






DSPL119




Shri Naveen Patnaik Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha announces New Smart Health Card with New Guidelines of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana

 Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana Smart Cardholders / National Food Security Act (NFSA) / State Food Security Scheme (SFSS) Cardholders are eligible to avail cashless healthcare from 1st Sept. 2021

 The new Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) smart card will be implemented from 1st Sept. 2021

 Each beneficiary family will get health coverage of Rs.5 lakhs & additional Rs.5 lakhs for the women members of the family per annum in empanelled private hospitals

 More than 3 crore 30 lakh people covering 92 lakh 50 thousand beneficiary families in Odisha will be benefited



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OIPR-10001/13/0010/2122

leisure



JOHNNY DEPP CLAIMS BEING BOYCOTTED BY HOLLYWOOD

Hollywood star Johnny Depp claimed in an interview that he is being 'boycotted' by Hollywood. Depp said that he feels the Hollywood is turning its back on him as his latest film *Minamata* is yet to get a US release, reports *variety.com*.

ROBBIE HASN'T BEEN HOME FOR TWO YEARS

Actress Margot Robbie has not been back to her native Australia in almost two years due to shoot commitments and the Covid-19 pandemic. "There was the pandemic and before that I was on a film or two. I miss home so much," Robbie told *T Australia: The New York Times Style Magazine*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You will be indecisive today, which is not usually the case with you. Ganesh says this could lead you to indulge in speculation, which is not so bad unless you risk all your money in it. Besides, when it comes to matters of the heart, you must exercise a great deal of caution.

TAURUS
All is not likely to go well during this day says Ganesh. Though you will sail smoothly most of the day, problems are very likely to come up. At the professional level you are not likely to face obstacles or difficulties. Your relations with your parents turn awkward and unpleasant. You could be getting into a serious argument with them and thereby displease and disappoint them. You need to respect their views and wishes and if necessary tender sincere apologies, if necessary.

GEMINI
Your sensitive and emotional nature will prove to be a problem for you. Hence you need to control your emotions. Tread carefully when it comes to personal relationships. You need to wait for a better time before you think of proposing to that special someone, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will be in a joyous mood. You will be de-lighted in whatever task you do. Financial matters will confound you, with even a petty issue causing tension. Ganesh says it will be a colourful day, with happy tidings.

LEO
Your entire day will be spent at work. Those working in large corporations will have to fulfill heightened expectations from their superiors. Housewives will need to tackle other work, apart from their daily chores. It is an important day for you, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
You will stay away from partnership ventures. Ganesh says you have the ability to control large-scale projects on your own. You have leadership qualities, and will be able to coordinate team work and direct your colleagues to get the required amount of work from them.

LIBRA
Ganesh says that you will be able to attain a huge benefit because of your nature to take chances. Higher ups in the office will take notice of your skills and ability to work well. Seniors in your office will promote and inspire you to give your best. Ganesh says this is not a good time to get into a direct fight with anyone since it will lead to more problems and issues.

SCORPIO
You are ready to take up the challenges that life has to throw at you. Thanks to the confidence within you, which gives you power to fight it out against all odds. Even if you take up a mammoth task, you are bound to succeed today, predicts Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Your business is likely to grow with leaps and bounds, foresees Ganesh. Increase in financial returns will keep you happy for the entire day. Work in progress gives out positive signals. Your expert advice will be valued at work. In short, a day full of activities.

CAPRICORN
Practical and creative, you are able to utilise your talents in the best possible manner. You will smartly solve family issues, without favouring or hurting anybody, says Ganesh. You'll like to play the role of a peace maker, as it gives you satisfaction from within. Also, you will love to help others as much as you can.

AQUARIUS
Be it about solving financial issues or concerns about income, money matters will keep your mind occupied through out the day. You will have a gala time with your friends later on the day, predicts Ganesh. Not that you don't value your friends, but today, you will realise how important you are for one another.

PISCES
You are fond of traveling and are always looking for an excuse to set off. Hence it comes as no surprise if you pack your bags and decide to embark upon a journey on a whim today. It is a much needed break too, from the daily stresses of earning a livelihood. While you are seeking solitude, you will take your friends and relatives along with you on the trip, says Ganesh.



Mrunal on going back to 'hectic schedule'

NEW DELHI: Mrunal Thakur says when the lockdown happened, she knew she would get back to the hectic schedule that actors live for. Mrunal's latest release is the Farhan Akhtar starrer *Toofan*. She next has *Jersey* and *Aankh Micholi*. Does the fast paced life of film industry ever get exhausting? Mrunal said: "When the second wave came and the

lockdown happened... I knew I would get back to this hectic schedule and this is what we live for..." "Shooting back-to-back... I know I feel exhausted but I always feel like this is the time, I have the opportunity and if not now then when?" added the 29-year-old actress. Mrunal will also be seen with actor Dulquer Salmaan in their yet-to-be-titled trilingual film. Directed by Hanu Raghavapudi, the film produced by Ashwini Dutt and Priyanka Dutt under Swapna Cinema is being made in Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam. It will be presented by Vyjayanthi Movies. IANS



Debashri bags SaReGaMaPa title

BHUBANESWAR: Odia singing reality show *SaReGaMaPa - Swara ra Mahamancha*, aired on Zee Sarthak TV, has found its winner. Debanshi Das from Puri has beaten her co-participants to bag the title. She won a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh while first and second runners-up Payal Mohanty and Ipsit Pati, both from Bhubaneswar went home with ₹50,000 and ₹25,000 in their kitties. After winning the title, Debanshi says, "I am overwhelmed and speechless as the feeling of being the winner is yet to sink in. Zee Sarthak has given me a platform to realise my dreams and I will always be thankful for that. It was an honour to perform with and in front of legends from the industry. I would like to express my gratitude to the audience who voted for me wholeheartedly." The musical event was attended by celebrities like Babushan, Mantu Chhuria, Tansen Singh, Bikash Dash and Prem Anand. Mentors of the show Gooddy Rath, Aseema Panda, Dipti Rekha and Krishna Beura were also present. PNN



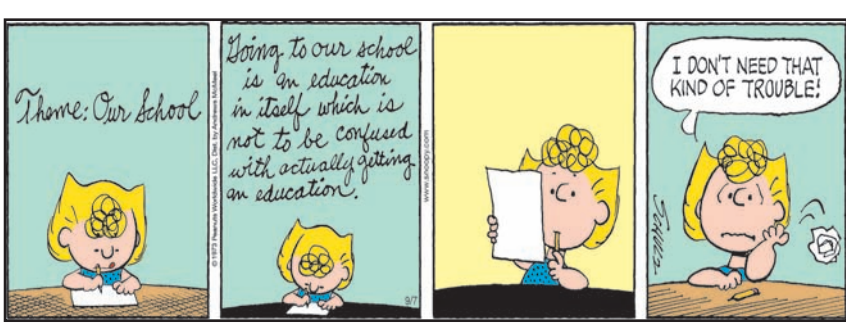
Prachi joins Forensic cast

MUMBAI: Prachi Desai has joined Radhika Apte and Vikrant Massey for investigative thriller *Forensic* directed by Vishal Furia. Talking about her upcoming film, Prachi said: "I am so happy to be a part of this investigative thriller. Vishal has a very interesting vision and palette for the project. And I play a part that I have never quite attempted before. It is exciting that writers and directors are penning projects that are so unique." Talking about Prachi being cast in the film, Vishal said: "I am happy that we have Prachi coming on board for the film. She plays a crucial character. She has this intrinsic charm that makes her effortlessly sync with the story." Welcoming her to the team, producers Deepak Mukut and Mansi Bangla said: "Prachi's casting was key to the film. It took us several weeks of brooding to find the right one for the part. We are so thrilled that she is coming on board." The actress was last seen in *Silence. Can You Hear It?* opposite Manoj Bajpayee. IANS

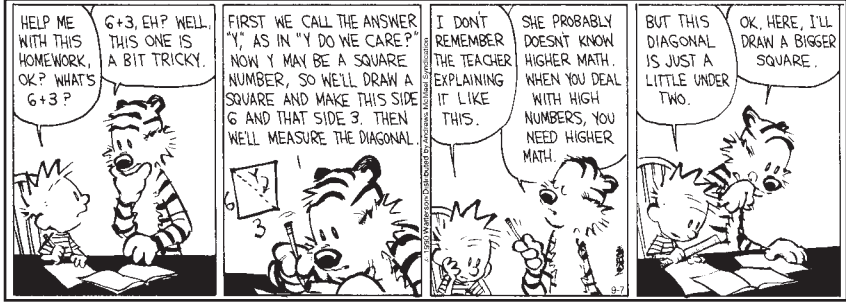
I am misfit in the industry: Sona

MUMBAI: Singer-songwriter Sona Mohapatra believes that even though her choice of 'living life on her own terms' and speaking her heart out made her journey as an artiste tougher, it has also liberated her as an artiste. She says: "I am a little strange and misfit in Bollywood or in the Mumbai music industry because I am always doing everything on my own terms. So naturally, my work opportunity in film music is less. Therefore I am not in a rat race. From the time I started my journey as a musician, I always focused on putting out original songs as opposed to counting on the number of Bollywood songs I lend my voice to. For me, it is not an ultimate achievement to have 100 Bollywood songs in my kitty, I would rather have original, independent songs. Yes, it is time-consuming, but these are original work." Since the pandemic, like all the other industries, the music industry has also got affected especially film music. IANS

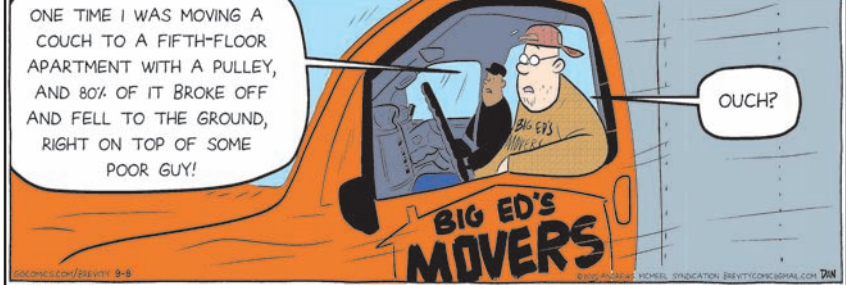
PEANUTS



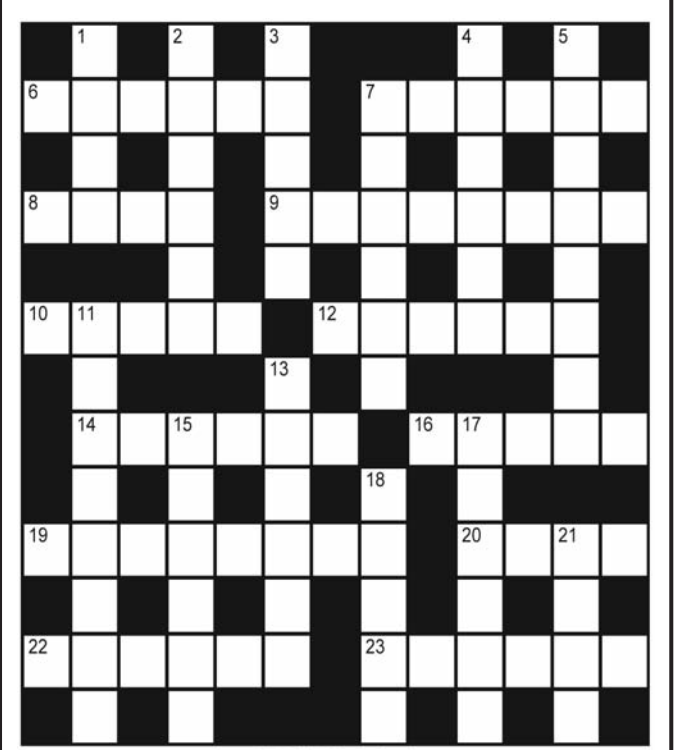
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



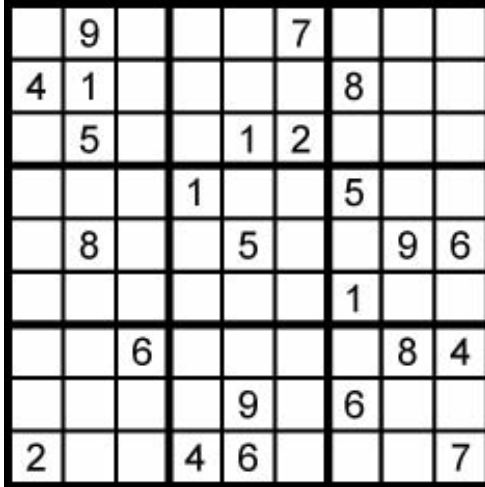
FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 6 Waylay
 - 7 Fear
 - 8 Leg part
 - 9 Antithesis of a cad (5,3)
 - 10 Cast
 - 12 Old maid flower
 - 14 Mainstay
 - 16 Quartz variety
 - 19 Ribbonlike parasite
 - 20 Duds
 - 22 Flourish
 - 23 Fancy neckwear
- Down**
- 1 Eastern nurse
 - 2 Subtlety
 - 3 Not too brainy
 - 4 Relative
 - 5 Stealth bomber, e.g.
 - 7 Unruffled
 - 11 Migraine
 - 13 Humorous
 - 15 Man of the cloth
 - 17 Rich and elaborate cake
 - 18 Impact sound
 - 21 Seize suddenly

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



STRAIGHT TALK

Singer-songwriter Sona Mohapatra believes that she is misfit in Mumbai film and music industry

LEISURE



AFGHANISTAN FALLS

The Taliban have seized power in Afghanistan two weeks before the US was set to complete its troop withdrawal

INTERNATIONAL P8



SPURS STUN MAN CITY

Son Heung-min goal helps Spurs beat Manchester City and get off to winning start in Premier League 2021-22

SPORTS BACK PAGE



Assembly session from September 1

BHUBANESWAR: The monsoon session of the State Assembly will begin from September 1 and continue till September 9, a notification said. As per the schedule prepared by the Assembly Secretariat, there will be seven official business days and one private members' business day during the short session. The house will remain closed September 4 (Sunday). The state government is likely to table several bills during the session. This will be the 7th session of the 16th Assembly.



3 top Maoists surrender before DGP

BHUBANESWAR: Three top Maoists from Chhattisgarh Monday surrendered before the Director General of Police Abhay at the DGP camp office here. The ultras of the CPI (Maoist) were identified as Lakma Madvi alias Lakhan of village Iurnag under Bijapur police limits, Ganga Madkam alias Nitesh of village Kamalpad under Kistaram police station and Suka Sodi alias Nabin of village Dulad under Chintakupa police station of Sukma district in Chhattisgarh. They were part of the Kodanga-Mahanadi-Sanjukta area committee operating under the KKBN division of Odisha State Committee of the CPI- Maoists.

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



India is truly a diverse country! There are people to even cheer for Taliban!

15-yr old, above vehicles to go off roads in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Soon after the Centre launched the vehicle scrappage policy, the state government has initiated steps to implement the same in Odisha. State Transport and Commerce Minister Padmanabha Behera said, "Whatever policy decisions on motor vehicles were taken by the Centre are being implemented by all states including Odisha. As the Prime Minister had announced



vehicle scrappage policy on the occasion of Independence Day, the state will also implement it."

All vehicles above 15 years which are unfit for the road and their fitness would not be renewed will be scrapped, Behera said. Asked about the number of such vehicles in Odisha, the minister said, "As per the Centre, there are nearly one crore such vehicles of which our state has a few lakhs." The state has the list of such old vehicles. The decision will be taken as per the Centre's scheme, he added.

Commenting on this new policy, All Odisha Private Bus Owners Association spokesperson Debasish Nayak said, "The launching of the policy during this pandemic will collapse the private bus sector. As we are sitting idle for more than two years, we are unable to pay our loans. This time, this policy will ensure that we stop doing business."

At least the government should give some time so that the bus operators can come out from the heavy losses, he said, adding, "It should have been implemented in a phased manner without putting much burden on us."

MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	55582.58	↑ 145.29
NIFTY	16563.00	↑ 33.90
DOLLAR	74.61	↑ ₹0.03
EURO	87.43	↓ ₹0.12
GOLD	₹47,220	↑ ₹280
SILVER	₹63,359	↑ ₹121

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	32.6°C	32.0°C
TEMP. MIN	26.8°C	26.2°C
Humidity	97%	97%
Rainfall	8.4mm	10.2mm
Forecast	Light rain very likely	



CLASSES AMID PANDEMIC: Class IX students of Govt Girls' High School at Unit-I in Bhubaneswar walk out after attending physical classes that resumed amid Covid-19 restrictions (REPORT P2)

Exit frenzy kills 8 at Kabul airport

As Taliban wrap up their takeover of Afghanistan, citizens scramble to leave the country. Panicked Afghans were seen desperately trying to get on flights out of the country

AGENCIES

Kabul, August 16: At least five people have been killed at the Kabul airport and three stowaways were reported to have fallen to their deaths from an airborne plane as thousands of Afghans are desperately trying to get on flights out of the country amid increasingly chaotic scenes, media reports Monday.

US troops fired shots in the air at the Hamid Karzai International Airport to prevent hundreds of civilians running onto the tarmac after they took over Afghanistan's air traffic control. Witnesses said it was not clear whether the victims were killed by gunshots or in a stampede.

Footage published by Asvaka showed three stowaways falling to the deaths after clinging on to the wheels of a military plane as it took off from Kabul airport.



AIR INDIA CANCELS FLIGHT TO KABUL

NEW DELHI: Air India cancelled its Delhi-Kabul-Delhi flight that was scheduled to be operated Monday and carriers running flight services between India and the western countries avoided the Afghan airspace after it was declared "uncontrolled" by the Kabul airport authorities, senior officials said. The Air India flight was the only commercial service scheduled to be operated between India and Afghanistan Monday. The national carrier is the only airline that has been operating flights between the two countries. Afghanistan stares at an uncertain future as President Ashraf Ghani left the country just before Kabul fell into the hands of the Taliban.

Panicked Afghans were also seen climbing up the outside of an air-bridge in a bid to get onboard planes and chasing a US military C-17 down the runway. Videos also showed hundreds of people running alongside, and in front of a US Air Force plane preparing to take off. All commercial services have been suspended, with only military flights leaving the country as the UK, US and other western countries repatriate their citizens. It comes as the UK Ministry of Defence confirmed the first British nationals had landed at the RAF base Brize Norton after being evacuated from Kabul.

104 KIDS TEST COVID-19 +VE

CUMULATIVE POSITIVITY RATE 5.82 PER CENT

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Amid concerns that the third wave of the pandemic would have a greater impact on children, 104 kids testing positive for Covid-19 in the state has set alarm bells ringing, Monday.

Odisha Monday registered 868 new Covid-19 cases, which took the tally to 9,95,433, while 66 fresh fatalities pushed the toll to 6,953, a health department official said. Of the 868 new cases, 104 are in the age group of 0-18 years, he said.

According to chief of Directorate of Medical Education and Training CBK Mohanty, "Since the population of 18 years of age and below is not inoculated, the probability of them getting affected is more. School authorities and parents have a specific role to play in protecting them."

According to the health department, 50,689 Covid-19 cases have been recorded among children in the age group of 0 and 14 thus far. Odisha's percentage of infection among children and adolescents is mostly at par with the national average, the DMET chief stated.

Khurda district, of which the state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, recorded 256 new cases, followed by Cuttack at 154, the official said. Three districts - Koraput, Nabarangpur and Subarnapur - did not report any new case. Sambalpur reported the highest

ALARM BELLS RING

50,689

Covid-19 cases have been recorded among children in the age group of 0-14 years thus far

3,638

active cases in Khurda-- the only district marked as 'Red Zone', Cuttack has been identified as 'Yellow Zone' with 1,356 active cases

1,94,18,224

people inoculated in state till Sunday of which 44,70,426 beneficiaries have taken both the doses



number of fresh fatalities at 12, followed by Cuttack eight, Angul seven, Balasore and Dhenkanal five each. This apart, 53 other Covid-19 patients in the state have died due to comorbidities. Odisha currently has 10,187 active cases while as many as 9,78,240 patients, including 1,043 Sunday, have recovered from the highly infectious disease. Khurda is the only district marked as 'Red Zone' with 3,638 active cases.

No cut in excise on fuel, Centre clarifies again

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 16: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday ruled out a cut in excise duty on petrol and diesel to ease prices, which have touched an all-time high, saying payments in lieu of past subsidised fuel pose limitations.

Petrol and diesel as well as cooking gas and kerosene were sold at subsidised rates during the previous Congress-led UPA government. Instead of paying for the subsidy to bring parity between the artificially suppressed retail selling price and the cost that had soared because of international rates crossing USD 100 per barrel, the then government issued oil bonds totalling ₹1.34 lakh crore to the state-fuel retailers.

These oil bonds and the interest thereon are being paid now. "If I did not have the burden to service the oil bonds, I would have been in a position to reduce excise duty on fuel," she told reporters here. "Previous government have made our job difficult by issuing oil bonds. Even if I want to do some-



thing I am paying through my nose for the oil bonds."

Sitharaman, who had raised excise duty on petrol and diesel to record high to shore up revenue collections last year, said the interest on oil bonds paid in the last seven years totalled ₹70,195.72 crore. Of the ₹1.34 lakh crore of oil bonds, only ₹3,500 crore of principal has been paid and the remaining ₹1.3 lakh crore is due for repayment between this fiscal and 2025-26, she said.

The government has to repay ₹10,000 crore this fiscal year (2021-22). Another ₹31,150 crore is due to be repaid in 2023-24, ₹52,860.17 crore in the following year and ₹36,913 crore in 2025-26. "A significant amount is going for interest payment and principal repayment. What unfair burden on me," she said.

"Opening balance in 2014-15 was about ₹1.34 lakh crore and interest repayment was ₹10,255 crore. Since 2015-16, interest burden each year is ₹9,989 crore." The collections from the hike in excise duty far exceed the amount due to be paid to oil companies.

Can't compel reluctant Centre to file affidavit on Pegasus: SC

The Centre's unwillingness to file a detailed affidavit on the controversial Pegasus expose has rattled the Supreme Court

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 16: The Supreme Court Monday said it cannot compel the "reluctant" Centre to file a detailed affidavit on pleas seeking information if Pegasus spyware was used to snoop on certain citizens and steps it took to probe the allegations amid vehement claims that there was "nothing to hide" and it will set

up a panel to examine all aspects related to the issue.

The apex court bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana would Tuesday deliberate on whether the Centre should file a detailed affidavit in the matter, after the short one in which it submitted Monday that the pleas were "based on conjectures and surmises or on other unsubstantiated media reports or incomplete or uncorroborated material".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said the matter, if gone into on the basis of unsubstantiated reports, may have "national security implications" and it cannot be handled by asking



"furnish an affidavit etc". The ministry of electronics and Information Technology in a two-page affidavit told the bench, also

with an object of examining the issues raised, the Centre will constitute a Committee of Experts in the field which will go in to all aspects of the issue.

"You see, when the government is reluctant, then can you force it to file a detailed affidavit?" the bench said, adding, "We will continue tomorrow... If Mr Mehta (Solicitor General) may decide to file an affidavit, then we have nothing to say, or we will hear all of you."

The law officer said, "The government is not reluctant at all... I ask myself a question if a one page affidavit is filed saying that Pegasus was not used then will they withdraw the petitions. The

answer is no."

He said, "If it is for fact finding, then I am for it. But if it is for sensationalising which is alien to Article 32 then I cannot help it. It looks like petitioners want to go somewhere else other than what courts want to see." Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for veteran journalists N Ram and Sashi Kumar who have filed one of the petitions in the matter, argued that the Centre should file an affidavit stating whether the government or its agencies have used Pegasus. The Solicitor General said the Pegasus issue would involve the aspect of national security and the matter is "sensitive".

'White Spider', Sarai App to arrest crimes

Smart health cards for 3.5 crore people



PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Around 3.5 crore people of 96 lakh families, who are getting benefits under national and state food security schemes, will avail cashless health coverage under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) from September 1 onwards.

The state government Sunday announced the expansion of its flagship health assurance scheme BSKY, which it had implemented instead of Centre's Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY). For the first time, the state government has also introduced smart health cards for the beneficiaries.

Announcing this on the occasion of 75th Independence Day, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said that all 96 lakh families will be provided smart health cards under the scheme that will transform health service delivery system.

STA LAUNCHES APP TO CURB ROAD FATALITIES

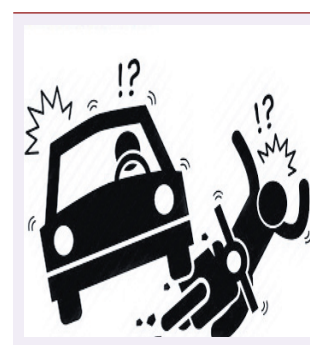
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: On the occasion of 75th Independence Day, Sunday, State Transport Authority (STA) launched Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD) mobile and web application that will analyse causes of road accidents and help reduce fatalities across Odisha.

An initiative of the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), the project was launched in Odisha by Commerce and Transport Minister Padmanabha Behera. Supported by the World Bank, the application will enable collection of accident data on the spot.

Speaking at the launching ceremony, Behera said, "The programme is aimed at maintaining a national database of road accidents. The app will help in establishing an accurate and uniform accident data collection mechanism for improving road safety in the state."

Sources said that the system would represent the analysis out-



The programme is aimed at maintaining a national database of road accidents

The app will help establish an accurate and uniform accident data collection mechanism for improving road safety in the state

It will enable the police, transport, PWD, and NHA authorities to use their mobile phones to collect accident data on the spot and facilitate timely exchange of information

put through analysing, monitoring and reporting dashboard for easy understanding and accordingly forecasting & decision making by apex authorities. This will help in formulating new policies and strategies.

The app will also enable the stakeholders such as the police, transport, PWD, and NHA authorities to use their mobile phones to collect accident data on the spot and facilitate timely exchange of information. National Informatics Centre (NIC) has appointed District Rollout Managers (DRMs) in every

district for implementation of this application.

"These descriptions will assist the government in bringing about reforms in driving rules, the conditions of roads, ensuring safety measures on district roads and highways and creating conditions for prompt disposal of road accident registered cases," said Commerce and Transport department principal secretary Madhu Sudan Padhi.

Apart from Odisha, the project was launched in Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana.

DIAL 112 FOR EMERGENCY

Odisha Police Monday urged the residents of Capital city to dial 112 instead of 100 in case of any emergency. "UPD Bhubaneswar (Dial 100) is now integrated with #ERSS (Dial Telephone receiver 112). We urge the people of Odisha including UPD Bhubaneswar, please dial Telephone receiver 112 in case of emergency rather than dialing 100," tweeted the official Twitter handle of Odisha police. Though the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) was launched in March, the system needs some more time to get fully integrated.

the security and crime by getting such details shared by the hotel owners daily.

The twin city police also launched operation 'White Spider' to make

the slums drugs free Monday. A special team of police officials have been created by the police. The cops will try to thwart the spread of drugs trade in the slums and arrest the peddlers.

The cops under the supervision of DCP, Bhubaneswar will visit the slums and listen to the problems of the slum dwellers under 'Basti Ku Chala'. They will try to find out why the slum dwellers are involved in various criminal activities. Action will be taken to check criminal activities in slums after proper analysis of findings.

"Our drive against drugs menace will be more effective following three-pronged action that includes Basti Ku Chala, extensive drives against drug addicts, drug peddlers and rising street crimes," Priyadarshi added.

Bhubaneswar DCP Umashankar Dash also reissued the WhatsApp number; 7077798111, for street crimes and urged citizens to share details regarding any illegal drug activities in their locality through this number:

SISTER'S LOVE



A woman checks rakhis at an ORMAS stall in Unit-VIII area of Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

Structures razed to pave way for multi-level car parking

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: An eviction drive was carried at Saheed Nagar here Monday by joint enforcement squads of city authorities to remove encroachments around the upcoming Multi-Level Car Parking (MLCP) facility.

The drive was conducted by Central Enforcement Monitoring Committee (CEMC) of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Bhubaneswar Development Authority (BDA), Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) and Commissionerate Police.

During the eviction drive, 28 illegal structures of eateries, boundary walls, iron angle with tin sheeted extension sheds and ramps were demolished.

In 2017, Chief Minister Naveen



Patnaik had laid the foundation stone of two MLCPs - Saheed Nagar and Rajmahal. While 80 per cent of work for Saheed Nagar MLCP has been completed, 30 per cent work remains to be completed for Rajmahal one.

BSCL chief executive officer (CEO) Sanjay Kumar Singh said, "Works were affected by Covid-19 and the virus-induced lockdowns. Completion of different infra and technology-based projects under the Smart City

Proposal has been expedited."

Sources said that the eviction was necessary to expedite the MLCP project at Saheed Nagar. The drive would also help provide drainage system for MLCP structure, street lights, avenue plantation and peripheral beautification.

Upon completion, the two MLCPs are expected to decongest Janpath by creating parking infrastructure for around 600 cars. These will also be integrated with a master-system integrator under Pan-city Smart Solutions which will provide app-based pre-booking and semi-automatic off-road parking facilities to the citizens.

The MLCP building at Saheed Nagar is envisaged as a high-rise with five floors of car parking and three floors of commercial area over 0.734 acres.

IMD predicts heavy rain for two days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Monday said heavy rainfall would occur at many places of the state for next two days under the influence of a fresh low pressure area (Lopar) formed over Bay of Bengal.

Under the influence of a cyclonic circulation over westcentral & adjoining northwest Bay of Bengal off north Andhra Pradesh-South Odisha coasts, a Lopar has formed over the same area, the IMD said.

Associated cyclonic circulation extends upto 7.6km above mean sea level tilting south-westwards with height. It is likely to move west north-westward during the next two days, the Met department said.

The IMD said heavy rainfall would occur in Kandhamal, Boudh, Puri, Khurda, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Sonepur, Nayagarh, Angul, Kalahandi, Jagatsinghpur and Ganjam districts, Tuesday.

Schools reopen for Class IX students

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Sandhya Pradhan's happiness knew no bounds as she met with her classmates after months with schools across the state resuming physical classes for Class IX students in strict adherence to Covid-19 norms Monday.

Pradhan, a Class IX student of Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir at Unit-III here, said, "This is for the first time in the last one and a half-year that I'm attending physical classes. It feels really awesome to meet friends in school after a long period."

Pragnya Mishra, another Class

IX student of Unit-I Girls' High School here, said that physical classes are very important for her as she could hardly get answers to doubts raised during online classes. While a few schools welcomed the students by drawing rangoli, others greeted the school goes with flowers.

According to sources, classes would begin at 9am and conclude at 12.30pm. Schools would hold classes every day except for Sundays and public holidays.

"Students with consent letter from their parents were allowed entry to classes. In accordance with the norms laid down by the authorities, students were subjected

to thermal scanning while entering the classrooms. Schools also ensured that students sanitise their hands, wear facemasks and maintain social distance on the school premises," said a source.

Sources said that Class X teachings start at 10:30am and ends at 1:30pm. Schools have been asked to make sure that Class IX and X students do not interact. "We have separate campus for the Class IX and X students. Hence, chances of interaction are negligible," said Sonali Ray, a teacher at Unit-I Girls' High School. Hostels for Class IX students also reopened Monday.

Earlier, physical teaching for Class X and XII resumed

July 26, after a gap of more than three months due to the restrictions enforced to curb spread of Covid-19. The Board of Secondary Education has introduced a new scheme of examination for Class IX and X students in 2021-22 as no examinations have been conducted either at school or Board level in Class IX during 2020-21 due to the Covid-19 situation.

Meanwhile, the universities and colleges also resumed physical classroom teaching Monday for the post graduate (PG) first year and under graduate (UG) pre-final year students. As per previous announcements, the examinations for PG and UG final year students will be held online.

Startup challenge under NGIS boon for innovators

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) Bhubaneswar organised a pan-Odisha online outreach event inviting startups, innovators, students, academicians and researchers to participate in Chunauti #2, an open challenge platform for selection of beneficiaries under the New Generation Incubation Scheme (NGIS).

Speaking on the occasion, STPI senior director Devesh Tyagi spoke about the success of Chunauti #1 in Odisha. He highlighted the extensive infrastructure and facilities created by STPI in Odisha with the active support and cooperation of the state government. He urged the participants to grab this opportunity and come up with innovative ideas and cost effective technology-driven solutions for the people.

STPI, Bhubaneswar director Manas Panda spoke about the contribution of STPI to build a robust

startup ecosystem in Odisha and encouraged the students and innovators to make Odisha the destination of choice for disruptive and deep-tech startups. He mentioned about the six successful startups from Odisha selected for funding under NGIS out of 42 startups across the country.

Under the initiative, the selected startups will get incentives like hi-tech office industrial space, high definition internet, networking and industrial connection, help to access funding from several capitalists, ₹25 lakh seed funding and ₹10,000 per month for six months for pre-incubation programme and for developing the idea.

The last date of entry for the programme is August 31, 2021.

Sanjukta Badhai, Evangelist of Startup Odisha, highlighted the incentives extended by Startup Odisha specially to women entrepreneurs and stressed that there is a need for more women to delve into entrepreneurship to contribute to faster economic development of Odisha.

Dharmendra's state visit to expedite RUSA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, on his three-day visit Odisha August 19, will interact with State Higher Education Minister Arun Sahoo and other senior officers of the Higher Education department with a view to expedite Rashtriya Uchcharat Siksha Abhiyan (RUSA) in Odisha.

Pradhan recently informed in Lok Sabha that Odisha has so far received the Central share of ₹35.42 crore till date under various components of the RUSA scheme. The Centre has approved 161 higher education institutions including degree colleges and universities from the state under RUSA.

The Centre has approved as many as 14 institutes from Balasore, 11 each from Cuttack and Khurda, 10 from Ganjam, eight from Mayurbhanj and seven from Jajpur. Three institutions - Rama Devi Women's College (Bhubaneswar), Gangadhar Meher College (Sambalpur), and Khallikote College (Berhampur) - were upgraded into universities under RUSA. Nine universities have received infrastructure grants this scheme.

The objective of RUSA is to improve access, equity and quality in higher education through planned development at state level. The scheme aims at creating new academic institutions, expanding and upgrading the existing ones, providing students with relevant education, and creating an enabling atmosphere in the higher educational institutions to promote research and innovation.

Centurion University launches community diagnostic centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Aiming to provide affordable services to the public, Centurion University, Jatni launched a community diagnostic centre on its premises Monday.

Senior physician at Jatni group health centre Jitendra Kumar Panda inaugurated the community diagnostic centre in the presence of Gautam Patnaik, research scientist at special centre for molecular medicine at JNU, and D P Rath, ex-pathologist and blood bank officer municipal hospital and Kalinga Hospital, Bhubaneswar.

Jamukoli sarpanch Jotirmayi Chhotray, Kusumati sarpanch Sunil



Kumar Rautaray, and Janla sarpanch Pradosh Kumar Jena attended the event as guests.

The diagnostic centre will offer tests of blood, stool, urine and eye as well as consultation with senior physicians. Various social service camps relating to diseases like di-

abetes, anemia and malnutrition will be organised with the help of students from health workers of the diagnostic centre and students of School of Paramedics and Allied Sciences in various panchayat offices, schools and villages under Jatni panchayat in coming days.

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Balaram Yojana fails to take off in Jajpur



Rasulpur block has 28 panchayats but Agriculture officials have so far managed to form only one joint liability group on the basis of guidelines comprising 14 families of landless cultivators in five panchayats

The Agriculture officials have failed to form groups in several panchayats as it has become difficult for them to get landless farmer families. Moreover, the banks are verifying the loan transaction records of the group members before sanctioning loans

village level Agriculture workers and Krushak Sathis are required to form the group. Accordingly, groups have been formed in the block but the banks have decided to provide loans only to 14 groups.

Meanwhile, the Agriculture officials have failed to form groups in several panchayats as it has become difficult for them to get landless farmer families. Moreover, the banks are verifying the loan transaction records of the group members before sanctioning loans.

A member of the group is declared ineligible for a loan if he has defaulted in repayment of any previous loan. As a result, for a single person the whole group suffers in availing the loan.

Moreover, the landless farmers provide the details of the land (khata and plot numbers) they are cultivating without the consent of the landowners while applying for the loan. This results in face-off between the two following which the landowners lodge complaints against the concerned farmers. As a result, it becomes difficult for a group to get a loan and, in most cases, the loan is declined to the group.

This apart, a bank declines a loan to the group if a loan on the land which he has mentioned in the application is outstanding on the landowner.

The Sharecropper Act has also been violated in the scheme. The rule mandates that the landowner who has more than 10 acres of farmland can handover his land to landless farmer in getting a loan.

Landless farmers have demanded to simplify the loan process under the scheme and to make provision of loan to individual farmers instead of a group. When contacted, Bhagydhara Sahu, Block Agriculture Officer, said that every attempt is being made to make the scheme a success in the block as per rules framed by the government.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rasulpur, August 16: The state government has launched Balaram Yojana (Bhoomihina Agriculturist Loan and Resources Augmentation Model) to provide crop loans to landless farmers, a report said.

However, the scheme has failed to take off due to various conditions laid down in the guidelines to provide crop loans and the restrictions imposed by the banks, the report said. As a result, sharecroppers and landless farmers who lack resources to carry out agricultural activities have failed to avail loan under the scheme.

The matter has been reported from Rasulpur block where agriculture officials have failed to implement the scheme in over 80 per cent panchayats.

Reports said the block has 28 panchayats. However, Agriculture officials have so far managed to form only one joint liability group on the basis of guidelines comprising 14 families of landless cultivators in five panchayats.

They are Rajendrapur, Samantarapur, Bandhadaha, Singhapur and Mugupala panchayats. What is worse is that it took around a year for them to form the joint liability group. The delay has sparked concern among the Agriculture department officials working in the grassroots level.

Sources said the scheme was launched in the state, July 6, 2020. The banks have been directed to provide loans to the landless families. The Agriculture department was directed to form one group each in every village comprising five families of landless cultivators.

The aim of the scheme is to provide a minimum of ₹50,000 and maximum of ₹1.6 lakh as loan to each group. The

State witnessing rise in sale of vehicles running on clean fuel

MANISH KUMAR, OP

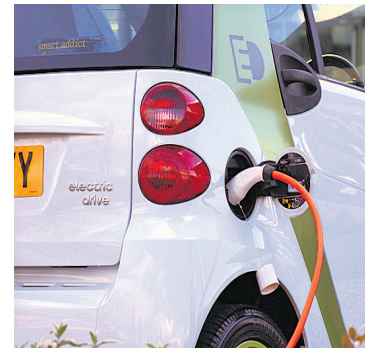
Bhubaneswar, August 16: After decades of dependence on fossil fuel, the transport system in Odisha is gradually witnessing a transition to cleaner fuel for both private as well as public vehicles.

Data available from the Ministry of Road and Surface Transport claim that over past several years, more and more vehicle owners in the state are showing interest in electric vehicles, hybrid vehicles and non-polluting energy such as compressed natural gas (CNG).

While the number of vehicles run on petrol is highest, the share of cleaner fuels is gradually increasing its presence in the automobile sector.

As per official data, April 1, 2021 onwards, the state witnessed registration of 2,83,450 and 37,133 vehicles run on petrol and diesel respectively. During the same period 2,229 hybrid vehicles were sold across the state – the third highest number after petrol and diesel vehicles.

Interestingly, electric vehicles were the fourth dominating category with registrations of 1,752 electric vehicles between April 1, 2021 and August 14, 2021. Similarly, 72 CNG vehicles and 286 petrol/CNG vehicles were registered with the state transport department



during the same period.

According to the government data, 2,246 electric vehicles were sold in the state in the last one year. The automobile industry believes that this has been possible due to the opening of more outlets of electric vehicles in the two-wheeler category as well as subsidy given to the customers and traders by the government to boost sales of electric vehicles.

Recently, the state government announced an electric vehicle policy to boost the sales of such vehicles. According to industry experts, with the rise in prices of fossil fuel, sales of electric vehicles have seen an upward trend recently.

"The higher sale of vehicles running on clean fuel, such as EVs, is also attributed to government support in

VEHICLE REGISTRATION IN ODISHA (TILL DATE)

CATEGORY	TOTAL REGISTRATIONS
Petrol	79,88,133
Diesel	13,41,029
Petrol/LPG	8,935
Petrol/CNG	7,415
Petrol/Hybrid	6,742
Electric vehicles	7,152
Diesel/Hybrid	2,033
CNG	298
LPG	208
Methanol	2

Source: Vahan, Ministry of Transport

terms of subsidy, lower operational charges, low cost of the vehicles and rising awareness among youths regarding preserving the environment," a commercial dealer of EVs said on the condition of anonymity.

At the same time, the state transport department plans to introduce more battery-operated rickshaws as a means of public transport, especially in places like Konark. During the last one year 283 electric rickshaws were registered in the state.

ELECTRIFICATION OF ALL VILLAGES BY DEC END

Roads to be laid in 423 villages in three months

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, August 16: With scores of villages in Rayagada still deprived of electricity, the district administration has focused on expeditious steps for rural electrification across the district. It has set a target to electrify all villages by December 2021.

Collector Saroj Kumar Mishra recently held a review meeting on the development projects of different departments in the district with the PD (DRDA) officials and all BDOs.

The officials deliberated on the progress and bottlenecks of the projects relating to drinking water, electricity, rural road connectivity, MGNREGS, Odisha Livelihood Mission, construction of



Mission Shakti houses, school transformation, healthcare and sanitation.

As for rural electrification drive, the Collector has directed the staff of Southco and block officials to conduct a survey on the status of electrification in the villages and submit a report within seven days. He also directed the officials concerned to initiate immediate steps so that electrification of all the villages that have been deprived so far is completed by December 31.

At the same time it was decided to supply electricity to all the houses that have been constructed under the Pradhan

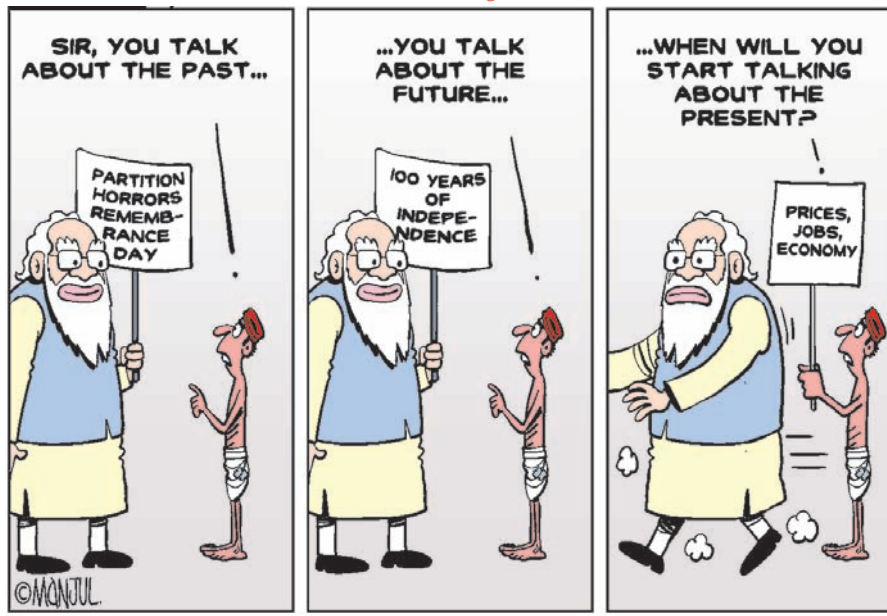
Mantri Awas Yojana.

Given the difficulties faced by people during the Covid-19 pandemic, the administration has emphasised on the execution of MGNREGS projects on a priority basis. Under the rural job scheme, roads will be laid in 423 villages, which currently lack connectivity, within three months. The DDOS have been asked to ensure that the road connectivity is completed on time.

It was also decided that a park, a library, an SHG house, a playground and waste management centre will be set up in each panchayat. Besides, Mission Shakti houses will have provision for drinking water, toilets and electricity. These houses will be handed over to CDPOs by September 15.

The Collector also warned that stern action would be taken against the BDOs who would fail to ensure timely completion of the projects. Tehsildars have been directed to provide land to the landless people. They will be provided with cluster houses on these lands.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Woman flees village fearing ostracisation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sajanagad, August 16: A woman in Jharanaghati village under Berhampur police limits in Balasore was forced to flee her village with her family members after a villager warned of ostracising her and her family members as the police failed to act on her complaint, a report said.

The matter came to the fore after the woman was left to starve without food after fleeing her village and admitted to Nilagiri hospital in Balasore district in a critical condition, the report said.



The woman was identified as Chhabi Bindhani, 30, wife of a migrant labourer Raju Bindhani at Jharanaghati village under Pithahata panchayat of Nilagiri block and Berhampur police limits.

The woman narrated her ordeal before the

media persons when they visited her and demanded justice for her and family members. However, police are yet to speak on the issue or register a case on her written complaint. The incident has spread anger and shockwaves in the district.

Reports said that Chhabi was staying with her three children at home in the absence of her husband. Trouble started after a co-villager Bhilu Bagal and his family members suspected her fidelity and started abusing her. Bagal even threatened to ostracise her by depriving her of fire and water.

Shocked over the development, the woman informed her husband and lodged a complaint at the local police station, August 11.

Enraged over her move, Bagal banned her from using fire and water in the village and threatened her family members of serious consequences. Panicked, she finally decided to leave the village as police did not act on her complaint even after two days.

Later, she along with her family members fled the village through the backyard of her house. Her health condition deteriorated after she failed to get any food after leaving her village. Later, she was admitted to the hospital.

STF seizes brown sugar worth ₹2.40cr in Balasore, 3 arrested

Bhubaneswar: In a major crackdown, the special task force (STF) of Odisha Crime Branch conducted a raid and seized a huge cache of brown sugar weighing around two kilograms in Jaleswar of Balasore district, Sunday. Three persons have been arrested in this connection. Acting on a tip-off, a team of STF personnel raided a place at Jaleswar market in Balasore leading to the arrests and seizure. They nabbed the peddlers when the latter were about to finalise a deal. Those arrested has been identified as Mamtaz Khan from Jhadeswarpur under Jaleswar police limits of Balasore district, Udaya Nath Rath from Arana village in Jagatsinghpur district and Pradeep Kumar Das of Taunkala area, under Baiyalismouza police limits of Cuttack district. The seized brown sugar weighing 2.402 Kg has been valued at around ₹2.40 crore in the market. Along with the contraband, other incriminating evidences were also found in the possession of those arrested. They were produced before the Balasore District and Sessions Judge Court Monday and remanded to police custody.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
 E-Tender Notice No.: ST-SBP-TENDER-2021-10, Dt. 11.08.2021
Name of Work: SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF PANEL INTERLOCKING AT BHUSAN POWER AND STEEL LIMITED BLOCK CABIN STATION IN SAMBALPUR DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.
Tender value: ₹1,08,46,878/-
Date & time of Tender Closing: 1500 hrs of 26.08.2021.
 No manual offers send by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against the e-Tenders. Even if these are submitted on firms letter head and receipt in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.
 Complete information including e-Tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website <http://www.treps.gov.in>
 Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer(Signal)/PR-290/M/21-22 Sambalpur

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA No. B-297
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PHULBANI (R&B) DIVISION, PHULBANI
 e-mail-eeplbrb@gmail.com
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB) 'e' Procurement Notice
Bid Identification No. EE-R&B-PLB-05-2021-22
 1) (a) Name of the work : Boundary wall/Compound wall-2(Two) Nos.
 Estimated Cost : Rs.34.466 lakhs – Rs.43.749 lakhs
 2) Period of Completion : As notified in Tender Call Notice.
 3) Date & Time of availability of Bid documents in the portal : From 17.08.2021, 10.00 A.M. to 26.08.2021, 5.00 P.M.
 4) Last date / time for receipt of bids in the portal : Up to 5.00 P.M. of dated 26.08.2021.
 5) Name and address of the O.I.T.: Executive Engineer, Phulbani (R&B) Division.
 Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in Corrigendum if any shall be published only in the above website.
 Sd./ P.Samantra Executive Engineer, Phulbani (R&B) Division OIPR-34066/11/0004/2122

ITI LIMITED (A Govt. of India Undertaking)
 M-5/26, Acharya Vihar, Bhubaneswar - 751013
 Phone: (0674) 2567225/2567229
 EOJ is invited for selection of Selection of partner having complete Solution of E-Recruitment process..
 Due date: 23.08.2021, at 15.00 hrs
 For details please visit the website www.itiltd-india.com www.eprocure.gov.in.
 Chief Manager, ITI Ltd., Bhubaneswar

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES Office of the Superintending Engineer, Barpali Irrigation Division, Barpali
 E-mail Id - ee.barpali.canal@gmail.com
'e' Procurement Notice No.-04/2021-22
BID IDENTIFICATION NO. - BIDT 04/2021-22 (ON-LINE) DATED 04.08.2021 No. A-373.-

1	Type of the work	Road work
2	No. of works	01 (One) No.
3	Class of contractor	"D" & "C"
4	Bid Identification No.	BIDT 04/ 2021-22
5	Estimated Cost	Rs. 18.40 Lakhs (Approx.)
6	Period of completion	As per DTCLN.
7	Date and time of availability of bid documents in the portal	Dt.14.08.2021 at 11.00 AM to Dt.31.08.2021 up to 5.00 PM.
8	Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	Dt.31.08.2021 up to 5.00 PM.
9	Date of opening of Bid	Dt.02.09.2021 at 11.00 AM
10	Name and Address of the Officer inviting Bid	Superintending Engineer, Barpali Irrigation Division, Barpali, A/P/O: Barpali, Dist: Bargarh-768029. Email Id: ee.barpali.canal@gmail.com

1. Any addendum/corrigendum/cancellation/erratum of tender can also be seen in the said Website.
 2. Further details can be seen from Government Website <http://tenderodisha.gov.in>
 Sd./ Superintending Engineer, Barpali Irrigation Division, Barpali OIPR-32413/11/0002/2122

MCL MAHANADI COALFIELDS LIMITED (A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited)
 JAGRUTI VIHAR, BURLA-768020, DIST-SAMBALPUR, ODISHA Ph.(EPABX):0663-2542461 to 469, Website:www.mahanadicoal.in

NOTICE
 All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of Coal India Ltd www.coalindia.in, respective subsidiary Company, (MCL, www.mahanadicoal.in), CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindiataenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in>"

R-5065

PUBLIC NOTICE
 Notice is hereby given to all concerned that, One Smt. Sasmita Kumari Patra, W/o, Sri Sitaram Patra, Resident of Flat No. 304, Bijay Tower, Saradhabali 1st Lane, Khodasingi, Po. Eng. School, Ps. B. N. Pur, Berhampur, Dist. Ganjam has applied to the LIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD., Berhampur to avail housing loan by mortgaging her Title Deeds. One of the Original Licn Regd. Sale Deed bearing Document No. 8032/2008 of SRO, Berhampur-II and Original ROR vide Khata No. 240/1991 of Mouza Khodasingi under Berhampur Tahasil has been lost since 01.06.2019. All concerned thereof, having any claim over the property purchased under the said Document No. 8032/2008, are required to file their claim with the undersigned within 15 (Fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it will be presumed that the property having link with said document is free from encumbrances and any claim in respect of thereof, against the applicant as a Mortgagor and the Company as the Mortgagee, shall be void and in effective after the lapse of 15 (Fifteen) days of publication of this Notice.
 Bijay Kumar Patnank, Advocate, Baikuntha Nagar, 3rd Lane, A/P.O. Berhampur, Dist. Ganjam, PIN-760001. Mob. No. 9438268735.

यूको बैंक UCO BANK
 Strategic Planning Department, Zonal Office, Agartala, Central Road, Kaman Choumoni, Agartala, West Tripura, PIN-799 001, Ph.: 03812384163, 03812385475, e-mail : zo.agartala@ucobank.co.in

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE
 Letter No.: ZO/AGT/VIG/666/2021-22 Date: 12.08.2021
 (1) Mr. Sidheswar Mohanty, S/o- Dr. Sampad Kumar Mohanty, Probationary Officer (Emp. No.- 51067) Mr. Sidheswar Mohanty, S/o- Dr. Sampad Kumar Mohanty, Badasankha, P.S.: Kumbharpada, Puri, Odisha, PIN-752002 has been duly advised vide our letter No.: Ref: ZO/AGT/HRM/2019-20/505 Dated: 09.07.2019 at his last recorded address, to resume the duty immediately as well as several attempts have been made to contact him via post/e-mail available in Bank's records for this purpose, but he did not turn up for resuming his duty. Such unauthorized absence, without good cause shall be treated as serious/gross misconduct which breaches the terms & conditions of his employment with the bank.
 Further, he has also violated the T&C of the Bond submitted by him for the value of Rs.2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh Only), for rendering minimum two year of services in the Bank and in case of default he has to pay the same amount to the Bank.
 In view of above, the above named person is once again advised to resume his duty immediately, needless to mention that in case of not resuming the Bank's service within one month of this notice, Bank may invoke the bond and will be entitled to take disciplinary/legal action to adjust the amount against accrued/accumulated amount, if any in his name with the bank or any other sources known to the bank. Further, it will also be presumed that he has no more interest for joining the Bank's service. Hence, his service will be terminated/dismissed and his name will be struck off from the muster roll of UCO Bank without further notice or any reference thereof.
 Date: 16.08.2021 Place: Agartala Sd/- Authorised Signatory, UCO Bank

FOCUS NATION

HDI ASPIRATIONS



India has a higher IMR than neighbours Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. The best in the world is 1 or 2. Imagine achieving this aspirational IMR benchmark. This is the project 'tiger' that we need to work on

In the early 1970s, Professor MD Morris was given the task of devising a quality-of-life index. He developed the physical quality of a life index, which later was adopted as a Human Development Index (HDI) by the United Nations Development Programme. The HDI is a simple average of three components, income, life expectancy and literacy. The first is an economic variable, the second is about health and the third is about education. All three are also included in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by all members of the United Nations in September 2015. India's HDI rank in 2019 was 131 out of 189. The HDI rank is a relative ranking, so if your peer countries are progressing faster than you, then your rank falls back, even if you have done much better than your previous year.

The HDI rank is one metric that we must focus on. It can be measured in a highly disaggregated way. You can have an HDI for the whole nation, or for each state of India, or a separate one for urban and rural areas of each state, or broken down into male and female HDI, or even in a more granular fashion. As such we have already identified the 100 most backward districts of India, which we term as 'aspirational' whose HDI is very low. One can quibble that even the HDI is an 'average' so it misses out on high performance islands. If one has to focus on only one metric, what would that be? What is the 'tiger' in this project approach? Some economic studies suggest, if there is a single metric to chase, it is the infant mortality rate (IMR) at age one. This is the number of deaths of children under one year of age, for every 1000 live births. For India this number is about 30. India has a higher IMR than neighbours Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. The best in the world is 1 or 2. Imagine achieving this aspirational IMR benchmark. This is the project 'tiger' that we need to work on.

The writer is an economist and Senior Fellow, Takshashila Institution.

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The only work that spiritually purifies us is that which is done without personal motives.

SRI AUROBINDO



Sabka Prayas

The Prime Minister's Independence Day speech delivered from the ramparts of the Red Fort has turned out to be an exercise in hyperbole rather than a blueprint for what his government proposes to do to tackle the grave problems on ground ravaging the country's economy and wreaking havoc on the lives of citizens in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic. The PM did what he is so good at, which is to weave verbal magic, churning out catch phrases and slogans and drawing up grandiose plans which are either poorly executed or remain only on paper: He has been doing this since he delivered his first such speech after assuming office in 2014. This year's notable coinage of catch phrases is - 'sabka prayas' - which is an addition to the already existing slogan of 'sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka viswas.' The mantra is followed more in breach than in observance.

We need to understand what that Sabka Prayas phrase implies. There is something called the Ben Franklin effect. The Ben Franklin effect is a proposed psychological phenomenon: a person who has already performed a favor for another person is more likely to do another favor for the other than if they had received a favor from that person. Let us think back to the last few years. Swachh Bharat or Clean India was a central government program. A tax in the form of a cess was imposed on the citizens to fund this program. The cleanliness drive was a complete failure. One of the best examples to check on was visible near the exit gates of the New Delhi Railway Station. Yet the PM asked every Indian to contribute 100 hours towards the cleanliness drive. Now look! Most Indians have forgotten about the drive as also that they are still paying the Swachh Bharat cess.

Surrender LPG subsidy was another call for action by the PM. People went haywire and were comfortable to socially enquire from friends and relatives whether they had given up the subsidized cylinder. We all know now where all that sacrifice has landed and which corporate is immensely benefitting from it. The task however was left on the citizens to implement. Today, if anyone questions as to who benefited from surrendering LPG subsidies, people in general feel as if their pro-nation activities are being questioned.

One is reminded about what the PM had said after surprising the nation with his Demonetization decision 8 November 2016. He had then asked citizens to shoulder the hardship for a short while in the interest of the nation and requested for 50 days of patience. People felt their sacrifice would eradicate black money, combat terrorism and currency counterfeiting and halt corruption. It was made out to be everyone's battle against these evils. While a blossoming economy of the country died a sudden death, most people even today are unwilling to accept that this single executive decision has broken the back of the Indian economy.

When COVID struck the country, the PM asked for patience while implementing an almost overnight lockdown, leading to a migrant crisis of epic proportions. Then Indians were asked for various favors including banging pots and pans and lighting candles to ward off the virus. When COVID spread and deaths increased, it was projected as the failure of the people to abide by mask wearing, social distancing and other mandates. More patience and cooperation was asked of people. With COVID raging on even today, instead of blaming the vaccination shortages or the neglected healthcare infrastructure of the country, people lament on not having done more themselves.

Interestingly, with such tasks placed on the shoulders of citizens on a daily basis, when any of these programs fail, it is the failure of every citizen. The citizen therefore is defensive and angry if any one points out those failures. The average Indian feels so invested in these processes that no one questions the absurdity of the planning, designing and execution of the programs. A dog chasing to bite its tail goes round tirelessly without achieving any results. This is the exact kind of motion that many Indians have been put into while the folks in power have cleverly maneuvered to not be held accountable for any of their acts.



Ajit Ranade

THE HDI RANK IS A RELATIVE RANKING, SO IF YOUR PEER COUNTRIES ARE PROGRESSING FASTER THAN YOU, THEN YOUR RANK FALLS BACK, EVEN IF YOU HAVE DONE MUCH BETTER THAN YOUR PREVIOUS YEAR

Democracy unleashed from the word go. No other modern nation has done it. Would it survive as a single nation? Would not competitive politics further divide the nation? Not only has the nation survived, but democracy has also thrived. Its health can never be taken for granted, but it is more robust now than it was in 1947. India is very much a free democracy. But as the famous quip goes, "eternal vigilance is the price of freedom and democracy." India's democracy project is akin to a company, which is run by a management team appointed by the shareholders. The managers are the elected representatives and officials of the government at all three tiers, and the shareholders are the citizens and voters. If the management is hijacking the company, it is as much a fault of the silent, indifferent, complacent shareholders or voters, as the wrongdoers themselves. Of course, the 'regulators' - the courts, the Lokpal, the Constitutional authorities - are all responsible for how well the 'company' is doing. There are so many metrics along which we can measure the performance of the 'company', or

rather the Republic of India. For instance, we could measure, how well have we done on the socio-political metrics. Have we been able to overcome social hierarchies to be able to give every citizen an equality of opportunity and access? On the political metric, do we have a genuinely representative democracy that represents every Indian's voice? The ultimate minority in any society is the individual. Thus, protection of minority rights means protecting the individual's rights. Those rights are both positive and negative. The positive rights are right to freedom of expression, to freely move anywhere in the country, to pursue livelihood and practice one's faith. The negative rights include right not to be harassed by the police or any organ of the state, at least not without due process. Many of these metrics can be measured and quantified in a fairly objective way. We can measure how we stand in comparison to other democracies of the world. It is however more important that we are progressing along our own historical path. That is irrespective of how we stand in comparison to other countries, are we doing better as a robustly func-

tioning democracy than in 1947? Are we better at our platinum jubilee than we were at the golden jubilee? Apart from the socio-political dimensions are the economic development dimensions. Here we can use many indicators, such as per-capita income, literacy rate, school and college education attainment, access to drinking water and electricity, access to medical facilities, job opportunities and so on. Is it possible to coalesce all these into one or two meaningful indicators, easy to track and that can give a sharp estimate of where we stand? One is reminded of 'Project Tiger' launched nearly 50 years ago. The basic idea of that project is that by focusing on the health and habitat of the tiger, it was an indirect way of ensuring the health of the entire system of flora and fauna, of forests and wildlife. For if the tiger was prospering, then so were its prey, like deer and bison, which meant there was adequate green vegetation providing food and habitat to the lower organisms in the food chain. Similarly, if one were to focus on a 'Project Tiger' metric to capture economic development in India, what would it be?

Piate
Tathagata Satpathy

SPECTRUM AFGHANISTAN

Does Taliban victory mean a Pak triumph?

It is a flawed line of thinking that Taliban victory in Afghanistan is somehow victory for Pakistan too. To the contrary, Pakistan's problems begin now Pashtun population on both sides of the border is just one of them. The failure of the Istanbul conference on Afghanistan reflects Pakistan's inability to persuade the top Taliban leadership to attend what was billed as a 10-day jamboree. All participants, including Ashraf Ghani, were expected to emerge having sorted out Afghanistan from A to Z. Nothing of this happened. Turkish Foreign Minister, Mevlut Cavusoglu came down a few notches in his boss, Tayyip Erdogan's esteem. The Foreign Minister believed that Pakistan would deliver the Taliban at the conference. It could not. Describing Indo-Pak dynamics on Afghanistan as a zero-sum game has antecedents. In 2010, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, as the force commander in Afghanistan, was unhappy that the popularity of India's socio-economic development work distracts Pakistan from its war-on-terror focus. To this, Gen. David Petraeus added his bit: "India's Cold Start doctrine worries Pakistan." It is impossible for an itinerant journalist to gauge public

opinion across the board, but my interactions in Kabul, Gardez and Mazar-e-Sharif some years ago surprised me: Pakistan was seen as a troublemaker. India's development works were appreciated. At night all of Kabul was glued to Bollywood on TV. After US Deputy Secretary, Richard Armitage threatened to "bomb Pakistan into the stone age" a terrified President Perviz Musharraf made a U-turn. His army turned upon exactly the mujahideen that ISI had trained to see the back of the Soviets in 1989. This about-turn by Pakistan became part of the historic memory of Taliban. That's the rub: the 'unreliability' quotient of Pakistan was cited even by the Taliban spokesman who showed disinterest in the Istanbul conference. Abdus Salaam Zaeef was the Afghan Ambassador in Islamabad and a friend of the late Mullah Omar. After Pakistan joined the war on terror, Zaeef found himself in Guantanamo Bay for four years. Zaeef was bitter: "The manner in which they treated our prisoners was worse than the Israeli treatment of Palestinian prisoners." These plants belong to an era many moons ago. Surely, the situation has changed after Prime

Minister Imran Khan took charge. The Taliban today are not the ones who won in 1996. The new Taliban have Shia and Uzbek commanders too but keep your fingers crossed for the women of that country. Was this collapse of a large section of the Afghan Army unexpected? Is one to believe that green-on-blue attacks had ended just because the US media had stopped reporting such incidents? US officers training the Afghan army were frequent victims of their own trainees. Little wonder President Joe Biden was almost bitter: "I don't regret the decision to withdraw." He said the US had spent \$3 trillion for 20 years training and equipping an Afghan Army of 3,00,000. "Now it is time for the Afghans to sort it out among themselves." Years ago, a former Governor of Baluch, Prof Habibullah Habib, told me a story which sounded conspiratorial then. "The British Provincial Reconstruction team was doing excellent work in the north of the country." Why did they so willingly agree to vacate the peaceful region for the Germans to take over? What surprised Prof Habib even more was the alternative destination selected by the British contingent. They chose to be headquartered in the troubled

province of Helmand - why? Prof Habib's question may well have been answered two days ago by a former British Defence Minister, Johnny Mercer, who served in Afghanistan: "A lot of British blood was spilled in Helmand." He asks angrily: "Was it really for nothing?" Helmand is the world's largest centre for poppy production which blossomed in 20 years of the war. His colleague, another Defence Minister, Tobias Elwood has gone one better; he wants Afghanistan re-invaded. The Mercer-Elwood duo revives images of Laurel and Hardy in frayed army uniform looking after a giant warehouse packed with canned food. News of the armistice has not reached the two, surrounded by mountains of opened cans which have been their only source for food. A biplane flies low and the pilot asks them what they were doing. "We are in charge of the war's biggest canteen," Hardy says. "But the war ended years ago." As Bobby Talyarkhan used to end his columns, "Do you get me Steve?"

The writer is a senior commentator on political and diplomatic issues.

IAN5

WISDOM CORNER

- We may give without loving, but we cannot love without giving. BERNARD MELTZER
- Love means to love that which is unlovable; or it is no virtue at all. GILBERT K. CHESTERTON
- Death and love are the two wings that bear the good man to heaven. MICHELANGELO

WORDSWORTH

Orrery
The orrery was invented by George Graham about 1710; the first example was constructed by the London instrument maker John Rowley. It was a device of arms and balls and gears, run by clockwork, that showed how the planets and their satellites moved around the sun as time passed; the Earth typically took about ten minutes to go round once, so it could hardly have been an enthralling spectacle by the standards of today. We ought to call it a graham, after its inventor, but John Rowley made a copy for Charles Boyle, the fourth Earl of Orrery, and ingratiatingly named it in his honour. It's really a reference to a geographic area, since the Boyles took their title from an ancient term for a part of County Cork, Ireland. (Boyle was described later that century as "one of the literary ornaments of the reign of Queen Anne"; he was a relative of the more famous Robert Boyle, he of Boyle's law.) The orrery became a popular amusement and teaching device; no progressive educational establishment was without one. But not everybody was enthralled by it; in 1833 the Astronomer Royal, John Herschel, called it a "childish toy", and Charles Dickens wrote an unflattering description of a public lecture that featured one in The Uncommercial Traveller: "My memory presents a birthday when Olympia and I were taken by an unfeeling relative - some cruel uncle, or the like - to a slow torture called an Orrery ... It was a venerable and a shabby Orrery, at least one thousand stars and twenty-five comets behind the age. Nevertheless, it was awful".

Orthorexia

In full, orthorexia nervosa, showing its close link to the much better-known psychological condition anorexia nervosa. Instead of an obsessive desire to lose weight, those who suffer from orthorexia have an unhealthy obsession with healthy eating. In their search for dietary purity, they may become so restrictive about what they eat - for example, avoiding fatty foods, those containing preservatives, those with salt or sugar - that eventually they become as dangerously thin as an anorexic. The word, and the identification of the condition, is attributable to a Colorado specialist, Dr Steven Bratman, who published a book on it in 2001, describing the condition as a "fixation on righteous eating". He coined orthorexia in 1997 on the pattern of anorexia, from Greek orthos, "correct or right", plus orexis, "appetite". A person with the condition is an orthorexic.

LOL

Why the big fight?

A man being mugged by two thugs put up a tremendous fight! Finally, the thugs subdued him and took his wallet. Upon finding only two dollars in the



wallet, the surprised thug said "Why did you put up such a fight?" To which the man promptly replied "I was afraid that you would find the \$200 hidden in my shoe!"



Saeed Naqvi

THE TALIBAN TODAY ARE NOT THE ONES WHO WON IN 1996. THE NEW TALIBAN HAVE SHIA AND UZBEK COMMANDERS TOO

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

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Criminalisation of politics

Sir, The Supreme Court and the high courts have always batted for transparent and accountable politics in the country. The 2018 Constitutional Bench headed by then Chief Justice of India, Dipak Misra, in Public Interest Foundation versus Union of India, not only made public declaration of all assets by contesting candidates compulsory, but also barred candidates with criminal charges from contesting any election. However, several loopholes remained unaddressed, and were exploited by wily politicians. The foremost - candidates with pending cases could still contest as is happening now. Looking back, will there be any politician left to contest elections if this rule is scrupulously adhered to? Reasons for giving ticket to a candidate with criminal antecedents, the SC had said, are to be put on party websites and social media accounts. Well, nothing much appears to have happened on this front. But the latest SC verdict has come down heavily on political parties failing to comply with its order. The top court has fined several political parties for disobeying it. It also has modified some of its own directions. What the court has done is to minimise the reason of 'winnability' cited by parties for doling out tickets to tainted politicians. Credibility, qualification, performance and merit of a candidate should matter for parties as much as the ability to win. However, lack of transparency and accountability in political contributions, and the absence of an independent audit of such transactions, may continue to help tainted candidates. Moreover, the onus also lies on the voters who will have to make wise choices. Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Archaic practice

Sir, The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. It is not mentioned in the Constitution that the President, the Vice-President and the Governor should be from political backgrounds. In India, there is no dearth of intellectuals, writers, social activists, painters, musicians, doctors, engineers and filmmakers who can do the job better than those from political backgrounds sitting in top constitutional positions. After over seven decades of Independence, we follow the same archaic process for selection of our constitutional positions. Why can't the voters have their say in the selection process? A political person for these posts is neither necessary nor desirable. The selection process needs an overhauling. Let us begin a new chapter this year. This move will enrich our vibrant democracy. Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

SETU Yojana comes a cropper in Malkangiri



Some fishermen alleged the fingerlings sold by traders from other states are of inferior quality. The onus lies with the OPDC for its failure to set up fingerling production centres in the district.

ponds. While ponds were dug up on 69.80 hectares, ₹1.74 crore was given to them as rebate. In 2019-20, 77 beneficiaries dug up ponds on 55 hectares and were given ₹1.37 crore as rebate. As many as 118 beneficiaries dug up ponds on 86.30 hectares and were given a subsidy of ₹2.15 crore.

they didn't have equipment like life jackets.

Meanwhile, some beneficiaries have dug up ponds to produce fish and fingerlings. For these, they either took loans from banks or invested their savings. But the ultimate result was not satisfactory. Since, these ponds failed to produce fingerlings, some traders from other states are producing and selling fingerlings to the fishermen here at exorbitant prices.

Some fishermen alleged the fingerlings sold by traders from other states are of inferior quality.

The onus lies with the OPDC for its failure to set up fingerling production centres in the district. Instead, the OPDC procured fingerlings from Bolangir, Kalahandi, Ganjam and Bhubaneswar and brought them to Malkangiri district, spending extra money on fares. These fingerlings were released in Chitrakonda and Satiguda reservoirs. But, according to the fishermen, these reservoirs don't have fish of the same fingerlings.

When contacted for his comment in this regard, district Fisheries officer Rajendra Patra said 21 beneficiaries dug up ponds on 16.40 hectares in 2017-18. Of them, six took bank loans and 15 invested their own money. They were given ₹41 lakh towards rebate.

Similarly, in 2018-19, 98 beneficiaries availed bank loans and 96 spent their own money to dig up

several reservoirs in the district, the OPDC and the district Fisheries department were given ₹2.80 crore under the SETU yojana. Similarly, ₹58 lakh was spent to buy 100 fishing boats, nets and life jackets, ₹2.40 lakh spent to give training to 25 societies of fishermen, ₹10,000 to each society. Another ₹48 lakh has been sanctioned to construct a house at Chitrakonda. The work on the house has not been started as yet since the process of tender is yet to be started. Thus, out of the sanctioned ₹100 crore, only ₹17.48 crore has been spent," informed Patra.

The OPDC has received money to provide boats and nets. The contractor who has been awarded the tender to provide boats has not supplied even a single boat so far. The district Fisheries department has also failed in supplying life jackets.

"The failure of OPDC and district Fisheries department has resulted in chemically-laced Andhra Pradesh fish kept in ice being sold everywhere in the district. People are falling ill after consuming these fish," some residents alleged.

They have urged the government to intervene and initiate steps so that the fingerlings and fish production increases and resultantly the people will no longer suffer from any disease.

STUDENT UNREST



Students of Khemundi College in Ganjam district staging a demonstration protesting hike in admission fee and in support of other demands after locking up the main gate of their college, Monday

CUT-OFF FROM MAINLAND BY MAHANADI IN SAMBALPUR

Panchayat gets its first banking service

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 16: A panchayat in this district surrounded by Mahanadi river finally got its first banking service after Sukant Tripathy, district Collector (in-charge)-cum-project director, DRDA, inaugurated a customer care centre in the panchayat, Monday.

Residents of Kudagundenpur panchayat, comprising seven villages, were overjoyed at the opening of the customer care centre in their panchayat that was opened 75 years after the country achieved Independence.

Reports said that the panchayat in Dhankauda block is surrounded by Mahanadi river and has a population of over around 6,000.

Speaking on the occasion, Tripathy said that the residents in the panchayat were living a life of neglect, seclusion and drudgery as it was surrounded from all sides by the Mahanadi river.

Sources said the villagers were facing a host of problems in availing education and transport facilities and healthcare services. The



farmers also find it difficult to sell their harvested crops due to the same reason. The villagers had to risk their lives and travel in small and dingy boats to reach the mainland for their daily work. Many lives were lost during these 75 years and finally their demand to get banking services in their panchayat has been met, Tripathy said.

Recently, their problem in connecting with the mainland has been eased after the state government realised their problem and constructed a bridge on the river connecting the panchayat with the mainland.

The bridge work has been completed but is yet to be unveiled but

people have started travelling on the bridge. The newly opened centre will not only help in the financial inclusion of residents through opening of bank accounts, but will also meet credit needs of the people for enhancing their livelihood and income, Tripathy said.

Earlier, the people had to travel 15-20 km daily to get banking service but now the bank has come to their doorstep. The opening of the centre will result in an increase in more customers while it will be easier for people to get loan and make its payment.

The members of women self-help group, farmers and small and mar-

ginal traders will also be benefited from the opening of the centre.

Addressing the gathering, Dhankauda block development officer Basant Hati said that taking banking services to rural and remote areas in the state has always been a priority of the state government. Moreover, the government has plans to implement many more welfare schemes in the panchayat.

As part of this programme, construction of a Mission Shakti building in the panchayat is nearing completion while plans are afoot for construction of a skill development centre and panchayat building in the area, the BDO said.

Currently, the panchayat office is functioning from Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra. A new building for the high school has also been constructed.

A woman Prabhassini Nayak said that today is red-letter day for all of us as the residents including the farmers will be benefited from the opening of panchayat. Senior officials of Utkal Gramya Bank and local public representatives were present on the occasion.

Traffic stranded for 9 hrs in Mayurbhanj



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

police said.

More than 200 people put up roadblocks near Bangriposh ghat demanding a widening of the highway into four lanes over a 6-km stretch in the area. The highway connects Kolkata to Mumbai.

"There was no untoward incident during the protest," Bangriposhi police station inspector Sanjay Kumar Panda said.

Bangriposhi Sachetana Nagarik Mancha had convened the 12-hour blockade over the rising number of road mishaps, which claimed more than 10 lives in the last three months, convenor of the outfit, Sanjay Kumar Agarwala, said.

The area is congested leading to increased vehicular queuing, he added.

The agitation was lifted at 3 pm, following an assurance from the authorities that they would discuss with the National Highways Authority of India on Thursday about ways to improve traffic movement.

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Bike lifting gang busted; 15 arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

SAMBALPUR: In a major crackdown, police busted a bike-lifting gang and arrested 15 people in this connection in Sambalpur Friday. Police have also seized 21 bikes from them. Of the arrested, three are minors, police said. Addressing a press meet, SP Batuala Gangadhar said, the gang has been operating in Rairakhole, Kuchinda, Jamankira and Jujumara areas for the last two years. People had lodged several complaints about bike thefts in these areas. Acting on a tip-off, police formed a team and carried out raids at different places in the locality and arrested the accused. Two of them were booked for buying stolen bikes.

Wrong site selection renders crematorium useless

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pattamundai, August 16: Despite spending lakhs of rupees on developing village cremation grounds in the state, many of them are lying unused due to one or the other reason.

The crematorium at Baipada village cremation ground of Khadianta panchayat under Pattamundai block in Kendrapara district is a case in point.

As per plan, the block development office had sanctioned money for

the construction of the crematorium, which has only a few pillars with a concrete slab resting on them. Local villagers alleged that the quality of the construction work is far below the standard.

"This is so because the block authorities did not inspect the work properly. Taking advantages of it, the contractor carried out the construction work carelessly. It is constructed on a bund of a water body (Patanali) and the area is covered with weeds and bushes," they said, adding that the wrong

site selection has rendered the facility useless.

While an approach road is yet to be laid out to the crematorium, the place is now home to poisonous snakes. This apart, if people need to carry a body to the facility, they have to wade through the water body, which is infested with weeds and hyacinths.

These are the reasons why the villagers are reluctant to go to the facility. Instead they still use the old cremation ground in the village.

Tardy pace of bridge work irks residents in Mayurbhanj

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, August 16: The tardy pace of construction work of a bridge over Budhabalanga river on the outskirts of Baripada town in Mayurbhanj district has triggered anger and resentment among local people. They threatened to call a strike if the work is not completed within the deadline.

The bridge is under construction at Madhuban on the Baripada-Midnapore state highway, connecting Udala. The Works department had initially sanctioned a budget of ₹27,29,80,206 for the project and the work was awarded to Iron Triangle Limited. The construction work commenced in May, 2017 and the contractor firm was asked to complete the work by December, 2018.

Later, the department felt the requirement of two more spans. As a result, the project cost was revised to ₹30.57 crore.

The 292-metre-long bridge will have eight spans with 400-metre and 200-metre-long approach roads from the Madhuban side and the other side of the bridge, respectively.

As of now, construction of five pillars has been completed, while work on two has just started. With



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While three years have passed since the construction work began, it will take at least another two years to be complete. The inordinate delay has left the locals worried as well as infuriated

no spans being constructed as yet, it is now anyone's guess when the bridge will be completed.

While three years have passed since the construction work began, it will take at least another two years to be complete. The inordinate delay has left the locals worried as well as infuriated. "The century-old narrow bridge's dilapidated condition had necessitated a new one. Due to heavy traffic on the existing one, people

have nightmarish experiences while crossing it," rued local residents like Govind Naik, Sanatan Naik and Panchanan Naik.

When the Works department assistant engineer Bikas Pani was contacted for his comment in this regard, he said March 2022 has been set as a new deadline for the completion of the bridge. In case of any unforeseen problem, it may take 3/4 months more.

Woman, minor daughter killed in road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Basta, August 16: A woman and her minor daughter were killed on the spot after they were mowed down by a speeding oil tanker near Katipola on National Highway-60 under Basta police limits in Balasore district Sunday. The deceased have been identified as Muni Tudu (50) and her daughter Shanti Tudu (12).

Eyewitnesses said that the mother-daughter duo was walking when the accident took place. An oil tanker heading from Kolkata to Ganjam hit them near Katipola. On being informed, police reached the spot, recovered the bodies and sent them for post-mortem.

As the news of the accident spread, tension gripped the area as local people gathered at the spot and demanded exemplary punishment to the driver. They also demanded compensation to the family of the deceased.

The cops have arrested the driver. According to police, the driver was in an inebriated state.

Crime Branch interrogates cook, 4 others in ACF death case



POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, August 16: Three-member teams of the Crime Branch Monday interrogated cook Manmath Kumbh in connection with the alleged murder of assistant conservator of forests (ACF) Soumya Ranjan Mohapatra, July 12 night. Along with the cook, four others were also grilled by a Crime Branch team headed by DSP Gyana Ranjan Mishra. Among them were a couple of ACFs and two forest guards. These five were interrogated at the Paralakhemundi police station to find out how Soumya Ranjan sustained burn injuries.

The investigating officials are likely to interrogate deceased ACF's wife Bidyabharati Panda, who is a key accused in the alleged murder case.

It is pertinent to mention here that a clean chit was given to Gajapati divisional forest officer (DFO) Sangram Keshari Behera by erstwhile police superintendent stating that he has no link in the case.

On August 8, Soumya's father Abhiram Mohapatra had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Affairs Minister Amit Shah seeking justice on behalf of the bereaved family.

Abhiram had complained against the tardy pace of investigation. He had alleged Soumya's death to be a clear case of murder and sought justice. In his communicate sent through e-mail and post, the father had demanded action against persons who are involved in the death of his son.

5T Secretary reviews 'smart classroom' project in Ganjam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 16: During a two-day-long official visit to Ganjam, 5T Secretary VK Pandian reviewed available infrastructure at the different schools in Hinjili and Sheragad blocks of the district Monday.

According to a senior administrative official, the 5T Secretary reviewed construction work under the 'Smart Classroom Project' at high schools in Hinjili block, on the first day of his tour. Pandian also reviewed seven smart classrooms that are under renovation. The 5T Secretary also visited playgrounds and held discussions with school children as well as their parents Monday. Local MLAs will visit the different schools in Ganjam starting from August 21 to 23, in phases.

Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange, District Education Officer (DEO) and several other senior officials of the department accompanied Pandian during his official tour. It is pertinent to mention here that ordinary classrooms, which existed at 53 high schools of Hinjili block, are being converted into smart classrooms.

OBC QUOTA

Pawar says amendment a 'fraud', seeks caste census

AGENCIES

Mumbai, August 16: Terming the recent Constitutional Amendment, restoring power to states to have their own OBC lists for reservations in government jobs and education 'a fraud', Nationalist Congress Party President Sharad Pawar Monday demanded a caste-based Census, providing states empirical data and hiking the cap on reservations above 50 per cent.

He said that unless the 50 per cent quota limit imposed by the Supreme Court in its 1992 landmark verdict is relaxed, states cannot prepare their own lists of socially and educationally backward classes (SEBCs). "In reality, it (the amendment) will be of no use... The Centre took away the rights of the states around a couple of years ago to prepare and maintain their SEBC lists and that has been restored now. The government has betrayed the OBCs. Today, almost all states have more than 50 per cent reservations," said Pawar. Giving details, he said the percentages for different states are: Madhya Pradesh - 63 per cent, Tamil Nadu - 69, Haryana - 57, Rajasthan - 54,



Lakshadweep - 100, Nagaland - 80, Mizoram - 80, Meghalaya - 80, Arunachal - 80, Maharashtra - 65, Haryana - 67, Rajasthan - 64, Telangana - 62, Tripura - 60, Jharkhand - 60, Uttar Pradesh - 59, Himachal - 60, Gujarat - 59, Karnataka - 50 per cent, etc.

He said that since the Centre is silent on the issue of relaxing the 50 per cent quota limits, the Maharashtra government will be in no position to restore the proposed 12 per cent in education and 13 per cent in government jobs for the Maratha community that was scrapped by the Supreme Court in May.

While the Centre later gave a 10 per cent quota for Economically Weaker Sections, almost 90 per cent states have exceeded the 50 per cent quota limits, so the Centre's move will be of no use now, he claimed. The NCP chief said the state NCP Minister Chhagan Bhujbal has been repeatedly demanding the empirical data from the Centre to enable the state conduct surveys and prepare their own SEBCs list.

While the previous UPA-II Government had initiated steps in this direction, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government put this on the backburner, he claimed.

Ganga continues to flood Bihar

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 16: For the second consecutive week, the Ganga is flowing in a severe flood situation, due to combined effects of river runoff from the Yamuna and its northern tributaries.

As per the CWC Flood Forecasting Network, one station in Bihar is in 'Extreme Flood Situation', 31 stations - 21 are in Bihar, six in Uttar Pradesh, two in Assam and one each in Jharkhand and West Bengal - are in 'Severe Flood Situation' and 25 stations - 10 in Bihar, six in Uttar Pradesh, seven in Assam and one each in Arunachal Pradesh and West Bengal - are flowing in 'Above Normal Flood Situation'.

The main Ganga stem is flowing in severe flood situation in Ghazipur (Uttar Pradesh) to Murshirabad (West Bengal) districts. From Ghazipur to Ballia (UP), the river is in falling to steady state, whereas from Patna and downstream, it is flowing with rising trend. "Alert may be kept in districts of Varanasi, Ghazipur, and Ballia (UP), Buxar, Patna, Munger, Bhagalpur (Bihar), Sahibganj (Jharkhand), and Malda and Murshirabad (West Bengal). Propagating peak inflow will further increase the water level of main Ganga stem in Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal in next 2 to 3 days," the CWC said.

At the Bhagalpur site of the CWC, water level of Ganga was expected to cross high flood level. Middle reaches of Ganga in districts such



People of Manash village shift to a safer place along the banks of the Ganga after the water level rises following monsoon rain in Patna, Monday.

as Badaun and Farrukhabad (UP) are in above normal flood situations. River Ghaghra in Barabanki, Ayodhya & Ballia (UP) and Siwan and Saran (Bihar) districts is flowing in above normal to severe flood situations with rising trend due to past two days rainfall in the catchment. The Rapti is flowing in severe to above normal flood situation in Balrampur, Siddharth Nagar and Gorakhpur districts (UP). River Sone and Punpun are flowing in severe flood situation in Patna.

"Currently, the flood that originated in tributaries of Yamuna last week is passing through Ganga and it may take another 3 to 4 days to pass through completely; in such situation further runoff created due to intense rainfall in the catchments of north tributaries of Ganga may not stream into Ganga easily. The flooding situation in districts such as Ballia (UP), Saran, Bhagalpur, Khagaria, Vaishali, and Katihar (Bihar) may get accentuated," the CWC warned.

River Kosi in Supaul, Khagaria and Katihar districts, Bagmati in Sitamarhi, Muzzafarpur, and Darbhanga districts, Gandak in Gopalganj, Muzaffarpur and Vaishali districts, Adhwara in Darbhanga district, Kamla and Kamlabalan in Madhubani district, Burhi Gandak in Samastipur and Khagaria districts, Parman in Araria, Mahananda in Purnia and Katihar districts are flowing in 'above normal' to 'severe flood situations'.

NAVROZ MUBARAK!



Parsi people walk outside a prayer hall near Fire Temple during Parsi New Year in Mumbai, Monday.

PTI PHOTO

Mumbai resumes rail services

REUTERS

Mumbai, August 16: Authorities in India's financial capital Mumbai have almost fully resumed suburban rail services for the first time in more than a year, as part of a wider easing of COVID-19 restrictions, as the pace of infections declined.

Previously, only essential workers were allowed to use the trains, but those who are fully vaccinated were allowed on board trains from Sunday. Parks, seafronts and playgrounds were also allowed to stay open for all until 10pm, from the previous closing hours of 4pm, the city's civic body said.

Monday, the second day that trains were 95% open, crowds were sparse because of a public holiday. In normal times, more than 8 million people travel on Mumbai's local trains every day, but services have been closed to commuters since March 2020, when the first COVID-19 related lockdown was announced in the state.

In February this year, commuters were allowed on trains at non-peak hours, before being shut again as the country faced a devastating



second wave that killed hundreds of thousands.

The thriving metropolis in the largest industrial state of Maharashtra, saw a peak of 11,000 daily cases a day at the height of the second wave in May-June, but new cases have fallen after stringent lockdown curbs, with overnight infections dropping to 267 new cases and four deaths Sunday.

India is relying on two home-produced vaccines, Astra Zeneca's Covishield, which is manufactured

in India by the Serum Institute of India, and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.

Almost half of India's 950 million adults have received at least one dose of the vaccine so far.

India as a whole reported 32,937 new infections of the novel coronavirus in the last 24 hours, taking its total caseload to 32.23 million, data from the federal health ministry showed Monday.

Deaths rose overnight by 417, with the country's COVID-19 death toll standing at 431,642.

BIHAR CAN CONDUCT CASTE CENSUS ON ITS OWN: DY CM



AGENCIES

Patna, August 16: Amid the rift between the BJP and the JD(U) over caste based census, the former seems to have softened its stand on the issue. Bihar's deputy chief minister Renu Devi has said that the state government can conduct a caste based census on its own.

Renu Devi, during the Sahyog programme Saturday said: "The Karnataka and Odisha governments have conducted caste based census at their own expense. The Bihar government is also independent on opting for the same. However, the central government has a clear stand of not to conduct caste based census in the country." Earlier, Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar while advocating a caste based census, wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging

him to consider the same. Some JD(U) ministers have openly said that if the Centre would not conduct a caste based census, the Bihar government is capable of doing that at its own expense.

Besides Renu Devi, Ram Surat Rai, another minister in the Nitish Kumar government under the BJP quota, advocated a caste based census in Bihar.

The Bihar legislature has twice passed a resolution for a caste based census unanimously -- February 18, 2019 and February 27, 2020.

The JD(U) has support from the opposition RJD and another ally of the NDA - the Hindustan Awami Morcha (HAM) - on the issue.

The BJP has however supported caste-based census only for SC/ST, which constitute only 15 per cent of the total population.

Sena fires missile after Gadkari's 'letter-bomb'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, August 16: A couple of days after Union Minister for Highways Nitin Gadkari dropped a 'letter-bomb' in Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's lap, the Shiv Sena has hit back in full force.

Accusing Sena leaders and activists in some places like Washim of giving "threats, making irrational demands" from contractors or officials, Gadkari said the works on the national highway projects in the state are being affected.

The Bharatiya Janata Party central minister, hailing from Nagpur, virtually threatened to stop the ongoing works in the Washim district and even yank off all future highway projects from Maharashtra if such acts are not reined in.

Taken aback by the harsh tone of the soft-spoken Gadkari's letter, Thackeray promptly asked Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil to direct the Director-General of Police (DGP) Sanjay Pandey to probe the issue.

Simultaneously, senior Sena leader Kishore Tiwari - accorded MoS status - launched a missile asking why Gadkari did not publicise his earlier letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi in which he had named BJP political and elected leaders from all over India making 'extortion demands' from road contractors.

Gadkari's grouse pertains mainly to the Washim-Akola section of the ongoing highway projects, where he said Sena activists



burnt road building machines and warned that if the Sena leaders and elected representatives repeat such behaviour it will be difficult to continue with the projects. Responding, Sena MP from Washim-Yavatmal, Bhavana Gawali-Patil said Gadkari was "misled" and pointed out that around 90 per cent of the work in her constituency was completed, although there were local hurdles in some areas which she would

find out. Claiming that most political parties are engaged in such activities in lucrative road contracts, Tiwari alleged that even the minister and his family's companies "have a finger" in all road and toll contracts. He said that right from 2014, contractors owing allegiance to certain BJP politicians grab the roads-tolls contracts and for a hefty commission, give a sub-con-

tract even to bankrupt companies or blacklisted entities, but after complaints of inferior quality, several projects were stopped many times. "I have a list of your supporters, even your past and present companies besides other BJP political or elected leaders engaged in nefarious deals for roads-tolls projects, and looting thousands of crores of rupees of public money through banks. Will you make

Accusing Sena leaders and activists in some places like Washim of giving "threats, making irrational demands" from contractors or officials, Gadkari said the works on the national highway projects in the state are being affected

your letter to PM public, just as you did with the letter to Maharashtra CM," said Tiwari throwing the gauntlet at Gadkari.

The Sena leader further pointed out that though Thackeray has always held Gadkari in high esteem, through his letter, the latter is now trying to edge close to "the small group of state BJP leaders" who are continuously targeting the Maha Vikas Aghadi government. As tempers continued, Nationalist Congress Party's Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar stressed that if the quality of road works is not good, then action should be taken against the contractors.

Since Gadkari has written to the CM, the government will enquire the situation at the ground level especially since Thackeray has always stated that "work quality would never be compromised", said Pawar.

of the day quote

The purpose of science is to make people's lives happy, healthy and comfortable



M VENKAIAH NAIDU
VICE PRESIDENT

The government must not be a 'shasak' (ruler) but a 'sewak' (server) and should work like a service provider. This year, the Independence Day is more significant because it marks 75 years of Independence. It is the beginning of a new chapter and we are committed to building a new Uttar Pradesh



AKHILESH YADAV
SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

I am going to Uttarakhand tomorrow. Aam Aadmi Party is going to make a very important announcement tomorrow. This announcement will prove to be a milestone for the progress and development of Uttarakhand



ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Centre allocated ₹267.35cr to Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, who arrived in Kerala with a central team on Monday to review the Covid-19 situation in the state, said the Centre has allocated Rs 267.35 crore to the state to strengthen its health infrastructure and will also provide it more vaccines to combat the pandemic. In a tweet, subsequent to his "intensive" meeting with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and state Health Minister Veena George, Mandaviya said that besides the Rs 267.35 crore an additional Rs one crore would be made available to each district of Kerala for creating a medicine pool.

Two sisters killed in building fire

Noida: Two sisters, aged 9 and 12, died in a fire that broke out Monday in a five-storey building in Noida apparently due to a short circuit, police officials said. The blaze broke out around 5.30 am and was soon controlled by fire department officials who had rushed to the site under Phase 3 police station limits, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central Noida) Ankur Aggarwal said.

Fresh 417 Covid deaths

New Delhi: India's coronavirus caseload mounted to 3,22,25,513 Monday with 32,937 fresh infections, while the active cases came down to 3,81,947, the lowest in 145 days, according to Union health ministry data. The death toll climbed to 4,31,642 as 417 more people succumbed to Covid-19, the data updated at 8 am showed.

3 Naxals held

Raipur: Three lower-rung Naxals, who were allegedly involved in the killing of a civilian in 2019 and also in incidents of damaging roads, were arrested in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district, police said Monday. Acting on a specific input, the trio, identified as Hunga Kartam (25), Aayta Madvi (25) and Pojja alias Lathi Kartam (28), was apprehended Sunday from a forest near Etepal village under Kuakonda police station limits when a joint team of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and local police was out on a search operation, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava said.

'WILL STAND BY OUR AFGHAN PARTNERS'

India is in constant touch with the representatives of Afghan Sikh and Hindu communities, said the Ministry of External Affairs Monday asserting that the country will facilitate repatriation to India of those who wish to leave Afghanistan

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 16: India Monday said it will "stand by" its Afghan partners, take all steps for the security of Indians and its interests in Afghanistan and facilitate the repatriation of Sikhs and Hindus who wish to leave the war-torn country in its first reaction following the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the situation in Afghanistan is being monitored on a constant basis at high levels and that the suspension of commercial operations at Kabul airport has forced a "pause" in India's repatriation efforts. Capping its month-long rapid advances, the Taliban took positions in Kabul on Sunday evening hours after Afghan President Ashraf Ghani left for an unknown destination, paving the way for the takeover of the capital as well as the country.

"The security situation in Kabul has deteriorated significantly in the last few days. It is changing rapidly even as we speak. The Government of India has been closely monitoring all developments in Afghanistan," he said.

Bagchi was replying to media queries on the situation in

Afghanistan following the takeover of the country by the Taliban. "We are in constant touch with the representatives of Afghan Sikh and Hindu communities. We will facilitate repatriation to India of those who wish to leave Afghanistan," the MEA spokesperson said. "There are also number of Afghans who have been our partners in the promotion of our mutual developmental, educational and people-to-people endeavours. We will stand by them," he said.

Bagchi said India is waiting for the resumption of flights to restart the repatriation process. "Commercial operations from Kabul airport have been suspended today. This has forced a pause in our repatriation efforts. We are awaiting the resumption of flights to restart the process," he said.

"The situation in Afghanistan is being monitored on a constant basis at high levels. The Government will take all steps to ensure the safety and security of Indian nationals and our interests in Afghanistan," Bagchi added.

The MEA spokesperson also referred to periodic advisories issued by the Indian embassy in Kabul for the safety and security of Indian nationals in that country, including calling for their immediate return to India.



Students return to classes in more states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Lucknow, August 16: Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh Monday joined the states where schools have cautiously restarted physical lessons after the ebbing of Covid-19 cases, while in Uttarakhand and Bihar, students of more classes returned to the offline mode.

States which had started physical classes in schools after a gap of a year were again forced to order closure due to the second wave of coronavirus in March-April this year. Schools across Haryana, Gujarat, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh, however, began reopening after mid-July in a staggered manner, starting with grades 10 to 12. A 50 per cent cap on attendance



and holding of classes in shifts to ensure social distancing, sanitisation and mask-wearing were among the Covid-19 norms being followed by the schools, which largely reported thin attendance. Similarly, states like Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh had resumed physical classes from August 2, while

Karnataka is planning to do so from August 23. Schools for classes 9 to 12, universities, colleges and coaching institutes will be allowed to reopen in Rajasthan from September 1. Earlier this month, the Uttar Pradesh government had announced that schools would reopen for students of classes 9 to 12 from August 16 with 50 per cent attendance.

On Monday, some schools started offline classes in shifts while adhering to Covid protocols, but the attendance was thin. The state government said teaching activity may be considered for classes 6 to 8 from August 23 and for classes 1 to 5 from September 1.

The Cathedral Senior Secondary School in Lucknow said about 100 students attended classes Monday.

When fundamental rights of people, guaranteed by the founding fathers of our Constitution are being trampled upon, it is a sin to stay silent

SONIA GANDHI
CONGRESS CHIEF



VAJPAYEE DEATH ANNIV

President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among the dignitaries who paid tributes to former Prime Minister and BJP stalwart Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his third death anniversary Monday



A devotee whispers in the ears of Nandi for fulfilment of her wishes during the holy month of Shravan, at lord Shiva temple in Patna

PTI PHOTO

PEGASUS SNOOPING ROW

Will the offender probe himself: Cong on Centre's affidavit in SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: With the Centre telling the Supreme Court that a group of experts will examine the issue of alleged snooping, the Congress Monday asked whether "the offender will investigate himself" and demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi answer whether the Pegasus spyware was bought or not.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in a two-page affidavit told a Supreme Court bench that "to dispel any wrong narrative spread by certain vested interests" and with an object of examining the issues raised, the Centre will constitute a committee of experts in the field

Give a direct answer Modi ji, I again ask through television channels that the people of India want to know - did you buy Pegasus spyware or not?

RANDEEP SURJEWALA
CONGRESS' CHIEF SPOKESPERSON

which will go into all aspects of the issue.

Reacting to the development, Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala tweeted, "Mr. 'SNOOP-BOND', Pl tell the Nation this much - Did you or not buy Pegasus Spyware? How does it impact National Security?"

"Mr. 'SNOOPING-BOND', Spying on Opposition, Spying on Judges, Spying on CBI Chief, Spying on Journalists, Spying on Union Min.,

Spying on Lawyers, Spying on Ex PM, Ex CMs...How is this 'National Security'? Can't pull wool over the 'truth!' he said in another tweet, using the hashtag 'PegasusSnoopingScandal'.

Asked about the development at a press conference, Surjewala said, "How can the cat guard the milk."

"Does the respected Supreme Court not know that only those who spied will investigate now? Will the offender investigate himself?" he asked.

In an affidavit filed before a bench of Chief Justice NV Ramana and Justices Surya Kant and Aniruddha Bose, the government said its position on the alleged Pegasus snooping has already been clarified in Parliament by IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

APEX COURT GIVES CENTRE 4 WEEKS MORE FOR GUIDELINES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 16: The Supreme Court Monday granted four weeks more to the Centre to frame guidelines in connection with payment of ex-gratia to dependents of those who succumbed to Covid.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and MR Shah asked Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati whether the other directions as given by the court in the order have been complied with.

As Bhati requested some time to seek instructions in the matter, the court, while granting the extension, also asked the ASG to place on record an affidavit men-

tioning steps taken in connection with other guidelines in the judgment within two weeks.

In July, the Centre had moved the Supreme Court seeking additional four weeks to frame ex-gratia payment scheme for the kin of those who succumbed to Covid, after the court, on June 30, directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to frame appropriate guidelines within a period of 6 weeks.

On June 30, the Supreme Court had said the Centre failed to perform its statutory duty cast under Section 12 of the DMA, to issue minimum standards of relief for families of those people who lost their lives to Covid-19.

EX GRATIA FOR COVID VICTIMS

India needs to strengthen security set up at J&K borders: Experts

THERE ARE APPREHENSIONS THAT PAKISTAN'S ISI MAY PUSH AFGHAN MILITIA INTO J&K TO DISTURB THE PREVAILING SECURITY SCENARIO

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 16: In the wake of the Taliban taking full control in Afghanistan, experts have cautioned the Indian security agencies to increase vigil on the international border with Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir.

There are apprehensions that Pakistan's ISI may push Afghan

militia into Jammu and Kashmir to disturb the prevailing security scenario.

In this regard, they have anticipated that the redeployment of Pakistani terrorist groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), who have targeted Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India in the past, may be activated again.

"The security agencies in India need to be careful and on high alert and need to take all possible steps to check the infiltration from the Pakistan side into Jammu and Kashmir: The ISI was also instrumental in pushing the Afghan militia into J&K when they were ousted from Afghanistan after the US security forces launched military operations against them," former Home Secretary GK Pillai said in a statement. A senior official in the



security set up said on the condition of anonymity that this may seriously undermine the aspirations of the Kashmiri population for peace and the desire of the Indian government to work for

the sustainable development of the region. Referring to the Soviet invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 that witnessed a heavy resistance movement by the Afghan local militia for eight years

when the Soviet troops withdrew in 1988, the experts recounted how Pakistan's deep state diverted vast stockpiles of Afghan war arms and ammunition to Kashmir in the late 1980s to fight a proxy war that continues till date.

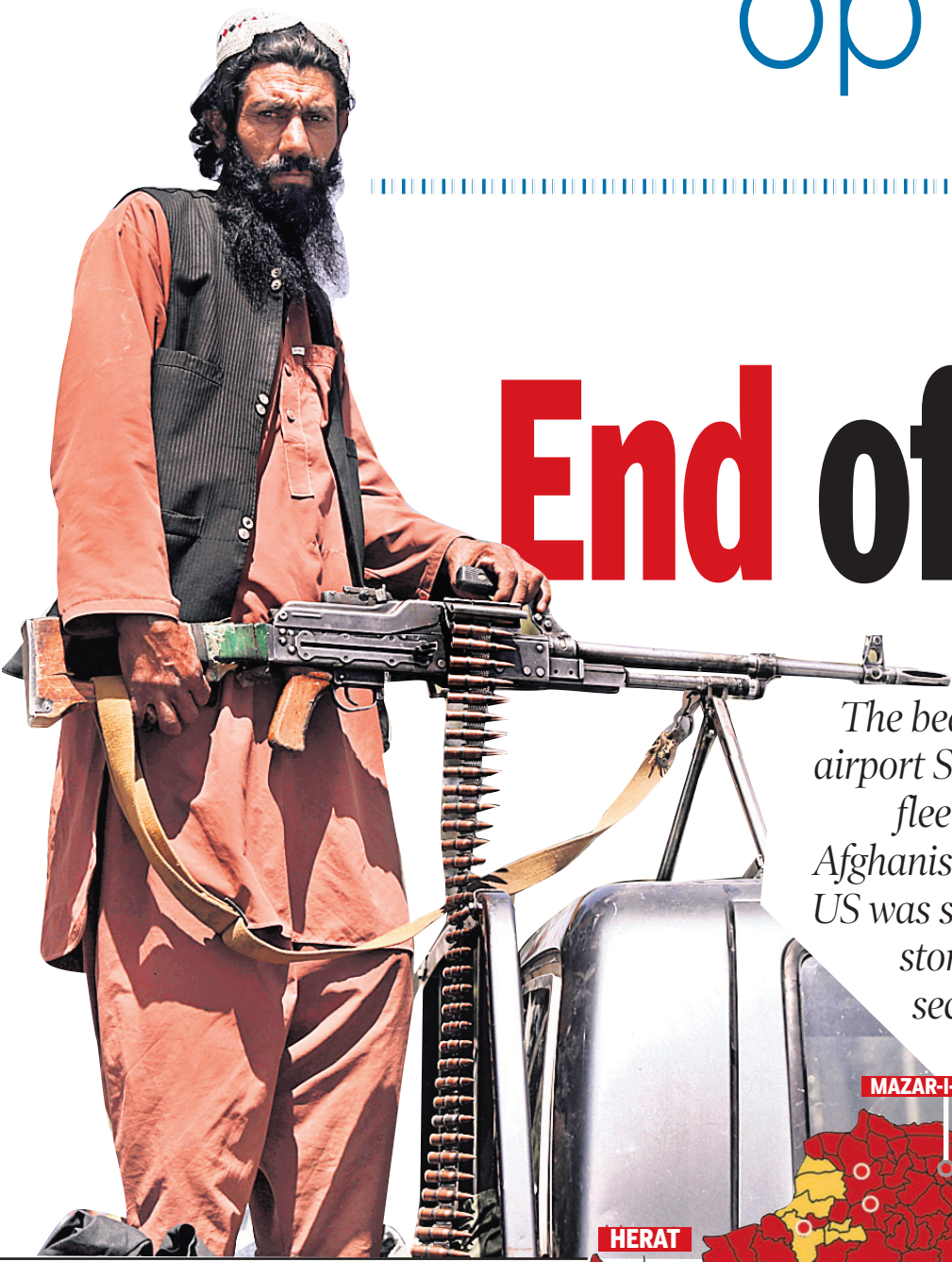
However, some experts also feel that it is a little early to speculate about such things as the present Taliban appears to be different from what it used to be in 1999.

"This is a little premature to speculate such terror threats on Jammu and Kashmir as the Taliban are in the process of settling down in Afghanistan but the security forces need to be on high alert in J&K to prevent such incidents", former DGP of J&K Police Ashok Prasad, said.

Noting that this Taliban are different from what it used to be in the past, he said that the Taliban is in

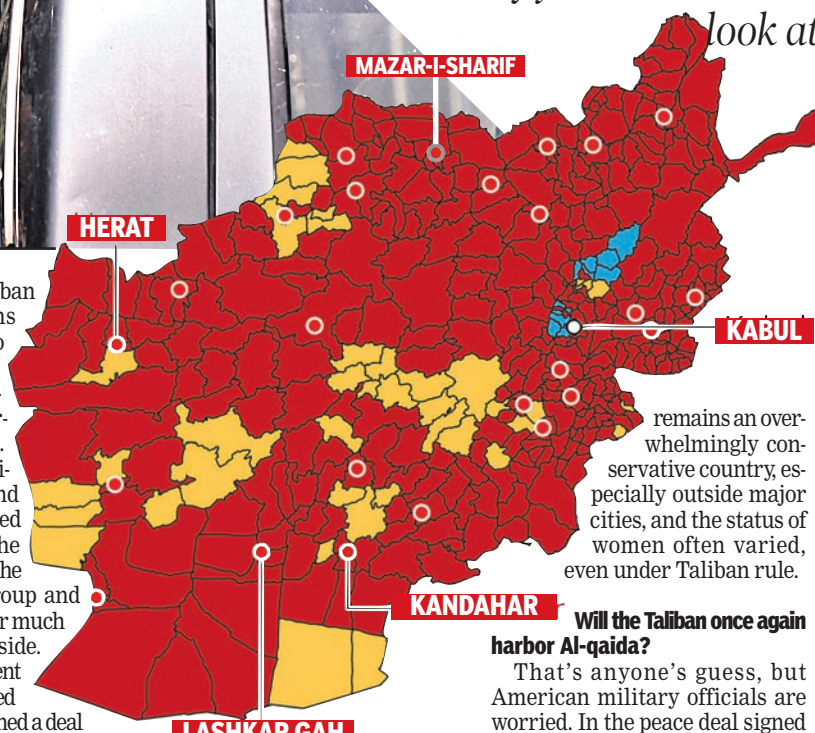
the process of settling down in Afghanistan, and they will aim to get recognition of their government from other countries before embarking on such endeavours. Taliban insurgents swept Kabul after the US-backed Afghan government collapsed and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country on Sunday, bringing an unprecedented end to efforts made by the US and its allies to transform the war-ravaged nation in the last two decades.

India has been a key stakeholder in Afghanistan and it has invested nearly \$3 billion in carrying out nearly 500 projects across that country. Afghanistan's security forces collapsed or fled in the face of a Taliban offensive that tore through the country, ahead of the planned withdrawal of the last American troops at the end of the month.



End of Afghan Republic

The beating blades of US military helicopters whisking American diplomats to Kabul's airport Sunday punctuated a frantic rush by thousands of other foreigners and Afghans to flee to safety as well, as a stunningly swift Taliban takeover entered the heart of Afghanistan's capital. The Taliban have seized power in Afghanistan two weeks before the US was set to complete its troop withdrawal after a costly two-decade war. The insurgents stormed across the country, capturing all major cities in a matter of days, as Afghan security forces trained and equipped by the US and its allies melted away. Here's a look at what happened and what comes next:



Mapping the advance

The Taliban armed group is eyeing power after it entered the capital Kabul, capturing 26 out of the country's 34 provincial capitals in the past 10 days. The armed group, which was toppled from power in a United States-led invasion in 2001, stepped up its campaign to defeat the Western-backed government in May as foreign forces started to withdraw from the country. Below is a more detailed breakdown of how each of the provincial capitals fell to the Taliban.



August 6

Zaranj, Nimruz province
The city of Zaranj was the first provincial capital to fall to the Taliban since it stepped up attacks on Afghan forces in early May. Nimruz province shares a border with Iran and Pakistan, and Zaranj is considered among the war-scarred country's famed historical cities.

August 7

Sheberghan, Jawzjan province
The Taliban declared that it had captured the entire northern province of Jawzjan, including its capital Sheberghan. Heavy fighting was reported in the city, and government buildings were taken over by the Taliban. The city is home to notorious strongman Abdul Rashid Dostum, who had recently returned to Afghanistan after receiving medical treatment in Turkey.

August 8

Sar-e-Pul, Sar-e-Pul province
The Taliban took control of the Sar-e-Pul capital in the north. It was the first of the three provincial centres that fell within hours of one another.

August 8

Kunduz, Kunduz province
Taliban fighters seized control of the northern city of 270,000 people, Afghanistan's fifth-largest city. Regarded as a strategic prize, Kunduz lies at the gateway to mineral-rich northern provinces and Central Asia.

August 8

Farah, Farah province
The Taliban captured the province's central prison, according to parliamentarian Abdul Nasri Farahi. The capture of Farah also provided another border crossing into Iran for the group.

August 8

Pul-e-Khumri, Baghlan province
The capital of the northern province of Baghlan, about 200km (125 miles) north of the capital Kabul, fell to the Taliban after about two hours of fighting, according to Mamoor Ahmadzai, a lawmaker. The capture of Pul-e-Khumri gave the Taliban a trifecta of bordering northern provinces.

August 11

Faizabad, Badakhshan province
The Taliban took control of another city in northern Afghanistan, an official said, making it the ninth provincial capital to fall to the group in six days. Badakhshan borders Tajikistan, Pakistan and China.

August 12

Terakot, Uruzgan province
The capital of the southern Uruzgan province is captured and the governor escapes to Kabul.

August 12

Qalat, Zabol province
The capital of Zabol province in Afghanistan's south became the 18th city to fall to the Taliban over the course of a week.

August 12

Qal-e-Naw, Badghis province
The Taliban also captured Qal-e-Naw, capital of the western Badghis province.

August 12

Feruz Koh, Ghor province
Taliban fighters took control of Feruz Koh city in Afghanistan's western province of Ghor without any fighting, officials said.

August 12

Pul-e-Alam, Logar province
The Taliban seized the capital of the central province of Logar and captured the governor and the head of the city's spy agency.

August 12

Mazar-i-Sharif, Balkh province
Taliban fighters captured Mazar-i-Sharif – the country's fourth-largest city with a strong defence, as it took control of the entire north of the country.

August 12

August 15
On Sunday, the Taliban captured at least seven capital cities, including Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province before surrounding the capital city of Kabul.

What is happening in Afghanistan?

The Taliban, a militant group that ran the country in the late 1990s, have again taken control.

The US-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 ousted the insurgents from power; but they never left. After they blitzed across the country in recent days, the Western-backed government that has run the country for 20 years collapsed. Afghans, fearing for the future, are racing to the airport, one of the last routes out of the country.

Why are people fleeing the country?

They're worried that the country could descend into chaos or the Taliban could carry out revenge attacks against those who worked with the Americans or the government.

Many also fear the Taliban will reimpose the harsh interpretation of Islamic law that they relied upon when they ran Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001.

Back then, women were barred from attending school or working outside the home. They had to wear the all-encompassing burqa and be accompanied by a male relative whenever they went outside. The Taliban banned music, cut off the hands of thieves and stoned adulterers.

The Taliban have sought to present themselves as a more moderate force in recent years and say they won't exact revenge, but many Afghans are skeptical of those promises.

Why are the Taliban taking over now?

Probably because US troops are set to withdraw by the end of the month. The US has been trying to get out of Afghanistan, its longest war, for several years now. American

troops ousted the Taliban in a matter of months when they invaded to root out al-Qaida, which orchestrated the 9/11 attacks while being harboured by the Taliban. But it proved more difficult to hold territory and rebuild a nation battered by repeated wars. As the US focus shifted to Iraq, the Taliban began to regroup and in recent years took over much of the Afghan countryside.

Last year, then-President Donald Trump announced a plan to pull out and signed a deal with the Taliban that limited US military action against them. President Joe Biden then announced that the last troops would leave by the end of August. As the final deadline drew close, the Taliban began a lightning offensive, overrunning city after city.

Why did the Afghan security forces collapse?

The short answer? Corruption. The US and its NATO allies spent billions of dollars over two decades to train and equip Afghan security forces. But the Western-backed government was rife with corruption. Commanders exaggerated the number of soldiers to siphon off resources, and troops in the field often lacked ammunition, supplies or even food.

Their morale further eroded when it became clear the US was on its way out. As the Taliban rapidly advanced in recent days entire units surrendered after brief battles, and Kabul and some nearby provinces fell without a fight.

What happened to the President of Afghanistan?

Ghani allegedly fled the war-torn country aboard a helicopter

remains an overwhelmingly conservative country, especially outside major cities, and the status of women often varied, even under Taliban rule.

Will the Taliban once again harbor Al-Qaida?

That's anyone's guess, but American military officials are worried. In the peace deal signed with the United States last year, the Taliban pledged to fight terrorism and prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a base for attacks. But the US has little leverage to enforce that.

Why are people comparing Afghanistan to the fall of Saigon?

The Fall of Saigon to North Vietnamese forces in 1975 marked the end of the Vietnam War. It became an enduring symbol of defeat after thousands of Americans and their Vietnamese allies were airlifted out of the city on helicopters. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has rejected any comparisons to Afghanistan, saying: "This is manifestly not Saigon."

What does the Taliban takeover mean for women?

Many fear it could mean a severe rollback of rights. Afghan women have made major gains since the overthrow of the Taliban. Many are worried they will once again be confined to their homes. The Taliban have said they are no longer opposed to women attending school but have not set out a clear policy on women's rights. Afghanistan

Afghanistan's military collapse: Illicit deals and mass desertions

The spectacular collapse of Afghanistan's military that allowed Taliban fighters to walk into the Afghan capital Sunday despite 20 years of training and billions of dollars in American aid began with a series of deals brokered in rural villages between the militant group and some of the Afghan government's lowest-ranking officials.

The deals, initially offered early last year, were often described by Afghan officials as cease-fires, but Taliban leaders were in fact offering money in exchange for government forces to hand over their weapons, according to an Afghan officer and a US official.

Over the next year and a half, the meetings advanced to the district level and then rapidly on to provincial capitals, culminating in a breathtaking series of negotiated surrenders by government forces, according to interviews with more than a dozen Afghan officers, police, special operations troops and other soldiers.

Within a little more than a week, Taliban fighters overran more than a dozen provincial capitals and entered Kabul with no resistance, triggering the departure of Afghanistan's president and the collapse of his government. Afghan security forces in the

districts ringing Kabul and in the city itself simply melted away. By nightfall, police checkpoints were left abandoned and the militants roamed the streets freely.

The pace of the military collapse has stunned many American officials and other foreign observers, forcing the US government to dramatically accelerate efforts to remove personnel from its embassy in Kabul.

The Taliban capitalised on the uncertainty caused by the February 2020 agreement reached in Doha, Qatar, between the militant group and the United States calling for a full American withdrawal from Afghanistan. Some Afghan forces realized they would soon no longer be able to count on American air power and other crucial battlefield support and grew receptive to the Taliban's approaches.



August 13
Lashkar Gah, Helmand province
The capital of Helmand province in the south was among six successive capital cities captured by the Taliban over the course of Friday.

August 13
Qal-e-Naw, Badghis province
The Taliban also captured Qal-e-Naw, capital of the western Badghis province.

August 13
Feruz Koh, Ghor province
Taliban fighters took control of Feruz Koh city in Afghanistan's western province of Ghor without any fighting, officials said.

August 13
Pul-e-Alam, Logar province
The Taliban seized the capital of the central province of Logar and captured the governor and the head of the city's spy agency.

August 13
Terakot, Uruzgan province
The capital of the southern Uruzgan province is captured and the governor escapes to Kabul.

August 13
Qalat, Zabol province
The capital of Zabol province in Afghanistan's south became the 18th city to fall to the Taliban over the course of a week.

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of the day quote

We are taking a pledge that no petrol 2W will be sold in India after 2025. This is a mission that we are putting forward to the industry and to the consumers to reject petrol and fully commit to electric. It's time for India to lead the way in electrification and build technologies of the future

BHAVISH AGGARWAL | CHAIRMAN AND GROUP EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OLA

With the gyms being shut and extended lockdowns, we have seen a surge in home-workouts, leading to a demand for home workout paraphernalia. Our team got thinking about how best we could support our consumers' fitness journey and set the idea of sports and fitness equipment in motion

AFSAR ZAIDI | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, HRX

Life Freedom Index is our barometer for measuring the levels of financial awareness, the planning and the adequacy of the plan. Over the last few years we have seen changing trends

VISHAL SUBHARWAL | HEAD OF MARKETING, DIGITAL BUSINESS & E-COMMERCE, HDFC LIFE

SHORT TAKES

Britannia 50:50 launches Potazos

New Delhi: Britannia 50:50, one of country's leading cracker biscuit announced its foray into salty snacks with the launch of '50:50 Potazos', which is 50% potato chip and 50% biscuit. It brings together two exciting and love-snacking formats. In a nationwide consumer survey undertaken by Britannia in the run up to the launch, the product was rated by consumers as the 'best new product' in the snacking category, with 90% consumers giving it a 'Definitely buy' rating.

Factsys opens branch in City

Bhubaneswar: An IT company Factsys Technology Pvt. Ltd has been inaugurated in the city. This company will work on cyber security, audit and IT services. Factsys will work on building product innovation and research along with the other companies under Global Group. On the occasion, video encryption software product 'Edusafe' was also launched. It will be used for online video-based classes for preventing video privacy by encrypting the videos.

Sonalika posts 10,756 sales

Bhubaneswar: Sonalika Tractors has registered 10,756 overall tractor sales in July, 2021 and raced ahead by 5.2%. Its dynamic performance has powered the new-age tractor portfolio that is fully equipped with advanced technologies to take farmers towards prosperity. Sonalika deeply understands rural geography and the crop-specific requirements of farmers, as it remains closely connected with them across 130 countries in the world.

Samsung rolls out new products

New Delhi: Samsung set a new standard for mobile experiences and innovation with two new foldable smartphones, Galaxy Z Fold3 5G and Galaxy Z Flip3 5G. It has also launched Galaxy Watch4 and Galaxy Watch4 Classic marking a new era for smartwatch experience, and Galaxy Bud2 as the perfect pal to Galaxy smartphone tablet or smartwatch. Galaxy Z Flip3 and Galaxy Z Fold3 offer users with unique ways to work, watch, and play.



Exporters lose heavily on account of conversions, volatility and ever-changing dynamics of forex markets. The partnership (with Myforexeye) will ultimately help exporters manage their forex operations under professional guidance of experts

A SAKTHIVEL | PRESIDENT, FIEO

AVIATION MINISTRY GIVES NOD

The Civil Aviation Ministry has given conditional permission to 10 firms, including M&M and SAIL, to use drones. The Karnataka government is one of the 10 firms that is permitted to conduct "drone-based aerial survey for creating urban property ownership records in Bangalore"



Rules for withdrawal of retrospective taxation to come soon, says FM



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 16: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday said that the rules for the recent taxation amendment bill will be framed soon. "We will have to wait for the rules to be framed under the recent taxation amendment bill," she said during an interaction with reporters here.

The Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 was passed by the Parliament in the recently concluded Monsoon Session, to do away with the contentious retrospective tax demand provisions and its passage may end the much stretched tax disputes with UK's Cairn Energy and Vodafone Plc.

The Bill has amended the Income Tax Act, 1961 so as to provide that no tax demand shall be raised in future on the basis of the said retrospective amendment for any indirect transfer of Indian assets if the transaction was undertaken before May 28, 2012 - when the finance bill was passed by the Parliament in 2012.

On the GST compensation issue, Sitharaman said that if GST revenues collection continues like this, then the Centre would be able to pay compensation as per the agreement.

She noted that the Centre will have to consult with states in the GST Council to assess the situation on repayment of borrowing be-

We should have released a white paper in 2014 listing out all that we inherited from the previous government. Oil bonds were a big part of that. The previous government had reduced to prices but that burden had to be taken by the OMCs through these oil bonds

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

yond five years of compensation which is ending in June 2022.

On the high fuel prices, the minister said that NDA government is paying for reduction in prices of petroleum products during the time of Manmohan Singh government, due to the interest and principles having to be repaid on oil bonds from that period.

Sitharaman said that as of 31 March, 2021, there was ₹1.31 lakh crore in outstanding principle and ₹37,340 crore in interest yet to be repaid on these oil bonds.

"We should have released a white paper in 2014 listing out all that we inherited from the previous government. Oil bonds were a big part of that," Sitharaman said.

WPI inflation eases to 11.16% in July

The high rate of inflation in July 2021 is primarily due to low base effect and rise in prices of crude petroleum and natural gas, mineral oils and manufactured products as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 16: Easing prices of food products, primary articles sequentially decelerated India's July 2021 wholesale inflation. The annual rate of inflation, based on wholesale prices, was at 11.16 per cent last month from 12.07 per cent in June.

However, on a year-on-year (Y-o-Y) basis, the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) data furnished by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has risen exponentially over July 2020, when it stood at (-) 0.25 per cent.

"The annual rate of inflation is 11.16 per cent (Provisional) for the month of July 2021 (over July 2020) as compared to (-) 0.25 per cent in July 2020. The high rate of inflation in July 2021 is primarily due to low base effect and rise in prices of crude petroleum and natural gas, mineral oils, manufactured products like basic metals, food products, textiles, chemicals and chemical



products etc. as compared the corresponding month of the previous year," the ministry said in its review of 'Index Numbers of Wholesale Price in India' for July.

On a sequential basis, the expenses on primary articles, which constitute 22.62 per cent of the WPI's total weightage, increased at a slower rate of 5.72 per cent

than 7.74 per cent in June 2021.

Similarly, the prices of food items rose on a slower rate at 4.46 per cent from 6.66 per cent reported for June.

On a Y-o-Y basis, the cost of the fuel and power category rose by 26.02 per cent against a rise of (-) 9.84 per cent Y-o-Y.

"The WPI inflation cooled for

STEEL INDUSTRY CAPACITY UTILISATION

State incurs ₹7,770 crore revenue loss, job opportunities in 2020-21

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Odisha lost around ₹7,770 crore of revenue and thousands of employment opportunities in 2020-21 because of the underutilisation of the installed capacity of steel, pellet and sponge iron plants in the state, industry experts said.

As per information from the government's Steel & Mines Department, out of the total installed capacity of steel of 33 MTPA, Odisha-based steel plants produced 20.5 MT steel in FY 2020-21.

The experts said that the loss of production by these industries is primarily due to low production and huge dispatch of iron ore outside Odisha by the merchant mines. "Former CM, Biju Patnaik, who



pioneered industrialisation in Odisha had envisioned 100 per cent utilisation of raw materials produced in Odisha by state-based industries only.

Contrary to his vision, merchant mines are diverting 80% of iron ore out of the state. The continued manipulation of iron ore availability and prices will lead to the end of the Odisha Steel industries and MSMEs, with 40% capacity unused that day is not far", said BS Pani, an in-

dustry expert. The experts also said that if adequate iron ore could be made available in Odisha, the steel industries could have produced as per their installed capacities, generating much more revenue for the state.

"In the last fiscal Odisha merchant mines produced 23% less iron ore, compared to the financial year 2019-20. During the year, around 80 percent of the iron ore produced in Odisha was taken outside the state.

This has created a severe shortage of iron ore for Odisha based plants evidenced by the highest ever surge of iron ore prices in the state situation is critical as some MSMEs are even facing the threat of closure due to raw material scarcity" said a senior official.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

I-Day celebrated at NTPC headquarters

Bhubaneswar: The 75th Independence Day was celebrated at NTPC Coal Mining Headquarters, Ranchi with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour. On the occasion, Chief Guest, Partha Mazumder, Regional Executive Director (Coal Mining) hoisted the national flag with a guard of honour and salutation to the national anthem. Mazumder on this occasion mentioned that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has spearheaded the 'Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav' as a Jana Andolan to create awareness across India, which commemorates the occasion of 75 years of independence in 2022. While talking about NTPC's digitisation initiatives, Mazumder expressed sincere thanks to NTPC Management for its vision.

75th I-Day observed by MCL

Sambalpur: Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) today celebrated 75th Independence Day with patriotic fervor and gaiety. OP Singh, Director (Technical/Operations), who was the chief guest at celebrations held at Anand Vihar Grounds, hoisted the tricolour. Singh also read out the message of PK Sinha, Chairman-cum-Managing Director (CMD), who is also the CMD of sister subsidiary Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL), Singrauli (Madhya Pradesh). Extending greetings on 75th Independence Day, the CMD appreciated efforts of coal miners in service of nation by ensuring uninterrupted and adequate supply of coal to power plants and other consumers. The CMD also expended I-Day greetings to public representatives, state administration, press/media, contractors, workers and peripheral villagers.

Central Bank celebrates I-Day in City

Bhubaneswar: Central Bank of India celebrated India's 75th Independence Day at Regional Office, Bhubaneswar. On this occasion, Chief Guest Parshuram Panda, CVO, Central Bank of India conducted the flag hoisting activities. He also distributed masks to public to spread awareness on the Covid-19 pandemic. A tree plantation drive was also conducted. That apart, traffic barricades were distributed to Bhubaneswar and Puri traffic control authorities to spread traffic awareness. Moreover, auto branding and other advertising activities of the bank's products and services were also held in the presence of esteemed SRM, PK Samantaray.

Tariff hike key to sector revival: VIL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 16: Amid an existential struggle, Vodafone Idea Monday said while its recent tariff tweaks are steps in the right direction, such changes are not enough to solve the industry's structural issues, and tariff hikes and floor pricing remain critical for the sector revival.

Speaking during the Q1 earnings call, Vodafone Idea CEO Ravinder Takkar said although Kumar Mangalam Birla recently stepped down as chairman of Vodafone Idea, "he as well as Aditya Birla Group (ABG) and the Vodafone group are committing to providing support and guidance to the company, in line with the stated positions of both the groups".

"We will thus continue to get the benefit of their experience and support," Takkar said. On fundraising, Takkar maintained that VIL continues to remain in active discussions with potential investors.

Citing the recent "tariff interventions" undertaken by VIL, including entry-level corporate post-paid plans and other offerings, Takkar said, "While these tariff interventions are steps in the right direction and will help in improving ARPU, such changes are not material enough to solve the structural issues that the industry is facing".

The company continues to engage with the regulator on floor pricing, which is "critical and necessary" to improve the overall health of the industry, he observed.



Aramco will be to be formalised in an "expeditious manner during this year", after obtaining required regulatory clearances.

Aramco Chairman Yasir Al Rumayyan has been appointed as an independent Director of RIL with effect from July 19.

Ambani had said that Rumayyan's joining the board is also the beginning of internationalisation of Reliance and more announcements on international plans of the company would come in times to come.

ROAD TO FREEDOM FROM FINANCIAL WORRIES

Insurance transfers the risk from an individual to the insurer; it is an excellent tool to attain financial security and economic freedom

The significance of August 15 is paramount to all the Indians and it needs no further elucidation. This year marks 75 years of our independence and what a remarkable journey it has been! We have traversed a long way, under various social, economic, and political reforms that helped us become one of the most vibrant democracies in the world.

As a country, we have achieved a lot, and there is a lot more to accomplish. Fuelled by a sense of patriotism, my train of thought led me to think what are a few things which I want for my fellow citizens? Following factors topped my list; I want them to have a long, happy life, to prosper, and wish them to have freedom from financial worries.

One of the simplest ways to free yourself from financial worries is by transferring them to someone else. Insurance transfers the risk from an individual to the insurer; it is an excellent tool to attain financial security and economic freedom.

We live in a dynamic, uncertain world, the ongoing pandemic has exposed the unpredictability of our environment and has accentuated the need to have a proper financial and risk management plan. Insurance provides peace to an individual by transferring the risk and frees the person from looming uncertainties and fear of the 'unknown'. Insurance also protects you from unforeseen financial crunches by indemnifying you for the loss arising due to an unfor-

tunate event.

Such incidents become roadblocks in your path to prosperity, hinder your growth and cause mental strain, thus thwarting your overall well-being. By buying an insurance cover, you shield yourself from these heavy losses in return for a small sum, as the cost of insurance is considerably lower than the amount of loss during an undesirable event.

Many people may believe that they don't require insurance since they have enough savings that will suffice

during an unwanted event. But if you analyze the situation, you will realize that your savings are not sufficient in most cases; you can only take some hit on your finances depending on your background. However, irrespective of one's financial status, there is a limit to which anyone can sustain a loss, after which the situation becomes precarious.

Insurance provides protection against various risks that your health, assets, and even life may face. Today the insur-

ance market has covers for all your assets including your home, vehicles, crops, cattle, mobile, you name it. What more, your freedom from financial worries is just a few clicks away

Gone are the days when buying insurance involved cumbersome paperwork, today all the products are easily available on the website and apps of the insurers. The entire policy management, right from purchasing the cover to policy issuance, from endorsements to renewal and claims settlement, everything can be done from the comfort of your home.

In a matter of a few clicks, you can secure your health and wealth. I urge everyone to buy few basic covers like comprehensive health insurance, home

insurance, comprehensive motor cover, personal accident cover, and cyber insurance cover. These basic covers will safeguard you and your family's most valuable assets and free you from the fear of the 'unknown'.

As we celebrate Independence Day, let us ensure that our economic liberty is maintained and we progress, undaunted, in the path of growth and prosperity. This Independence Day step towards freedom from financial worries, a risk-free future awaits you, head towards it. May we always flourish, as individuals, as a society, as a nation and achieve new milestones!!

(The writer is the Chief Technical Officer at Bajaj Allianz General Insurance)



TA RAMALINGAM

India lord at Lord's

Shami, Bumrah batting show followed by Siraj's bowling help Men in Blue take 1-0 lead in the 5-match series after winning the second Test by 151 runs at the 'Home of Cricket'



MOMENT TO CHERISH: Indian players react after Mohammed Siraj dismissed James Anderson to wrap up the win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 16: India's world class pace attack pulled off an incredible heist with the bat and then a magnificent performance with the ball to decimate England by 151 runs in the second Test here Monday. The fifth day at the hallowed Lord's was as good an exhibition of Test cricket with India bowling out England for 120 as they tried to bat it out without going for a chase of 272 in 60 overs.

It was a match where odds were in favour of England but the cricketing Gods wanted Virat Kohli's men to script another golden chapter in the history of Indian cricket.

Mohammed Shami (56 n o, 70b, 6x4, 1x6 & 1/13) and Jasprit Bumrah (34 n o, 64b, 3x4 & 3/33) played in-

nings of their lives and then rocked the England top order, before Ishant Sharma (2/13) and Mohammed Siraj (4/32) played their part to perfection to give the visitors a 1-0 lead in the five-match series.

This is India's third Test match win at Lord's having won earlier in 1986 and 2014 series and they now have six points in the World Test Championship.

First Shami and Bumrah achieved the unthinkable of batting England out of the contest by conjuring a record stand of 89 which took team's total to 298/8 and made the target of 272 in two sessions look fairly impossible.

Shami and Bumrah's special effort with the bat was duly applauded by the fellow teammates who came downstairs from the dressing room

BRIEF SCORES

INDIA 364 & 298/8
(Mohammed Shami 56 n o, Jasprit Bumrah 34 n o; Mark Wood 3/51)

BEAT ENGLAND 391 & 120
(Joe Root 33; Mohammed Siraj 4/32, Jasprit Bumrah 3/33, Ishant Sharma 2/13, Mohammed Shami 1/13) **by 151 runs.**

to welcome the duo.

With the ball, they both were joined by the "daddy of the pace pack" Ishant as they had a serious shot at a memorable win after Joe Root's (33) dismissal of a 'jaffa' from Bumrah had England on the mat at 67/5 just after tea.

Before that Shami had bowled a leg-cutter for keeps to get Dom Sibley (0) and Bumrah had forced



MATCH-WINNING PARTNERSHIP: Jasprit Bumrah congratulates Mohammed Shami after the latter completed his half century at the Lord's, Monday

Rory Burns (0) to close his bat for a catch at short mid-off.

It could have been six down soon had Virat Kohli held onto the catch provided by Jos Buttler at first sip but it evaded his reverse cupped palms and Moeen Ali's edge didn't matter as Ravindra Jadeja over-stepped.

But then Siraj bowled couple of superb successive outgoing deliveries to get Moeen (13) and Sam Curran (0) to make it 90/7 before picking up

the final wicket of James Anderson.

Earlier, from a situation where a defeat looked imminent after Rishabh Pant's (22) early dismissal, Shami and Bumrah displayed never before seen resolve in a record stand with Ishant (16) also making a nice little contribution.

The tail-enders between themselves accumulated 106 runs, something that India have been missing before the start of the series.

Odisha FC sign Aridai Cabrera



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 16: Odisha FC have reached an agreement with Aridai Cabrera that sees the Spanish winger representing the Bhubaneswar-based club in the eighth edition of the Indian Super League (ISL). The club announced through a statement, Monday.

The 32-year-old winger comes with a vast experience of playing professional football for various Spanish teams after starting his youth career with Universidad LP. He also made his maiden senior appearance for Universidad LP B in 2006 and played for their senior team the very next year.

He has also represented other clubs like RCD Mallorca, Girona FC, Betis B, Hospitalet, Sabadell FC, Huracan, Valencia B, Cultural

Leonesa and Las Palmas.

"I am very happy to sign for Odisha FC and I am really excited to play in India. I want to meet my teammates soon and start preparing for the upcoming season. We will definitely make sure that Odisha FC does well in the next ISL," said Cabrera.

Head coach Kiko Ramirez heaped praise on Cabrera, saying: "Aridai is an electric player who can change the game with the magic that is needed in football. He is a footballer with a very refined technical quality and capable of surpassing the opponents with his feints."

"He is a dribbler and with his speed, we can say that he is a different footballer. If he is motivated and people are with him, he can have a big impact in the ISL," he added.

Roger needs 3rd surgery

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Basel, August 16: Roger Federer is going to miss the US Open and be sidelined for months because he needs a third operation on his right knee, a procedure he said will leave him with "a glimmer of hope" that he can return to competition.

Federer announced the news Sunday via a video message on Instagram. "I've been doing a lot of checks with the doctors, as well, on my knee, getting all the information as I hurt myself further during the grass-court season and Wimbledon," Federer said.

"Unfortunately they told me for the medium- to long-term, to feel better, I will need surgery, so I de-

ecided to do it. I will be on crutches for many weeks and then also out of the game for many months."

The 40-year-old Federer, who has 20 Grand Slam singles titles to share the men's record with Rafa Nadal and Novak Djokovic, acknowledged there was a chance his playing career could be over, but he said he would rehab the knee with the goal of making another comeback.

"I want to be healthy. I want to be running around later, as well, again, and I want to give myself a glimmer of hope, also, to return to the tour in some shape or form," Federer said. "I am realistic, don't get me wrong. I know how difficult it is at this age right now to do another surgery and try it."

Son gives Cityzens hard time



STUNNING FINISH: Son Heung-min curls one for Spurs' winner against Manchester City, Sunday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, August 16: If this was a first taste of life without Harry Kane for Tottenham, maybe that prospect isn't so terrifying after all. At least not while Son Heung-min is still at the club.

Son netted a second-half winner Sunday as Tottenham opened the Premier League season with an impressive 1-0 home victory over defending champion Manchester City — the team that has spent the summer trying to buy its talisman striker.

New Tottenham manager Nuno Espirito Santo left Kane out of his team altogether amid continued speculation about a pending move to City, but still ended up with a statement victory on his debut.

Son finished off a quick counter-attack in the 55th minute and Tottenham effectively neutralized City's many attacking threats in front of a packed home stadium of about 58,000 fans.

Kane's absence was the big pregame talking point, although Nuno said the decision was made solely because the England striker only returned to full training Friday after his holiday. Son insisted the Tottenham players had no difficulties putting all the speculation aside.

Based on this performance, City might need Kane more than Spurs do — especially after letting Sergio Aguero leave on a free transfer this summer.

This was the final game of a crowd-pleasing opening Premier League weekend and City was the only big title contender that failed to start with a win. Chelsea, Manchester United and Liverpool all opened with big victories Saturday.

City dominated possession but struggled to break down a disciplined Tottenham side, which was content to sit back and wait for opportunities to counter.

City's record signing Jack Grealish showed early flashes of his abili-

ties — breaking forward in the opening minutes to draw a free kick just outside the area — but missed his best chance to score when his shot from a tight angle was easily saved by Hugo Lloris in the 75th.

Riyad Mahrez had City's best chance of the game in the 35th when he met a cross from Raheem Sterling but shot wide after failing to cleanly connect with the ball.

Son had already threatened on a couple of counterattacks by the time he put Spurs ahead. The South Korea international collected the ball down the right flank, drove at defender Nathan Ake and then cut inside to bend a low shot inside the far post.

Steven Bergwijn had a great chance to double the lead on another counter just before the hour mark, but shot wide. Guardiola brought Kevin De Bruyne off the bench in search of an equalizer and the Belgian forced a save from Lloris with a dipping shot from distance in the 84th.

MESSI GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Braithwaite scores twice and sets up another in Barcelona's 4-2 win over Real Sociedad in their La Liga campaign opener

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, August 16: The post-Lionel Messi era began for Barcelona with fans chanting his name in the stands and players overcoming his absence on the field.

Barcelona's first season without Messi in 17 years started with a 4-2 win over Real Sociedad in the Spanish league on Sunday, with many in the crowd of more than 20,000 at the Camp Nou Stadium paying tribute to the Argentine star and protesting against the club for letting him go.

The majority of fans loudly chanted Messi's name in the 10th minute, a reference to the No.10 jersey he used to wear at the club. Many fans were wearing or carrying Messi's jersey and several banners honored the playmaker.

"Forever grateful to Messi," read one of them. There were also some jeers against Messi, though, who was already in France with PSG after Barcelona failed to give him a new contract because of its financial struggles. Some fans preferred to chant "Barca, Barca" instead of his name. On the field, Barcelona opened the scoring in the 19th with a header by Gerard Pique, who also was loudly cheered by fans after agreeing to reduce his salary so the club could register other players in time for the opener.

Martin Braithwaite added to the lead with goals in first-half stoppage time and in the 50th. He also assisted in Sergi Roberto's final goal in second-half injury time. Memphis Depay, the club's top offseason signing, helped set up two goals.

Sociedad, coming off a fifth-place finish last season, pulled closer with a goal from Julen Lobete in the 82nd and with a superb free-kick — which Messi would have been proud of — taken by Mikel Oyarzabal three minutes later.

The last time there were fans at the Camp Nou was March 7, also in a match against Real Sociedad. Spanish health authorities allowed the league to restart with crowds of up to 40



NEW ERA BEGINS: Barcelona players celebrate after one of the two goals by Martin Braithwaite (4th from R) at Camp Nou

per cent of the venues' capacity. Fans had mixed feelings. "On one side I feel very bad because Messi is gone. I had a very hard time with all this," 23-year-old student Marta Gonzalez said. "But on the other side I am very happy to see a new Barca and to be here."

ATLETICO WIN TOO

Angel Correa scored a goal in each half as Atletico Madrid opened its title defense with a 2-1 win at Celta Vigo, extending their unbeaten streak in Spanish league openers to 12 matches.

Correa, starting in attack in place of Luis Suarez, opened the scoring with a low shot from outside the area in the 23rd. He added his second from inside the box in the 64th after Iago Aspas had equalised for the hosts by converting a 59th-minute penalty kick following a hand ball by Marcos Llorente.

The benches were emptied in stoppage time after an altercation following a foul by Hugo Mallo on Suarez. Mallo and Atletico's Mario Hermoso got red cards.

Club's debt now at USD 1.6bn

MADRID: Barcelona's president presented a grim picture of the club's financial situation Monday, saying its debt had risen to 1.35 billion euros (USD 1.6 billion).

Joan Laporta blamed the previous administration of Josep Bartomeu for the club's "dramatic" situation that ultimately led to Lionel Messi's departure. Laporta accused Bartomeu of countless "lies" and said he and his board of directors must be held accountable.

Laporta said the club had losses of 481 million euros (USD 567 million) and was left with a negative net worth of 451 million euros (USD 532 million), making it difficult to negotiate with players.

"Our salaries represent 103% of the club's total income. That's 20% to 25% more than our competitors," Laporta said in a news conference. "We have found our-

selves in a difficult situation to renegotiate the players' contracts."

The club lost star player Messi to PSG this month because it could not give him a new contract that would fit within the Spanish league's strict financial fair-play regulations.

The club's debt included almost 390 million euros (USD 460 million) related to player salaries, Laporta said. More than 670 million euros (USD 790 million) was debts with banks, while some 40 million euros (USD 47 million) was linked to membership losses. The impact of the coronavirus pandemic was 91 million euros (USD 107 million), he said.

Laporta was among those targeted by some fans in the team's Spanish league opener Sunday, when it defeated Real Sociedad 4-2. There were banners outside the Camp Nou criticizing Laporta and accusing him of not doing enough to keep Messi.