



POSITIVE VIBES

Khushali Kumar has said that working with Scam 1992 actor Pratik Gandhi was creatively satisfying

LEISURE P2



VITAL MEETING

A Taliban commander has discussed ways to form the new government with former Afghan President Hamid Karzai

INTERNATIONAL P10



A NEW CHAPTER

Sandesh Jhingan becomes first Indian footballer to sign for a top-tier Croatian club

SPORTS P12

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CLOSE SHAVE FOR BHADRAK MLA

BHUBANESWAR: Bhadrak MLA Sanjib Kumar Mallick had a close shave when the car he was travelling in was hit Wednesday by a speeding truck near Jaraka in Jajpur district. Sources said that the lawmaker was returning to Bhadrak from the state Capital when the accident occurred Wednesday morning. Even though the vehicle was damaged, Mallick escaped unhurt and so did the driver. Both were rushed to a hospital nearby for a preliminary check up, but were discharged soon. The truck driver fled the spot immediately after the crash. Police reached the place where the accident occurred and seized the truck.



THAROOR ABSOLVED IN SUNANDA CASE

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court Wednesday discharged senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor in a case related to his wife Sunanda Pushkar's death in a luxury hotel here July 7, 2014. Special Judge Geetanjali Goel pronounced the order absolving Tharoor of all charges in a virtual hearing. After the order was pronounced, Tharoor, who had joined the proceedings, thanked the judge and said, "It was an absolute torture for last the seven-and-a-half years. The order is a great relief. Finally a long nightmare has ended." Later he released a statement, saying that the justice has been done, which will allow everyone in the family to mourn Sunanda's death.

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Thanks to rising prices, I've started following all the religions. I observe vrats, Lent, Roza,...

'INFECTION RATE NOT WORRYING'

BHUBANESWAR: The number of Covid-19 infections is slowly increasing among children. However, a top Odisha Health department official said Wednesday that people should not panic. Public Health Director Niranjana Mishra said that the government is fully prepared to deal with any situation. With vaccination of kids yet to start, it is expected that there will be surge in Covid-19 infections among children. However, the rate of infection can be controlled, said Mishra. "The Health department is maintaining a strong vigil. Approximately 12 per cent of kids have been hit by the virus in Odisha. In most cases however, children are recovering," he added.

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX		VARIATION	
SENSEX	55629.49	↓	162.78
NIFTY	16568.80	↓	45.80
DOLLAR	74.54	↓	₹0.10
EURO	86.97	↓	₹0.10
GOLD	₹47,114	↓	₹166
SILVER	₹62,485	↓	₹741

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP MAX	29.6°C	34.5°C	
TEMP MIN	25.6°C	25.0°C	
Humidity	88%	85%	Forecast
Rainfall	0.2mm	Nil	

THREADS OF FAITH



Patara Bisoyi servitors crafting rakhis for Lord Jagannath and Lord Balabhadra ahead of the Raksha Bandhan festival at Srimandir in Puri, Wednesday

PIC: YAGNESWAR MOHANTY

NGT bats for 14 elephant corridors

■ ELEPHANT DEATHS IN ODISHA HAVE BEEN INCREASING AND CURRENTLY STAND AT 76 PER YEAR

■ THE NGT HAS ASKED FOR IDENTIFICATION OF THE JUMBO CORRIDORS WITHIN 2 MONTHS

The petitioner had told the NGT that the elephant corridors needed to be notified as ecological sensitive zones for multiple reasons including preventing man-pachyderm conflicts

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The National Green Tribunal has asked the Odisha government to notify 14 elephant corridors in the state within the next two months. The order was passed Tuesday, realising a long-standing demand of elephant conservationists.

This development comes after years of exercise for setting up such corridors and subsequent litigations by the 'Wildlife Society



of Odisha' demanding notified paths for the jumbos in the state. This is needed to safeguard the paths taken by the tuskers during their normal movement and also to prevent man-elephant conflict.

In an order passed by the Eastern Zonal bench of NGT, judicial member B Amit Shalekar and expert member Saibal Dasgupta have asked for notification of the 14 corridors identified

by 'Asian Nature Conservation Foundation'.

"In our view, since the action plan has been submitted and 14 elephant corridors have been identified by the State Respondents, Government of Odisha, we, therefore, dispose of this original application with the direction to the Respondent No.1 (state government) to notify the elephant corridors in terms as identified by the Asian Nature Conservation Foundation (ANCF), within a period of two months from today in accordance with law," the written order of the NGT said.

Wildlife conservationist Biswajit Mohanty through his NGO 'Wildlife Society of Odisha', had moved the NGT. He argued that Odisha hosted the highest number of elephants in eastern India as per the 2015 cen-

sus. It was said that elephant corridors should be prescribed and notified as ecologically sensitive zones under Section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

The NGT order comes in the wake of rising elephant deaths in Odisha since 2001. As against 33 elephant deaths per year on an average between 1990 and 2000, 46 deaths were reported annually on an average between 2001 and 2010. The figure has gone up to 76 deaths per year since 2010.

Shankar Prasad Pani, NGT lawyer told **Orissa POST** that recognition of elephant corridors could pave the way for declaration of these areas as sensitive zones similar to other protected areas which can prevent starting and operations of industries and other environment-threatening units.

JUSTICE NAGARATHNA MAY BECOME 1st WOMAN CJI IN 2027

Since March 2019, no new Supreme Court judge has been appointed and nine positions have remained vacant for over 2 years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: The Supreme Court Collegium headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana is understood to have ended the nearly-two-year-long log-jam by recommending nine names for appointment as judges in the apex court, sources said Wednesday. With the retirement of Justice RF Nariman, August 12, the strength of judges in the top court had come down to 25 as against the sanctioned strength of 34, including the CJI.

Sources said that the five-member collegium, which also comprises Justices UU Lalit, AM Khanwilkar, DY Chandrachud and L Nageswara Rao, has sent three names of women judges among



the nine recommended. Among them is Justice BV Nagarathna from the Karnataka High Court. She has every chance to become the first woman CJI in 2027. The two others recommended for appointment are Justice Hima Kohli, the Chief Justice of Telangana High Court, and Justice Bela Trivedi, a Gujarat High Court judge.

The Collegium is also understood to have selected senior advocate and former Additional Solicitor General PS Narasimha for direct appointment from the Bar.

The other names recommended, as per sources, are Justices Abhay Shreenivas Oka (CJ of Karnataka HC), Vikram Nath (CJ of Gujarat HC), Jitendra Kumar Maheshwari (CJ of Sikkim HC), CT Ravi Kumar (judge in Kerala HC) and M M Sundersh (judge in Kerala HC). The recommendations, if accepted, will fill all current vacancies taking the working strength to 33.

LPG price hiked again

Since January 1, the cumulative rate hike of LPG cylinders has gone up by ₹165 putting a huge burden on the consumers' pockets amid Covid crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Domestic cooking gas LPG price was increased Wednesday by ₹25 per cylinder. This is the second time that LPG prices have gone up in two months. Earlier rates were hiked July 1 by ₹25.50 per cylinder. Subsidised LPG will now cost ₹859 per 14.2-kg cylinder in the national capital, according to a price notification of oil companies.

Non-subsidised LPG rates were increased August 1 by the same proportion, and now the subsidised cooking gas prices have been raised. There is hardly any difference in the rate of subsidised and non-subsidised cooking gas. The latest increase in subsidised LPG price now

COAL RATES SET TO RISE

New Delhi: More problems are in the offing for consumers as coal prices may see a substantial hike in the near future. This is because trade unions at Coal India Ltd have demanded a 50 per cent increase in workers' wages. If the demand is met, price of coal will also skyrocket. The trade unions have already conducted their first meeting on salary increase with the management last month. Coal India however, has declined to comment on the issue.

has taken the cumulative rate hike since January 1 to ₹165 per cylinder. The price of domestic cooking gas has more than doubled in the last seven years. The retail selling price of domestic gas was ₹410.50 per 14.2-kg cylinder March 1, 2014.

In a small relief for consumers diesel prices were cut by 19 to 21 paise across India, while petrol rates remained unchanged, according to the notification.

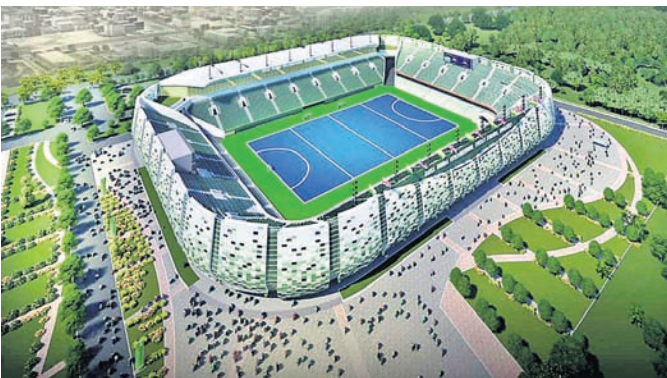
Stadium ready by July 2022

Construction of the hockey stadium in Rourkela, which will co-host matches of the 2023 World Cup, will be completed well ahead of schedule

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The proposed Birs Munda International Hockey Stadium at Rourkela in Sundargarh district will be ready by July 2022, Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra said Wednesday. A high-level delegation of state government officials led by Mahapatra visited Rourkela, Wednesday to review various development works. Secretary (ST) VK Pandian, National Health Mission (NHM) director Shalini Pandit and Sports Secretary R Vineel Krishna accompanied him.

"Work is going on in full swing for the hockey stadium where some matches of the 2023 Men's Hockey World Cup will be played. Construction of parking space and



dormitories for players is also progressing smoothly. We have set the target to complete the entire work by July 2022," Mahapatra said.

"The civil work of the Biju Patnaik Indoor Stadium in Panposh has reached the last stage and it will be operational soon. There will be three indoor badminton courts and three outdoor tennis courts. A state-of-the-art gym is also being set up for the players," informed Mahapatra.

The stadium with a seating capacity of 20,000-plus will be the

largest hockey stadium in India. It will co-host some matches of the 2023 World Cup along with the Kalinga Stadium here. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had laid the foundation stone in February 2021 for the stadium.

The team also reviewed the Rourkela airport expansion project. The Rourkela airport expansion project has been taken up by the Airport Authority of India (AAI). The terminal building will also be constructed there by May 2022, Mahapatra told the media.

Kid falls to death during online class

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, August 18: Thirteen-year-old Andriya Jagaranga from Pandraguda village under Padmapur block in Rayagada district had probably dreamt of a bright future with proper education. However, fate had other plans in store for the kid. In an attempt to get better mobile network to attend online classes, the minor had climbed atop a hill Tuesday. However, he slipped and fell and suffered grievous injuries. He breathed his last while undergoing treatment at a hospital here.

Andriya was a student of Missionary School in Cuttack. He had been attending online classes at his home here during the Covid-19-induced lockdown, informed a neighbour of the ill-fated boy.

Andriya's phone did not have a proper network at home. So he used to frequently climb atop hills in an effort to get proper connectivity. However, Tuesday it had rained

YouTube classes for +2 students

BHUBANESWAR: The Odisha government has decided to conduct online classes for Plus-II students on YouTube, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash said Wednesday. "Classes for Plus-II first year students are yet to commence as admission process is underway. For Plus-II second year students who opted not to attend offline classes, we have decided to webcast the same for them on YouTube," Dash said. "Schedule and timing of the online classes will be notified soon," he added.

heavily. As Andriya tried to climb up the path he slipped and fell and suffered a serious head injury. Locals found Andriya lying in a pool of blood. He was rushed to a hospital here. However, he died while undergoing treatment. Efforts were on to shift him to a better facility, but he succumbed to injuries.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES Your work and family will vie with each other for your attention. Merry-making will seem a good idea in the evening. Your desire for name and fame will meet with success shortly, maybe even today! Ganesha showers his blessings on you.

TAURUS You must learn to get to the root of a routine to keep things fresh today, feels Ganesha. Just learn the basic psychology of people and analyse the facts. All action and decision has a motive, you will need to understand the chain to get the most out of things, advises Ganesha.

GEMINI An extremely productive and fulfilling day awaits you. Along with your daily routine, you will also concentrate on your household issues. You will feel the need to have someone to call your own. You may find yourself in two minds over things like marriage and partnership.

CANCER An awareness of optimism and idealism will mark your activities this day. You may benefit by traversing from one terrain to another. You will be liberal and generous with ideas; your internal beauty will blossom.

LEO Pack your bags, and don't forget the sunscreen and the shades. Look at the stars today – Ganesha foresees for you a strong prospect of going on a tour. If not an individual backpacking adventure, then an elaborate family holiday, but travel you shall.

VIRGO It is not the time to rest on your past laurels, and you will have to carry on with your work unabated. You will have to keep your focus steady and remain organised to get the same level of success that you had in the recent past.

LIBRA Ganeshi says that today you shall make your competitors and enemies envious of your success in business. Beware, as they shall try to hurt or put down your reputation in varied ways. Instead of having a fight with them you should try to be politically correct and take care of matters using your intelligence.

SCORPIO You are in a dilemma and feel like standing at a crossroads of life. Some important decisions of life need time and that's what you want right now. However, keep personal life and work separate to avoid confusion and disturbance. As per Ganesha's advice, it's all right if decision making takes some time, but avoid taking hasty decisions.

SAGITTARIUS Your ways to deal with your team mates and colleagues will be strict and disciplined. However, your perfect ways at work will leave them awestruck. Your personal equations will be least affected by your stern ways, says Ganesha. Do not let success go to your head.

CAPRICORN A penny saved is a penny earned. Your strong belief in this will make you scrutinise your requirements and rearrange the priority list, so that you know where and how to utilise the resources. Your choice of friends will represent your approach and outlook towards life.

AQUARIUS There is nothing like having a good time with your brothers and sisters. Generally, you plan out your routine and activities by yourself, but it is a different day today. Your siblings will make plans for you and you will just go along with the flow, predicts Ganesha.

PISCES Some unknown fear could haunt you today. You will direct your energies to discovering the source of your worries and eliminate them. Lovers will find some precious time to cozy up with their partners. You will find yourself going out to the movies or to a concert.



WHITMAN COMES OUT AS PANSEXUAL

Actress Mae Whitman has spoken about her sexuality. "Being pansexual myself, I wish I had characters like Amity and Luz (of *The Owl House*) in my life when I was growing up," she said. *The Owl House* has been loved by the audiences for its LGBTQ+ representation.

KATONA DOING YOGA TO GET BACK IN SHAPE

Singer Kerry Katona says she has taken up yoga to lose weight that she gained in last few months. Katona has started with some yoga each morning with the help of her personal trainer and fiancé - Ryan Mahoney, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.



Working with Pratik satisfying: Khushali



New Delhi: Actress Khushali Kumar has started shooting for her next film *Dedh Bigha Zameen* opposite co-actor Pratik Gandhi in Jhansi. *Dedh Bigha Zameen* is a family drama set in the small town of Uttar Pradesh. The plot revolves around the dignified struggle of a common man to win what is his.

Khushali shares her experience of preparing for her role opposite Pratik, who gained critical acclaim for his film *Scam 1992*.

She said: "Pratik is very observant as an actor. Preparing with him was again fun and creatively satisfying. We understood each other's way of timing and I think it works best when there's chemistry off-screen because that way it reflects on cinema as well."

A T-Series production, *Dedh Bigha Zameen* is produced by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Shaalish R Singh, and Hansal Mehta.

T-Series chairman Bhushan Kumar's sister Khushali debuted in Hindi film industry with a music video *Mainu Ishq Da* in 2015. Since then she has been featured in several music videos and short films.

ANS



KBC Season 13 will begin August 23

Mumbai: The 13th season of *Kaun Banega Crorepati* hosted by superstar Amitabh Bachchan is set to start from August 23 on Sony Entertainment Television with certain changes this time from the last season.

The *Audience Poll* lifeline is making a comeback this season.

With the studio audience being re-instated, the entire vibe of the show has been raised a few notches higher. The other three lifelines include *50:50* (wherein 2 incorrect answers will get deleted from the four options), *Ask The Expert* (wherein the contestant can seek help from one distinguished professional) and *Flip The Question* (wherein the contestant will get an opportunity to change the question altogether and choose a topic for the replacement question).

Amitabh talks about the same and says: "It's the 21st year of my association with *Kaun Banega Crorepati* and I can never get enough of this show. It was probably for the first time, last season, that the studio audience wasn't a part of the show and we saw a major change in the lifelines as well. I, for one, truly missed them and their energy...it's infectious!"

ANS

Punjabi single Na Na was an adventure: Jonita

Mumbai: Jonita Gandhi has released an urban Punjabi single titled *Na Na* together with Mickey Singh. The singer says working on the song has been an adventure!

together with DJ Lyan.

The song has released on the YouTube channel of TreeHouse V.H.T.

ANS

Sung by Jonita and Mickey, the track is a blend of east and west. The music video featuring the two singers has been directed by Jay Skilly.

Talking about the song, Jonita shared: "*Na Na* is our baby. This song was such an adventure, from ideation to execution and I'm beyond excited to share it with you all. I'm thrilled to have collaborated with Mickey Singh for the first time, and working with the entire team on this song was such a memorable experience."

"From dance practices to wardrobe and even the vocals, I got to experiment and you all know how much I love to step outside my comfort zone," the singer added.

Na Na has been written by Jonita Gandhi, Mickey Singh, Charanpreet Singh and Jay Skilly while Mickey has composed the music



Five immunity-boosting exercises to do at home

When done regularly, squats, one of the most popular exercises among fitness freaks, can tone the legs and strengthen the glutes and muscles

Exercising not only keeps the body and mind healthy, it also acts as an immunity booster. For that, one doesn't have to do heavy exercises for long hours. Here are five simple exercises that can get the job done.

Walking Walking has several health benefits – the heart stays fit, muscle endurance is improved, bones get stronger, body fat is re-

duced, high cholesterol can be managed and the body's defence mechanism gets better. People of any age can participate in this without any difficulty. Opt for power walking to reduce fat, a casual stroll for a more relaxed feel or marathon walking for high-impact results.

Jumping Jacks Jumping jacks is an amazing workout to boost immune system. It is one of the easiest workouts to do from

the comfort of home. All one needs to do is to add a bit of variation to this immunity power exercise to boost the fitness regime. Doing so will not only promote stability but also strengthen the immune system.

Squats Squats are one of the most popular exercises

among fitness enthusiasts. When done regularly, this exercise can tone the legs and strengthen the glutes and muscles. There is no better exercise to work on lower body than squats. In addition, this activity also boosts blood circulation in the body. All one has to do is



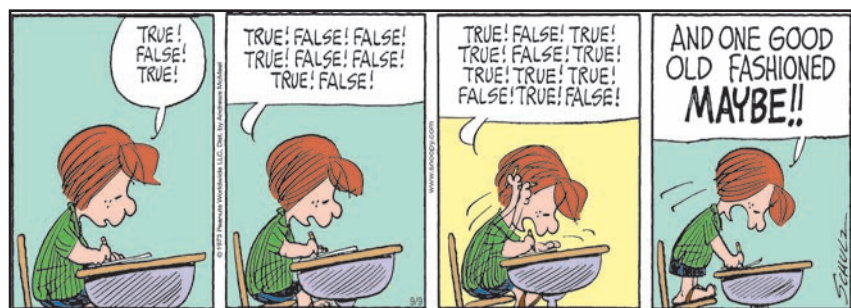
to get the posture correct.

Pilates Any list of exercises for the immune system is incomplete without pilates. They are great for building flexibility, strength and immunity. Pilates promotes muscle development, flexibility, core strength, energy, weight loss and increases joint motions.

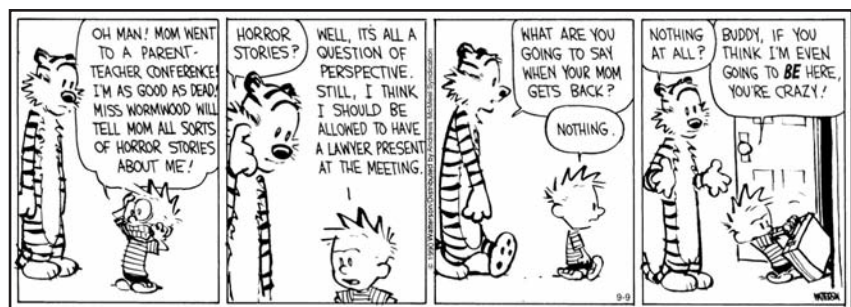
Plank Not many workouts engage so many muscles at the same time as a plank does. It is also the best exercise to tone the abs. Beginners or experts, this simple exercise is for all to strengthen the arms, shoulders and backs. This activity can be completed within a minute or two. Just balance the body and hold it in position for a minute.

AGENCIES

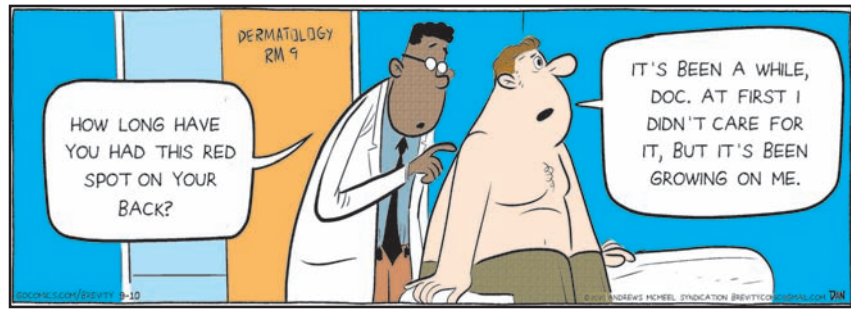
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

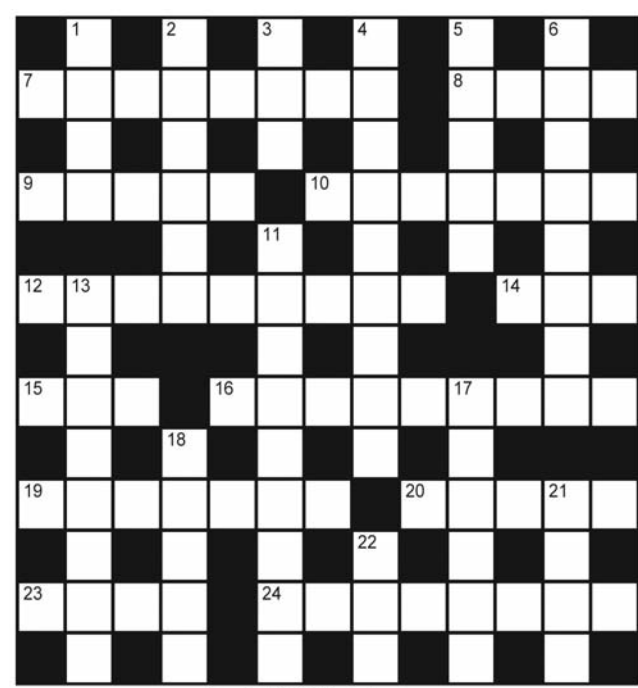


BREVITY



FUN post

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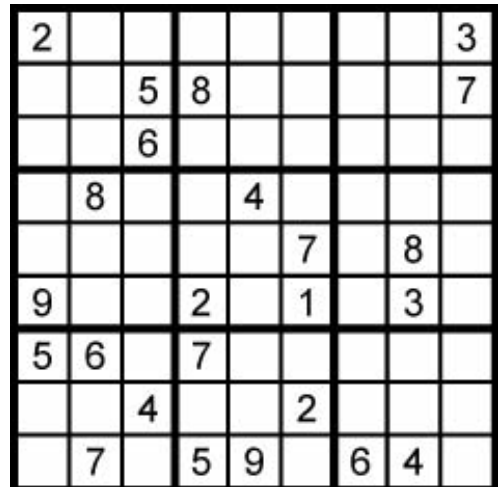


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- Across
- 7 Leonardo da Vinci painting (4,4)
 - 8 Tropical tuber
 - 9 Unit of length
 - 10 Quake aftermath, at times
 - 12 Scholarly folks
 - 14 Bearded antelope
 - 15 Wayside stop
 - 16 Supernatural
 - 19 Of little importance
 - 20 Hostile force
 - 23 Melee memento
 - 24 Bartender's tool (3,5)
 - 4 Vest
 - 5 Make amends
 - 6 Malefactor
 - 11 Glycine, e.g. (5,4)
 - 13 Binding agreement
 - 17 Sinew
 - 18 Shade of white
 - 21 Visages, in slang
 - 22 Snaky fish
- Down
- 1 Tree trunk
 - 2 Spanish capital
 - 3 Young fox

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.

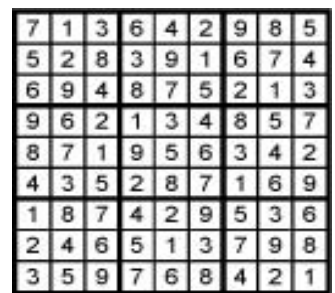


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown

Facelift for British-era loco as relocation plan shelved



The British-era locomotive at Chanakya BNR Hotel in Puri

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, August 18: After a hue and cry over a proposal to relocate the British-era steam engine from the premises of Chanakya BNR Hotel here, the East Coast Railway (ECOR) authorities have refurbished the antique railway machine.

The railway authorities had made an attempt to relocate the locomotive to somewhere else August 8. However, the proposal was shelved in the wake of stiff opposition from the locals, sources said. Many social activists and intellectuals of the city, meanwhile, urged the ECOR to make special arrangements for preservation of the steam engine.

“The British-era locomotive has been displayed on an open space at the hotel for the last several years. The Railway authorities should immediately build a shed for the steam engine. They should develop the site as a small museum to attract visitors,” said Hector Mishra, who was leading the protest over relocation of the locomotive from the front.

Sources in the ECOR claimed that the authorities concerned

ANTIQUE PIECE

The 20-tonne steam engine was manufactured by Stewart & Co, England

The then Maharaja of Paralakhemundi had purchased it for Rs 12,000 in 1898 and it began its run between Paralakhemundi and Nuapada in 1900

In 1987, during the centenary celebrations of the South Eastern Railway, it was brought to Puri and installed in the BNR Hotel complex

Since steam locomotives were phased out, this antique piece is only left with some archival value

are now mulling to construct a shed for the old engine. “There was a proposal to relocate the engine from Puri. However, the plan has been cancelled. The old locomotive will remain on the Chanakya BNR Hotel premises. The steam engine has been given a facelift. The railway authorities will soon take a decision on a pro-

posal to erect a shed for the locomotive,” they added.

According to sources, the 20-tonne steam engine was manufactured by Stewart & Co, England. The then Maharaja of Paralakhemundi had purchased it for Rs 12,000 in 1898 and it began its run between Paralakhemundi and Nuapada in 1900. The route was later extended to erstwhile Vijaynagar (now Vizianagaram).

Since steam locomotives were phased out, this antique piece is only left with some archival value. In 1987, during the centenary celebrations of the South Eastern Railway (SER), it was brought to Puri and installed in the BNR Hotel complex. The Postal department had released a commemorative stamp with the picture of this engine to mark the centenary celebrations of SER.

The BNR Hotel, established in 1900 near Puri beach, is also a heritage hotel. The display of this heritage engine at the hotel entrance has enthralled scores of visitors who were privileged to witness this antique piece.

The Railway authorities had leased out BNR Hotel to Chanakya Group in 2007, sources added.

UPPING THE ANTE

Locals hold a demonstration to oppose the opening of a liquor shop near Satichaura Square in Cuttack, Wednesday



CBI probe sought into 12 ‘murders’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 18: A public interest litigation (PIL) has been filed in Orissa High Court seeking CBI probe into 12 sensational deaths/murder cases in the state including that of motivational speaker Aditya Das.

Petitioner Surendra Panigrahi has made the CBI, Odisha Chief Secretary, Home secretary, Director General of Police, the chief of Crime Branch and the superintendents of police in several districts parties to the case.

Panigrahi, the state president of Bharatiya Vikash Parishad, claimed that the police have failed to arrest the main accused in many of these murder cases. Some influential people including a few politicians were involved in these cases, alleged the petitioner.

“The police often try to hush up some murder cases. They have failed to solve many sensational deaths,” he said. Panigrahi has sought HC’s intervention for CBI probe into the cases.

SC seeks status report from states on vacancies in SICs

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 18: The Supreme Court Wednesday directed Odisha and other states to file status reports giving details about the vacancies and pendency of appeals in the State Information Commissions (SICs).

A two-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices S Abdul Nazeer and Krishna Murari noted that Odisha has created only two additional posts of information commissioners. However, the top court had directed to create three additional posts. The bench adjourned the matter for three weeks and sought a status report by the next date of hearing.

During the hearing, the counsel appearing Odisha submitted that four information commissioners are now working and advertisements for Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and one in-



formation commissioner have been published.

The apex court’s directions came in an application filed by RTI activist Anjali Bhardwaj seeking compliance on part of the states with respect to the directions issued by the Supreme Court in its judgement in February 2019.

Significantly, in October last year the petitioner had submitted

In Odisha, 4 information commissioners are now working and advertisements for CIC and one information commissioner have been published

that Odisha State Information Commission has been functioning with four posts despite having a huge backlog of nearly 15,000 appeals and complaints.

Notably, the SC February 15, 2019 had directed Odisha and five other states to fill all the vacancies of sanctioned posts (four sanctioned posts, including CIC) within two months and take a decision regarding sanction of additional posts.

Vig glare on industry promotion officer

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, August 18: Separate teams of Vigilance sleuths conducted simultaneous raids Wednesday morning at houses and office of industry promotion officer (IPO) Sitaram Sahu, who is presently working at Puri district industries centre (DIC), official sources said.

According to sources, raids were carried out after a case was registered against Sahu, who possessed assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

The anti-corruption squad conducted raids at five different places. As many as eight Vigilance teams were led by four DSPs, five inspectors and other subordinate officials. The places raided include Sahu’s rented house at Mahavir Apartment in Puri town and properties owned by him at Nayagarh, Kalinga Vihar in Bhubaneswar, ancestral house in Kantilo area and office, a Vigilance official said.

Sahu was interrogated at his office and later taken to Nayagarh by the Vigilance team. Several complaints were made against him that he was demanding and accepting bribe for approval of loans.



ment of new session.

The sprawling new campus is nestled in the serene surroundings of Taraboli village under Jatni tehsil of Khurda district in Odisha.

The IOCL volunteered to lead the initiative of setting up SDI in Odisha with support from other seven major oil PSUs (ONGC, GAIL, BPCL, HPCL, EIL, Balmer Lawrie and OIL).

SDI-Bhubaneswar started its operations following the inauguration of its pilot campus (0.5-acre campus in Mancheswar, Bhubaneswar) May 9, 2016 by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Dharmendra Pradhan.

IOC has contributed Rs 255 Crore for setting up this institute and has already approved another Rs 80 crore till date. In its new campus, SDI-B plans to roll out new courses by setting up Centres of Excellence (CoEs) in various fields with top industries in that area.

The dignitaries will also carry out Bhumi Pujan ceremony of the permanent campus of ICT-IOC Bhubaneswar on same day. Land for this permanent campus of ICT-IOC Bhubaneswar has been earmarked at Godiput Matiapada, Delang tehsil of 111.79 acre. In the first phase, 73.86 acre of land has been allotted to ICT-IOCB.

GOVT MISUSED DMF FUNDS, SAYS CONG



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The state unit of Congress party Wednesday slammed the state government for alleged misuse of District Mineral Foundation (DMF) funds in mining-affected areas.

Addressing a presser here Wednesday, Congress leader Prashant Satpathy said, “In Odisha, DMF was established to ensure the communities affected by mining get assistance for creation of basic infrastructure in their areas. The state government, however, has

It is really shocking to see how the govt has been using the funds to build stadiums, urban projects, lavish patrolling vans, sports and on other activities

PRASHANT SATPATHY | CONGRESS LEADER

been misusing the funds rampantly,” he added.

The leader claimed that when the government faced fund crunch in any sector, it banked upon DMF funds which were meant exclusively to benefit the local com-

munities living near mining areas for their basic amenities.

“It is really shocking to see how the government has been using the funds to build stadiums, urban projects, lavish patrolling vans, sports and on other activities whereas funding for such areas should be coming from planned expenditures,” Satpathy said.

Citing official data, the Congress party said that Odisha reported the highest of Rs 11,984 crore collections of DMF which was the highest collection by any Indian state. However, this came when the basic amenities like roads, drinking water and pollution control measures elude people affected by mining in the state.

INOX resumes shows after 3 months

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: Much to the delight of movie goers, INOX multiplexes resumed screening of films at BMC Bhawani Mall, Saheed Nagar and DN Regalia, Patrapada after more than three months’ hiatus.

As per sources, while INOX at Saheed Nagar opened for viewers, Wednesday, DN Regalia will begin shows Thursday. Although the state government had allowed the Capital city’s cinemas to resume shows August 1, the INOX stated that it resumed operations only after complying with Covid norms.

“All cinemas will operate by a 100 per cent vaccinated team. INOX is adhering to each and every instruction as prescribed in the notifications issued by the state government. As we prepare to reopen slowly and steadily, we are confident about our pre-



paredness to ensure the safety and security of our customers and employees,” Amitava Guha Thakurta, Regional Director, East Zone.

Meanwhile, other Odisha properties are set to reopen gradually as per their operational readiness. Keeping in mind the need for

getting together in a safe and secure ambience, while maintaining social distancing, INOX will offer private screenings for smaller groups of friends and families.

With a promising content pipeline in the months to come, we strongly believe that the remaining part of 2021-22 will be a treat

WHILE INOX AT SAHEED NAGAR OPENED FOR VIEWERS, WEDNESDAY, DN REGALIA WILL BEGIN SHOWS THURSDAY

ALTHOUGH THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAD ALLOWED THE CAPITAL CITY’S CINEMAS TO RESUME SHOWS AUGUST 1, THE INOX STATED THAT IT RESUMED OPERATIONS ONLY AFTER COMPLYING WITH COVID NORMS

for the movie enthusiasts across the country. “As India emerges from the clutches of the second wave of Covid-19, we are completely geared up and prepared to welcome back movie lovers. We will keep opening our cinemas as per operational readiness and government guidelines in the near future,” Thakurta added.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION



Beautification work of Barabati moat in Cuttack underway, Wednesday. The project has been taken up to attract visitors to the historic site

OP PHOTOS

State administers 2cr Covid vax doses

Over 1.54 crore people have received their first dose, while 46.51 lakh have been fully vaccinated

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 18: Odisha Wednesday recorded a milestone by administering over 2 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses since the beginning of the inoculation drive January 16, 2021.

Taking to Twitter, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik wrote, "Crossing a historic milestone in #COVID19 vaccination, #Odisha has administered two crore vaccine doses across the State. Commend hard work & commitment of our health-care workers in ensuring a swift inoculation process to save precious lives (sic)."

The Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department thanked the health workers as well as the citizens for their proactive participation in making the vaccination drive successful.

As per the data available in the CoWIN portal, the coastal state has so far administered as many as 2,00,71,492 doses of the vaccine.

Over 1.54 crore people in the state have received their first dose, while 46.51 lakh have been fully vaccinated. Moreover, 87.05 lakh people in the age group of 18-44 years have received the jab till now, while 65.26 lakh people in the 45-60 age group and 48.39 lakh beneficiaries above 60 years of age have also been inoculated.

Khurda district has administered the highest 25.36 lakh doses while the Deogarh district is at the bottom of the list with 1.45 lakh doses. The vaccines have been



FILE PHOTO

DMs told to vaccinate Tibetans

Following instructions from the Centre, the state government has asked officials concerned to vaccinate all Tibetan nationals residing in Odisha against Covid-19.

Additional Chief Secretary (Health) PK Mohapatra Wednesday wrote ten to all Collectors and municipal commissioners in this regard, sources said.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has recently approved the Covid-19 vaccination of Tibetan communities resid-

ing in India. Many people from the Tibetan communities have received the first dose of the vaccine, Mohapatra said.

"However, the Tibetans are yet to get the second dose. You are, therefore, requested to monitor the vaccination of Tibetan communities in your jurisdiction and ensure timely administration of the second dose," Mohapatra said in his letter to the collectors and municipal commissioners.

Some Tibetan nationals are residing in Chandragiri area of Gajapati district in Odisha.

administered at 1,066 centres across the state of which 1,033

are government facilities and 33 private hospitals.

993 fresh infections push tally to 9,97,146

Odisha Wednesday reported 993 fresh Covid-19 cases, taking the tally to 9,97,146, while 65 more fatalities pushed the toll to 7,086, a H&FW department official said.

Amid concerns that the third wave of the pandemic might have a bigger impact on children, the department pointed out that 138 of the 993 new patients belong to the age bracket of 0 to 18 years.



The rate of infection among children and adolescents stood at 13.33 per cent Tuesday, up from 11.98 per cent the day before, the official said.

As many as 83,102 Covid-19 cases have been detected so far among children and adolescents.

Khurda district, of which the state Capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported 419 cases, which made for 42.19 per cent of new infections detected, followed by Cuttack at 95. The remaining 28 districts reported less than 100 cases

Over 1.72 crore samples have been tested thus far, including 69,008 Tuesday. The positivity rate in Odisha stands at 5.79 per cent

each, the official said.

Cuttack district reported 15 deaths, followed by Jagatsinghpur at 11, Kendrapara at nine, Dhenkanal at seven, and Angul and Balasore at five each.

This apart, 53 Covid-19 patients in the state have died to comorbidities in the past, said the official.

According to the H&FW department, the list of fatalities does not reflect deaths that have occurred on a particular day. It gives details of past deaths for which the audit process has been duly completed and the cause identified as Covid-19.

Odisha currently has 8,691 active cases, while 9,81,316 patients, including 845 Wednesday, recovered from the highly infectious disease.

The positivity rate in the state stands at 5.79 per cent.

Over 1.72 crore samples have been tested thus far, including 69,008 Tuesday.

Seer joins locals decrying another Blue Flag beach



AGENCIES

Puri, August 18: Govardhan Peeth Shankaracharya Swamy Nischalananda Saraswati Wednesday joined with the residents of the Holy City and beach visitors, opposing the plan of the district administration to acquire Panthaniwas beach to Chakratirth beach for another Blue Flag beach.

Jagannath Sena convenor Priyadarshan Patnaik said the administration has already occupied 3 kilometre of the beach and established Blue Flag beach. He said that at a time when the Tourism department is earning lakhs of rupees from Blue Flag beach, many beach vendors are deprived of their livelihood and the free movement of visitors along the beach has also been prohibited.

Acquiring more area of the beach for Blue Flag beach will adversely affect hundreds of fishermen's families, including small businessmen doing business on the sandy beach, he said.

The seer said that the state government should have consulted persons likely to be affected and considered its religious importance before taking such decision.

He said entire Puri beach has been described in religious texts as 'Mahodadhi Tirtha'. It is one of the five Tirthas (holy places) of the country. Devotees perform Pinda Dan (last rites) of their ancestors while many rituals connected with Srimandir and Samudra Arati is performed on the beach. The state government, he said, should stop this idea.

Senior Congress leader Suresh Kumar Routray condemned the creation of another blue flag beach. He said Puri beach is unique and famous for its golden sand.

Hundreds of fishermen and small traders are earning their bread and butter by doing business in the beach.

The Congress said it will launch an agitation in front of the Lions' gate of Srimandir if government did not reconsider its plan.

Huge BSKY dues pending in private hospitals, claims BJP



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The state leadership of the BJP Wednesday attacked the state government over their publicity campaign on the revamped Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana.

BJP leader Lekhashree Samantsinghar Wednesday held a press conference and claimed that several private hospitals are turning away patients under the scheme due to long pending dues from the government.

"Private hospitals are returning patients hopeful of availing benefits under the scheme as dues

of private hospitals that have pending dues since the launch of the scheme. The BJP also termed the scheme as an old product sold in a new packet. "Facts revealed from the ground and from our interaction with patients showed that this scheme is a big scam just to fool the people of the state. The government officials themselves have admitted that this is not a new scheme but an umbrella scheme covering several other existing health schemes. This is just a mixture of different schemes and renaming of old schemes," she said.

The state government had been giving free healthcare services from government hospitals at district level but cancer, heart and other disease patients were forced to come to private hospitals. The leader also criticised the state government for its reluctance to roll out the Ayushman Bharat scheme of the Union government and keeping the local population out of ambit of the universal health scheme.

Lekhashree asked the state government to put figures relating to the number of patients benefited under the scheme, budgetary allocations for the scheme, number

of private hospitals that have pending dues since the launch of the scheme. The BJP also termed the scheme as an old product sold in a new packet. "Facts revealed from the ground and from our interaction with patients showed that this scheme is a big scam just to fool the people of the state. The government officials themselves have admitted that this is not a new scheme but an umbrella scheme covering several other existing health schemes. This is just a mixture of different schemes and renaming of old schemes," she said.

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Ravenshaw University students stage a sit-in near the Vice-Chancellor's office in Cuttack opposing the varsity's decision for holding UG and PG examinations offline during the pandemic, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

'MSME Prerana' unveiled

Bhubaneswar: Indian Bank has launched its flagship business mentoring program—MSME Prerana—in a function here. MSME Prerana is an initiative to empower MSME entrepreneurs by improving their managerial and financial skills. It focuses on developing the MSMEs' communication and financial skill set. MSME Principal Secretary Satyabrata Sahu said the programme will boost the confidence of entrepreneurs.

Lingaraj Temple to reopen September 1

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 18: After remaining out of bounds for devotees for months due to the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, the Lingaraj Temple here will reopen September 1 with strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols, an

official said Wednesday.

A decision to this effect was taken during a meeting chaired by the Khurda Collector.

According to the decision, visitors will not be allowed to enter the sanctum sanctorum (garbha gruha) of the 11th century shrine. However, darshan will be allowed

from Adapa Mandap.

Double dose vaccination proof is mandatory for servitors and devotees to enter the Shaiva shrine.

Wearing of masks, sanitising hands and maintaining social distance will be ensured on the shrine premises.

FOR A GREENER TOMORROW



Puri Town police officials plant saplings on the police station premises, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

'Stage on wheels' for safety of kids from Sept

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: 'Stage on Wheels' for Covid-19 will start in September first week by Odia Language, Literature and Culture department in association with Unicef in all 30 districts of the state.

In a preparatory meeting at Sanskruti Bhawan here, Odia Language, Literature and Culture department principal secretary Suresh Chandra Dalai said that the training programme for members of the 10 district-level cultural associations and local artistes started Wednesday.

In the training programme, they were directed to focus on spreading awareness regarding safety of children during a possible third wave of Covid-19.

The 10 districts which participated in the training are: Bargarh, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Bolangir, Sonapur, Sundargarh and Boudh.

The training programme for 10 southern districts will be con-



ducted August 20 and 21 while the same will be conducted August 26 and 27 for 10 central districts.

After the training programme, the 'Stage on Wheels' will start in first week of September that will cover all the villages in these districts.

Apart from creating awareness for children's safety during the third wave, it will also spread awareness on vaccination for children, food nutrition requirement (especially milk) for children, safety of pregnant women and destitute kids.

Apart from creating awareness for children's safety, it will also spread awareness on vaccination for children, and food & nutrition requirement of children

Amidst talks of possible third wave of Covid-19, Odisha has reported more than 100 new cases among population in the age group of 0-18 years consecutively for past two days.

The Health and Family Welfare department issued a bulletin saying 138 of the 993 new patients belong to the age bracket of 0 to 18 years, registering 13.33 per cent of the total cases.

Meanwhile, Director of Health and Family Welfare department Bijay Panigrahi said that the third wave of Covid-19 is expected to have less impact with 15 per cent children likely to get infected by the virus.

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ACT WORTH EMULATING: A pigeon flies off with a twig to build its nest in Angul



NONE LIKE A MOTHER: A chick opens its mouth to receive food from the mother bird on Bhubaneswar's outskirts



FATHER'S LOVE: A man feeds his minor daughter on the occasion of Fathers' Day in Bhubaneswar during lockdown



FUN AND FROLIC: Children play inside a huge pipe on Kathajodi Ring Road in Cuttack



FEAR WRIT LARGE: Two children look apprehensive as they take shelter under a table during an eviction drive at Jobra Chunabhati lane in Cuttack



ALL IN A FAMILY: Two kids and their pet enjoy a nap on the verandah of a shop in Cuttack during a weekend shutdown



FIGHTING HAZARD: Fire personnel sanitising a road in Bhubaneswar following spread of Covid pandemic



SUN & SILHOUETTE: Sun signs bright as it sets in western horizon behind the Dhauli Shanti Stupa on Bhubaneswar's outskirts

CANDID LENS

It is aptly said a photograph is worth a thousand words. Photography is a wonderful art form that keeps reminding us of the days, people and the events gone by. The world would be robbed of countless memories and milestones if there are no photographs. On the **World Photography Day** today, **Orissa POST** takes a sneak peek into the best of pictures clicked by our lensmen



BASKING UNDER SUN: Birds perched on an islet of the Mahanadi in Cuttack



TELLING A TALE: Dancers performing an Odissi recital in Bhubaneswar



BREAK FROM LOCKDOWN: Boys enjoying volleyball on the Puri beach



PLAYMATE: Two leopards in a playful mood at Nandankanan

“Late, I learned that when reason died, then Wisdom was born; before that liberation, I had only knowledge.”

SRI AUROBINDO

Pax Americana Dies

The terrorist takeover of Afghanistan, following President Joe Biden's precipitous and bungling military exit, has brought an ignoble end to America's longest war. This is a watershed moment that will be remembered for formalising the end of the long-fraying Pax Americana and bringing down the curtain on the West's long ascendancy.

At a time when its global preeminence was already being severely challenged by China, the United States may never recover from the blow this strategic and humanitarian disaster delivers to its international credibility and standing. The message it delivers to US allies is that they count on America's support when they most need it at their own peril.

After all, the Afghanistan catastrophe unfolded after the US threw its ally – the Afghan government – under the bus and got into bed with the world's deadliest terrorists, the Taliban. President Donald Trump first struck a Faustian bargain with them, and then the Biden administration rushed to execute the military exit dictated by the deal, even though the Taliban had been openly violating the agreement.

The dramatic collapse of the Afghan defences and then the government was directly linked to the US betrayal. Biden admits Trump “drew US forces down to a bare minimum of 2,500” in Afghanistan. By refusing to retain that small military footprint and by ordering a rapid exit at the onset of the annual fighting season, Biden pulled the rug out from under the Afghan military's feet, thus facilitating the Taliban's sweep.

The US had trained and equipped the Afghan forces not to play an independent role but to rely on American and NATO capabilities for a host of battlefield imperatives – from close air support, including drones for situational awareness, to keeping US-supplied weapon systems operational. Biden's calamitous troop pullout without a transition plan to sustain the Afghans' combat capabilities unleashed a domino effect, with 8,500 NATO forces and some 18,000 US military contractors also withdrawing and leaving the Afghan military in the lurch.

As former CIA Director General David Petraeus has explained, ever since US combat operations in Afghanistan ended January 1, 2015, Afghan soldiers had been bravely “fighting and dying for their country” until the US suddenly ditched them this summer, mortally compromising Afghan defences. This assessment is reinforced by the number of military deaths: Since the US combat role ended more than six and a half years ago, Afghan security forces lost tens of thousands of soldiers, while the Americans suffered just 99 fatalities, many in non-hostile incidents.

This is not the first time the US has dumped its allies – or even the first time in recent memory. In the fall of 2019, the US abruptly abandoned its Kurdish allies in northern Syria, leaving them at the mercy of a Turkish offensive.

But in Afghanistan, the US sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind. Its self-inflicted defeat and humiliation have resulted from a failure of political, not military, leadership. Biden, ignoring conditions on the ground, overruled his top military generals in April and ordered all US troops to return home. Two decades of American war in Afghanistan culminated with the enemy riding triumphantly back to power.

Whereas 58,220 Americans (largely draftees) were killed in Vietnam, 2,448 US soldiers (all volunteers) died over the course of 20 years in Afghanistan. Yet, the geopolitical implications of the US defeat in Afghanistan are much more significant globally than the American defeat in Vietnam.

The Pakistan-reared Taliban may not have a global mission, but their militaristic theology of violent Islamism makes them a critical link in an international jihadist movement that whips hostility toward non-Sunni Muslims into nihilistic rage against modernity. The Taliban's recapture of power will energise and embolden other violent groups in this movement, helping to deliver the rebirth of global terror.

In the Taliban's emirate, al-Qaeda, remnants of the Islamic State (ISIS), and Pakistani terrorist groups are all likely to find sanctuary. According to a recent United Nations Security Council report, “the Taliban and al-Qaida remain closely aligned” and cooperate through the Pakistan-based Haqqani Network, a front for Pakistani intelligence.

The unravelling of the effort to build a democratic, secular Afghanistan will pose a far greater threat to the free world than Syria's meltdown, which triggered a huge flow of refugees to Europe and allowed ISIS to declare a caliphate and extend it into Iraq. The Taliban's absolute power in Afghanistan will sooner or later threaten US security interests at home and abroad.

By contrast, China's interests will be aided by the Taliban's defeat of the world's most powerful military. The exit of a vanquished America creates greater space for China's coercion and expansionism, including against Taiwan, while underscoring the irreversible decline of US power.

An opportunistic China is certain to exploit the new opening to make strategic inroads into mineral-rich Afghanistan and deepen its penetration of Pakistan, Iran, and Central Asia. To co-opt the Taliban, with which it has maintained longstanding ties, China has already dangled the prospect of providing the two things the militia needs to govern Afghanistan: diplomatic recognition and much-needed infrastructure and economic assistance.

The reconstitution of a medieval, ultra-conservative, jihad-extolling emirate in Afghanistan will be a monument to US perfidy. And the images of Chinook and Black Hawk helicopters transporting Americans from the US embassy compound in Kabul, recalling the frenzied evacuation from Saigon in 1975, will serve as a testament to America's loss of credibility – and the world's loss of Pax Americana.

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

WISDOM CORNER

“Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster.” FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

“If your heart is a volcano, how shall you expect flowers to bloom?” KAHILU GIBRAN

“He who knows, does not speak. He who speaks, does not know.” LAO TZU

WORDSWORTH

Overweening

A bookish term, it is often found in serious up-market periodicals, mostly next to nouns such as power, ambition and pride. It is not complimentary. A person or group described as overweening may demonstrate presumptuousness, arrogance, conceit, self-importance or an excessively high opinion of themselves. While I share the general European aversion to the overweening US firearms lobby, gun ownership has two compelling arguments on its side (The Independent, 18 Dec. 2012). The word comes from the older noun and verb overween. Both have now almost entirely vanished but were available to the writers of an earlier age. Perhaps one reason why overween became unfashionable is that we lost its second part. Ween is Old English, a Germanic form that survives, for example, in modern German wännen, to imagine or to believe wrongly. In English, it meant to think or surmise. By the nineteenth century it had ceased to be a common verb and turned up almost exclusively in the fixed phrase I ween.

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

FOOD SYSTEMS ON EDGE

The COVID-19 pandemic has ruthlessly exposed the global food system's deficiencies, and a massive escalating hunger crisis now looms. A quarter of humanity lacks secure access to food, with one in ten people affected by severe food insecurity, and up to 811 million people hungry. Another quarter of the world's population suffers from various forms of malnutrition, including obesity, with huge negative effects on health.

Both trends are on the rise, and both are directly connected to injustice and poverty. No matter how much food the world produces, failure to address power imbalances in the global food system will mean that hunger persists and food-borne illnesses explode.

Many hope that the United Nations Food Systems Summit in September will be a catalyst for real change. But the gathering is more likely to legitimise and cement the current inequitable model of industrialised food production.

That would be bad news for the world's hungry people, the majority of whom – 418 million – live in Asia. More than 282 million live in Africa, where chronic hunger affects one in five people and is increasing faster than in any other region.

Hunger is primarily a problem of accessibility. People go hungry not because there is insufficient food in the world, but because they are poor. Were it not for injustice and inequality, the record global wheat production in 2020-21 could in theory feed up to 14 billion people.

irrigation schemes.

All these crises limit poorer people's capacity to buy food or produce enough to be self-sufficient. As a result, 155 million people across 55 countries suffered from severe hunger in 2020, an increase of 20 million from 2019.

Since the Green Revolution in the 1960s and 1970s, we have continuously heard that increasing agricultural productivity is the key to fighting hunger and feeding the world's population. Today, global corporations like Corteva (formerly the agricultural unit of DowDuPont), Bayer/Monsanto, and ChemChina/Syngenta promote productivity through the use of chemical pesticides, artificial fertilizers, and genetically modified or commercially grown hybrid seeds that cannot be reproduced. But such capital-intensive agriculture cannot serve those who lack the basics for secure food production: land, water, and regionally rooted knowledge systems.

Meanwhile, nearly two billion people globally are now overweight or obese. Mexico, where about 73 per cent of the population is overweight, is a particularly worrying case. If current dietary habits persist, 45 per cent of the world's population could be overweight by 2050. This will result in exploding healthcare costs, with diet-related health costs linked to mortality and non-communicable diseases projected to exceed \$1.3 trillion per year by 2030.

Again, powerful economic interests are fueling this trend. The food and beverage industry profits greatly from selling unhealthy processed food and sugary drinks. After all, fat, sugar, and carbohydrates mixed with a lot of salt are the cheapest calories. In 2019, the world's five largest food and beverage companies – Nestlé, PepsiCo, Anheuser-Busch InBev, JBS, and Tyson Foods – had a combined revenue of \$262.7 billion.

Healthy diets are much more expensive, so obesity is often a result of poorer populations' low purchasing power. The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation estimated that a diet with sufficient calories cost \$0.79 per day in 2017, whereas a diet with sufficient nutrition cost \$2.33 per day, and a healthy diet cost \$3.75 – making it unaffordable for more than three billion people.

Scientists around the world have proposed future food systems that protect the health of both humans and the environment. The EAT-Lancet Commission, for example, has shown that it is feasible to provide a healthy diet for ten billion people by 2050 without destroying the planet. The panel advises doubling consumption of fruits, vegetables, nuts, and legumes, and reducing red-meat and sugar consumption by more than 50 per cent.

However, there is a clear lack of political leaders who understand the urgency of the food-system crisis and initiate the necessary transformations. In doing so, they should stand up to powerful economic interests and focus on the needs of the most vulnerable.

The pandemic has accelerated demands for a more resilient, diverse model of farming and food production. Grassroots initiatives based on community decisions and open-source ideas can help to develop local food systems that are free from corporate capture, such as community kitchens, nutrition centers, and urban farming initiatives. About 300 urban farms influenced dietary choices in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2020.

Unfortunately, the upcoming UN Food Systems Summit looks set to entrench the status quo. The agenda gives little room to crucial structural issues rooted in power imbalances and the political economy. And the industrial agriculture lobby may well seek to water down discussion of important scientific themes on the agenda, including access to locally adapted seeds, the consequences of highly hazardous pesticides, and land and water regulation.

What we need is a people's Food Systems Summit that aims to end hunger and malnutrition, protect ecosystems, and provide small farmers with a decent livelihood. Those most affected by the negative consequences of our current food systems should play a vital part in discussing how to transform them.

The writer is President of the Heinrich Böll Foundation.

Barbara Unmüßig

NO MATTER HOW MUCH FOOD THE WORLD PRODUCES, FAILURE TO ADDRESS POWER IMBALANCES IN THE GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEM WILL MEAN THAT HUNGER PERSISTS AND FOOD-BORNE ILLNESSES EXPLODE

SPECTRUM NATION

Junk the vehicle scrappage policy



Shivaji Sarkar

IF SOMEONE HAS SPENT A LIFETIME TO PAY FOR HIS PRIZED CAR OR ANY OTHER POSSESSION, WHO IS THE STATE TO DECLARE IT JUNK?

India needs pragmatic policies to revive its sagging economy and save its wealth. Policies such as automobile scrappage, promoting electric cars, banning single-use plastic, and imposing heavy penalties on violators are detrimental to the interests of the nation.

It is nice to synchronise with Fourth UN Environment Assembly 2019, but it is imprudent to overlook the conditions of the country, which is reeling under poverty-like conditions. The wealthier nations have different problems and solutions, but India must not ape these. Indians are trying to come out of decades of poverty. It is a gradual process. An individual does not transform in a jiffy. Mere change in income level is also not guarantee that overnight he would have different economic status.

Let us for instance check how an individual acquires a motorcycle or a car. It is certainly not luxury in a country where public transport is rudimentary to have an automobile to help one travel with a bit of ease. The process has its rigmarole. Not more than a per cent of people can make full down pay-

ment. Most resort to a four to seven years or more repayment schedule. Announcing the vehicle to be a junk in 10 years does not make sense. Besides, if someone has spent a lifetime to pay for his prized car or any other possession, who is the State to declare it junk?

It is an individual's property, he is its custodian and nobody else without his permission can issue an order that it can be seized by a State agency without violating the fundamental rights. These issues cannot be discussed merely on legal grounds, particularly in a society where the State agencies feel they are not answerable to anyone. It is a strange anti-people mindset of an executive that is appointed by a government elected by the people. It is like the servant disowning the master. Most problems that are being heaped on the people start with this convoluted mindset.

The government's estimates that the scrapping policy would bring ₹10,000 crore investments are illusory statistics. It has ignored the fact that the total registered vehicles in 2019 were 295.8 million – 29.6 crore. In 2011, 14.2 million ve-

Left in lurch

Sir, This refers to the brilliant editorial 'Fall of Kabul' (Orissa POST, August 18, 2021). It is heart-wrenching to see the grim condition of the citizens of Afghanistan. After the Taliban's blatant declaration of control over the country there is chaos and a sense of panic among the people. For the women, these plights are one step ahead. Although the Taliban have pledged to allow the education for girls and the working of women in various sectors, the lives of the Afghan women are never going to be the same. It seems that the nation has once again been carried back on a time machine to the horrific late 1990s. While extending sympathy to the Afghan civilians, I agree with US President Joe Biden's decision on withdrawing troops. The US invaded Afghanistan in 2001 in retaliation of the ghastly attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon coordinated by al-Qaeda led by Osama Bin Laden. The revitalisation of the war-ravaged country or the 'nation building' as termed by Biden was factually never the motive. If someone needs to be blamed for the crisis, it is the government of Afghanistan. The US in the last 20 years has incurred a military expenditure of two trillion dollars in Afghanistan. It provided logistics, armoured, artillery and air support to the Afghan defence forces for countering the Taliban. But it is appalling to know that these resources were mishandled and huge money went into the pockets of Afghan leaders. These corrupt leaders have fled away, leaving the civilians in the lurch.

Tushar Anand, PATNA

Covid among kids

Sir, It has been reported that COVID cases among children are on the rise in Odisha. This is on predicted lines. Children below 7-8 years have little resistance to the disease. Urgent attention must be paid to inoculate children of all age groups. Production of vaccines must be stepped up on a war-footing to meet the growing demand. If all schools are reopened the problem may further accentuate. School reopening also cannot be delayed since the denial of education from bottom level will shake the very foundation of education and spoil the careers of budding citizens. People are caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. There is a need to vaccinate children before they assemble in the schools.

KV Seetharamaiah, HASSAN (KARNATAKA)

ACF SOUMYA'S DEATH

CB INTERROGATES DOCTORS



CB officials in Paralakhemundi

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, August 18: A three-member team of Odisha Crime Branch which was handed over the probe of assistant conservator of forests (ACF) Soumya Ranjan Mohapatra's death case interrogated three doctors who had treated him July 12 night after he sustained burn injuries.

According to sources, the three

doctors were questioned at the office of Gajapati Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO). Earlier, the Crime Branch had interrogated cook Manmath Kumbh August 16 in connection with the alleged murder of the ACF.

The team headed by Crime Branch DSP Gyana Ranjan Mishra had interrogated Manmath and four others, two days after the state investigating agency was handed

FATHER WRITES TO PREZ, SEEKS CBI INVESTIGATION

Khaira: Though officials of the Crime Branch have been grilling some people in connection with the mysterious death of ACF Soumya Ranjan Mohapatra, his father Abhiram Mohapatra could not rely on the ongoing investigation by the CB officials.

Abhiram has urged President Ramnath Kovind to intervene and order a CBI investigation into his son's death. He posted a letter to the President Tuesday, seeking an investigation into the incident.

He pointed out that 35 days have passed, but no one has been arrested. "If the CBI is handed over the investigation, many accused will be arrested. I can only rely 50 per cent on Crime Branch. But the CB is working under pressure from the state government," he added.

Getting justice in this matter is remote. Gajapati DFO Sangram Behera and IIC Mamata Panda have not been suspended. Bidyabharati and the cook are not taken into remand," Abhiram wrote in the letter.

over the case.

Four others, who were also grilled, included two ACFs and two forest guards. The CB officials interrogated them at a special cell in Paralakhemundi police station to ascertain as to how a fire mishap took place at Soumya's government quarter.

The investigating officials may likely interrogate his wife Bidyabharati Panda who is a key accused in the case.

A clean chit was earlier given to Gajapati divisional forest officer (DFO) Sangram Keshari Behera by erstwhile police superintendent stating that he has no link in the case.

Man hacked to death by younger brother

POST NEWS NETWORK

Beguniapada, August 18: A man was hacked to death by his younger brother over a property dispute at Jagati Sahi here in Ganjam district, Wednesday morning. The deceased was identified as Kishore Panigrahi, 56, while the accused is his younger brother Radhashyam Panigrahi in the area.

The incident occurred when Kishore was having food at home in the morning. Radhashyam rushed inside and hacked him on head with a sharp-edged weapon, leaving his critical. Then, the accused led the scene.

Family members rushed him in critical condition to Kodala community health centre (CHC) where doctors pronounced him brought dead. Kodala police sent the body for post-mortem and started an investigation.

posts are lying vacant.

Sixteen posts, including assistant executive engineer, assistant engineer and junior engineer have not been filled up when the rural development department is faced with the huge task of building of ficial infrastructure like PMGSY roads, rural roads, government buildings and buildings for health-care centres.

PRE-SCHOOL INITIATIVE



Children attend a pre-school (chatasali) at Ganjuguda village under Phulbani block in Kandhamal district following its launch, Wednesday. The programme aims at addressing the learning deficit among children in marginalised communities during the pandemic

OP PHOTO

Fake farmers take PMFBY advantage



POST NEWS NETWORK

Deogarh/Sambalpur, August 18: Fake farmers have allegedly managed to get themselves enrolled under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) while scores of genuine farmers have been left out of such crop insurance benefits in Deogarh district, a report said.

Such allegations have come from Sadho panchayat. The area comes under Kendejuri primary cooperative society. Over a hundred farmers in the panchayat alleged they are unable to avail of PMFBY.

The farmers had drawn attention of Deogarh Collector, the tehsildar, district civil supplies officer and assistant registrar of cooperative societies about the insurance mess August 10. "But no action was taken. We appeal to the administration for an investigation into the irregularities in crop insurance," farmers lamented.

Five days after this allegation was raised, a person along with two others from Lapada under Mahulapalli village of Sambalpur district came to Kalachipudadihi village. Two of them were fake farmers. They lured some farmers (complainants) with money and wanted to settle the matter,

farmers of Deogarh alleged.

Meanwhile, the deadline for applying under PMFBY has expired. Farmers are already sore over disappearance of monsoon. Agriculture activities have been severely affected in Sadho, Kalachipudihi, Patrajhari and Dangapathar villages. Disappointed farmers have urged the district agriculture officer to look into the issue and take necessary steps for enrolment of farmers under PMFBY.

On other hand, farmers from Kayankuda panchayat under Jujumara block of Sambalpur alleged that their insurance claims for 2020-21 have not been settled while they have not yet received their money.

They pointed out that farmers of other villages have received their insurance money. "A list of names of affected farmers had been published last year after a joint survey was conducted by the revenue department and the statistics department. Deficit rainfall and pest onslaught had damaged crops then. Now, drought situation is gradually looming large in the area. The administration should rescue farmers at this juncture. Our insurance claims of previous years should be settled forthwith," they said.

Leopard hide seized

Nabarangpur: A leopard skin was seized during a raid by forest officials in Raighar Range under Nabarangpur forest division Tuesday. Reports said, a squad led by Raighar forest ranger Sukumar Dukhu under the supervision of DFO Magar Dhanaji Raoso had been monitoring the movement of wildlife criminals based on reliable information. The wildlife criminals were returning with a leopard skin from a forest near Birpur village when the squad intercepted them and seized the skin.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
e-Tender Notice No. ETCPMIIBBS2021043, Dt. 16.08.2021

Name of work: EXECUTION OF BALANCE P-WAY WORKS SUCH AS LINKING OF TRACK, INSERTION AND LAYING OF POINTS & CROSSINGS, AT WELDING OF RAILS, TRANSPORTATION OF P-WAY MATERIALS, SUPPLYING, LEADING AND SPREADING OF BALLAST, BALANCE EARTHWORK, BLANKETING, TURFING SLOPE PITCHING, BOULDER FILLING, PROTECTION WORKS IN BRIDGES ETC. AND OTHER ALLIED WORKS FROM SALEGAON STATION (INCL.) TO RAJATGHAR STATION (INCL.) IN CONNECTION WITH CONSTRUCTION OF 3RD AND 4TH LINE PROJECT BETWEEN SALEGAON AND BUDHAPANK VIA RAJATGHAR.

Approx Cost of the work: ₹739.45 lakhs, **Completion Period of the work:** 04(Four) Months.

Tender Closing Date & Time: 07.09.2021, 1200 hrs.

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-Tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website <http://www.reps.gov.in>

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website fifteen days before the date of closing of tender to note any Change/Corrigenda issued for this tender.

The tenderers should read all instruction to the tenderers carefully and ensure compliance of all instructions including check lists, para 3.1 (additional check-list) of Tender form (Second sheet) Annexure-I of chapter 2 of Tender documents, submission of Annexure-C duly verified and signed by Chartered Accountant.

Chief Administrative Officer (Con)/
PR-50/CE/21-22
Bhubaneswar

Jajpur weavers meet Naveen, get assurance on 5 demands

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rasulpur, August 18: Weavers from Gopalpur village in Jajpur district undertook a padayatra to Bhubaneswar and met Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to discuss their 11-point charter of demands.

The Chief Minister has assured the weavers he will consider five of their demands, the weaver leaders said.

"We met the Chief Minister in his chamber Monday night. He has assured to meet five of our demands. A timeline has been set to fulfill our demands," said Sridhar Sahu, executive president of Odisha Silpi Mahasangh.

Notably, Gopalpur is known as the



FILE PHOTO

village of weavers in Rasulpur block of the district. They demanded financial assistance to weavers' families affected by the 2020 flood in seven days. Their other demands included simplification of laws governing handloom sector and revival of Handloom and Handicrafts Development and Promotion Council

within two months. The Council has fund to the tune of ₹20 crore.

The fund will be utilized towards pension of weavers. The Council will conduct a survey of weavers and take steps accordingly. It was assured, Boyanika will buy handloom items and clothes worth ₹2 crore before Durga puja.

36 PMGSY road projects non-starter

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, August 18: Both the Central and State governments have emphasised on connectivity to remote villages through the Pradhan Mantri Gramya Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). However, many such road projects under the PMGSY are in a limbo in Ganjam due to government apathy. Some

projects have not progressed beyond the foundation-laying work.

According to reports, 36 PMGSY projects have remained a non-starter while the government is yet to take a final call on the tender process for these projects.

This was revealed in a report of the Berhampur Rural Development Division-II which was submitted to the Ganjam Collector. It was learnt

that ₹75.39 crore has been estimated for construction of these projects.

Four PMGSY roads have been proposed in Chhatrapur block, five in Sadar block, six in Kukudakhandi block, three each in Sheragad and Sanakhemundi blocks, six in Hinjili block and four in Kabisuryanagar block. One major reason for these projects not moving forward is several

REMAINS OF GUPTA ERA FOUND IN SAMBALPUR



POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 18: Wall structures constructed with bricks dating back to early Gupta period were found in Sambalpur district, a report said. The bricks were first observed by members of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), following which they informed the research scholars. Subsequently, the team visited the site August 15, it said.

The breakthrough has been achieved by a team of faculty and researchers of the History department of the Sambalpur University. The team members claimed the remnants of the ancient period are spread in neighbouring Angul and Boudh districts.

The remains of a bye-gone era have been discovered at Badamal under Jujumura block and are spread over an area of 2 km from Durgapali to Bada Bazaar under Sambalpur civic body limits. Historians claimed that human settlements used to exist in the region centuries ago and this is evident from the remnants of burnt bricks.



Scale: 1 meter

The shape of the bricks resembles the bricks used during the Gupta period. However, carrying out an archaeological survey to find newer details is not an easy task as large-scale construction work is taking place in the area due to rapid urbanisation.

The matter came to the fore after scribes Deepak Kumar Panda, Kulamani Patel and historians Bibhudendra Mishra and PK Mishra stumbled upon the remains of the ancient civilization and informed the History department of the university.

A team of historians comprising Prof Pradip Kumar Behera, Nabin Kumar Sahu, Khirasindhu Barik and Khageswar Bhoi of Sambalpur museum visited the site and carried out a detailed examina-

tion. Later, they visited the bank of Harihar creek and Asuragad and conducted various examinations.

During the excavation, they discovered precious stones like garnet, berry, aquamarine, amethyst, corundum, carnelian, agate and chalcedony stones, glass beads, necklaces, stone and iron implements as well as open air and well protected tool-manufacturing units.

A rectangular shaped human settlement had flourished at the place during the Mauryan era. Similar settlements have been discovered at other places as well. Remains of a mega construction have also been found on top of Sindol hill, about 45 km to the south of Sambalpur town. This place bears resemblance to the leaning temple of Huma in Sambalpur town and the remains available at Durgapalli. Given this evidence, Sambalpur town is believed to be as old as the Gupta era or might be older than it is thought.

A archaeological survey could shed more light on this theory, the team members said. This apart, glass bangles and glass wares of various colours at Tentulipalli valley on the Mahanadi river bank and at Krumapadar near the river bank have been unearthed.

The team members claimed that iron melting was widely prevalent in 7th century BC. Similar remains of brick-made structures, iron implements and guard-wall around well made of burnt bricks have been found at Tarporgarh.

A circular fort-like structure that has been discovered in Chhattisgarh was also found at Tarporgarh. Remains of burnt bricks have been found at Manmunda block of Boudh district and in Budhigarh near Madanpur-Rampur in Kalahandi district which probably belong to the Gupta era, Prof Sahu said.

OHPC
O/O. THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, STORES & MECHANICAL DIVISION, UPPER INDRAVATI HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT
At/P.O.- Khatiguda, Dist.- Nabarangpur, Odisha, PIN - 764085

No. CAD-915
No. S&M/Estr/953

NOTICE INVITATION FOR BIDS (NIFB)
Tel. No. 06858-224350, E-mail: exengeer123@gmail.com
TENDER CALL NOTICE No. 12/2021-22
Date: 13.08.2021

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Tender Value in Rs.	EMD (Bid Security)	Cost of Bid	Places of Sale of Tender Paper	Date & Time of Sale of Tender Paper	Last date of receipt of tender paper	Date & time of opening of tender	Period of Completion	Class of Contractor
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
01	Deployment of one Commercial Light Vehicle on hire basis (TUV-300/ Mahindra Bolero/Sumo Gold) to be engaged for four years/48 Calendar months with effect from date of Agreement (Excluding Cost of POL & halting charges of Driver).	1248000/-	12500/-	6000/- + GST @ 18% = 1080/- = 7080/-	(1) O/o. The Executive Engineer, Stores & Mechanical Dvn. UIHEP, Khatiguda, Dist.- Nabarangpur. (2) O/o. Corporate Office, OHPC Ltd., Odisha State Police Housing & Welfare, Corporation Building, Vanivihar Chouk, Janpath, Bhubaneswar - 751022	18.08.2021 10.00 A.M.	01.09.2021 at upto 4.00 P.M.	03.09.2021 at 11.00 A.M.	04 years 48 (Forty eight) Calendar months	Registered Travel Agency/Tour Operators/ Private individuals having GST Registration No. & PAN of IT

The Bid documents will be available in the OHPC Website: www.ohpcitd.com from 10.00 A.M. of Dt. 18.08.2021 to 01.09.2021 up to 4.00 P.M.

The details of the Tender Documents, terms and conditions please refer our Website: www.ohpcitd.com.

Further details can be seen from the OHPC Ltd web site www.ohpcitd.com.

OIPR-32211/11/0002/2122

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, S&M DIVISION, Khatiguda

Bank of India
Bank ऑफ इंडिया
Zonal Office : Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli, Bhubaneswar-751015

POSSESSION NOTICE
[Rule-8(1)] of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules-2002

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer of Bank of India, Ranihat Branch, Cuttack** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notices calling upon the Borrowers/Guarantor in the loan account given below to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus further interest & costs thereon within **60 days** from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrowers/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **possession** of the properties described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under sub-section (4) of the section 13 of the Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules. The Borrowers/Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of **Bank of India, Ranihat Branch, Cuttack** for an amount mentioned below with further interest & costs thereon. **The Borrower's attention is invited to provisions of Sub-Section (8) of Section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.**

RANIHAT BRANCH, CUTTACK / Name & Address of Borrowers/Guarantor	Liabilities due as per Notice	Date of Demand Notice/ Date of Possession	Description of the Immovable Properties
Borrower: Mr. Bibhuti Bhusan Rout, S/o: Brahmananda Rout, At: Friend Colony, P.O.: Buxibazar, Cuttack-753001 / Guarantor/Mortgagor: Mr. Golekha Bihari Das, At: Thoriasahi, Buxibazar, Cuttack-753001	₹68,19,204/- + further interest & costs thereon	25.09.2016 / 13.08.2021 No.: 404, Type-D, 3rd Floor, Ramadevi Apartment, Near Haramani Mandap, Mahanadi Vihar, Over Revenue Mutation	Equitable Mortgage of All the part and parcel of Land & Building situated at Flat No.: 382/69, Plot No.: 691/738, Area: Ac.0.130dec., Kissam: Gharabari, Mouza: Batapurana, P.S.: Cuttack Sadar, DSRO: Cuttack Town, Tahasil: Cuttack Sadar, Dist.: Cuttack, standing in the name of Mr. Golekha Bihari Das , Bounded by North: Ajay Kumar Behera, South: Mahanadi River, East: Ajay Kumar, West: Land of CMC
Borrowers: 1) Mr. Golekha Bihari Das, At: Thoriasahi, Buxibazar, Cuttack-753001, 2) Mr. Bibhuti Bhusan Rout, S/o: Brahmananda Rout, At: Friend Colony, P.O.: Buxibazar, Cuttack-753001 (Guarantor/Mortgagor: Mr. Golekha Bihari Das)	₹1,00,08,082/- + further interest & costs thereon	25.09.2016 / 13.08.2021	Equitable Mortgage of All the part and parcel of Land & Building situated over Khata No.: 382/69, Plot No.: 691/738, Area: Ac.0.130dec., Kissam: Gharabari, Mouza: Batapurana, P.S.: Cuttack Sadar, DSRO: Cuttack Town, Tahasil: Cuttack Sadar, Dist.: Cuttack, standing in the name of Mr. Golekha Bihari Das , Bounded by North: Plot No.: 689, South: Canal Embarkment, East: Plot No.: 691(P), West: Plot No.: 690

Cuttack Town, Tahasil: Cuttack Sadar, Dist.: Cuttack, standing in the name of **Mr. Golekha Bihari Das**, Bounded by North: Plot No.: 689, South: Canal Embarkment, East: Plot No.: 691(P), West: Plot No.: 690

Place: Bhubaneswar, Date: 19.08.2021

Authorised Officer, Bank of India

Why 3 decades later Kashmir is cool to Taliban

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 18: Kashmir's politicians, both separatists as well as mainstream, have maintained near-total silence over Taliban's capture of Afghanistan after a prolonged strife of 20 long years. However, the visibility of a wave of jubilation among the separatists, militants and their shrinking supporters is not completely concealed.

As news of the fall of Kabul flashed in the media Sunday, 15 August, Dr Sheikh Showkat Hussain, formerly a professor of Law at the University of Kashmir and the Central University of Kashmir gave vent to his euphoria. "And say truth has come and falsehood has vanished away," he tweeted a Quranic verse with its English translation. "Falsehood is indeed bound to vanish," Showkat commented, without linking his expression explicitly to Kabul's capture by Taliban.

"Can't imagine the feeling of Kashmiris", commented one Shoaib. Another follower appreciated: "Aap kii baat sach nikli"-acknowledging that the retired university teacher's prophecy had come true. Almost all of Prof. Showkat's eight books have been released and ap-



preciated by Kashmir's tallest separatist hardliner Syed Ali Shah Geelani.

Two days back, when the news of the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's escape to Tajikistan was circulating in the social media, Showkat cryptically tweeted a Kashmiri folk stanza, linking Kashmir to Kabul and Kandahar: "Ashraf Ghani in supersonic retreat," he observed, with praise on the Taliban co-founder Mulla Abdul Ghani Baradar and a tangent on the third Ghani-senior separatist leader

and former chairman of now defunct and disintegrated Hurriyat Conference, Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat. Bhat, an erudite, moderate separatist, perceived to be Geelani's bete noire, has been living in oblivion since long.

But why are the separatists, militants and their supporters in Kashmir silent, even in social media, over Taliban's conquest in Kabul if they are perceptibly happy?

"Anything they perceive to be India's defeat or embarrassment and Pakistan's gain makes them

obviously exultant. For many of them, it stirs their adrenaline. Had it happened in 2018 or before, there would have been nightlong fire-crackers and celebrations on the streets in downtown Srinagar," reasons a senior political analyst. He recalls the jubilation triggered by release of five top militants in exchange for Rubaiya Sayeed in December 1989.

Kashmir has gone through a sea change in the last over three years as the Centre has tightened its grip with detention and house-arrest of hundreds of the separatist activists who would be usually on the forefront of all the street turbulences in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2016. Killing of civilians in protest demonstrations, clashes with police and security forces, funeral processions of slain militants, stone pelting and pellet injuries have fallen to the lowest point of the last 31 years.

Even in the year 2020, the valley's separatist sections sounded ecstatic over the killing of the Indian soldiers in a clash with the Chinese army on the LAC in Ladakh. The sentiment looked phenomenal when former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah said in an interview that the Chinese would help the

Kashmiris retrieve Article 370. Around the same season, many among the separatists began seeing Mohammad Bin Qasim, the conqueror of Sindh, in Ertugrul, the protagonist of a Turkish period serial promoted by Pakistan Television. But it all fizzled out soon when a large number of the Kashmiris began participating in the Government's 'Naya Kashmir' initiative. The UT administration's recent decisions include surveillance of government employees' political and social media activities, dismissal of officials involved in 'anti-national' activities and denial of government jobs, trade licences and passports on the basis of 'negative reporting' by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

"Those days are gone when a separatist leader publicly invited Taliban to so-called Jihad in Kashmir; when the Kashmir University students chanted an anthem 'Teri jaan meri jaan, Taliban Taliban'. Yes I agree there was a different situation until the last day of the PDP-BJP government. Had this Taliban takeover happened in that era, the separatists would have brought thousands on the streets," said an assistant professor of journalism at a government college.

MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

Mehbooba's mother appears before ED



In New India, being summoned by agencies like NIA and ED has become a ritual for whoever disagrees with GOI's divisive agenda and policies. In my mother's case, the chronology is quite clear

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | EX-CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 18: Gulshan Nazir, mother of former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti, Wednesday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) here and answered questions in a case related to money laundering even as the PDP alleged that the Centre had 'talibanised' and 'subverted' all institutions.

Accompanied by Mehbooba, who is also president of the People's Democratic Party, Nazir was quizzed by the ED officials for nearly four hours.

Mehbooba was also present during the questioning at the agency's office located in the Civil Lines area here, they said.

After the questioning, she tweeted, "In New India, being summoned by agencies like NIA and ED has become a ritual for whoever disagrees with GOI's divisive agenda and policies. In my mother's case, the chronology is quite clear."

"The last time she received a summon was when the PDP boycotted the Delimitation Commission followed by another summon when I staged a peaceful protest on 5th August criticising the illegal abrogation of Article 370," Mehbooba said.

She took a dig at a certain section of the media and said "Unfortunately agencies like NIA and ED that should be working on serious cases are weaponised to

harass and punish political opponents. GOI has Talibanised and subverted all institutions inc Godi media (sic) to the extent where instead of upholding the truth they peddle their lies."

Nazir, the wife of former Union Home Minister and ex-Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, had earlier been summoned on three occasions, a move which was termed by the PDP as a political vendetta against the party which has been opposing the abrogation of the special status of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The criminal case filed under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) is linked to the recovery of at least two diaries by the ED after raids on an alleged associate of Mehbooba.

The diaries contain the details of some purported payments made from the chief minister's discretionary fund in alleged contravention of rules, the officials said.

These funds are alleged to have been diverted during the PDP rule in the erstwhile state.

A few lakh rupees from these funds are alleged to have been transferred into the accounts of Nazir and some others, and the ED wants to question her about it, the officials said.

CPM leader MY Tarigami also tweeted saying, "Summoning aged wife of former union home minister by ED is glimpse of coercive tactics employed by central government to kill dissent."

JCCI for resumption of 'Darbar move'



FOCUS ON TOURISM

Claiming neglect of the Jammu region in the tourism promotion, the body called for focussed attention on Patnitop, Bhaderwah, Banj, Sarthal, Kishtwar and Doda

Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industry advocated continuation of the bi-annual 'Darbar move', an age-old practice under which the J&K government functions six months each in the twin capital cities

The commerce body asked the administration to focus on promotion of tourism in Jammu province, including the possibility of Wagah-type parade at Suchetgarh and revoking of the notification regarding re-registration of vehicles purchased by local residents from outside the Union Territory

Karnataka to screen 1.5 crore children ahead of third wave

AGENCIES

Bangalore, August 18: The Karnataka government is all set to launch a flagship programme 'Arogya Nandana' under which 1.5 crore children will be screened ahead of the third Covid wave, Minister for Health Dr K. Sudhakar announced.

Experts have expressed fears of a possible third wave of Covid-19 affecting children. Keeping in view of the projections, the state government is launching a new programme called 'Arogya Nandana'. The flagship programme is an attempt to reach out to all 1.5 crore children of the state.

"Under this scheme, all children will be undergoing health screening. The children with malnutrition, immunity issues will be identified and in coordination with the Women and Child Welfare department, we will see to it that children get nec-



essary nutrients and food supply which will provide them immunity from Covid," Sudhakar explained. The state government, in its remaining 21 months, is intending to bring about complete change. No other government in Karnataka has recruited 4,000 doctors in a period of 4.5 months and it has been done, he added.

CM Basavaraj Bommai will inaugurate the programme and plans of the project are ready. "This is CM Bommai's dream. The project

has been implemented in Haveri and Udupi districts where he was district in charge minister before. The project has been extended to the whole state now. Over 1.5 crore children will be screened across the state and the government has the infrastructure to reach out to all of them," Sudhakar said.

Since it is suspected that 28 lakh people who were affected with coronavirus and later recovered face the threat of being infected with Tuberculosis. The government has already launched another flagship programme to conduct tests to ascertain whether this section of people got affected with TB, he explained. "Early detection and treatment helps us to contain TB spreading on a large scale. In 5 years, infection rate has increased by 33%. I call upon those who were infected with Covid and got better to take up testing voluntarily," he said.

Union minister welcomed with gunfire, FIR lodged

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Yadgir (Karnataka), August 18: Bhagwanth Khuba, the Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers, New and Renewable Energy, was welcomed to BJP's 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' with gunshots here Wednesday.

However, the action of the BJP followers and local representatives didn't go down well with the police with district SP Vedmurthy ordering the local police to file an FIR over the incident.

The followers of BJP leaders - former ministers Baburao Chinchansur, Raju Gowda and MLA Venkatreddy Mudnal - had gathered in Yaragol village in large numbers to welcome the Union minister. The crowd threw all Covid guidelines to the wind and even senior leaders seemed to be getting carried away by the celebrations of the Yatra.

Khuba was welcomed with celebratory gunfire from country-made rifles with the crowd flashing guns throughout the procession. Chinchansur himself held a gun and encouraged the crowd to fire in the air.



Khuba was welcomed with celebratory gunfire from country-made rifles with the crowd flashing guns throughout the procession. Chinchansur himself held a gun and encouraged the crowd to fire in the air

Karnataka Home Minister Araga Jnanendra has stated that he will direct the officers in the ministry to get details of the incident.

Khuba later said that the followers did not fire bullet shots, but only burst crackers which made a loud sound. Newly-appointed Union ministers are taking out the 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' in their respective states to seek people's blessings

and to explain the works carried out by the Narendra Modi government.

As per the plan, all the 39 newly-inducted ministers in the Union council of ministers will seek people's blessings in the three days of Jan Ashirwad Yatra in 19 states. Together, all the 39 ministers will cover 19,567 km, 212 Lok Sabha constituencies and 265 districts of the country.

Union min draws flak for dubbing farmers' stir as brokers' struggle

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mysuru, August 18: The Opposition parties have slammed Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shobha Karandlaje for calling protesting farmers as brokers and middlemen.

Farmers are protesting against the three farm laws for nearly nine months at the borders of Delhi.

Karandlaje has dubbed protesters as 'brokers' and 'middlemen'. "We can convince the genuine farmers not the fake ones," she had commented.

Former minister and JD(S) leader Sa Ra Mahesh Wednesday urged the Shobha Karandlaje to take back her statement on protesting farmers and apologise.

Kuruburu Shantakumar, State Farmers Organisation Federation President chided Shobha Karandlaje and said that she gave the statement for cheap publicity. "She has spoken very lightly about farmers," he mentioned.

Karnataka Sugarcane Growers Association members also staged a protest and questioned Shobha Karandlaje on her comments on agitating farmers.

Shobha Karandlaje Tuesday



Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shobha Karandlaje

had said that the government has held 11 rounds of meetings with agitating farmers and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is trying to remove the shackles of farmers through these new sets of laws. The central government is ready for another round of talks. But, the agitation in New Delhi is carried out by brokers, middlemen and those with vested interests who want to project the central government in a poor light, she said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, August 18: Asserting that COVID-19 has badly hit tourism, transport and trade sectors in Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industry (JCCI) Wednesday demanded a special relief package for these sectors.

The Chamber also advocated continuation of the bi-annual 'Darbar move', an age-old practice under which the J&K government functions six months each in the twin capital cities.

It also asked the administration to focus on promotion of tourism in Jammu province, including the possibility of Wagah-type parade at Suchetgarh and revoking of the notification regarding re-registration of vehicles purchased by local residents from outside the Union Territory.

The demands were highlighted in a memorandum which was submitted by a five-member delegation led by JCCI President Arun Gupta to Chief Secretary A K Mehta at a meeting here, a spokesperson of the trade body said.

Sharing the copy of the memorandum, the JCCI said the practice of darbar move was aimed at "maintaining communal harmony" among the people of Jammu and Kashmir regions and "we therefore request (the government) to continue the practice."

J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha administration had June 20 announced that the J&K administration has completely transitioned to e-office, thereby ending the practice of the bi-annual 'darbar move'.

"Now, both the Jammu and Srinagar secretariats can function normally for 12 months. This will save the government Rs 200 crore per year, which will be used for the welfare of the deprived sections," he had said.

However, various stakeholders, including traders and transporters, have openly voiced their resentment against the decision on the plea that

the practice, which was started by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1872, gives a big boost to Jammu economically.

Thousands of families from Kashmir used to move along with darbar to spend winter in Jammu.

The JCCI advocated special incentives for tourism, transport and trade sectors, saying the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic last year and subsequent lockdown had hit them hard.

"We urge the government to make some mechanism for survival and revival of these sectors," the memorandum said, also requesting for a revival package to give relief to the small-scale business houses especially the non-essential shopkeepers.

The JCCI demanded continuation of the VAT and power amnesty scheme and also pleaded for relief to the business community from paying rent to various departments for the lockdown period.

Claiming neglect of the Jammu region in the tourism promotion, the memorandum called for focussed attention on Patnitop, Bhaderwah, Banj, Sarthal, Kishtwar and Doda. Besides, it also requested the Centre to explore the possibility of Wagah-type parade at Suchetgarh in RS Pura sector of Jammu to boost border tourism.

The trade body requested for completing of pending work on the ongoing projects like artificial lake on River Tawi, Mubarak Mandi Heritage Complex, and development of banks of river Tawi on the pattern of Sabarmati and heritage circuit at the earliest.

It demanded removal of security pickets in and around the famous Raghunath temple in the city, claiming that the installation of the pickets have affected the flow of devotees. The JCCI called for intensification of vaccination drive against COVID-19 across the Union Territory and allowing functioning of banquet halls and cinema halls with 50 per cent capacity.



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mysuru, August 18: The Karnataka government has announced that due to Covid, Dussehra celebrations will remain a low-key affair, and authorities have decided to allow only those jumbos that test negative for Covid infection in the festivities.

The negative RT-PCR test has also been made compulsory for mahouts, kavadis, and the Dussehra organising committee members.

Jumbos in Mysuru Dussehra to be tested for Covid

Elephants were tested ahead of last year's celebration also. Usually, 13 to 14 elephants take part in the Dussehra festival but only five were allowed last time.

Forest Department officials, veterinarians and officers will reach elephant camps in Mysuru and Kodagu to conduct Covid tests. The tests will be conducted on Abhimanyu, the elephant that carried the Golden Howdah, as well as Gopi, Vikram, Kaveri, and Vijaya.

The final list of participating

elephants will be prepared after the test results are obtained.

Mysuru in-charge Minister ST Somashekar said Tuesday that this year also, Dussehra is going to be a simple affair. A high-level meeting will be held at the end of this month for a final decision, he added.

The Dussehra festival, known as Nada Habba or 'state festival', is celebrated in mid-October and attracts tourists from across the world. Due to Covid, the celebrations are being kept low-key.

of the day quote

Uncertainty, conflict, violent clashes and unchecked lawlessness have marred large parts of India's North East

RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA | CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON

The state government is working with full commitment for the strengthening and modernisation of police for speedy justice to the common man and for better law and order

ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

The state is fully geared to tackle a third wave of Covid

JAI RAM THAKUR | HIMACHAL PRADESH CM

SHORT TAKES

Protest near Pak High Commission

New Delhi: The BJP and its frontal organisations staged a protest near the Pakistan High Commission here Wednesday against the vandalism of a statue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the neighbouring country. The protesters, gathered at Teen Murti area of diplomatic enclave Chanakya Puri, were stopped by the police at a barricade near Pakistan High Commission compound.

No classes in 63 DU colleges

New Delhi: Delhi University (DU) teachers Wednesday refused to take any classes in 63 colleges in the national capital affiliated to it. No teacher from these colleges turned up for teaching whether in online or offline mode. They have taken this step against the non-payment of salaries in 12 colleges which are 100 per cent funded by the Delhi government.

Bus overturns, two killed

Firozabad: A driver of a mini bus was among two persons killed and 24 others injured when the vehicle overturned after hitting a divider on the Agra-Lucknow Expressway on Wednesday morning, police said. The bus carrying labourers was going to Delhi from Assam when the accident took place.

MP booked for Taliban remarks

Sambhal: Samajwadi Party MP Shafiqur Rehman Barq has been booked for sedition following his recent remarks allegedly defending the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan and equating it with India's own freedom struggle, police said Wednesday.

3 Naxals surrender

Raipur: Three Naxals, two of them carrying cash rewards on their heads, surrendered before police in Sukma district of Chhattisgarh, an official said Wednesday. The trio told the police they were quitting the path of insurgency due to violence committed by Maoists against local tribals and discrimination within Naxal outfits.

Robbers blow up ATM

Shivpuri (MP): Robbers blew up an ATM using explosives in Karera town of Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri district, but as people gathered there on hearing the loud sound, the miscreants fled from the spot immediately, leaving currency notes worth around Rs 7 lakh lying scattered there for some time before the police arrived, an official said.



Many people from Darjeeling and the Terai region in West Bengal are stranded in war-torn Afghanistan and the state government is writing to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) to bring them back at the earliest

MAMATA BANERJEE | WB CHIEF MINISTER

SHOCKING REVELATION

The education sector in India was attacked significantly more compared to other industries in the month of July globally, experiencing 5,196 attacks per week on average, a new report showed Wednesday



Northeast cancer capital of India: Report

THE ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CANCER CASES IN THE NORTHEAST IN 2020 WAS 50,317, AMONG WHOM 27,503 WERE MALES AND 22,814 FEMALES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Itanagar, August 18: Arunachal Pradesh's Papum Pare district and Aizawl in Mizoram recorded the highest incidence of new cancer cases in the country among females and males respectively, as per a government report.

The report, released by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research (NCDIR), stated that Papumpare district has 219.8 per one lakh cancer cases among females.

Mizoram's capital Aizawl has 269.4 per one lakh cases among males, it said. Northeast India is the cancer capital of the country with

the highest age-adjusted cancer incidence rates of newly diagnosed cancer cases, said Dr Kaling Jerang, the principal investigator of Population Based Cancer Registry (PBCR) at Bakin Pertin General Hospital (BPGH) in Pasighat.

The PBCR project under the ICMR-NCDIR, Bengaluru, has been studying the cancer trends under the National Cancer Registry Programme (NCRP), he said Tuesday. He hoped that the cancer data revealed by the project will be used by the government in policy-making decisions regarding cancer prevention, treatment and management. Oesophagus cancer was most prevalent in the region with cases 5,785 last year, it said.



Oesophagus cancer will continue to be most prevalent in the Northeast till at least 2025, the report predicted. Breast and lung cancer are the next most common types of cancer found in the Northeast, as per the report. There

were 3,674 breast cancer cases in the region last year and 3,413 cases of lung cancer, it added.

The ICMR-NCDIR study further revealed that Papum Pare also recorded the steepest age adjusted incidence rate (AAR) for cancer

R-VALUE DROPS BELOW 1

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 18: After breaching the value of one in the first week of August, the R number, which reflects how rapidly the coronavirus pandemic is spreading, has been steadily ebbing in the country including Kerala and some northeastern states, according to researchers.

"India's R has fallen to around 0.9," Sitbara Sinha of the Indian Institute of Mathematical Science, who is leading the research, told PTI, citing their data.

The R-value of Kerala, which has the highest number of active cases in the country, is now below one, signalling a relief to authorities who have been struggling to bring down the infection levels in the state.

Earlier this week, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, visited Kerala with a central team to review the COVID-19 situation in the state.

The minister said the Centre has allocated Rs 267.35 crore to the state to strengthen its health infrastructure and will also provide 1.11 crore vaccines in August and September. There are currently 4,98,630 people under surveillance in various districts of the state. Of these, 4,70,771 are in home or institutional quarantine and 27,859 in hospitals, according to the state health department.



COVID EBBING

▶ The R-value between August 14-16, calculated by the researchers, now stands at 0.89

▶ If R is less than one, it means the number of newly infected people is lower than the number of infected people in the preceding period and the disease incidence is going down

Kerala, which recorded the first COVID-19 case in the country, received accolades for effectively handling the first wave, but the state government has been under criticism after the second wave.

The northeastern states seem to have finally come out of the second wave, Sinha said. The R-value for Maharashtra, another state which has a high number of cases, is 0.89, the data shows.

However, Himachal Pradesh con-

tinues to have an R-value of above one, although it reduced in the last few days, while Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand still have R very close to one, Sinha said. Among the major cities, the R-value of Mumbai was lowest (0.70 from August 10-13), followed by Delhi (0.85 from July 31 to August 4), Bengaluru (0.94 from August 15-17), Chennai (0.97 from August 15-17).

However, the R-value remains high for Kolkata (1.08 from August 11-15), Pune (1.05 from August 10-14). The Reproduction number or R refers to how many people an infected person infects, on average. In other words, it tells how 'efficiently' a virus is spreading. A smaller R indicates the disease is on a decline. Conversely, if R is greater than one, the number of infected people is increasing in each round and, technically, this is called the epidemic phase.

After the devastating second wave that saw hospitals and health infrastructure being overwhelmed by the patients infected by SARS-CoV2 coronavirus, the R-value started to decline. During the March-May period, thousands of people died due to the infection while lakhs were infected.

In its bulletin Wednesday, the Ministry of Health said India saw a single-day rise of 25,166 new COVID-19 cases, the lowest in 154 days, taking the tally to 3,22,50,679.



Crowded avenue road market ahead of the Varamahalaxmi festival in Bangalore

PEGASUS ROW

SC notice to Centre, WB on plea against inquiry by state

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: The Supreme Court Wednesday asked the Centre and West Bengal government to respond to a plea challenging the setting up of a Commission of Inquiry by the state to probe the Pegasus snooping allegations.

A bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana issued notices to them and posted the matter for hearing August 25. Advocate Saurabh Mishra, appearing for the petitioner, told the bench that the Commission of Inquiry should not conduct further proceedings in the

interregnum. He told the bench, also comprising Justices Surya Kant and Aniruddha Bose, that public notice has been issued by the Commission of Inquiry and proceedings are taking place on a day-to-day basis. "We will see, wait", the bench said and asked him to serve the copy of the petition to the respondents. The counsel argued that the petition challenges the notification, issued by the West Bengal government last month appointing a Commission of Inquiry to probe into the snooping allegations, on the ground of jurisdiction. "The problem is there is some inconsistency in your affidavit. You say you

want inquiry, at the same time you are opposing the Commission of Inquiry," the bench said, adding, "In your affidavit and in your petition, you must be consistent." Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, said he would be assisting the court on Constitutional questions involved in the matter. "This is unconstitutional is all I can say," he told the bench. Former Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B Lokur and former chief justice of Calcutta High Court Justice Jyotirmay Bhattacharya are the members of the Commission of Inquiry announced by the West Bengal government last month."

'Triple Talaq' over phone



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Fatehpur, August 18: A man has been booked for allegedly divorcing his wife over phone from Saudi Arabia through the outlawed practice of instant triple talaq, police here said Wednesday.

In her complaint, Razia Bano has alleged that Tasabbul gave her talaq as her family could not fulfil dowry demands, Hathgam Station House Officer (SHO) A K Gautam said.

A case has also been registered against eight members of

Tasabbul's family, police said. Bano had married Tasabbul, a resident of Mohamadpur Gaunti under the Sultanpur Ghosh police station, May 21, 2005, the SHO said, adding that the woman is a resident of the Chak Auhadpur village.

After her marriage, Tasabbul and his family members also allegedly assaulted her several times, Gautam said.

Tasabbul, who works in Saudi Arabia, on Monday gave her triple talaq over phone, the SHO said. No arrests have been made yet and the matter is being probed, he said

SC allows women to appear for NDA exam

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 18: The Supreme Court Wednesday said the "mindset is not changing" and emphasised why judicial orders are required to allow women candidates to take the entrance exam for the National Defence Academy (NDA), even after top court's judgment on extending permanent commission in the Army to women.

The top court passed an interim order allowing women to take the exam slated to be held September 5. Citing the government's counter-affidavit, senior advocate Chinmoy Pradip Sharma, representing the petitioner, submitted it says that this is purely a policy decision and should not be interfered with by the court, and that because girls

are not allowed to enter into the NDA does not mean there is any difficulty in their progression or in their career.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Hrishikesh Roy said: "Why are you continuing in this direction? Even after Justice Chandrachud's judgment expanding the horizons and extending Permanent Commission in the Army to women? This is unfounded now! We are finding it absurd!"

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, representing the Centre, submitted that such is not the case here and that there are three modes of entry in the Army - the NDA, the Indian Military Academy (IMA), and the Officers' Training Academy (OTA). She added that women are permitted



entry through the last two.

At this, the bench asked: "Will the Army only act when a judicial order is passed? Not otherwise?" "We will do that if that is what

you want! This has been my impression right from the high court that till a judgment is passed, the Army doesn't believe in doing anything voluntarily." As Bhati sub-

mitted women have been conferred permanent commission in the Army, Justice Kaul replied: "No thanks to you! You kept on opposing it! And till orders were not passed, you didn't do anything! The Navy and the Air Force are more forthcoming!" As the bench asked: "Why is co-education a problem?" and the ASG responded: "The whole structure is such...this is a policy decision", Justice Kaul said: "This is a policy decision based on gender discrimination... respondents (Centre) must take a constructive view." "The mindset is not changing only. The Solicitor General who was appearing before the HC in the PC (permanent commission) matter could not persuade the Army," he said.

"In law also, you did not regu-

Haryana bans use of term 'Gorakh Dhanda'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, August 18: The Haryana government has banned in official communication the use of expression "Gorakh Dhanda", generally used to describe unethical practices.

The decision was taken by CM Manohar Lal Khattar after a delegation of the Gorakhnath community met him, according to an official statement Wednesday.

The delegation urged Khattar to ban the use of the expression as it hurts sentiments of followers of saint Gorakhnath. The CM said Gorakhnath was a saint and using this term hurts sentiments of his followers.

Therefore, the use of the word in whatsoever context has been completely banned, the CM said according to the statement. Gorakhnath was a saint and a temple dedicated to him is located at Gord village, 20 km from Sonapat.

India, Vietnam conduct naval exercise in SCS

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 18: India and Vietnam navies have carried out bilateral maritime exercise in the South China Sea, the Indian navy said Wednesday.

Accordingly, Indian Naval Ship (INS) Ranvijay and INS Kora undertook bilateral maritime exercise with the Vietnam People's Navy frigate VPNS Ly Thai To (HQ-012).

"The bilateral interaction aims to consolidate the strong bond shared by the two navies and would be another step towards strengthening India-Vietnam defence relations," the force said.

The Indian naval ships arrived at Cam Ranh, Vietnam, on August 15 for harbour phase, which included professional interactions with the Vietnam People's Navy, maintaining all Covid-19 protocols.

The sea phase included surface warfare exercises, weapon firing drills and helicopter operations. Regular interactions between the two navies over the years have enhanced their interoperability and adaptability.

This has ensured a quantum jump in the complexity and scale of professional exchanges.

The visit also holds special importance as Indian naval ships celebrated the country's 75th Independence Day in Vietnam. Defence ties between the two countries have been robust. In June this year, the two countries undertook a defence security dialogue.

Also, Indian naval ships have been frequently visiting Vietnamese Ports. Training co-operation between the two navies has been on the rise over the years. INS Ranvijay is a guided-missile destroyer and the latest of the Rajput class.

The ship was commissioned December 21, 1987 and is equipped with an array of weapons and sensors, including surface-to-surface missiles, anti-air missiles and guns, heavy weight torpedoes, anti-submarine rockets.

It is also capable of carrying anti-submarine helicopter (Kamov 28).

larise them! You kept them for 5 years and extended by another five, but never gave them permanent commission."

Justice Kaul had authored the judgment granting permanent commission to women, when he was in the Delhi High Court.

The top court added that admissions, etc. will be subject to its final orders. "Cannot create bar for women in NDA," it noted.

The direction came on a PIL filed by advocate Kush Kalra, seeking the NDA to open its doors for women aspiring to join the armed forces. The plea also sought a direction from the court to allow women to get trained in the Indian Naval Academy as well. However, the court has not passed any order on this prayer:

international

of the day quote

The new leader “must work in hand with those who lost and all parties should be prepared to work as a team,” the king said in a statement. “In other words, the winner does not win it all while the losers do not lose it all.”

SULTAN ABDULLAH SULTAN AHMAD SHAH | KING, MALAYSIA

I have seen these outrageous actions when officials push people across the border. It is both an issue of human rights, and also a question of protecting the border of the EU. It is an organized activity of the Lukashenko regime

DAVID SASSOLI | PRESIDENT, EU PARLIAMENT

Nearly 2.1 million Kenyans are currently facing high acute food insecurity, up from 1.4 million in February due to a worsening drought situation

ASHA MOHAMMED | SECRETARY-GENERAL OF KENYA RED CROSS SOCIETY

SHORT TAKES

Haiti quake death toll rises to 1,941

Les Cayes: Haitian officials raised the death toll from a deadly weekend earthquake by more than 500 Tuesday after Tropical Storm Grace forced a temporary halt to search and rescue efforts, a delay that fed growing anger and frustration among thousands who were left homeless. Grace battered southwestern Haiti and officials warned some areas could get 15 inches of rain before the storm moved on. Intermittent rain fell in the earthquake-damaged city of Les Cayes and in the capital of Port-au-Prince.

HK police arrest 4 from student union

Hong Kong: Four members of a Hong Kong university student union were arrested Wednesday accusations of advocating terrorism when they paid tribute to an attacker who stabbed a police officer and then killed himself, police said. Those arrested included the president and council chairman of the University of Hong Kong's student union, who were among more than 30 students who attended a meeting last month in which they passed a motion to mourn the “sacrifice” of the attacker, local media reported.

S'pore jails Briton for flouting norms

Singapore: A Singapore court sentenced a British man to six weeks in prison Wednesday, local media reported, after he repeatedly breached Coronavirus protocols by refusing to wear a face mask in public. Benjamin Glynn, 40, was found guilty on four charges over his failure to wear a mask on a train in May and at a subsequent court appearance in July, as well as causing a public nuisance and using threatening words towards public servants. Glynn was earlier subjected to a psychiatric assessment ordered by the judge as a result of his conduct and remarks in court.

Oz outbreak grows

Sydney: Australia's most populous state reported a record 633 new Coronavirus infections Wednesday as concerns grew about the Delta variant's spread beyond Sydney. The previous record in New South Wales, which includes Sydney, was 466 Saturday. Three people died Tuesday, bringing the death toll from the outbreak first detected in Sydney in mid-June to 60. “I can't express enough my level of concern at these rising numbers of cases,” state Chief Health Officer Kerry Chant said.



Thanks to God's grace and to the work of many, we now have vaccines to protect us from Covid-19. They grant us the hope of ending the pandemic, but only if they are available to all and if we work together

POPE FRANCIS | HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

TEEN AIMS AVIATION RECORD

Nineteen-year-old Zara Rutherford took to the skies Wednesday in her quest to become the youngest woman to fly around the world solo. The Belgian-British teenager took off from an airstrip in Kortrijk, western Belgium



Taliban eye govt amid mixed global response

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kabul, August 18: A Taliban commander and senior leader of the Haqqani Network terrorist group, Anas Haqqani, has met former Afghan President Hamid Karzai for talks, a Taliban official said Wednesday, amid efforts by the Taliban to set up a government. Karzai was accompanied by the old government's main peace envoy, Abdullah Abdullah, in the meeting, said the Taliban official, who declined to be identified. Afghanistan may be governed by a ruling council now that the Taliban has taken over, while the Islamist militant movement's supreme leader, Haibatullah Akhundzada, would



likely remain in overall charge, said a senior member of the group. Many issues regarding how the Taliban would run Afghanistan are

yet to be finalised, said Waheedullah Hashimi, who has access to the group's decision-making, but Afghanistan would not be a democracy.

GERMANY

BERLIN: Germany will send up to 600 army personnel to Kabul to help evacuate German citizens and former Afghan local embassy staff. Chancellor Angela Merkel's Cabinet Wednesday approved the mission which started Monday. Germany's Bundestag Parliament will have to vote on the military mission as well which is likely going to happen next week. Every armed foreign deployment of the German army has to be approved by parliament in Germany. Normally this has to happen before the start of the deployment but in this case, because of the imminent danger German citizens were exposed to in Afghanistan, Cabinet and parliament were also allowed to approve the mission in retrospect, German news agency dpa reported.



UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON: The British government says it will welcome up to 5,000 Afghan refugees this year, and a total of 20,000 Afghans will be offered a way to settle in the UK in the coming years. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said late Tuesday: “We owe a debt of gratitude to all those who have worked with us to make Afghanistan a better place over the last 20 years.” The new Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme will focus on women, children, and others who have been forced to flee their home or face threats of persecution from the Taliban. Opposition parties have criticized the plan for not going far enough to make a real difference. Nick Thomas-Symonds, of the Labour Party, said the proposal did not meet the scale of the challenge.



Ghani in UAE

The United Arab Emirates said Wednesday that it is hosting former Afghan president Ashraf Ghani “on humanitarian grounds”, after he fled his country amid a Taliban takeover. “The UAE Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation can confirm that the UAE has welcomed President Ashraf Ghani and his family into the country on humanitarian grounds,” it said in a brief statement. Ghani fled Afghanistan Sunday as the Taliban closed in on Kabul, before the insurgents walked into the Afghan capital unopposed. In a Facebook post, Ghani said the “Taliban have won” and that he fled to avoid a “flood of bloodshed”. His whereabouts were unknown until Wednesday, with speculation that he had fled to Tajikistan, Uzbekistan or Oman. This would not be the first time that the oil-rich Gulf country opens its arms to former leaders and their relatives, now persona non grata in their country.



HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING

UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON: The US State Department has released a joint statement signed by about two dozen nations expressing concern for the rights of Afghan women and girls and urging those in power in Afghanistan to “guarantee their protection.” Wednesday's statement was signed by the United States, Britain, the European Union and 18 other countries. It says the statement's signatories are “deeply worried” about the Afghan women's “rights to education, work and freedom of movement” in the wake of the Taliban takeover. “Afghan women and girls, as all Afghan people, deserve to live in safety, security and dignity,” it said. “Any form of discrimination and abuse should be prevented. We in the international community stand ready to assist them with humanitarian aid and support, to ensure that their voices can be heard.”



EUROPEAN UNION

MADRID: The European Union's top diplomat says that it is necessary to talk with the Taliban to secure the evacuation of foreign nationals and those Afghans who have worked with NATO forces. “I said that we must speak with them and some people found that scandalous,” Josep Borrell, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, told Spanish National Radio Wednesday. “But how are we supposed to open a safe passage to the airport if we are not speaking with those who have taken control of Kabul?” Borrell said his main concern is the immediate situation of those needing help to immediately leave the country for fear of reprisals. “My responsibility is to identify and help move those who have worked with us,” Borrell said. “(But) that does not exclude the EU from opening its arms to other people.” “What has happened in Afghanistan is a defeat for the entire western world and we all must have the courage to accept that,” he said.



CHINA

BEIJING: China says it is waiting for the establishment of an “open, inclusive, and widely representative” government in Afghanistan before it decides on the issue of recognition. “If we are going to recognize a government, we will have to wait till the government is formed,” Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said Wednesday. “Only after that, will we come to the question of diplomatic recognition,” Zhao told reporters at a daily briefing. Zhao reiterated Beijing's hopes for a “a smooth transition” following the Taliban's sweep to power to avoid further violence or a humanitarian disaster. “China will continue to support the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan and provide assistance to Afghanistan's economic and social development within its capacity,” Zhao said. Beijing long called for the US to leave Afghanistan, but has condemned what it calls the “hasty” retreat of American forces for the current instability.



Jalalabad stir tests Taliban's patience

The Taliban violently broke up a protest in eastern Afghanistan Wednesday, killing at least one person as they quashed a rare public show of dissent. The militant group meanwhile met with Afghan officials from the Western-backed government it toppled. The Taliban violently broke up a protest in eastern Afghanistan Wednesday, killing at least one person in quashing a rare public show of dissent, as insurgent leaders met with Afghan officials from the Western-backed government they toppled. Dozens of people gathered in the eastern city of Jalalabad to raise the national flag a day before Afghanistan's Independence Day, which commemorates the end of British rule in 1919. They lowered the Taliban flag — a white banner with an Islamic inscription — that the militants have raised in the areas they captured. Video footage later showed the Taliban firing into the air and attacking people with batons to disperse the crowd.



400 BOOKED IN PAK FOR HARASSING YOUTUBER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lahore, August 18: Lahore police have booked 400 people who allegedly harassed and molested a YouTuber girl on Pakistan's Independence Day at the historic Minar-i-Pakistan, officials said. The incident took place August 14 when hundreds of youngsters were celebrating Independence Day at Azadi Chowk near Minar-i-Pakistan in Lahore.

In the videos, hundreds of young men can be seen throwing the girl in the air for fun, dragging her, tearing her clothes and molesting her. They also took off her shalwar (trouser) and molested her. After the videos went viral Tuesday, the police approached the girl on the order of the high-ups and

There were reports on social media that the girl was carrying two flags -- a Pakistani and an Indian -- to use them for her TikTok video clip in connection with the Independence Day of both countries

persuaded her to register FIR, a senior police official told PTI. He said the girl was still traumatised and broke into tears while narrating what had happened to her on Independence Day. She said in the FIR that she and six other members of her YouTube

channel visited Azadi Chowk to record a video clip of the Independence Day celebrations. We were shooting the clip when a good number of youngsters started teasing me. Seeing the suspects harassing me, the security guard of the Minar-i-Pakistan Park opened the central gate to let her enter to take shelter. When I crossed the gate and entered the park, the suspects came after me. They dragged and tossed me up in the air for fun. They also beat my team members, and used abusive language, she said and added the humiliation continued for an hour before some people (of them) finally managed to rescue her. The police officer said with the help of video footage the suspects will be arrested soon.

No need for Covid booster jabs for now, says WHO

AGENCIES

Geneva, August 18: Current data does not indicate that Covid-19 booster shots are needed, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Wednesday, adding that the most vulnerable people worldwide should be fully vaccinated before high-income countries deploy a top-up. The comments came just before the US government said it planned to make the booster shots widely available to all Americans starting on Sept 20 as infections from the Delta variant of the Coronavirus rise. WHO chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan, asked about the need for boosters to increase protection against the disease, told a Geneva news conference: “We believe clearly that the data today does not indicate that boosters are needed.” Further research was needed,



she added. WHO senior adviser Bruce Aylward, referring to booster shots being administered in high-income countries, told reporters: “There is enough vaccine around the world, but it is not going to the right places in the right order.” Two doses should be given to the most vulnerable worldwide before boosters are administered to those fully-vaccinated, he said, adding: “We are a long, long way from that.”

India, UN launch tech platform for peacekeepers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, August 18: India in collaboration with the UN Wednesday launched UNITE AWARE - a technology platform for peacekeeping missions aimed at providing terrain-related information to peacekeepers. The launch came as India assumed the Presidency of the 15-nation UN Security Council for the month of August. The project was launched in the presence of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at the UN headquarters. Jaishankar arrived in New York Monday as the UN Security Council held an emergency meeting on the situation in Afghanistan, the second time in just over 10 days that the powerful UN body met under India's Presidency for the month of August to discuss the rapidly deteriorating and unravelling situation in the war-torn country. “UNITE AWARE” is a situational awareness software programme that allows a Peacekeeping Operations Centre to visualise and analyse the ground situation in a conflict zone on a real-time basis. It will help in increasing situational awareness and provide terrain-related information to peacekeepers. India has contributed USD 1.64 million towards the project. This project aims to demonstrate the impact of modern surveillance technology on the detection of asymmetric threats. The aim of the project is to improve camp security for UN peacekeepers, the overall security situation, and the quality of situational awareness, the Ministry of Affairs said. India has partnered with the UN to roll out the UNITE Aware platform initially in four UN Peacekeeping Missions MINUSMA (Mali), UNMISS (South Sudan), UNFICYP (Cyprus) and AMISOM (Somalia).

ELECTRICITY WOES

Singers in the dark: Syria ‘power cut video’ goes viral

IN DAMASCUS, THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IS WORSE AND ELECTRICITY HAS BECOME A RARE COMMODITY

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Damascus, August 18: It's a typical Arabic song of forlorn love and heartache but it was power cuts that added low-lit romance to the music video of Syria's latest hit. In Damascus, the economic situation is worse now than at the height of the decade-old conflict that is still ravaging parts of Syria, and electricity has become a rare commodity. When singer Shadi Safadi and the band he co-founded, “Safar”, brainstormed over a low-budget video, the only way not to be defeated by power outages was to embrace them. The result is filled with humour



and relatable to most of the Syrian population, who spend long unventilated summer evenings in the dark. The video for the song

“Ya Weel Weely”, which topped five million views on YouTube within days of its release, was shot entirely in a small room lit by bat-

The video is filled with humour and relatable to most of the Syrian population, who spend long unventilated summer evenings in the dark

tery-powered devices. The all-male band stand donning black shirts, their instruments and microphone festooned with LED strip lights. “The electricity situation is so bad we had to rely entirely on batteries to shoot our video,” Safadi told AFP. “Some days the electricity

would barely come on for an hour.” The conflict since 2011 in Syria has left key infrastructure in tatters and displaced half of the population. The national grid once provided steady power to the population but rationing is now peaking at over 20 hours a day in most regions. “The song was done with love and for sure people liked the lyrics and music, but what connected the most with our audience was the video,” said Wafi al-Abbas, another of the band's founding members. The video's success marks a breakthrough for Safar, an outfit formed two decades ago but little known to the wider Syrian public until last month.

of the day quote

India is among a few G20 countries on track towards United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Paris Agreement goals and has taken decisive actions to tackle climate change

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

Integrated pest management is an integral part of the agricultural practices in the tropical areas as they are one of the most pest-affected areas in the world but grows most of the world's foodgrain

RAJESH AGGARWAL | MD, INSECTICIDES (INDIA) LTD

We have studied how to launch an SUV (in the Indian market). So now we can confirm that we are in the developing phase to launch an India specific SUV

GAKU NAKANISHI | PRESIDENT & CEO, HONDA CARS INDIA LTD

SHORT TAKES

Lifestyle rolls out 'sale of season'

Bhubaneswar: Lifestyle, one of country's leading fashion destination has announced its much-awaited sale, offering incredible discounts on national and international fashion brands of up to 50% and more. Customers can find the best deals in-store as well as online at lifestylestores.com. SBI Credit Card holders can avail 5% cashback on a minimum purchase of ₹5,000 across Lifestyle stores, lifestylestores.com and on the Lifestyle mobile apps (T&C apply). The Lifestyle sale will be valid across all Lifestyle stores, online at lifestylestores.com and on the Lifestyle app.

ICICI Prudential ties up with NPCI

Bhubaneswar: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance ties up with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to provide Unified Payments Interface (UPI) AutoPay facility to its customers. This would enable customers to buy insurance policies and make premium payments from the safety and comfort of their homes. At the time of purchasing a life insurance policy, customers can link their bank accounts with UPI AutoPay and easily make premium payments thereafter.

PhonePe receives \$50 million

New Delhi: Digital payments company PhonePe has received fund infusion of USD 66.5 million (around ₹492 crore) in its Singapore-based entity which includes investment from Chinese firm Tencent. According to a regulatory filing in Singapore, investment firm Tencent has infused USD 50 million in the company and Tiger Global USD 16.5 million. In this financing round, PhonePe is raising USD 700 million in primary capital at a post-money valuation of USD 5.5 billion from existing Flipkart investors led by Walmart.

RBI to conduct OMO of ₹25K cr

Mumbai: The RBI Wednesday said it will conduct an open market purchase of government securities of ₹25,000 crore August 26, under the G-sec Acquisition Programme (G-SAP 2.0). Earlier this month, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das had said the RBI's secondary market G-sec Acquisition Programme (G-SAP) has been successful in anchoring yield expectations.



Bringing a large number of women under the ambit of the financial sector needs a more gender-inclusive financial system that can address the demand and supply side obstacles faced by them

AMITABH KANT | CEO, NITI AAYOG

INDIA FOR EXPANDING NDB'S HORIZON

The horizon of the New Development Bank (NDB), set up by BRICS members, should be expanded by utilising resources for strengthening social infra like service delivery in education and health sectors, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said Wednesday



'Economy rapidly normalising towards pre-pandemic levels'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: The Indian economy is rapidly normalising towards pre-pandemic activity levels, even as uncertainty exists about coronavirus mutations and repeated infection waves, industrialist Kumar Mangalam Birla said Wednesday.

Vaccination is picking up pace, which would improve India's resilience against a potential third wave, the chairman of Aditya Birla Group said while virtually addressing shareholders at the AGM of group firm UltraTech Cement Ltd. Moreover, various steps taken by the RBI and the government have helped in containing the economic disruptions of the pandemic, Birla added.

"Economic indicators show that

the Indian economy is also rapidly normalising towards pre-pandemic activity levels. In FY22, the Indian economy is projected to grow at a little below 10 per cent," he said.

He added the fiscal stance clearly seems poised for an acceleration of government capital expenditure (capex) in the coming years, especially in relation to the National Infrastructure Pipeline projects.

Alongside, there are very strong signals of a pick-up in the private sector capex cycle, driven by companies like UltraTech, he said.

"The three factors of cyclical upswing, conducive policy impulses and an improving global backdrop are likely to align themselves to position India for a virtuous cycle of growth and investments in the medium-term," he said, adding,



Economic indicators show that the Indian economy is also rapidly normalising towards pre-pandemic activity levels. In FY22, the Indian economy is projected to grow at a little below 10 per cent

KUMAR MANGALAM BIRLA | CHAIRMAN, ADITYA BIRLA GROUP

"In the interim, of course, the policymakers and companies will need to remain on guard with respect to the pandemic-related uncertainties."

Post the onset of the pandemic, policy support – in terms of fiscal stimulus and ultra-easy monetary policies – has been stupendous at

the global level.

"While some countries may be pondering over a gradual normalisation of monetary policies, such actions will happen at a measured and calibrated pace," he said, adding infrastructure spending is likely to be stepped up significantly in the US, and green investments

Cabinet okays National Mission on palm oil to cut import dependence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: The Cabinet Wednesday approved the National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEO-OP) with a financial outlay of ₹11,040 crore to promote domestic cultivation of oil palm in the next five years, and reduce the country's dependence on edible oil imports. The decision comes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the new central scheme on August 15 during his Independence Day speech at Red Fort.

Briefing the media, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said the Cabinet approved the NMEO-OP with a focus on the northeast region and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands with a financial outlay of ₹11,040 crore.

Of the total outlay, ₹8,844 crore would be the central government's share while ₹2,196 crore would be states' share. This includes the viability gap funding also, an official statement said.

The new scheme will subsume the current National Food Security Mission-Oil Palm programme.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the new scheme aims to cover oil palm in an additional area of 6.5 lakh hectare by 2025-26 and thereby reaching the target of 10 lakh hectares.

With this, the domestic production of crude palm oil (CPO) is expected to go up to 11.20 lakh tonnes by 2025-26 and up to 28 lakh



Union I&B Minister Anurag Thakur said the Cabinet approved the NMEO-OP with a focus on the northeast region and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands with a financial outlay of ₹11,040cr

tonnes by 2029-30.

Stating that the new scheme addresses several challenges faced by farmers, the minister said oil palm cultivation has been happening in the last few years and is being undertaken in 12 states at present.

"Since oil palm cultivation takes at least 5-7 years to give yield and profits. It was not possible for small farmers to wait for this long. Even if farmers were successful in cultivation, they were unsure of getting returns due to fluctuation in prices," he said.

are getting a fillip in most economies.

Moreover, companies and businesses have demonstrated remarkable resilience throughout the pandemic – taking up productivity and digitisation measures with missionary zeal.

"Businesses have devised ways of working that adapt to pandemic-related conditions and uncertainties," he noted.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expects the world economy to grow at 6 per cent in 2021, although on a contracted base, he said. "More remarkably, world growth is projected at an above-trend 4.9 per cent in CY2022. US and China, which together account for one-third of the world economy, are powering the global economic recovery," Birla added.

New Honda Amaze launched in City

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: Honda Cars India Ltd. (HCIL), leading manufacturer of premium cars in India, Wednesday launched the New Amaze at Central Honda showroom at Unit-9 in City.



The new generation Honda Amaze has been priced between ₹6.32 lakh and ₹11.15 lakh (ex-showroom) and comes with enhanced looks, premium exteriors styling and plush interiors. SBI RM Srikant Kumar Dash and AGM Sourav Kumar Rath were present during the launch programme. The new Honda Amaze is available in three variants: E, S, VX trims. The S and VX variants in petrol will come with CVT automatic gearbox. The diesel CVT engine will be available only for the VX trim.

Delhi falls five positions in Prime Global Cities Index

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 18: Delhi has slipped five spots, to the 37th position, in Knight Frank's Prime Global Cities Index Q2 2021. In Q1, Delhi's ranking was 32nd in the global index. In a statement, Knight Frank India said that Delhi saw a marginal decline of 0.2 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) in prime residential prices, leading to the drop in global position from 32nd rank in Q1 2021 to 37th rank in Q2 2021.



The premium micro-markets of the city remained unchanged on a Q-o-Q basis in Q2 2021 to record an average price of ₹33,572 per square feet. Global Prime Residential Index has witnessed an annual increase of 8.2 per cent. Mumbai and Bangalore also moved down to 40th and 43rd rank in Q2 2021, compared to 36th and 40th rank in Q1 2021, respectively. Bangalore saw a decline of 2.7 per cent.

State may allot iron ore under pre-emption policy, says ICC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 18: The state government may focus on value addition of the mineral reserves. Owing to low availability of iron ore in the open market in Odisha, many operational plants cannot utilise their total installed capacity, said Manish Kharbanda, Member, Core & Advisory Committee, Steel & Mines Committee, ICC.

He highlighted the concerns during 'National Metal and Mining e-Summit 2021' organised by the Department of Steel and Mines, Government of Odisha and the Indian Chamber

of Commerce (ICC).

Kharbanda also urged that the Odisha government may allot iron ore under pre-emption policy for the survival of state-based industries. "When about 58 per cent of the state-based iron ore is allowed interstate export, the survival of the value addition industry and the associated economic growth is bound to slow down, which can have disastrous medium to long-term consequences for the state," Kharbanda added.

He also said that the state government should focus on the value addition of the mineral reserve in Odisha, which can generate five

times more revenue on a stand-alone basis.

Prafulla Kumar Mallik, State Steel and Mines Minister, who headed the virtual meet, said, although steel and mines sector faced minor effects owing to the pandemic, the initiatives by the state government helped in keeping the sector on track.

Mallik said, "The state government was able to conduct the auctions of mines during the pandemic.

Meanwhile, at the central level the MMDR Act saw some amendments which also made the works in the sector more conducive and user-friendly."

Why Taliban can't access \$9bn Afghan reserves

REUTERS

Singapore, August 18: Afghanistan's currency reserves are mostly held in foreign accounts and are probably inaccessible to Taliban rulers, leaving the country desperately low on dollars, Ajmal Ahmad, who led the central bank until the capture of Kabul, said.

Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) controlled about \$9 billion, some \$7 billion of which was held as a mixture of cash, gold, bonds and other investments at the US Federal Reserve, Ahmad, the acting governor, who has now fled Afghanistan, said on Twitter.



Most of the rest is in other international accounts and at the Bank for International Settlements, a bank for central banks based in Switzerland, and not physically in DAB vaults, he said - leaving about 0.2% or less of the total accessi-

ble to the Taliban.

"Given Afghanistan's large current account deficit, DAB was reliant on obtaining physical shipments of cash every few weeks," he said.

"The amount of such cash re-

'Indian Inc. to extend full support to govt's initiatives'

New Delhi: In the wake of worsening security situation across Afghanistan, industry body Assocham Wednesday said the Indian leadership is best suited and capable of protecting Indians and playing a pragmatic role for peace, stability and progress in the region. "Indian industry would extend full support to whatever initiatives are taken by our government with regard to the emerging situation in Afghanistan," it said in a statement. In the past also, it said, India had taken up several infrastructure projects in Afghanistan. Assocham would remain engaged with the government on the way forward, it added.

maining is close to zero due a stoppage of shipments as the security situation deteriorated." No international reserves were "ever compromised" and "no money was stolen from any reserve account," Ahmad said.

A US administration official has also told Reuters that no assets of the Afghan government held in the United States would be made available to the Taliban.

The Taliban, who now control Kabul, have said treasury, public fa-

cilities and government offices were the property of the nation.

Ahmady said he had been told Taliban were asking bank staff about the location of assets, but added that they should have foreseen it would be impossible to access them.

He now expects the local currency, the Afghani, to fall as the central bank cannot supply enough dollars to local banks and for the Taliban to use capital controls to prevent outflows.

"Inflation will rise as currency pass-through is very high," he said. "This will hurt the poor as food prices increase."

Book tells Siraj tale



Mohammed Siraj reacts after dismissing an England batsman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Mohammed Siraj is a beautiful story that can always invoke an entire gamut of emotions – sadness for the tragedies he has endured, thrill for the way he is attaining mastery over his craft and joy for his success at the highest level.

A match-haul of eight wickets at Lord's recently was a testimony that success Down Under earlier this year wasn't a mere flash in the pan and the Indian cricket team's most adorable "miyaan" is here to stay for some years.

Siraj is one of the multiple stories of grit and glory chronicled in

a new book on Indian cricket – 'Mission Domination: An Unfinished Quest' – co-authored by Boria Majumdar and senior PTI sports journalist Kushan Sarkar. The book has been published by Simon & Schuster.

The manner in which Siraj scythed through the lower-order with two sets of double break-throughs just when it seemed the match was meandering to a draw, not only spoke volumes about his high skill-sets but also gave a peek into his mental fortitude in pressure situation.

This Indian team management always knew that Siraj is cut out for the big league having watched

him from close quarters during the tour of Australia, when he lost his father Mohammed Ghaus, who died after a brief illness.

An excerpt from the new book reads: "Siraj had lost his father during the statutory period of 14 days hard quarantine in Australia in November. What this meant was that none of his teammates could even go to his room to give him a shoulder to cry on. At the time there were cops outside every room just in case the Indians tried to violate protocol. They were being guarded as prisoners who could export Covid to Australia!"

"As a result, his teammates were on video calls with him all day and

were concerned he wouldn't do something drastic or damaging to himself. Only the physio could go to his room to treat him, and Nitin Patel used the window to go and console the young man who was in mourning.

"Siraj broke down on multiple occasions, which is only natural but never gave up. He was steadfast and resolute. He wanted to fulfil his father's wish of doing his best for India and when the opportunity came his way at the MCG on the huge occasion of the Boxing Day Test, he just did not want to let it go."

Before his Test debut on the Boxing Day, Siraj had played a few white ball games for India without much success and wanted to make it count.

"In fact, he said to us he was abusing himself for failing and coaxed himself to push harder on debut. 'I was telling myself that I had done nothing worthwhile in the white ball games. And here are the same batsmen — Travis Head and Marnus Labuschagne, who I had bowled to and had success against while playing for India A. Then why couldn't I do so at this stage? I had to. There was no turning back'."

The 13 wickets in Australia earned Siraj overnight stardom. "Siraj did not turn back. 13 wickets later he ended up as India's highest wicket-taker. It was only fitting that his teammates handed him the tricolour during the team's victory march. He was so much more than a cricketer. He was a young boy who had turned into a man in the course of the two months in Australia."

The book also has anecdotes on how Rishabh Pant and Navdeep Saini performed in the most hostile confines of Delhi District & Cricket Association and how Dinesh Lad convinced a teenaged Shardul Thakur's father to allow him to come to Mumbai to give himself a fair shot at top flight cricket.

Arvind Pujara spoke at length about how his son Cheteshwar went and played an U-19 match days after his mother's death, without shedding a drop of tear. How fielding coach R Sridhar told a hamstrung Hanuma Vihari that he owes the team and needs to save the Sydney Test.

‘Manner of defeat could hurt’ England

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 18: Former England skipper Andrew Strauss feels the manner in which Joe Root's team capitulated against a fired-up India in the second Test could hurt the "bruised and battered" hosts in the remainder of the five-match series.

From a seemingly comfortable position, England fell to a 151-run defeat on the final day at the Lord's. "They were favourites but let things slip before lunch (on final day) and then had another top-order collapse," Strauss told 'Sky Sports'.

"Those early wickets put huge pressure on the middle order and India just had enough overs to bowl them out. It was feisty."

He said India "thoroughly deserve" to go one up in the five-match series. "Every series with India, and particularly (Virat) Kohli, is feisty and as the match was on the line you expected nothing else. It has been five brilliant days of Test cricket."

"India were exceptional and there were times when England looked like they were going to get out of jail but, in the end, you have to say that India deserved it, they did enough to win. England are going to be absolutely battered and bruised as a result of that," he added.

Strauss has also called for a change in England's top-order after

another disappointing show by the batsmen. He is certain that the woefully out-of-form opener Dom Sibley could be dropped ahead of the third Test at Headingley.

For the first time in Test history, both England openers were dismissed for ducks in the same innings of a home match. "At some stage if you keep being two or three down for nothing, it's going to come back to haunt you."

"Yes, they were two good balls to get rid of Burns and Sibley but, of course, then Joe Root is under pressure, (Haseeb) Hameed is under pressure and then Jonny Bairstow and the middle order as well. You just can't keep doing that time after time," Strauss said.

Sibley averages just 14.25 across four innings in the series and with only one half-century in his last 15 Test innings, Strauss expects the 25-year-old right-hander to be axed. Root (128.66) is the only England player averaging over 30.

"I think it might be time to bring Sibley out of the firing line. He has looked out of touch. I think Ollie Pope is probably going to come back in, who has been in and around the squad, but is it right for him to be batting in the top three? It is not an easy solution."

"There are a lot of problems for England, no doubt about that. If they had got away with it again, we might have been able to paper over the cracks but not anymore."



3rd Test: Malan replaces Sibley; Saqib added too



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 18: England Wednesday recalled batsman David Malan and also added seamer Saqib Mahmood to their squad, apart from dropping struggling opener Dom Sibley, for the third Test against India.

England have kept injured pacer Mark Wood in the 15-man squad, hoping that he will be fit for the third Test starting August 25 at Leeds but left out Zak Crawley.

Malan is returning to the Test squad for the first time in three years. He last played Test cricket in August 2018 in England's victory over India at Edgbaston.

"David Malan deserves his opportunity in the Test arena. He has a lot of experience across all formats and, if called upon, I am confident that he can come and do well on his home ground," England head coach Chris Silverwood said.

Saqib Mahmood is yet to make his Test debut. The 24-year-old was named as a reserve during England's tour of Sri Lanka and India. Spinner Jack Leach will return to Taunton, but remains on standby as back-up to Moeen Ali.

THE SQUAD: Joe Root (C), Moeen Ali, James Anderson, Jonathan Bairstow, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Sam Curran, Haseeb Hameed, Dan Lawrence, Saqib Mahmood, David Malan, Craig Overton, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson and Mark Wood.

LEWANDOWSKI SCORES TWICE IN THE MATCH AGAINST DORTMUND

Bayern triumph in Super Cup



IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY: Robert Lewandowski (No.9) helped Bayern Munich win German Super Cup, Tuesday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dortmund, August 18: Robert Lewandowski scored twice for Bayern Munich to beat Borussia Dortmund 3-1 in the German Super Cup and give coach Julian Nagelsmann his first win in charge.

The Poland star, who scored a record 41 goals in the Bundesliga last season, opened the scoring in the 41st minute and got the decisive third goal in the 74th after Marco Reus had pulled one back for Dortmund.

Nagelsmann had endured a difficult start as Bayern had not won any of its four preseason friendlies and was held to a draw at Borussia Mönchengladbach in the Bundesliga's opening game on Friday.

"I'd like to start hoarding titles," Nagelsmann said after claiming his first with his first win as Bayern coach. "My predecessor and the players, they collected a lot."

The Super Cup was preceded by

a minute's silence for former Bayern and West Germany great Gerd Müller, though it quickly became a minute's applause as Thomas Müller (no relation) held a jersey with Müller's old No.9. Müller, who was known as "Der Bomber" for his scoring prowess, died Sunday, aged 75.

Bayern made a better start but the biggest early chance fell to Reus when he was played through by Jude Bellingham. Manuel Neuer produced a brilliant save with his right foot.

Dortmund's 16-year-old Youssoufa Moukoko thought he'd scored but the goal was ruled out for offside, and Neuer produced another great save to deny Erling Haaland after Kingsley Coman flashed a shot just wide at the other end.

Lewandowski finally made the breakthrough before halftime when he surged through the middle to meet Serge Gnabry's cross with a thumping header inside the left post.

Dortmund's defense switched off for Bayern's second in the 49th, set up by Alphonso Davies and scored by Müller after Lewandowski's heel took the ball past Gregory Kobel in goal.

Haaland had a goal ruled out for offside in response, but Reus got the home fans going again in the 64th. Bellingham laid the ball back and the Dortmund captain struck a perfect curling shot from outside the penalty area inside the right post.

Lewandowski dashed Dortmund's hopes of a comeback, however, when Corentin Tolisso blocked Manuel Akanji's attempted kick out and Lewandowski had all the time he needed to pick his spot.

"Gutted I couldn't get my hands on the trophy, just like the lads are," said Bellingham, who was unstoppable at times for Dortmund. "We'll definitely use it to motivate us in the coming weeks. Now that the game is done, we just want to focus on the next one."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Sandesh Jhingan will become the first India international footballer to play in the Croatian top-tier league Prva HNL after completing a move from ATK Mohun Bagan to HNK Sibenik.

Named India's footballer of the year last month, the 28-year-old is already in Croatia and watched Sunday's home win against Hrvatski Dragovoljac.

"We expect good things from him as we have followed him on different platforms where we were able to see his past performances," said Francisco Cardona, CEO of HNK Sibenik.

"Although we know the adaptation process might take him a few weeks, we are confident that with his quality and leadership, he will become an important member of the team."

"He made a very good impression on the staff and fans of the club when he was watching the last home game from the stands. He showed passion and energy for the team," Cardona added.

Jhingan was excited to have the



opportunity to move to HNK Sibenik in the Prva HNL in Croatia.

"I think I am at a stage of my career where I really want to test myself in the highest-level possible and I think this is the perfect platform for me. As I have said, it has been my desire to play in Europe and I have taken up this challenge

upon myself," the top defender said.

"A big thank you to the head coach Mario Rosas and the owners and management for giving me the opportunity to come here. I cannot wait to get going and look forward to giving 100 percent at every given opportunity," Jhingan

INDIA GET DECENT DRAW IN THOMAS & UBER CUP



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Indian badminton teams were Wednesday handed comfortable draws in the rescheduled Thomas and Uber Cup Finals, slated to be played October 9-17 at Aarhus, Denmark.

The Indian men's team has been clubbed alongside defending champions China and minnows Netherlands and Tahiti in Group C, while the women's side will be challenged by last edition runners-up Thailand, Spain and Scotland

Princepal 1st Indian to be on NBA title winning team



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, August 18: Young cager Princepal Singh became the first Indian to be part of an NBA title winning team when his side Sacramento Kings clinched the 2021 NBA Summer League crown.

The 6-foot-9 forward made history by being the first Indian to be part of a championship roster at any level of the NBA. The Kings dom-

inated the championship game against the Boston Celtics, clinching the title with a 100-67 win Tuesday.

The win also made the Kings the only franchise to win multiple Summer League titles, having previously clinched it in 2014, according to the NBA.

In the final, Princepal, an NBA Academy India alumni, played the last 4:08 minutes of the game and put his name alongside Satnam Singh Bhamara.

The 20-year-old's appearance in the championship game comes exactly a week after he made his brief yet landmark debut at the Summer League, where he checked-in for the final 1:22 minutes of a Kings' victory over the Washington Wizards.