

MYNTRA AMBASSADOR

Actor Disha Patani has been roped in as the beauty brand ambassador of Myntra

LEISURE P2

'FAKE ENCOUNTER'

DNA samples of 3 men who were killed in an encounter with the Army have matched with their families

TWO STATES P7

MAJOR SETBACK

Pak will not allow a foreign lawyer to represent Kulbhushan Jadhav in Islamabad HC

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL

I've checked. There is no problem. Give it a little time. Seems, it is mourning SPB.

DIESEL PRICE FALLS, PETROL UNCHANGED

BHUBANESWAR: Diesel price in the capital continued to decline Friday after a two-day pause as product prices fell globally while crude prices remained steady. The price of diesel was dropped by 20 paise per litre while petrol prices remained unchanged for the third consecutive day. After the deduction, diesel price stood at ₹77.43 Friday. Petrol price was paused at ₹81.66. In the national capital, Oil marketing companies also cut diesel price by 18 paise per litre to ₹71.10 a litre down from ₹71.28 per litre, Thursday. The petrol price remained static at ₹81.06 a litre.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	37388.66 ↑ 835.06
NIFTY	11050.30 ↑ 244.80
DOLLAR	74.15 ↓ ₹0.18
EURO	86.08 ↓ ₹0.28
GOLD	₹49,551 ↓ ₹353
SILVER	₹58,723 ↓ ₹906

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	31.6°C	32.2°C
TEMP MIN	27.3°C	25.4°C
Humidity	94%	87%
Rainfall	Trace	Nil
Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	

Centre violated GST law: CAG

Govt used the money for other purposes, which led to overstatement of revenue receipts and understatement of fiscal deficit

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 25: The CAG has found that the Union government in the very first two years of the GST implementation wrongly retained ₹47,272 crore of GST compensation cess that was meant to be used specifically to compensate states for loss of revenue. In its audit report of government accounts, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) flagged that the amount was to be credited to the non-lapsable GST Compensation Cess collection fund for payment to states for loss of revenue due to implementation of GST since 2017, but the government did not do so, and thus violated the GST law. The GST Compensation Cess Act, 2017 provides for levy of cess for the purpose of providing compensation to the states for loss of revenue arising due to implementation of GST for a period specified in the Act, CAG said. CAG said out of the ₹62,612 crore GST Compensation Cess collected in 2017-18, ₹56,146 crore was transferred to the non-lapsable fund. In the following year (2018-

STATES SUFFER

- States have not been paid their promised compensation for letting go of their powers to levy taxes on goods and services since last fiscal
- The Centre says a slowdown in the economy has meant that not enough money is being collected by way of cess



CONTRADICTION REPORT: The CAG findings run contrary to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's submissions in Parliament that states could not be compensated for revenue shortfall as there was no such provision in the law

19), ₹54,275 crore out of ₹95,081 crore collected was transferred to the fund. The short transfer in 2017-18 was ₹6,466 crore and in 2018-19 it was ₹40,806 crore, CAG said adding the Centre used this money for other purposes which

led to an overstatement of revenue receipts and understatement of fiscal deficit for the year. The short-crediting was a violation of the GST Compensation Cess Act, 2017. The issue of compensation cess is driving a wedge between the Centre and states at the GST Council - the highest decision making body of the GST regime that had subsumed 17 different central and state taxes such as excise duty and VAT. States have not been paid their promised compensation for letting go of their powers to levy taxes on goods and services since last fiscal. The Centre says a slowdown in the economy has meant that not enough money is being collected by way of cess that is levied on luxury and sin goods. The Centre has asked states to borrow for meeting the revenue shortfall. States ruled by Congress, Left, TMC and AAP have opposed the move completely arguing that the Centre should borrow and provide to states, since states have given majority of their taxation powers to the Centre under GST regime introduced in July 2017.

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Patro spells out Assembly norms



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Going away from the convention, the proceedings of monsoon session of the State Assembly will be conducted for four and half hours on each day, Speaker Surya Narayan Patro informed at an all-party meeting here Friday. Patro said that the first day of the monsoon session will begin at 11 am while the proceedings will be held from 10.30 am to 1 pm and again from 3 pm to 5 pm on each of the other days. Sitting arrangements have been made in accordance with social distancing norms, he said. Senior members, who are unable to attend the session, can do so from the district headquarters or their own office, where video conferencing facility is available, Patro said, adding, "They have to inform beforehand about it in writing." Government chief whip Pramilla Mallick said that there will be no Question Hour and 12 Ordinances, which have been cleared by the state Cabinet, will be tabled during the session for discussion. Other businesses of the House like Zero Hour and Calling Attention among others will continue as per present practice, she said. Senior Congress legislator Narasingha, however, has termed the decision to suspend Question Hour as illegal and unconstitutional. "Cancellation of the Question Hour and earlier announcement of such a thing is illegal and unconstitutional. I strongly condemn this." After paying obituary references for former President late Pranab Mukherjee, former MLAs Bishnu Charan Das, Madan Mohan Dutta, some former members and police personnel, the House will adjourn for an hour on the first day Sept 29.

Farmer protests rock state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Several farmers' outfits from across the state under the banner of All India Kisan Sangharsha Coordination Committee staged a protest here, Friday, against the controversial farm Bills passed in the Parliament recently. Farmers' outfits like Bhaartiya Kisan Union, All India Farmers Union and All India Kisan Mahasangha demonstrated near Master Canteen Square. They tried to gherao Krushi Bhawan in the city but were stopped by police. The protest was supported by political parties like Congress. Many farmer leaders, activists, trade union leaders and student activists joined the protest. Suresh Panigrahi, member of committee, said, "Passing of the farm Bills amidst the pandemic is not acceptable. The government



didn't even consult the farmer organisations nor any state. Agriculture is a state subject, they are doing it for corporates and it is anti-farmer, by all means, even their own farmer organisation is opposing the Bills." The protesters burnt the effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with slogans of 'Ram Naam Satya Hai' at Master Canteen Square. Commissionerate Police deployed 15 platoons of police to prevent any incident. Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Niranjan Patnaik extended the moral support to the agitation, which was observed nationwide as 'Bharat Bandh'. Other party leaders were seen voicing their concerns over the farm Bills passed in the Parliament recently.

Playback legend SPB passes away at 74

CHENNAI: Famed playback singer and Padma awardee SP Balasubrahmanyam, popular as SPB or Balu in the movie world, who recorded over 40,000 songs in 16 languages over a period of five decades, died Friday afternoon, his son S.P.Charan said. Speaking briefly to the media outside the MGM Healthcare Hospital, Charan said Balasubrahmanyam passed away at 1.04 p.m. and thanked the hospital officials for the treatment and service. In a statement issued Friday the hospital said: "In a further setback this morning, despite maximal life support measures and the best efforts of the clinical team, his condition deteriorated further and he suffered a cardio-respiratory arrest. With profound grief, we regret to inform that he has passed away September 25 at 13.04 hours." The hospital said, Balasubrahmanyam was on life support measures since Aug 14 for severe Covid-19 pneumonia. MORE P2



Voda wins ₹20K crore dispute against govt

REUTERS

New Delhi, Sept 25: Vodafone Group Plc VOD.L has won an international arbitration case against the Indian government in a \$2 billion tax dispute, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter said. An international arbitration tribunal in The Hague ruled that India's imposition of a tax liability on Vodafone, as well as interest and penalties, were in breach of an investment treaty agreement between India and the Netherlands, one of the sources said. The tribunal, in its ruling, said the government must cease seeking the dues from Vodafone and should also pay 4.3 million pounds (\$5.47 million) to the company as partial compensation for its legal costs, the source said. Vodafone and India's finance ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The tax dispute stems from Vodafone's acquisition of the Indian mobile assets from Hutchison Whampoa in 2007. The government said Vodafone was liable to pay taxes on the acquisition, which the company contested. In 2012, India's top court ruled in favour of the telecom provider but the government later that year changed the rules to enable it to tax deals that had already been concluded. In April 2014, Vodafone initiated arbitration proceedings



- The tribunal said the govt must cease seeking the dues from Vodafone and pay \$5.47 million to the company as partial compensation for its legal costs
- The tax dispute stems from Vodafone's acquisition of the Indian mobile assets from Hutchison Whampoa in 2007

against India. India is entangled in more than a dozen international arbitration cases against companies, including Cairn Energy CNE.L, over retrospective tax claims and cancellation of contracts. The exchequer could end up paying billions of dollars in damages if it loses.

Bihar polls from October 28

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 25: Voting for Bihar assembly elections will be held in three phases October 28, November 3 and November 7 in one of the biggest elections globally during the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by counting of votes November 10, the Election Commission announced Friday. Announcing the poll schedule for the 243-member Bihar assembly, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said voting will begin as usual at 7 am but the period will be extended by one hour until 6 pm, except in the Left Wing Extremism-affected areas, so that COVID-19 patients can vote in the last hour of the day. The world has changed significantly since the last major election



in our country, which was held for Delhi assembly, and the COVID-19 pandemic has forced a new normal in every aspect of our life. Bihar assembly polls will be one of the biggest elections globally to be held during prevailing COVID-19 situation, Arora said. He also said special protocols have been readied for voters who are COVID-positive patients. Announcing the poll schedule at a press conference here, Arora

CALL ON BYPOLLSEPT 29: CEC

NEW DELHI: The Election Commission will take a call on bypolls to one Lok Sabha and 64 assembly seats on September 29 after going through inputs provided by poll officials and chief secretaries of the states concerned, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said Friday. He also said that EC Secretary General Umesh Sinha will issue a press release of the schedule the same evening based on the decision taken at the poll watchdog. said the number of phases for 243-member Bihar assembly polls has been reduced keeping in mind security arrangements and festive season, among other factors.

Ahead of bypolls, govt nod to Mahanadi bridge

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Ahead of by-polls for Balasore Sadar as well as Tirtol Assembly segments, the state government Friday approved a bridge project over the Mahanadi River in Jagatsinghpur district. According to reports, after completion, the bridge would connect Tirtol, Poshal and Sankheswar areas and benefit around 50,000 residents of Ainta, Gopalpur, Kanimula, Bisanpur, Krushanapur, Poshala, Bijipur, Saralapur and Tentulipada areas in the district. The local residents had been de-

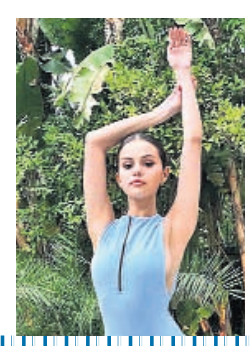
manding for this bridge since long. To ensure proper road communication and economic development of the area, the state government has decided to go ahead with the project, sources said. The 888.89 metre-long bridge will be constructed with an estimated cost of Rs118.56 crore. Following the state government's approval, tender process for the project also began Friday. "The work will begin soon after completion of tender process. The bridge will facilitate better road communication and enhance economic activities in the district,"



said an official statement issued by the engineer-in-chief of Rural Works department. Meanwhile, Opposition BJP and Congress smell politics behind the

move. To woo the voters of Tirtol, the government has come up with the project, they alleged. "If the government would have little shame, it might not have announced the project. During Bijapur by-election also the government had announced Gangadhar Meher irrigation project. But the tender process was started in 2020. People of Tirtol knew about this very well and will not be influenced by the decision," said BJP leader Prithviraj Harichandan. Similarly, senior Congress leader Suresh Routray said, "To influence the voters, the state government has announced the bridge project." BJD leader Pramilla Mallick said, "It is the duty of opposition parties to oppose all moves of government. We will win both the seats."

leisure



SELENA FLAUNTS SCAR

Singer Selena Gomez has showed off her scar from a kidney transplant in a new social media post. She says she now feels confident and is proud of what she had gone through. The 28-year-old posted a photo of her in a blue swimwear in Instagram. She is seen posing with one leg placed on a rock, which puts her inner thigh scar on display

BOSEMAN HONOURED

A Black Panther mural featuring late actor Chadwick Boseman, who brought alive the popular superhero on screen, has been unveiled at Disneyland. The theme park unveiled the mural in its Downtown Disney shopping district in California. The artwork by Nikkolas Smith has the late star giving the famous Wakanda salute to a young fan wearing a "Black Panther" mask



FORTUNE FORECAST



ARIES
You have been too busy with work and social obligations. It is high time you took a break and did something for yourself. Your health may need attention. Ganesha says, everything else should take a back-seat if you're stressed out.

TAURUS
Today, you will strike a great balance between your professional and personal life, predicts Ganesha. You will save your money from being swindled by others. You may be lagging in the race to catch up with your goals, but will not be disappointed by what you achieve.

GEMINI
You need to guard against hurting anyone's feelings because of your ill-temper or harsh language. You need to help others in their troubles. You ought to reflect on the toll that the troubles that have visited you have taken on you, and accordingly empathise with others, says Ganesha.

CANCER
There is nothing extraordinary about today. You will be busy doing the routine work and will find contentment in the mundane. The absence of thrill and adventure doesn't mean that you'll be free for most part of the day.

LEO
Your mind will be filled with conflicting emotions, says Ganesha. You will feel extreme happiness one moment, and then will be depressed the next. You need to guard against mood swings and find a balance to achieve success in your work today. Financial gains are indicated.

VIRGO
Surf's up as you enjoy an unexpected achievement! But your joy ride today may well be spent in vexing about the problems you have. Expect to gain new money for a new venture. Your business will rise atop the highest wave today, foretells Ganesha.

LIBRA
Ganesha feels the day will be beneficial for you when it comes to transactions with the government. But you already expect that. It is more than likely that public servants will have encouraging and optimistic achievements lined up for their efforts.

SCORPIO
The stars are aligned in a way that they produce a constructively favourable day for you today, predicts Ganesha. You know the importance of a team and treat everyone – seniors & juniors as equals. This will make the work environment harmonious.

SAGITTARIUS
It is not your nature to warm the bench, but you will wake up feeling lazy and laid-back today, says Ganesha. This may be due to the fatigue of some recent endeavours. For a change, you will try and delegate your work and responsibility to those around you. Make sure that they do so wisely as they may not live up to your standards, warns Ganesha.

CAPRICORN
Today, you will get back to playing the power game, using both fair and unfair means to achieve your goals, says Ganesha. Intellectual growth will be phenomenal; equally good will be your intuitions. In fact, your gut feelings will guide all the decisions you take today, and rest assured, none will leave you in a soup.

AQUARIUS
Your communication skills will work wonders today. Your eloquence will win you precious brownie points, and may prove highly beneficial in meetings. In fact, all your arguments will sound very persuasive. The trick is not to get ruffled, says Ganesha, when people don't agree with you.

PISCES
An auspicious time for starting new projects, today will see you make substantial investments in your future. Your family is the foundation of your success, and keeping that in mind will provide you with some vital insights. Your smile wins many a heart today, says Ganesha.

SPB: The voice of heroes goes silent permanently

CHENNAI: SP Balasubrahmanyam or popularly SPB, the playback singer, as well as the voice over, of popular heroes from south and Hindi movies breathed his last Friday. The coronavirus attacked his lungs and permanently silenced the singer who, in his illustrious career, had sung over 40,000 songs in 16 different languages over a career spanning five decades.

In a Facebook post, August 5, the 74-year-old SPB said that he was suffering from a very mild attack of coronavirus and had got himself hospitalised to take rest. He had said that though the doctors had advised him to stay at home and take rest, he decided to be in a hospital, as at home his family members would get concerned. He hoped to get discharged from the hospital in two days. But it was not to be.

The man who had sung the one of the popular duets with P Susheela "Aayiram Nilevae Vaa" (Come thousand moons) for MG Ramachandran (MGR) in the Tamil movie Adimai Penn has finally reached the stars, perhaps to sing for the Gods.

Honoured with Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awards in 2001 and 2011 respectively, SPB has won six National Film Awards for the best male playback singer and several

other state awards. Born to SP Sambamurthy, a Harikatha artist and mother Sakunthalamma June 4, 1946, SPB instilled interest in music at a very young age. His younger sister P Sailaja was also a movie playback singer.

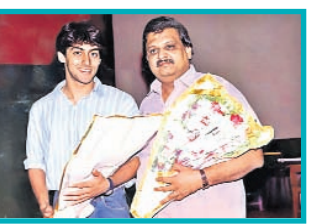
While pursuing engineering, he used to participate in singing competitions and won prizes. "At one such competition, popular playback singer S Janaki while giving the prize sowed the seed of singing in movies in me by saying that I can shine in the cine world. She encouraged me saying that she too was not a trained singer," SPB had reminisced at a media meet.

A humble person, SPB had said that if a person achieves something significant in a field, then it is due to the nudges and help rendered by several others. And in his case,

there were couple of people. Had it not been for his friend and roommate Murali who compelled him to reach the recording studio in December 1966, he wouldn't have become a singer.

SPB recorded his first song composed by music director and his mentor SP Kodandapani for the Telugu movie Sri Sri Sri Maryada Ramanna. Nearly a week later after his debut, he recorded his first Kannada song for the movie Nakkare Ade Swarga in 1967. Soon he became busy with Telugu movie songs. At a media meet SPB had said he was grateful to MGR for postponing the shooting for "Aayiram Nilevae Vaa" by a month so that the song was ready.

The singer said he was then down with fever. Given his stature MGR could have recorded the song with a different singer and gone ahead with the shooting. "I had asked MGR about that later. He said after the audition, I



SPB sung in movies like *Maine Pyar Kiya* and *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* starring Salman Khan

would have told my friends that I will be singing for MGR. And if I was replaced the talk would be that MGR didn't like my voice and so he chose some other singer. That would have been a big setback for my Tamil movie career, which he (MGR) didn't want to happen," SPB recalled the incident.

It was in 1981 that SPB made his debut in the Hindi movie world singing for Kamal Haasan in "Ek Duuje Ke Liye" and went on to sing in movies like "Maine Pyar Kiya", "Hum Aapke Hain Kaun" and others.

"It was K Balachander, Director, Ek Duuje Ke Liye who had insisted that I should sing for Kamal Haasan though the music composers Laxmikant-Pyarelal were bit reluctant to try me out," SPB reminisced.

Disha becomes 'beauty' brand ambassador

NEW DELHI: "Beauty is an integral part of my life, even more since I became a model," says Bollywood actress Disha Patani has been roped in as the beauty brand ambassador of Myntra.

Disha will be featuring in a brand campaign that will bring to the table a holistic representation of a tech-savvy, modern-day celebrity with the appeal to connect and engage with enthusiasts for/beauty and personal care products across various age-groups.

She says: "Myntra has consistently pioneered the path to self-expression through fashion and beauty for fashion-forward customers, including myself. Through this association with Myntra, I hope to inspire and help people across India on their journey towards discovering their own unique fashion styles and preferences."

Commenting on the association, Amar Nagaram,

CEO, Myntra, said: "In a first-ever for Myntra, this association with Disha as our beauty brand ambassador represents our increasing focus on the booming Beauty and Personal Care segment.

Through our tech-based personalisation capabilities, a growing portfolio, and content innovation, we are extending our superlative consumer experience to cater to the beauty needs of consumers and help them complete the look. Disha joins our illustrious list of celebrity brand ambassadors ahead of the festive season and will help us in our vision of providing a holistic fashion and lifestyle offering to our fashion-forward consumers across the nation under one roof."



Tamannaah opens up on her role in Anhadhun's remake

MUMBAI: Tamannaah Bhatia is excited to reprise the role of Tabu in the Telugu remake of the Hindi thriller, "Anhadhun". "I've always been an ardent fan of Tabu's work and it is such an honour to reprise a role played by her. The original film has this psychological influence on people and succeeded in inducing a sense of curiosity. What I personally loved about the original film was the brilliance of the script and the screenplay. It had no hero or no villain," she said.

Actor Nithiin will reprise Ayushmann Khurrana's National Award-winning role in the Telugu remake.

"It is a very unconventional casting and I have always wanted to do a film that is entertaining, while it has moments of darkness. Lately, I

have started taking an incline towards films that embody a sense of individualism, that are less scared of convention and much more stimulating. This is the first time I will be collaborating with Nithiin and he is one of the few people in Telugu industry I have never worked with previously. So, I am quite looking forward to this project," Tamannaah added.

"Anhadhun", a black comedy crime thriller directed by Sriram Raghavan, has Ayushmann playing a piano player who pretends to be blind and whose life is thrown in a tizzy when he becomes witness to the murder of an aged film actor by the latter's wife and her lover.

The Telugu version is being directed by Merlapaka Gandhi.



Akshay's episode sets record

MUMBAI: Akshay Kumar has set a new record. This time, though, the big-screen superstar has made history on television. The recent episode of British adventurer Bear Grylls' show "Into The Wild" featuring Akshay has emerged as the second most-watched television show in the history of the infotainment genre in India. The show had garnered a huge buzz on social media, with #KhaladiOnDiscovery reaching out to 1.31 billion individuals and delivering 2.9 billion impressions. About 1.1 crore people watched its premiere on Discovery Network channels. Almost 2.6 crore people watched the show in the first week across Discovery Network channels (original + repeats).

Akshay shot for the episode at Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka in January this year.

Before Akshay, superstar Rajinikanth and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have featured in Bear Grylls' show.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

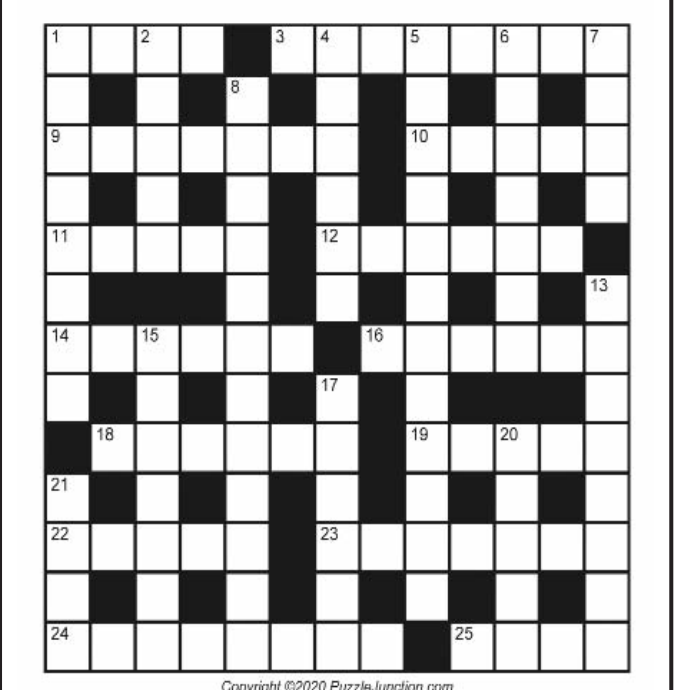


BREVITY



FUN post

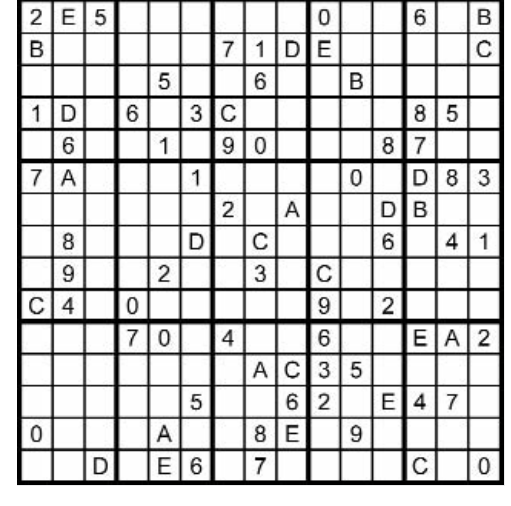
CROSSWORD



- Across**
1 Ayatollah's land
3 Cloudy
9 Woodchucks
10 Rocket type
11 Staircase post
12 Free of charge
14 Inherent character
16 Woodland
18 Eurasian finch
- Down**
19 Crosswise, on deck
22 Young hooter
23 Saudi sight (3,4)
24 Statue holder
25 Ogled
- 1** Senseless
6 Silhouette
7 Lampblack
8 They can be inline or quad (6,6)
13 Flattered
15 Revolved
17 Neighbor of Zambia
20 Hostile force
21 Hen housing

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



CALMNESS MATTERS

A flock of ducks takes shelter under a plant at Taladanda canal in Cuttack, Friday

COVID-19 TRACKER table with columns: World, India, Odisha, and sub-columns: INFECTED, RECOVERED, DEAD.

'Controlled blood sugar can help fight nCoV better'

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Doctors who are part of the state government's awareness programme on COVID-19 have said that diabetes patients who have kept their sugar levels under control are in a better position to fight the novel coronavirus.

patients are likely to get more complications if infected with the virus. He said, "People with cardio vascular diseases can see more impact of Covid on their system. Such patients may see some complications if they are infected with the disease. Their blood vessels may see some blockages."



According to Mahendra Kumar Tripathy, a senior cardiologist at CARE Hospital here, heart patients are likely to get more complications if infected with the virus

TWO MORE SPL TRAINS TO GUJARAT TO CLEAR RUSH

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: In view of heavy rush in special trains towards Surat and Ahmedabad from Odisha and high number of passengers getting long waitlist position in other Gujarat bound trains, East Coast Railway (ECoR) is providing two more special trains towards Gujarat.

These trains are: Khurda Road-Surat-Khurda Road weekly special and Khurda Road-Ahmedabad-Khurda Road Special. Khurda Road-Surat-Khurda Road weekly special will run from Khurda Road at 8:40pm every Sunday from 27th September to 18th October, 2020 and from Surat at 8:30am every Tuesday from 29th September to 20th October, 2020.

The stoppages are Bhubaneswar, Dhenkanal, Talcher Road, Angul, Sambalpur, Bargarh Road, Bolangir, Tittlagarh, Kantabanji, Raipur, Durg, Gondia, Nagpur, Bhusabal, Jalgaon and other important Stations between Khurda Road and Surat from both the directions. The second special Khurda Road-Ahmedabad-Khurda Road special will run from Khurda Road at 10:40am every Wednesday from 30th September to 21st October, 2020 and from Ahmedabad at 12:15am every Saturday (mid night of Friday) from 3rd October to 24th October, 2020.

Naveen bats for classical status to Odissi music

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday urged Union Culture and Tourism Minister Prahlad Singh Patel to accord classical status to Odissi music (vocal and instrumental) to fulfil the long cherished dream of music lovers of Odisha and the country.

Naveen wrote a letter to Patel following a decision of the Heritage Cabinet to draw the attention of Union government towards accoring classical status to Odissi music. Odishan music has at least a tradition of 2,000 years and is based on written sastra and its own crore raaga. It is a distinctive rendition style based on codified grammar: the characteristic giti system of classical texts and having its own tala, different from Hindustani and Carnatic music, he said.

MISSIVE TO UNION MINISTER

ODISHAN MUSIC HAS AT LEAST A TRADITION OF 2,000 YEARS AND IS BASED ON WRITTEN SASTRA AND ITS OWN CRORE RAGA

It is a distinctive rendition style based on codified grammar, the characteristic giti system of classical texts and having its own taala, different from Hindustani and Carnatic music

Odissi dance has been recognised as one of the classical forms and stands eminent because of its characteristics bhangi, thani, lalitia, mudra and others



Odishan music has at least a tradition of 2,000 years and is based on written sastra and its own crore raaga. It is a distinctive rendition style based on codified grammar: the characteristic giti system of classical texts and having its own tala, different from Hindustani and Carnatic music, he said. He said Odissi music has made significant impact on Indian cultural scenario. Several Odishan playwrights, sculptors, painters and choreographers have earned national and international fame. Odissi dance has been recognised as one of the classical forms and stands eminent because of its characteristics bhangi, thani, lalitia, mudra, etc. Elaborating the steps taken by the state government to get classical status for the music at an institutional level, the CM said, his government has established Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre and Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi with the purpose of promotion of music, dance and drama in the state.

Another milestone in the path of promotion of culture, art, music and tradition of Odisha was the establishment of Utkal University of Culture way back in 1999 by the government, he mentioned. "It is a matter of concern that Odissi music, the tradition of which dates back almost to second century BCE is yet to be recognised as a classical music by the Government of India. No doubt, Odissi music has all the requisite and exclusive characteristics to be recognised as a classical music," the Chief Minister stated in his letter to Patel.

1,709 cops serving in Red-hit areas feted

Bhubaneswar: Director General of Police Abhay has awarded Police Antrik Suraksha Seva Padak to 1,709 police personnel, including 12 IPS officers. The medal is awarded to police personnel as per the SOP issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Police personnel serving two years in internal security duty in Naxal-affected areas as designated by the Ministry of Home Affairs are eligible to get the medals. The awardees include 252 personnel from Koraput, 248 from Malkangiri, 275 from Rayagada, 107 from Kalahandi, 173 from Gajapati, 444 from other districts and establishments, and 12 IPS officers.

Happy first birthday notice for Mayudh, including a photo and a list of family members.

Complications will develop if blood sugar level of diabetes patients is not under control when they are infected with COVID-19. The diabetics thus need to control their sugar levels to reduce the chances of complications. ANUJ KUMAR BALIARSINGH | ENDOCRINOLOGIST AT SCBMCH

When asked about kidney patients on dialysis during the pandemic, Jayant Panda of Medicine department at SCB Medical College and Hospital said that for such patients who are under dialysis has now COVID earmarked dialysis machines. "These are available in many government hospitals. All kidney patients who come to dialysis are first tested for COVID now. Kidney patients are administered dosage of their COVID drugs (if infected) as per their conditions," he said.

BJD RECONSTITUTES ITS STUDENT WING

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 25: As part of its ongoing organisational restructuring exercise, the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Friday named new office bearers of its student wing—Biju Chhatra Janata Dal (BCJD). BJD president and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has appointed Abinash Thakur, Prasanta Panda and Rajesh Raj Swain as working presidents of the student wing

while Ipsita Sahoo is the secretary general. Similarly, student leaders Ajit Behera, Biswa Pratap Sahoo and Swagatika Mohanty have been placed as senior vice-presidents of the BCJD. The party has also appointed six zonal presidents, 11 vice-presidents, 40 general secretaries, 44 secretaries, 33 joint secretaries and presidents for 32 organisational districts of the student wing.

FOR SCB EXPANSION



The Sweeper Colony at SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack being evicted to facilitate the expansion of the state-run health institute, Friday

Official gazette notification from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, India, dated 25th September 2019, regarding the acquisition of land for widening of NH49 in Mayurbhanj district.

Large table containing land acquisition details for villages: Handipuhan, Jamada, Jashipur, Jokajhary, Kenjhara, Tangabhila, and Ghupara. Columns include S.No, Survey Number, Type of Land, Nature of Land, Area in Hectare, Name of the Land Owner/Interested Person, and Part Survey No.

Indravati power for Kalahandi people

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatana, Sept 25: Indravati Upper Hydropower Generation project of the OHPC had been made functional at Mukhiguda under Jaypatna block of Kalahandi 21 years ago, but thousands of people in this district were deprived of electricity since then. Ironically, many villages under this block have no power supply.

Now, their dream will be realized soon, as the energy department has decided to provide electricity to 25,000 left out people in the first phase from the project.

This has reportedly been successful due to continuous efforts of Junagarh MLA and energy minister Dibyashankar Mishra.

A decision to this effect was taken at a high level review meeting chaired by Mishra at OHPC conference hall at Mukhiguda.

The minister held discussions with officials of the OHPC on how to provide electricity to the people of Kalahandi.

Officials revealed that the process



THE ENERGY MINISTER SAID CHIEF MINISTER NAVEEN PATNAIK WILL INAUGURATE THE GRID CONNECTIVITY THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING

21-YEAR OLD DREAM

IRONICALLY, MANY VILLAGES UNDER JAYPATNA BLOCK WHERE INDRAVATI PROJECT IS SITUATED HAVE NO POWER SUPPLY NOW, THEIR DREAM WILL BE REALIZED SOON, AS THE ENERGY DEPARTMENT HAS DECIDED TO PROVIDE ELECTRICITY TO 25,000 LEFT OUT PEOPLE IN THE FIRST PHASE FROM THE PROJECT

IN THE NEXT PHASE, PEOPLE IN JUNAGARH, DHARMAGARH, GOLAMUNDA BLOCKS WILL GET THE BENEFIT

in this regard has been completed.

In the first phase, 25,000 people in Jaypatna block will be provided electricity from five 33/12 KV grids under 220/132/33 KV grid at Banore.

In the next phase, people in Junagarh, Dharmagarh, Golamunda blocks will get the benefit. The energy minister said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will inaugurate the grid connectivity through video conferencing.

He also said the state govern-

ment has been working to develop Kalahandi into a leading district.

"Over 1.5 lakh people will get electricity if electricity supply from UIHP is ensured in a phased manner," he added. He later visited the 220/132/33 KV power grid at Banore.

It may be noted here that people living in 16 villages in the cut-off areas of Indravati reservoir are deprived of basic amenities. There is no power supply, drinking water, communication, health and edu-

cation facilities in these villages under Thuamul Rampur block.

97 villages (44 from undivided Koraput district and 53 from Kalahandi) were affected and 32,530.87 acres acquired by displacing 17,000 people for construction of the dam. Displacement was carried out in four phases - 1989, 1990, 1991 and 1992. Scores of people did not want to leave their villages in the hilly area of Indravati reservoir.

IOCL, IDCO ink pact for Bhadrak textiles park

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Sept 25: The hopes of a textile park in Bhadrak will be realized soon. The land of the park proposed at Dhamnagar Chhak has been unutilized for 25 years. The issue was recently taken up by the Bhadrak MP Manjulata Mandal in the Parliament.

It was learnt that IOCL and IDCO have signed an agreement at Dhamnagar sub register office September 11 for the textile park.

The park will be set up in a part of the acquired land. People who have spared their land were happy



to know about the development.

It may be noted here that 217.71 acres were acquired in mouzas in 1995 for the textile park. When the land was acquired, local farmers were told that their land would be

used for a sugar factory. In the last 25 years, locals had staged agitations and road blockades over delay in the project.

Finally, it was decided that the park will be set up on 59.625 acres. The Bhadrak MP Manjulata Mandal demanded that if the textile park is set up on the land, people in the district would not have to migrate to Gujarat and other states in search of jobs.

The MP drew attention of the Union Minister of Natural Gas and petroleum toward the long pending project while this project has been proposed by the IOCL.

Sarvodaya leader Bhagbat Nanda dies

AGENCIES

Sambalpur, Sept 25: Noted Sarvodaya leader and social worker, Bhagbat Prasad Nanda, died in his home here, family sources said Friday. He was 82. His mortal remains were consigned to flames Friday.

Nanda was suffering from prolonged illness and died Thursday. He is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik condoled the demise of Nanda.

"CM@Naveen Odisha condoled the demise of Sarvodaya leader Bhagabat Prasad Nanda. CM said

his association with Bhoodan movement demonstrates his concern for the poor and landless farmers. CM conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family and prayed for peace to the departed soul," the PMO Odisha tweeted Friday.

Nanda, who was born December 14, 1937 at Balangir, was president of Odisha Sarvodaya Parishad.

He joined Bhoodan Padayatra, led by Acharya Harihar Das in 1959 and later joined the Sarvodaya movement after completing his college education. He was political special assistant of former Chief Minister Nandini Satpathy.

Swabhiman people seek 200 workdays

POST NEWS NETWORK



STRESS ON MGNREGS

Tribals residents of Panaspur, Jantri, Andirapalli, Gajulumamudi, Jodamaba and Muduliguda submitted a memorandum to the BDO, pointing out nine demands

Their major demand is creation of more work scope under the MGNREGS when they have been facing difficulties in the pandemic

"All should be given work during the Covid times. The government should provide 200-workdays to each beneficiary to tackle the pandemic induced miseries," they said

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chitrakonda, Sept 25: People of Swabhiman Anchal (earlier known as cut-off area) are deprived of various facilities. Upset over this, hundreds of tribals from six panchayats organised a prajameli (public meeting) at Panaspur village under Chitrakonda block in Malkangiri district Thursday.

They pressed for nine demands. The major demand is creation of more work scope under the MGNREGS when they have been facing difficulties in the pandemic.

"All should be given work during the Covid times. The government should provide 200-workdays to each beneficiary to tackle the pandemic induced miseries," they said.

Tribals residents of Panaspur, Jantri, Andirapalli, Gajulumamudi, Jodamaba and Muduliguda submitted a memorandum to the BDO, pointing out nine demands.

Their demands included primary health centre in each panchayat, appointment of MBBS doctors and ventilators, 200 workdays under MGNREGS, provision of cash bank payment, waiver of agriculture loans and payments of pension to all differently abled persons and widows.

The other demands are hike of wages to Rs 500 and steps to create self-employment opportunities for unemployed youths.

They observed that MGNREGS should be properly to ensure work scope for the people as Covid has impacted all their activities.

"This area has no banking facilities. In view of this, the administration needs to make weekly cash payment to the beneficiaries," they added.

"Since people have in fact not good scope of earning, the loans of the people should be waived to alleviate their financial burden at this critical time," they noted.

Bolangir: People call 7-day bandh for Covid

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Sept 25: Bolangir town has been shut for a week starting September 25. The shutdown has not been clamped by the district administration. A newly formed 'Corona Niyantara Committee' has called for this week-long bandh to put a check on the ever increasing Covid-19 cases in the town.

Bolangir district has been reporting more and more Covid-19 cases every day. At the same time, the district administration has clarified that it is not going to impose any shutdown as per the Centre's guidelines.

Seeing no options left, members of several organizations located in the town joined hands and formed 'Corona Niyantara



Local residents have drawn rangoli on a street as part of Covid-19 Awareness Week at Chhatrapur in Ganjam

Committee', a committee to stop spread of the disease. The committee has appealed the businessmen to down their shutters during this period. However, shops dealing in essential commodities like medicines have been kept out of the bandh's purview. Similarly, no restriction has been imposed on vehicle and people movement.

Barring a few shops, all other shops in the town were found closed Friday, suggesting that they have supported the band call.

Meanwhile, the administration has announced ward nos 1 and 2 as Containment Zones to stop the spread of the disease. This apart, both the Bolangir District Collector and superintendent of police have been going around the city, asking people to wear face masks and maintain social distancing.

Jharsuguda: No fast food vending for 15 days

JHARSUGUDA: Continuing its fight against coronavirus, the Jharsuguda district administration has banned selling of roadside fast food and other edibles Friday onwards.

Collector Saroj Kumar Samal said roadside vending of fast food and other cooked edibles will not be allowed for 15 days in Jharsuguda district from September 25 onwards to contain the spread of Covid-10 in a tweet. He said small businessmen will be given incentive of Rs 2,500 per head for compliance. However,

Bolangir district reported 76 fresh COVID-19 cases Friday. With this, the district's tally has gone up to 3,854. Of them, 3195 have already been discharged from

deviation from the rule will invite penalty. Residents of Jharsuguda town have welcomed the decision. "Scenes of these roadside eateries and gup chup carts being crowded with customers at major chowks and markets, giving a toss to social distancing have become common here.

The district administration's order will go a long way in curbing the spread of the virus," some of the locals said.

Notably, the district reported 81 fresh Covid-19 cases Friday.

COVID-19 hospitals and 640 patients are presently undergoing treatment. The district reported one death case due to COVID-19 Friday, taking the toll to 19.

Koraput reports 72 cases, tally up to 5,832

KORAPUT: There is no let-up in the rising coronavirus cases in Koraput district as the tribal-dominated district reported 72 fresh Covid-19 cases Friday.

With this addition, the district's tally has increased to 5,832. Of the fresh cases, 55 are males and the rest females. Among them, five are from

quarantine centres, 37 have contracted the virus from previous positive cases and the rest 30 are local cases.

As many as five patients have travel history. While one has returned from Andhra Pradesh, one each from Chhattisgarh and Ganjam and two have returned from Kandhamal.

While Koraput municipality reported maximum number of 15 cases, Sunabeda and Jeypore municipalities reported nine and six cases respectively. Similarly, four cases were reported from Kotpad NAC.

The block-wise breakdown: Kundra (11), Semiliguda (five),

Nandapur (four), Koraput, Boipariguda, Bandhugaon (three each), Borigumma, Jeypore and Lamataput (two each), Narayanpatna, Potangi and Kotpad (one each). Of the total 5,832 cases, 5,022 have recovered from the disease while 803 are still undergoing treatment. So far, seven patients have succumbed to the disease.

2 women put lives to risk to attend to Anganwadi duties

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, Sept 25: Spirit and dedication of two Anganwadi workers has earned them accolades from all over Odisha. The two, Pramila Pelmal and Hemalata Shisa, swim across a river everyday to attend to their duties in Malkangiri district. For them 'work is worship' and the two working at different Anganwadi centres under Ralegada panchayat of Swabhiman Anchal in Malkangiri district put their lives at risk to attend to their responsibilities.

While Pramila works at Suapali Anganwadi centre, Hemalata is engaged at Nerudapali. They attend to the needs of children and women in Suapali and Nerudapali villages under Chitrakonda block. The two provide food to the residents of the two villages, attend to the health needs of women, especially



DUTY-BOUND

Pramila works at Suapali Anganwadi centre while Hemalata is engaged at Nerudapali. They attend to the food and health needs of children and women in Suapali and Nerudapali

They usually tie dried bottle gourd shells to their waists and cross the river to go to their respective Anganwadi centres. They also spread awareness about Covid-19

The two Anganwadi workers cross the swelling Nerudapali river every day to attend to their responsibilities, even during the rainy season

those who are pregnant. Both Pramila and Hemalata also spread awareness about COVID-19 and the precautions that should be taken.


The duo crosses the swelling Nerudapali river every day to attend to their responsibilities. Even during the rainy season when the river is flooded, they take risks to cross it. They usually tie dried bottle gourd

shells to their waists and cross the river to go to their respective Anganwadi centres. "Every year we cross the nullah dangerously due to poor road connectivity in the area. We put our lives at stake and cross the nullah to serve the people," said Pramila. Hemalata also echoed similar views and informed the odds cannot deter them to perform their duties.

Advertisement in Odia for 'Gour Govind Karmayalaya, Mohana' with details about workdays and contact information.

Advertisement for 'OFFICE OF THE PANCHAYAT SAMITI, MAHANGA' regarding 'INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)' with a table of work items and terms.

“Do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of future.”
SRI AUROBINDO



Return of the retired

While senior bureaucrats often get re-employed with the government after they retire, it is certainly rare for a retired *babu* to be re-appointed as secretary to the government, to the same post he retired from two years earlier. But the Modi *sarkar* has many firsts (and in this instance, seconds) to its credit.

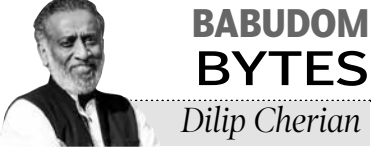
So, there were some puzzled faces when former bureaucrat Raghendra Singh was recently appointed as culture secretary, replacing Anand Kumar, who was shifted as secretary of the National Commission for Backward Classes, as part of a high-level reshuffle. Singh, who belongs to the 1983-batch of the West Bengal cadre, is CEO of the Development of Museums and Cultural Spaces, under the Ministry of Culture, and will continue to hold that post. Singh has been appointed on a contract basis for a year. Interestingly, Singh was the Culture Secretary from December 2017 till August 2018. So, the new Culture Secretary is the old Culture Secretary!

Before Singh's (re)appointment, there was Parameswaran Iyer, who returned as secretary, Drinking Water and Sanitation, in 2016 on contract although he had resigned from the IAS in 2010 to join the UN and then the World Bank. Interestingly, he did not complete his term, but resigned last month for "personal reasons".

DIVIDED IN UNIFORM
If Delhi Police was feeling cornered and unloved after several retired top cops criticised its investigation of the riots in northeast Delhi in February this year, it has now found support in 26 retired IPS officers who have come out in defence of their Delhi brethren.

The Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava was left scrambling for allies when the widely respected retired IPS officer Julio Ribeiro, a former Mumbai police commissioner and former DGP of Gujarat and Punjab, and former envoy to Romania, questioned the Delhi Police's handling of the probe into the riot cases. He accused the Delhi cops of taking action against "peaceful protesters" while ignoring the actual perpetrators of the riots and also noted that Shrivastava was not addressing the issues that he had raised in his letter to the Delhi Police Commissioner.

Ribeiro's broadside found resonance in many minds who see the police investigation as vilification of peaceful protesters and a politically motivated campaign. But it has also brought the venerated top cop in the line of fire of those who see this as an attempt to "demoralize the Indian Police Service". However, Ribeiro's detractors come across as attempting a rear-guard action that will do little to change the public perception about Delhi Police. And by pitting cop against cop, the force in khaki is split right down the middle.



BABUDOM BYTES
Dilip Cherian

'HURT' IRS OFFICIALS
Last month, the Modi *sarkar* announced reforms in the taxation system with the aim of making the system seamless, painless and faceless. The faceless assessment scheme will eliminate human interface between the taxpayer and the tax officials and has been largely welcomed by all. But not every IT *babu* is happy with the development.

According to sources, the IRS Association of the Northeast region views the decision as one that will reduce the stature of the service. The association members have reportedly proposed a complete makeover of the IRS including cadre restructuring, a new transfer and deputation policy, and creation of cadre posts in other ministries and departments. Apparently, the resentment among the IRS officers is due to their belief that faceless taxation will reduce the service to "cyber policing".

Under faceless assessment, AI and data analytics-based systems will be used to identify taxpayers and send notices in a transparent manner. This will inevitably require a change in how IT officials will function. The NE-IRS officers are perhaps jittery about this change from the "normal".

Share a *babu* experience! Follow [diliptheherian@twitter.com](https://twitter.com/diliptheherian). Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER


- “People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and if they can't find them, make them.”
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW
- “Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”
ALBERT EINSTEIN
- “The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.”
CONFUCIUS

WORDSWORTH

- Triacle**
Americans prefer to call it molasses but treacle, our current form of the old word triacle, is the usual British name for the sticky, sweet stuff. Many British children encounter the name first in the treacle well in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. The older form of the word is remembered in the apothecaries' term triacle, but it was originally used for something very different — an antidote to the venom of a snake or insect. This word came through French and Latin from Greek *theriake*, meaning an antidote against a poisonous bite, which has its origin in therion, a wild beast. Herbal remedies against such bites often contained alkaloids and so tasted bitter — it was common to sweeten them with honey to make them easier to swallow. English apothecaries changed over to black treacle as the sweetener when it began to be available in the Middle Ages. The word was often used in a sense not so very different to that of balm or salve, a some fragrant ointment or preparation used to heal or soothe the skin.
- Trimmer**
A problem with looking up trimmer online is that the political sense is swamped by references to tools that cut and neatens, such as hedge-trimmers and hair-trimmers. The political sense of the word isn't now so common as it once was, though one can still find it at the heavyweight end of journalism. The reference was originally to the trim of a yacht or sailing ship and to the action of keeping the vessel balanced against the forces of wave and wind. Sails continually need trimming and a person who does it can be called a trimmer. In the late 17th Century, this idea was applied to English politics during the administrations of George Savile, Lord Halifax.

LOL

NOUNS
A class is on and the lady teacher begins with asking questions at the fag end of the class. Teacher holds the stick and says, "Hey, stand up. Tell me two nouns."
A boy get up, "Who, me?" He asks the teacher.
"Very good, sit down," says the teacher.



FOCUS AGRICULTURE

NEW CROPS, MORE MONEY

The government has provided that sale of agricultural produce through the *mandis* will no longer be compulsory. Large companies will be able to enter into direct contracts with farmers to buy their produce at predetermined prices. Certainly, this will hit at the interests of the traders who make a living in the *mandis*.

However, the situation is similar to the entry of e-portals in retail trade. The street-corner *kirana* shops continue to survive because they provide certain services such as immediate delivery and replacement that e-traders are not able to provide. In the same manner, the entry of large companies in agricultural trade will not kill the *mandis*. The *mandis* provide a highly valuable service of sorting the farmer's produce in different qualities and then selling that crop to a particular buyer. A trader may, for example, buy tomatoes produced in Alwar and supply them to Kanpur. Such a service cannot be provided by the e-traders. Hence, the *mandis* will survive. Farmers have a right to enter into direct contracts with large companies and their freedom to do so must be preserved.

The government has also removed certain crops like cereals, pulses and edible oils from the items covered under the Essential Commodities Act. This Act places limits on the maximum quantities of specified items that can be stored by traders. With this change, the traders will be able to store as much quantities of these crops as they may want. This measure can have some negative impact. These crops were brought into the act because big traders bought the produce, hoarded it, created an artificial shortage in the market and induced a huge price increase.

Both the farmers and the consumers suffered in the process. The farmer got the low price prevailing at the time of the purchase. The consumer paid the manipulated high price at the time of the sale. The government had brought these crops under the Act to prevent such manipulation of the market. At the same time, storage of crops by private traders is much more efficient than the



The government must work out a system to cover the risk of the farmers in cultivation of market-based crops. A subsidized insurance system which covers against price decline would be one option. Also, the government should put in place a programme of research in advanced agricultural technologies such as tissue culture to enable cultivation of these crops

Food Corporation of India (FCI). The way forward is to make it compulsory for the traders to disclose the quantity of crops stored by them.

Simultaneously, the government must direct the FCI to import crops that the traders may be hoarding. The FCI can make forward contracts or outsource storage of the relatively small quantities involved. In this way, the government can stabilize the price and the country will also become free from the inefficiencies of the FCI in bulk storage.

There is a need to go farther, however. The Minimum Support Price (MSP) is provided to select crops such as wheat, rice and sugarcane. Our farmers have increased the production of these crops because they are assured of a decent price. This success has shifted the farmer's attention away from other crops that could provide higher returns such as vegetables, fruits, timber, flower and orchids because of uncertainty of price in these unsupported crops. We need to move the farmers from low-value MSP crops to high-value market-oriented crops. In particular, it is important to support crops

that have a huge international demand such as flowers, organic foods and designer vegetables.

We have a varied climate from Kerala to Kashmir. It is possible for us to become a global flower and vegetable hub and supply these items across the year. The government must work out a system to cover the risk of the farmers in cultivation of market-based crops. A subsidized insurance system which covers against price decline would be one option.

The government is trying to reduce agricultural subsidies of food, fertilizers, water and diesel. The need is to turn these subsidies towards areas that lead to a multiplier effect. For example, instead of subsidizing electricity for extracting ground water, the same money can be better utilised in providing subsidy for water recharging by building check dams, ponds and canals.

Public investment in agriculture also needs a close study. Mere building of more canals and increasing area under irrigation will not help because the prices of agricultural crops are declining if we take the inflation into account. Public investment must be fine-

tuned to support value-added agriculture. For example, the global demand for organic foods — guavas, mangoes, coffee and tea — is increasing. The government must create a certification mechanism in each district to promote this. Export subsidy may be provided to private exporters of value-added agricultural crops.

We have been asking for the dismantling of domestic agricultural subsidies by the rich countries under the WTO. The idea is that opening of the markets of rich countries will provide opportunities for our farmers. The resulting increase in supply from other producers can wipe out the gains for us. For example, the entry of Vietnam in coffee and black pepper has wiped out the gains for Indian farmers from free trade in these crops. We should consider an altogether different policy. We must make cartels for specific agricultural commodities just as OPEC has done for oil. India can join hands with Malaysia to increase the world price of rubber, with Bangladesh for jute, with Sri Lanka for tea and Pakistan and Egypt for cotton. This will provide high prices to our farmers. But we may have to come out of the WTO in the process which we must consider seriously.

The government is trying to increase the flow of credit to the farmers under the impression that lower interest rates will provide relief to them. No relief is likely to be got, however. The rural areas are flush with funds. The credit-deposit ratio of rural banks is typically 15. The loan given out is only ₹15 for every ₹100 of deposits garnered by the rural banks. Thus, rural banks have plentiful deposits but few applicants for loans. Farmers have the money but no opportunity to deploy it productively because of absence of profitable opportunities in villages.

Expansion of credit will serve no purpose in this situation. It is like pouring tap water into the water-fall. The government must instead focus on promoting specific areas such as floriculture where the profits are high. Need is to make fundamental shifts in the policies.

The writer is a former professor of IIM, Bangalore.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT MUST BE FINE-TUNED TO SUPPORT VALUE-ADDED AGRICULTURE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE GLOBAL DEMAND FOR ORGANIC FOODS — GUAVAS, MANGOES, COFFEE AND TEA — IS INCREASING

SPECTRUM DEMOCRACY

Decency and decorum in Parliament

What happened at the Chamber of Rajya Sabha in the just-concluded session of Parliament, when Opposition members protested against the passage of the farm Bills, was most unfortunate and stands out in the recent history of Indian Parliament. The act can be termed as a misdemeanour falling short of misconduct in the course of the Parliamentary proceedings.

Parliament had to pass important Bills and discuss emergent issues like the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). It was with great difficulty that the session was convened amidst the pandemic which has affected one and all. It was a constitutional requirement for the House to meet as there cannot be a gap of more than six months between the last sitting and the ensuing session of the House.

As such, the brief time before the House was precious. The pandemic has largely dented and sullied people's perception towards the highest representative body and the image of the law-makers. It has raised cynicism about the credibility of the august house. It is worth the while to recall the observations of Lord Nolan who



Rup Narayan Das

THERE IS NEED FOR SERIOUS DEBATE IN THE HOUSE AND THE BILLS THAT WERE HURRIEDLY PASSED WARRANTED A SERIOUS DEBATE

chaired a relevant committee of the House of Lords in 1995.

He said, "We cannot say conclusively that the standards of behaviour in public life have declined. We can say that conduct in public life is more rigorously scrutinised than it was in the past, that the standard which the public demand remains high, and that the great majority of people in public life meet those high standards."

The unfortunate incident has raised the imperative and necessity as how to check such incidents in future. It is pertinent to mention in this connection that the Speaker of the Lok Sabha had constituted a committee under the chairmanship of the veteran parliamentarian V. Kishore Chandra Deo in May 2007 to inquire into instances of misconduct including misuse of privileges and facilities by members of the Lok Sabha. The committee was further authorised to look into the desirability of defining what acts would amount to misconduct on the part of a member and make suitable recommendations regarding action against such misconduct. The terms of reference further said the Speaker will decide whether the member or the members will at-

tend the House till a suitable decision is taken after the submission of the report by the committee.

The committee sought views from the stakeholders in the political spectrum including the civil society and the judiciary. The committee, through a questionnaire addressed to the stakeholders, sought to elicit their views on some pertinent issues such as the desire and ability to define as to what can be construed as misconduct and also the need to codify them and some related issues. Veteran parliamentarian the late President Pranab Mukherjee opined that misconduct is nothing but "conduct unbecoming of a member of Parliament," not only in discharge of his parliamentary functions but also in the discharge of his public duties and probity of conduct in private life to the extent it impacts on the performance of his public duties.

Mukherjee further observed that what amounts to conduct "unbecoming of a Member of Parliament" depends on the facts and circumstances. A contrarian view was given by the legal fraternity including Soli Sorabjee and PP Rao who observed that it was desirable and necessary to codify such actions

of MPs which would amount to misconduct so that there is a deterrent for members.

Those who had seen the stellar performance of eminent parliamentarians would only feel pained and anguished at the bedlam that happened in the chamber of the Rajya Sabha. There is need for serious debate in the House and the bills that were hurriedly passed warranted a serious debate. It is incumbent upon the lawmakers to keep the interest of the people in mind, and not the partisan political considerations.

The conduct of members should be exemplary; the debate in the House illuminating. The government is duty-bound to listen to the just and fair argument and points of views and amend the laws accordingly if a situation so demanded. What the country needs is substantive democracy and not merely a functional democracy which simply conforms to the procedural and constitutional requirements.

The writer is a former joint secretary of the Lok Sabha Secretariat. Views are personal.

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

Happiness survey

Sir, The first-ever 'India Happiness Report 2020' has Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhhand finding their places at the bottom of the list. The survey was conducted in all the 36 states and Union Territories between March 2020 and July 2020 during the coronavirus spread. On various parameters — work, relationships, health, philanthropy, religio-spiritual orientation and impact of Covid-19, the survey covered around 16,950 people. Mizoram has topped the list. The survey found no significant correlation between gender and happiness, age-group, marital status, income levels and education. The survey might or might not have arrived at the right conclusions. It could also be that happiness cannot be measured on the basis of various parameters. Different people get joy from different engagements or indulgences in life. Family plays a vital role in one's happiness as per Indian social conditions.
Hitesh Kumar Parida JAJPUR

Essential commodities

Sir, This has reference to the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020 that has been passed recently. Rajya Sabha has passed the Bill on Tuesday. It is aimed at deregulating commodities such as cereals, pulses, oilseeds, onions, potatoes, and edible oils. After the amendment, the supply of certain food items like cereals, potatoes, oilseeds, and edible oils can be regulated only under extraordinary circumstances like a war, famine, an extraordinary price rise, or a natural calamity of a severe nature. In effect, the amendment takes these items out of the purview of Section 3(1) which gives power to the Central government to "control production, supply, distribution, etc of essential commodities". This may be a good step forward.
Animesh Mishra, DHENKANAL

Rahul's century

Sir, KL Rahul put up a stellar display with the willow as his side routed the Virat Kohli-led Royal Challengers Bangalore by a whopping 97 runs in Dubai. The Kings XI skipper went hell for leather to notch up an unconquered 132 off just 69 balls. Rahul's century is a record in the IPL both by an Indian and a captain, besting Rishabh Pant's (128 n/o) and David Warner's (126) respectively. After 'Lady Luck' deserted them in their first match against Delhi Capitals, the triumph must come as a shot in the arm for the 'men in red'. However, the IPL is a long-drawn tournament and Rahul and his men would be required to produce more such performances if they wish to win the Cup for the maiden time.
NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

DNA samples of 3 men killed in encounter match with families

IN THE ALLEGED FAKE ENCOUNTER CASE, THE FAMILIES OF THE THREE MEN CLAIMED THAT THEY WORKED AS LABOURERS IN SHOPIAN

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Sept 25: The DNA samples of three men who were killed in an alleged fake encounter with the Army in Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district in July have matched with their families from Rajouri, a senior police officer said Friday. Asked whether the three men were indeed labourers, as claimed by their families, and not involved



three men were from Rajouri and had gone missing in Amshipura. The families of the three men claimed they worked as labourers in Shopian and lodged a police complaint. The police also launched an investigation and collected the DNA samples of the three families from Rajouri to match with the slain men. "The DNA report has come and matching has taken place," Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar told reporters here. Asked if he meant that the DNA samples of the three men have matched with the families from Rajouri, he said, "There is positive matching with the families from Rajouri." On whether it had been established that the three men were labourers and not involved in any militant activities, Kumar said, "The police are now taking up further investigations in the case." The Army completed its inquiry into the matter in a record four weeks.

Omar questions official claim

Srinagar: Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah Friday questioned the official version that arms and ammunition were recovered from the Shopian encounter site in July after the DNA tests Friday proved that the three slain men were labourers from Rajouri district of the union territory. "According to this official version, 'incriminating materials, including arms and ammunition, were recovered from the site of encounter'. So who planted this 'incriminating material'?" Omar said in a tweet. "These young men were buried somewhere in North Kashmir. It is imperative that the bodies be exhumed & handed over to the families immediately so that a proper burial can take place near their homes in Rajouri district." Omar, who is also the National Conference vice president, said. Sajad Lone, chairman of Peoples Conference, said he did not expect anything to change due to the latest developments as such cases have happened in the past as well. "Will there be any change? Will the sanctity of human life be restored? No, nothing will change. This encounter was exposed by our media forcing initiation of investigation. As hiding it in today's digital age was not possible. My thoughts with the 3 men murdered in cold blood," Lone wrote on his Twitter handle.



in militant activities, he said it is a matter of further investigation. July 18, the Army had claimed three militants were killed in

Amshipura village in the higher reaches of south Kashmir's Shopian. It initiated an inquiry after social media reports indicated that the

Fresh trouble: CBI to probe Vijayan's pet project

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kochi, Sept 25: The CBI Friday filed a detailed report in the special court here on the Kerala government's now controversial Life Mission housing project and has decided to take up the case, in a setback to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who was losing his cool whenever the media questioned him on the issue. The next step for the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will be to register an FIR and list all those who will be questioned. Sensing trouble, it was Wednesday that Vijayan decided to order a Vigilance probe into the project. The Life Mission project, a pet one for Vijayan ever since he assumed office in 2016, was floated to build houses for the homeless and landless, using funds from sponsorships, and the role of the state government was to provide the land only. The project, however, ran into trouble when Anil Akkara, the Congress legislator from Wadakkanchery in Thrissur, first raised questions about the wrongdoings in a building project in his constituency, cleared with funds from UAE-based charity organisation, the Red Crescent.

Though Vijayan had been maintaining that the state government, apart from handing over the land, had no role in the project, things began changing since the Kerala gold smuggling case surfaced. This particular project was routed through the UAE Consulate, where main accused Swapna Suresh and PS Sarith, whose arrest led to uncovering of the scam, both worked. It turned murky, when news surfaced that the son of state Industries



UNDER SCANNER

THE KERALA GOVERNMENT'S NOW CONTROVERSIAL LIFE MISSION HOUSING PROJECT WAS ROUTED THROUGH THE UAE CONSULATE, WHERE MAIN ACCUSED SWAPNA SURESH AND PS SARITH, WHOSE ARREST LED TO UNCOVERING OF THE GOLD SMUGGLING SCAM, BOTH WORKED

THOUGH VIJAYAN HAD BEEN MAINTAINING THAT THE STATE GOVERNMENT, APART FROM HANDING OVER THE LAND, HAD NO ROLE IN THE PROJECT, THINGS BEGAN CHANGING SINCE THE KERALA GOLD SMUGGLING CASE SURFACED

PRESENTLY, THE CUSTOMS, THE NATIONAL INVESTIGATION AGENCY, THE ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE AND THE INCOME TAX ARE PROBING THE GOLD SMUGGLING, DRUGS AND THE LIFE MISSION CASE, BUT THE OPPOSITION WAS DEMANDING THAT ONLY THE CBI CAN PROBE THIS CASE, AS EXTERNAL AGENCIES WERE FUNDING THIS PROJECT

Minister EP Jayarajan was also close to Swapna. Suspicions were also raised after Bineesh Kodiyeri, son of the powerful CPI-M state Secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, was questioned by the Enforcement Directorate. Adding to the problems, it came out that the commission for the project was not Rs 1 crore, but more than that, as per Vijayan's media advisor as well as state Finance Minister Thomas Issac.

Vijayan, for the past one month, has been evading media's questions about the Life Mission project. Speaking to the media, Akkara noted it was he who had first raised this fraud and he approached Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan seeking justice. "I knew the CBI

would take up this case, as I had given them a detailed complaint on this case. Later I was called by the CBI and I gave them all the details I had about this project. Now I am happy that the CBI has taken the case up. This was a classic case where in the name of the poor, money was swindled... such a thing should never ever happen," said Akkara. Both the Congress and the BJP for long have been up in arms demanding a CBI probe and calling for the resignation of Vijayan for taking people for a ride. State BJP President K Surendran said this is a classic case of usurping of public funds. "This particular project was cleared by Vijayan, who is the Chairman of the Life

Mission. He even went to the UAE to source funds for this project. Swapna and suspended IAS officer M. Sivasankar had reached UAE a few days before Vijayan landed. Now that the CBI has taken up, every aspect that we raised on this will be looked into," he said. Congress-led UDF Chairman Benny Behanan said if Vijayan has any morals left, he should quit immediately. "This project was mired in controversy over its funding and the commission that was paid was the hard truth, which Vijayan always had dismissed with contempt. Everyone including Vijayan will now be questioned by the CBI and if he has any morals left, he should quit," he said.

Keralite trained by ISIS found guilty by court

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Sept 25: An Indian national, trained by ISIS in Iraq in 2015, was found guilty by a court here Friday for hatching a criminal conspiracy to wage war against the Governments of India and Iraq. Subahani Haja Moideen, a Keralite, was arrested by the NIA in 2016 following a crackdown in Tamil Nadu with the help of central security agencies and other state police, foiling designs of ISIS operatives to attack or eliminate certain prominent persons and target places of public importance. The Special NIA court will pronounce the quantum of punishment Monday.



knowingly became an ISIS member in April 2015. To further the activities of ISIS, he proceeded to Iraq during April-September 2015, joined the terrorist organisation and waged war against the Government of Iraq, an Asiatic Power in alliance with the Government of India. During custodial interrogation, he had disclosed that he had knowingly and intentionally communicated with co-conspirators in ISIS within and outside India over social media platforms like Facebook and Telegram to wage war against the Governments of Iraq and India. Based on his disclosures, the contents of his email and social media accounts were extracted in the presence of independent witnesses, during custody.

The Court convicted Moideen under IPC Sections 120(B) (Criminal Conspiracy), Section 125 (waging war against Asiatic power in alliance with the Government of India) and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, Section 20 (Punishment for being member of terrorist gang or organisation). It also held him guilty under Section 38 (Offence relating to membership of a terrorist organisation) and 39 (Offence relating to support given to a terrorist organisation). According to the chargesheet filed by the NIA, Moideen, hailing from Idukki district, intentionally and

J&K POLICE FORM SIT TO PROBE LAWYER'S KILLING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Sept 25: The Jammu and Kashmir Police Friday said it has constituted a special investigation team (SIT) to probe the killing of advocate Babar Qadri who was shot dead by unidentified gunmen here Thursday. Speaking to reporters at a press conference here, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said the case was a top priority for the force and an SIT has been formed to probe it. "I went to the (Qadri's) house this morning and inspected the scene of the crime. We have formed an SIT headed by SP Hazratbal. It will include a legal expert apart from senior officers of the police. The SIT has been asked to investigate the matter and solve the case immediately and ascertain which militant and outfit was involved in the incident," Kumar said. Qadri was shot at by unidentified militants at his residence in the Hawal area of the city Thursday evening. He succumbed to the injuries on the way to a hospital. Kumar said the assailants would be arrested or neutralised soon. "We will arrest them as soon as possible and if we cannot arrest them, we will try to neutralise them in an encounter. This case is a top priority for us," the IGP said.



The IGP said Qadri's car was fired upon in 2018 and he had a threat perception but had declined to shift to a safe zone

Giving details about the incident, Kumar said two persons posing as clients with files in their hands and faces covered with masks came to Qadri's house Thursday evening. "They called the lawyer saying that they want some suggestion for an accident case. When

the lawyer came down, they fired upon him indiscriminately with a pistol. He received four bullets in his head and succumbed to injuries on the way to a hospital. When the militants were fleeing, they fired a few rounds in the air. We are assessing the CCTV footage from a camera installed nearby," he said. The IGP said Qadri's car was fired upon in 2018 and he had a threat perception but had declined to shift to a safe zone. "A police officer, who is a relative of Babar, had requested him to shift from Hawal area to a safe zone, but the lawyer declined. Local police officers also said they were requesting him to shift for the last one week as the locality was congested and the police patrolling was difficult. He (Qadri) had said he did not want to leave his house. I have seen the tweet by him about danger to his life. Unfortunately he had not tagged the Kashmir police in that tweet, but Jammu police," Kumar said. The IGP appealed to people -- whether protected or not -- who face a threat to approach the police. "Babar had not shared any such thing with us, otherwise we would have shifted him to a safer place," he said.

Kerala gets UN award for prevention, control of lifestyle diseases

The award recognises achievements during 2019 on the multisectoral action in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, mental health and wider NCD-related sustainable development goals



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 25: Kerala bagged a United Nations award Thursday for its 'outstanding contribution' towards the non-communicable diseases-related sustainable development goals. The UN Interagency Task Force (UNIATF) award this year on prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) was announced by World Health Organization director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. The award recognises achievements during 2019 on the multi-sectoral action in the prevention and control of NCDs, mental health and the wider NCD-related sustainable development goals (SDGs). Health Minister KK Shailaja said the award was a recognition of the tireless service of Kerala in the health sector. "The state government has arranged facilities from the basic public health centres to hospitals at all levels to treat the lifestyle diseases," Shailaja said in a statement. "We were able to control the death rate during the COVID-19 period as we were able to focus on the NCDs."

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KK SHAILAJA | HEALTH MINISTER

of the lifestyle disease control mechanism in Kerala, and the treatment and free services received by a large section of the population. "In addition, the state-of-the-art lung disease control program, cancer treatment program and paralysis control program were also considered for the award," it said.

In June, Shailaja was honoured by the United Nations for her efforts to tackle the coronavirus pandemic. She was among a few of the world leaders invited to speak on the occasion of the United Nations Public Service Day. United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, President of the General Assembly Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, President of Ethiopia Sahle-Work Zewde, were among other speakers. Kerala which has the best HDI in the country also has the best public healthcare systems in India.

What's pushing Pashmina shawl-makers into penury

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Sept 25: Kashmir's Pashmina shawl has a centuries-old reputation and Emperor Napoleon presenting a gown made of Pashmina yarn to his queen Josephine is just one of the myriad stories eulogising the famed hand-woven garment. Pashmina shawls are woven from the fleece of domesticated, high altitude Himalayan Capra hircus goat. This special species of goat is found in the Himalayan range at high altitudes in Tibet, Ladakh and Nepal. J&K established a goat farm of this special breed at Khuril (Nyoma) in Leh district of Ladakh in 1970s. The goat farm is now in the newly-carved Union territory of Ladakh and hosts around 1,000 Pashmina goats.



undercoat of the goat and is collected by using special combs. The fleece is then auctioned to bidders who pass it on to the shawl weavers. The undercoat is basically a defence mechanism by the animal to ward off the extreme cold. If the same animal is brought down to warmer climates, the goat does not grow the undercoat," said a veterinarian posted at the Khuril goat farm. Officials at the farm say the fleece is sold at Rs 2,000 per kg. "The raw material is de-haired and then the pure undercoat fleece is

spun into yarn that is woven by Pashmina shawl makers into the magic garment," said Mohd Sultan, 61, a shawl-maker in the old city of Srinagar. Kashmir has traditional shawl-making families who specialise in making the Pashmina shawls with majority of such families concentrated in the old city area of Srinagar. "Pashmina making has been in our family line for the last five generations. We have kept the art alive, but given the worst period of the non-

availability of yarn due to COVID-19 and now the heightened tensions between India and China in Ladakh region, it is likely that the art of Pashmina shawl-making is going to be a thing of the past," lamented Nazir Ahmad, 54, a Pashmina shawl-maker from Eidgah area of Srinagar city. Others in the industry believe official apathy is pushing the traditional Pashmina shawl-makers into penury and oblivion. "We have been demanding support from the government not in terms of money, but by making

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NAZIR AHMAD | SHAWL-MAKER

try believe official apathy is pushing the traditional Pashmina shawl-makers into penury and oblivion. "We have been demanding support from the government not in terms of money, but by making

available the Pashmina yarn at reasonable rates. This is not happening in the Valley."

"Influential people monopolise the yarn market and then use the poor shawl-makers as bonded labour. I think the magic of the Pashmina shawl is now relegated to history books," said Mohd Raza, 45, another shawl-maker whose family has been in the trade for four generations. Making a Pashmina shawl is a painstaking and labourious task. One shawl-maker, who is otherwise known as a good weaver, takes almost one year to finish a shawl. In economic terms it means making one Pashmina shawl should earn a weaver an entire year's livelihood. "This rarely happens given the remuneration an average Pashmina shawl-maker gets. This also acts as a dampener for the shawl-maker and his family," said Gowhar, a shawl trader of Kashmir. Under the hardships faced by this world famous industry, the only glory a Pashmina shawl-maker can boast of is the picture of the French empress Josephine sporting a gown made of the poor shawl weaver's hard labour.

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national

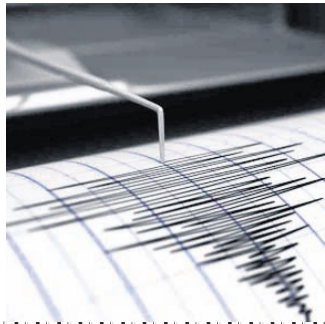


Why was the law made? Why was the minimum support price not proposed? You can understand from it that the situation is very serious and the way these three bills were passed, it was also done in a shameful manner

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CM

QUAKE HITS LADAKH

A medium-intensity earthquake of magnitude 5.4 hit the Ladakh region Friday, the National Centre for Seismology said. It said the quake occurred at 16:27 pm at a depth of 10 kilometres



of the day quote

India has executed 194 developmental projects in 37 African countries and is currently working to complete 77 more projects in 29 countries in the continent, with a total outlay of USD 11.6 billion

V MURALEEDHARAN | UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Link medical institutes with virtual ICUs by using technology in such a way that the serious patients may get treatment from experienced doctors

YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CM

The Modi government has put the agriculture sector in private hands, similar to the railways and civil aviation sectors, in a bid to benefit corporate friends funding the BJP

TEJASHWI YADAV | RID LEADER

LAC ROW CHINA WANTS INDIA TO VACATE KEY HEIGHTS

During the Corps Commander-level talks, China told India that it will not discuss disengagement in eastern Ladakh, where the build-up by both sides has triggered a war-like situation over the last four months, till the time India vacates strategic positions

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 25: China is insisting that India vacates strategic heights on the south bank of Pangong Lake ahead of talks on disengagement on the LAC, top Indian Army sources said. During the Corps Commander-level talks, China told India that it will not discuss disengagement in eastern Ladakh, where the build-up by both sides has triggered a war-like situation over the last four months, till the time India vacates the strategic positions.

India wants a roadmap for de-escalation all along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh to be drawn out. India stated, during the talks, that all friction areas, including Depsang, should be discussed for disengagement all along the LAC. "Why should discussions be restricted to one or two places when there is a massive build-up all across the LAC," a top Indian Army officer said. India has occupied critical mountain heights on the south bank of the Pangong Lake, including Rechin La, Rezang La, and Mukpari that were unmanned till now. This step, along with some others peaks it holds, allows India to dominate the Spangur Gap under Chinese control



and also the Moldo garrison on the Chinese side.

This has irked the PLA which has made multiple attempts to dislodge Indian troops, leading to instances of warning gunshots being fired. India had changed the rules of engagement after the Galwan Valley clash of June 15 where 20 Indian soldiers and unknown number of Chinese soldiers were killed. Chinese had attacked Indian troops with medieval barbaric weapons like iron-studded clubs.

After that, the Indian Army had empowered its commanders on the ground to take a decision whether

6th round of Military Commander-Level Meeting. "The two sides had candid and in-depth exchanges of views on stabilising the situation along the LAC in the India-China border areas," Indian Army had stated. "They agreed to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, strengthen communication on the ground, avoid misunderstandings and misjudgments, stop sending more troops to the front line, refrain from unilaterally changing the situation on the ground, and avoid taking any actions that may complicate the situation."

The two sides also agreed to hold the 7th round of the Military Commander-Level Meeting as soon as possible, take practical measures to properly solve problems on the ground, and jointly safeguard peace and tranquility in the border area. It was for the first time that the Indian delegation had two Lt Generals, two Major Generals and a Joint Secretary from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

Hyderabad youth kidnapped, killed

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, Sept 25: In a shocking case of honour killing, a youth from Hyderabad was kidnapped and murdered by the family members of his wife for marrying her against their wish.

The body of Hemant Kumar, 28, was found in Sangareddy district near Hyderabad early Friday. Hemant and his wife Avanti were kidnapped by a group of people from their house in TNGO colony in Gachibowli area around 3 p.m. on Thursday.

While Avanti managed to escape from their clutches by jumping out of a car, they took her husband to the city outskirts and murdered him. Hyderabad police have reportedly arrested 12 people in connection with the kidnap and murder. They include Avanti's maternal uncle, cousins and hired killers.

Hemant and Avanti, who were neighbours, fell in love about eight years ago and wanted to marry. However, the girl's family, belonging to an upper caste, was opposed to the marriage. Avanti's parents locked her in home in November last year and were looking for another alliance. She later managed to escape and on June 10 this year, Hemant and Avanti entered into the wedlock at a temple in BHEL.

As the couple faced threat from Avanti's family, they approached Cyberabad Police Commissioner V C. Sajjanar, who referred the matter to Chandanagar police station. Both sides were called to the police station and Avanti's family was told not to trouble the couple. However, on Thursday a group of more than 10 people in three cars reached Hemant's house and asked the couple to come with them. "We were told that they want to discuss the issue and we boarded the cars. After a few minutes I realized that we have been kidnapped and I jumped out of the car," Avanti said.

Two LeT commanders killed in J&K encounter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Sept 25: Two Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) commanders were killed in an overnight encounter with security forces in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir Friday, police said.

Based on specific information about the presence of militants in Sirhama area of the south Kashmir district, security forces launched a cordon and search operation on Thursday evening, a police officer said. He said the search operation turned into an encounter after the militants fired upon the forces, who retaliated.

A tight cordon was maintained throughout the night to prevent the two militants from escaping. They were killed in the exchange of fire, the officer said. Incriminating materials, including arms and ammunition, were recovered from the encounter site, he said.

Addressing a press conference here, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said the two militants were Lashkar commanders. "One of the militants has been identified as Abu Rehan from Pakistan, who was active since March 2019. The second one has been identified as Adil Rashid Bhat, who was also a Lashkar commander," he said.

"Bhat was involved in an attack on two policemen at Nowgam on August 14," the IGP said, adding that he had decamped with an INSAS rifle which was recovered from the encounter site. The killing of the two militants is a huge success for the forces, he said.

Kumar said LeT militants were also behind the killing of Bhupinder Singh, Block Development Council chairman, Khag, in central Kashmir's Budgam district. Singh was shot dead by militants Wednesday evening.

After touring his area, Singh dropped his two personal security officers (PSOs) at Khag police station and left for his home, the IGP said. "He then went to his village, about 10 to 12 kilometres from there, in his private car without informing the police. We have suspended the two PSOs," he said.

"Investigations are on and two suspects have been called. SP Budgam is himself investigating the matter. Perhaps the militants had known that he was coming home. We have taken all the details and will solve this case soon," Kumar said.

Prima facie, from his call and location details, names of two Lashkar militants have come up - LeT commander Yousuf Kandroo and Abrar from Narbal, he said. On the killing of an assistant sub-inspector of the Central Reserve Police Force in Wadipora, Budgam, Kumar said the attack was carried out by Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) as M-4 cartridges were found at the spot. "M-4 is usually used by JeM militants," he said. Responding to a question, Kumar said 170 to 200 militants are active in Kashmir.

On the alleged custodial death of a man, Irfan Ahmad Dar, in Sopore area of Baramulla last week, the IGP said the matter is being investigated even as a magisterial inquiry is on. He said two policemen have been suspended because Dar had fled from their custody.



AAROGYA SETU LOSSES SHEEN AS DOWNLOADS DROP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Noida, Sept 25: Prashant Kumar who lives in Noida sector 143 often goes to a nearby mall-cum-office complex with his family for some quick bites or gets a bank job done.

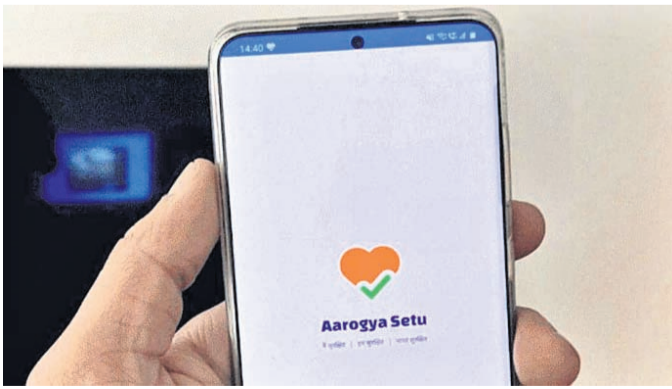
The complex does not allow anyone without checking the Covid status on Aarogya Setu app on the visitors' smartphones, along with the mandatory thermal temperature screening.

Whenever Kumar plans a visit to the complex, he updates the contact tracing app on his smartphone as well as the devices with his family members, filling the self-assessment form by just ticking all the boxes with "none of the above" symptoms. And the app declares them "safe".

As cities get unlocked and people begin to visit markets, eating joints, malls and other public places, this attitude is worrisome as this does not paint the real picture, especially if someone who is an asymptomatic Covid patient visits public places even with the 'safe' app tag on.

"Only update the app while visiting the complex and leave it without any use for days. It surprises me that it is so easy to just fill in wrong details and enter wherever you want with the 'you are safe' tag," Kumar said.

Kumar said he has even seen people who are not aware of the Aarogya Setu app, downloading it right in front of the complex, filling the self-assessment form quickly with 'None of the Above' symptoms and entering the premises, only to



remove the app later. According to latest data from app Intelligence Company Sensor Tower, Aarogya Setu downloads have decreased significantly in the country, as much as 90 per cent less last month compared to April when it was launched

with much fanfare. As Delhi Metro resumed services after more than five months due to Covid-19 restrictions, officials in some stations, including Noida Sector 16, were seen trying to block entry of people into the

GRIM SITUATION



A villager guides his cattle towards a safer place from a flood-hit village near Kampur in Nagaon district of Assam, Friday

UP cop ends life

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Moradabad (Uttar Pradesh), Sept 25: A head constable in Uttar Pradesh Police has died after allegedly shooting himself in the head with his service carbine at the Police Lines here.

Forty-two-year-old Mazhar Hussain, was posted at the Police Lines and had joined duty on Wednesday after a 10-day break. He was found dead on Thursday. Pitamber Singh, another head constable, who was present at the time of the incident, said, "I returned from duty and lay down in the barracks after my lunch. Mazhar was also lying in his bed just a few metres away. Suddenly, I heard a gunshot. Initially, I thought it was the sound of glass breaking, but when I took a closer look, I saw Hussain lying in a pool of blood."

Senior police officials, including IG (Moradabad range) Ramit Sharma, SSP Prabhakar Chaudhari and superintendent of police (city) Amit Kumar Anand, who were reportedly at a meeting in Police Lines at the time, rushed to the spot. "The forensic team has collected evidence from the scene. The family has been informed and the body is being sent for post mortem," IG Ramit Sharma said.

MCI goes, NMC takes charge

The Undergraduate and Postgraduate Medical Education Boards, Medical Assessment and Rating Board, and Ethics and Medical Registration Board have been constituted to help the NMC in day-to-day functioning

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 25: Putting into effect the 'historic reforms' in the field of medical education, the Union government has set up the National Medical Commission (NMC) along with four other autonomous boards while abolishing the MCI.

The Undergraduate and Postgraduate Medical Education Boards, Medical Assessment and Rating Board, and Ethics and Medical Registration Board have been constituted to help the NMC in day-to-day functioning. The four boards come into existence with effect from Friday. The decades-old Medical Council of India (MCI) stands abolished.

The reforms are aimed to steer the country's medical education towards a transparent, qualitative and accountable system. The basic change is that the regulator is now 'selected' on merit, as opposed to an 'elected' regulator.

Men and Women with impeccable integrity, professionalism, experience, and stature have now been placed at the helm to steer the medical education reforms fur-



ther: The notifications in this regard were issued on September 24.

Dr SC Sharma (retired Professor of ENT Department, AIIMS, Delhi) has been selected as the NMC Chairperson for three years. The NMC will also have 10 ex-officio members, including Presidents of the four autonomous boards; Dr Jagat Ram, Director of PGIMER, Chandigarh; Dr Rajendra A Badwe, Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai; and Dr Surekha Kishore, Executive Director, AIIMS, Gorakhpur.

In addition, the NMC will have 10 nominees from among Vice Chancellors of Health Universities from states/UTs, 9 nominees from state Medical Councils, and three expert members from diverse professions. Dr Smita Kolhe, a social worker working in the tribal

Melaghat area of Maharashtra, and Santosh Kumar Kraleti, CEO, Foot Soldiers for Health Pvt Ltd, have been nominated as expert members. Dr RK Vats will head the Secretariat as NMC Secretary.

The NMC will carry forward the reforms initiated by the Board of Governors under Dr VK Paul. Already, the number of MBBS seats has increased over the last six years by 48% - from around 54,000 in 2014 to 80,000 in 2020. The PG seats too have increased by 79% - from 24,000 to 54,000 in the same duration.

The NMC's key functions include further streamlining of regulations, ratings of institutions, HR assessment, and focus on research. Besides, it will work on the modalities of a common final-year exam after MBBS (NEXT- National Exit Test) to serve for both registration and PG entrance, prepare guidelines for fee regulation by private medical colleges, and developing standards for Community Health Providers to serve in primary healthcare with a limited licence for practice.

It may be recalled that the National Medical Commission Act, 2019 was passed by Parliament in August, 2019.

SHORT TAKES

Parole extended

Bhopal: Parole granted to 3,900-odd inmates of Madhya Pradesh jails in view of the coronavirus outbreak has been extended by 60 days and they are now expected to be back in their cells only by November-end, a senior official said Friday. Parole was granted after the Supreme Court in March asked states to take steps to decongest jails so as to contain the spread of COVID-19 in these facilities. The state has some 43,000 inmates in 125 jails, of which 3,900-odd were given parole and 3,000 were granted interim bail.

4 IEDs defused

Medininagar (Jharkhand): Security forces Friday defused four landmines allegedly planted by Naxalites on a road in Jharkhand's Palamu district, police said. The improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), weighing 12-15 kg each, were laid on a road near Mansuria village in Manatu police station area, Superintendent of Police, Sanjeev Kumar, said. "The landmines were laid to inflict casualties on the security forces. Investigation is on to find out which Naxalite outfit was behind it," the officer said.

Liquor seized

Medininagar: Police seized liquor worth around Rs 15 lakh from a warehouse in Palamu district of Jharkhand on Thursday and arrested three people, an official said here. During a raid at the warehouse in Bhagat Tendua area, police seized over 1,200 cartons of liquor, "which were to be sent to Bihar ahead of the assembly elections" in that state next month. Sub-Divisional Police Officer, Chhattarpur, Shambhu Kumar Singh said.

Priest booked

Muzaffarnagar: A priest and his brother were booked for allegedly stealing Rs 1.25 lakh cash and other valuables from a temple in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district, police said Friday. The priest, Sompal, of the Yogmaya temple at Miranpur town in the district and his brother Rampal are absconding after the incident that took place Wednesday evening, they said. The in-charge of the temple managing committee, Anurag Sharma, lodged a complaint against the duo on Thursday. According to the complaint, the donation boxes were broken open by the accused who decamped with cash and ornaments. Police said efforts are on to nab the accused.

national



The dates of the Bihar elections have been announced. The Lok Janshakti Party welcomes the Election Commission's decision. The 2020 elections will write a new story of betterment in Bihar
CHIRAG PASWAN | LJP PRESIDENT

DENGUE THREAT AMID PANDEMIC

There is 'no standard protocol' for treatment of patients who have contracted a double infection of COVID-19 and dengue, and a very 'finely balanced' approach is needed to tackle both the ailments at once, experts said



of the day quote

My heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and friends of Mr SP Balasubrahmanyam. His songs touched millions of hearts in many languages. His voice will live on. #RIPSPB



RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

Now we see two kinds of people. One who has tremendous fear for the coronavirus and the other who is very careless about the outbreak. The threat of spread of the virus is more from asymptomatic patients



UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHA CM

Despite endless announcements and directions of the Uttar Pradesh government, incidents of injustice, atrocities against Dalits and women, cases of rape and murder etc. have not stopped



MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

FARMERS' STIR CRIPPLES NORTH INDIA

AGENCIES

Chandigarh, Sept 25: Over 265 farmers' groups took to the streets Friday to block roads and carry out rallies and marches in a nationwide agitation against the controversial farm bills.

Agitating farmers blocked roads, including highways, to press the Centre for the withdrawal of the legislations, which are yet to get the

Oppn 'using farmers' shoulders to fire'

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday accused the Opposition of "misleading" farmers and "using their shoulders to fire" at his government over the farm bills for selfish political interests, and asserted that for the first time in decades, the Centre has framed laws that will benefit farmers and workers. Addressing BJP leaders and workers, Modi launched a powerful defence of farm as well as labour bills, saying the reforms will benefit the small and marginal farmers the most.



assent of the President.

Road blockades caused hardships to commuters in many states. Punjab farmers held the agitation as part of a "bandh" call against the Bills.

The "Punjab bandh" call is getting support from government employees' unions, singers, commission agents, labourers and social activists.

Shops, commercial establishments and vegetable markets at many places remained shut. Shopkeepers have been appealed to keep their shops shut in support of farmers.

Farmers Thursday had started a three-day "rail rook" stir against the Bills and squatted on tracks in parts of the state.

Chief Minister Amarinder Singh

had said the state government was with them in fight against the Bills and no FIR will be registered for the violation of Section 144 of the CrPC, which bars assembly of more than four people at a place.

While the ruling Congress and AAP have extended support to the protest, the Shiromani Akali Dal held a "chakka jaam" (road blockade) at many places in Punjab.

SSR DEATH CASE

NCB grills Rakul Preet, Deepika's ex-manager



AGENCIES

Mumbai, Sept 25: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Friday is questioning Hindi film industry's actor Rakul Preet Singh, Dharma Productions executive producer Kshitij Ravi Prasad and Deepika Padukone's former manager Karishma Prakash in connection with its probe into the drugs case related to death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

According to NCB officials, Rakul, Karishma and Kshitij deposed before the drug law enforcement agency in a drug case related to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. NCB officials said Rakul was the first to arrive at the NCB office followed by Karishma and Kshitij. They are being questioned about their alleged drugs chats that came to the fore after the NCB seized the electronic devices of several people. The NCB will be asking them whether they procured drugs for personal consumption or whether they were part of a drug syndicate. The NCB will also ask them about if they provided drugs to any other people in the entertainment industry and made some monetary gains. Reportedly, the NCB has also asked Dharma Productions ex-Assistant Director Anubhav Chopra for questioning in connection with the case. The development comes two days after the NCB summoned Deepika,

'NCB to summon Karan Johar soon'

In what looks like more trouble for the biggest names in Hindi film industry, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) could summon several top actors, directors and producers of tinsel town for questioning. The development comes when Siromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa has claimed that the drug law enforcement agency is set to summon filmmaker Karan Johar soon in a drug-related case. Sirsa had filed a complaint with the NCB chief Rakesh Asthana last week over the alleged drug party hosted at Johar's residence in 2019 where several top actors were in attendance including Deepika Padukone, Arjun Kapoor, Vicky Kaushal, Varun Dhawan, Ranbir Kapoor, Malaika Arora and several others.

Rakul, Shradha Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan and others. Earlier in the day responding to a question on whether Ranveer Singh will join the investigation with his wife Deepika, an NCB official said, "We confirm that we have not received any such request from any summoned person. The last email received from the concerned summoned person is only regarding joining the investigation."

SHORT TAKES

Landslide buries several homes

Shillong: Woman cricketer Razia Ahmed was killed and five others were missing when their homes were buried in a landslide triggered by incessant rainfall in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district Friday, officials said. Body of Razia, who has played for Meghalaya in several national-level cricket tournaments was retrieved from the debris.

Nine held for IPL betting in Kolkata

Kolkata: Nine persons have been arrested from different parts of Kolkata for allegedly betting on an Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket match, police said Friday. Acting on a tip-off, sleuths of the Kolkata Police's detective department conducted raids in Hare Street, Park Street, Jadavpur and Salt Lake areas Thursday night and arrested nine persons, mostly in their mid-20s, for allegedly betting on the previous day's IPL cricket match, a senior officer said.

India, Cambodia to boost defence ties

New Delhi: The Union government Friday held a webinar with officials of the Cambodian Army to boost defence cooperation, said an official statement. "Senior MoD (Ministry of Defence) officials from the Indian side and senior army officials from the Cambodian side participated in the webinar and spoke about enhancing defence cooperation between both the nations," the statement noted.

30.9% prefer Nitish as CM

New Delhi: The three-phase Bihar Assembly polls will be the first large-scale election in the country amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and as per the IANS C-Voter Bihar opinion poll survey, 30.9 per cent of the people are still backing Nitish Kumar as the most preferable candidate to be the Chief Minister again.

Engineer held

New Delhi: The CBI has busted an online child pornography racket being run on Instagram allegedly by a UP-based engineer, officials said Friday. The CBI has registered an FIR against Neeraj Yadav, a resident of Anpara in Sonbhadra, who has a BTech degree.

DEVOTION TO DUTY



Vice Admiral AK Chawla, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Southern Naval Command (SNC), reviews the parade during Naval Investiture ceremony, in Kochi

GOATS BECOME GUESTS AT WB POLICE STATION

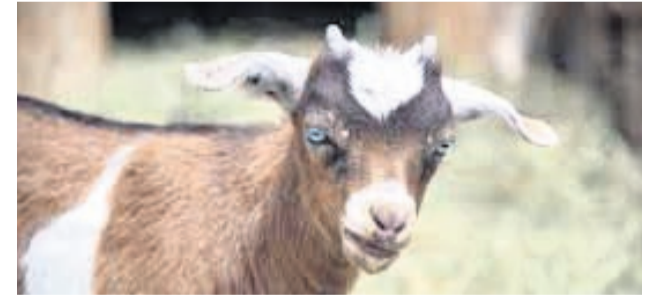
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bardhaman (WB), Sept 25: A humane gesture by some West Bengal police personnel has made a few goats albatross around their necks, as the trip has made their police station in Purba Bardhaman district its home for nearly a week, sources said Friday.

One of the goats has also given birth to two babies at Bhatar police station, prompting the policemen to assign a civic volunteer to take care of the kids. The police personnel, during night patrolling six days ago, had found

four goats, of which one was pregnant, wandering in Balgona Bazar area, an officer said. "After searching in vain for the owner, we decided to bring the trip to the police station as the area is notorious for theft of goats.

"However, now we are tired of feeding the goats and taking care of them. We are trying to find the owner, who can come and take back his/her goats after giving sufficient proof," the officer said. Police, which often launches manhunt for criminals, is now looking for the owner of the goats who could relieve them of the burden.



AYUSH ministry's 'Yoga Break' protocol resumes

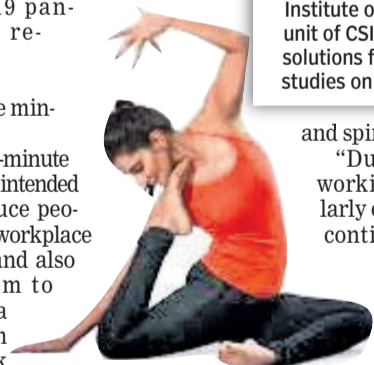
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: Activities for promoting the "Yoga Break" protocol of the Ministry of AYUSH, which were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resumed from Friday, the ministry said.

The five-minute protocol is intended to introduce people at the workplace to Yoga, and also help them to take a break from the work schedule and to refresh and re-focus, it said. Yoga is an ancient Indian discipline intended to bring balance and well-being of individuals to the physical, mental, emotional

Vasa, Guduchi for Covid management

The Ministry of AYUSH has approved a proposal for carrying out a clinical study to assess the role of Vasa and Guduchi in therapeutic management of symptoms in COVID-19 positive patients. This will be a randomised, open label three armed study, and will be conducted at the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi, in collaboration with the IGBI unit of CSIR, the ministry said. In view of the need for accelerated solutions for COVID-19, the Ministry of AYUSH has taken up systematic studies on different possible solutions through multiple channels.



and spiritual dimensions. "Due to the change in working habits, particularly on the computer and continuously sitting for long hours, the majority of the workforce is feeling work stress. Such stress may decrease the focus at work which may further hamper their efficiency and effectiveness," the ministry said. The Ministry of AYUSH in association with the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga

(MDNIY) had developed five minutes yoga break protocol to de-stress, refresh and re-focus the workers at the workplace in 2019. The protocol developed by a group of eminent Yoga experts contains stretching exercises like Tadasana, Kati Chakrasana, among others, and Nadisodhana Bhramari Pranayama and Dhyana.

The protocol was initially launched on a trial basis in January and was found to be effective, based on an analysis of feedback of participants.

Lecturer turns farm labourer to support family

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, Sept 25: Till March, Navnath Gore was a lecturer in a college in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, but the COVID-19-induced lockdown took away his contract job and reduced him to a farm labourer.

Gore (32), a resident of Nigdi, a small village in Jat tehsil of Sangli district, received the Sahitya Akademi's Yuva Puraskar for young writers in 2018, but that is hardly a consolation for a man who has fallen on hard times due to the outbreak of coronavirus.

Coming to terms with the reality of losing job, a situation faced by millions worldwide, he decided to work

as a farm labourer in his home district to support his family. A post-graduate in Marathi from the Shivaji University in Kolhapur district, Gore started writing his maiden novel 'Pesati' during his post-graduation days.

The book got published in 2017 and he won the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar the next year. "After I won the award, I received an offer from a college in Ahmednagar district where I started working as a lecturer on a clock hour basis and used to get Rs 10,000 per month."

"In February this year, my father passed away and the responsibility of my mother and a 50-year-old brother, who is physically challenged, came on my shoulders,"



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

said Gore. After the death of his father, Gore went home in February, but could not go back to his teaching job as the lockdown was imposed in March-end to curb the COVID-19 spread.

"I came back to my village in February. Since my job was contractual, the income from the college also stopped." "With no income, it was difficult for us to make the ends meet. I then started taking up odd-

jobs and also started working as a farm labourer in the region," he added. Gore, who travels long distances in the region for work, said he earns around Rs 400 if he works full day. Gore recalled his student days in Kolhapur, where, while pursuing his post-graduation, he used to work as a security guard at an ATM centre to support his family.

'Pesati' is a story of a youth, who against all odds, completes his education. The book also depicts the plight of farmers. Maharashtra minister Vishwajeet Kadam, who also manages Bharti Vidyapeeth, said he has offered a job to him with the Pune-based group of educational institutes.

Bihar to have rallies with distancing norms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 25: Political parties and candidates can hold rallies as part of their campaigning for the Bihar assembly polls and the grounds where such meetings will be held will have white circles to ensure distancing norms.

Addressing a press conference to announce the schedule for Bihar assembly elections, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said he wants to dispel doubts that there will only be virtual campaigning in the state.

The 'propaganda' that only virtual meets will take place during campaigning is way off the mark, he said. Arora said the district election officers have already identified places where gatherings can take place. The exercise of putting markers to ensure distancing norms is on.

District election officers and district superintendents of police should ensure that the number of attendees does not exceed the limit prescribed by the State Disaster Management Authority for public gatherings, an EC statement later said. DEOs will depute sector health regulators to oversee that COVID-19 instructions are being followed during such meetings.

Political parties and candidates concerned should ensure that all COVID-related requirements such as face masks, sanitisers and thermal scanning are fulfilled during each of these election activities, the commission said. Anyone violating the norms will face action under relevant sections of the Disaster Management Act and the Indian Penal Code, the EC warned.

As part of restrictions put in place to check the spread of the virus, the EC has reduced the number of people who can under take door-to-door campaigning.

With the arrival of autumn and winter, "twinemic of Covid-19 and the flu" could overburden the bloc's health systems and lead to more loss of life

STELLA KYRIAKIDES | EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY



FB SUSPENDS THREE FAKE RUSSIAN ACCOUNTS

Facebook Inc said it has dismantled three fake accounts which could be used by Russia's intelligence services to leak hacked documents as part of efforts to disrupt the upcoming US election



of the day quote

I can only speak for Russia. Russia will in no way build its policy on the basis of taking into account these aggressive demands that have no legal force

SERGEI LAVROV | RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

I must say, enough is enough! You (the United States) have created enough troubles for the world already

ZHANG JUN | CHINESE AMBASSADOR TO THE UN

Pakistan's sole objective as a member of the UNHC is to distract the attention of the international community from serious human rights violations committed by it against its own people

VIMARSH ARYAN | FIRST SECRETARY, INDIAN MEA

SHORT TAKES

\$66mn allocated for Beirut victims

Beirut: Lebanese President Michel Aoun has approved \$66.1 million in the 2020 state budget to be paid to the people affected by the August 4 Port of Beirut explosions. The distribution of the money will be based on the lists prepared by the Lebanese army, giving priority to those who have been affected the most by the explosions. The explosions, caused by 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate detonating at a warehouse in the port, killed around 190 people, wounded 6,000 others and led to at least 300,000 being homeless.

Global nCoV cases cross 32.1 million

Washington: The overall number of global coronavirus cases has crossed the 32.1 million mark, while the deaths have increased to more than 981,000, according to the Johns Hopkins University. As of Friday morning, the total number of cases stood at 32,135,220 and the fatalities rose to 981,754. The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 6,976,215 and 202,762, respectively, according to the CSSE. India comes in the second place in terms of cases at 5,732,518, while the country's death toll soared to 91,149.

Nepal landslides kill 12, 9 missing

Kathmandu: At least 12 people died and nine others went missing in separate incidents of landslides triggered by heavy rainfall in western and eastern Nepal Thursday, officials said. Heavy to moderate rainfall continued to lash Nepal since Tuesday. According to the meteorological department, the downpour will continue till Saturday. Nine people, including three children, died and four others went missing after their house was swept away by a landslide in Waling municipality of western Nepal.

Donald Trump's niece sues him

New York: Mary Trump, the niece of Donald Trump, sued the US President Thursday, accusing him and other family members of cheating her out of tens of millions of dollars from an inheritance. The complaint filed in a New York state court in Manhattan against Donald Trump, his sister Maryanne Trump Barry, and the estate of his brother Robert Trump, who died in August, accused the defendants of "rampant fraud" and conspiracy. Jay Sekulow, a lawyer for Trump, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Trump infuses politics into his choice for the Supreme Court

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Sept 25: President Donald Trump is infusing deliberations over his coming nomination of a new Supreme Court justice with political meaning as he aims to maximise the benefit before November 3 and even secure an electoral backdrop should the result be contested.

Even before Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death last week, the President had tried to use likelihood of more Supreme Court vacancies to his political advantage. Now, as he closes in on a decision on her likely replacement, Trump has used the vacancy to appeal to battleground-state voters and as a rallying cry for his conservative base. He also is increasingly embracing the high court - which he will have had an outsized hand in reshaping - as an insurance policy in a close election.

Increases in mail, absentee and early voting brought about by the pandemic have already brought about a flurry of election litigation, and both Trump and Democratic nominee Joe Biden have assembled armies of lawyers to continue the fight once vote-counting begins. Trump has been open about tying his push to name a third justice to the court to a potentially drawn-out court fight to determine who will be sworn in on January 20, 2021. "I think this will end up in the Supreme Court," Trump said

SUPREME COURT NOMINATIONS ARE NEVER ENTIRELY DEVOID OF POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS, BUT TRUMP'S DECISION HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY WRAPPED UP IN A CHARGED POLITICAL MOMENT

BARELY SIX WEEKS FROM ELECTION DAY, AND AS MILLIONS OF AMERICANS ARE ALREADY VOTING, TRUMP AND HIS ADVISERS HAVE TRIED TO USE THE COURT VACANCY TO HELP DELIVER TRUMP ANOTHER TERM IN OFFICE

TRUMP AND HIS AIDES, APPEAR TO HAVE SET THEIR SIGHTS ON NOMINATING JUDGE AMY CONEY BARRETT OF INDIANA, WHO WAS AT THE WHITE HOUSE TWICE THIS WEEK

Wednesday of the election, adding, "And I think it's very important that we have nine justices." It's a line echoed by Trump allies, including Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who said Thursday, "I think that threat to challenge the election is one of the real reasons why it is so important that we confirm the Supreme Court nominees, so that there's a full Supreme Court on the bench to resolve any election challenge."

Barely six weeks from Election Day, and as millions of Americans are already voting, Trump and his advisers have tried to use the court vacancy to help deliver Trump another term in office.

Supreme Court nominations are never entirely devoid of political considerations, but Trump's decision has been particularly wrapped up in a charged political moment.

Within hours of Ginsburg's death, Trump made clear his intention to nominate a woman in her stead, after previously putting two men on the court and as he struggles to mitigate erosion in support among suburban women. In discussing his five-person short list, he's been sure to highlight some from election battlegrounds that he's aiming to win this fall as much as their jurisprudence. "I've heard incredible things about her," he said of Florida's

Barbara Lagoa, a day after Ginsburg's death. "I don't know her. She's Hispanic and highly respected. Miami. Highly respected." In an interview with a Detroit television station, he volunteered that hometown Justice Joan Larsen is "very talented."

Trump was even considering a meeting with Lagoa this week in Florida, where he plans campaign events. The appellate court judge was confirmed last year by the Senate in a bipartisan vote and has been promoted for the court by GOP Gov. Ron DeSantis and others as a nominee with more cross-the-board appeal.

\$150mn for H-1B One Workforce training



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Sept 25: The US will invest \$150 million in training for middle-to-high-skilled H-1B occupations in key sectors, including in information technology which employs tens of thousands of Indian professionals.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. According to the Department of Labor, prominent among these sectors are information technology, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, transportation, wherein the H-1B One Workforce grant programme would be used to upskill the present workforce and train a new generation of workers to grow the future workforce.

The coronavirus pandemic has not only caused disruptions in the labour market, but also forced many education and training

providers and employers to rethink how to deliver training, the department said in a statement.

In this grant programme, the department's Employment and Training Administration has set out to streamline funding and resources to encourage a more integrated workforce system that will push the applicants to provide an innovative mix of training strategies, leveraging innovative modes of training delivery, including online, distance and other technology-enabled learning.

Through local public-private partnerships, the grantees will deploy training to provide individuals in their communities with skills necessary to advance career pathways to employment in middle-to-high-skilled H-1B occupations within key industry sectors.

The training models will include a broad range of classroom and on-the-job training, customised training, incumbent worker training, registered apprenticeship programmes and industry-recognised apprenticeship programmes.

"The US Department of Labor is challenging communities to think as 'One Workforce'," Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training John Pallasch said.

"In the current job environment, it is critical that local organisations work as one, instead of independent parts of a process. Our goal is to create seamless community partnerships to build career pathways for local job seekers to enter middle-to-high-skilled occupations in the cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing and transportation sectors," he said.

RALLYING FOR FUTURE



People attend a 'Fridays For Future' protest rally at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Germany, Friday

WITH EYE ON NOBEL, TRUMP WANTS TO MEDIATE BETWEEN INDIA, CHINA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, Sept 25: With eye on Nobel Peace Prize, United States President Donald Trump wants to mediate the dispute between India and China, even though his offers have been turned down.

Asked by a reporter Thursday about his nomination for the prize for promoting Israel-Arab relations, he said, "I know that China now, and India, are having difficulty, and very - very substantial difficulty. And hopefully they'll be able to work that out. If we can help, we'd love to help."



Trump was nominated by a member of Norwegian Parliament mainly for helping the United Arab Emirates and Israel establish diplomatic relations, a breakthrough in lowering hostilities in the Middle East. Trump said, "It was an honour to be nominated for two Nobel Prizes. So that was an honour. And we'll see what's happening."

As part of the question about his nomination, the reporter also asked, "Does your global foreign policy also checkmate China? It stops them from increasing the defence of China globally?"

Instead of answering it directly, Trump veered off into the offer of help to India and China. Both countries had turned down an earlier offer he made in May to mediate between them. Norwegian MP, Christian Tybring-Gjedde, also claimed that Trump played "key role in facilitating contact between conflicting parties."

Queen Elizabeth's finances hit, royal budget may lose £15m

IN MARCH, THE UK WENT INTO LOCKDOWN AGAINST THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND ROYAL FINANCES HAVE BEEN DENTED BY THE LOSS OF SIZEABLE INCOME GENERATED FROM PUBLIC VISITS TO THE PALACES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

London, Sept 25: Britain's Royal household Friday defended taxpayer-funded trips, including a golfing jaunt by the beleaguered Prince Andrew, as it warned of a financial hit stemming from the coronavirus pandemic.

Unveiling the annual financial report of Queen Elizabeth II's household, officials also said Prince Harry and his wife Meghan were now paying commercial rent on their UK residence at Windsor Castle, after quitting the royal frontline.

The Sovereign Grant, which pays for the monarch's official duties and upkeep of royal palaces, came to 82.4 million pounds (\$105 million) in the financial year ending in March 2020, a slight rise from the year before.

In March, the UK went into lockdown against the coronavirus pandemic and royal finances have been dented by the loss of sizeable income generated from public visits to the palaces. Losses to the Royal household's core budget will come to 15 million pounds over the next three years, according to Michael Stevens, who as Keeper of the Privy Purse is the queen's treasurer.

A separate budget for long-term repairs designed to avert a "catastrophic failure" to the fabric of Buckingham Palace, the queen's main residence in London, will suffer a shortfall of 20 million pounds.

By law, the Sovereign Grant cannot go down year-on-year, and the monarchy has become increasingly cost-conscious given wider public



scrutiny of its affairs. But Stevens said British taxpayers would not be asked to cough up for the additional shortfalls, at a time

when millions are suffering a drop in income or outright loss of their jobs.

"In responding to both these financial challenges we have no intention of asking for extra funding and will look to manage the impact through our own efforts and efficiencies," he told reporters.

The Royal Household has already instituted a freeze on pay and new hiring, and is "actively looking at cutting non-essential expenditure", a senior royal source added.

ROYAL SPORTS

The annual report itemised the costs of royal trips over the past financial year including 15,848 pounds incurred for a charter flight to take Prince Andrew to a golf club in Northern Ireland in July 2019. Another charter flight was deemed

necessary for Princess Anne to attend a rugby match between Italy and Scotland in Rome in February, at a cost of 16,440 pounds.

While the queen's only daughter is a widely popular and industrious member of the family, her second son Andrew's reputation has been shredded by his association with the late Jeffrey Epstein, a convicted paedophile.

Both royals were serving in an official capacity as patrons of relevant organisations.

Officials were also grilled about a claim by Prince Harry's spokesman this month that the queen's grandson has paid back 2.4 million pounds of taxpayers' money used to renovate Frogmore Cottage, his home in the grounds of Windsor Castle.

