



IN THE SOUP

Actor Amyra Dastur has refuted claims by actor Luviana Lodh that she used to procure drugs

LEISURE P2



DELHI CHOKES ON

Air pollution in parts of the city reached 'severe' levels Saturday - a day after US Prez termed Indian air as 'filthy'

TWO STATES P7



BIDEN'S PROMISE

Joe Biden says if elected as President, he will ensure free COVID vaccination for all Americans

INTERNATIONAL P10

DUSSEHRA GREETINGS
To all our readers, advertisers and well-wishers
— EDITOR

HOLIDAY NOTICE
The offices and press of Orissa POST will remain closed October 25 and 26 on account of Dussehra. Hence, there will be no edition of the paper October 26 and 27. However, OP Web edition will be available to readers on both the days.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



You needn't do this, prabhu. My increased spending on masks, soap, etc. will soon kill me.

SHORT TAKES

Farooq Abdullah is Gupkar prez

Srinagar: The recently floated People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), a conglomerate of mainstream Kashmir parties for the reversal of constitutional changes made in Jammu and Kashmir August 5 last year, has been given a formal structure Saturday. National Conference president Dr. Farooq Abdullah has been appointed as the president of the alliance, PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti as vice president and People's Conference leader Sajad Lone as the spokesperson and Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Yousuf Taragami as convener.

11 killed, 20 hurt in Kabul bombing

Kabul: A suicide bombing at an education centre in a western neighbourhood of Afghanistan's capital Kabul Saturday killed at least 11 people and injured 20 others, local police said. The explosion took place around 4:30 pm (local time) outside Kowsar-e-Danish, a private education centre, when a suicide bomber detonated his explosive vest after being intercepted by the security guards of the facility, Kabul police spokesman Ferdous Faramarz told reporters.

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP. MAX	31.6°C 33.4°C
TEMP. MIN	24.6°C 23.2°C
Humidity	97% 85%
Rainfall	Nil Nil
	Partly cloudy sky

Relief to small borrowers

CENTRE ROLLS OUT SCHEME FOR INTEREST WAIVER ON LOANS UP TO ₹2 CRORE

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 24: The Finance Ministry has announced a scheme for ex-gratia payment of difference between interest for the designated class of borrowers to provide relief in times of Covid-19 pandemic.

The scheme issued by the Department of Financial Services provides the difference between compound interest and simple interest for six months of loans up to ₹2 crore.

The scheme can be availed by designated class of borrowers from March 1 to August 31, 2020.

Those having loan amounts above ₹2 crore are not eligible. "Borrowers, who have loan accounts having sanctioned limits and outstanding amount of not exceeding ₹2 crore (aggregate of all facilities with lending institutions) as on February 29 shall be eligible for the scheme," it said.

The class of borrowers included: housing loan, education loans, credit card dues, auto loans, MSME loans, consumer durable loans and consumption loans.

As per the scheme, the lending institutions shall credit the difference between compound interest and simple interest with regard to the eligible borrowers in respective accounts for the said period irrespective of whether

IN NUTSHELL

- The scheme provides the difference between compound interest and simple interest for 6 months
- The lending institutions shall credit the difference for the period irrespective of whether the borrower fully or partially availed the moratorium
- The lending institution after crediting the amount will claim the reimbursement from the Central govt
- All banks and NBFCs are covered under the scheme
- The class of borrowers includes housing loans, education loans, credit card dues, auto loans, MSME loans, consumer durable loans and consumption loans



the borrower fully or partially availed the moratorium on repayment of loan announced by the RBI March 27, 2020.

The lending institution after crediting the amount will claim the reimbursement from the Central government. All banks and NBFCs are covered under the scheme. The government has clarified that the payment does not constitute a legal, contractual or equitable liability of the Central government and is only an ex-gratia payment to borrowers in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a major relief to thousands of in-

dividuals and MSME borrowers, the Centre in an affidavit had informed the Supreme Court that it has taken a decision to waive "interest on interest" on loans up to ₹2 crore during the six-month moratorium period.

The affidavit said the only solution is that the government should bear the burden resulting from waiver of compound interest.

"After careful consideration and weighing all possible options, the respondent Union of India has decided to continue the tradition of hand-

holding the small borrowers," said the Centre. The Centre said it is impossible for the banks to bear the burden resulting from waiver of compound interest without passing on the financial impact to the depositors or affecting their net worth adversely which would not be in larger public interest.

The affidavit said: "The government, therefore, has decided that the relief on waiver of compound interest during the six-month moratorium period shall be limited to the most vulnerable category of borrowers."

Centre 'responsible' for onion price hike

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare minister Ranendra Pratap Swain held the Union government responsible for the skyrocketing onion prices and said that the situation may continue for another two months.

Speaking to reporters here, Swain said the Centre notified Farm ordinances a few weeks ago and also amended the Essential Commodities (EC) Act removing cereals, pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes from the list of essential commodities. As a result, no state government has any legal power to control the hoardings, monitor the transportation and stock in the market, said the minister, adding: "Now, all these things are being governed by the Central ordinance. The onion price hike is impact of the new law on the markets."

Though many states including Odisha protested the move of Centre, Centre enacted the law without taking opinions from the state governments which was a gross violation of our federal structure and the fiasco has now led to the steep rise in the prices of the



bulb vegetable across the country, said Swain.

"Earlier, we had the right to ensure stock verification and also control the transportation of the commodities, but they are no longer in our hands due to amendment to the EC Act," he stated.

As the price hike is hurting the consumers, he said, the state government has asked the district Collectors to make sure that onion price remains under control in the state.

Another reason for onion price hike is heavy rainfall in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh. Due to damage to the standing crop in these states, fresh supply of the new harvest to the markets has been disrupted, he said.

The retail price of one kg of onion has already breached ₹80-mark and is likely to touch ₹100 a kg in the next few days.

The Centre notified Farm ordinances a few weeks ago and also amended the Essential Commodities Act....As a result, no state government has any legal power to control the hoardings, monitor the transportation and stock in the market

RANENDRA PRATAP SWAIN | FOOD SUPPLIES AND CONSUMER WELFARE MINISTER

DEVOTION IN THE AIR



A priest performs 'Maha Ashtami' puja at Balu Bazaar-Binod Bihari Puja pandal in Cuttack, Saturday

46K non-Aadhaar pensioners turn up

The nos. are contrary to the data that the state has around 11L such pensioners

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: The Department of Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD), the nodal department handling pensions in the state, has said that less than 50,000 pensioners without Aadhaar turned up for pensioners recently.

This is against the claim of 11 lakh pensioners who were enrolled in different Central and state government pension schemes. A total of 11 lakh pensioners in the state as per government data, were not having Aadhaar or had not seeded them with their pension accounts.

Several organisations had been claiming that 11 lakh pensioners were likely to be deprived of their pensions if Aadhaar was made mandatory for pension payment.

The government earlier this year had issued notification asking all the District Social Security Officers (DSSOs) to release pensions only to pensioners with Aadhaar cards.

The department had to take back the decision after several civil society members opposed the



WE KNEW THE GROUND REALITY. THE NOTIFICATION FOR MANDATORY AADHAAR WAS BROUGHT TO WEED OUT THE FAKE BENEFICIARIES. BUT WE HAD TO WITHDRAW OUR ORDER AFTER PROTESTS

SENIOR OFFICIAL | SSEPD

mandatory Aadhaar linkage. Many CSOs had feared that it may deprive the elderly, widows, differently-abled and others who get pensions, be it under the state scheme of Madhu Babu Pension Scheme (MBPS) or the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) of the Union government, of their pension.

"We knew the ground reality. The notification for mandatory Aadhaar was brought to weed out the fake beneficiaries. But we had to withdraw our order after protests. However, the recent data is promising," a senior official from the department said requesting anonymity.

He added, "There were claims of 11 lakh non-Aadhaar pensioners not getting pensions due to mandatory Aadhaar regime. But

in the latest disbursement, only 46,000 such people without Aadhaar turned up. This raises our doubt."

The department told this reporter that it has already asked all DSSOs to enroll all left out pensioners with Aadhaar and seed them with their respective pension accounts.

During the past few years, the Rural Development Ministry and other Central ministries have been asking the state and the SSEPD department to shift towards Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of pensions and ensure 100 per cent Aadhaar seeding of pensions for the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) database.

DRAGON IS ON A LAND-GRABBING SPREE IN NEPAL

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 24: China has illegally occupied Nepal's land at several places spreading over seven bordering districts and Indian intelligence agencies have sounded an alert in New Delhi.

The agencies have flagged that Beijing is fast moving forward and further pushing Nepali boundaries by encroaching more and more landmass. "The actual scenario could be worse as the Nepali Communist Party (NCP) is trying to shield the expansionist agenda of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)," an internal intelligence agency report pointed out.

The report also talked about the Survey Department of Nepal flagging China's attempts to grab land before Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli which was ignored. It stated that Nepali districts which are victims of China's land-grabbing plan include Dolakha, Gorkha, Darchula, Humla, Sindhupalchowk, Sankhuwasabha and Rasuwa.

China has pushed the international boundary 1,500 metres towards Nepal in Dolakha including pushing the boundary pillar Number 57 in the Korlang area in Dolakha, which was previously located at top of Korlang.

Similar to Dolakha, China has relocated Boundary Pillar Numbers 35, 37 and 38 in Gorkha district and Boundary Pillar Number 62 in Nampa Bhanjyang in Solukhumbu. The first three pillars were located in Rui village and areas of Tom River.



Though Nepal's official map shows the village as a part of Nepali territory and citizens of the village have been paying taxes to Nepal government, China had occupied the region and merged it with the Tibet Autonomous Region of China in 2017. Numerous houses that used to be a part of Nepal have been now taken over by China and assimilated into the Chinese territory. The Nepal Ministry of Agriculture also recently came up with a report highlighting multiple cases of land grabbing by China.

Take note of failed vax trial: WHO

The agency warns nations against giving green light to Gilead Science Inc's remdesivir

AGENCIES

Geneva/Zurich, Oct 24: Health officials reviewing Gilead Science Inc's remdesivir against Covid-19 should consider all evidence, including a trial in which the medicine failed, before giving it the green light, the top WHO scientist said Friday.

US regulators appeared not to have done so when approving the drug this week, Soumya Swaminathan told a news conference.

The US Food and Drug Administration Thursday approved Gilead's antiviral drug for treating patients hospitalised with Covid-19, making it the first and only



drug approved for the disease in the United States.

The FDA decision came a week after the release of the results of the World Health Organization's Solidarity trial, which concluded remdesivir has little or no impact on a patient's chances of surviving Covid-19.

The FDA said its approval was based on three trials, including a 1,062-patient study by the National

Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, which found that remdesivir reduced hospital stays to 10 days from 15 days, and helped reduce the risk of death in some patients who were receiving oxygen. The drug did not improve overall survival.

"The Solidarity results do not refute these findings of benefit to patients," the FDA said in a statement posted on its website.

Remdesivir is also approved for treatment of patients with severe Covid-19 in Japan, Taiwan, India, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates and the European Union. Gilead is allowing generic companies to manufacture the drug for supply to 127 low-income countries.



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER DOING WELL AFTER HEART SURGERY

Hollywood star and former politician Arnold Schwarzenegger says he is recovering well after a heart surgery. This is the second time that the 73-year-old actor has had a heart surgery in the past two years, reports *variety.com*.

THE MEG 2 TO BE DIRECTED BY BEN WHEATLEY

Filmmaker Ben Wheatley will direct the sequel of the 2018 prehistoric shark thriller hit, *The Meg*. The announcement of the sequel comes two years after *The Meg* grossed \$530 million worldwide, reports *hollywoodreporter.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you may feel caught between the devil and the deep blue sea: while you must please your beloved, you can't afford to annoy your boss. It's okay once in while to walk the tight rope, smiles Ganesh. Life only gives you what you can handle.

TAURUS
There is a strong possibility that you may switch over to a newer and more exciting job today, predicts Ganesh. You are likely to spend lavishly while on a shopping spree. In the evening, you will understand the importance of pampering loved ones with gifts, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today, you need to find ways to integrate your feelings with your logical and analytical observations, says Ganesh. In nutshell, it's time you became a bit practical. Otherwise, the afternoon will prove to be too emotional for you. Fortune will favour you if you manage to keep your emotions in check.

CANCER
It is quite likely that the elderly will shower care and love on you, predicts Ganesh. Financially, you will probably collect certain overdue payments in the afternoon. Later in the day, your wooing may pay rich dividends, says Ganesh.

LEO
When like-minded people come together, a lot of good things happen. And when the group happens to be as trustworthy as it is brilliant, it is sheer magic, says Ganesh. Today, in all probability, you will be at the beneficial end of a luminous meeting of minds.

VIRGO
Domestic troubles brewing for some time now might be sorted today. But put in extra efforts, says Ganesh. Plans may be to open a joint account or start a venture in partnership. Evenings may be spent in socialising, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
Some feelings last forever, and so do some relationships. Bear this in mind and look forward to the beginning of an enduring relationship today, says Ganesh. The joy of companionship shall spill over to the workplace as well, and keep you very delighted and elated today. But you need to watch out for spats with people around you, especially neighbours and acquaintances.

SCORPIO
Children will be drenched in the rain of love and affection you shower on them, says Ganesh. A special treatment awaits you at work. Your spouse will be a permanent source of happiness and abundance. You shall feel whole and complete in the evening, predicts Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
The welfare of your children is going to be of supreme priority for you today. Afternoon promises to bring good news about their academic performance. Later in the day, meditation and prayer may take the lion's share of your time.

CAPRICORN
Everybody has some regrets in life. You will have some too, and today may just be the day for it, says Ganesh. You will put your best efforts at work to make things better for others, and although the purpose may be met, your hard work may not bring you the kind of appreciation you were waiting for.

AQUARIUS
You may get a chance to fulfill some promises today. Those of you in the legal profession will find things going well for them. You aim to excel in whatever you do, and if nothing else, you will derive huge work satisfaction.

PISCES
Your family will be the cause of annoyance to you in the morning. However, as the day progresses and you find out just how much of an annoyance the workplace can be, your thinking processes ought to shift right back to your heart. There never was a crusader who set foot upon the holy land as gratefully as you will, when you return home.

Jacqueline's unique celebration on hitting new milestone

Mumbai: Actress Jacqueline Fernandez celebrated garnering 46 million followers on Instagram by sharing topless pictures. The three pictures Jacqueline has posted to thank fans have gone viral. "Love you, thank you," she wrote as caption.

Jacqueline wears white trousers, with peach and pink roses partially covering her upper body. She poses against a white background.

DJ Snake dropped a crown emoji commenting on the post.

Jacqueline shared a while back that she was gearing up to resume work. In a video she posted on Instagram Stories, she is seen practicing yoga while a friend helps her pack and curate looks for her travels.

Jacqueline will be next seen with Salman Khan in *Kick 2*. She also has *Bhoot Police*, which features Saif Ali Khan and Arjun Kapoor, followed by *Cirkus* alongside Ranveer Singh.



Taapsee tired of roasting her curly locks

Mumbai: Taapsee Pannu is tired of straightening her curly locks for her upcoming film, *Haseen Dillruba*.

The actress shared her 'curly hair' problems in an Instagram post. "Last few days on #HaseenDillruba and that's my face when I have to roast my hair to straighten them everyday," she wrote along with a picture in which she gives a puffy-faced expression. She tagged her post with

#CurlyHairIssues, #LookChange and #StressfulStraight.

Reacting to the post, a user commented: "Hahah, I can relate to you. 'You look cool in curly hair,' another user commented.

Haseen Dillruba is directed by Vinil Mathew. Vikrant Massey and Harshvardhan Rane are also a part of the murder mystery.

Taapsee also has *Rashmi Rocket* and *Shabaash Mithu* coming up.

Amyra refutes drug charges, considers legal action

Mumbai: The legal representative of actress Amyra Dastur has refuted claims by actress Luviana Lodh that Amyra used to procure drugs. A statement issued by her lawyer declares that Amyra is considering legal remedies against such accusations.

Actress Luviana Lodh had issued an Instagram video statement Friday declaring that she sought divorce from filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt's nephew Sumit Sabharwal because, she alleged, she had discovered that Sabharwal was into drug running and supplying women to directors. Luviana added that Bhatt, who was aware of all this, has been harassing her and her family ever since. Among claims that Luviana made in her video was: "I have filed for a divorce on getting to know that he (Sumit Sabharwal) supplies drugs to actors like Amyra Dastur and Sapna Pabbi etc."

Amyra's legal team clarified that the said video contains false statements and has been published with an aim to defame and cause damage to the reputation of the Issaq actress.



Footfairy: A spine-chilling psycho thriller

The film maintains a relaxed pace in a bid to let the incidents on screen seep into the audience mind space and also to render a slow burn impact

Footfairy is simply the most engaging noir attempt in Hindi film industry in a while. The triumph lies in treatment. The film manages to be sinister and shocking, and conveys a grizzly plot without being too blatant about it.

Psycho stories face the risk of running into clichés. There are only so many paths the plot can take if it revolves around a killer who derives warped pleasure out of taking lives of young women. Footfairy does a value-add to the idea. The serial killer in the story is obsessed with collecting the severed feet of the victims. The characterization seems loosely drawn from real-life serial killer Jerry Brudos, also known as the Shoe Fetish Killer.

The mysterious killer in debutant



FILM REVIEW

writer director Kanishk Verma's film asphyxiates the victim, neatly cuts off her feet and leaves the body in a red trolley bag. The killer operates in and around local train stations in Mumbai. Footage of CC TV cameras have revealed little be-

yond the fact that the killer moves around in khaki pants and a dark hoodie.

That backdrop is crisply established within the first 10 minutes. The CBI assigns the case to officer Vivan Deshmukh (Gulshan), who begins investigation with his assistant Harsh (Ashish Pathode).

Cast:
Gulshan Devaiah, Sagarika Ghatge, Kunaal Roy Kapur, Ashish Pathode;
Direction:
Kanishk Verma

As Vivan and Harsh set out to nab the culprit, there are twists galore.

The film maintains a relaxed pace in a bid to let the incidents on screen seep into the audience mind space and also to render a slow burn impact. Yet the narrative

never appears sluggish.

Writer-director Verma thinks differently while ending his story. It is an unusual end by conventional Hindi film norms, and quite fascinating. What's more, it actually leaves scope for a sequel.

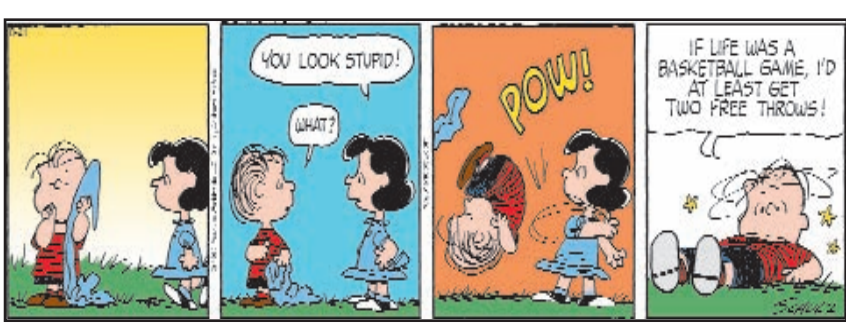
The cast also leaves nothing to complain about. Gulshan Devaiah is brilliant in his rendition of the soft-spoken cop who can also be boorish to juniors, driven by frustration when things hit rock bottom.

Sagarika Ghatge and Kunaal Roy Kapur are effective in small roles that render movement to the plot. Almost the entire cast seems like an apt fit in their respective roles.

Footfairy is an automatic recommendation if you dig murder mysteries or psycho thrillers. The film deserved a big screen release before airing on television.

AGENCIES

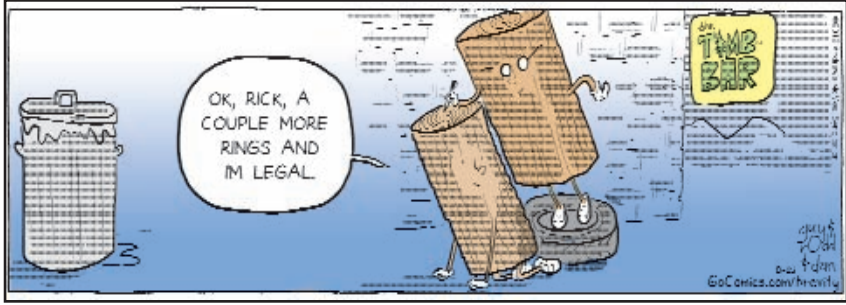
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

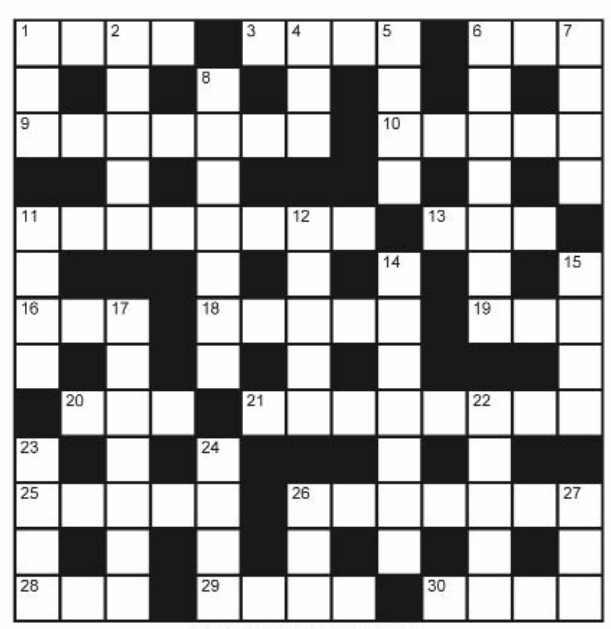


BREVITY



FUN post

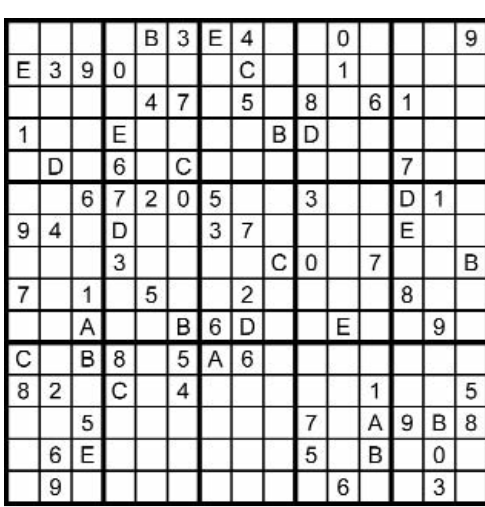
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Chew the fat
 - 3 Ballet move
 - 6 Snoop
 - 9 Educator
 - 10 Side road
 - 11 Identify
 - 13 Service award
 - 16 Small pouch
 - 18 Pulitzer Prize
 - 19 Resinous deposit
 - 20 Twosome
 - 21 Menace
 - 25 Oyster's prize
 - 26 Tornado
 - 28 Fish story
 - 29 Newborn
 - 30 Comprehend
- Down**
- 1 Bunk
 - 2 Stockpile
 - 4 Miss the mark
 - 5 Taverns
 - 6 Lumber processing plant
 - 7 Toy that does tricks (2-2)
 - 8 Blatant deception
 - 11 Work station
 - 12 Vacation spot
 - 14 Cheese dish
 - 15 Computer image
 - 17 Bravery
 - 22 Giant
 - 23 Iridescent stone
 - 24 Dieter's target
 - 26 Place to unwind
 - 27 Like sushi

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

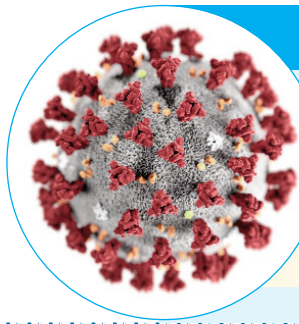


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



FOR GOOD LUCK

Devotees offer earthen lamps at Gada Chandi temple in Cuttack on the occasion of Mahashtami, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	4,26,62,304	3,15,16,906	11,51,622
India	78,14,682	70,16,046	1,17,956
Odisha	2,79,582	2,62,031	1,229

LAW ADMISSIONS

NRIS quota affront to worthy candidates: HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Cuttack, Oct 24: The Orissa High Court has observed that a reservation for the non-resident Indian sponsored (NRIS) category for admission to national law universities is 'unconstitutional' and an 'affront to the meritorious candidates' who work hard to secure seats in these institutes through a common entrance test.

The court also said the consortium of national law universities (NLUs), the Bar Council of India and all other stakeholders involved in the process should revisit the NRIS reservation and prepare a proper regulation while implementing this quota.

Hearing a petition, a division bench comprising Justice Sanju Panda and Justice S K Panigrahi Tuesday observed that the NRIS category is like a 'reservation for the elite class'.

"...we are constrained to observe that the NRIS category is an affront to the meritorious candidates who toiled day night to secure seats in NLUs through CLAT (Common Law Admission Test)," the bench observed.

The candidates belonging to the category of NRI or NRIS, who are very low-ranked in the merit list, often get seats in the NLUs, while the general candidates having secured better marks lag behind the reserved students and get disappointed, the court said.

"This is like the reservation for the elite class and this dubious category of quota is unconstitutional," the



MAJOR OBSERVATIONS

THE CANDIDATES BELONGING TO THE CATEGORY OF NRI OR NRIS, WHO ARE VERY LOW-RANKED IN THE MERIT LIST, OFTEN GET SEATS IN THE NLUS, WHILE THE GENERAL CANDIDATES HAVING SECURED BETTER MARKS LAG BEHIND THE RESERVED STUDENTS AND GET DISAPPOINTED

THE HC SAID THE CONSORTIUM OF "NLUS, THE BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA AND ALL OTHER STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS SHOULD REVISIT THE NRIS RESERVATION AND PREPARE A PROPER REGULATION WHILE IMPLEMENTING THIS QUOTA

THE STAKEHOLDERS, ESPECIALLY THE BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA WHICH IS MANDATED TO REGULATE THE LEGAL EDUCATION IN THIS COUNTRY, WERE ASKED TO ENSURE THAT A UNIFORM AND WELL-DEFINED PARAMETER IS ADOPTED SO THAT THE MERITORIOUS CANDIDATES DO NOT SUFFER

court said. The division bench also observed that the eligibility and selection under NRIS category are 'unregulated, illegal and arbitrary'.

Citing an observation by the Supreme Court in a case, the High Court said that "admission under this category is given to less meritorious students just because they

could afford to pay the higher fees". The court called upon the stakeholders especially the Bar Council of India which is mandated to regulate the legal education in this country, to ensure that a uniform and well-defined parameter is adopted so that the meritorious candidates do not suffer.

Complete bridge over Kanupur project, NHA told

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: The state Water Resources department has urged the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to take measures to complete the much awaited Kanupur irrigation project in Keonjhar district.

According to the department sources, the dam and spillway works of the irrigation project are almost complete except the river gap portion. River closing is a vital activity for impounding the reservoir and this has been inordinately delayed due to delay in the construction of bridge over the spill channel of Kanupur irrigation project by NHAI, official sources said here Saturday.

Despite repeated reminders, the NHAI is not showing any interest to take up the bridge work, which is resulting cost overrun.

Water Resources secretary Anu Garg has recently written to NHAI chairman urging the later to take appropriate action for early completion of the bridge.

NHAI was supposed to execute the four-lane bridge project over Kanupur spill channel at 173.325 km of Rimuli-Roxy-Rajamunda section of NH-215 (new NH-520). However, it failed to take up the work after several meetings and correspondence at different levels. Therefore, the construction of the bridge came under the purview of Kanupur Project Authority after obtaining the consent of NHAI.

Accordingly, the project authority started the work for the tendered cost of ₹40.68 crore of which NHAI agreed to bear 80 per cent. But, later on, the cost of the bridge was revised to ₹100.53 crore due to change in its design. As the NHAI didn't agree to bear its share of 80% of the revised cost, the work stopped.

In order to resolve the issue, the then Water Resources secretary had held a meeting with NHAI chairman in March 2019 at New Delhi. The secretary stated in the meeting that since NHAI remained firm in bearing 80 per cent of the initial cost of ₹40.68 crore, the work undertaken by state government was terminated. The then secretary requested the NHAI chairman to take up the work at their level.

Swargadwar renovation to be over by March

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: The Secretary to Chief Minister and 5T VK Pandian, Saturday visited Puri and reviewed the progress of development of Swargadwar. A target was set to complete the work by March end.

After the devastating cyclone Fani, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had announced his commitment to develop Puri as a world heritage city. As part of the 5T initiative, a slew of projects have started since then to give Puri its rightful place in the world tourism map.

Redevelopment of Swargadwar constitutes an important part of the initiative. Accordingly the work has been started with fund-



5T Secretary VK Pandian (left) inspects a Gosala in Puri, Saturday

Gosala for stray cattle and rehabilitation of beggars. Stray cattle have been shifted to Gosalas to make the Badadanada clean. About 700 cattle have been shifted from Badadanda to Gosalas and another 400 will be shifted within one month. Funding for next five years for feed and maintenance has been tied up from CMRF.

Similarly, 500 beggars have been rescued from Badadanda and rehabilitated in various institutions. Out of the rescued, 150 have been traced and reunited with their families. Funding for this purpose is being met from the state government resources. Pandian also visited Banki river mouth and Puri blue flag beach.

ଶ୍ରୀକୃଷ୍ଣାୟ ନମଃ

ପବିତ୍ର ଦଶହରା ଅବସରରେ କେନ୍ଦୁଝର ଜିଲ୍ଲା, ରାଜ୍ୟ ତଥା ଦେଶବାସୀଙ୍କୁ ଆତ୍ମିକ ଅଭିନନ୍ଦନ ଜଣାଉଛି।

ଜଗତ ଜନନୀ ମା' ଦଶଭୂଜାଙ୍କ ଅପାର କୃପା ସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟ ପାଇଁ ପୁଷ୍ପ, ଶାନ୍ତି ଓ ଉଲ୍ଲାସ ସୃଷ୍ଟି କରିବା ସହ ମହାମାରୀ କରୋନାର ବିନାଶ କରାନ୍ତୁ ।

ସ୍ଵର୍ଗାଦର ମହାକୁଡ଼

ପୂର୍ବତନ ବିଧାୟକ, ଚମ୍ପୁଆ, କେନ୍ଦୁଝର

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- Protect the elderly
- Continue practicing Social distancing
- Take care of at least one family in need
- Help your co-workers
- Follow the guidelines of Ayush Dept. to increase your immunity
- Download the Aarogya Setu App to help curb the spread of virus
- Respect the frontline warriors - medical staff security, sanitary personnel

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COVID CASES DOWN, BUT FATALITIES STILL A CONCERN

PNN/AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: The state Saturday reported 1,695 fresh cases of novel coronavirus, which took the tally in the coastal state to 2,79,582 while 15 fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 1,229, a Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department official said.

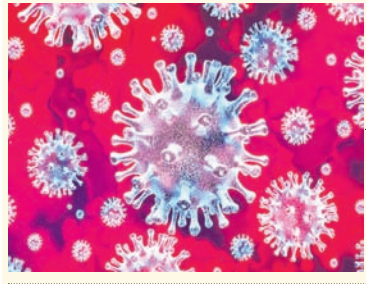
Of the new cases, 986 were reported from various quarantine centres and 709 people detected during contact tracing, he said. Khurda district, of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, recorded the maximum number of fresh cases at 183, followed by Balasore 128, Sundargarh 110 and Cuttack 103.

Taking to Twitter, the H&FW department said, "Regret to inform the demise of fifteen #COVID19 positive patients while under treatment in hospitals."

Two new fatalities each were registered in Khurda, Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh districts, and one each in Angul, Balasore, Bhadrak, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Kandhamal, Puri, Sambalpur and Gajapati. Fifty-three other Covid-19 patients died in the state due to comorbidities, the official said.

Odisha currently has 18,882 active cases, while 2,59,418 people

STATE PICTURE



OF THE NEW CASES, 986 WERE REPORTED FROM VARIOUS QUARANTINE CENTRES AND 709 PEOPLE DETECTED DURING CONTACT TRACING

KHURDA DISTRICT RECORDED THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF FRESH CASES AT 183, FOLLOWED BY BALASORE 128, SUNDARGARH 110 AND CUTTACK 103

TWO NEW FATALITIES EACH WERE REGISTERED IN KHURDA, MAYURBHANJ AND SUNDARGARH DISTRICTS, AND ONE EACH IN ANGUL, BALASORE, BHADRAK, BARGARH, JHARSUGUDA, KANDHAMAL, PURI, SAMBALPUR AND GAJAPATI

have so far recovered from the disease, the official added. The state has conducted over 42.80 lakh sample tests for Covid-19, including 40,033 Friday, he added.

Meanwhile, as many as 182 new Covid-19 cases were detected under Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) limits in last 24 hours, the civic body said Saturday.

While 44 of them are quarantine cases, the remaining 138 are local contact ones. Meanwhile, 276 persons who earlier tested positive for the disease have recovered.

A total of 63 new COVID-19 cases were detected under Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) limits in last 24 hours, CMC said Saturday. While 17 of them were home quarantine cases, 11 were from institutional quarantine centres and the remaining 35 were local contact ones.

According to a notification issued by the civic body, as of Saturday, 14,487 persons have tested positive for COVID-19 in Cuttack out of which 13,555 have recovered. There are 866 active cases and 66 persons have succumbed to the disease.



Traffic at Janpath in Bhubaneswar was chock-a-block as people and vehicles came out in hordes for Durga Puja and Dussehra festival Saturday

Youth bludgeoned to death in Cuttack, past enmity alleged

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Oct 24: Miscreants bludgeoned a man to death in full public view at Gholapur village under Banki police limits in Cuttack district Saturday.

The deceased has been identified as Gobind Behera (28) of Gholapur village. Police's preliminary investigation revealed that the crime was the fallout of a past enmity.

According to sources, Gobind was on his way to the village market Saturday morning riding on his bike when miscreants hurled a country-made bomb at him.

As he fell down, the rogues did not let him stand up and hit him with stones. They continued hitting him until he lay motionless. The entire incident took place in the crowded market but none dared to come to Gobind's rescue. They chose to be mute spectators. After the incident, the fear-stricken businessmen downed their shutters and the market bore a deserted look.

On being informed, police reached the spot, recovered the body for post mortem and launched an investigation.

BIKE LIFTER GANG BUSTED; 35 VEHICLES SEIZED, 5 HELD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Oct 24: Jagatpur police under Twin City Police Commissionerate busted a five-member motorcycle looters' gang in Cuttack City and seized 34 motorcycles and a Tata Magic vehicle from their possession Saturday.

The accused were identified as Bhakta Charan Roul of Tangi, Ratikanta Pradhan and Jagabandhu Roul of Mahanga, Prasant Samal of Jagatpur and Pratap Sethy of Purighat area in Cuttack city.

A case was registered in this connection and the accused produced in court, informed DCP Prateek Singh at a press meet held at the Jagatpur police station, Saturday.

The DCP said on basis of a complaint lodged by Sadanand Sahu at Jagatpur Police Station September 14, 2020 alleging loot of a Tata Magic vehicle, the police registered a case and launched an investigation. The police also set up check points Friday evening and frisked vehicles.

While checking, the police personnel searched a pick-up van



The accused inside the Jagatpur police station and the seized bikes (inset)



and came to know that the vehicle was the same one stolen from Jagatpur area. The police searched another person riding a scooter on Birupa bridge near Jagatpur and nabbed them.

The DCP said Bhakta Charan Roul and Jagabandhu Roul were detained after brief questioning. The duo was professional looters. This was revealed during verification of their antecedents.

Bhakta and Jagabandhu admitted to have looted motorcycles from Cuttack, Jajpur, Khurda,

Mayurbhanj and other districts as well as from Bhubaneswar. They conceal these bikes in Keonjhar and later sell them to interested buyers by changing the colour of the vehicles.

Jagatpur police on the basis of their statements visited Keonjhar and recovered 34 bikes from different places and arrested three more persons. Further investigations are on, he added.

Youth held for extortion

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Oct 24: Badambadi police arrested a youth on charge of demanding extortion from shopkeepers in Chhatra Bazaar area in the city, Saturday.

The accused was identified as Jyoti Ranjan Barik, 29, alias Lipuna of Barik Sahi in Shankarpur. A case was registered in this connection and the accused produced in court.

Barik regularly collects ₹200 from every vendor in Chhatra Bazaar area. He assaults the vendor who fails to obey his orders. A complaint was lodged in the Badambadi police station following which he was arrested. Four criminal cases are registered in his name in Badambadi and Madhupatna police stations.

Car falls into canal in Cuttack, five critically hurt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Oct 24: In a road mishap late Friday night, at least five persons were severely injured when the vehicle they were travelling in fell into a canal on Phulnakharaniali road.

The injured persons were admitted to Niali community health centre (CHC) but later, they were shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital as their condition deteriorated

According to sources, the driver of the car which was on its way to Phulnakharaniali lost control over the vehicle at Haridapada Square under Balipatna police limits on the state highway (SH-60) in Cuttack district and fell into a roadside canal.

Locals rescued the injured and sent them to Niali community health centre (CHC) for treatment. Later, the injured were shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital as their conditions deteriorated.

On being informed, Balipatna police reached the accident site, seized the vehicle and initiated an investigation. Notably, three persons including former MP Amar Pradhan's son had died October 17, after the speeding car (OD-14 C-0007) they were travelling in skidded off and fell into a canal in Cuttack.

ILLEGAL QUARRYING

Tangiria hills may vanish from map



POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Oct 24: Tangiria hills at Jariput revenue village under Tangi tehsil of Khurda district would soon vanish from the map due to illegal stone quarrying, alleged the locals.

The villagers have lodged a complaint in this regard with Khurda Collector and pleaded for stern action against the mafia involved in the illegal stone quarrying at Tangiria hills. According to the villagers, some influential people have been quarrying stone from Tangiria hills for last several days without approval from the authorities. The illegal blasting at the hills often causes mild tremors in nearby villages.

"The walls and roofs of many houses in the nearby villages have developed cracks due to illegal blasting at Tangiria hills. The illegal stone quarrying is also causing se-

vere air pollution in the locality," alleged the locals.

The villagers claimed that the stone mafia started exploiting Tangiria hills following frequent raids by the special task force (STF) at various illegal stone quarries under Khurda tehsil.

"The mafia have deployed hundreds of trucks to transport stone from the hills. The issue has been raised with the local administration time and again. But, the authorities are yet to take action on the illegal quarrying," said the villagers.

It is learnt that Gopinath Paikaray, a resident of Biribadi, filed a case and lodged a complaint with the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) seeking immediate steps to stop the illegal quarrying.

"We would be forced to take to street if the administration does not take steps against the stone mafia," the villagers said.

Plaint in SEIAA against illegal tree felling, soil lifting

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: Complaints were filed at the State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA), State Pollution Control Board (SPECB) and other authorities against illegal felling of trees and lifting of soil in Angul district.

The aggrieved villagers of Badajhara village in Parajang Tahasil in their communication to the SEIAA said that for the construction of NH-53, hundreds of truckloads of morrum have been illegally lifted by the contractors



engaged for the highway construction.

"It is pertinent to mention here that morrums being a minor mineral cannot be lifted from any source without environment clear-

ance from State Environment Impact Assessment Authority and consent from the State Pollution Control Board in addition to the approved mining plan," the communication said.

It also added, "Hence the lifting of morrums from all these sources are illegal and warrants appropriate action by the Tahasildar to the extent of seizure of vehicles, criminal proceedings against the person concerned and prohibiting the persons from lifting the morrums."

The complaint alleged that the local administration has failed to dis-

charge their responsibilities and illegal activities continue to thrive under the nose of the government.

"Further in absence of requisite approvals necessary for obtaining environment clearance, consent to operate, consent to establish, environment management plan, District Mineral Survey Report and mining plan all such illegal mining must be stopped," it said.

The complaint has sought intervention by the authorities and initiation of criminal proceedings against the people involved in these activities.

Irregularities in postal ballots: BJP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Saturday alleged irregularities in the conduction of postal ballot voting in the poll bound Balasore Sadar and Tirtol Assembly constituencies.

Party leader Leekhashri Samantsinghar Saturday said the whole system of postal ballot voting for the COVID infected, elderly, differently-abled and others had been mired in controversy and lacked transparency.

"There are massive irregularities in the conduction of postal ballot voting. There were earlier 8600 names of eligible candidates for the same which dropped to 1700. The government officials are misusing their powers in the whole process," she said.

She said despite the reluctance of many voters to cast their votes through postal ballots, many were forced to use that medium to cast

ASSEMBLY BYPOLLS

The BJP leader said despite the reluctance of many voters to cast their votes through postal ballots, many were forced to use that medium to cast their votes

The Congress party meanwhile attacked the ruling party for fetching details of people in the name of COVID vaccine during the election season in two regions in the state

their votes. "The booth level agents of political parties have not been taken into confidence in the process. We have lost our faith in Returning Officer in Balasore Sadar who seemed to be working to ensure the BJD wins the election," she said. She demanded removal of the

returning officer and other officials involved in the whole process for a better and transparent voting process in Balasore Sadar.

The Congress party meanwhile attacked the ruling party for fetching details of people in the name of COVID vaccine during the election season in two regions in the state.

"Vaccines are yet to be out and the government has started collecting details of voters. These have been done keeping in mind the current elections and future elections. This raises suspicion among people. Doesn't the government have information on such issues. This is propaganda," a Congress leader said Sunday.

Both the opposition parties are now sending their star campaigners in the poll-bound constituencies while the ruling party is leaving no stone unturned. Several BJD leaders are also roaming around the constituency including their ministers to woo the voters.

Lady dupes man of ₹10L on pretext of helping poor

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: Female cyber fraudsters have duped a person of more than ₹10 lakhs on the pretext of helping the poor people in India during the pandemic. The victim, Sidhartha Shankar Pani, 45, of Parjang area in Dhenkanal district, lodged a complaint with the cyber police station at the state Crime Branch in Cuttack a few days back.

According to sources, Pani received a text message from a lady who identified herself as Miss Maurine Alex of London, UK on his Facebook messenger. She sought friendship in her text message of the victim which he accepted too.

Subsequently, they entered into a friendship and used to chat on Facebook, Whatsapp and other social media platforms. Meanwhile,

she expressed her willingness to help the poor and distressed people in India who have been undergoing financial hardships due to the pandemic. The con-woman also informed Pani that she would reach India shortly and sought his help for the purpose of helping the poor.

On September 29, Pani received a call from the lady who informed about her arrival at New Delhi Airport. A few minutes later, the lady again called up Pani and sought his cooperation as she was facing difficulties in converting her draft of ₹2, 50,000 into Indian currency. Subsequently, Pani received another call from another lady who identified herself as the Customs Department official at New Delhi Airport.

Pani also found out from the 'true caller app' that the phone number was registered in name of

Indian Air Port. She allegedly pursued Pani to help Miss Maurine following her instructions as everything will be done according to the Indian government procedures.

Later, the victim started depositing various amounts in different bank accounts as instructed by the fraudsters to cover the alleged draft. Pani lost ₹10, 36,200 to the cyber criminals on the pretext of income tax, currency conversion charges, Bank reflection code certificate charge, beneficiary anti terrorism and anti money laundering certificate charge for exchange of draft. However, he smelt a rat when they continued to demand more money repeatedly calling him on different pretexts. He even received a fake email from Reserve Bank of India mentioning the procedure in connection with the deposit of draft in his account.

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Angul draws up master plan to boost tourism



The district administration has now planned to boost the sector in a major way. It is in the process of preparing a master plan to fully explore the tourism sector

As tourist season has set in, the administration is on its toes to set things right to infuse life into the now-dormant sector. The hospitality and travel sectors dependent on tourism is equally hit, a report said

The report said Satskosia is a key tourist destination in the district. But the pandemic has dealt a blow to the site as the footfalls have come down. Apart from Satskosia wildlife, water reservoirs like Rengali and Derjeng are good tourist draws in the district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Oct 24: The industrially rich Angul district is also endowed with environment and cultural tourism. But for several reasons this sector has not been able to develop as expected due to apathy of the administration. It was alleged that the administration has failed to cash in on it. The Covid difficulties have also dealt a setback to the footfalls at various tourist destinations.

However, the district administration has now planned to boost the sector in a major way. It is in the process of preparing a master plan to fully explore the tourism sector.

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The report said Satskosia is a key tourist destination in the district. But the pandemic has dealt a blow to the site as the footfalls have come down. Apart from Satskosia wildlife, water reservoirs like Rengali and Derjeng are good tourist draws in the district.

On the other hands, there are

several scenic spots in the district, which have not yet come to the limelight for lack of infrastructure development. The district known as a treasure trove of natural bounties has much more potential in the sector. The scenic beauty of Deulajhari in Athmalick is potential enough to attract tourists.

Other spots like Jagannath temple at Purunagarh, Maa Ramchandi Peetha at Koshala, Narayan sevashram at Kukudanga, Bhinkunda at Kaniha hold much importance for the tourism sector. The dense forest and Khuludi waterfall of Palahara charm tourists throughout the year.

The state government has recognized 13 tourist spots in the district. Besides, a number of other scenic places are there in the district up till now hidden from tourists as basic infrastructure has not been developed till date.

Experts observed that the district could make full use of its tourism potential if the tourist spots get government recognition and infrastructure development in

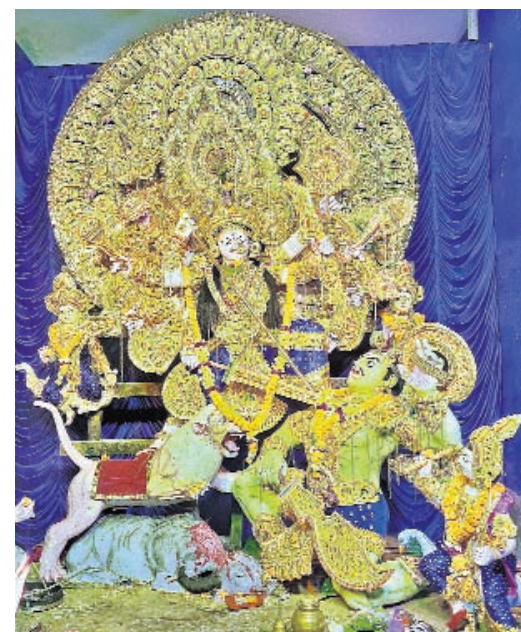
the communication sector is developed. Despite the government's claim to make the tourism sector a priority, the tourism industry is yet to be fully utilized in the district, they said. The existing natural environment in many parts of the district is more conducive to tourism, but there are several factors that put the brakes on the development of this industry.

However, Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain has come forward to boost the sector. Soon after joining, the Collector has toured various subdivisions and blocks, exploring the tourism potential of the unexplored spots.

He has directed the officials to draw up a master plan for development of tourism.

He has even formed a team to identify potential tourism spots. The team will make a list of these spots in each block and point out the scope of tourism. He directed the officials to submit the list within a month and prepare a blueprint thereof, it was stated by the administration.

LACKLUSTRE DURGA PUJA



Amid Covid restrictions, Goddess Durga being worshipped without gatherings of devotees at Pandara in Bhubaneswar (L) and at Goudabada sahi in Puri (R)

OP PHOTO

Voters of 3 GPs in Tirtol to boycott bypoll

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tirtol, Oct 24: Residents of three panchayats under Tirtol block in Jagatsinghpur district have decided to boycott the upcoming bypoll.

Several villages of Gopalpur, Baritola and Katara panchayats do not have an all-weather road and a few kutcha roads in the area have run down sans adequate maintenance.

Most of the villages under these panchayats become completely inaccessible during rainy season.

Even as electioneering intensified in the area and senior leaders of different political parties thronged Tirtol Assembly constituency segment ahead of bypoll November 3, the irate voters have taken such a decision as a token of protest.

"A canal road connecting local villages to the main road has dilapi-



dated over years. We have been running from pillar to post and the local administration is in limbo", some villagers alleged.

Elections do not bring any betterment for the villagers. Critical patients face utter difficulties in reaching nearby hospitals. The children suffer a lot while going to schools during rainy season. As a result of which they decided to boy-

cott the bypoll, the villagers added. On the other hand, campaigning by three major political parties is in full swing.

BJD has roped in 30 star campaigners for the polls. The star campaigners like Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Pranab Prakash Das, Somya Ranjan Patnaik, Ananta Das, Debi Prasad Das, Satyabrata Tripathi (Kuna Tripathy) will take

A canal road connecting villages to the main road is in bad shape over years, but local administration takes no step, villagers alleged

part in a phased manner.

Similarly, for Bharatiya Janata Dal (BJP) Samir Mohanty, Jual Oram, Dharmendra Pradhan, Pratap Chandra Sarangi, Baijaya jay Panda, Suresh Pujari and Ragunath Mohanty are the star campaigners for the BJP. Communist Party of India (CPI) has engaged Ashis Kanungo, Dibakar Nayak, Ramakrushna Panda, Prasant Mishra, and Sura Jena as star campaigners.

2 wounded in boar attack in Angul

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, Oct 24: Two persons were wounded when a wild boar attacked them at Badatribida village under Kaniha block of the district Friday.

The injured were identified as Maharga Roula and Katu Roula. They were busy in farming in the backyard of their house when the wild animal attacked them. Maharga and Katu having sustained grievous wounds on their hands and legs were hospitalised.

Two go missing in as many days in Bargarh main canal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bargarh, Oct 24: A day after a 70-year-old man went missing in Bargarh main canal, another youth went missing in the same canal Saturday morning.

The missing youth has been identified as Omprakash Bhoi (22) of Talipada village in the district. While he was taking a bath in the canal he was swept away by the current and went

missing, it was learnt.

Omprakash and his cousin had gone to the canal for a bath. Omprakash was swept away by the current of the canal. On being informed, firemen immediately launched a search operation which was on at the time of filing this report.

Two persons going missing in the Bargarh main canal in two consecutive days have shocked the local residents here.

3-month eco fest in Bhitarkanika

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Oct 24: In a bid to attract tourists to Bhitarkanika, the second largest mangrove ecosystem of the country, the state tourism department for the first time will organise Eco Retreat festival at Bhitarkanika National Park from December 1 to February 28.

A meeting to review preparedness for the festival was held in collectorate Friday.

The three-month festival will be held on the banks of Baitarani river at Nalitiapatia village, six km from the park. Kendrapara Collector Samarth Verma said as many as 15 luxury tents will be erected for tourists with water and electricity supply as well as parking facility. Cultural programmes, food festival, trekking in the forest and visit to nearby Pentha beach will be part of the festival.



The tourism department will soon start online booking of tents which will be set up at a place adjacent to the lush green mangrove forests with primates.

A photo exhibition and screening of films on Bhitarkanika and its wildlife will also be organised during the festival. Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary within Bhitarkanika is the world's largest rookery of Olive Ridley turtles. In an effort to attract more tourists, the authorities have built cottages at Habelikothi, Gupti and Danagamal.

Divisional forest officer Bikash Ranjan Dash said, "Bhitarkanika is a Ramsar site and home to a great variety of wildlife including spotted deer, saltwater crocodiles, water monitors, pythons and Sambars. It also houses a large number of migratory birds in winter: We selected Nalitiapatia village for the festival so as not to disturb the wildlife in the park." Dash added, "We are also giving emphasis on sustainable tourism to generate employment for locals. The festival will boost the income of local people."

YOUTH STABBED TO DEATH IN GANJAM

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, Oct 24: A youth was allegedly stabbed to death following a minor altercation at Banthapalli village under Digapahandi police limits here in Ganjam district Saturday morning.

The deceased was identified as Bachan Singh. He had many cases pending against him at various police stations.

Bachan had allegedly picked up a quarrel with a youth in his locality over past enmity with the latter. Soon they engaged in fistcuffs. The scene turned uglier as the youth whisked out a knife and attacked Bachan multiple times before fleeing the scene.

Bachan was rescued by local people and rushed to MKCG Medical College and Hospital. But it was too late. The doctors there declared him received dead.

Covid hits theatre artistes hard

POST NEWS NETWORK

Odapada, Oct 24: Auditoriums across Odisha were full of activities with theatre artistes and behind-the-scenes technicians having their hands full before the onset of coronavirus. The scene, however, has changed for worse starting March 2020 with the pandemic induced lockdown rendering thousands of people associated with theatres jobless.

The situation in Dhenkanal district is no different. The theatre artistes here are passing through a difficult phase with many of them staring at bankruptcy. Most find it difficult to make both ends meet. They continue to await the government nod to go back to the-



atres again.

"None but a theatre artiste can tell how s/he feels after staying away from stage for so many days. The auditoriums are closed for last eight months. Many have lost their only source of earning," Shatrughna Mati, a senior theatre director and comedian said.

Echoing his feelings, Binod Mohanty, a senior theatre actor, said, "Most of the theatre actors here live in penury. We get our remuneration when our audiences appreciate our acting. The theatre has taught us to struggle. However, the present situation of not being able to stage plays has made our life miserable. We had never ever thought of such a situation. We are eagerly waiting for the day when we will win our battle against coronavirus and stage plays again."

Kamakshya Prasad Rana, an advocate by profession but theatre actor by passion said, "We are waiting for the day when we will be allowed to stage plays again."

Theatre director Madhusudan Sindhia rued, theatre artistes are now in a spot. "With their earning sources getting dried, they are not in a position to fill the stomach of their family members," he added.

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Action on illegal stone quarries soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, Oct 24: Officials of the Koraput district administration asked tehsildars Friday to take stringent action against those involved in illegal blasting of stone quarries. This development came after three persons died due to illegal blasting at the stone quarry October 16 at Okilaguda area under Gunupur

police limits in Rayagada district. Sources said illegal blasting is being carried out in over 30 quarries in Koraput district that do not have valid permission.

"Respective tehsildars were ordered to ensure strict adherence to law by stone quarries in Koraput district, which are carrying out blasting. Obtaining necessary clearances from the district adminis-



tration prior to functioning is a must. Stringent actions will be

taken otherwise for flouting stipulated norms", District Collector Madhusudan Mishra said.

Notably, the Odisha government Wednesday had suspended Gunupur tehsildar Laxminarayan Sabat in connection with the stone quarry explosion. The massive explosion took place October 16 at Okilaguda area under Gunupur police limits in Rayagada district.

Chhatar Jatra passes off peacefully sans devotees

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, Oct 24: In a first, the famous Chhatar Yatra of Devi Manikeshwari, the presiding deity of Kalahandi, was held amid Covid-19 restrictions and tight security without devotees here in Kalahandi district, Saturday.

A procession of the representative deity of Manikeshwari called 'Chhatar' left for Jenakhal to the west of Bhawanipatna town at 4.14 am after completion of all secret rituals and animal sacrifice before the deity at the main temple.

An animal sacrifice was also held at the Budharaja (Bhairav) temple on the north gate of the main temple before the start of Chhatar Yatra.

The ceremonial 'Chhatar' returned to the temple in a procession passing through the 4-km long road to the main temple under tight security and similar restrictions to prevent congregations.

Even no musical troupes were allowed to participate in the



procession except for the Jena Baja troupe and the Ghumura troupe permitted by the Kalahandi royal palace.

As per the order, no devotee was allowed to enter the temple and take part in rituals during the event. The age-old practice of animal sacrifice by devotees along the road on the occasion was not reported so far as the animal sacrifice was banned after the High Court order.

The district administration had clamped Section-144 and sealed all

entry points to Bhawanipatna town from October 23 to October 24 to prevent people and passenger vehicles from entering the town.

The district administration also prevented people from coming out of their houses by sealing all entry points of the streets.

The entry points of streets from Jenakhalpada-Pardesipada-New bus stand-Ghodaghat Chhack-Palace Road (Jagannath Mandirpada)-Manikeshwari temple and Statue Chhack in the town were

sealed on the occasion.

As per traditions, every year at the Manikeshwari Temple, hundreds of animals and birds are sacrificed on the road when the Chhatar of Maa Manikeshwari is taken out in a procession from the main temple to Jenakhal, a distance of 4 km, in the town.

As a result, the roads acquire a tinge of red due to the merciless killing of thousands of animals and birds by the devotees. The devotees claim that sacrifice of an-

imals propitiates the deity who in turn fulfills their wishes.

However, the age-old practice of animal sacrifice in Chhatar Yatra for propitiating the deity was restricted this year fearing spread of Covid-19 among the people.

Around 10 platoons of police force comprising an additional SP, four DSPs, 14 police inspectors, 19 sub-inspectors, 32 ASIs, 74 constables, 70 home guards including SOG, DVF and CRPF jawans maintained law and order during the festival.

District Collector Gavil Parag Harshad, SP B Gangadhar, sub-collector Susant Singh, ASP Mani Patra, DRDA PD Bimbadhar Sahu and host of administrative and police officials supervised the peaceful completion of the festival.

Notably, Orissa High Court had imposed a ban on animal sacrifice in and around the Devi Manikeshwari temple during Chhatar Jatra January 6. Later, the Supreme Court clamped an interim stay on the HC order.

Hilltop villages seek rehab, development

POST NEWS NETWORK

Patrapur, Oct 24: People living in hilltop villages in the upstream area of Baghalti reservoir under Patrapur block of Ganjam have long been suffering in the absence of basic facilities. They have demanded their rehabilitation and basic facilities.

Reports said, scores of tribals live in miseries at Beherapur, Jharbad, Baniabasa, Elgal, Maduaguma and Sisirgunda. They recently met sub-collector V Kirtivasan about their

perennial problems.

"Though we have been living in utter miseries, the administration has always ignored our problems. We have surfed due to Titli while the government has not yet provided assistance for our damaged houses. The roads leading to the villages need to be developed," they pointed out.

The sub-collector assured the villagers to make a visit the hilltop village and steps will be taken for renovation of roads and compensation for the Titli damage.

Cops attacked during raid in Bhadrak

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, Oct 24: In an untoward development, locals Saturday attacked a police team that was conducting a raid on a fake tobacco manufacturing unit at Holasahi area under Purunabazar police limits in Bhadrak.

After getting reliable information about the fake manufacturing unit, a team of Purunabazar police conducted the raid in the afternoon.

As the police seized spurious chemicals, machines and packaging materials in use from the tobacco unit, a group of residents assaulted the police team.

The irate mob allegedly beat the cops and vandalised their van. With situation being out of control, another team of police was called. Tension erupted in the locality and police were not allowed to conduct the raid. More police forces were deployed in the area.



Higher always higher! Let us never be satisfied with what is accomplished.

THE MOTHER

Make voting safer

India's electoral system, run by the Election Commission of India, is one of the world's wonders. It was not too long ago (and in fact many of us can remember those days) when Bihar's elections were associated with violence and booth capturing. A series of innovations from the Election Commission under TN Seshan and his successor MS Gill resulted in violence reducing considerably. And also the introducing of machines ensuring that voting happened smoothly and counting quickly.

Many things have changed in the democratic space in India but it is still the case that all parties believe or assume that the autonomous Election Commission run by 300 officials in Delhi is independent of the government. The EC also has an international reputation because of its accomplishments and officials from Russia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Indonesia, South Africa, Bangladesh, Thailand, Nigeria, Namibia, Bhutan, Australia, Afghanistan and even the United States have visited it to see how they can improve their own systems better.

Voting systems in older democracies come from tradition and are difficult to change both from the point of view of the State and the voting citizen. It is for this reason that the broad and quick reforms and their wide acceptance in India are all the more remarkable.

Having accepted all this it must be asked if we cannot further reform the process and also learn from practices that other nations follow that might help us. Bihar is going to the polls in three phases between October 28 and November 7. This splitting of voting will help the State machinery manage its resources such as security personnel better and reduce the load on the EC.

However, the phase-wise voting will not be of any use in reducing the risks of Covid transmission. The number of people queuing up to vote in any given polling station will remain the same. Is there a way that this can be addressed? We could look at what is happening in America, which is going to the polls on November 3 to elect their president. As of October 24, about 5.5 crore Americans had already voted for that election. This was a figure that was 40 per cent of the total votes that had been polled for the presidential election in 2016. Meaning that these 40 per cent people would not have to show up in the queue on November 3, greatly reducing the risk of Covid spread overall.

In the days that lead up to the election, it is possible that another 30 per cent or more people will also have voted in advance and that will reduce the stress and risk at the polling booth for officials and for voters. Voting rules in the US are a state and not federal subject and so each of the 50 US states has its own rules. They allow for voting by mail (voters have to request for a mail-in ballot which is sent to them and which they can then post back) or voting in person at the designated voting booth which opens three weeks before the official voting day.

The counting of votes does not begin till the last day as it would in other places. This ensures that there is no advantage or perception of one side appearing to be so far ahead in early voting as to discourage the other side's voters from showing up. Though this is not a new system and has been around for many years it is without doubt that it is going to help American voters and officials reduce Covid transmission risks in a way that Bihar will not be able to.

A record number of people are expected to vote in this year's US election and even with that it is indisputable that the mail-in ballot and the in-person advance voting system gives America a great advantage. Indeed, the safety of the voting process is also one reason why the numbers of those showing up to vote is so high.

The hope is that the Bihar election also passes safely, but we are entering into a fairly long election season when large states like Bengal and Uttar Pradesh are going to vote. India needs to examine some way in which, assuming that there is either no vaccine or a delay in administering it to everyone, voting can be made safer. This will have to be done with the consent of all parties but it needs to be considered. It is one of the things that America does better and can be examined.

Of course it is the case that our system is superior to most in some ways. In a part of the world where there was endemic electoral violence and controversy, the most important element — counting — has been comprehensively solved. But the times we are in require even this great and proven system to be more flexible in the interest of public safety.

WISDOM CORNER

Happiness is a how; not a what. A talent, not an object.
HERMANN HESSE

Die to everything of yesterday so that your mind is always fresh, always young, innocent, full of vigour and passion.
JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI

You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water.
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

WORDSWORTH

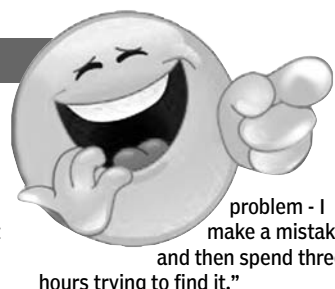
Unitasker

A unitasker is a tool or device that does only one thing. Before it meant that, it was a dismissive term for a person who does one job at a time before moving to the next, the opposite of a multitasker. It's one of those slow-burn words that seems to be creeping up on us in a variety of fields, becoming accepted because it's a useful term of abuse to describe those gadgets we buy because they seem like a good idea at the time. This is despite experience teaching us that their advantages don't justify their cost or the space they take up or that a general-purpose item could do the job as well. It's used in particular for specialist kitchen gadgets (electric gravy boat warmers, strawberry slicers, watermelon knives) and odd computing contraptions (USB foot warmers). Unitasker has been popularised by the American TV chef Alton Brown and the website unclutterer.com. Not all unitaskers are bad, of course; some of them are invaluable and their limitations are a strength, not a weakness. What's wrong with a fire extinguisher? It does one job well. (OK, you can use it to prop the door open or brain a burglar, but we're talking about intended uses here.) And one person's useless unitasker is another's onion-ring holder or USB fragrance oil burner.

LOL

COUNTING SHEEP

An accountant is having a hard time sleeping and goes to see his doctor. "Doctor, I just can't get to sleep at night." "Have you tried counting sheep?" "That's the



problem - I make a mistake and then spend three hours trying to find it."



Dhanada Kanta Mishra

IN COMPETITIVE GAMES, GAME THEORY TEACHES US HOW TO BE 'SMART' WHEREAS, IN COOPERATIVE GAMES, IT TELLS US HOW TO BE 'FAIR'



Aakar Patel
India needs to examine some way in which, assuming that there is either no vaccine or a delay in administering it to everyone, voting can be made safer

SPECTRUM BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

Psychology of Trump's debate rudeness



Raj Persaud

AS A DEBATING TACTIC WHERE THE AIM IS TO DEFEAT AN OPPONENT RHETORICALLY, INTERRUPTING HAS SOME POWERFUL HIDDEN PSYCHOLOGY BEHIND IT

The US Commission on Presidential Debates muted the microphones of President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden during portions of their second and final televised encounter on October 22, in order to prevent the candidates from interrupting each other. The panel's decision followed the widespread negative audience reaction to Trump's extensive interruptions in the first debate on September 29.

But there is a powerful hidden psychology behind the tactic of interjecting and interrupting. Could these two experienced campaigners — and Trump especially — have used it to their advantage in an attempt to appear more dominant and assertive?

The fact that the debate organisers had to seek a technological solution suggests that interruption might be a more potent tactic than many realise. Political and psychological strategists in both campaigns are increasingly being advocating it as a rhetorical weapon. What do they know that we don't?

Psychological research involving scientific experiments has found that people evaluate those who interrupt more as being more capable, confident, dominant, and persuasive. But this comes at a price, because interrupters are also usually seen as less likeable and attractive.

In the midst of a pandemic, some voters may favour the more dom-

inant candidate and may be less concerned about how likeable he or she is. So, the psychological consequences of interruption can be both positive (being seen as more assertive) and negative (coming across as rude). Interestingly, researchers have found this to be especially true for female interrupters.

Some research has found that men interrupt (especially with intrusive interruptions) more than women do. Other studies indicate that women are more interrupted than men are, and that men interrupt women significantly more than they do other men. But a lot depends on the precise nature and timing of the interruption.

Different types of interruption have different effects. Deep and 'intrusive' interruptions try to change the subject and prevent the other person from speaking. 'Overlapping interruptions' involve someone interrupting when another person appears to be coming to the end of making a point. There are even so-called silent interruptions where, for example, someone momentarily forgets the word they were looking for, or pauses to find the right phrase, and their adversary steps in to supply it, but then takes over the conversation.

A recent psychology experiment investigating the effects of different kinds of interruption found, surprisingly, that an audience evaluated so-called 'disagreement'

interruptions (perhaps the kind that were most on display in the first Trump-Biden debate) more positively than 'change-subject' interruptions.

One possible explanation for this finding, according to the study's authors, is that 'disagreement' interruptions at least suggested a strong engagement with the issue, and did not necessarily imply the same disregard for the speaker being interrupted as 'change-subject' interjections did. In other words, there appear to be ways of interrupting that seem justified. But as a debating tactic where the aim is to defeat an opponent rhetorically, interrupting has some powerful hidden psychology behind it.

For example, if you know that your opponent tends to interrupt and is constantly looking for an opportunity to take the floor from you, then you might speak faster than you normally would. The fear of providing an opportunity for a 'silent' interruption may push you into unfamiliar conversational territory and cause you to stumble or misspeak, resulting in a verbal gaffe that your opponent can exploit.

Moreover, if you are aware that your opponent is interrupting you and gaining more floor time, then you may feel pressured into responding in kind. But if you are less skilled at interrupting, your timing may be poorer and your choice of opportunity may then reflect badly on you. You end up being the one

coming across as rude. There is even the tactic of interrupting by saying you agree. This may surprise the other speaker so much that they pause, giving you the opportunity to explain that what you agreed with was not what they were hoping. For them not to allow you the chance to speak when you assert that you agree now makes them look like the one seeking conflict and confrontation.

The real psychological power of interrupting perhaps isn't even on display in presidential debates, but instead lies in the way that it disrupts the other candidate's thought patterns. Here lies the real danger: interruptions succeed by stopping you from thinking clearly. Recent research found that so-called 'sub-clinical' psychopaths, tended to detect who interrupted them more, and as a result, appeared to become less interested in a potentially exploitative future relationship. In other words, if you interrupt a psychopath more than they are used to while they are trying to make a point, they notice this quickly and infer that they may be less able to manipulate or use you, and move on to other targets.

So, when Trump interrupted Biden in the two debates, there was a lot more going on beneath the surface than simple rudeness.

The author is an academician currently visiting Hong Kong University of Science and Technology as a Research Scholar.

FOCUS SOCIOLOGY

GAME THEORY IN LIFE



Each of us has our own book of regrets which helps us to know a particular life that might have been if we made a different life choice

ing the decision of prisoner A, B has to confess in order to keep his/her jail term to a maximum of two years. This is known as the 'dominant strategy' in game theory reflecting Adam Smith's free-market doctrine based on self-interest being paramount. The Nash equilibrium, on the other hand, claims that every such game is a combination of decisions that is not only best for the individual but the group as a whole. In this case, it requires both A and B to neither confess nor cooperate. These kinds of games are called 'competitive games'.

The other group of games is known as 'cooperative games' where every player agrees towards a common goal. It could be a situation where a group of friends trying to decide how to divide a bill for dinner at a restaurant or a group of nations trying to determine how to fight climate change together. Like the Nash equilibrium for competitive games, the Shapley value determines a fair distribution of gains from any joint venture taking into account what is known as the marginal contribution of individual players. For example, let's assume player A

can plant 10 trees an hour and player B 15 trees an hour. Working together they can plant 30 trees an hour for which there is a reward of say Rs 3000 at Rs 100 per plant. To determine how to divide the reward in a fair manner, Shapley value determines the average of the reward minus the individual marginal contributions. In this case, marginal contributions of A and B being 1000 and 1500 respectively, the Shapley value for player A is half of (1000) + (3000-1500) = 1750. Player B gets 3000-1750 = 1250. In competitive games, game theory teaches us how to be 'smart' whereas, in cooperative games, it tells us how to be 'fair'.

Imagine life as a game with as many players as people we interact within our lives with all its complications. Now, we can appreciate the complexity of decision making in a real-life situation, be it in our individual circumstances or in the lives of nations as in politics and economics. Had Nora Seed been as exposed to the game theory of life as she was to philosophy she perhaps wouldn't have had to come to the predicament that she did in the novel. Seed's life story is about all the life choices she made that were documented in the book of regrets. Each of us has our own book of regrets which helps us to know a particular life that might have been if we made a different life choice! The present time is increasingly stressful with a rampaging pandemic, economic distress and loud footsteps of climate catastrophe looming. The game theory holds out the hope for cooperative decision making that would be perhaps humanity's only chance to avoid a painful extinction just as Nora Seed managed to right from the brink.

Victory of good over evil

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Sir, Dussehra symbolises the victory of good over evil and people of India celebrate this festival to put an end to all types of odds in the society. On this day, Goddess Durga had conquered Mahishasura after nine nights and ten days of fighting. It is celebrated as the victory of truth over untruth. Dussehra is the combination of two words - 'dus' means ten and 'hara' means annihilated. That means on this day ten evil faces of Ravana were destroyed by Ram. In every society there is suppression and tyranny and to protect the society personalities like Ram have come forward. It is true, in all ages people have conquered the evil forces to protect the society. But it is unfortunate in the present scenario we are unable to identify the evil forces which are hurdles for development of the society. In my opinion education is the best weapon to identify the evil forces and by this weapon we can defeat the evils that prevail in the society. While taking the mother goddess home, we welcome Durga by beating drums and chanting hymns and our joy knows no bounds. When a daughter is born in our home, if she is welcomed that way, then only goddess worship will be meaningful.
Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Attack on daughters

Sir, "Attack on anybody's daughter is attack on our daughter," the Karnataka High Court rightly says. This is analogous to Benjamin Franklin's observation: "Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are." The observation by the High Court has come in the context of upholding the trial court's order of sentencing seven accused to life imprisonment for the gangrape of a law student on the Jnana Bharathi campus in Bangalore in 2012. The Court has noted that the difference between Nirbhaya's case and the gangrape of the law student is that in the case of the former, the victim died but in the case of the latter, the victim discontinued her law course and returned to her homeland Nepal. India is a land of principles according high respect for women. But, of late, the image of the nation is being tarnished by those who are on prowl on women. The High Court has recommended amending provisions of IPC to include capital punishment for gangrape in addition to existing provisions of life imprisonment with fine. Death penalty already exists for gangrape-cum-murder; but not applicable for cases of gangrape in which there has been no death. What the Court desires is that, death or no death of victims, capital punishment has to be awarded to the convict(s).
KV Seetharamaiah, HASSAN



Farooq to lead Gupkar alliance

While the Communist Party of India's Kashmir head AR Trukroo joined the amalgam, J&K Pradesh Congress Committee has quietly distanced itself from the 7-party alliance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Oct 24: Seven main-stream parties of Jammu and Kashmir Saturday gave a formal shape to their recently cobbled alliance for the restoration of Article 370, electing National Conference's Farooq Abdullah as its chairman and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti as vice-chairperson, and asserted that theirs was 'not an anti-national' grouping.

Veteran CPM leader MY Tarigami was elected as the convenor while Lok Sabha member from South Kashmir Hasnain Masoodi would be the coordinator of the conglomerate known as Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD).

Sajjad Gani Lone of People's Conference would be the spokesman for the amalgam.

After a meeting held at Mehbooba's house, Abdullah, who turned 84 earlier this week, said the alliance is fighting for the restoration of special status to Jammu and Kashmir and is an 'anti-BJP platform' and not an anti-national amalgam.

"I want to tell you that this is false propaganda by the BJP that the PAGD is anti-national. I want to tell them that this is not true. There is no doubt that it is anti-BJP, but it is not anti-national," he told reporters here.

Abdullah alleged that the BJP has tried to break the federal structure through acts like the abroga-



MP and president of National Conference (NC) Farooq Abdullah, PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, former CM Omar Abdullah and other members after a meeting of Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration, in Srinagar

tion of Article 370 and dividing Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories. "They have tried to destroy the Constitution of the country, they have tried to divide the nation, to break the federal structure which we saw what they did on August 5 last year," the NC president said. "I want to tell them that this (PAGD) is not an anti-national jamaat. Our aim is that the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh should get their rights back. That's where our battle is. Our battle is not for more than that," he said. Abdullah said the BJP was doing propaganda against the constituents of the PAGD in Jammu and elsewhere in the country. "They are trying to divide us

(people of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh) in the name of religion. This attempt will not succeed. This is not a religious battle, this is a fight for our identity, and for that identity, we are standing together," he said. The amalgam, which met for the first time after its formation, will come out with a white paper within one month on governance in Jammu and Kashmir over the past one year since the abrogation of article 370, Lone told reporters after the meeting. "The white paper will not be rhetoric. It will be based on facts and figures to present the reality to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and around the country... An impression is being given that all the corruption had happened in Jammu and Kashmir," Lone said. The amalgam decided to hold its next meeting after a fortnight in Jammu, followed by a convention

in Srinagar on November 17. As a mark of defiance to the constitutional changes made by the Centre with respect to Jammu and Kashmir last year, the alliance adopted the flag of the erstwhile state as its symbol. While the Communist Party of India's Kashmir head AR Trukroo joined the PAGD, Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee has quietly distanced itself from the alliance. JKPC chief Ghulam Ahmad Mir, who was part of the meetings that took place before the formalisation of PAGD earlier this month, has skipped the last two meetings. The JKPC had issued a statement after the previous meeting that Mir could not attend due to the advice of doctors. This time the party did not explain its absence from the meeting.

Delhi chokes on 'severe' smog as farm fires soar

Air pollution in parts of the city reached 'severe' levels Saturday -- a day after US President Donald Trump described Indian air as 'filthy' -- with monitoring agencies warning it would worsen in the next two days because of the lack of wind

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New Delhi, Oct 24: Delhi's smog crisis headed for a new toxic peak Saturday but farmers are refusing to stop the stubble burning that is widely blamed for the poisonous clouds engulfing the capital.

Air pollution in parts of the city reached 'severe' levels Saturday - a day after US President Donald Trump described Indian air as 'filthy' -- with monitoring agencies warning it would worsen in the next two days because of the lack of wind. Teams in states around Delhi, home to some 20 million people, are hunting the illegal stubble burners, even driving around country roads at night when most fires are started.

In the past month some 1,265 farmers have been fined in Punjab alone, according to senior pollution officer Krunesh Garg, but satellite detectors have recorded more than 12,000 fires in the state.

In a bid to step up the campaign, the government is offering subsidised machines to clear rice paddies and farmers who are caught starting fires are blocked for bank loans. But thick grey clouds of smoke that carry deadly particles to the world's most polluted capital can still be seen everywhere.

Because of Delhi's position and weather pattern, every winter the city is choked by deadly smog.

Farmers like Paramjeet Singh say they understand inhabitants' health concerns but consider stubble burning a "necessary evil" in the race to clear fields for fresh crops.



"The smoke is also bad for our eyes and lungs but we don't have the money to buy machines that can clear the crop residue," Singh told AFP in Saneta village, about 230 kilometres northwest of Delhi, in Punjab state. "And why go after only farmers? There are so many polluting industries in Delhi and Punjab but only we get blamed," said the 42-year-old. According to state air quality monitors, farm fire smoke accounted for 56 per cent of Delhi's pollution in 2018 and 44 per cent last year. Authorities say the share has fallen further this year, but not enough to ease the crisis in Delhi. Some experts say the worsening smog is because of the number of cars on the roads, construction and industry around the city. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind

Kejriwal has declared a "war on pollution" putting up billboards across the city while placard-wielding activists urge drivers to turn off their engines when halted at traffic lights. But experts say political will to tackle pollution is still lacking with central government and Delhi, Punjab and Harayana states unable to agree tough action to clean the air. And this year farmers, who represent a powerful voting bloc, are upset over new laws they fear will let large private retailers control pricing. "Yes we are angry and we don't care about the government. Many farmers I know burnt the crop residue mainly to spite the government," said 62-year-old farmer Yashpal Singh. "If the farmers wanted they could have listened to the government but they chose not to."

BJP seeks Mehbooba's arrest for 'seditious' remarks



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Oct 24: The Jammu and Kashmir BJP has demanded PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's arrest for her 'seditious' remarks, wherein she said she would only hold the tricolour when the flag of the erstwhile state is restored. The BJP said 'no power on earth' can either hoist the state flag again

or restore Article 370 of the Constitution, which granted a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing reporters Friday for the first time since her release from a 14-month detention following the abrogation of Article 370 in August last year, Mufti said she will only hold the national flag after the flag of Jammu and Kashmir is restored.

In an act seen as defiance, the flag of the erstwhile state was prominently placed on a table in front of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president, along with that of her party, during a press conference. "I request Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to take cognisance of the seditious remarks of Mehbooba Mufti, book her for the seditious act and put her behind bars," Jammu and Kashmir BJP president Ravinder Raina told reporters.

"We will sacrifice every drop of our blood for our flag, country and motherland. Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of our country, so only one flag can be hoisted in Jammu and Kashmir and that is the national flag," he said. Raina said the saffron party will not tolerate such 'nefarious designs' aimed at instigating the people of Kashmir. "I warn leaders like Mehbooba Mufti not to instigate the people of Kashmir. We will not allow anyone to disturb peace, normalcy and brotherhood. In case anything wrong happens, she will have to face the consequences," he said. If Kashmiri leaders are feeling insecure in India, they can go to Pakistan and China, he added. During her presser, Mufti accused the BJP of 'looting' the dignity of the people of Jammu and

Kashmir. "We had acceded to a liberal, democratic, secular India. Let me tell them that we are not comfortable, we are incompatible with today's India where minorities and Dalits are not safe and where they tried to disrespect us by looting our dignity," she said. Referring to the Centre's move to abrogate Article 370 on August 5 last year, Raina said no decision taken by the government can be reversed. He said Article 370 gave rise to separatism, terrorism and was instrumental behind thousands of killings. "As the government has permanently scrapped Article 370, no power on earth can restore it. No power on earth can hoist any flag other than the national flag in Jammu and Kashmir," the BJP leader said.

As the government has permanently scrapped Article 370, no power on earth can restore it. No power on earth can hoist any flag other than the national flag in Jammu and Kashmir

Schools not opening for now in Delhi: Kejriwal



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 24: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Saturday ruled out reopening of schools in the national capital for now. "Schools are not reopening for now," Kejriwal told reporters on the sidelines of an event. The government had earlier announced that schools will continue to remain closed till October 31 in view of COVID-19 pandemic. Universities and schools across the country have been closed since March 16, when the Centre announced a countrywide classroom shutdown as part of the measures to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

A nationwide lockdown was imposed March 25. While several restrictions have been eased in different phases of "unlock", educational institutions continue to remain closed. However, as per "unlock" phase guidelines, states can take a call about reopening schools in phases. Earlier, schools were allowed to call students from class 9 to 12 to school on voluntary basis from September 21. However, the Delhi government decided against it. Talking about the AAP government's decision to not pay for the CBSE examination fees this year, Kejriwal cited funds crunch due to the pandemic as the reason.

MBBS seats have doubled in J&K's medical colleges

50 per cent of these seats shall be made available to female aspirants as per the MBBS admission policy of the union territory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Oct 24: The number of MBBS seats in government medical colleges (GMCs) in Jammu and Kashmir has increased from 500 in 2018-19 to 1,100 seats for the current academic session 2020-21, an official spokesman said. In this regard, the health and medical education department has got a letter of permission (LoP) from the National Medical Commission (NMC) for the GMC Doda to admit 100 MBBS students for this academic session. GMCs in Anantnag and Baramulla have also got permission to admit their second batch of 100 students, he said. "It will produce an increased number of doctors to strengthen the healthcare setup in Jammu and Kashmir," Financial Commissioner, Health and Medical Education, Atal Dulloo said.



The GMCs at Rajouri and Kathua have got permission for second batch with intake of 115 and 100 seats respectively. The total MBBS seats in J&K have now been enhanced from 500 (2018-19) to 1100 (2020-21) seats during the current academic session 2020-21, spokesman said. The make shift arrangement for admission of MBBS students in GMC Doda to accommodate the lecturer theatres, labs, dissection hall, library, museum, faculty rooms, administrative block have been completed and are fully equipped and furnished to start MBBS classes

in the current academic year, he said. The main buildings of all the new GMCs are in various stages of completion and are expected to be ready for use in the next few months, he said. Pertinently addition of 115 MBBS students this year will make 1100 MBBS seats available in Medical Colleges of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for the aspirants of MBBS Course, which is a great achievement of the UT Government. He said that 50 per cent of these seats shall be made available to female aspirants as per the MBBS Admission Policy of the UT.

How 4 of a family duped banks of over ₹20 crore

In one case, the accused fraudulently availed loan on a property which was already acquired by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 24: Four members of a family have been arrested for allegedly duping several banks of over Rs 20 crore by forging documents and fraudulently availing loans by mortgaging same properties multiple times, police said Saturday.

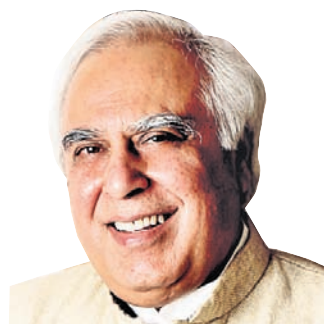
In one such case, the accused fraudulently availed loan on a property which was already acquired by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, they said. Ashwani Arora and Vijay Arora along with their wives, who were absconding for nearly four years, were arrested from different places in Ghaziabad and Delhi after the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police conducted simultaneous raids in connection with a 2016 case of bank fraud, they said. The matter came to light after a complaint was received in 2016 from Zonal Manager of Punjab and Sind Bank, in west Delhi's Naraina, police said.

In the complaint, the bank alleged that M/s Riya Enterprises availed ODP (Overdraft against Property) limit of up to 70 lakhs. This limit was released against the equitable mortgage of a property on GT Road, Shahdara, which was in the name of Ashwani Kumar who was also the guarantor in this loan. These limits were granted by Punjab and Sind Bank in Karol Bagh.

Similarly, over the years since 2011, the accused availed ODP amounting to several lakhs from the complainant bank on behalf of their created firms by mortgaging properties, police said. The bank also alleged that the properties were already mortgaged with other banks, a senior police officer said. Based on the complaint, a case was registered and investigation was taken up, he said. Joint Commissioner of Police (EOW) Dr OP Mishra said during the investigation, it emerged that all the accused prepared forged chain of property papers, on the basis of which, they succeeded in getting the property registered fraudulently before the Registrar Office either in their name or in the name of other persons. "On the basis of these forged documents, they availed loans multiple times on same property from many banks. Using the same modus operandi, they succeeded in availing loan from the complainant bank. After some time they stopped paying interest and duped them of Rs 6 crore. During investigation, it was found that the accused not only multi-mortgaged the properties but also availed loan on a property which was already acquired by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation," he said.

So far, it has emerged that the accused have duped at least five banks for more than Rs 20 crores, he added. The officer said the accused formed firms and created alibi for taking loans. Thereafter, they created multiple sets of documents of the same properties and on the basis of this, they availed loan from various banks. They created multiple identities by changing their names and parentage, he added.





Trump questions India's Covid-19 death count. Says India sends dirt up into the air India "air is filthy". Called India "tariff king". All these result of "Howdy Modi" KAPIL SIBAL | CONGRESS LEADER

ONLY 144 WOMEN CANDIDATES IN PHASE 1 OF BIHAR POLLS

Data shared by the Election Commission shows out of a total of 1,066 contestants in the fray in the Phase 1 of Bihar Assembly elections, only 144 females have been given tickets from the political parties



of the day quote

This is not 1962, but 2020, and things are different now. Right from Jammu and Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh, we are fully prepared. If required, the people of Arunachal will not hesitate to stand behind the Indian Army



PEMA KHANDU | ARUNACHAL PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER

Instead of going on political tours, Rahul Gandhi should visit Tanda (Punjab) where a shocking incident of rape and murder happened with Bihar's six-year-old daughter



Prakash Javadekar | I&B MINISTER

Where were you (BJP) when Hathras victim was raped and killed? Where were you when Unnao gang rape case happened? And now, you are speaking about women safety just for politics



SUSHMITA DEB | CONGRESS WOMEN WING CHIEF

Faulty military equipment raises doubts over China's tech prowess

The world's fifth-largest arms exporter in 2015-19, China accounted for 5.5 per cent of total global arms exports with its top customers including its Belt and Road Initiative partners

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 24: China is fifth-largest exporter of weapon systems, after the US, Russia, France and Germany, but much of its equipment sold to various countries is defective, say sources in intelligence agencies.

The world's fifth-largest arms exporter in 2015-19, China accounted for 5.5 per cent of total global arms exports with its top customers including its Belt and Road Initiative partners as Beijing presents itself as an alternative to Russia.

In 2015-19, Asia and Oceania accounted for 74 per cent of Chinese arms exports, Africa for 16 per cent and the Middle East for 6.7 per cent, while the number of countries to which China delivers arms has grown significantly - from 40 in 2010-14 to 53 in 2015-19.

Pakistan was the main recipient (35 per cent) in 2015-19, as it has been for all five-year periods since 1991.

Intelligence agencies have prepared a report recently where it highlighted how Beijing has pushed "defective equipment" to friendly nations in Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

Bangladesh

China gave two obsolete 1970s era Ming class Type 035G submarines to Bangladesh at \$100 mn each in 2017. Re-commissioned as BNS Nobojatra and BNS Joyjatra, these were originally used as training vessels for People's Liberation Army Navy and had outlived their utility.

"The condition of these submarines is so bad that they are reportedly lying unserviceable for considerable time," the intelligence report stated.

In April 2003, PLA Navy Ming Class submarine 361 suffered a mechanical failure in the Yellow Sea,



killing all its 70 crew members. Meanwhile, Bangladesh's recently-acquired two Chinese 053H3 Frigates - BNS Umar Farooq and

BNS Abu Ubaidah - arrived at Mongla Port this year, after experiencing multiple defects en route, including a non-functioning navigation radar and gun system.

systems was completed in 2019. However, three out of nine systems are non-functional due to faults in guidance vehicle, search vehicle and firing vehicle.

"Pakistan Army has conveyed to M/s Aersospace Long-March International Co Ltd (ALIT) that these need to be addressed on priority," the report stated.

Myanmar Myanmar's senior leadership is unhappy over the quality of Chinese equipment supplied to them but is helpless due to lack of sources.

However, they have started diversifying their imports, looking towards India.

"China is also supplying high quality sophisticated weapons (including Surface to Air Missiles) to militant groups Arakan Army, fighting the Tatmadaw which is also a source of annoyance to them," the report stated.

Union Minister's 'myth' barb at China amid border row

Union minister G Kishan Reddy said the culture of the country teaches it to worship both "shastra and astra" or sacred scriptures and weapons at the same time



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Greater Noida: The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), in developments that took place in the last few months, has broken the myth of some countries that they have a powerful Army, Union minister G Kishan Reddy said Saturday, in an indirect reference to the ongoing standoff between India and China in Ladakh.

The Minister of State for Home was addressing the troops of the mountain warfare-trained border force on the occasion of its 59th raising day in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

He did not take names but said while India believes in the philosophy of "vasudhaiva kutumbakam" or the world is one family, the culture of the country teaches it to worship both "shastra and astra"

or sacred scriptures and weapons at the same time.

"This has taught us that the enemy can raise its head anytime, anywhere and we should be fully prepared to face any possibility. The ITBP is an important pillar of that preparedness of the country," Reddy said.

"The armies of some countries had a myth that they were among the powerful armies of the world, but during the developments in the past few months, the ITBP has broken that myth," he added.

The country and its citizens are proud of the ITBP's valour and dedication, the minister said.

The ITBP is the designated force to guard the 3,488-km-long Sino-India Line of Actual Control (LAC) that runs from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh in the northeastern flank of the country.

The Army and the border-guarding force are engaged in a military standoff in the Ladakh region for the past few months. The ITBP had some time ago said it "fought the whole night" and gave a befitting reply to the Chinese PLA troops during a violent clash between the two sides June 15-16.

Reddy said the force not only mans the borders and ensures the internal security of the country, but also protects its economic interests.

"India is surrounded by a hostile neighbourhood and our enemy, time and again, puts obstacles to stop our economic development. When you defeat these designs of the enemy, you ensure the country's economic development," he said.

Reddy said the Narendra Modi government is "determined" to strengthen and "modernise" the force, and informed about certain sanctions given to it in the recent past.

"I am happy to inform that the ITBP has been given the approval by the Ministry of Home Affairs to establish 47 border posts, uniform special clothing and mountaineering equipment for high-altitude locations, latest weapons are being provided and work is on to prepare priority border roads for the force," he said.

RJD releases manifesto, promises jobs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Oct 24: As lakhs of Bihar voters are poised to exercise their franchise in the first phase of Assembly elections, the RJD Saturday released its manifesto or vision document, reiterating the promise to recruit 10 lakh persons in government jobs if the party returned to power.

The manifesto, titled 'Prann Hamara, Sankalp Badlav Ka' was released by Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav, the Chief Ministerial face of the

Mahagathbandhan or Grand Alliance, in the presence of party spokesperson Manoj Jha, Congress leaders Randeep Singh Surjewala and Shaktisinh Gohil and other leaders.

Tejashwi said his party would fulfil all promises made to the people. The RJD manifesto said nearly 10 lakh government jobs would be given in the very first state Cabinet meeting after returning to power as well as abolition of contractual labour system. The manifesto covers 17 major commitments, including special priority to employment, agriculture, industry,

infrastructure development, cultural heritage and construction sectors in the state, community development, poverty alleviation, and education.

It also promises to further strengthen self-help groups and priority to higher education and employment. It pledges to implement local policy in any government job in the state, ensuring at least 85 per cent reservation for local candidates. The RJD also promised to provide 'equal wages for equal work' to the people of Bihar and implement the old pension scheme.

AGAINST FARM LAWS



Members of various farmers' organisations block the rail track of Rajpura Thermal Plant during their protest over new farm laws at Rajpura in Patiala district, Saturday

After Bihar, Pondicherry, TN announces free Covid vaccine

AGENCIES

Chennai, Oct 24: Puducherry Chief Minister V Narayanasamy while talking to the media has said that whether the Centre gives the funds or not, the Puducherry government will provide free coronavirus vaccine for free for all in the Union Territory.

CM Narayanasamy quoting the BJP's announcement in Bihar and Tamil Nadu CM EPS' announcement in Tamil Nadu said that the vaccine should be provided free for all across the country.

Narayanasamy further added, "Corona is like smallpox, polio and the governments have been providing the vaccine for free for all this. Similarly, the corona vaccine

has to be provided free for all."

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) earlier in its Bihar assembly election manifesto or 'Sankalp Patra' had also announced a free corona vaccine for all.

Releasing the manifesto, Nirmala Sitharaman said that all Biharis will get coronavirus vaccines, that are still in clinical trial stages in India, at their houses free of cost as soon as it is available for mass production in the country.

"As soon as a coronavirus vaccine will be available for production at a mass scale, every person in Bihar will get free vaccination. This is the first promise mentioned in our poll manifesto," Nirmala Sitharaman said.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami had also

said that as soon as the vaccine for the coronavirus is ready, it will be given to the people of the state free of cost. He was later slammed by AIADMK chief MK Stalin.

MK Stalin wrote on Facebook, "The Chief Minister, like a big achievement, has said that vaccines will be provided to all at the expense of the government. It is the duty of a people's government to do such an act at the time of a pandemic. Did the Chief Minister think that the vaccine was a freebie that he would give the people?"

"The Chief Minister, who has not shown any interest in providing ₹5,000 financial aid to the people who are affected by the coronavirus, is staging a drama by announcing free vaccines for all," he added.

SHORT TAKES

Quadcopter shot down by Army

Srinagar: The Army shot down a quadcopter near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Keran Sector in Jammu and Kashmir Saturday, official sources said. "A quadcopter (DJI Mavic 2 Pro model) was shot down this morning by the Indian Army on the LoC in Kupwara district," an Army statement said. It is not the first time a quadcopter has been shot along the borders in Jammu and Kashmir. In June, a Pakistani drone was shot down by the BSF in Hiranagar Sector on the International Border in Jammu. Arms and ammunition, including one M-4 US rifle, were seized.

Cop injured in knife attack

Thane: A 46-year-old police constable was injured when four persons attacked him with a knife after he foiled their attempt to escape with a stolen car at Ambarnath in Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said Saturday. The incident occurred late Friday night and the four accused have been arrested, he said. The accused had stolen a car from Vithalwadi and were trying to escape last night. After being alerted, a police team started chasing them. At Ambarnath, Chavan stopped their car, but the accused attacked him with a knife.

14-yr-old girl raped in UP

Banda (UP): A 14-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a man in Banda while she was returning home, police said Saturday. The incident took place late Thursday night when the girl was returning home after watching Ram Leela, they said. A 22-year-old man belonging to her village forcefully took her to his home and allegedly raped her, SHO of Atarra police station Akhilesh Mishra said.

Heroin worth ₹20 crore seized

Kolkata: Kolkata Police has seized over 4 kg of heroin from a goods vehicle in Garden Reach area of the city, and arrested two persons in this connection. Acting on a tip-off, a team intercepted the vehicle Friday night and seized heroin weighing 4.20 kg, worth around ₹20 crore in the international market, a senior police officer said.

Amazon explains Parliament no-show



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 24: Hours after sources said that Amazon had refused to appear before a joint parliamentary committee looking into the Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill - and could, therefore, face "coercive action" and a "breach of privilege" notice - the online retail giant said its position "may have been misconstrued" and that it would work with the committee to "set the record straight".

"The inability of our experts to travel from overseas due to travel restriction and depose before the joint parliamentary committee (JPC) during the ongoing pandemic may have been misconstrued and led to a misunderstanding," the company said in a statement released Friday night.

According to sources Amazon had requested not to appear before the committee on October 28 because its "subject matter experts" were overseas and unable to travel to India because of risks associated with the coronavirus pandemic.

"We will work with the JPC to set the record straight," the company said.

Has Shakespeare's Hamlet finally come to haunt Gupkar?

To be or not to be? Shakespeare's Hamlet has finally come to haunt the members of the Gupkar alliance after Mufti's press conference

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, Oct 24: After joining the alliance for implementation of the Gupkar declaration, former Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti seems to have written the agenda for the alliance.

To be or not to be? Shakespeare's Hamlet has finally come to haunt the members of the Gupkar alliance after Mufti's press conference.

Speaking to the media in Srinagar Friday, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president, Mehbooba Mufti said unless the special status of J&K is restored as it existed before August 5, 2019, participation in any electoral process was meaningless.

Six parties in the alliance for the implementation of Gupkar declaration include the National Conference (NC) headed by Dr. Farooq Abdullah, PDP headed by Mehbooba Mufti, Peoples Conference (PC) headed by Sajad Gani Lone, Awami National Conference (ANC) headed by Khalida Shah, Jammu and Kashmir People's Movement (JKPM) headed by Feroz Peerzada and the local unit of the CPI-M headed by Yusuf Tarigama.

The Gupkar declaration seeks restoration of Articles 370 and 35A and also the statehood for J&K.

Farooq Abdullah heads the alliance as the senior-most politician



and also because of the strength of his party cadre. He as the leader of the alliance

has been reiterating his commitment to the declaration, but he has, so far, stopped short of making the restora-



The BJP and RSS are planning to have their own chief minister in Bihar and retire Nitish Kumar. BJP and RSS are working on this
ASADUDDIN OWAIISI | ANIM CHIEF

INDIA BANS IMPORTED GOODS, INCLUDING LIQUOR, AT ARMY CANTEENS

The government has ordered the Army shops in the country to stop buying imported goods, a move that could send an unwelcome signal to foreign liquor firms such as Diageo and Pernod Ricard



of the day quote

In the name of liquor ban, people in Bihar are being labelled as smugglers. Bihar's women- the sisters and mothers - don't want to see their own turning into smugglers

CHIRAG PASWAN | LOK JANSHAKTI PARTY PRESIDENT

They (leaders from Kashmir) have cultivated the art and craft of swearing by Mother India saying 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' when in power. Once they are out of power they start swearing by Pakistan and questioning the integration of Jammu and Kashmir

JITENDRA SINGH | UNION MINISTER

Bihar should get vaccine but other states of our country are not Pakistan. Why do politics over coronavirus vaccine when the whole country is badly suffering from the virus, it is not just only Bihar

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA MP

61% of Covid recoveries reported from 6 states/UTs

Around 70,16,046 people have so far recuperated from the disease, pushing the national recovery rate to 89.78 per cent Saturday, the Health Ministry said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 24: Around 61 per cent of the total recovered cases from Covid-19 are from six states and UTs of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, the Union Health Ministry said Saturday.

Around 70,16,046 people have so far recuperated from the disease, pushing the national recovery rate to 89.78 per cent Saturday, it said.

"About 61 per cent of the total recovered cases from Covid-19 are from six states and Union territories (UTs) of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi," the ministry said.

While Maharashtra recorded 20.6 per cent of the total recoveries, 10.9 per cent recovered cases were from



Andhra Pradesh, 9.9 per cent from Karnataka, 9.4 per cent from Tamil Nadu, 6.1 per cent from Uttar Pradesh and 4.1 per cent from Delhi, it said.

In a statement, the Health Ministry said latest recoveries have exceeded the fresh cases in the recent days, with 67,549 COVID-19 patients having recovered and discharged in the last 24 hours.

"A total of 53,370 new confirmed cases were recorded in the last 24 hours. Eighty per cent of the new cases are from 10 states and UTs. Kerala is reporting the maximum addition with more than 8,000 cases followed by Maharashtra with more than 7,000 cases," it said.

India's Covid-19 tally climbed to 78.14 lakh with 53,370 fresh cases in a day. The number of deaths due to the infection mounted to 1,17,956, with the novel coronavirus virus claiming 650 lives in a span of 24 hours in the country, the ministry data updated at 8 am Saturday

ICMR-backed Covaxin to be ready by June 2021

New Delhi: Officials of Bharat Biotech have revealed that its coronavirus vaccine candidate Covaxin is expected to be ready by June 2021. Earlier Thursday, the Drug Controller General of India (DGI) allowed Bharat Biotech International Limited to conduct the Phase III trials of its Covid-19 vaccine candidate Covaxin. According to a news report, a top company official informed that Covaxin should be ready by June 2021 - unless the government advances its launch through emergency use authorisation. "If we get all the approvals in place, I think during Q2 of 2021, we should get the efficacy readout from our phase-3 clinical trial - April, May, June, for example. That is for the full efficacy results," Sai Prasad, executive director, Bharat Biotech International Ltd, said.

showed. The COVID-19 case fatality rate has further declined to 1.51 per cent.

There are 6,80,680 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprise 8.71 per cent of the total caseload, the ministry added.

SELFIE WITH THE GODDESS



Devotees take a selfie in front of an idol of Goddess Durga before prayer at a cordoned off 'pandal' or temporary platform, amidst the spread of Covid-19 in Kolkata

REUTERS PHOTO

CAUGHT ON CAMERA

UP BJP chief showers petals on 'guilty' party MLA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ballia (UP), Oct 24: Uttar Pradesh BJP chief Swatantra Dev Singh has been caught on camera showering flower petals on the party's Bairaia MLA Surendra Singh, days after serving him a notice for his statements supporting the main accused in the firing incident at Durjanpur village here.

The video which went viral Saturday shows Swatantra Dev Singh participating in a 'bhumi puja' programme of a Krishna temple at Kathauda village in Sikanderpur area. Both the leaders are seen sitting side by side in the footage. The state BJP chief is seen showering flower petals on Surendra Singh, who acknowledges it with folded hands.

On being asked about the video, BJP's Salempur MP Ravindra Kushwaha, who was also present at the event Friday, told reporters that only Swatantra Dev Singh can elaborate on his actions.

Earlier this week, the state unit of the BJP had issued a show cause notice to MLA Surendra Singh for issuing statements in support of Dharendra Pratap Singh, a local

party leader who has been arrested for allegedly killing a man. The legislator was given a week's time to respond to the notice.

Surendra Singh had come out in open support of Dharendra Pratap Singh, who allegedly shot dead a 46-year-old man in Ballia's Durjanpur village following a quarrel over the allotment of ration shops October 15.

The Bairaia MLA had defended the accused, saying that the latter "opened fire in self-defence" as "it was a do-or-die situation for him".

He had also accused the administration of bias and demanded that action be taken against the other side.

Meanwhile, Swatantra Dev had said that BJP national president JP Nadda had sought information about the matter.

Despite being served a notice, the Bairaia MLA continued to extend his support to Dharendra Singh, who is said to be the district unit president of the BJP ex-service-men cell.

The MLA had also recently claimed that he met senior BJP leaders in the past few days and that everyone backed him.

Gangsters Act invoked against Vikas Dubey's aides

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kanpur (UP), Oct 24: More than three months since the Bikru village ambush, in which eight policemen including a deputy SP were killed, the Kanpur police have invoked the Gangsters Act against 30 of slain gangster Vikas Dubey's aides arrested in connection with the case.

Kanpur's Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Preetinder Singh said on Saturday that the Gangsters Act has been slapped against the 30 accused.

A separate FIR under the relevant sections of the Gangsters Act has been lodged against the jailed accused, the DIG added.

The investigation has been handed over to Station House Officer (Billhaur) PN Bajpai, who has been asked to probe the case properly.

Earlier this month, a chargesheet in the Bikru ambush case was submitted in the court concerned.

Eight policemen, including Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Devendra Mishra, were ambushed in Bikru when they were going to arrest Dubey, a dreaded gangster, and fell to bullets fired from rooftops shortly after midnight July 3.

SHORT TAKES

Delhi cop abducted from moving bus

New Delhi: In a shocking incident, a Delhi Police constable has alleged that he was abducted by the driver and helpers of a private bus from the Kashmere Gate area before being released in Uttar Pradesh's Firozabad. The bus was later traced to Bhand in Madhya Pradesh, where raids are being conducted by Delhi police teams. According to the police, constable Sachin, posted at the Kashmere Gate police station, was on patrolling duty Wednesday night.

Arunachal erects war memorial

Itanagar: The Indian Army has constructed a War Memorial in Arunachal Pradesh named after Subedar Joginder Singh, the brave heart of the 1st Battalion of the Sikh Regiment, who was martyred in the 1962 India-China war, defence sources said. Subedar Joginder Singh received the highest gallantry award, the Param Vir Chakra, for the exemplary bravery he displayed in the eastern theatre during the war.

Explosive dump unearthed

Dantewada: Security forces have recovered a cache of explosives from a forest on a hill in insurgency-hit Dantewada district in Chhattisgarh, a police official said Saturday. Acting on a tip-off, the recovery was made from Duvalikarka hill under Kuakonda police station limits Friday evening by a team of District Reserve Guard (DRG). Some local villagers had informed the police that Naxals have hidden explosive materials on the hill with a plan to execute some major attack on security personnel, following which the patrolling team rushed to the spot.

Man held with ganja worth ₹40K

Panaji: Goa police on Saturday nabbed a 26-year-old man from the outskirts of Mapusa city for allegedly possessing ganja worth ₹40,000, an official said. During a raid in the early hours of the day, the police arrested Ashok Durgappa Gullar at Parra village, inspector Vijay Chodankar of Mapusa police said. The accused, who is employed at a restaurant in Anjuna village, allegedly had 1.1 kg of ganja worth ₹40,000 in his possession, the official said.

Cong wants Modi govt to bring white paper on demonetisation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 24: Ahead of the 4th anniversary of demonetisation, the Congress demanded that the government bring a white paper on the benefits of its decision to ban notes of higher denomination.

Congress spokesperson Gourav Vallabh asked why is the government afraid to make public the names of entities involved in scams, the details of defaulters and transaction trails, since the Income Tax Department was probing all those with undisclosed incomes.

"In the next couple of weeks, when we will be commemorating the 4th anniversary, we demand that the government should come out with a white paper highlighting the cost and benefits of this 'Tughlaqi decree'," he said at a press conference.

The Congress leader said the government should answer how many such alleged defaulters has the Income Tax Department probed and what is the undisclosed income unearthed.

The Income Tax Department had announced that they would initiate assessment proceedings to check black money instances after demonetisation, but till date there has been no disclosure from the department.

"Demonetisation was an organised loot and legalised plunder," he said.

"How much black money has the government recovered from such defaulters so far," he asked.

Vallabh alleged that serious charges of tax evasion have come out in the wake of demonetisation



Cong spokesperson Gourav Vallabh asked why is the government afraid to make public the names of entities involved in scams and the details of defaulters

against a prominent jeweller of Surat, who made sales of ₹6.3 crore post 8.30 pm November 8, 2016, when note ban was imposed.

Subsequently, between November 10 and 12 the jeweller deposited close to ₹110 crore cash in banks and the total tax paid as per allegations is only ₹80 lakh.

He said what is surprising is that rather than acting on the complaint, the IT Department has been after the complainant itself, who is a former income tax officer.

"Why did the government decide to misuse the machinery to raid the whistleblower instead of instituting an inquiry against the alleged scam," he asked.

Vallabh also accused the Modi government of being "autocratic in the garb of a democratic one".

He said the Indian economy is still reeling with the aftershocks of this ill-advised move.

Toll in TN firecracker unit blast rises to 7

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madurai (TN), Oct 24: The toll in the blast at a fireworks factory mounted to seven Saturday with two more women workers succumbing to injuries and the manager of the manufacturing facility have been arrested, police said.

All the seven victims were women. The blast was triggered when explosive ingredients were handled by workers for the manufacturing process at the factory Friday.

Five workers were charred to death and over five others sustained injuries.

Two women, who fought severe burn injuries, meanwhile, died without responding to treatment at a hospital here, police said, adding the manager of the private unit was arrested.



A probe was on into the blast and efforts are on to arrest the owner of the firm who has gone absconding, police deputy superintendent, (Peraiyur), Mathiazhagan said.

An office-bearer of a Sivakasi based association of firecracker unit workers, Karmegam Pandian, alleged that several units functioned without proper licence and did not follow mandated safety measures to avoid mishaps.

He urged the government to close down such units.

"There are sufficient employment opportunities in well established factories with proper licence and they adhere to safety norms that are stipulated. Workers should seek jobs only in such units," he said.

Unemployment is the major poll issue in Bihar this year

ALL POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE STRESSED ON MAKING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN THEIR MANIFESTO

AGENCIES

Patna, Oct 24: With campaigning for Bihar elections in full swing, a lot of buzz this time has been around unemployment as a major poll issue.

It all started with RJD leader and Mahagathbandhan CM candidate Tejashwi Yadav promising 10 lakh government jobs if his government was formed in Bihar.

This was followed by BJP Thursday promising the creation of 19 lakh jobs in its manifesto, in agriculture, IT and health and education sectors.

The question is why unemployment has become such a big election issue in this Bihar, and why the lack of jobs here is far more concerning than the rest of the country.

HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

A survey conducted by Periodic Labour Force in 2018-19 said the unemployment rate in Bihar was 10.2 per cent, which was almost double the national average of 5.8 per cent.

This figure shows how the situation in Bihar as far as unemployment is concerned is extremely grim when compared nationally. Salaried jobs figure low

According to the survey, only 10.4 per cent of people in Bihar had a salaried job in comparison to the national average of 23.8 per cent people in the country having a salaried job in 2018-19.

Surprisingly, people with salaried job in Bihar in 2004-05 were merely 4.2 per cent clearly indicating the



pathetic job situation in the state.

This was the period when Lahu-Rabri government was in place in Bihar and employment opportunities were extremely limited.

This was the time when people usually had no option but to run their own business or enterprise as jobs in the private sector were extremely less.

In 2011-12 people of Bihar with salaried job was 5.8 per cent, 13.1 per cent in 2017-18 and declined to 10.4 per cent in 2018-19.

This was the time when Nitish Kumar government was in place and the situation was better than 2004-05. However, employment opportunities for the youth of Bihar haven't been better than the rest of the other states.

In 2004-05, nationally 14.3 per cent people in the country were salaried, 17.9 per cent in 2011-12, 22.8 per cent in 2017-18 and 23.8 per cent in 2018-19.

When we compare Bihar with the rest of the country, data shows that Bihar has fared worse when compared with the rest of the country.

MIGRATION TO OTHER STATES

As far as migration is concerned, Bihar tops the country with the highest percentage of migration taking place every year. According to 2011 census, 32.3 per cent people in Bihar migrated to other parts of the country for job and employment followed by Odisha at 31.5 per cent.

It is not that migration began in Bihar only in Nitish Kumar's regime. Migration to other states in search of better employment opportunities was also high during the RJD regime when the educational system between 1990 and 2005 crumbled.

Lack of educational institutes and employment opportunities lead to an increase in migration.

international

of the day quote

The next few months are going to be very tough and some countries are on a dangerous track



TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

I share the growing concern about the rise in infections these days throughout Europe and in Italy



GIUSEPPE CONTE | ITALIAN PM

Peace in Afghanistan will benefit the two neighbours by opening new avenues for cooperation and enhance connectivity with other Central Asian countries



IMRAN KHAN | PAKISTAN PM

SHORT TAKES

Colombian Vice Prez Covid positive

Bogota: Colombian Vice President Marta Lucia Ramirez confirmed that she has tested positive for the novel coronavirus and would be isolated in her home for 15 days. "Yesterday I took the Covid-19 test, since I had planned to travel to the Governors Summit in (the city of) Manizales. I am informing Colombians that the result was positive," Xinhua news agency quoted Ramirez as saying in a tweet on Friday. "Thank God I am in good health and I am complying with the corresponding isolation," she added.

69 killed in Nigeria protests

Abuja: Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has said 69 people have been killed in protests against police brutality that have rocked the country. The deaths were mainly civilians but include police officers and soldiers. The president announced the toll in an emergency meeting with former Nigerian leaders aimed at finding ways to end the unrest, his spokesman said. A group that has been key in organising the demonstrations has now urged people to stay at home.

Guinean President wins third term

Conakry: Guinea's President Alpha Conde has won a third term with 59.49 per cent of the vote, the National Independent Electoral Commission declared Saturday. Some people went to the streets to protest immediately after the announcement. Such demonstrations have occurred for months after the government changed the constitution through a national referendum, allowing Conde to extend his decade in power. Opposition candidate Cellou Dalein Diallo received 33.50 per cent of the vote, the electoral commission said. Voter turnout was almost 80 per cent.

4 students killed

Douala (Cameroon): Attackers shot dead at least four students and wounded a dozen others after storming into a private school in Cameroon Saturday morning, an official said. It was not immediately clear why the attack at the Mother Francisca Memorial College occurred. The deputy prefect of the community of Kumba, Ali Anougou, blamed separatists who have been fighting the military in parts of western Cameroon. Some separatists have targeted schools or students. "At least six students were shot at close range," Anougou said.



As part of the peace process, NATO has adjusted its military presence in Afghanistan. And our presence is condition-based. Any future adjustments must depend on progress in the peace talks and the conditions on the ground

JENS STOLTENBERG | NATO SECRETARY GENERAL

POLAND'S PRESIDENT COVID POSITIVE

Poland's President Andrzej Duda has tested positive for coronavirus, his spokesman said Saturday. He said the President feels well and is in isolation



Closely monitoring border row: US



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Oct 24: The US is closely monitoring the border row between India and China and does not want the situation to escalate, a senior Trump administration official has said.

The official said during a conference call Friday, ahead of the next week's 2+2 India-US Ministerial in New Delhi, that the Trump administration was providing support to India through defence sales, joint military exercises and information sharing.

"We as a government are covering the situation in the Himalayas closely, and understandably. We certainly want to ensure that the situation doesn't escalate," the official said. "These are all areas where we cooperate with the Indians on, and not just as it relates to the tensions in the Himalayas," the official said.

India and China are locked in a bitter border standoff in eastern Ladakh since early May that has significantly strained the bilateral ties. Both sides have held a series of diplomatic and military talks to resolve the row. However, no breakthrough has been achieved to end the standoff.

China unsuccessfully attempted to occupy Indian territory on the southern bank of Pangong Lake in the last week of August. In response to a question, the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that the US was having an ongoing dialogue with India about increased cooperation in Southeast Asia, and not simply about the South China Sea.

"And we encourage their involvement. That cuts across development investments, it cuts across security cooperation, and then it also involves presence. So, we welcome greater Indian participation in Southeast Asia across all three of those areas," said the official. The senior official's remarks came in the midst of a growing global concern over China's expansionist behaviour.

The evolving situation in the Indo-Pacific region in the wake of China's increasing military muscle-flexing has become a major talking point among leading global powers. The US has been favouring making Quad a security architecture to check China's growing assertiveness.

China is engaged in hotly contested territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas. Beijing has also made substantial progress in militarising its man-made islands in the past few years. Beijing claims sovereignty over all of the South China Sea. But Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Brunei and Taiwan have counterclaims. In the East China Sea, China has territorial disputes with Japan.

The South China Sea and the East China Sea are stated to be rich in minerals, oil, and other natural resources. They are also vital to global trade. Although the US lays no claims to the disputed waters, it has challenged China's growing territorial claims in the South China Sea by deploying warships and fighter jets to assert freedom of navigation and overflight patrols in the strategically vital region.

TWO KILLED IN PLANE CRASH

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Foley (US), Oct 24: A US Navy training plane that took off from Florida crashed Friday in an Alabama residential neighbourhood near the Gulf Coast, killing both people in the plane, authorities said.

Zach Harrell, a spokesperson for Commander, Naval Air Forces, said both people in the T-6B Texan II training plane died, but they weren't immediately releasing their names. No injuries were reported on the ground.

Foley Fire Chief Joey Darby said responders encountered a "large volume of fire" with a home and several cars engulfed in flames. Firefighters were able to make "a quick stop on the fire," the chief told local news outlets. The crash occurred southeast of Mobile, near the city of Foley and the town of Magnolia Springs. Darby called the neighborhood a "heavily populated" residential area.

LIVING WITH COVID



People wearing face masks walk past the Trocadero Place near the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France

Biden vows free Covid vaccines if elected

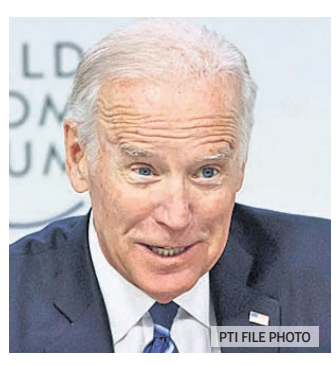
"ONCE WE HAVE A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE VACCINE, IT HAS TO BE FREE TO EVERYONE, WHETHER OR NOT YOU'RE INSURED," THE FORMER VICE PRESIDENT SAID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Oct 24: Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has pledged that if elected as President in the November 3 election, he will ensure free COVID-19 vaccination for all Americans, laying out his pandemic response plan just days before the US presidential polls.

In a major policy speech on the coronavirus in his home state of Delaware, Biden Friday flayed US President Donald Trump for his policies to combat the coronavirus pandemic that has killed over 220,000 people and has had a devastating impact on the country's economy.

"President Trump said we're rounding the corner, it's going away, we're learning to live with it. They are quotes. But as I told him last night, we're not learning to live with it. We're learning to die with it. This is a dark winter ahead," Biden, 77, said.



PTI FILE PHOTO

Trump casts early ballot

Washington: President Donald Trump has cast his ballot Saturday morning in West Palm Beach, Florida, and he tells reporters afterward: "I voted for a guy named Trump." West Palm Beach is near his private Mar-a-Lago club. He used to vote in New York but changed his residency to Florida last year. There were several hundred supporters gathered with flags and signs outside the library where he voted. And there were chants of "Four more years." The President wore a mask while voting but he took it off as he approached reporters afterward in the building. He called it "a very secure vote. Much more secure than when you send in a ballot, I can tell you that." Democrat Joe Biden hasn't voted yet and it likely to do so in person in Delaware on Election Day, Nov. 3. Delaware doesn't offer early, in-person voting like Florida.

sured," the former vice president said. He said that if elected, he would direct the federal government to "bulk-purchase as many doses as necessary of the COVID-19 vaccine so we can provide it free to those who are uninsured, underinsured or Medicaid-eligible."

"COVID-19 dwarfs anything we've faced in recent history and it isn't showing any signs of slowing down. The virus is surging in almost

every state. We passed 4.8 million cases. And when Trump was asked this week what he'd do differently to get the pandemic response right from the start his answer was and I quote, 'Not much. Not much.'," he said.

Alleging that Trump does not have a plan to fight the coronavirus, Biden said the longer he is the president, the "more reckless" he gets.

New clashes in Nagorno-Karabakh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Stepanakert, Oct 24: Rocket and artillery barrage hit residential areas Saturday hours after the United States hosted top diplomats from Armenia and Azerbaijan for talks on settling their decades-long conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

The heavy shelling forced residents of Stepanakert, the regional capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, into shelters, as emergency teams rushed to extinguish fires. Nagorno-Karabakh authorities said other towns in the region were also targeted by Azerbaijani artillery fire. There was no immediate information about casualties.

Officials in Azerbaijan claimed that the town of Terter and areas in the Gubadli region came under Armenian shelling early Saturday, killing a teenager. They said that another 13-year-old boy died Saturday of wounds he received in an earlier shelling of Ganja, Azerbaijan's second-largest city.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces



AFP PHOTO

backed by Armenia since a war there ended in 1994. The current fighting that started September 27 marks the worst escalation in the conflict since the war's end.

After two failed attempts by Russia to broker a truce, the US waded onto the scene on Friday, with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo hosting the Armenian and Azerbaijan foreign ministers for separate talks. "Both must implement a ceasefire and return to substantive negotiations," Pompeo said in a tweet after the negotiations.

"Just now a bomb exploded in my garden," Georgiy, a resident of

Nagorno-Karabakh authorities said other towns in the region were also targeted by Azerbaijani artillery fire

Officials in Azerbaijan claimed that the town of Terter and areas in the Gubadli region came under Armenian shelling early Saturday, killing a teenager

Stepanakert who only gave his first name amid the war jitters, said after the overnight attack. "If this is the so-called cease-fire, let the whole world see this cease-fire," Georgiy, who was born in Stepanakert, said he would stay home despite the fighting. "This is my motherland, I'm not going to leave it," he said.

Men produce more Covid-19 antibodies than women: Study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lisbon, Oct 24: On average, men produce more Covid-19 antibodies than women, say Portuguese researchers, adding that, 90 per cent of the patients have detectable antibodies up to seven months post contracting the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

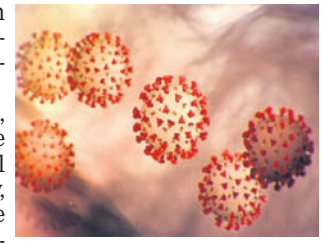
The results, published in the European Journal of Immunology, also show that age is not a confounding factor in levels of antibodies produced, but disease severity is. "Our immune system recognizes the virus SARS-CoV-2 as harmful and produces antibodies in response to it, which helps to fight the virus," said study author Marc Veldhoen from Medicina Molecular Joao Lobo Antunes in Portugal.

For the findings, the research

team set up an in-house sensitive specific and versatile Covid-19 serology test. They started to monitor the antibody levels of over 300 Covid-19 hospital patients and healthcare workers, and over 200 post-Covid-19 volunteers.

The results of this six months cross-sectional study show a classic pattern with a rapid increase of antibody levels within the first three weeks after Covid-19 symptoms and, as expected, a reduction to intermediate levels thereafter.

"In this early response phase, on average men produce more antibodies than women, but levels equilibrate during the resolution phase and are similar between the sexes in the months after SARS-CoV-2 infection," Veldhoen said.



US man jailed for 20 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Los Angeles, Oct 24: A US man has been sentenced to 20 years in jail for conspiring to commit terrorist attacks and providing two powerful assault rifles to a Pakistani-origin couple who carried out a mass shooting in California in 2015 that killed 14 people, according to federal prosecutors.

Enrique Marquez Jr., 28, was sentenced Friday by United States District Judge Jesus Bernal in a major terrorism case that shook America when radicalised Pakistani-American couple Syed Rizwan Farook and Tashfeen Malik massacred 14 people and injured 22 others in a shooting rampage.

The sentencing concludes a case in which Marquez pleaded guilty in 2017 to conspiracy to provided material support and resources to terrorists.

In the plea agreement and in open court, Marquez admitted that he conspired with Farook, 29, in 2011 and 2012 to attack Riverside City College (RCC) and traffic on a highway, the Department of Justice said in a press release.

Marquez also pleaded guilty to making false statements in connection with the acquisition of firearms by serving as the "straw buyer" of two assault rifles that he provided to Farook.

More than three years later, Farook and his wife Tashfeen Malik used those rifles in the shooting rampage at the San Bernardino Inland Regional Center (IRC) in San Bernardino, California on December 2, 2015.

Farook's wife, 29-year-old Malik, pledged allegiance to Islamic State on social media on the day of the shooting, according to US officials.

Farook and his wife were killed by law enforcement officers, ending what at the time was the worst terrorist attack on American soil since 9/11.

Birth rates will change dramatically: Study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, Oct 24: Covid-19 pandemic is likely to profoundly affect our families, work lives, relationships and gender roles for years, say 12 prominent scientists who analysed 90 research studies to evaluate pandemic and its aftermath.

The study published in journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences revealed that planned pregnancies will decrease in a disease-ridden world, birth-rates will drop, and many couples will postpone marriage.

"People who are single are less likely to start new relationships. Women who can afford to be on their own are likely to stay single longer," said study senior author Martie Haselton from the University



PTI PHOTO

of California, Los Angeles in the US. According to the researchers, with children home due to the pandemic, women are spending more time providing care and schooling, are less available for paying work

and may come to rely more on male partners as breadwinners.

This will push us toward socially conservative gender norms and potentially result in a backslide in gender equality. Unlike many past

crises, this pandemic is not bringing people closer together and, despite some exceptions, it is not producing an increase in kindness, empathy or compassion, especially in the US.

"Our species is not wired for seeking a precise understanding of the world as it actually is," the authors wrote, and our tribal predispositions toward groupthink are resulting in the large-scale spread of misinformation. We tend to seek out data that supports our opinions, and we too often distrust health experts, they say.

"The psychological, social and societal consequences of Covid-19 will be very long-lasting. The longer Covid-19 continues, the more entrenched these changes are likely to be," the team said. As marriage

rates plummet and people postpone reproduction in a virus-plagued world, some nations' populations will shrink and fall precipitously below "replacement level," they added.

These birth-rate drops, in turn, can have to cascade social and economic consequences, affecting job opportunities, straining the ability of countries to provide a safety net for their ageing populations and potentially leading to global economic contraction. Research has also shown that even before the pandemic, women were more stressed than men by family and job responsibilities. "Now they are managing more household responsibilities related to child care and education," the study noted.



It's the first time that the pricing of such a big listing (for Ant Group), the largest in human history, has been determined outside New York City. We didn't dare to think about it five years ago, or even three years ago. But a miracle just occurred

JACK MA | FOUNDER, ALIBABA

ICICI BANK SHUTS DOWN OPS IN SL

ICICI Bank Saturday said it has shut down operations in Sri Lanka after getting approval from the Sri Lankan monetary authority. The Monetary Board of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, has granted approval to close down business operation of the bank and cancel the licence issued to it



of the day quote

As India's leading stock exchange, it's our responsibility to support the government's nation-building exercise

AJAYKUMAR THAKUR | HEAD, BSE SME AND STARTUPS

Some 15 years ago there were practically no producers of bottled olive oil in Istria and there was no expert verification of its quality. Now Istria has become a region where guests come also because they know what kind of olive oil they can buy

DENIS IVOSEVIC | ISTRIAN TOURIST BOARD

The future of fashion will be built on rightfully taking care of the craftsman, inventing and training them to produce meticulously made pieces and eliminating excessive production in the post pandemic era

AMIT AGGARWAL | ACE FASHION DESIGNER

SHORT TAKES

MomSoon, Monte Carlo join hands

New Delhi: Maternity clothing startup MomSoon Saturday said it has partnered Monte Carlo to launch a winter collection for maternity wear. Under the partnership, Monte Carlo will produce maternity wear garments designed by Momsoon for sale online. "There have been a lot of queries for winter wear from our target customers. We have entered into a partnership agreement with Monte Carlo to launch co-branded winter collection of maternity wear," Momsoon founder Neha Nahata said.

Idemia launches card programme

New Delhi: French augmented identity firm Idemia Saturday said it has launched an accelerator card programme for financial technology firms and neobanks which would help them in their card issuance process. The programme allows a rapid process from cardholder onboarding to card issuance and enables fintech firms and new age banks to issue cards in any marketplace, the company said. Idemia said that it has dedicated teams and a network of 30 service centres in 26 countries.

JK Cement opens new unit

Ahmedabad: JK Cement Saturday inaugurated its new grey cement grinding unit at Balasinor in Gujarat's Mahisagar district with a manufacturing capacity of 0.7 million tonnes per annum (mtpa). The plant, spread over an area of eight hectares, has been set up at a total project cost of ₹200 crore, the company said. It is a part of the company's total funding outlay of ₹2,000 crore to add 4.2 mtpa capacity, comprising 2 mtpa in Rajasthan, 1.5 mtpa in Uttar Pradesh and 0.7 mtpa in Gujarat.

Tata Motors crosses milestone

New Delhi: Auto major Tata Motors Saturday said its passenger vehicle vertical has crossed 40 lakh cumulative production milestone, nearly three decades after it rolled out its first model in the segment -- Tata Sierra SUV in 1991. The company, which over the years has produced models like the Indica, Sierra, Sumo, Safari and the Nano, had achieved the 10 lakh production mark for passenger vehicles in 2005-06 and 30 lakh milestone in 2015.

POST-PANDEMIC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, Oct 24: The Chinese economy is staging impressive recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic shock, bolstered by the country's effective control of the novel coronavirus, a renowned US economist said.

"The third quarter GDP was encouraging," which does show that "China is on a solid path of economic recovery following the Covid-19 shock in the early months of this year," Stephen Roach, senior fellow at Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, told Xinhua.

"The encouraging pieces of it have to do with the contribution to economic growth made by Chinese consumers, who clearly were most adversely impacted by the lockdown early this year," said Roach, who was formerly chair-



man of Morgan Stanley Asia and chief economist at Morgan Stanley, a New York-based investment bank.

China's gross domestic product (GDP) expanded 4.9% year on year in Q3, faster than the 3.2% growth seen in Q2, showed official data earlier this week.

Also, in the latest World Economic Outlook report released earlier this month, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projected China's economy to grow by 1.9% in 2020, 0.9 percentage points above the IMF's June forecast, making it the only major economy

China's (approach to public health) is an important lesson for other economies around the world, as massive fiscal and monetary stimulus could be undermined if you don't have effective control over the disease

STEPHEN ROACH | SENIOR FELLOW, JACKSON INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS

that will see positive growth this year. "The most impressive aspect of the economy's performance is that the highest priority was given to containing the outbreak of Covid-19," said Roach.

"China's approach to public health is strict, it's disciplined," which is "a model of what can be done to contain the impacts of a disease outbreak in a major economy," he said, adding that "it's a model that the rest of the world needs to take very seriously as an example of what is

missing today and what they could do."

A shock like a pandemic does not just go away instead, it takes very rigorous, focused and disciplined public health actions to curtail the spread and bring the disease under control, said the famed Yale scholar. "The lesson from China is (that) they addressed the shock first of all and that was the principal focus of the government's efforts in the early months of 2020. And then by containing the shock, they were able to utilise policy tools, fiscal and monetary, to then stimulate the aggregate demand after the shock had been controlled," said Roach.

"That's an important lesson for other economies around the world," as "massive fiscal and monetary stimulus could be undermined if you don't have effective control over the disease," he noted.

RBI to keep policy accommodative, but wary of inflation



REUTERS

Mumbai, Oct 24: A second wave of COVID-19 remains a threat to the Indian economy and the central bank believes monetary policy needs to remain accommodative despite inflationary pressures, according to the minutes of the monetary policy committee's latest meeting, released Friday.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) left interest rates unchanged at that meeting two weeks ago, as expected.

Almost all members of the MPC said they see room for further easing, but a recent rise in price pressures would need to abate for them to use that space.

"This space needs to be used judiciously to support recovery in growth," Governor Shaktikanta Das wrote in his minutes.

Structural reforms to unlock growth are needed but may lack support with growth and employment depressed, Deputy Governor Michael Patra said.

"In the absence of intrinsic drivers, the recovery may last only until pent-up demand has been satiated and replenishment of inventories has been completed," Patra said. "Empirical evidence suggests that consumption-led recoveries are shallow and short-lived."

DISSENT NOTE

One of the new external mem-

bers, Jayanth Varma, added a dissent note as part of his minutes. He agreed with the MPC's intention to keep policy accommodative during the current financial year and into the next financial year, he said, but he opposed using the word "decided".

Structural reforms to unlock growth are needed but may lack support with growth and employment depressed

MICHAEL PATRA | DEPUTY GOVERNOR, RBI

"It appears to me that the steep yield curve reflects a lack of credibility of the MPC's existing accommodative guidance," he said, but the MPC was risking making a commitment it might not be able to keep as new data emerges or conditions change. He said he would have preferred to use the word "expected".

Varma pointed out the damage inflicted by high long-term interest rates on the economy as policy rates fail to feed through, causing a collapse in investments.

Governor Das said, however, guidance from the central bank would help translate policy rates into longer-term yields and bolster consumption and investment demand.

e-Tailers begin 2nd festive sale round

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 24: After registering record sales in the seven-day period to kick off the festive season after pandemic-induced lockdowns, e-commerce marketplaces like Amazon and Flipkart have announced the second round of online sales to keep up the momentum.

Amazon Saturday announced 1/2 Happiness Upgrade Days where customers will get special offers on a wide range of products across categories from top brands till October 28.

The e-commerce platform is offering up to 40 per cent off on latest smartphones from top brands, 65% off on large appliances and TVs and up to 80% off on Amazon fashion and home and kitchen products.

The sale brings over 6,000 deals on consumer electronics and accessories, up to ₹30,000 off on laptops, up to 75% off on headphones and up to 60% off on camera devices, the company said in a statement.



"The customers can save big with a 10% instant bank discount on Axis Bank, Citibank and ICICI Bank credit and debit cards and EMI transactions.

They can get 5% instant discount plus up to 5% reward points with Amazon Pay ICICI Bank credit card.

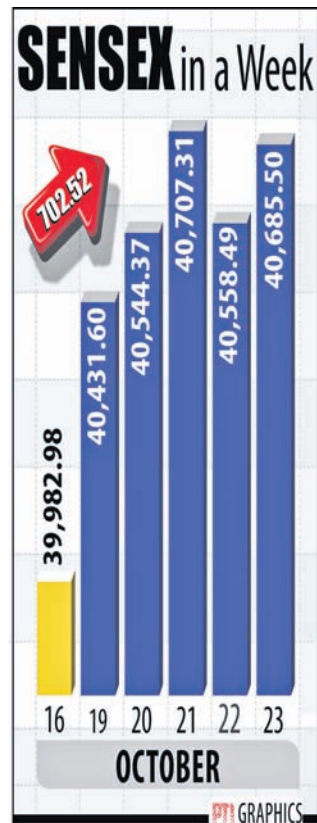
Flipkart has also started Dussehra sale from October 22 till October 28 and after that, the e-commerce platform will begin the 'Big Diwali Sale'.

According to industry reports, the seven-day sales likely witnessed

over \$4.8 billion (nearly ₹35,273 crore) in sales.

According to the Bangalore-based market research firm RedSeer, \$3.1 billion (about ₹22,000 crore) of goods were sold online from brands and sellers in the first four-and-a-half days of the online sales event that started from October 15.

Online retailers are expected to generate approximately \$6.5 billion (Rs 47,751 crore) in sales during the festive month (October 15-November 15), with around 5.5-6 crore online buyers participating, according to a Forrester report.



MCL produces 105 lakh tonne coal in September

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: Amid the crisis of COVID-19 outbreak, a major coal producer Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) produced 105.807 lakh tonne in the month of September, 2020. However, the produced coal is not equivalent to the set target for the same month. The subsidiary of Coal India Limited (CIL) had targetted to produce 130.780 lakh tonne in the month of September, 2020.

According to the data available at MCL website, MCL produced 0.407 lakh tonne of coal from underground mining while it produced around 105.399 lakh tonne from open cast mining.

On the other hand, MCL also fell short to achieve its monthly target in August during the current



fiscal. The coal producer set a target to produce 173 million tonne of coal during the financial year of 2020-21 in Odisha.

The company authorities have expected to extract around 5 lakh tonne of coal per day and 15 MT coal in a month.

MCL had produced 1403.576 lakh tonne of coal from all its projects in Odisha during previous financial year. Last fiscal, the company had targetted to achieve 1,600 lakh tonne but several local demonstrations obstructed to achieve the target.

INSURANCE – A WOMAN'S SMARTEST ACCESSORY

Being in the insurance field for close to three decades now, one thing that makes me really happy is when women secure themselves, their families and their assets with an insurance policy. These women understand that by spending a few hundreds of rupees on these policies, they will be securing themselves against any possible financial exigencies in terms of an illness, accident, natural calamity, theft etc. But a pain point that still remains is that this financial literacy among women is limited to the metros and other tier-I cities.

Most of the women from tier-II/III cities, towns and villages still remain unaware of this financial tool, having the power to prevent them from spending their lifetime worth of savings in paying hospital bills/rebuilding or re-furnishing homes or other assets.

Insurance for women is a necessity as an all-round coverage will ensure financial stability even in times of distress. In today's modern times

with evolving risk patterns, there is a strong need to reassess basic insurance covers that will fundamentally protect and safeguard a woman, her family and assets. Here is a list of 5 must have covers:

Health Insurance

As medical costs are increasing exponentially, there is a rising impetus to get a health insurance cover of at least 5 lakh. Ensuring a health insurance policy at the onset, provides an advantage of low premiums and it also covers any forms of pre-existing medical conditions which get covered within 2-3 years as per the policy one selects. Added advantages of health insurance products are the covers available for maternity and newborn related expenses but their coverage extent should be considered before one buys a product. General infections and fevers contribute to 25% of all woman related claims, however with fast changing lifestyles there is an increasing number of woman suffering from various critical illnesses.

Home & Content Insurance Home insurance is a necessity as it covers the house from various dangers like accidents, peril damages and thefts. Home policies also offer



Insurance for women is a necessity as an all-round coverage will ensure financial stability even in times of distress

Health insurance specific to such critical illnesses for women is the solution to this problem.

Home insurance is a necessity as it covers the house from various dangers like accidents, peril damages and thefts. Home policies also offer

coverage to cover only the assets like equipment, furniture, electronic items which are even portable such as mobile phones and cameras. Home insurance policies also cover jewellery, even the one's kept in bank lockers. If the house lies in a catastrophe prone area such as

floods/earthquakes/cyclones a home insurance will ensure that the calamity does not rain down on one's savings.

Motor Insurance cover

It is mandatory by law to have a third-party liability cover for one's vehicle in India. We must realise that third party insurance protects the owner against legal liability arising from an accident causing any permanent injury or death as well as any damage to the property. However, a comprehensive car or two-wheeler insurance policy is a must as it covers the vehicle against any loss or damage caused to it and its insured accessories as a result of natural and man-made disasters or accidents. In case of women, most policies have add-on covers where 24*7 roadside assistance is provided to them in case of a road mishap.

Cyber insurance for individuals

In the past the risks that an individual was exposed to was limited to physical theft, personal accident or illness. However, with the rise in

the number of internet users, frequency of online transactions and significant personal information being available on social media and e-commerce sites, individuals today are exposed to new age risks. To address these risks one needs to have a secured insurance cover that offers protection against such perils.

Personal Accident cover

Personal accident schemes cover the policyholder against death or disability due to an accident. It costs less than a cup of tea. For as little as ₹2 per day, one can get a cover of ₹5 lakh. This policy provides financial support to the policyholder if she is disabled after an accident. Secondly, the magnitude of the mishap doesn't matter; even minor ones like falling off a bicycle and breaking an arm, or fracturing a leg while playing a sport are covered here, as this is a benefit policy.

(The writer is Head - Bancassurance - PSUs, RRBs & Cooperative Banks, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance)

Chakravarthy fifer scripts KKR victory



Varun Chakravarthy reacts after getting rid of Shimron Hetmyer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Abu Dhabi, Oct 24: Leg-spinner Varun Chakravarthy (5/20) dished out the best bowling performance of this IPL with a five-for after his batting colleagues stepped up in style as Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) beat Delhi Capitals (DC) by 59 runs here Saturday.

Promoted to open the innings, Nitish Rana revelled in his new role as he overcame a personal tragedy to smash a whirlwind 81 and shared a game-changing 115-run stand with Sunil Narine (64) to lift KKR to an imposing 194/6 after being put in to bat.

Chasing a stiff target, Chakravarthy (5/20) and Pat Cummins (3/17) gave the Delhi Capitals batsmen a torrid time to restrict them to 135 for 9 in 20 overs.

Cummins gave a perfect start, dismissing both the openers Ajinkya Rahane (0) and in-form Shikhar Dhawan (6) in his first two overs. Then Chakravarthy played the finisher's act in the back-end of the innings to choke the DC run chase.

Coming on the back of a horror batting show against Royal Challengers Bangalore when they crumbled to 84/8, KKR ticked all the boxes to keep their playoff hopes alive by securing their sixth win, with three matches left.

For DC, this was their second successive loss but they still maintained the second spot. Skipper Shreyas Iyer was the top-scorer for DC with 47 as he, along with Rishabh Pant (27), held on after Cummins' twin strike. They took on the opposition attack in the second half but KKR's strategy to press in Chakravarthy paid dividends.

The spinner opened his account after Pant holed out at deep square leg and in his next over he got two in two, dismissing Shimron Hetmyer (10) and Iyer off consecutive balls.

Hetmyer fell while trying to clear the long on boundary, while Iyer could not connect well and was



Nitish Rana (L) and Sunil Narine

caught by Kamlesh Nagarkoti at long on. In his next over, Chakravarthy dismissed Marcus Stoinis and then picked his fifer in the fifth ball, cleaning up Axar Patel with a straight one.

Earlier, Nitish Rana revelled in his new opening role with a whirlwind 81, while Sunil Narine, playing in her first match after being cleared of suspect bowling, smashed a 32-ball 64 to propel KKR to 194 for 6 after being asked to bat.

Promoted to open, Rana smashed 13 fours and one six in his 53-ball 81, while Narine also came out all guns blazing, smacking four sixes and six fours as KKR put behind their horror show against RCB to post a stiff total.

The left-handed duo stitched together 115 runs from just 59 balls to seize the momentum. Having crumbled for 84 in their last match against RCB, KKR once again were staring down the barrel at 42/3 after 7.2 overs.

Anrich Nortje grabbed the wickets of the under-performing Shubman Gill (9) and Rahul Tripathi (13) inside the Powerplay, while Kagiso Rabada accounted for Dinesh Karthik (3).

BRIEF SCORES: KKR 194/6 (Nitish Rana 81 n.o., Sunil Narine 64; Anrich Nortje 2/27, Kagiso Rabada 2/33) beat DC 135/9 (Shreyas Iyer 47; Varun Chakravarthy 5/20, Pat Cummins 3/17) by 59 runs.

KXIP PASS SRH TEST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Oct 24: It was a bowlers' day out at the Dubai International Stadium as Kings XI Punjab (KXIP) bowlers turned the tables on Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) while defending a small total, scripting a 12-run win in the IPL, Saturday.

Defending a paltry 126/7, KXIP bundled out SRH for 114 with a ball to spare. Needing 17 off the last two overs and having five wickets in hand, SRH could add only four runs to the total before losing all the wickets.

Chris Jordan (3/17), who bowled the 19th over, conceded only three runs and in the process he dismissed Jason Holder and Rashid Khan off successive deliveries. In the final over, young left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh (3/23) conceded a single off the first ball before dismissing Sandeep Sharma and Priyam Garg off consecutive balls. KXIP wrapped up the things with a run-out.

SRH openers - David Warner (35, 20b, 3x4, 2x6) and Jonny Bairstow (19) - started the chase wonderfully adding 56 in 6.1 overs before Ravi

TODAY'S MATCHES

RCB VS CSK
AT 3:30 PM

RR VS MI
AT 7:30 PM

TELECAST: STAR SPORTS

POINT TABLE

TEAM	M	W	L	N/R	NRR	PTS
MI	10	7	3	0	+1.448	14
DC	11	7	4	0	+0.434	14
RCB	10	7	3	0	+0.182	14
KKR	11	6	5	0	-0.476	12
KXIP	11	5	6	0	-0.103	10
SRH	11	4	7	0	+0.029	8
RR	11	4	7	0	-0.620	8
CSK	11	3	8	0	-0.733	6

Bishnoi (1/13) broke the stand getting rid of Warner. SRH then lost two more wickets one after the other to be reduced to 67/3 in 8.5 overs.

Manish Pandey (15) and Vijay Shankar (26) played cautiously putting together 33 runs. However, a gem

of a catch at the boundary line by substitute J Suchith ended the Pandey's struggle. Then, SRH lost the momentum, as well as the match. With this, KXIP registered their fourth successive win and moved to fifth spot, displacing SRH (8 points), with 10 points.

Earlier, SRH bowlers produced a clinical performance to restrict KXIP to a modest 126/7. SRH bowlers responded impressively to their skipper David Warner's decision to field first, picking wickets at regular intervals to control the innings.

KXIP Skipper KL Rahul (27), Mandeep Singh (17) and Chris Gayle (20) all got starts but their innings never got going as they failed to grab the momentum. Nicholas Pooran ended being the top scorer, making an unbeaten 32 off 28 balls. Rashid Khan (2/14), Jason Holder (2/27) and Sandeep Sharma (2/29) bowled well.

BRIEF SCORES: KXIP 126/7 (Nicolas Pooran 32 n.o.; Rashid Khan 2/14, Jason Holder 2/27, Sandeep Sharma 2/29) beat SRH 114 (David Warner 35; Chris Jordan 3/17, Arshdeep Singh 3/23) by 12 runs.



Chris Jordan (C) is surrounded by his teammates in celebration after getting a wicket

Real punish sloppy Barca at Camp Nou



Real Madrid players celebrate a goal against Barcelona at Camp Nou

AGENCIES

Barcelona, Oct 24: Sergio Ramos returned to win and score a game-turning penalty in Real Madrid's 3-1 El Clasico win here, Saturday. The Los Blancos captain Ramos drew a second-half spot-kick from Clement Lenglet to restore Madrid's lead after Ansu Fati had cancelled out Federico Valverde's opener.

In the process, Ramos became the first Real Madrid player to score a penalty in El Clasico since Cristiano Ronaldo in February 2013 (in Copa del Rey) and the first in La Liga since Ruud van Nistelrooy in March 2007.

Meanwhile, Barca are now without a win in three in the league and sit six points back in mid-table under new coach Ronald Koeman.

Barca made a very slow start to the game and paid for it just five minutes in, when a terrible de-

fensive breakdown left Federico Valverde all alone inside the box to give Madrid the lead. Barca quickly woke up after conceding and instantly equalised after a brilliant pass from Lionel Messi, and assist for Jordi Alba followed by a tap-in from Ansu Fati.

Fifteen minutes into the second half, Lenglet pulled Ramos' shirt inside the box and the Spaniard threw himself to the ground to try and earn a penalty, and it was given after a VAR review. Ramos scored from the spot to put Madrid ahead.

Luka Modric then preyed on a Neto error in the 90th minute to secure the points and take Zinedine Zidane's men top, earning back-to-back LaLiga wins against their fiercest rivals for the first time since May 2008 - the last time they successfully defended their domestic title.

Unique races to assess athletes' progress in Odisha HPC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: Odisha's High Performance Centre (HPC) for athletics, which is a collaboration between the state government and the Reliance Foundation, is conducting a unique 'performance graded races' for 29 budding athletes in which age and gender won't be the basis of groupings.

The competition is a brainchild of centre's head coach James Hillier, who says the races will

allow the athletes, between the ages of 13 to 17 years, experience competitiveness at its best as they would be segregated on the basis of their timings.

"This will hopefully help the athletes focus more on their own best individual performances rather than getting distracted in personal rivalries or just winning their respective age group race," explained Hillier.

"We would rather an athlete finishes fifth in a personal best per-

formance in a high-quality race than win easily with a poor performance in a weak race," the former British athlete added.

The three-stage competition that began at the Kalinga Stadium in a bio-secure bubble Saturday features sprint, middle and long distance running and hurdles.

The second and third stages of the competition will take place October 28 and 31 before the grand finale November 8.

"Our sprint events will always

be run with prevailing wind conditions and our middle-distance events will have pace-makers," Hillier said.

"We also rank our races based purely on performances and therefore it is possible for athletes of different ages and sex to compete in the same race if they are of similar abilities," he added.

The athletes, all from Odisha, reside at the Bhubaneswar state sports hostel. Athletes in the academy group are 16 years or older and

are identified at various stages of development from being two years away from winning a national level medal to those with established international credentials.

There are nine such athletes (six from Odisha) at the HPC academy currently, who live at the Kalinga stadium. In Hillier's estimation, at the end of these four competitions, with plenty of time in the interim periods to analyse performances, these athletes will make significant progress.

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Asian Chess: India men, eves in finals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, Oct 24: B Adhiban and R Vaishali shone bright as the top-seeded Indian men and women teams entered the finals of the Asian Nations (Regions) Online chess championship with victories over Kazakhstan and Mongolia respectively Saturday.

While the men beat Kazakhstan 2.5-1.5 and 3-1, the women's side posted 3.5-0.5 and 4-0 wins over Mongolia.

Adhiban notched up important victories over Rinat Jumabayev on the top board in both his matches. In the first match, India rode on Adhiban's win while Nihal Sarin, SP Sethuraman and K Sasikiran drew their games.

In the second match, Adhiban, Sarin and Sethuraman won their respective games but Sasikiran suffered a defeat at the hands of Denis Makhnev.

The Indian team, led by Surya Sekhar Ganguly, faces Australia in Sunday's final. Ganguly didn't play any match Saturday.

In the women's semifinal, India were in dominant form and won both the matches comprehensively. Vaishali, winner of the gold medal on the top board in the preliminary phase, won both her games against Batkhuyag Munguntuul.

The team led by Woman Grandmaster Mary Ann Gomes will meet Indonesia in the final Sunday.

Apart from Vaishali, Padmini Rout and PV Nandhidhaa recorded wins against their opponents in the first match, while Gomes drew her game. In the second match, there were wins for Vaishali, Bhakti Kulkarni, Padmini and Nandhidhaa as Indian team won 4-0.

Foden saves City the blushes at West Ham

AGENCIES

Manchester, Oct 24: Manchester City continued their stuttering start to the Premier League season with a 1-1 draw at West Ham. City have eight points from five games and are 11th, below West Ham on goal difference.

The Hammers last beat City in September 2015 but Michail Antonio's magnificent overhead kick gave them an 18th-minute lead.

City produced more of the ponderous play that saw them drop points against Leicester City and Leeds United until Phil Foden came off the bench to inspire their most convincing passage of the match.

Foden struck a 51st-minute equaliser but, as they did in the first period, Pep Guardiola's side tailed off and even the appearance of a fit-again Kevin De Bruyne from the bench could not inspire a victory.



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