 volunteers at some sites across the country, he said. "After ensuring that there are no safety concerns in these 100 trials, 1,500 people will be administered the (potential) vaccine across the country in the next phase and generation of antibodies will be observed," Dr Lalwani said, adding that if results are positive, the vaccine is likely to be made available. Meanwhile, one of the volunteers said he was elated as he could become part of the fight against the coronavirus. "Besides me, my wife and daughter have also enrolled for the trial. In fact, I and my daughter had volunteered during the clinical human trials of H1N1 vaccine," the 48-year-old said.

College girl's 'uphill' struggle for internet ends



Mumbai, August 26: Swapnali Sutar, a third-year Bachelor of Veterinary Science (BVSc) student, wrote an essay about her routine during lockdown as asked by her teacher. Little did she know that it would prompt the Union government to ensure that she got uninterrupted internet at her home in Maharashtra's Sindhudurg district, and save her the daily trouble of climbing a hill. Talking to PTI over phone Wednesday, Swapnali said since online classes began, patchy internet connection became a headache for her. She had mobile internet connection, but at her home in village Dharishte in Kankavli tehsil, 480 km from Mumbai, it often got disconnected. "I would get uninterrupted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

internet on a hill which is 1.5 km away from my house. So every day I trekked up the hill, carrying my laptop. I would get uninterrupted internet on a hill which is 1.5 km away from my house. So every day I trekked up the hill, carrying my laptop, to attend online lectures

I would get uninterrupted internet on a hill which is 1.5 km away from my house. So every day I trekked up the hill, carrying my laptop, to attend online lectures

SWAPNALI SUTAR

the story. "A day before Ganesh Chaturthi, officials of BharatNet came to the village and said they had received orders from the Centre to ensure internet connectivity to me," she said. BharatNet under the telecom ministry has been tasked with setting up an optical fiber network to provide internet connectivity to gram panchayats. "They installed optical fibre cable in the gram panchayat and provided me a WiFi connection," she said. The gram panchayat had internet facility, but it hadn't been activated, she said. Swapnali said she moved to Mumbai after standard 12 to study at the Mumbai Veterinary College, but returned home when lockdown was imposed following the coronavirus outbreak.

national



Special arrangement has been made by the BSP in view of the deteriorating law and order in Uttar Pradesh and the failure of the Yogi Adityanath government to control crimes
MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

SREE PADMANABHASWAMY TEMPLE OPENS

After months, following the lockdown due to the Covid pandemic, Wednesday the famed Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple - billed as the world's richest, opened for devotees



of the day quote

Union Minister of State for Defence and AYUSH will continue to be on high flow nasal oxygen treatment for the next three to four days, but his health is improving
PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CM

The fire at the state Secretariat is a conspiracy to save Vijayan in the gold smuggling case
RAMESH CHENNIHALA | CONGRESS LEADER

When fighting for principles in life, in politics, in law, amongst social activists, on social media platforms, opposition is often voluntary, support is often managed
KAPIL SIBAL | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

Sharjeel sent to 4-day custody
New Delhi: A Delhi court Wednesday sent Jawaharlal Nehru University scholar Sharjeel Imam to four-day police custody in connection with the February Delhi riots case. On Tuesday, the Delhi Police Special Cell had arrested Imam in connection with the riots under the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). He was brought back to the capital from Assam two days earlier on a production warrant. The Delhi Police had moved an application for five-day remand of Imam. Additional Session Judge Amitabh Rawat allowed an application moved by Imam's counsel for two legal interviews with him in a period of five days, away from the hearing range of police officials.

Bhopal man gets life term
Kolkata: A fast track court in West Bengal's Bankura district has sentenced Bhopal resident Udayan Das to life imprisonment for the murder of 28-year-old Akanksha Sharma in 2016. After murdering Akanksha, Das had put her body into a metal box and concrete was poured over it. The body was recovered from Das's place at Saket Nagar in Bhopal. A resident of Bankura's Rabindra Sarani locality, Akanksha came in touch with Das via social media, police sources said.

Goa Speaker hospitalised
Panaji: Assembly Speaker Rajesh Patnekar was admitted to the Goa Medical College hospital here Wednesday, though the reason for the same was not known. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said Patnekar visited the top government hospital in the state for examination Wednesday. "He had gone to the GMC for a check-up, but was asked to get admitted," Sawant told reporters outside his official residence here. In a post on social media, Patnekar said that he has been hospitalised for the purpose of conducting medical tests and is feeling "perfectly fine".

J&K highway blocked
Srinagar: The Jammu-Srinagar National Highway continues to remain blocked for the second day due to multiple landslides triggered by rains. Around 1,000 vehicles, mostly trucks carrying supplies, have been stranded. The meteorological department has forecast more rains till Friday across Jammu and Kashmir and some places in Ladakh.

NEET, JEE ROW

7 non-BJP CMs to jointly move SC

New Delhi, August 26: Supporting the demand for postponement of NEET and JEE examinations in view of the coronavirus pandemic, seven Chief Ministers of non-BJP ruled states Wednesday decided to jointly move the Supreme Court on the issue.

Parties like the DMK and the AAP too joined the growing chorus against the holding of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) and Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) at a time when COVID-19 cases were rising.

At a meeting convened by Congress chief Sonia Gandhi on a range of issues ahead of Monsoon Session of Parliament, the seven chief ministers unanimously agreed to the need for filing a review petition urging the Supreme Court to reconsider its recent order rejecting the postponement of the competitive exams.

Among the chief ministers who attended the meeting were West Bengal's Mamata Banerjee (TMC), Maharashtra's Uddhav Thackeray, who is heading the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress government, Punjab's Amarinder Singh (Congress), Jharkhand's Hemant Soren (JMM), Rajasthan's Ashok Gehlot (Congress), Chhattisgarh's Bhupesh Baghel (Congress) and Pondicherry's V Narayanasamy (Congress).

A decision was taken to discuss the matter and evolve a joint strategy in this regard.



Congress Interim President Sonia Gandhi chairs a virtual meeting with Chief Ministers of 7 states to discuss various issues in New Delhi

Hemant Soren suggested meeting the president and prime minister on the issue, to which Banerjee and Amarinder Singh said there was no time for that, considering JEE Mains are scheduled to be held from September 1 to 6. Sonia Gandhi set the stage for a discussion on the JEE, NEET issue by mentioning in her opening remarks that the government was looking at the students' issue "uncaringly".

Banerjee then urged other CMs to jointly move a review petition in Supreme Court, saying the students are facing a lot of hardships. The Punjab CM endorsed her demand, saying the atmosphere is not conducive for holding exams physically as the number of COVID cases were rising.

Uddhav Thackeray also said that the time is not right for holding the competitive exams and pressed on the need for postponing them.

Uddhav Thackeray also said that the time is not right for holding the competitive exams and pressed on the need for postponing them.

Ultras wanted to 'misuse videos'

An official said that JeM terrorists wanted to make an audio-video clip on suicide bomber Aadil Ahmed Dar, who rammed the explosive-laden car into a security convoy bus on February 14 in 2019, in Kashmiri language to motivate youths of the Valley

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Jammu, August 26: Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorists had asked their handlers in Pakistan to prepare videos of the Pulwama terror attack that showed mutilated bodies of Indian soldiers to motivate Kashmiri youths to join militant ranks against India.

The JeM commanders had also planned another Pulwama-like attack on a security convoy in March 2019 as well and even identified the 'fedayeen' (suicide bomber) and made other logistical arrangements but shelved the plan after the Balakot air strikes on February 26, 2019.

The revelations were made in a 13,800-page charge sheet filed in a Special NIA court in Jammu against 19 persons, including JeM chief Maulana Masood Azhar, his brothers Abdul Rauf Asghar and Ammar Alvi, slain terrorist Mohammad Umar Farooq (son of IC 814 flight hijacking conspirator Ibrahim Athar).

A top National Investigation Agency officer related to the probe said: "Farooq, who had infiltrated India in April 2018 and was involved in the Pulwama attack conspiracy, had asked his handlers in Pakistan to prepare video clips of mutilated bodies of Indian soldiers to motivate Kashmiri youths by dubbing the suicide bomber as 'shahid' or martyr."

PULWAMA ATTACK



The official said that JeM terrorists also wanted to make an audio-video clip on suicide bomber Aadil Ahmed Dar, who rammed the explosive-laden car into a security convoy bus on February 14 in 2019, in Kashmiri language to motivate youths of the Valley. The messages were shared in the form of audio clips through WhatsApp used on Pakistani SIM cards, which Farooq used after his ingress into India. "However, this plan was shelved due to the Balakot air strikes as they were told to lie low," the official said.

Force personnel and the attacker. Another NIA official pointed out that the JeM terrorists were well aware of the support for another terrorist Burhan Wani, whose killing in an encounter with the Indian security forces on July 8, 2016 triggered protests and stone-pelting in the then state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The official said that the JeM commanders in Pakistan wanted to pitch Aadil also as a martyr like Wani to gain support of the Kashmiri youths. The charge sheet claimed that Rs 5.7 lakh was spent for the Pulwama attack, which was revealed in a chat between Farooq and a JeM handler in Pakistan.

The NIA charge sheet claimed that Masood Azhar's brother Asgar also asked Farooq about the movement of fighter jets in Kashmir after the Balakot strikes.

Tripura takes novel step to fight Covid stress

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agartala, August 26: In a novel initiative at the instance of Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb, the state government has started distributing books on Swami Vivekananda in the Covid Care Centres to help patients overcome mental fatigue, officials said Wednesday.

"To keep the Covid-19 patients motivated and mentally strong, we have decided to distribute books written on Swami Vivekananda to every Covid patient so that they can read these books and get inspired by his thoughts," Deb said in a tweet.

An official of the Information and Cultural Affairs Department said that the Chief Minister on Tuesday evening handed over sets of books on Swami Vivekananda to the health officials and others

to distribute among the under treatment Covid-19 patients. "These books would help the under treatment Covid-19 patients in various centres across the state to overcome mental exhaustion. The initiative was undertaken at the instance of the Chief Minister," an ICA official said.

Health officials said that they have also taken several initiatives, including music, to overcome the mental fatigue of the under treatment Covid-19 patients. "The Chief Minister, who also holds the Health and Family Welfare Department, has been regularly monitoring the treatment and health and hygiene of the Covid-19 and other patients in the hospitals and CCCs," the officials said. Tripura till Tuesday night had 9,213 Covid-19 positive cases with 6,574 patients having recovered.

SOAKED IN DEVOTION



Priests worship an idol of Goddess Radha on the occasion of Radha Ashtami, at Rawal village in Mathura, Wednesday

Testing to be doubled: Kejriwal

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 26: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Wednesday alerted that there has been an increase in the number of coronavirus cases in the national capital in the past few days, adding that testing will be doubled in a week.

"From the last few days, there has been a slight spike in coronavirus cases. After August 17, we have witnessed that the cases are between 1200 and 1400. Delhi recorded 1,693 cases in the last 24 hours," Chief Minister Kejriwal said.

Kejriwal added that his government is prepared to deal with the rise in cases. "I have directed that the number of tests will be dou-

CORONA SPIKE



bled in the coming days," he said. Delhi is currently testing nearly 20,000 people daily, which Kejriwal said, will be increased to 40,000 in a week. "We have adopted the strategy of test and isolate."

cent and death rate is 1.4 percent, among the lowest in the country. "There was a time when more than 100 people were dying. It has now dropped to less than 20 and sometimes 10," he said, adding that no person has died in home isolation since July 14.

The chief minister further said that a few people have died even after recovering from the disease. Even if they test negative, symptoms do not subside, people suffer from breathing issues and require oxygen.

"After recovering, if people have symptoms, they will be given oximeters for a few more days. If the oxygen levels are less, oxygen concentrators will be given to them for free so that they do not need to go to the hospital again," he added.

23 Punjab lawmakers Covid positive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, August 26: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Wednesday said twenty-three ministers and MLAs were coronavirus positive two days before the Vidhan Sabha session on August 28.

He gave the figure during a video conference convened by Congress President Sonia Gandhi with the chief ministers of seven Opposition-ruled states to discuss various issues. With this, the CM tried to emphasise that the scenario was not conducive for

holding physical examination for JEE-NEET.

The chief minister, however, did not disclose how many of Punjab MLAs and ministers have recovered so far. "As of today, two days before the scheduled Punjab Vidhan Sabha session, 23 Ministers/MLAs were Covid positive," said the CM in an official release. "If this was the state of the legislators and ministers, one can only imagine how grave the situation on the ground was. The scenario was not conducive to holding physical examinations," he said.

MATTERS OF THE MIND

Mobile addiction leading to behavioural changes in kids

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, August 26: With schools closed for more than five months now and online classes becoming the new normal, more and more children are now showing symptoms of mobile addiction that is causing behavioural problems.

A senior psychiatrist at the King George's Medical University (KGMU) said that he had been getting cases where children were getting irritable, losing appetite and also complaining of headaches and eye problems. "Since the pandemic is continuing, I am unable to hold counselling sessions with such children and I am only advising parents on dealing with the situation," he said.

Psychiatrists at the Moti Lal Nehru hospital in Prayagraj have also noticed increase in the number of parents bringing their children with problems of mobile addiction and behavioural changes.

Ishanya Raj, clinical psychologist at MLN hospital, said, "After meeting so many patients and doing counselling, we have observed some factors influencing the family dynamics during the lockdown. There is less interaction with children, poor parenting practices, lack of communication and supervision."

Raj said that in most cases, every family member was busy in the virtual world during the pandemic. "Due to the current nuclear family structure, children do not have



the opportunity to play and involve in other recreational activities. Schools are closed and children are relying on mobile phones to play games or watch other programmes. Some children have been found to be using mobile phones for more

than 12 hours in a day or more due to absence of interaction among family members. This is leading to behavioural issues and making the child irritable," the psychologist said.

maker admitted that her two children - a son and a daughter - had shown definite behavioural changes. "They were well-behaved children but now they have started answering back. If I scold them, they start throwing things around and even misbehave with their grandparents. They want to go out and play but I cannot send them because of the Corona scare," she said.

Rakesh Paswan, consultant psychiatrist in the same hospital said, "Through detailed analysis of the parenting style, the deficit areas need to be identified, and with the use of psychological interventions these kinds of issues can be tackled."

The doctors said that parents were being advised to increase interaction with children even if they are on a work-from-home mode. The problem is more severe if the family has a single child who, therefore, cannot interact with others in his or her age group. "We are asking them to allow physical activity for the child from within the home and spend more time interacting with them. The child should be made to take regular breaks from the mobile phones," he said. O.P. Rai, an ophthalmologist in Agra, said that cases of children suffering from redness and watering of eyes, blurred vision and even pain around the eyes have increased substantially in the past three months.

national



The state government must come out with a White Paper on impact of five editions of Bengal Global Business Summit. Details of projected investment of over Rs.12.3 lakh crore be made known
JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | WEST BENGAL GOVERNOR

GOGOI CONTRACTS CORONA

Former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi said Wednesday that he has been diagnosed with Covid-19. The Congress leader urged all those who came in contact with him recently to get tested



of the day quote

NEET-JEE aspirants are worried about their health and future. They have genuine concerns of: fear of Covid-19 infection, transport and lodging during pandemic and flood mayhem in Assam and Bihar
RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

The Uttar Pradesh Governor must take cognizance of the situation of women's safety in the state
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

I am neither a member of the CWC nor have I seen the letter. But about five of the signatories (of the letter) are members of the CWC, and as per the Congress' constitution any member of the CWC can request for a discussion which can take place before the committee. But writing a letter and leaking it in the media is not proper
DIGVIJAYA SINGH | CONGRESS LEADER

NCB FILES CRIMINAL CASE AGAINST RHEA

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 26: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Wednesday filed a criminal case against Rhea Chakraborty and others for their alleged dealings in banned drugs, officials said.



They said various sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS) have been pressed in the complaint filed by the federal anti-drugs agency on an official reference received from the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

The alleged narcotics dealing links are connected to the criminal probe being conducted in the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, 34, who was found hanging at his duplex flat in Mumbai's Bandra area on June 14. The NCB is now the third federal investigative agency probing this case apart from the ED and the CBI.

The ED, which is probing a money laundering angle into the death of Rajput, has questioned Rhea Chakraborty, and has obtained "deleted WhatsApp messages" allegedly indicating dealings in banned drugs from her phone.

Rhea has been questioned by the ED about these suspect drug deals and her statement on these allegations has been recorded by it under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), officials said.

Her lawyer Satish Manehsinde had vehemently denied the allegations made against the 28-year-old actor. "Rhea has never consumed drugs in her life ever. She is ready

Mumbai cops in soup

MUMBAI: Taking suo moto cognizance of actress Rhea Chakraborty's 'visit' to the morgue where the late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's body was kept, the Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) has slapped a notice to the Mumbai Police and BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation demanding an explanation, an official said here Wednesday.

Treating the matter as a priority, the SHRC has ordered the police and civic authorities to submit their detailed explanation in the matter by Monday. Confirming the developments, SHRC Acting Chairman M.A. Sayeed declined to elaborate.

Official sources said that the SHRC top brass had viewed video and news reports of Rhea Chakraborty's June 14 visit to the mortuary of R.N. Cooper Hospital, Vile Parle. They later directed the SHRC Legal Wing to check the relevant provisions pertaining to this as only the immediate family members can be permitted in the morgue.

The SHRC has asked the hospital dean to explain the circumstances behind Rhea getting permission and access to the morgue and even view the mortal remains of the late actor just hours after his death was discovered.

After the videos went viral on social media and television, the SHRC had received several complaints in the matter last month following which it has initiated the suo moto action.

for a blood test," Maneshinde had said. She is the prime accused in this case and has stated in her petition before the Supreme Court that she was in a live-in relationship with the actor. The ED had shared these alleged drug links with the CBI too.

Choksi moves HC against Netflix series

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 26: Fugitive diamondaire Mehul Choksi Wednesday approached the Delhi High Court against Netflix's upcoming web series 'Bad Boy Billionaires: India' seeking postponement of the release date.

A single judge bench of the high court presided over by Justice Navin Chawla after hearing brief arguments posted the matter for further hearing on August 28. The adjournment came in as senior advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul appearing for Netflix sought time to go through the petition and seek instructions.

The petition filed by Choksi through advocate Vijay Aggarwal sought the court's direction to the OTT platform to not release the episode/portion of the Documentary "Bad Boy Billionaires: India" in so far as it relates to Choksi or is prejudicial to his rights or mentions him during the pendency of investigations and/or trials against him.

It also sought the court's direction



to Netflix to conduct a pre-screening of the documentary for the court and the counsels for the Petitioner. Appearing for the petitioner, advocate Vijay Aggarwal argued that he is not seeking a stay on the documentary but he is seeking that he be shown the preview so that he can agitate.

"My Lords, the matter is under investigation and the said documentary will prejudice the rights of the accused (petitioner)," Aggarwal submitted.

On the other hand, senior advocate Neeraj Kishan Kaul appearing for Netflix opposed the said petition on the grounds of maintainability saying that the documentary has a two minute piece where mention of Choksi has been made.

Choksi in his petition states that he became aware of the documentary's imminent release on 24.8.2020 when he saw the trailer and started receiving phone calls from various persons across the world, including from Delhi, asking him whether

he was part of the documentary and to solicit his comments qua the same. "Thereafter, the petitioner discovered that one of the persons seen speaking in the trailer was one Mr. Pavan C. Lall who had written a book titled "Flawed: The Rise and Fall of India's Diamond Mogul Nirav Modi" where also the petitioner's name had been comingled with Nirav Modi's," said the plea.

The plea states that with the release of this documentary there is a real and substantial threat of prejudice to the fairness of the trial and to the rights of the Petitioner (Choksi) under Article 21. "A trial by media is always detrimental to the case of the Petitioner and is totally contrary to the trite rule that an accused person is innocent until proven guilty by a court of law," the plea read.

Choksi further stated that the release of the documentary would cause severe impact on his reputation as well as create a widespread perception of guilt notwithstanding the fact that no competent court has found him guilty.

RAIN MAYHEM



Locals gather near a bridge over a stream that was washed away due to heavy rainfall, at Indra Nagar on the outskirts of Jammu, Wednesday

Maha building collapse toll 16

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 26: With the recovery of two more bodies Wednesday, the death toll in the building collapse incident in Maharashtra's Raigad district mounted to 16, officials said.

The Raigad police Wednesday arrested an RCC consultant of the building in connection with the incident. He is one of the five persons booked in the case, they said. The five-storey building - Tareq Garden in Mahad town, around 170 kms from Mumbai, collapsed on Monday evening.

According to a police official, the rescue operation was called off around 11.30 am on Wednesday. Fifteen persons died after being trapped under the rubble, but one person had died of a heart attack at a local hospital late on Monday night, hours after he was injured in the incident, he said.

At least nine others, who suffered injuries in the incident, are undergoing treatment in a hospital, he said. "The bodies of a 70-year-old man and a 60-year-old woman were recovered in the early hours of Wednesday. This took the death toll in the incident to 15," Superintendent of Police, Raigad, Anil Paraskar said.

Another official said that one person had died Monday night due to heart attack after getting injured in the incident.

"So the death toll in the incident is 16," he said. The teams comprising the personnel of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and police, local disaster management team, trekkers and local residents, were involved in the rescue operation.

Till late Tuesday night, bodies of 13 victims had been recovered from under the rubble.

On Tuesday, a four-year-old boy was pulled out alive from under the rubble 19 hours after the incident. A 60-year-old woman was also rescued 26 hours after the building collapse.

"Both of them are safe and undergoing treatment at hospital," the official said.

The dead include nine women, he added. A Raigad police spokesperson said, "An RCC consultant of the five-storey building was apprehended from his residence early this morning. He has been identified as Bahubali Dhamane."

SHORT TAKES

Girl raped

Gorakhpur: A Class 7 student was allegedly raped by a manager of her school, who also made a video of her and threatened to post it on social media if she reported the matter to anyone, police said here Wednesday. Police said the incident took place on July 30 when school manager Harendra Yadav (38) called the 15-year-old girl to his house. The accused is on the run and police have registered a case against him. The police station in charge of the area was removed from the post and attached to the Police Lines for failing to take the case seriously and not informing high officials regarding it.

Woman ends life

New Delhi: A 36-year-old woman ended her life by jumping off the 11th floor of the NDMC building here Wednesday morning, police said. The woman, identified as Krishna, worked as an attendant at the office of an architect on the 11th floor of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) building, they said. Police said no suicide note has been found and they do not suspect any foul play. According to the police, the woman came to office around 9.45 am and opened it after taking keys from the counter. She went inside, kept her bag on the side table, removed her sandals and jumped off from the window.

Tremors felt

Kolkata: A medium-intensity earthquake of magnitude 4.1 struck Durgapur in Paschim Bardhaman district of West Bengal Wednesday morning, officials said. Tremors were felt in the industrial town and its nearby areas, they said. The quake, with its epicentre at 110 km east-northeast of Durgapur, occurred at 7.54 am at a depth of 10 km, the National Centre of Seismology said. There has been no report of damages in the area so far, police said.

Ten rescued

Mumbai: A fire broke out in a 15-storey building in Worli area of central Mumbai in the wee hours of Wednesday, officials said. Nobody was injured in the incident and 10 persons trapped inside the building were rescued, they said. "The fire erupted on the tenth floor of Sterling Seafare Apartment on Dr Annie Besant Road around 12.30 am," a civic official said. Fire tenders were rushed to the spot and the blaze was brought under control after over three hours, he said.

Coronavirus fallout: Maths teacher sells bags for living

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 26: Mohammad Faizi has not received his salary since March and is unable to pay school fee of his two daughters. The mathematics teacher has now taken to selling cloth bags at a weekly market in Delhi's Dilshad Garden.

Weekly markets in the national capital, which remained shut since March-end due to the coronavirus lockdown, reopened on Monday after the Delhi government allowed it till August 30 on a trial basis.

A resident of Shahdara, Faizi lives in a two-room house with his elderly parents, wife and two daughters, aged five and 10.

The 30-year-old teaches mathematics to students of classes 6-8 at a private school and has been taking online classes but without any salary since the lockdown started. "My friends have helped me financially, but I cannot ask them for more," Faizi said. "We have been managing somehow. I could not pay the school fee of my daughters, so I

am teaching them myself now." Faizi, who took online classes during the day, reached a weekly market in Dilshad Garden on Tuesday evening to sell cloth bags made by one of his friends. "My friends manufactures these bags. He suggested I could sell them in the market and keep the profits," he says, as he waits for customers.

Faizi says he can understand the fact that the school would not be able to pay his salary for some time. "Many families have been rendered jobless due to COVID. Many people like me are unable to pay their children's school fee. So the schools, too, are finding it difficult to pay their teachers," he says.

Faizi underscores that he wants to keep teaching his students. "I want to teach during the day and do something else in the evening to make ends meet. That's why the weekly market seemed a better idea," he says.

One his first day, Faizi could not sell anything as police asked the vendors to vacate the space after it became overcrowded.

Six killed in bus accident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, August 26: Six persons were killed and five others injured in a collision between two UP state roadways buses on the outskirts of the state capital on Wednesday morning, prompting the state government to order a probe into the accident.

The six killed in the collision between two UPSRTC buses included a woman riding a two-wheeler, said officials. The collision took place at about 6.45 am when an Uttar Pradesh State Transport Corporation bus collided with another while trying to overtake it on the Lucknow-Hardoi road under Kakori police station area, about 22 km, a senior official said. Transport Minister Ashok Kataria has ordered a probe into the incident. "Five persons on-board bus and a woman on a two-wheeler were killed while five others were injured in the mishap," a UPSRTC statement said.

Those killed are Sarvdhar (40), Lucky Saxena (16), Rajendra Saxena (48), Hariom (40), Nitesh Bharti (20) and one unidentified woman (about 35 years).

17-year-old girl raped, killed in UP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lakhimpur Kheri (Uttar Pradesh), August 26: A 17-year-old girl, whose mutilated body was found near a village in Lakhimpur Kheri district was also raped, police has confirmed. This is the second rape and murder of a teenage girl in this district in the past 10 days.

The confirmation came late on Tuesday after the body was recovered the same morning. The police had initially said the girl appeared to have been killed with a sharp weapon and that she had sustained injuries to her neck. The body was found near a dried-up pond, around 200 metres from her village.

SP Satendar Kumar said: "The post-mortem report has confirmed rape. We are making all possible efforts to identify and arrest the accused. We hope to make a breakthrough soon." According to the relatives of the girl, she had left home on Monday to visit a neighbouring town to fill up a scholarship form. However, when she did not return the family informed the police.



"I really do not know what to say or whom to suspect. She left around 8.30 a.m. on Monday. We do not suspect anyone," her uncle told reporters. On August 15, a 13-year-old girl was raped and killed. Her body was found in a sugarcane field that belongs to one of the accused. Two men from her village have been arrested.

Her father alleged his daughter had been strangled, and had her eyes gouged out and her tongue cut off. The police, however, said the post-mortem report, which was released a day later, did not show her eyes had been gouged or that her tongue was cut out. The police said the autopsy did mention rape and strangulation.

Covid turns big fat Hyderabad weddings into a simple affair

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, August 26: The Covid-19 pandemic has completely changed the way the wedding ceremonies are held in Hyderabad.

In this historic city known for big fat weddings with a long list of invitees, large number of lip-smacking dishes and nightlong celebrations, the marriages have become simple and mostly a day affair.

The Covid-19 scare has taken the sheen off the typical Hyderabad marriages. The situation has forced the people to go for simple ceremonies with limited numbers of guests at smaller function halls and

that too during day time.

This was something unimaginable in the city a few months ago as even the middle class families used to vie with each other in hosting the wedding ceremonies at the biggest and most popular function halls with hundreds of invitees.

The city of nawabs is known for ostentatious marriages and this was seen as a social problem pushing many families into debt trap. Many individuals and organisations working for reforms and advocating simple marriages had failed in their efforts.

However, the Covid-19 outbreak changed everything. The lockdown



begin in March when the marriage season was at its peak. Following the government orders, the marriage halls were forced to cancel the bookings. Hundreds of marriages had to be postponed.

Wherever the postponement was not possible, the families organised the simple ceremonies at home with the list of invitees confined to few close relatives. After the easing of lockdown norms in May, mar-

riages resumed in function halls but were subject to many restrictions like number of guests, timing and physical distancing.

Unlike in the past when even the middle class families used to look for the most spacious function halls, they started hosting the wedding ceremonies at smaller avenues. The night curfew and fewer transport options available also forced the families to go for day ceremonies.

"This is something unprecedented in last 20-25 years in Hyderabad because almost all Muslim families in the city prefer weddings during night times," said Syed Abdul Rauf, a senior citizen.

During the last few years, the marriages and Valima (the dinner hosted by the bridegroom a day or two after the wedding) had become a nightlong affair. Late dinners had become common and the subsequent ceremonies also used to consume several hours.

The wedding and Valima dinners are an integral part of the social life in Hyderabad. At the peak of the marriage season, people get multiple invitations in a single day. However, with the outbreak of Covid-19 and resultant lockdown, many citizens started missing the lively evenings with families and friends at the function halls.

international



To overcome the health crisis, we must learn to live with the coronavirus
EMMANUEL MACRON | FRENCH PRESIDENT

PENGUIN PARADE

Over 7,70,000 people worldwide logged on to the internet to watch the famous Penguin parade in Australia that was live streamed from an empty tourist destination spot



of the day quote

President Donald Trump has held China accountable for covering up the China virus and allowing it to spread death and economic destruction in America and around the world. He will not rest until justice is done
MIKE POMPEO | US SECRETARY OF STATE

Musharraf gave NRO (National Reconciliation Ordinance) to two political leaders which quadrupled our debts and destroyed economy. There will be no more NROs
IMRAN KHAN | PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER

China and Italy should build on the good momentum of their joint fight against the pandemic to push for new developments in their bilateral relations
WANG YI | CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

70 killed in Afghan floods

Kabul: Heavy flooding has killed at least 70 people and injured dozens of others as heavy seasonal rains drenched northern and eastern Afghanistan, officials said Wednesday. Spokesperson for northern Parwan province Wahida Shahkar said the number of casualties may rise as rescue teams work to locate people buried under destroyed houses.

NK, SK brace for strong typhoon

Seoul: Hundreds of flights were canceled in South Korea while North Korea's leader expressed concern about a potential loss of lives and crops as the countries braced for a fast-approaching typhoon forecast as one of the strongest to hit their peninsula this year. Packing a maximum wind speed of 162 kilometers (100 miles) per hour, Typhoon Bavi was already lashing South Korea's southern resort island of Jeju Wednesday afternoon, flooding roads, toppling trees, ripping off signboards and knocking down at least one traffic sign as it passed over waters off the island's western shores.

HK police arrest 16 over protest charges

Hong Kong: Hong Kong police arrested 16 people Wednesday on charges related to anti-government protests last year, including two opposition lawmakers. Pro-democracy legislators Ted Hui and Lam Cheuk-ting announced their arrests on social media. Posts on Lam's Twitter account said he had been arrested on charges of conspiring with others to damage property and obstructing justice during a protest in July 2019.

2 shot dead in Wisconsin protest

Violence broke out as hundreds of protesters marched for a third night in the Wisconsin city in anger after Jacob Blake was seen in video footage being shot up to seven times by police

REUTERS

Kenosha, Wisconsin, August 26: A third night of street protests over the police shooting of a Black man erupted into gun violence late Tuesday and early Wednesday in Kenosha, Wisconsin, killing two people and wounding one, police said.

Social media videos showed chaotic scenes of people running and screaming amid a volley of gunfire and others tending to gunshot wounds. The bloodshed followed a night of skirmishes that had appeared to turn calm after police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters who defied a curfew.

The shooting broke out shortly before midnight, killing two people and wounding a third who was expected to survive, the Kenosha Police Department said in a statement.

Crowds chased a man running down the street with a rifle after they believed he had shot another man. One pursuer took a flying kick at



Flares are seen near a Kenosha County Sheriff vehicle during a protest in Kenosha, Wisconsin

him after he fell to the ground. Another man tried to grab his weapon and appeared to be shot at close range, falling to the ground.

Another video showed a man who appeared to be shot in the head as several people rushed to his aid, frantically trying to tend to his wound and keep him alert.

Yet another video showed a man with a severe arm wound sitting on

the ground and being aided by an armed man as police approached.

Kenosha has been rocked by protests since Sunday, when police shot Jacob Blake, 29, in the back at close range.

After struggling with police, Blake broke free and walked away from them and around his car to the driver's side, where he was shot after opening the door, according to

a bystander video that went viral. Three of his young sons were in the car, witnesses said.

Blake was hit by four of the seven shots fired and left paralyzed and "fighting for his life," his family and lawyers said on Tuesday, hours

KENOSHA SHOOTING

before the latest round of civil unrest broke out in the lakefront town between Milwaukee and Chicago.

Anti-racism protesters also clashed with police in Portland, Oregon, and Louisville, Kentucky, Tuesday night, part of a wave of national protests that have continued since the May 25 death of a Black man in Minneapolis, George Floyd, who was pinned to the street under the knee of a white police officer.

The Kenosha protests have drawn self-styled militias, patrolling the streets with rifles or standing guard outside businesses to protect them from looters or arsonists.

US targets Chinese firms amid sea dispute



REUTERS

Washington, August 26: The United States Wednesday blacklisted 24 Chinese companies and targeted a number of individuals it said were part of construction and military actions related to disputed islands in the South China Sea.

The US Commerce Department said the two dozen companies played a "role in helping the Chinese military construct and militarize the internationally condemned artificial islands in the South China Sea." The State Department, in a separate statement, said it would impose visa restrictions on Chinese individuals "responsible for, or complicit in," such action and those linked to China's "use of coercion against Southeast Asian claimants to inhibit their access to offshore resources." The move marked the Trump administration's latest efforts to crack down on companies whose goods may support Chinese military activities.

The United States accuses China of militarising the South China Sea and trying to intimidate Asian neighbors who might want to exploit its extensive oil and gas reserves. The United States has conducted multiple freedom of navigation operations by sending its warships through the area to assert the freedom of access to international waterways.

China claims 90% of the potentially energy-rich South China Sea, but Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also lay claim to parts of an area through which about \$3 trillion of trade passes each year.

Lanka will adopt 'India first approach', says top diplomat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Colombo, August 26: Sri Lanka will adopt an "India first approach" as its new foreign policy plank and protect New Delhi's strategic security interests, the country's Foreign Secretary Jayanath Colombage has said as he sought to allay concerns amid China's growing presence in the island nation.

Admiral Colombage became the first-ever foreign secretary from a military background when he was appointed by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to head the Foreign Ministry August 14.

In an interview published by Daily Mirror Wednesday, Colombage said Sri Lanka is to adopt an 'India first approach' as its new regional foreign policy plank.

"That means Sri Lanka will not do anything harmful to India's strategic security interests," said Colombage, who was the chief of the Sri Lanka Navy between 2012-14 and later became a foreign policy analyst mostly on the Chinese initiatives in Sri Lanka and the im-

mediate region. Colombage said that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa would have an India first approach as the key to strategic security. "China is the second-largest economy and India is considered the sixth-largest. In 2018 India was the world's fastest-growing economy. That means we are between two economic giants," he said.

Commenting on the Chinese investment in the southern port of Hambantota, Colombage says that Sri Lanka had offered India Hambantota first.

FUN TIME



Children play at the beach during sunset in Kuwait City, Kuwait

UNI PHOTO

Pressure mounts on Russia to probe Navalny's poisoning

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, August 26: The Kremlin said Wednesday it doesn't want the illness of Russia's opposition leader, who is in a coma in a German hospital after a suspected poisoning, to affect relations with the West as international pressure mounted on Moscow to investigate Alexei Navalny's condition.

The statement came two days after doctors at the Berlin hospital where the 44-year-old is being treated said tests indicated he was poisoned, and minutes before before UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson joined other Western officials in demanding a transparent investigation.

"The poisoning of (Alexei) Navalny shocked the world," Johnson said in a Tweet.

"The perpetrators must be held accountable, (and) the UK will join international efforts to ensure justice is done." Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov reiterated Wednesday that Moscow "categorically" disagreed with "hasty" conclusions that Navalny was a victim of an intentional poisoning, and said it doesn't want the situation to affect its ties with the West.



"We are absolutely, no less than others, interested in understanding what led to a coma."

Navalny, a politician and corruption investigator who is one of Putin's fiercest critics, fell ill on a flight back to Moscow from Siberia Thursday and was taken to a hospital in the Siberian city of Omsk after the plane made an emergency landing.

Over the weekend, he was transferred to the Charité hospital in Berlin, where doctors found indications of "cholinesterase inhibitors" in his system.

Trump - 'No Mr. Nice Guy' - shows softer side to win voters

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP KICKED OFF HIS REELECTION CAMPAIGN WITH A SWAGGERING WORLD SERIES AD THAT DECLARED HE'S "NO MR. NICE GUY"

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, August 26: President Donald Trump kicked off his reelection campaign with a swaggering World Series ad that declared he's "No Mr. Nice Guy," but his campaign has taken pains to highlight a softer side of the famously brusque and bombastic chief executive during this week's Republican convention.

The competing depictions of the President come after the Democrats spent last week showcasing the compassion of Joe Biden. But the attempt to humanise Trump was already in the works, part of a strategy to win back senior and suburban voters who have abandoned him in no small part due

to his aggressive rhetoric and lack of obvious empathy during the coronavirus pandemic.

Republicans went all-out to depict a gentler Trump over the first two nights of their convention.

House Minority Whip Steve Scalise of Louisiana Monday recalled how Trump sat by his hospital bedside as he recovered from a near fatal gunshot wound in 2017. Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio spoke of how Trump embraced his request two years ago to talk with relatives whose son had died in a car accident. The president was shown talking to COVID-19 first responders, thanking his "friends" for their service.

And Sen. Rand Paul Tuesday revealed how the President supported his medical missions to perform



emergency eye surgeries in Guatemala and Haiti.

Trump's tough-guy persona, built over half a lifetime in business, is well known. He made millions

telling people "you're fired" on "The Apprentice" and championed his hard-nosed business practices. Recognising that it is an immutable part of Trump's image, his allies

have long worked to hold it up as an asset, both in last October's splashy ad campaign as well as during the convention.

"Joe Biden is a very good guy. I know him. He's just as nice as they come," former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley said Tuesday on Fox. "But that's just the problem. We saw what happens when you try to be nice at the United Nations. Basically, everybody was running over America when Obama and Biden were in there."

Herschel Walker, the former NFL player, acknowledged in a convention speech Monday night that "Some people don't like Trump's style." But he added: "People on opposing teams didn't like it when I ran right over them either. But that's how

you get the job done."

Walker acted as a pivot point in the Republican messaging, relaying a story of how Trump — in his business suit — once joined the ex-NFL star and their respective kids on a trip to Disney World.

Republican National Committee Chair Ronna McDaniel did much the same, offering testimony to Trump's toughness but also saying, "I've seen private moments where he comforts Americans in times of pain and sadness."

Much of last week's Democratic National Convention was used to flesh out a portrait of Biden as a man who has suffered immense personal tragedy and can relate to others, including Americans who have lost jobs or loved ones during the pandemic.

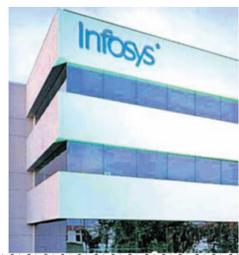
business



Due to migration of labourers, many farmers in Punjab and Haryana are going for direct sowing of paddy which has less productivity
HETAL GANDHI | DIRECTOR, CRISIL RESEARCH

AI-POWERED SOLUTION TO AUTOMATE HELPDESK OPS

Infosys has launched an AI-driven solution that will automate helpdesk operations, allow customers to eliminate manual resolution and build near-touchless contact centers in the COVID-19 times. Infosys partnered Blue Prism, a leading Robotic Process Automation provider and a strategic partner, to build the 'Cognitive Email Workbench' solution



of the day quote

The liquidity in financial markets is the key point driving the number of deals we have seen in August. Roadshows have been turned into calls and investors are making themselves available very quickly

RISHI JALAN | CO-HEAD, ASIA DEBT SYNDICATE, CITIGROUP

COVID-19 seems like another demonetisation-like catalyst for the industry. Digital payment providers have been quite hands-on in terms of responding to this situation, by offering enhanced support on essentials, offering integration with donations to PM fund and other essential product and services

ANIL KUMAR | FOUNDER AND CEO, REDSEER CONSULTING

Co-operatives in rural areas need to be revitalised at the earliest as collapse of the cooperative credit system will affect credit availability in rural areas

GOVINDA RAJULU CHINTALA | CHAIRMAN, NABARD

SHORT TAKES

Accenture to fire 25K staff globally

New Delhi: Thousands of roles at Accenture could be impacted as the global IT and professional services company is looking to reduce at least 5% i.e. 25,000 of its global workforce. Accenture has a global workforce of around 5.13 lakh people and out of them, about 2 lakh are in India. The workforce reduction might have an impact on India operations. The IT firm said that it was not planning "extraordinary global workforce actions" at this time.

Uber kicks off 'Auto Rentals'

New Delhi: Ride-hailing major Uber Wednesday launched an on-demand 24x7 Auto Rentals service in Delhi-NCR, Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Pune that will allow riders to make multiple stops along a journey. The service allows riders to do more by the hour at an affordable price point of ₹149 for a one-hour/10 km package, with the option of selecting from multiple hourly packages that can be booked up to a maximum of 8 hours.

Paytm to hire over 1K people

New Delhi: Setting the stage for a major expansion amid the pandemic, leading digital payments service Paytm Wednesday said it is in the process of hiring over 1,000 engineers, data scientists, financial analysts among other positions for tech and non-tech roles. Paytm in April announced to hire over 500 people for multiple roles, aside from continued hiring in product and technology.

Reliance hires IOCL chairman

New Delhi: India's Reliance Industries Ltd has appointed Sanjiv Singh, former chairman of refiner and fuel retailer Indian Oil Corp. (IOC.NS), as group president and member of its oil-to-chemicals (O2C) business leadership team, according to an internal announcement. Singh, who retired from IOC on June 30, will lead and drive the group's manufacturing services which are considered the backbone of RIL's oil-to-chemicals business, RIL Executive Director Hital R Meswani said in the announcement.

Gujarat, Maha, TN top 'Export Preparedness Index'

IN THE EXPORT ECOSYSTEM PARAMETER, ODISHA STANDS SECOND NEXT TO MAHARASHTRA

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 26: Gujarat has topped the Niti Aayog's Export Preparedness Index 2020 followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu in the second and third place respectively, according to the government think tank's report released Wednesday.

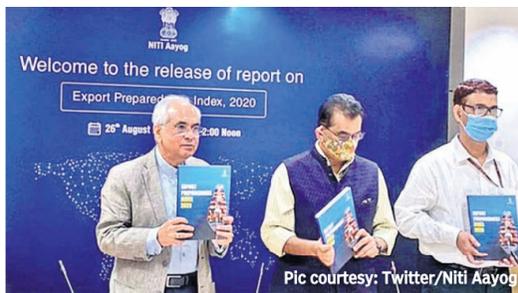
According to the report, six coastal states: Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Karnataka and Kerala feature in the top ten rankings, indicating the presence of strong enabling and facilitating factors to promote exports. Among the landlocked states, Rajasthan has performed the best, followed by Telangana and Haryana.

Among the Himalayan states, Uttarakhand topped the chart, followed by Tripura and Himachal Pradesh, the report said adding that across UTs, Delhi has per-

formed the best, followed by Goa and Chandigarh. The report noted that Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand are two landlocked states that had initiated several measures to promote exports. Other states facing similar socio-economic challenges can look at the measures taken by Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand and try to implement them to grow their exports, the report noted.

Speaking at the launch of the report, Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar said exports are an integral part of Aatmanirbhar Bharat and the country will have to keep striving to increase the share of exports in GDP and world trade. "We will try to double India's share in world trade in the coming years," he said.

Kumar pointed out that India's per capita exports stood at \$241, compared to South Korea's \$11,900 and China's \$18,000, so there is a huge potential for growth of India's ex-



Pic courtesy: Twitter/Niti Aayog

ports, he said adding "states must look at creating a separate department for exports promotion."

He said the government of India has made it clear that production linked incentive (PLI) schemes are critical to promote exports. Kumar also said that there is a need to distinguish between coastal states and landlocked states because condi-

networks, globally, Kant added.

India's merchandise exports have witnessed growth from \$275.9 billion in 2016-17, to \$303.5 billion in 2017-18, and to \$331 billion in 2018-19.

However, the COVID-19 crisis dealt a major blow to the current fiscal. Consequently, India's exports shrank by 60% in April 2020.

Niti Aayog in partnership with the Institute of Competitiveness released the first Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2020. The EPI intends to identify challenges and opportunities and encourage a facilitative regulatory framework. It ranked states on four key parameters: policy, business ecosystem, export ecosystem and export performance.

In the export ecosystem parameter, Maharashtra topped the Index followed by Odisha and Rajasthan and on the export performance parameter, Mizoram led the index, followed by Gujarat and Maharashtra.

SC asks Centre to clarify stand on interest waiver

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 26: The Centre is "hiding behind the RBI", the Supreme Court (SC) said Wednesday and asked it to reply within a week on the issue of interest being charged on installments which have been deferred under the central bank's scheme during the moratorium period amid COVID-19 lockdown.

"This happened because you locked down the entire country," the apex court told the Centre while referring to the difficulties in loan repayments.

The court had earlier asked the Centre and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to review the move to charge interest on EMIs during the moratorium period introduced under the scheme due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The Centre has not made its stand clear till now. Ample powers are available with the Centre under the Disaster Management Act. You have to make the Centre's position clear," a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said in a hearing conducted through video conferencing.

"Centre is hiding behind the RBI," said the bench which also

LOAN MORATORIUM



- The apex court had earlier asked the Centre and the RBI to review the move to charge interest on EMIs during the moratorium period
- It has now posted the matter for hearing September 1

comprised Justices R Subhash Reddy and MR Shah.

"My Lordships may not say that. We are working in coordination with RBI," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said and sought a week's time for filing response in the case.

The bench said: "You have to tell us your stand on two things" - that is the role of the Centre under the Disaster Management Act and whether the "interest on interest" will be accounted for.

Mehta argued that there cannot be a common solution for all the problems.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for one of the intervenors, said that the loan moratorium scheme is ending August 31 and it should be extended.

"I am only saying that till these pleas are decided, the extension

should not end," Sibal said. The apex court has now posted the matter for hearing September 1.

The top court had earlier said there was "no merit in charging interest on interest" for deferred loan payment installments during the moratorium period announced in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bench was hearing a plea filed by Agra resident Gajendra Sharma, who has sought a direction to declare the portion of the RBI's March 27 notification "as ultra vires to the extent it charges interest on the loan amount during the moratorium period, which create hardship to the petitioner being borrower and creates hindrance and obstruction in 'right to life' guaranteed by Article 21 of the Constitution of India".

FASTag must to avail discounts on NH toll plazas

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 26: The government Wednesday said it has made FASTag mandatory for availing all discounts on National Highways toll plazas. It has issued a gazette notification in this regard.

"The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has made the use of FASTag mandatory for availing return journey discount or any other exemptions on Toll Fee Plazas. Users who wish to claim a discount for making return journey within 24 hours or any other local exemptions, shall be required to have a valid functional FASTag on the vehicle," MoRTH said in a state-

ment. It said this is another step towards promoting the use of digital payments on fee plazas of National Highways.

The fee payable towards such discounts shall be paid through pre-paid instruments, smart card or through FASTag or on board unit (transponder) or any other such device only, it said.

The government said the amendments to the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, 2008 in this regard would enable discount on return journey within 24 hours and it would be through FASTag or such other device and would be automatic with no requirement for a pass.

State set to attract Japanese investors

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 26: The government of Odisha has planned to set up a dedicated Japanese manufacturing cluster near the Capital to attract industries from Japan.

During a virtual conference, Principal Secretary of Industries department, Hemant Sharma, Wednesday, said, "To attract investors from Japan, the state government offered 3.53 square kilometer industry-ready land near Bhubaneswar. The particular land parcel is a plug-and-play industrial land with a dedicated research lab, dormitories for employees, and other facilities required for new industrial projects."

Sharma addressed the gather-



The Odisha Government has offered 3.53 sq km industry-ready land near Bhubaneswar and it is a plug-and-play industrial land with a dedicated research lab, dormitories for employees, and other facilities for new industrial projects

HEMANT SHARMA | PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, INDUSTRIES DEPARTMENT

refinery facility of Indian Oil Corporation Limited," Sharma said.

"With abundant natural resources, surplus availability of power at a cost lesser than many other industrialised states in the country and a strategically located coastline, within reach of the ASEAN markets, Odisha could be the most promising investment destination for countries like Japan," said Sharma in his presentation.

State MSME minister Dibya Shankar Mishra, who also attended the conference, outlined steps taken to streamline the investment processes and to create a business-friendly environment.

"To support new industries planning to set up in the state, we have efficient single window system which hand-holds them throughout the investment grounding process," Mishra said.

'INVESTORS MUST HOLD ON TO SIPs DURING CRISIS'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 26: As the economy goes through an unprecedented slowdown severely impacting the income levels and personal finance of individuals, a white paper by ClearTax has suggested that people should continue to invest through systematic investment plans (SIP) and not halt or exit them amid the crisis.

It said that the current market scenario is conducive to invest in equities as the stock prices have fallen to their multi-year lows. Entering the market now and staying invested for a long period of time would help investors create wealth, the whitepaper said.

The online survey by ClearTax showed that 54.5% of the responses received said that this is not the

right time to invest in SIPs.

The white paper titled "COVID-19: Impact on investing" said that thousands of investors exited their investments due to severe financial constraints.

"We conducted a survey and an astounding 54.5% of the responses said that they believed this was not a good time to invest, even though most experts have recommended investors to increase or at least continue SIPs. Remaining 45.5% have increased their SIPs to make the most of the falling markets," it said.

Noting that investing in equity markets comes with some inherent risks, the white paper said that many investors tend to make the mistake of making an exit during a crisis. It said that Indian stock markets have witnessed several crises in the past and have emerged from



those.

"Therefore under such a situation, investors must continue to invest through SIPs and not halt them or exit from holdings. A small investor will likely lose a lot of value when an exit takes place during a severe dip in the market," the whitepaper

said. A 62% of the respondents were hopeful that the markets will recover from the current crisis. Also 67 per cent people surveyed stated that there is no change in their investing strategy due to Covid.

Remaining 33% were considering fixed deposits in the short term

It said that the current market scenario is conducive to invest in equities as the stock prices have fallen to their multi-year lows

and avoiding the stock market.

It noted that industry experts are of the opinion that the current market scenario is ideal for getting started with investments in mutual funds and stock markets and 46% of the survey participants agreed to the view.

Meanwhile, the gold prices are on the upward run ever since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stock markets have been volatile since the beginning of 2020, and retail

investors are seeking to invest in gold, which is considered a safe haven. Due to the high demand for the yellow metal, its price has skyrocketed.

However, the survey showed that 42% of the survey participants said they don't have gold in their portfolio. The rest of the participants said that they are interested in learning about gold as an investment option.

The whitepaper said that people may consider investing in gold if their investment horizon is less than three years. On doing so, investors will be away from the market fluctuations and preserve their capital.

"If you have a long-term investment horizon, then it's advisable to invest in stocks as they are known to provide excellent returns in the long run," it said.

MESSI TELLS BARCELONA HE WANTS TO LEAVE, SIGNALLING END OF AN ERA LEAVING THE CLUB IN COMPLETE DISARRAY

LEO-HEARTED BOMBHELL

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, August 26: After dozens of titles, hundreds of goals and countless records, Lionel Messi's spectacular career at Barcelona could be coming to an abrupt end. The divorce may turn ugly, too.

Messi told Barcelona Tuesday that he wants to leave after nearly two decades at the club, having grown unhappy after a trophy-less season ended with a humiliating loss to Bayern Munich in the Champions League.

Barcelona confirmed to the agency that Messi sent the club a document expressing his desire to leave. But the club hinted that a legal battle could be coming and said it won't automatically grant the Argentina great his wishes.

Barcelona said they told Messi in response that they want him to stay and finish his career at the club. The dispute centers around a clause in Messi's contract.

Barcelona said the document sent by Messi referenced a clause allowing him to leave for free at the end of the season. However, the club said the deadline for triggering that clause expired in June and that it would seek legal advice. Messi's contract also includes a 700 million euro buyout clause.

The Spanish season would normally have ended in May but was pushed back because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"If Messi is to leave Barcelona by activating a release clause, then I hope the club (tries) to help, not hinder him," former England and Barcelona striker Gary Lineker said on Twitter.

"He's been fiercely loyal and their greatest ever player. It would be terribly sad if it finished with a fight between the player and the club."

If Messi can leave for free, he will have no shortage of suitors. However, only a handful of clubs could realistically afford to pay his wages even

without a transfer fee — with mega-rich PSG and Manchester City widely seen as perhaps the most likely destinations.

Messi's announcement came 11 days after Barcelona's humiliating 2-8 loss to Bayern in the Champions League quarterfinals, one of the worst defeats in the player's career and in the club's history.

The defeat capped a difficult season for Barcelona — the first without a title since 2007-08 — and ignited one of their worst crises ever.

Messi had been outspoken about his dissatisfaction with some of Barcelona's decisions this season, talking about the team's problems and contesting club directors. Sporting director Eric Abidal, who was criticized by Messi, left the club last week.

Messi had been silent since the loss to Bayern, though, raising doubts about his future. The defeat may have been the tipping point for the playmaker. He and his teammates faced

furious Barcelona fans who confronted them and criticized the team at the club's training centre after the squad returned from Portugal.

Club president Josep Bartomeu had said he was confident that Messi would finish his career with Barcelona, and that he was a crucial part of incoming coach Ronald Koeman's plans for the team.

Koeman met with Messi last week and the player reportedly told the Dutchman that he saw himself more out than in at the club at that moment.

Spanish media said an emergency board meeting was expected to take place Wednesday, when the club had already scheduled the official presentation of forward Francisco Trincao.

Messi arrived at Barcelona as a teenager in 2001, joining the club's famed La Masia youth academy. His first-team debut happened in 2003 as a 16-year-old, and since then he has led Barcelona to 34 titles.



Your privileges in the squad are over: Koeman

BARCELONA: Lionel Messi decided to hand in a transfer request after he was told "Your privileges in the squad are over" by new Barcelona boss Ronald Koeman. Messi reportedly told the Dutchman that he saw himself "More out of the club than in it" having cut short his holiday to meet the Dutchman. Argentine news outlet 'Diario Ole' claims at a meeting Koeman told Messi: "Your privileges in the squad are over, you have to do everything for the team. I'm going to be inflexible, you have to think about the team." The frank exchange reportedly convinced Messi that now is the time for him to leave the club. The dramatic move piled the pressure on Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu.

- 6** No. of Ballons d'Or awards won by Messi a record and he is followed by Cristiano Ronaldo (five)
- 6** No. of European Golden Shoes (top scorer across all of European leagues) and it's a record too as among other winners, maximum is 4
- 7** No. of Pichichi trophies (La Liga's top scorer) in a season. No one has ever won more. But to put this in a Barcelona context
- 26** No. of goals he scored in El Clasicos (vs Real Madrid); the next best, Real's Alfredo di Stefano and Ronaldo (both 18 apiece)
- 50** He once hit a quite ridiculous 50 goals in a single La Liga season (2011-12) which is a record
- 73** That same season, he hit a total 73 goals for Barca — that is the most goals ever scored in a single season in Europe's top five leagues (all competitions)
- 91** In 2012, he hit 91 goals for both club and country. That's the most anyone has ever scored in official competitions in a calendar year
- 36** No. of hat-tricks in La Liga. No one has more. He's tied with Ronaldo for the most number of Champions League hat-tricks (8)
- 19/30** Messi is the only footballer to have scored consecutively against all teams in a professional league (19 games, 30 goals in 2011-12)
- 40/10** Messi is the only player to score more than 40 goals in 10 consecutive seasons
- 444** He holds the record for most goals scored in La Liga history with the next closest on the all-time list is Ronaldo (311)
- 634** No. of goals he scored for Barcelona and he is followed by Cesar Rodriguez (232) and Luis Suarez (198)

Messi, Guardiola reunion on cards

BARCELONA: Pep Guardiola has recently held talks with Lionel Messi and would be delighted to be reunited with the wantaway Barcelona star at Manchester City, 'Goal' can reveal.

The six-time Ballon d'Or winner has stunned the Camp Nou side by handing in a transfer request and asking to activate a clause in his contract that would allow him to leave for free.

Guardiola is very interested in signing the 33-year-old and City are one of the few clubs with the financial muscle capable of absorbing the Argentina international's wage. The relationship between the two men remains very close, having worked previously together at Barca.

Guardiola cut his teeth in coaching with the Catalans and enjoyed incredible success during his spell in the dugout with their first team, which lasted from 2008 through until 2012. He won the treble in his first season in charge, with six major honours arriving in 2009 alone. Six more would follow before his departure.

That Barcelona generation is widely considered to be one of the greatest the game has ever seen. Having enjoyed arguably their greatest successes together, Messi is keen to reunite with the coach.

The prospect of playing alongside his friend and compatriot Sergio Aguero at the Etihad, along with the chance to remain playing at high level in the Premier League,

is also said to appeal to Messi.

There has been no firm offer from City and any deal for Messi would be extremely complex given the financial details involved in such a transfer.

Manchester United, Inter and PSG are among the other clubs credited with a serious interest in the attacker, who has previously said that he would one day like to return to play with Newell's Old Boys in his homeland before he retires.

Fans flood to Camp Nou in Messi outrage



BARCELONA: Barcelona fans have gone to Camp Nou to voice their displeasure over the uncertain future of Lionel Messi. The Argentine informed the club Tuesday that he does not wish to continue at the club, and it appears the forward is set to exit the only professional club he has ever represented. President Josep Maria Bartomeu, meanwhile, has decided to stay on through to at least the election in March, stating that he believes Barca's issues are of a sporting nature. As the news began to emerge that Messi wished to leave, fans marched to the club's home stadium to voice their frustration with the club for their role in his decision. With an emergency board meeting in progress inside, fans gathered while chanting 'Messi stay' and 'Bartomeu resign'.



How Spanish media reacted



'SPORT' ran with the headline: 'TOTAL WAR', reporting that Messi wrote to the club by fax that he wants to depart the Nou Camp. They then go on to report that PSG, Manchester City, Manchester United and Inter Milan are among the clubs monitoring his intriguing situation



'as' also run down the fax route before claiming that there could be chaotic times ahead in the Messi transfer saga. The Spanish paper reported that Messi intends to become a free agent this summer but the Nou Camp outfit will demand from any rivals that they stump up 222mm euro for his signature



'MARC' go with the headline: 'I want to leave Barcelona' before emphatically printing 'And the bomb explodes'. They then go on to state under-fire Barcelona president Bartomeu has called an urgent meeting to get the situation in order



Front page of 'Mundo Deportivo' is all black with the headline 'Messi Bomb: He wants to go.' The front pages tell the story of the day and also explains how Barca have asked Messi to reconsider and want him to finish his career at the Camp Nou. There's also a report that the captain called Pep Guardiola to talk about a move

Welcome to the club: Kumble to Anderson

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 26: 'Welcome to the club', said Anil Kumble, while Sourav Ganguly marvelled at the 'greatness' as English pacer James Anderson's 600 Test wickets earned him a unanimous round of applause from some of the biggest names in Indian cricket.

Anderson touched the milestone on the fifth day of the drawn third Test against Pakistan when the 38-year old dismissed rival skipper Azhar Ali.

"Congratulations @jimmy9 on your 600 wickets! Massive effort from a great fast bowler. Welcome to the club," Kumble tweeted.

Anderson became only the fourth bowler in the history of Test cricket to reach the mark with former India leg-spinner Anil Kumble (619), Australian great Shane Warne (708) and Sri Lankan legend Muttiah Muralitharan (800) being the others.

Former India skipper and BCCI president Ganguly was among the stalwarts to laud Anderson's achievement, calling it an inspiration for younger fast bowlers.



"Well done James Anderson @jimmy9. This milestone is just greatness...156 test matches as fast bowler is just unthinkable..u will make every young fast bowler believe that greatness is achievable," he tweeted.

India skipper Virat Kohli joined his illustrious compatriots to praise Anderson. "Congratulations @jimmy9 for this outstanding achievement of 600 wickets. Definitely one of the best bowlers I've faced," he tweeted.

Anderson also claimed his 29th five-wicket haul in the third Test in Southampton and only the great Richard Hadlee has more among seam bowlers.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Indian sports' defining moments to be recreated in web series

New Delhi: Indian sports have witnessed some defining moments in its history which have been etched in our memories and revered by fans over the ages. To relive these historic moments, Baseline Ventures has conceptualised and produced an eight-part web series titled 'The Finish Line' which documents eight defining moments from Indian sports by recreating the moment by the actual athletes. The eight legends who have been confirmed for season 1 of 'The Finish Line' are Abhinav Bindra, Viswanathan Anand, Dinesh Karthik, Pankaj Advani, Smriti Mandhana, Leander Paes, Parul Parmar and Varun Singh Bhati.

Maguire's lawyers appeal against brawl conviction

Athens: Lawyers for Manchester United captain Harry Maguire have appealed against a Greek court ruling which found him guilty of multiple charges following a brawl on the island of Mykonos last week, sources close to the process told 'Reuters'. "Yes, Maguire's lawyer Alexis Anagnostakis has submitted an appeal," one of the sources said adding that the accusations were "wrong and misleading". The 27-year-old England and Manchester United defender was one of three people arrested Thursday after an altercation with police on Mykonos. A court in the nearby island of Syros handed him a suspended sentence of 21 months and 10 days Tuesday on charges of repeated bodily harm, attempted bribery, violence against public employees and insult, court officials said. Maguire has denied the charges against him. Following the hearing, England coach Gareth Southgate withdrew Maguire from his squad for next month's Nations League matches.

Mickelson on track for win on debut

Missouri: Phil Mickelson is in the driving seat to win on his PGA Tour Champions debut after the American surged to a four-shot lead heading into the final round of the Charles Schwab Series, which he is using to prepare for next month's US Open. Hall of Famer Mickelson has won 44 events on the regular PGA Tour, including five major championships, and qualified for the senior circuit having turned 50 in June. Mickelson followed up his opening round of 61 with a 64 Tuesday to go 17-under for the tournament here with Rod Pampling and Tim Petrovic trailing him going into the final round at Ozarks National. He is now in a position to break the PGA Tour Champions' 54-hole scoring record of 191, jointly held by David Frost, Bruce Fleisher, Loren Roberts, Bernhard Langer and Rocco Mediate.

20k-plus COVID-19 tests during IPL

Dubai: The BCCI has recruited VPS Healthcare as the official COVID-19 testing agency for the upcoming IPL, where more than 20,000 tests will be conducted for nearly three months. As per a press release sent by the company, the 20,000 tests will include 'all players, support staff of the franchisees, BCCI officials and IPL stakeholders'. All players and staff members of the teams are being tested on days one, three and six before they are allowed to enter the bio bubble. After that players and others are supposed to be tested every fifth day throughout the course of the tournament.

Djokovic's win takes him to 20-0 in 2020

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, August 26: Novak Djokovic's neck felt much better, and his tennis looked much better, in a 6-2, 6-4 victory over unseeded American Tennyis Sandgren at the Western & Southern Open that improved the top-ranked man's win-loss record to 20-0 in 2020.

He has won five of the past seven Grand Slam tournaments, including at the Australian Open in February. His winning streak is the longest to open a season since he began 41-0 in 2011, which is the best start for a man since at least 1990. Djokovic will face 34th-ranked Jan-Lennard Struff in the quarterfinals. The other quarterfinal in the top half of the draw will be defending champion Daniil Medvedev against No.8 seed Roberto Bautista Agut.

The No.3-seeded Medvedev's 2019 title at the tournament was part of a stretch in which he reached the finals at six consecutive tournaments, including a runner-up finish to Rafa Nadal at the US Open.



Reilly Opelka knocked off 2019 US Open semifinalist Matteo Berrettini 6-3, 7-6(7-4). Opelka next meets No.4 seed Stefanos Tsitsipas, who won 7-6(7-2), 7-6(7-4) against No.16 John Isner.

Andy Murray, however, lost 2-6, 2-6 to 2016 Wimbledon runner-up Milos Raonic. That was followed by Serena Williams against Maria Sakkari in the day's last match.

Women's quarterfinal matchups set earlier in the day were two-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka against Anett Kontaveit, former No.1 Victoria Azarenka against Ons Jabeur, and Jessica Pegula against Elise Mertens.