



BHUMI'S DESIRE

Bhumi Pednekar says she wants to be remembered as an actor who never shied away from pushing boundaries

LEISURE P2



TALIBAN FOR TIES WITH ALL

Taliban's political chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Saturday said they intend to have ties with all countries

INTERNATIONAL P10



AMIT WINS SILVER

Amit Khatri bags silver medal in men's 10,000m race walk at the World U-20 Athletics Championship

SPORTS P12

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Give Pakistan a little rest. Instead, discuss Afghanistan!

Indians 'abducted' on way to Kabul airport

Of the 150 Indian citizens picked up by the Taliban Saturday morning, 78 have been released and allowed to leave war-torn Afghanistan



US Marines stand guard at an Evacuee Control Checkpoint at Hamid Karzai International Airport, Kabul

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 21: Amid reports of the alleged abduction of around 150 Indians from outside the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul Saturday, local Afghan journalist Zaki Daryabi said that most of the kidnapped persons were released and they were on the way to the airport. "Two sources confirmed that the Indians were released by the Taliban and they are on the way to Kabul airport," Daryabi tweeted.

He also said that these Indians were taken to the nearby Alokzoai compound, a garage designated for US forces, from the Kabul airport, adding they were safe. These Indians were taken to the Alokzoai compound as there was a huge rush at the airport and the Taliban allegedly inspected their documents before releasing them.

The abductors later ushered them to the right place at the airport from where their evacuation flight would take off for India after getting the slot, the

report added. Earlier in the day, the Afghan media reported that men affiliated with the Taliban have abducted over 150 people, mostly Indian citizens, from an area close to the airport.

A local publication 'Kabul Now' had also confirmed the development.

"Over 150, mostly Indian citizens, abducted near Kabul airport Men affiliated with the Taliban have abducted over 150 people, mostly Indian citizens, from an area close to Hamid Karzai International Airport Saturday morning, a reliable source confirmed to 'Kabul Now'," Daryabi said in a different tweet.

72 Afghan Sikhs, Hindus forced to stay back

New Delhi: The Taliban are learnt to have stopped a batch of 72 Afghan Sikhs and Hindus, including two minority members of Afghanistan parliament, from boarding an Indian Air Force (IAF) plane Saturday. Seeking evacuation to India, this first batch of Afghan Sikhs and Hindus had been waiting outside the airport for over 12 hours since Friday, president of World Punjabi Organisation Vikramjit Singh Sahney said.

COVID tally crosses 10-L mark in state

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 21: COVID-19 caseload in the state surpassed the 10-lakh mark Saturday as 911 more people tested positive for the infection, while 66 fresh fatalities pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 7,289, a Health department official said. The fresh infections took the state's COVID tally to 10,00,084, he said.

At least 116 new cases were found among people below 18 years of age, the official said. The daily positivity rate stands at 1.27 per cent as the fresh cases were detected from 71,264 sample tests, he said, adding that the infection ratio among children and adolescents was at 12.73 per cent.

Of the fresh cases, 531 were reported from quarantine centres and 380 detected during contact tracing. Khurda, which comprises the state capital Bhubaneswar, recorded the highest number of new cases at 352, followed by Cuttack (88) and Balasore (51).

Boudh, Nuapada and Nabarangpur did not report any new COVID-19 case Friday, while the new patients were found from the remaining 27 districts of the state. Of the total COVID-19 cases in the state, Khurda recorded the highest number of infections at 1,57,657, followed by Cuttack at 89,642 and Sundargarh at 61,034.

Deogarh district reported a minimum of 6,271 infections since the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020.

The Health and Family Welfare department said 66 coronavirus patients succumbed to the infection in 12 districts in the last 24 hours.

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School transformation programme launched

1,070 schools across Odisha would be redeveloped under this programme in phase-1

in the government schools. The walls of these schools have also been painted based on educational and interesting themes.

Inaugurating the programme via video-conferencing, the Chief Minister said that every child is a symbol of eternal potential. School transformation has brought an opportunity for the students to realise their dreams. "The goal of a new Odisha will be fulfilled if the students' dreams come true," he said.

Describing the transformation as the foundation of a new Odisha, Patnaik said, "The school days are the best time of life for everyone. This transformation is for you. It will create many opportunities for your future and to make you excellent."

Jumbo attacks: 2 killed

KHURDA/HINDOL: At least two women died on the spot after they were attacked by elephants in separate incidents early Saturday morning. The first incident took place at Golabai village in Khurda district. The deceased was identified as Ranga, wife of Bharat Behera of Golabai village. In the second incident, another woman named Puni Sahu (55) of Tantichira village in ward number 13 under Hindol NAC limits of Dhenkanal district was killed by an elephant. P5

WEATHER		BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX	32.9°C	33.0°C
	MIN	25.4°C	25.0°C
	Humidity	87%	84%
	Rainfall	7.1mm	3mm
	Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	

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GAGA IS THE BEST PERFORMER OF OUR GENERATION: RODRIGO

Pop star Olivia Rodrigo says she will never forget Grammy Award-winner Lady Gaga's stage performance at the MTV Video Music Awards. "She always acts this whole thing out - it's incredible. I love Gaga. I think she's like the best performer of our generation," says Rodrigo.

KYLIE JENNER EXPECTING HER 2ND BABY WITH TRAVIS SCOTT

Reality TV personality and make-up mogul Kylie Jenner is expecting her second child with Travis Scott. Multiple sources exclusively confirmed the news to *pagesix.com*. The two already have three-year-old daughter Stormi. Kylie has been open about wanting a sibling for her.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You love meeting people, says Ganesh. And you are going to have a wonderful time interacting with the most brilliant people today. You remain a perfectionist as ever, and may spend a fortune to buy that 'perfect' gift to please your sweetheart!

TAURUS
Communication may be poignant with your loved ones today, says Ganesh. Your unpretentious character will seek to safeguard the feelings of others from being hurt. You will learn that total agreement is sometimes twice as seductive in love's intimacies, feels Ganesh.

GEMINI
You need to understand and respect the feelings of others. You will be beset by financial worries and plagued by financial insecurity. You will work with grim determination to achieve all your goals and will be successful in doing so, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You will give top priority to love today. Ganesh says that it is the best time to talk your mind to the beloved. Being happy with your colleagues, you will give them a treat in the evening. You will make everyone happy.

LEO
Your expectations from your partner or spouse are likely to be unmet, so keep them low. For traders and commission agents, this could be a tough day, and hence they should be wary of suffering from financial reversals. Important documents should be signed only after careful scrutiny, says Ganesh.

VIRGO
Ganesh says you will raise the bar today. You will set higher goals for yourself, and will want to crack the existing barriers. You will be deeply concerned in the afternoon about your finances. Petty matters will lower your spirits. However, Ganesh advises you to climb the next rung in the ladder by spending the evening in spiritual pursuits.

LIBRA
Ganesh says work related to the government will prove beneficial to you today. Your relations with your siblings will improve. You may be able to spend a happy time with your close friends.

SCORPIO
Your day is equally divided between your near & dear ones and your responsibilities towards the elderly people. As you are sensitive, you may go out of your way to help them. For all those who are eagerly waiting to begin the new chapter in life, a marriage proposal is due during the evening time, foresees Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
According to Ganesh, creative juices are likely to flow freely today. You are all geared up to meet new challenges in life and crack few business deals. Financial gains on the cards. However, make sure your health does not take a back-seat all this while.

CAPRICORN
Love will be on your mind today. Going down the memory lane will make you cherish some golden moments spent with friends and family members. You will call up an old friend and share those memories. On the professional front, you will achieve major milestones, predicts Ganesh. All in all, it is a good day for you today.

AQUARIUS
If you are associated with law and legal matters, today is a favourable day for you. You will aim for the stars, because you know that even if you can't reach there, you will not end up being in the mud. Later on the day, you will receive some favourable news, feels Ganesh.

PISCES
Your health and mood will be good today as you will begin to reap the fruits the seeds sown in the past. You will experience happiness and satisfaction from business and returns during the evening. Make the most of the perfect alignment of planets is what is Ganesh's advice.



BHUMI OPENS UP ABOUT HER LEGACY

MUMBAI: Actress and environmentalist Bhumi Pednekar has always signed up films that have sent out a clear message to the audience and have meaningful content. She says always wanted to be part of cinema that goes down in the history of Hindi films as path breaking. Bhumi said: "I have been fortunate that film-makers who have tried to change the face of content in India, have felt that I could be a part of their vision." She added: "This gives me immense joy and confidence because I have always wanted to be part of cinema that goes down in the history of Hindi films as path-breaking." The 32-year-old's journey in cinema has just started and she says her filmography comprises outstanding gems that are among the generation defining films of my time. "I want to be called that actor who never shied away from pushing herself and experimented every single time she came on screen," she added.

Afghan pop singer Aryana flees to US

MUMBAI: Afghan pop singer Aryana Sayeed has fled to the US amid fears following the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. Sayeed has been updating her Instagram account with posts about leaving Afghanistan to reach the US. The Afghan pop singer shared a photograph with her husband on the flight to the US to reveal that she has left her country and later made a post on reaching the country after four days of traveling. Along with the picture with her husband, she wrote a heartfelt note on the photo-sharing website. "I had said in one of my recent interviews that I will be the Last Soldier to leave the Motherland and interestingly enough, that is exactly what happened. I hope and pray as a result of the recent changes, at the very least my beautiful people will be able to start living a peaceful life without the fear of suicide bombers and explosions." Aryana Sayeed is a singer, songwriter, and TV personality. She sings mostly in Persian and Dari but also has many songs in Pashto. Sayeed is one of Afghanistan's most famous musical artists, performing regularly in concerts and philanthropic festivals within and outside the country.

MANOJ WINS Best Actor award at IFFM

MUMBAI: Manoj Bajpayee received the Best Actor award for his role in *The Family Man 2* web series at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) 2021 Friday. Hearing the news, he said it was a 'proud moment' for the entire team and went on to explain why he chose to make his web debut with the show back in 2019. Manoj said in a conversation: "It is a big win not for me but for the team of *The Family Man*, because be it film or a web series, it is teamwork that matters. Yes, my character, Srikant Tiwari, has been loved by everyone and it is also one of the top shows in the world now. So, I am happy that the web series worked, it has got loved globally! That is fantastic. "In 2018, when Raj and DK approached me with the narration of my character, I saw so much potential for me to add to it as an actor. I thought, yes, I can take the character from paper to screen, and to a level higher." *The Family Man 2*, streaming on Amazon Prime Video, bagged two awards at the film festival - the second going to Samantha Akkineni.



Back-to-school safety tips during pandemic

While excitement may run high at reuniting with friends and classmates after over a year, children must remember to socially distance as much as possible



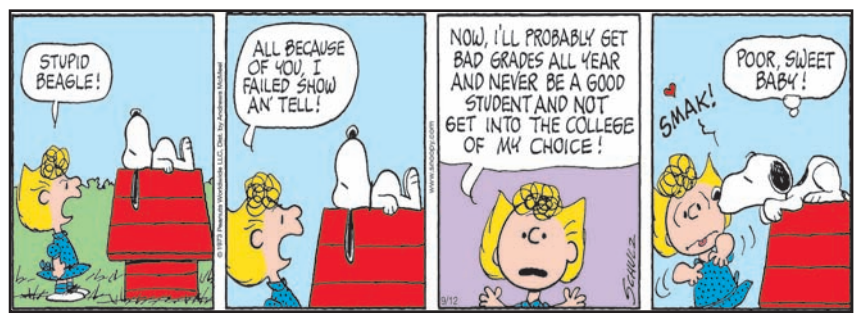
With children under 18 being one of the large vulnerable and unvaccinated groups, it is crucial to keep them extra protected from being exposed to the many variants of the Covid-19 virus. Here are a few tips to keep children protected in these times: **No lunch, bottle sharing** As many Indian states reopen schools and invite children back to the classroom, it is crucial to remember to behave in a Covid-appropriate manner at all times.

While excitement may run high at reuniting with friends and classmates after over a year, children must remember to socially distance as much as possible. If you want to, simulate a classroom at home, let your siblings or parents be your classmates, and practice following all protocols. It is also important to not share lunch, water bottles and other edibles.

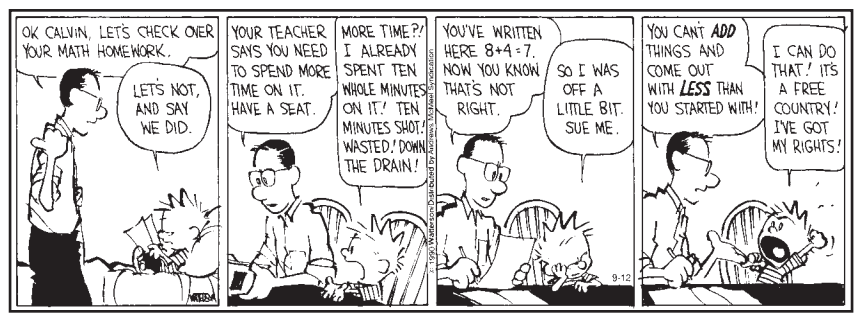
Put on face mask with antimicrobial coating Masking is extremely important. It is important to mask up always, and have a mask with a snug but comfortable fit. Use masks with combination of anti microbial coating which uses organic extracts. These components, when mixed in a controlled environment and further applied to the mask's surface,

provide a shield against the SARS-CoV-2 by trapping these viruses on the surface and killing it. **Carry individual sanitiser** Covid-19 has made sanitisation awareness a universal thing. Whether going out with friends to play, or with family, or to school or coaching, children must carry individual sanitisers with them. Remember to use it every 20-30 minutes if you are touching other surfaces frequently. **Regular flu shots for kids** As soon as vaccines become available for the population under 18, don't hesitate and sign up for a slot at the earliest. Meanwhile, it is always better for all adults in the family to vaccinate themselves, since children can be carriers of the virus as well, even if they are asymptomatic. It always helps to give children their regular flu shots and vaccines for other diseases on time.

PEANUTS



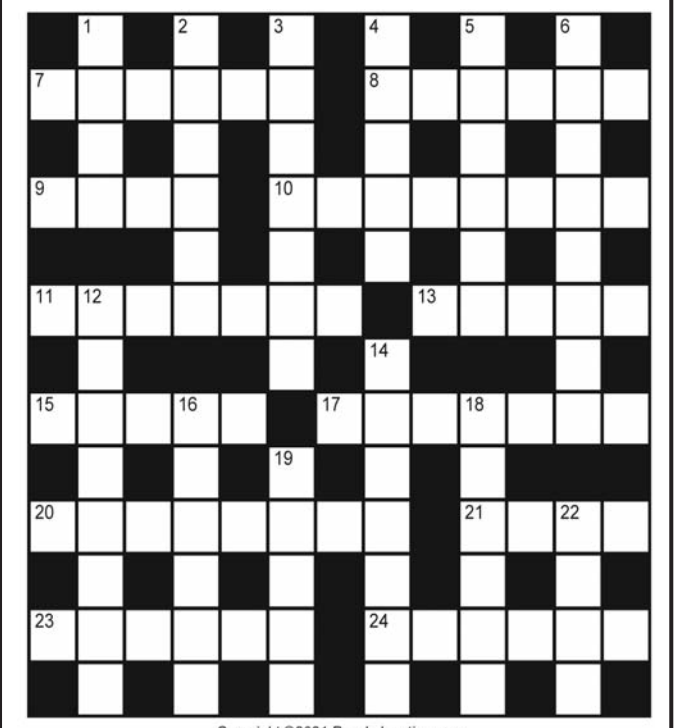
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



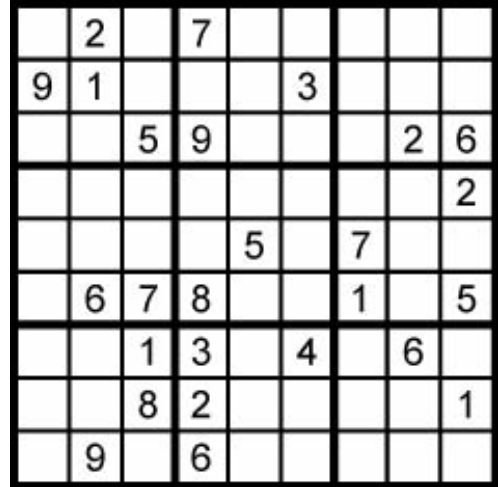
FUN post CROSSWORD



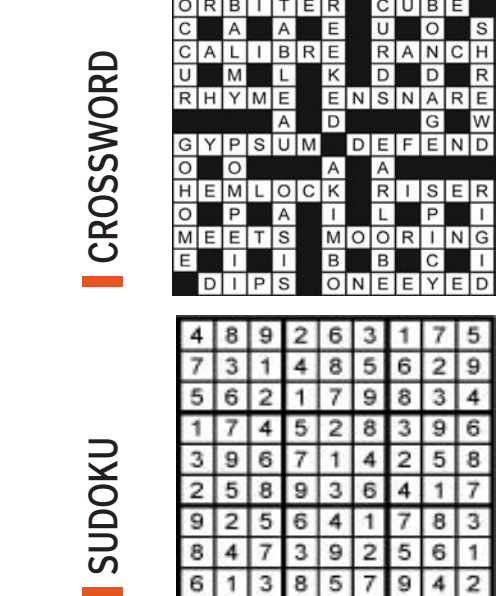
- Across**
- 7 Type of bath or gum
 - 8 Companion
 - 9 Christiania, now
 - 10 Colourful gem (4,4)
 - 11 Garnish
 - 13 Cut off
 - 15 Like some jokes
 - 17 First light
 - 20 Kind of shotgun (5-3)
 - 21 Mount Olympus dwellers
 - 23 Shoat
 - 24 They provide zest
- Down**
- 1 Washouts
 - 2 Loathes
 - 3 Circular
 - 4 Winter warmer
 - 5 Take your pick
 - 6 They're found on a beach
 - 12 Fragrant
 - 14 Bison
 - 16 Seamstress's need
 - 18 Time in power
 - 19 Words to remember
 - 22 Family rooms

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



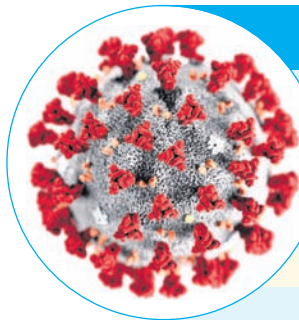
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



BEAUTIFICATION PLAN

Eviction drive underway for Srimandir heritage corridor work in Puri, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	21,18,28,977	18,95,70,734	44,32,529
India	3,23,93,286	3,15,97,982	4,33,964
Odisha	10,00,084	9,84,224	7,289

Passenger footfall at BPIA inches towards normalcy

THE CITY AIRPORT HAS WITNESSED 52.4 PER CENT RISE IN PASSENGER TRAFFIC SINCE JULY THIS YEAR

AVIRAL MISHRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 21: The Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA), which was hit hard by Covid-induced lockdowns and travel restrictions, is slowly witnessing normalcy as passenger footfall has improved during the past two months.

As per sources, the BPIA saw 1,06,700 passengers during July this year. This includes 55,935 embarking and 50,765 disembarking passengers. This comes against a meagre 33,151 and 70,013 passenger footfall during May and June. Sources said the airport has witnessed 52.4 per cent improvement in passenger traffic since July. These two months (May and June) are also stated to have recorded the lowest flight and passenger movements this year. The state had witnessed a surge in Covid cases and thus, lockdowns and shutdowns in these two months.

The figures also suggested that the airport reported a 69.9 per cent rise in flight movement in July 2021 as compared to the last year. The BPIA saw only 62,791 passengers in 2020. The officials explained that the reduced number was due to travel restrictions imposed by



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During pre-Covid period, the BPIA was handling about 30,000 flights and 40 lakh passengers per year

Bengal and Tamil Nadu had suspended flight services last year. Although no flight restrictions were issued this year, a surge in Covid cases derailed our aim of full capacity operation. During February this year, we saw the highest 2.28 lakh passenger movement, after which numbers dropped significantly," a BPIA official said.

During pre-Covid period, the BPIA was handling about 30,000 flights and 40 lakh passengers per year. As per data available, about 30,231 domestic and 701 international flights operated from the BPIA catering to about 38.69 lakh passengers in 2019. While 45 flights with 12,000 passengers used the BPIA services on a daily basis, it fell to about 30-33 flights and merely 6,500 passengers during Covid period.

other states owing to the pandemic, even after the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had suggested otherwise after two months of suspension of service.

"Due to heavy caseloads, many states such as Maharashtra, West

RTOs to accept new LL applications from Aug 23

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: With improvement in Covid-19 situation, the State Transport Authority (STA) Saturday asked the Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) across the state to resume accepting applications for new Learner's Licences (LLs) from August 23.

In deference to a directive issued by the state government, the STA instructed the RTOs to receive applications in adherence to Covid protocol. Issuance of LLs was suspended in view of Covid April 22. It can be mentioned that LL test for existing applicants has resumed August 11.

The applicants can book slots from 7 am to 10 pm every day. The slot duration is of 15 minutes which includes 10 minutes of test time. A candidate has to answer at least 12 out of 20 questions correctly to pass the test.

'Potable water, internet for 50K schools in 2 yrs'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: Around 50,000 government-run schools in the state will soon have drinking water, electricity, internet, toilets and ancillary facilities in two years as part of the implementation of National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 in Odisha.

This was revealed at a review meeting chaired by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Saturday.

It was decided at the meeting that a combination of vocational and skill development education will be imparted to students of 150 schools in the state as a pilot project.

Drinking water, electricity, internet, toilets and ancillary facilities will be provided to 50,000 government-run schools in the state in next two years, Pradhan said. He advised the higher education officials to launch a campaign in September to ensure 100 per cent immunisation of teachers, students above the age of 18 years, and school and college staffers.

SMART JANPATH WORK



Civic authorities removing sculptures from Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, Saturday, to pave way for the Smart Janpath project. A sculpture got broken during its relocation triggering sharp reactions from various quarters

OP PHOTOS

AIRCRAFT & PASSENGER MOVEMENT AT BPIA					
2021			2020		
Month	Flight Movement	Passenger Movement	Month	Aircraft Movement	Passenger Movement
Jan	2,068	2,13,066	Jan	2,613	3,52,756
Feb	1,994	2,28,448	Feb	2,453	3,01,436
March	2,038	2,20,770	March	1,983	1,86,432
April	1,748	1,44,970	April	58	102
May	806	33,151	May	162	8975
June	1,182	70,013	June	389	57,830
July	1,422	1,06,700	July	650	62,791
Total	11,258	10,17,118	Total	8,308	9,70,322

Sensory Park in Capital city by Sept

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: Children and adults, especially those with special needs, now have a reason to cheer as the Capital city will have its first-ever Sensory Park at Saheed Nagar by September.

Located near Maharshi College road in Ward No-30, the facility has been developed with an investment of ₹93 lakh by the Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) over an area of 16,117 square feet. Apart from offering exclusive features meant for children and people with special needs, the park also has special open-air equipment ensuring adherence to the universal access guidelines.

"The project at Saheed Nagar will provide recreational facility for differently-abled people. The park with special features will help the children with special needs during early morning and evening hours.



Provision of play equipment and open-air gym will encourage the kids and adults to remain fit and smart," said CEO of BSCL Sanjay Kumar Singh.

Though the work for the Sensory Park was initiated in 2018, it ran into some legal hurdles leading to delay in its progress. However, with works have now been finished, the park

is set to be inaugurated within a month's time. It will feature rides such as wheelchair swing, two-seater swing, bucket swing, multiline swing, single-seater spring rider, musical polls, sound play, drum track, musical panel and sound play table among others.

It can be mentioned here that in its Smart City Proposal sub-

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mitted during the Smart City Challenge process the Temple City has presented a child-friendly theme-based proposal, which, with its ideas and challenging concept won the race. And, Bhubaneswar won the challenge by ranking No-1 among the 100 participating cities from across the nation.

INTERNAL RIFT IN CONG

Review poll debacle, my performance in Assembly: Bahinipati to AICC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: The internecine squabbles in the state unit of Congress party seems to have escalated Saturday as party leader and MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati fired fresh salvos at Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Niranjan Patnaik.

Interacting with media, Bahinipati claimed that the All India Congress Committee (AICC) is well aware of the party affairs in the state. He further claimed that he had not uttered a single word against the party's central leadership.

Bahinipati said that he had only pleaded for debate on the poor condition of the party in Odisha and al-

lotment of Congress tickets to leaders who could not win elections.

"I have decided to share my thoughts in the upcoming Congress legislature party meeting. Doesn't the AICC know about the party affairs in Odisha? Why do I need to say this?" he quipped.

The Congress MLA also asked the party's central leadership to conduct an enquiry into his performance in the Assembly. "This time, the Congress has only nine MLAs. I had never seen such a debacle in the election. The AICC can examine my performance in the Assembly. Had I supported the BJD and BJP? Had I sold out myself to them? If the central leadership has any doubt in this regard, my explanation could be sought," Bahinipati said.

The Congress MLA sought action against people who failed to revive the party in Odisha. "Those who often get defeated in the elections are being given the responsibility of distributing party tickets. Two and a half years have elapsed since the last Assembly and General elections. Has the party undertaken any review of its performance?" he asked.

"I had never insulted Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and the Congress party. People vote for me on the basis of my performance. People from all walks of life support me. The way Niranjan Patnaik is creating divisions in district units of Congress party, I don't know when the party can win the elections and come to the power," he said.

BAMBOO CRAFTS



An elderly woman crafts bamboo baskets alongside Taladanda canal road in Cuttack, Saturday

OP PHOTO

Myopia among kids doubled in 2 yrs: Study

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 21: A study on progression of myopia (short-sightedness) among 5 to 15-year-old children claimed that the ailment saw a two-fold rise in the last two years.

The analysis conducted by a private eye hospital attributed the spurt in such cases (myopia and squint eyes) to increased screen exposure during Covid-induced lockdowns and shutdowns.

"In the last two years, the number of myopia cases in this particular age group saw 100 per cent rise, while the cases of squint eyes also witnessed a five-fold increase," said Chandra Shekhar Sahoo, consultant ophthalmologist from Dr Agrawal's Eye Hospital, Bhubaneswar which studied the paediatric patient database of all its branches.

According to Sahoo, "There is an escalation of cases of kids coming with progression of myopia, onset of myopia and other eye ailments. This comes when schools remained suspended and kids stayed indoors



for a longer time due to the lockdowns and shutdowns while online classes also came to the play. All such factors contributed to the paediatric population becoming the new set of digital device consumers.

Experts claimed that Covid and lockdowns really took a toll on the eye health of people across age brackets. Kids and youths were hit hard primarily due to increased screen time. Inflow of patients with problems like fluctuations in eye power, progression of eyes and dryness of eyes has increased manifold, they maintained.

Cuttack-based ophthalmologist Anurag Mishra also said that there has been an increase in cases of eye disorders in kids and youths during the last two years.

"Dry eyes is now the most common issue which is often triggered by increased screen time. For, increased screen time reduces the potential of eyes from natural blinking which reduces the chances of eye secretion and thus prevents normal lubrication of eyes," he said.

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Kids and youths were hit hard primarily due to increased screen time

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Doctors at LV Prasad Eye Institute, Bhubaneswar also told this reporter that eye disorders among kids and youths have become an emerging issue after the outbreak of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, experts suggested safe practices of using digital devices like maintaining safe distance from computer, laptop and television sets unlike close devices like mobiles. Further, healthy lifestyle, exercise, balanced diet, exposure to sunlight could arrest development of eye disorders.

Ministers, MLAs visit Tara Tarini temple despite ban

Purusotampur, August 21: Even as the state government is yet to lift restrictions on visits of common people to Tara Tarini temple in Ganjam district, two ministers accompanied by 17 MLAs visited the temple and conducted a review of the developmental projects despite the ban, Saturday.

Goddess Tara Tarini, the presiding deity of Ganjam district, is revered by devotees in and outside of the state.

Two ministers Dibyashankar Mishra and Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi, accompanied by 17 MLAs including Pranab Prakash Das, Bikram Kumar Panda, Prafulla Samal, Pratap Keshari Dev, Byomkesh Routray, Suryamani Baidya and Basanti Hembram visited the shrine to have darshan of the deity. The ministers and the legislators also conducted a review



of the ongoing developmental projects.

The ministers and legislators after their arrival were welcomed by Khallikote MLA Suryamani Baidya with mementoes. The temple has remained out of bounds for devotees after the district administration clamped restrictions on public visits due to rising cases of Covid-19. The temple is yet to reopen for the common people.

As a result, the main gate leading to the hill shrine has remained

THE SHRINE HAS REMAINED OUT OF BOUNDS FOR DEVOTEES AFTER THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION CLAMPED RESTRICTIONS ON PUBLIC VISITS DUE TO RISING CASES OF COVID-19. THE TEMPLE IS YET TO REOPEN FOR THE COMMON PUBLIC

RECENTLY, MEMBERS OF A FAMILY FROM NEIGHBOURING ANDHRA PRADESH VISITED THE SHRINE BUT HAD TO RETURN DISAPPOINTED AFTER THEY WERE REFUSED ENTRY INSIDE

closed for ten devotees. Police officials have been deployed at the gate and refuse entry to the devotees wanting to visit the shrine.

As a result, people visiting the hill shrine for darshan of the deities are disappointed. Recently, mem-

bers of a family from Andhra Pradesh visited the shrine but had to return disappointed after they were refused entry inside. This sparked sharp resentment among devotees who are longing to have a glimpse of the deities.

Locals alleged that all those who are framing rules are also breaking the rules. They questioned how could the administration open the gate of the temple for ministers and legislators when it has banned visits of public to the shrine.

Priya Ranjan Prusty, Chhatrapur sub-collector Nitish Kumar Tripathy, Purusotampur tehsildar Bijay Kumar Behera, BDO Snehalata Panda, vice-chairperson, Zilla Parishad, Ashok Kumar Mahakur, general secretary, district unit of BJD, Bausdev Mohapatra, former chairman of the civic body and a host of party leaders were present during the visit.

11 more multi-purpose cyclone hubs for Jajpur

Jajpur Town, August 21: Most parts of Jajpur district are affected by floods and cyclones every year and to deal with natural disasters, the administration has decided to set up 11 more multi-purpose cyclone shelters in the district.

According to reports, there are 26 multi-purpose cyclone shelters. The state government has approved the new projects, said Collector in-charge Akshay Kumar Mallick.

The administration has decided to set up new multi-purpose cyclone shelters at Kalyanpur, Tina and Jari under Binjharpur block, Kayan under Dashrathpur block, Patapur, Antia and Jenapur under Dharmasha block, Bhubaneswarpur, Nathasahi, Bhuinpur and Jafarpur under Jajpur sadar block.



As per the decision of the administration, committees will be formed for maintenance and management of the cyclone shelters. Local sarpanchs will be chairpersons of the committees while volunteers will be its secretaries. The administration has emphasized on activating the disaster management system in the flood-prone areas in the district.

BJD leaders start distributing smart health cards in Malkangiri



Malkangiri, August 21: A day after Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched smart health cards under the Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana in Malkangiri, several BJD leaders have started distributing the cards to beneficiaries in different parts of the district Saturday.

The scheme aims at enabling around 3.5 crore people to get cashless healthcare services in 200 hospitals in the state and other parts of the country.

A health card distribution ceremony was organized at Talasahi primary school in Malkangiri municipality. The programme was attended by Mines Minister Padmanabh Behera, advisor of

A programme was organized at BLPur panchayat and Ganjeibahal Saturday where 300 cards were distributed to beneficiaries.

Forest and Environment Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha took part in a programme at Andarabahal panchayat and distributed smart health cards.

Beneficiaries and people's representatives expressed happiness over the scheme as the cards will help them in meeting huge expense of medical treatment.

Around 3.5 crore people of 96 lakh families will be covered under the new healthcare initiative. Women can avail cashless treatment up to ₹10 lakh per year while other family members will get the benefit up to ₹5 lakh each.

Mission Shakti Lopamunda Buxipatra, chairperson of Odisha State Seeds Corporation Iswar Chandra Panigrahi and chairperson of special development council Manas Madkani.

Another programme was organized at BLPur panchayat and Ganjeibahal Saturday. 150 cards were distributed to beneficiaries in each centre.

Forest and Environment Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha also distributed smart health cards in Andarabahal panchayat.

Beneficiaries and people's representatives expressed happiness over the scheme as the cards will help them meeting huge expense of medical treatment.

It may be noted here that around

FORGING A BOND



Women members of a Vana Suraksha Samiti tying rakhis to a tree pledging for its protection on the eve of Rakhi Purnima in Sambalpur, Saturday

CB questions Gajapati DFO Sangram Behera

Paralakhemundi, August 21: A three-member team of Odisha Crime Branch started questioning Gajapati Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Sangram Keshari Behera Saturday in connection with the death of Paralakhemundi Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Soumya Ranjan Mohapatra.

According to a source, the probing team led by DSP Gyana Ranjan Mishra is quizzing all suspects in the death case that took place July 12, 2021.

It is pertinent to mention, Soumya's postmortem carried out by the Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology (FM&T) at SCB Medical College and



Hospital (SCBMCH) reported that he died after sustaining 95 per cent burn injuries on the intervening night.

Former Gajapati Superintendent of Police Tapan Kumar Patnaik had previously granted DFO Behera a clean chit

in relation to the case. However, in the alleged murder case, the DFO is a key suspect. The team members had also interrogated accused cook Manmath Kumbha August 16 in connection with the alleged murder of the ACF.

Four others who were also grilled included two ACFs and two forest guards.

The Crime Branch officials interrogated them at a special cell in Paralakhemundi police station to ascertain as to how a fire mishap, if any, took place at the government residence of Soumya.

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

2 women killed in jumbo attacks

Khurda/Hindol, August 21: At least two women died on the spot after they were attacked by elephants in separate incidents early Saturday morning.

The first incident took place at Golabai village under Jankia police limits in Khurda district.

The deceased was identified as Ranga. She is the wife of Bharat Behera of Golabai village. The woman had gone to the backyard of her house to pluck flowers in the morning when she was attacked by an elephant. She was critically injured. Ranga's family members rescued and rushed her Khurda hospital where she succumbed while undergoing treatment.

Forest department officials reached Golabai village after getting information about the incident.

"We have assured deceased Ranga Behera's kin to give ₹40,000 as immediate compensation and an additional amount of ₹3.60 lakh within next 15 days as per government norms," ACF Govind Biswal said.

In the second incident, a woman identified as Puni Sahu (55) of Tanchihira village in ward number 13 under Hindol NAC limits of Dhenkanal district was trampled by an elephant.

Diarrhoea spreads in Rupsa; 22 affected

Rupsa: Diarrhoea is reportedly spreading in Rupsa area of Balasore. As many as 22 people were affected by the water borne disease over last 22 days in Routapada panchayat. As the disease is spreading in Charpal village, locals were panicked. The administration is yet to send medical teams to the affected area.

According to reports, 22 affected people including eight children are undergoing treatment at different hospitals. Condition of three patients is stated to be critical. They were shifted to the district headquarters hospital while two are in Basta community health centre. It was alleged that the disease has broken out due to consumption of contaminated water.

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
DEOGARH (R&B) DIVISION, DEOGARH**
E-mail ID : eepwdddeogarh@gmail.com
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
Lr. No. - 2835 Dtd. 19.08.2021

No.B-317/-

Invitation for Bids
Bid Identification No. EE PWD DGR No. 05 of 2021-22

- The Executive Engineer, Deogarh (R&B) Division, Deogarh, on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in single/ double cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for Construction of Building as detailed below.
- Nature of work : Building works
- No. of works : Building 17 Nos.
- Bid Cost : Rs. 6,000/-
- Class of Contractor : "D", "C" & "B" Class
- Availability of Bid Documents in the website : From dt. 24.08.2021 to 17.00 hours of dt.02.09.2021
- Date of Opening of Technical Bid : Dt 03.09.2021 at 11.30 AM.
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

Sd./- Executive Engineer, Deogarh (R&B) Division
OIPR-34061/11/0003/2/122

FLOOD DETERRENCE PROJECT FOR BUDHABALANGA

Baripada, August 21: A dream project for people of Baripada town and its outskirts in Mayurbhanj district is going to be realized. Local residents have been facing the flood fury from Budhbalanga river every year.

A ring road project along with a spur and automated sluice gates will be built to control floods in the town. Meanwhile, the irrigation department has initiated a survey for the project.

During Phailin, Baripada town was massively flooded. All streets were under water for days together. Floodwater even entered the district headquarters hospital and remained stagnant as high as 10 ft. Patients had a harrowing time.

The flood had inflicted huge damage on properties. Floodwater breaks the economic backbone of denizens every year. To mitigate the annual flood fury, they have



been demanding construction of a ring road and a spur.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, while visiting Baripada to address a rally in 2019, had announced setting up of a ring road. Days after the announcement, a technical advisory committee in its 117th meeting decided to construct a spur from Damodarpur to Sunamuhin ghat in three phases.

The committee had recommended an estimated ₹62.34 crore for the project in the initial phase.

The irrigation department has started a survey for the spur and the sluice gate eight years after Phailin, locals said.

Sources said, a report has been prepared for construction of eight sluice gates at the confluence of Budhbalanga, Sarali, Jarali,

A ring road project along with a spur and automated sluice gates will be built to save people in the town from flooding. Meanwhile, the irrigation department has initiated a survey for the project.

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Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, while visiting Baripada to address a rally in 2019, had announced setting up of a ring road

Sukajodi rivers. The ring road will be 7-km long which will protect thousands of people of the town from flood fury.

People of low-lying areas have blamed apathy of the administration for delay in the project.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS DIVISION, MOHANA**
e-mail: rwdmohana@gmail.com
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Identification No. Online Tender 02/MOHANA/2021-22

No.O-654/-

- Name of the work : Building work
- Total No. work : 36 (Thirty Six) Nos.
- Estimated cost : Varies from Rs. 1.33 lakhs to Rs.26.09 lakhs
- Class of contractor : As per Annexure
- Period of completion : As per Annexure
- Cost of tender paper : As per Annexure
- EMD required : EMD not required as per Office Memorandum No.8943 Dt.18.03.2021 of Finance Department, Govt. of Odisha. But bid security declaration should be furnished by the bidders as mentioned in the DTCN.
- Other details

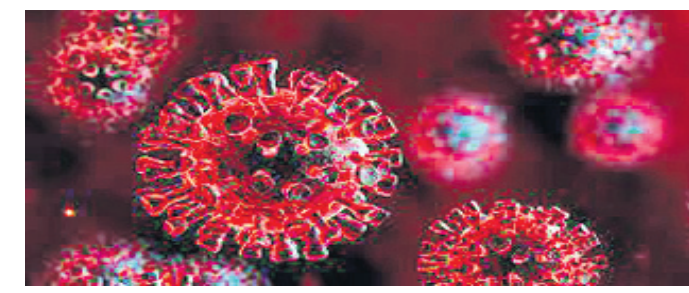
Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of works	Availability of tender online for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & time of opening of tender
			From	To		
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Mohana	02/MOHANA/2021-22	36 (Thirty Six) Nos. of Building work	23.08.2021 from 10.00 A.M.	06.09.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	03.09.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	07.09.2021 at 11.30 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tenderorissa.gov.in
OIPR-25148/11/0002/2/122

Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Mohana

FEARS OF THIRD WAVE OF COVID

Health screening of kids to start from August 24



Preventive Measures

IN ORDER TO PREVENT SEVERITY OF THE THIRD WAVE, COLLECTOR VIJAY AMRUTA KULANGE HAS ISSUED AN SOP SATURDAY. THIS FOLLOWED A DIRECTIVE FROM THE STATE GOVERNMENT

As per the decision, 50 per cent of the beds in SNCUs and NBSUs will be reserved while nodal medical

THE COLLECTOR HAS ORDERED FORMATION OF TASKFORCE COMMITTEES. BDOs WILL HEAD THE TASKFORCE AT THE BLOCK LEVEL WHILE THE COMMISSIONER WILL HEAD THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION LEVEL TASKFORCE COMMITTEE

THE COLLECTOR HAS ORDERED THE OFFICIALS TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ISOLATION BEDS AT ALL COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES, SUB-DIVISIONAL HOSPITALS AND THE DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS HOSPITAL

administration, door-to-door health screening of children and teenagers will be started from August 24.

On the basis of the health screening report, a next course of action will be taken. The Collector has ordered formation of taskforce committees. BDOs will head the taskforce at the block level while the commissioner will head the municipal corporation level taskforce committee.

These committees will comprise child specialists, pediatricians, Ayush medical officers, block education officer, CDPOs and medical officers.

The Collector has ordered the officials to make arrangements for isolation beds at all community health centres, sub-divisional hospitals and the district headquarters hospital. The officials have been told to make everything ready by August 25.

As per the decision, 50 per cent of the beds in SNCUs and NBSUs will be reserved while nodal medical officers will train doctors of hospitals about Covid cases.

Asha workers and Anganwadi workers will visit houses to conduct health screening of children. Their reports will be given to ANMs. On the basis of these reports, swabs of sick children will be collected.

If any kid is found Covid positive, he/she will be treated either at home or hospital. It will be decided by RRT. The Collector has advised people to be more careful, wear masks and maintain social distance.

It has become a cause of concern for all - both health officials, people and the administration at a time where there is no provision for vaccination of children below 18 years of age.

In order to prevent severity of the third wave, Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange has issued an SOP Saturday. This followed a directive from the state government.

As per a decision of the district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatraur, August 21: As the third wave of Covid-19 is expected to hit the state in September, the district administration of Ganjam has geared up to deal with the pandemic. In the third wave, more children and youths are feared to be affected by the deadly virus while the second wave is yet to be over.

STUDENT UNREST



Students of Khemundi College at Digapahandi in Ganjam district staging a demonstration on their college premises demanding withdrawal of admission fee hike, Saturday

KOTIA CONTROVERSY

Locals gherao Andhra babu in Kodama

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, August 21: Even as Andhra Pradesh has been trying every possible trick in the book to grab parts of Kotia panchayat under Pottangi block in Koraput district, people of Kodama panchayat gheraoed an Andhra official while he was in Fatusineri to lay foundation stones of some projects Saturday.

Earlier, people of Kodama panchayat had appealed to MLAs of the district to lay a road from Fatusineri to Kodma panchayat. With the help of five MLAs of Koraput, the road was started. Each MLA contributed Rs 1 lakh from their kitty.

But the forest department of the Andhra Pradesh stopped the project, saying the area is reserve forest. Local people were infuriated over the development.

When project officer of



Parbatipuram ITDA P Kurmanath visited Fatusineri area to lay foundation stones for various projects, people of the Kodama panchayat and forest officials opposed him as the Andhra Pradesh had stopped their road project.

The ITDA officer assured the villagers that he would talk to AP

forest department about the road project.

A few days ago, Andhra Pradesh officials sparked a dispute by entering Fatusineri and Phagunsineri villages of Kotia panchayat and identifying land for developmental projects to be implemented in the area, Thursday. The officials and

an MLA also planted saplings on this occasion to establish their control over the land.

Salur MLA Rajana Dora and senior officials of Andhra Pradesh visited the Fatusineri village in Kotia panchayat and identified land for establishment of developmental projects at a programme August 18. The MLA and officials visited the village and identified land for developmental projects worth Rs 5 crore.

It was learnt that the Andhra government has executed various developmental projects in the panchayat and has decided to take up more such projects.

Notably, Andhra has declared Fatusineri and Phagunsineri villages in Kotia panchayat as two separate panchayats and conducted elections there despite stiff opposition from the Odisha government.

Youth electrocuted in Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kuchinda, August 21: A youth was electrocuted when he came in contact with an air-cooler overflowing with electric current at Khadiapali village under Kuchinda police lim-

its in Sambalpur district, late Friday night.

The deceased was identified as Kuber Nayak, 27, in the village. While going to sleep, he tried to adjust the cooler to his side without knowing it has been plugged to

the switch board. Family members rushed him to Kuchinda hospital where doctors pronounced him brought dead. Kuchinda police registered a case and handed over the body to his family members after post-mortem.

IN REMEMBRANCE



Guests garlanding the martyrs' memorial at Mathili in Malkangiri district on the occasion of 79th Mathili firing day, Saturday. The firing by police led to the killing of several freedom fighters during a demonstration for independence of the country, August 21, 1942

As drought looms, farmers cry for restoration of defunct LI points

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khaira, August 21: Drought situation loomed large in most parts of Khaira block in Balasore district due to poor rainfall. Scores of lift irrigation projects in the area are left defunct. Though farmers have been demanding their renovation for a long time, the authorities concerned have turned a blind eye to the plight of farmers.

Locals said had the lift irrigation points been ready by this time, they would have been coming handy at this time. At least, farmers could have saved their crops from drought.

Farmlands are dry while thousands of farmers are sitting idle worrying for the extensive crop loss.

According to reports, paddy is cultivated in 19400 hectares in this block. Only 9000 hectares are irri-



gated while remaining farmlands are solely fed by rain.

Besides, 2000 hectares are irrigated by shallow wells and bore wells.

As per information available from the lift irrigation department, there were 98 lift irrigation projects in the area in 2019. They used to supply water to 2000 hectares alone.

Grand welcome to hockey stars in Sundargarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, August 21: Four members of the Indian men's and women's hockey teams- Amit Rohidas, Birendra Lakra, Deepgrace Ekka and Sunita Toppo, who have made the country and the state proud for their stellar performance at the Tokyo Olympics, were given a rousing welcome at their hometown here on arrival.

They were accompanied by former captain of the Indian hockey team Padmashri Dilip Tirkey.

The players were given a grand welcome by the district administration and the people of Sundargarh.



Upon their arrival at the Jharsuguda Veer Surendra Sai Airport here Saturday, officials of the district administration, and the sports department after welcoming them at the airport took them home to Sundargarh a distance of 22 km in a special carcade.

On their arrival at the Parijat Park here, the stars of the Indian hockey team were taken on a tour of the town in an open SUV accompanied by bikers on a procession to the sound of dulduli (a typical set of huge drums played particularly in the western part of Odisha).

Large crowds welcomed the players with great enthusiasm apart from felicitating them at Sundargarh Public School and at different squares on the route.

After the tour of the town, the players were taken to the Circuit House. The hockey stars were felicitated by the district administration at Bikash Bhawan.

Container runs over scooter, one dies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, August 21: In a road mishap, a scooter rider was killed on the spot Friday night after being hit by a container truck on NH-60 near Madhuban Dhaba under Jaleswar police limits in Balasore. The container truck caught fire following the accident.

According to an eyewitness, the truck loaded with cartons of snacks was on its way from Kolkata to Balasore when it rear-ended the scooter and dragged the rider up to 100 metres.

The deceased has been identified as Laxmidhar Patra of Nuabazar area in Jaleswar. Initially, the scooter caught fire which spread to the container truck. A number of cartons were reduced to ashes in the inferno.

On being informed, a team of fire services personnel from Jaleswar and Basta rushed to the accident site and doused the flames.

Jaleswar police have registered a case in this connection and launched a probe. Laxmidhar's body was sent for postmortem.

e-Waste collection drive launched in Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 21: In its bid to make the town clean, the Sambalpur Municipal Corporation has launched a plan to collect e-waste from every household in the town.

Civic body workers will go around in the town and collect e-waste from various households only Saturdays. At the outset, a team of civic body staff comprising ward officers, Swachha Sathis, Swachh supervisors and sanitary workers will move around in various wards and conduct awareness drives among residents. An awareness vehicle is also engaged in the drive, Subhankar Mohanty, enforcement officer of Sambalpur Municipal Corporation, said.

Speaking to mediapersons, Mohanty said sanitary workers will visit the households in the town and collect e-waste comprising electric bulbs, computers and accessories, mobile phones, laptops, television and remote sets, air-coolers, printer machine and fans. He sought the cooperation of residents to make the plan a success. As a result, people will not dump



these e-waste here and there that will help in keeping the town clean. Earlier, people used to mix these e-wastes and dump it along with common wastes for which the sanitary workers were finding it hard to segregate the wastes, he said.

The e-wastes will be collected only Saturdays and taken to material recovery stations (MRF) in the town. There these e-wastes will be handed over to scrap dealers approved by the state pollution control board (SPCB). Earlier, the

scrap collectors used to collect the e-waste from households, he said.

They keep only those e-wastes which they think necessary for re-use and dump the rest elsewhere. Many of these wastes without getting decomposed are causing pollution. At many places these wastes were also leading to clogging of the drains. This results in water-logging in the town during rainy season due to obstruction in water flow in the drains, he said.

The sanitary workers were finding it difficult to clean the drains due to this reason. Keeping these problems in mind, the civic body has taken the steps to collect the e-wastes from households, Mohanty added.

Earlier, in its bid to contain pollution and adopt austerity measures the civic body launched battery driven auto rickshaws to collect wastes in the town. Moreover, women have been given the charge to drive the autos as part of a

Sanitary workers will visit the households in the town and collect e-waste comprising electric bulbs, computers and accessories, mobile phones, laptops, television and remote sets, air-coolers, printer machine and fans, the enforcement officer said

The e-wastes will be collected only Saturdays and taken to material recovery stations (MRF) in the town. There these e-wastes will be handed over to scrap dealers approved by the state pollution control board (SPCB)

The scrap dealers used to keep only those e-wastes which they thought necessary for re-use and dump the rest elsewhere. Many of these wastes without getting decomposed were causing pollution. At many places these wastes were also leading to clogging of drains

women empowerment drive on the lines of Mission Shakti programme of the state government.

Notably, Bhubaneswar is the first city in the state to launch a drive to collect e-wastes from households in the city.

Maha CM urges Oppn parties to win people's trust



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 21: Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has urged the Opposition parties to win people's trust and also called upon them to stay united and strong. He made this appeal during a virtual meeting of Opposition leaders convened by Congress president Sonia Gandhi Friday. Talking to reporters, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut Saturday said, "During the meeting, Thackeray stressed that the parties must win people's trust." "As of today, there is no lust for power among the Opposition parties, but even when the chair of power is in sight, people should be able to trust the Opposition parties with the belief that they will remain strong and united," Raut quoted Thackeray as saying during the meeting. The Sena's Rajya Sabha member said that Sonia Gandhi had personally called up the leaders of all parties and requested them to join the meeting. The meeting was attended by leaders of 19 Opposition parties, including NCP supremo Sharad Pawar and four non-Congress

Chief Ministers - TMC's Mamata Banerjee (West Bengal), DMK's MK Stalin (Tamil Nadu) and JMM's Hemant Soren (Jharkhand) and Uddhav Thackeray. During the meeting, Gandhi urged the leaders to rise above political compulsions to take on the BJP in the interest of the nation and start planning 'systematically' to realise the 'ultimate goal' of winning the 2024 Lok Sabha polls to provide a government that believes in the values of the freedom movement and provisions of the Constitution. Raut said that apart from discussion on how to prepare for the next general elections by staying united, several issues like alleged Pegasus snooping, issues concerning farmers, price rise and 'attack on democracy' figured at the virtual meeting, he said. When asked about the developments in Afghanistan, Raut said, India faces the threat of Taliban since it has the support of Pakistan and China, which are India's enemies. "If there are voices of support for Taliban in India, the government should crush them immediately," he said.

RS member targets MVA govt over Maratha quota

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 21: Rajya Sabha MP Sambhajiraje Chhatrapati Friday said a 15-page letter sent to him by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray detailing the state government's efforts to benefit the Maratha community was far from reality. Speaking at a rally in Nanded, Sambhajiraje Chhatrapati, an RS member from the President's quota, also said Congress minister Ashok

Chavan, who heads the state cabinet's sub committee on Maratha quota, was ineffective. He said the Maharashtra government and the Centre were blaming each other after the Supreme Court struck down a law that gave reservations in jobs and education to the Maratha community. The MVA government must inform the people about the follow up of the review petition filed by it in the SC, the RS MP added.

'BJP frantic to patch up with Thackeray'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, August 21: Making a startling claim, senior Shiv Sena leader Kishore Tiwari has said that the state Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party is 'frantically trying' to patch up with Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. The BJP is also willing to concede all demands of Sena -- its former partner for over two decades -- which has now allied with the Nationalist Congress Party and the Congress to head the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in the state. More so since Thackeray could emerge as a major national Opposition contender in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, which has spooked the BJP, he pointed out, in comments to a private local TV channel. Tiwari -- accorded MoS status, added: "Every two weeks or so, the BJP leaders call up the CM, requesting to bury the past and



start afresh." "In fact, people like Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis, even want me to mediate between the Sena and the BJP and hammer out an understanding between the two parties," Tiwari later elaborated to IANS. He contended that since the past over six months, Fadnavis and other BJP bigwigs are seeking ap-

pointments with Thackeray Saab 'to clinch a settlement' comprising Thackeray remaining CM for full five years with their support, with choice of ministries and smoothening all other irritants. However, the CM has given a 'thumbs down' sign -- even publicly as recently as last June -- to all BJP's overtures, while making it clear that -- "I have given my word to the

NCP-Congress and will not betray them." Top Sena leaders, including Thackeray, have repeatedly accused the BJP leadership of "treachery and breaking its promise of equal power-share arrangement," made in February 2019, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Later, the BJP allegedly reneged on it, virtually calling Thackeray a 'liar', which ultimately resulted in the unprecedented MVA government taking power in November 2019. At one point in November 2019, worried BJP leaders from New Delhi had woken up Thackeray at 3 am, begging to forgive-and-forget, bury the hatchet and start on a clean slate, Tiwari said. Still not succeeding, Tiwari said the BJP resorted to 'wrecking the brand-new MVA' with Fadnavis suddenly becoming CM of a two-man government in an unprecedented dawn ceremony at Raj Bhavan. "It was only the determination of the NCP President Sharad Pawar,

Sena MP Sanjay Raut and other Congress leaders that the bloodless coup on democracy was exposed...Fadnavis' so-called second-term lasted barely 80 hours," a grim Tiwari recalled. After that mega-failure, he said the BJP leaders kept targeting the CM and his family members personally, and attempted to drag them into the Sushant Singh Rajput death case. "Till date, the BJP is constantly harassing the MVA, misusing central agencies, filing fake cases against Sena, NCP leaders or ministers and their families, not sparing even ex-BJP leaders who joined MVA...All these gimmicks are intended to force a break-up of the 3-party alliance," Tiwari declared. The strong reactions of the Sena's 'farmer-face' came after questions on the renewed attacks on Shiv Sena launched by Union Industry Minister Narayan Rane since Thursday during his 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra'.

Nagpur metro, passing through 20-storeyed skyscraper, operational



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Nagpur, August 21: The Nagpur Metro's unique section -- with a metro train zipping through the fourth floor of a 20-storeyed commercial building, a first in India -- became operational Friday, running 1.6 km between Sitabuldi-Zero Mile-Kasturchand Park. The iconic corridor, incorporating unique architecture and design, has been constructed by the Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MahaMetro) and was inaugurated by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray along with Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari and Hardeep Singh Puri in the presence of top officials. The 1.6 km corridor in the Zero Mile Freedom Park station and 20-floor tall commercial tower is part of the upcoming 19 km long north-south metro rail that will be ready by the year-end. It is part of the total 38-km long Nagpur Metro with another 19 km coming up in the east-west directions, with barely a handful

of such metro train passing through commercial or residential structures in the world, said a MahaMetro official. Flagger off the inaugural train along with Gadkari and Puri, Thackeray affirmed that development work would not be hindered anywhere in the state. "While development should take place, we must ensure that there are no shortcomings in it. We shall do a good job in the 75th year of Indian Independence and it will last for another 75 years," said Thackeray. Gadkari urged the government to construct a tunnel to give access to the Zero Mile Freedom Park station from the Cotton Market to avoid road traffic hassles and promised all financial assistance for it. Puri said that the project foundation stone was laid exactly 7 years ago August 21, 2014 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and it is one of the fastest moving metros in the country. He said that Nagpur Metro is a green metro with two-thirds

of its energy needs met from solar power, it will recycle 100 percent water used by it, plus harvest rainwater, bio-digesters are provided at all stations, making it a clean and sustainable project. Puri added that a traditional Rajput-style architecture has been used in designing the Kasturchand Park station including its facade, umbrellas, arcs, nets etc, making it a unique structure in the city. Nagpur Guardian Minister and Congress leader Nitin Raut expressed confidence that the Nagpur Metro would prove a big boon in the infrastructure development of the state's second capital. Bharatiya Janata Party's Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis said that the 'Zero Mile' has an immense historic significance with the Great Trigonometry Survey launched by the British here in 1907 from Zero Mile, Nagpur, the country's geographical centre-point. The new corridor links the Vidhan Bhavan, Reserve Bank of India, Central Museum, Sanvidhan Chowk and Morris College in Nagpur. Simultaneously, the 40,000-square feet 'Freedom Park' flanking the Zero Mile Freedom Park station was also inaugurated to mark the 75th anniversary of Independence. The Freedom Park has unique concepts like a Public Plaza and a long History Wall depicting major moments of the Indian Freedom Movement. An Indian Army's battle-worn T-55 tank which saw action in war is displayed on a pedestal, plus an amphitheatre, adequate seating and moving spaces for the people of the city and tourists.

Country's highest herbal park opens in U'khand



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehradun, August 21: India's highest altitude herbal park situated at a height of 11,000 feet was inaugurated Saturday at Mana village close to the Indo-China border in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district. Mana is the last Indian village in Chamoli bordering China and is adjacent to the famous Himalayan temple of Badrinath. The research wing of Uttarakhand's forest department has developed the park over three acres of land given by Mana Van panchayat, under the central government's CAMPA, or Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, scheme. The herbal park has around 40 species found in high altitude alpine areas in the Himalayan region, Chief Conservator of Forest (research) Sanjiv Chaturvedi said. Many of these species are endangered and threatened as per the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list as well as the State Biodiversity Board. It includes many important medicinal herbs also, he said. The park is divided into four sections. The first section contains species associated with Badrinath (Lord Vishnu), which includes Badri Tulsi, Badri Ber, Badri Tree, and sacred tree of Bhojpatra. Badri Tulsi, which is

scientifically named as Origanum Vulgare, is found in this area and forms important part of offering to lord Badrinath. Various researches have established its multiple medicinal benefits. Badri Ber, which is scientifically known as Hippophae Salicifolia, and locally called as Amaesh, is another nutrition-rich fruit and used widely, Chaturvedi said. The second section is dedicated to Ashtavarga species which is a group of eight herbs found in the Himalayan region namely Riddhi (Habernaria Intermedia), Vriddhi (Habernaria Edgeworthii), Jeevak (Malaxis Acuminata), Rishbhak (Malaxis Muscifera), Kakoli (Fritillaria Roylei), Ksheer Kakoli (Lilium Polyphyllum), Maida (Polygonatum Cirrhifolium), and Maha Maida (Polygonatum Verticillatum), which are the most important ingredients of Chyawanprash, he said. The third section consists of Saussurea species and includes Brahmakamal (Saussurea Obvallata) which also happens to be the state flower of Uttarakhand. The fourth section consists of assorted alpine species including Ateesh, Meethavish, Vankakdi, and Choru, all of which are important medicinal herbs and are in great demand, he said.

'Seed bombing' forests to protect crops from animals

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Dehradun, August 21: The farms in the hilly villages of Uttarakhand have been under regular attacks from wild animals over the last few years. These constant attacks have left several people dead, cattle injured, crops and buildings damaged and farmlands barren. Recently, the plantation technique of seed bombing has been mooted as a solution to this problem. Seed bombs, or balls of seed covered in soil, are being thrown in the forests to ensure food for wild animals is available in the forest itself, thus negating the need for them to attack the farms. The campaign, which started in 2017, has now spread to the entire state, including Dehradun, Tehri and Nainital. Since 2017, when the seed bombing initiative began, the number of hectares of crops damaged has dropped (though it rose again last year). Similarly, the number of injuries to humans, cattle and buildings has been fluctuating. So while the data suggests the results of the campaign are inconclusive still, it has continued to receive support from the community, civil society and government. The seed bomb campaign was started in the state by Dwarka Prasad Semwal, Secretary,



Himalayan Paryavaran Jadi Booti Agro Sansthan (JADDD), Uttarkashi, a non-governmental organisation focused on environmental conservation. Explaining the idea behind the campaign, Semwal said, "We planted bare seeds in the forest in 2017 but most of the seeds were lost, eaten by birds and trampled by animals. We did not even achieve one per cent success. To protect the seed, we made a ball of soil, manure and water and put two seeds in it. We named them beej (seed) bombs. We started this campaign on a small scale in a few villages and

then took it to the entire state." Today, the campaign is active in many villages of Uttarkashi, where women and youth together make seed bombs and scatter them in the forests. Seed bombs are prepared in the month of June-July just before the onset of rains as the seeds are most likely to germinate in wet soil. The clay balls are dried in the shade for three to four days until they are neither too hard nor too soft before being taken into the forest. Tulsi Devi, the former village head of Nathuakhan village of the

Ramgarh block in Nainital is optimistic about these seed bombs. "We made seed bombs with seeds of pumpkin, gourd, zucchini, cucumber, corn and pulses. Just before the rains, some seed bombs were thrown towards the forest. If we grow these vegetables and fruits near the forest, then our agriculture will survive. This is our third year of making seed bombs," she said. The seeds are chosen carefully, in accordance with altitude and soil, said Dwarka Prasad. His NGO consulted with several experts like the Vice-Chancellor of

HNB Garhwal University, Dr Annapurna Nautiyal; NK Singh, Assistant Horticulture Officer at Uttarkashi; Dr Pankaj Nautiyal, Krishi Vigyan Kendra at Chinyalisaur, and few others to pick the seeds. This year, seed donations are also being sought from the community Semwal explained. "There is a feeling of conservation attached to seed donation. Many people have donated seeds; some give two, some give 10." Akash Nautiyal, a member of the Mangal Youth Foundation of Uttarkashi, said that they have been asking for seed donations from every house they go to. "Farmers keep traditional seeds in their homes even today, which they sometimes give to us," he said. In addition to enthusiastic support from the forest department, many important people like Governor Baby Rani Maurya and former Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat have been endorsing the campaign, especially during the Harella festival (a folk festival in Uttarakhand). So while the jury is still out on whether seed bombs are enough to meet the stated objective of reducing man-animal conflict in Uttarakhand, the community is determined to keep trying.

Locals attempt self-immolation in protest against hydel project



AGENCIES

Gopeshwar (U'khand), August 21: Villagers affected by the Vishnugad-Pipalkoti hydel project of THDC India Friday allegedly attempted to immolate themselves in protest against the forcible demolition of their homes near the project site, the police said. However, timely intervention by police averted any untoward incident, they said. The run-of-the-river hydel project is being built on the Alaknanda river by acquiring the land and homes of residents of Haat village near Pipalkoti in Uttarakhand's Chamoli under an agreement. Trouble began when a team sent by the local administration at the request of THDC India tried to de-

molish the homes of residents of Haat village. As the team moved to raze their homes, a group of young men and women of the village poured some combustible material over themselves and attempted to set themselves on fire, the Chamoli Police said. However, the police intervened well on time and averted any untoward incident, they said. Efforts are being made to solve the problem through talks between the villagers and officials of the firm, police said. The villagers whose land and homes have been acquired by THDC India for the project are refusing to vacate their homes on the plea that the company has not expanded basic facilities in the area that it had promised as part of the agreement.

national

of the day quote

Bhaktis and trolls will ridicule the show of unity, but they should remember the famous words of the German Lutheran pastor Martin Niemoller. Cynics will scoff at the effort, but they will realise one day that we are fighting for the liberty of all people, including the cynics

P CHIDAMBARAM | SENIOR CONG LEADER

We have decided to look for new talented players under a campaign and train them in 18 sports academies of Madhya Pradesh. We will churn out not one but many such players, who will bring laurels to the country and the state in the Olympics besides in national and international competitions

SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | CM, MADHYA PRADESH

We need to understand that the victory in Afghanistan is being seen by terror groups as a Pakistani victory and an Indian defeat.... We have to organise ourselves for a renewed offensive by elements like the JeM

SHANKAR ROYCHOWDHURY | FORMER ARMY CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

3 JeM terrorists killed in encounter

Srinagar: Three Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) militants were killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district Saturday, officials said. Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in the upper reaches of forest area of Nagbaeran Tral in the south Kashmir district following inputs about the presence of militants there, the officials said.

Earthquake hits Gujarat's Kutch

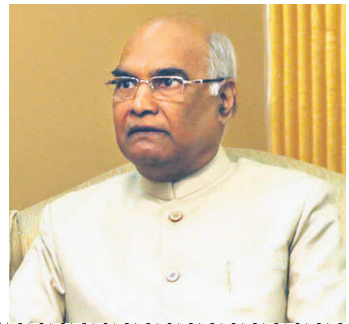
Ahmedabad: An earthquake of 4.1 magnitude was recorded in Gujarat's Kutch district Saturday with its epicentre located near Dholavira, the Institute of Seismological Research (ISR) said. No damage to property or casualty was reported due to the moderate-intensity earthquake, officials of the district administration said. "A 4.1-magnitude earthquake was recorded at 12.08 pm Saturday with its epicentre 23 km East-Southeast (ESE) of Dholavira in Kutch. It was recorded at a depth of 6.1 km," the Gandhinagar-based institute said.

2 Russian women found dead in Goa

Panaji: In separate incidents, two Russian women were found dead at their residences at a beach village in North Goa on two consecutive days, police said Saturday. While Alexandra Djavi, 24, was found hanging from a ceiling fan at her rented place late Thursday, the body of her 34-year-old compatriot - Ekaterina Titova - was recovered from her apartment Friday, a senior police official told PTI.

Jawan dies due to severe weather

New Delhi: One Army jawan died and a few others were injured during a supervised training activity at Mamun military station near Pathankot in Punjab Saturday as the weather conditions were "severe", said senior officials. The senior Army officials said that the affected jawans have been admitted at the military hospital in Pathankot and are being provided with required medical care.



The festival of Raksha Bandhan strengthens the spirit of harmony and fraternity in our society. On this special occasion, we should dedicate ourselves towards ensuring safety of women by increasing their participation in nation-building

RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT OF INDIA

DELHI GETS HIGHEST RAINFALL SINCE 2009

Delhi received the highest rainfall in a month since 2009, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Saturday, leading to waterlogging and traffic snarls across the national capital. The last highest rainfall of 110 mm was recorded August 10, 2010



'15 names given by PM to file fake cases against'

DURING AN ONLINE BRIEFING, SISODIA CLAIMED THAT MANY NAMES ON THE LIST ARE FROM THE AAM AADMI PARTY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Saturday alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has shared the names of 15 people with Delhi Police, CBI and ED and asked them to conduct raids and file fake FIRs against those on the list and ruin them before the next elections.

During an online briefing, Sisodia claimed that many names on the list are from the Aam Aadmi Party.

Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta rejected the allegations as "unfounded and baseless" and accused the Arvind Kejriwal government of resorting to issuing "concocted statements" to make AAP relevant in the upcoming elections in few states.



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal echoed similar sentiments and said nothing had come out of the earlier raids or fake cases.



We have learnt from reliable sources that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has handed over a list of 15 people to the CBI, the ED

Do politics of votes and win the trust of people. There were so many fake cases filed against us and raids conducted but you got nothing. You want to file more fake cases and carry out raids. You are welcome

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | CHIEF MINISTER OF DELHI

and the Delhi Police, asking them to conduct raids and file fake FIRs against them (people on the list) in order to ruin them before the next elections, Sisodia claimed. He claimed that Delhi Police

Commissioner Rakesh Asthana has promised to get the job done.

Rakesh Asthana is Modi's 'brahmastra'. He has promised that come what may, he will get the job done, he claimed.

Sisodia said the AAP does politics of truth and honesty.

You can send the CBI and the ED, we will welcome them, he said.

Sisodia said there had been previous instances where AAP leaders were 'targeted' but nothing came out of it.

The deputy chief minister also claimed that AAP is gaining popularity in other states like Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab and had even won 27 seats in the municipal corporation polls in Gujarat, which is the stronghold of the BJP.

FORMER UP CM KALYAN SINGH PASSES AWAY



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, August 21: Former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh (89) passed away here Saturday due to sepsis and multi-organ failure.

Singh was admitted to the ICU of Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGI) July 4 in a critical condition. On Saturday, his condition worsened due to kidney infection. He breathed his last at 9.15 pm.

Singh's body has been brought to his Mall Avenue residence where Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and his Cabinet colleagues paid tributes to the departed soul. Earleir, Adityanath had tweeted the news of the veteran leader's demise.

The state Cabinet is meeting later Saturday night to mourn the death of Singh.

A three-day state mourning has been announced in Uttar Pradesh and a holiday will be observed Monday as a mark of respect to the departed leader.

Deputy Chief Ministers Dinesh Sharma and Keshav Maurya have expressed their grief over the passing away of Singh, while senior leaders across the political spectrum have termed his demise as a loss to Indian politics.

Akhil Bhartiya Akhara Parishad chief Mahant Narendra Giri said that Indian politics has lost one of its tallest leaders.

₹935cr embezzled in MGNREGA over last 4 years: Cong



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 21: The Congress Saturday alleged that Rs 935 crore had been misappropriated in MGNREGA schemes over the last four years and said the government must be held accountable for failing to check corruption.

The party also demanded that the government restore the four per cent quota for differently-abled persons in police forces.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said a media report, which assessed publicly available information of the Rural Development Ministry, revealed that Rs 935 crore was misappropriated in schemes under the Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) over the last four years.

These numbers are the outcome of audits done by social audit units under the Rural Development Department of the Ministry of Rural Development, he told a press conference.

Khera said the significant outcome of the social audit unit was that the primary type of misappropriation in most cases was financial misappropriation which includes and is not limited to bribery, payments to non-existent persons and to vendors at inflated procurement prices.

He said of the whopping Rs 935 crore misappropriated, only Rs

The party also demanded that the government restore the four per cent quota for differently-abled persons in police forces

12.5 crore, which is 1.34 per cent of the misappropriated amount, stands recovered. The very fact that misappropriations have been happening is a testament to the lack of accountability and due diligence by the Narendra Modi government, the Congress leader alleged.

The Congress party demands that the government of India is held accountable for the misappropriations in the MGNREGA scheme and ensures that social audit is undertaken as per the provisions of the MGNREGA, Khera said.

We also demand that the government of India recovers the misappropriated amount at the earliest and ensures that the recovered money is used to compensate the poor and marginalised who have suffered a lot due to Covid-19 mismanagement, he said.

The Congress leader claimed that Tamil Nadu had the highest misappropriation of Rs 245 crore between 2017-18 and 2020-21, and in Bihar, Rs 12.34 crore was misappropriated.

14 held for pro-Taliban posts on social media

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati/Hailakandi, August 21: Fourteen people were arrested from across Assam for social media posts allegedly supporting the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, police said Saturday.

The arrests were made since Friday night and they have been booked under different sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, IT Act and CrPC. "@assampolice has arrested 14 persons for social media posts regarding Taliban activities that have attracted provisions of law of the land," special director general of police GP Singh tweeted.

Singh also advised people to be careful about inflammatory social media posts, including retweeting them, liking them, as their actions could invite penal action.

Deputy Inspector General Violet Baruah also urged people to help law enforcing agencies keep tab on such social media posts. Baruah tweeted "we're registering criminal cases against such persons."

Danve's dig at Rahul leaves party fuming

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 21: Union minister Raosaheb Danve has criticised Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, saying that he was of no use to anyone, and also likened him to a stray bull.

The Congress objected to his indecent and shocking remarks and demanded his removal from the Union cabinet.

Danve made the remarks while speaking at a public rally in Jalna district of Maharashtra as part of the 'Jan Ashirwad Yatra' taken out by newly-inducted Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad.

Giving his speech in Marathi, Danve said, "Rahul Gandhi is of no use to anybody. He is like a 'saand' (bull) dedicated to god. He roams everywhere, but is of no use to anyone. I have been in the Lok Sabha for 20 years and have seen his work."

It is a practice in rural

Maharashtra and some other parts of the country to dedicate a newly-born male calf to a local deity. That bull is not used for any agriculture or transportation purposes.

The Union Minister of State for Railway further said, Even if such a bull enters a farm and eats the crop, the farmer forgives the animal saying it needs food.

One should look at the great work being done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi... The government is spending money from its coffers as Railways does not generate enough revenue from various sources, including through the sale of tickets, he said.

Reacting to his remarks, Congress's state unit chief Nana Patole sought Danve's resignation.

He has crossed all the boundaries. His remarks are indecent and shocking. We demand his removal from Union cabinet for using such a foul language against Gandhi, he said.



A farmer ploughs his paddy field at a village near Balurghat in South Dinajpur district, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

CLIMATE CHANGE

South Asian children at extremely high risk: Unicef

SOUTH ASIA IS HOME TO OVER 600 MILLION CHILDREN AND HAS THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE GLOBALLY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 21: Young people living in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are among those most at risk of the impacts of climate change, threatening their health, education, and protection, pointed a new Unicef report released Saturday.

In addition, Nepal and Sri Lanka are among the top 65 countries most impacted globally.

"The Climate Crisis Is a Child Rights Crisis Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index" (CCRI) is Unicef's first child-focused climate risk index. It ranks countries based on children's exposure to climate and environmental shocks, such as cyclones and heatwaves, as well as their vulnerability to those shocks, based

on their access to essential services.

Pakistan, Bangladesh Afghanistan and India are among four South Asian countries where children are at extremely high risk of the impacts of the climate crisis, with a ranking of 14, 15, 15 and 26, respectively. While Nepal is ranked 51, Sri Lanka is at 61st place. Bhutan is ranked 111, with children at relatively lower risk.

Approximately 1 billion children live in one of the 33 countries classified as extremely high-risk, including the four South Asian countries.

For the first time, we have clear evidence of the impact of climate change on millions of children in South Asia. Droughts, floods, air pollution and river erosion across the region have left millions of children homeless and hungry, and with-



out any healthcare and water, said George Laryea-Adjei, Unicef Regional Director for South Asia.

Together, climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic have cre-

ated an alarming crisis for South Asian children. The time to act is now - if we invest in water, healthcare and education, we can protect their futures from the

impacts of a changing climate and degrading environment, he said further.

The report found that these South Asian children are in constant danger from riverine floods and air pollution, but also that investments in child health, nutrition, and education can make a significant difference to protect children from climate change.

South Asia is home to over 600 million children and has the highest number of young people globally. South Asian countries are among the most vulnerable globally to the impacts of climate change. Extreme climate-related events - heatwaves, storms, floods, fires and droughts - affect more than half of the region's population every year and continue to burden South Asian

countries' economies.

Rising global temperatures and changing weather patterns have put the futures of millions of children living in climate-vulnerable areas in South Asia at constant risk. Worse, before they can recover from one disaster, another one strikes, reversing any progress made.

The report also reveals disconnect between where greenhouse gas emissions are generated, and where children are enduring the most significant climate-driven impacts. The 33 extremely high-risk countries, including four from South Asia, collectively emit just 9 per cent of global CO2 emissions. Conversely, the 10 highest emitting countries collectively account for nearly 70 per cent of global emissions.

international

of the day quote

It's necessary to stop the irresponsible police of enforcing its own values on others and attempts to build democracy in other countries based on outside models without taking into account historic, ethnic and religious issues and fully ignoring other people's traditions

VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

The US-India strategic partnership is now even more critical in containing the Taliban and preventing terrorism

RO KHANNA | INDIAN AMERICAN CONGRESSMAN

On Instagram, we're rolling out pop-up alerts in Afghanistan with specific steps on how to protect your account. We also temporarily removed the ability to view and search the 'Friends' list for FB accounts in Afghanistan to help protect people from being targeted

NATHANIEL GLEICHER | HEAD OF SECURITY POLICY, FACEBOOK

SHORT TAKES

10K rapes recorded in SA in April-June

Johannesburg: South Africa registered 10,006 rape cases between April and June this year, according to official statistics. "This is an increase of 4,201 cases, amounting to a 72.4 per cent increase, compared to the skewed previous reporting period," Xinhua news agency quoted Police Minister Bheki Cele as saying Friday. He said that comparing the two periods would leave the statistics distorted because of the hard lockdown in 2020, which severely restricted freedoms and movement, resulting in less crime.

Portugal to ease Covid lockdown

Lisbon: The Portuguese government has announced that the country will move from the "state of calamity", its highest response to a national emergency, to the "state of contingency" beginning August 23. At a press conference, Minister of State for the Presidency Mariana Vieira da Silva highlighted the positive development in the control of the Covid-19 pandemic and announced that the Council of Ministers decided to anticipate the easing of the lockdown measures to reopen the country, Xinhua news agency reported Saturday.

53 suspected militants held

Jakarta: The Indonesian National Police said that its counterterrorism squad, known as Densus 88, has arrested 53 suspected militants, who were planning attacks during the country's independence day across 11 provinces. Of the 53 suspected terrorists, 50 belong to the outlawed Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) group and the other three are from the banned Jemaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), police's spokesman Inspector General Argo Yuwono said Monday.

Turkey floods toll rises to 81

Ankara: The death toll from Turkey's flash floods along the Black Sea coast has increased to 81, the country's disaster agency said. Seventy people died as a result of floods in Kastamonu province. Another 10 people died in Sinop and one in Bartin, Xinhua news agency quoted the Disaster and Emergency Management Directorate (AFAD) as saying Friday. Rescue and relief efforts are continuing as some 30 people that are still reportedly missing in the flood-hit areas.



The ongoing evacuation of US citizens and Afghan nationals who supported Americans over the last 20 years is one of the largest and most difficult airlifts in history

JOE BIDEN | PRESIDENT, US

ISMAIL SABRI TO BE NEW MALAYSIA PM

Malaysia's King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah has appointed former Deputy Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob as new Prime Minister of the country, the national palace announced. His appointment comes as Malaysia is mired in a political turmoil



'Taliban want ties with all countries, including US'



AGENCIES

Kabul, August 21: Taliban's political chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar Saturday said the insurgent group intends to have economic and trade ties with all countries around the world, including the US. "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan wants diplomatic and trade ties with all countries, particularly with the United States of America," Baradar said in a tweet.

Baradar denied media reports that the Taliban has not intended to have diplomatic and trade ties with Washington, reports Xinhua news agency.

"We never talk about cut of trade ties with any countries. Rumor about this news has been a propaganda. It is not true," he said.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan wants diplomatic and trade ties with all countries, particularly with the US

MULLAH ABDUL GHANI BARADAR | POLITICAL CHIEF, TALIBAN

Earlier in the day, unconfirmed reports said Baradar has arrived in Kabul from southern Kandahar to conduct consultation with Afghan leaders about the creation of a new government. He returned to Kandahar from Doha on Tuesday.

On Tuesday, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said they intended to form an inclusive government and does not want to have any internal or external enemies.

Co-education banned in varsities

KABUL: Taliban officials in Afghanistan's Herat province have ordered the government and private universities that girls will no longer be allowed to sit in the same classes with boys, Khaama News reported. In a three-hour meeting between university lecturers, owners of private institutions, and the Taliban officials, the latter said that there is no alternative and justification for continuing co-education and must be ended.

Afghanistan has a mixed system of both co-education and separate classes with schools functioning separate classes while co-education is applied both in government and private universities and institutes around the country.

Lecturers in Herat province have reasoned that the government universities and institutes can manage separate classes but because of the limited number of female students in private institutions, the latter cannot afford to create separate classrooms.

Mullah Farid, head of higher education of Afghanistan Islamic



Emirate who was representing the Taliban in the meeting in Herat has said that co-education should be ended because the system is the root of all evils in society.

Farid as an alternative suggested that female lecturers or elderly male ones who are virtuous are allowed to teach female students and for the co-education, there is neither an alternative nor any justifi-

fication to be continued.

Lecturers in Herat said, since private institutions cannot afford separate classes, thousands of girls may remain deprived of higher education.

There are reportedly around 40,000 students and 2,000 lecturers in private and government universities and institutions in the province.

Woman set on fire for 'bad cooking'

KABUL: Afghan women are being shipped into neighbouring countries in coffins and used as sex slaves, according to a former judge. Najla Ayoubi, who lives in the US after "fleeing for my life" from the Taliban, said she has heard horrific examples of violence against women since the militants took control of her homeland August 15, reports metro.co.uk.

She said one woman was "put on fire because she was accused of bad cooking for Taliban fighters" in the north of the country. Other young women are being forced into marriage and sexually



abused.

The lawyer told Sky News: "They are forcing people to give them food and cook them food. Also there are so many young women in the past few weeks being shipped into neighbouring countries in coffins to be used

as sex slaves.

"They also force families to marry their young daughters to Taliban fighters. I don't see where is the promise that they think women should be going to work, when we are seeing all of these atrocities."

The Taliban have said they will respect women's rights and allow them to work and be educated.

She said there was "no way to believe" assurances that the Taliban wanted to form inclusive government, saying she knew of one female TV anchor who was told to go home.

China condemns suicide attack on its nationals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, August 21: China Saturday asked Pakistan to take effective measures and overhaul the security mechanism to forestall attacks on its nationals working on various infrastructure projects after a suicide bomber attacked a convoy of Chinese nationals in the restive Balochistan province, in the second such attack in over a month.



The Chinese embassy here in a statement strongly condemned Friday's suicide attack on the convoy of Chinese nationals comprising four vehicles in Gwadar, the port city of strategic importance due to the presence of Chinese workers and investment.

In the attack, two children who

were playing nearby were killed while one Chinese national was among several others who sustained injuries.

The embassy said that it launched the emergency plan immediately, "demanding Pakistan to properly treat the wounded, conduct a thorough investigation on the attack, and severely punish the perpetrators."

"At the same time, relevant departments at all levels in Pakistan must take practical and effective measures to accelerate to implement strengthened whole-process security measures and upgraded security cooperation mechanisms to ensure that similar incidents will not happen again," it said.

The embassy further said that recently, the security situation in Pakistan has been severe and there have been several terrorist attacks in succession, resulting in the casualties of several Chinese citizens.

The Chinese embassy in Pakistan asked its citizens in Pakistan to be vigilant, strengthen safety precautions, reduce unnecessary outings, and take effective security protection.

250 arrested at Australia anti-lockdown protests

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sydney, August 21: Authorities in Australia say more than 250 people have been arrested while protesting coronavirus lockdowns in the country. Many faced fines for defying health orders. The protests took place Saturday in several cities nationwide, with the largest and most violent protest in Melbourne.

At least seven police officers were treated for injuries after skirmishes broke out at some of the protests.

Sydney has been in lockdown for two months, while Melbourne and Australia's capital, Canberra, went into lockdown earlier this month. Under the rules of the lockdown, people are mostly confined to their homes and have limits placed on their social interactions.

Protestors say the lockdowns should end, but authorities say they are necessary to suppress the spread of the virus and save lives.

Despite the restrictions, Sydney's New South Wales state reported a record 825 new daily community infections on Saturday. Several cities are battling outbreaks of the highly contagious delta variant.

TO THE RESCUE



A firefighting helicopter flies by the sun as a wildfire burns in the village of Vilia, Greece. More than 500 wildfires have broken out in recent weeks across the country, ravaging swathes of forest and forcing the evacuation of thousands of people

Rain falls at Greenland ice summit for first time on record

REUTERS

New York, August 21: Rain fell at the highest point on the Greenland ice sheet last week for the first time on record, another worrying sign of warming for the ice sheet already melting at an increasing rate, scientists said Friday.

"That's not a healthy sign for an ice sheet," said Indrani Das, a glaciologist with Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. "Water on ice is bad. It makes the ice sheet more prone to surface melt." Not only is water warmer than the usual snow, it's also darker - so it absorbs more sunlight rather than reflecting it away.

That meltwater is streaming into the ocean, causing sea levels

to rise. Already, melting from Greenland's ice sheet - the world's second-largest after Antarctica's - has caused around 25% of global sea level rise seen over the last few decades, scientists estimate. That share is expected to grow, as global temperatures increase.

The rain fell for several hours at the ice sheet's 3,216-metre summit August 14, where temperatures remained above freezing for around nine hours, scientists at the US National Snow and Ice Data Center said. Temperatures at the ice cap almost never lift above freezing, but have now done so three times in less than a decade.

In total, 7 billion tonnes of rain fell across Greenland over three days, from Aug. 14 through August



16 - the largest amount since records began in 1950.

The rain and high temperatures triggered extensive melting across

That's not a healthy sign for an ice sheet. Water on ice is bad. It makes the ice sheet more prone to surface melt

INDRANI DAS | GLACIOLOGIST, LAMONT-DOHERTY EARTH OBSERVATORY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

rain is the latest in a string of warning signs about how climate change is affecting Greenland's ice sheet.

Greenland experienced a massive melting event in late July, when enough ice melted in a single day

to cover the US state of Florida in 2 inches (5 cm) of water.

That melting event and last week's rain were both caused by air circulation patterns which meant warm, moist air temporarily covered the island.

"This alarming rain at the summit of Greenland is not an isolated event," said Twila Moon, deputy lead scientist with the US National Snow and Ice Data Center.

Along with rising floods, fires, and other extremes, it is one of many "alarm bells" signalling the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, she said.

"We really have to stay laser-focused on adapting, as well as reducing the potential for those to become truly devastating."

