



SEEKING RECOGNITION
 'The Family Man 2' fame south Indian actress Samantha Akkineni says she is ready to act in Hindi films **LEISURE P2**



UK WARNS TALIBAN
 The UK has warned the Taliban not to forcibly seal off Afghanistan from the rest of the world **INTERNATIONAL P10**



ENGLAND PACERS RULE
 England pacer James Anderson leads the charge as India are bowled out for 78 in the first innings of the 3rd Test **SPORTS P12**



Dengue cases increase in Bhubaneswar
BHUBANESWAR: Dengue cases are increasing in the state Capital at an alarming rate, sources informed Wednesday. All the 67 wards of the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) have been hit by the disease and the number of cases in the city is now close to the 2,000-mark. However, people in the know of things said that the figure could be much higher. They also said that a few market areas have turned into hotspots for the vector-borne disease. People have blamed BMC for the rise in the number of dengue cases.



'No coercive action against Rane'
MUMBAI: The Maharashtra government told the Bombay High Court Wednesday that it would not take any 'coercive action' against Union Minister Narayan Rane in an FIR registered in Nashik over his controversial remarks against Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. The government's assurance came a day after the BJP leader was arrested for the 'slap Thackeray' comment. He however, got bail within a few hours after his arrest, Tuesday. After his comment, clashes broke out between BJP and Shiv Sena workers in several parts of Maharashtra.

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Four of Rourkela family killed in road accident

Rourkela, August 25: Four persons belonging to the same family, including two children were killed on the spot when the vehicle carrying them met with an accident near Torapa locality in the state of Jharkhand. The deceased comprised of a couple and their two kids and they were from the Civil Township area of this city. Two others were also injured in the accident. They have been admitted to the RMS hospital in Ranchi and their condition is slated to be critical. The four deceased have been identified as Kanhaiya Jain, his wife Rama, seven-year-old son Rishav and three-year-old Nitya. The two injured are Vasistha Jain and a young woman whose name is Vanshika. They were returning from Raniganj of West Bengal via Ranchi in an Innova car when the accident occurred.

Vasistha, who was driving the vehicle lost control, while negotiating a sharp turn near Churagi area in Torapa causing it to skid off the road. The speeding vehicle then thudded into a tree before falling into a roadside ditch. The car was heavily damaged and half of it was submerged. Locals with the help of gas cutters pulled out the bodies of the couple and their children. However, by that time they had breathed their last. The injured Vasistha and Vanshika were also rescued and sent to the hospital. Police are trying to ascertain whether the vehicle had any snag which led to the tragedy. Eyewitnesses however, said that the car was travelling at high speed and was swerving from side to side when the driver lost control and it veered off the road to crash into a tree before falling in the ditch.

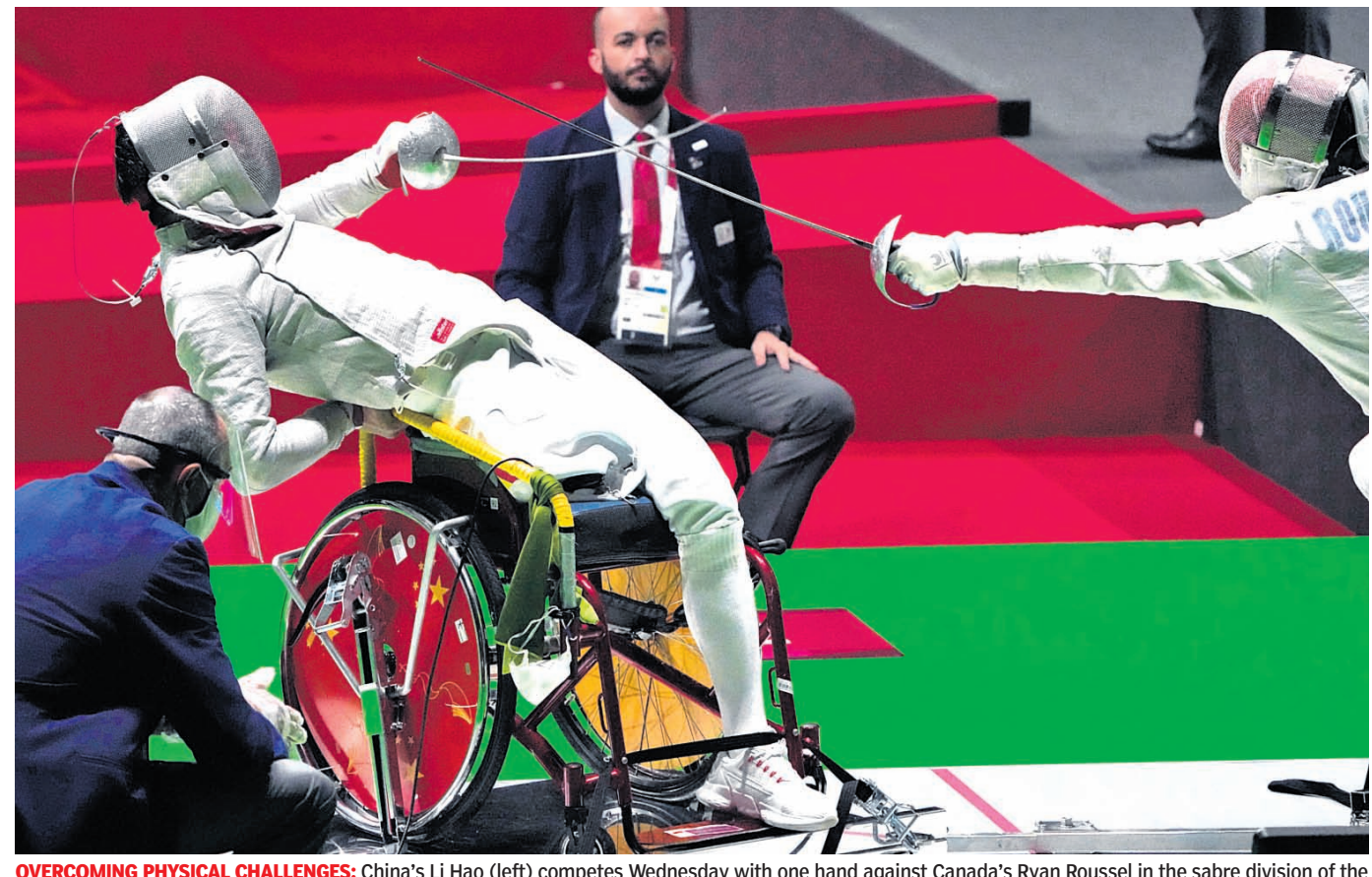
MARKET WATCH

INDEX	55944.21	↓	14.77
SENSEX	55944.21	↓	14.77
NIFTY	16634.70	↑	10.10
DOLLAR	74.49	↑	₹0.06
EURO	87.14	↑	₹0.01
GOLD	₹47,140	↓	₹472
SILVER	₹63,017	↓	₹457

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	34.4°C	35.0°C
TEMP MIN	24.4°C	25.0°C
Humidity	98%	81%
Rainfall	10.1mm	1.8mm

Forecast: Light rain very likely



OVERCOMING PHYSICAL CHALLENGES: China's Li Hao (left) competes Wednesday with one hand against Canada's Ryan Roussel in the sabre division of the men's wheelchair fencing event at the Tokyo Paralympics. Hao went on to win gold later in the day

SC slams probe agencies

The top court, peeved at the slow pace in cases against lawmakers, asked as to why chargesheets are not being filed even after 10-15 years of investigation

New Delhi, August 25: The Supreme Court came down heavily Wednesday against probe agencies like the CBI and Enforcement Directorate (ED). The apex court severely reprimanded the two probe agencies over delays in cases against MPs and MLAs. It said investigations have been going on for 10-15 years and yet no chargesheet had been filed. A bench headed by CJI NV Ramana asked the agencies to explain why such a situation exists. "Cases are pending for 10-15 years and chargesheets are not filed. The ED is only attaching properties and nothing else is done," the Supreme Court noted in sharp remarks. "Don't keep cases hanging like this. File a chargesheet," Justice Ramana, heading a three-judge bench, said. He asserted that speedy trials were needed to deliver justice to people. The agencies have given no reason for the delays, commented the

362 cases against Odisha lawmakers

NEW DELHI: The Registrar General of the Orissa High Court submitted Wednesday in the Supreme Court that 362 cases are pending against MPs and MLAs before 18 judicial officers in the state. Giving the breakup in a status report, the registrar general said among them 178 cases are for appearance. A district-wise breakup was also presented. The high court official said 31 cases are pending before JMFC Angul, 37 before the Third Additional Session Judge, Bhubaneswar, 200 before JMFC, Special Court, Bhubaneswar and 47 before JMFC, Sambalpur. P3

bench comprising CJI Ramana and Justices DY Chandrachud and Surya Kant. "Just like us agencies also suffer from lack of staff. But unlike us, they have not been affected by the pandemic. So why are they not trying their best," the bench asked.

According to the Chief Justice, since the cases involve public representatives, special conditions were needed as "they can also misuse their position". "We had said in the last hearing that cases against lawmakers cannot be withdrawn without the approval of the High Court," said Justice Ramana.

'Special' schools to reopen soon

After resumption of physical classes for Class IX students from August 16, the government has now decided to focus on the 'special' category and will soon resume offline teaching

Bhubaneswar, August 25: The Odisha government has asked all district collectors to resume offline teaching for Class IX students belonging to the special category. These classes will be for physically-challenged students in special schools. The collectors have been instructed to see that Class IX students belonging to the disabled category can physically attend classes under special arrangements. Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) director Bratati Harichandan has recently written

a letter to the collectors of Balasore, Cuttack, Ganjam, Kalahandi, Koraput, Keonjhar, Puri, Kandhamal, Sundargarh and Khurda in this regard. "Steps may please be taken for reopening of Class-IX of special schools and hostels functioning there-under subject to some conditions," Harichandan said in his letter. The collectors have been directed to reopen the schools taking into consideration the physical infrastructure available as well as the local Covid-19 situation. They have been directed to reopen the hostels also. They have been asked to strictly follow the instructions issued by the School and Mass Education (S&ME) department on reopening of schools and hostels. "District social security officers (DSSOs) concerned may be instructed to regularly monitor the functioning of schools and hostels for special students and submit a monthly report on their attendance. They will also report if any additional arrangements are made

for residential accommodation of the special students keeping in view the implementation of social distancing norms, Harichandan said in the letter. "An officer preferably additional district magistrate (ADM) or sub-collector may be deputed to personally visit the institution in their respective districts and ensure that necessary safety procedures are implemented," the director further said. The DSSOs have been asked to personally visit the schools for special students before their reopening and submit a report regarding the safety measures undertaken. The S&ME department August 5 had issued orders for reopening Class-IX for physical classroom teaching of normal students from August 16 with strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols. Currently physical classes are on for the students from 9.00am to 12.30pm in all government schools on all days except Sundays and public holidays.

State govt ready to provide subsidy for buying e-vehicles

The Odisha government in all probability will be providing subsidy for buying e-vehicles to all those residing in the state. The proposal has been muted by the Transport department and is on the verge of getting Cabinet approval. As per the proposal, 15 per cent subsidy will be given by the government for buying two-wheelers, three-wheelers and four-wheelers. The maximum subsidy amount for the three segments will be ₹5,000, ₹12,000 and ₹1,00,000 respectively. The government departments/offices, PSUs will give preference to hire EVs for official use and the above purchase incentives will be applicable for the owners to purchase vehicles. The respective departments or PSUs can also provide further incentives on hiring charges to promote the use of EVs. The municipal authorities will also be encouraged to provide subsidised parking for all personal EVs. Individual cities will prepare city parking plan to encourage provisions for on-street parking places for EVs with subsidised fees. Also in all these places charging facilities will be set up.

Vaccine efficacy wanes with time, booster shots a must

A recent study in the UK has said that effectiveness of both Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines decreases with time, so booster shots are a must in the fight against Covid-19

(UK) reported Wednesday. The ZOE COVID Study found that protection after two shots of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine decreased from 88 per cent at one month to 74 per cent at five to six months. In case of AstraZeneca the protection dipped to 67 per cent in the same time frame from 77 per cent. Incidentally, the Oxford vaccine is being administered in India as Covishield. The findings would seem to reaffirm the UK government's plan to offer booster shots to the most vulnerable groups, expected from next month. "In my opinion, a reasonable worst-case scenario could see protection below 50 per cent for the elderly and healthcare workers by winter," said Professor Tim Spector, lead scientist on the study. However, he insisted that vaccines still provide strong protection against severe Covid-19, especially against the highly transmissible Delta variant.

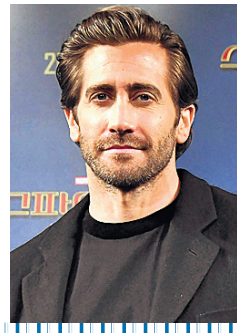


PREFERENCE FOR KIDS WITH COMORBIDITIES

NEW DELHI: The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) will soon hold a meeting to devise a roadmap for introducing Zydus Cadila's Covid vaccine in the inoculation drive and prioritising beneficiaries focusing on those aged 12-18 years with comorbidities. NTAGI chairman Dr NK Arora said India has approximately 12 crore adolescents in the age group of 12-18 years. Less than one per cent of them have comorbidities. The three-dose vaccine will be rolled out in October.

"Waning protection is expected and is not a reason to avoid vaccination. Vaccines still provide high levels of protection for the majority of population, especially against the Delta variant. Hence we still need as many people as possible to get fully vaccinated," pointed out Spector. With such a situation looming, Spector said 'urgency' is needed to make plans for 'vaccine boosters'. The boosters will help in reduction of the death rate and hospital admissions. The vast study involved more than 1.2 million test results and participants, though the vaccines were not examined against the now dominant Delta variant of the virus. Meanwhile, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) confirmed a new clinical trial to determine whether a third so-called booster dose of vaccine will improve the immune response for people who have weakened immune systems is launching in the UK. The study, 'OCTAVE DUO', will offer people who are immunosuppressed or immunocompromised a Pfizer, Moderna or Novavax vaccine to determine whether this will give a stronger immune response than just two doses of two-dose vaccines. "We know some people may get less protection from the vaccine than others, so we are planning for a booster programme in autumn, prioritising those most at risk," UK Health Secretary Sajid Javid said.

leisure

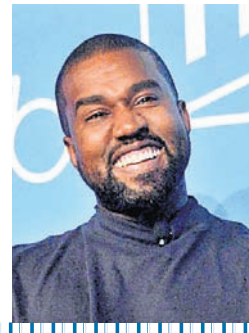


GYLLENHAAL TO STAR IN OBLIVION SONG

Jake Gyllenhaal is all set to star in *Oblivion Song*, an adaptation of Robert Kirkman and Lorenzo De Felici's graphic novel. Jake's production company Nine Stories will produce the film with Riva Marker and Kirkman via his Skybound Entertainment.

KANYE WEST LEGALLY CHANGES HIS NAME

Kanye West has filed papers to change his name to 'Ye'. The rapper, 44, was born Kanye Omari West, but he filed the legal paperwork for the new name Tuesday, according to documents obtained by *HollywoodLife*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You're finally impressed by the yogis. A degree course in Art of Living? Ganesh approves. You may even fulfill a desire to begin lessons in music or dance, or something that has interested you since long. A good, good day, and it smells of sweet success.

TAURUS
Today, you may experience the juxtaposition of pleasure and pain. Household tasks may weigh you down around afternoon. Later in the day, you will be able to achieve whatever you desire solely on account of your determination and mental strength.

GEMINI
Your long-term goals seem to be shaping up well. You may also expect some good news, which will change the course of your life. Play a waiting game in matters of auctions and sealed tenders. And memorise these words: Prevention is better than cure.

CANCER
Not a good day for you in terms of fortune and opportunities. You will constantly find yourself in unwanted tricky situations without any fault of yours. You, however, are likely to know what to do in such situations by now, for you have been in too many of those in the past.

LEO
The friends we make go a long way in making us who we are, says Ganesh. Over the years, with your natural instinct to be a social charmer, you have built a fine circle of dedicated friends on whom you can bank with confidence under any circumstance.

VIRGO
An easy-going day full of fun and light moments will help you vent all that pressure built up inside you. Ganesh predicts a progressive and profitable day for you. Expect to honour invitations to social events or even parties.

LIBRA
It is more than likely, and possible indeed, that you will surpass your own past performances today. All this is on the cards, despite the fact that your peers at work will try to outwit you. But it is your consummate set of skills that shall help you pre-empt all such attempts, says Ganesh.

SCORPIO
Ganesh predicts today will be a day full of focus and a clear thought process. The clarity of thought you have been acquired over a period of time, says Ganesh, and that could make all the difference. A crisp application of thoughts to ideas and actions will bring much appreciation from bosses and peers.

SAGITTARIUS
Settling for a new, better employment will help you fast-track your career growth. A telephonic interview might ring in a new offer. A lucrative deal with an MNC would serve well. Your dedication and devotion to work will also peak today, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
It's going to be a day of pleasant surprises. You will try your level best to help people around you, and will find it exceedingly frustrating when the results won't be as expected, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
Eat, drink, and make merry. But watch out: don't empty your pockets in one go. Also, guard your reputation. A lot depends on your behaviour, and the big daddies may be watching you. You have a lot at stake, and there should be no regrets later. Let success be your priority for now, says Ganesh. All else will follow.

PISCES
Now is the time when the inner circle of friends that you have nurtured over the years will prove their worth, says Ganesh. It is good to know that in times of need you can bank on their support and count on their cooperation. You will be able to luxuriate in the benefits of their friendship today.

'I'm more open now to enter Hindi entertainment space'

Mumbai: South Indian actress Samantha Akkineni, who recently won the Best Performance (Female) in an Indian web series at the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne for *The Family Man 2*, says she is now more open to Hindi entertainment space.

"When I did *The Family Man 2* I did not know how the show will become, but now that people from the north are also loving and appreciating my work, I

would say yes, I am little more open to the idea of working in other language projects including Hindi. Yes, I am open to new ideas, instead of limiting myself to regional cinema," said the actress.

When Samantha signed her debut web series *The Family Man 2* in 2019, the first season of the show was yet to be released. Now, after two seasons and 19 episodes, the show is so loved by the audience that they cannot wait for the third season.

Since the release of *The Family Man 2*, the actress has received a lot of love from people worldwide as well as Hindi viewers.

In the show, Samantha played antagonist 'Raji' who is a rebel leader. IANS



Krystle's ice-breaking moment with Big B

Mumbai: Even in her wildest dreams she could not have imagined that she would make her Hindi film debut with the legend of Indian cinema, Amitabh Bachchan.

Chehre actress Krystle D'Souza says meeting the legend, and starting a conversation with him, could have been a speechless moment for her, but a thoughtful gesture on the part of the Big B changed it all.

Krystle said: "I cannot even begin to tell you how nervous I was and it was the first time my mother came along with me for

the first day of shooting. Of course, my mother also had a dream to meet Mr Bachchan as we are a family of Bachchan fans. But when I saw him for the first time, the aura that he has, made me so nervous and for a moment I didn't know how to start the conversation.

"He walked towards me, and said, 'Hello Krystle, this is Amitabh Bachchan, it is nice to meet you!' Then, I realised that he is such a humble and easygoing individual. Since then, I really felt comfortable around everyone." IANS

Shalini owes everything to Arjun Reddy

Mumbai: Shalini Pandey is all set to make her Hindi film debut in *Jayeshbhai Jordaar* opposite Ranveer Singh.

On the fourth anniversary of *Arjun Reddy*, a film that catapulted her to instant stardom in the south, Shalini credits the film and her director Sandeep Reddy Vanga.

Shalini said, "I owe everything to Arjun Reddy because it put me on the map as a performer. I had done my level best to put in a performance that I was immensely proud of and I'm glad that audiences appreciated my hard work."

She added, "I am also grateful to my director Sandeep Vanga Reddy for his belief in me as an actor. I'm fortunate that I was a part of his vision to create an unparalleled love story that has etched its place in the hearts and minds of film lovers across India."

On her debut Hindi film she said, "I can't talk too much about my role right now so you will have to wait and watch."

The actress admitted that the phenomenal success of *Arjun Reddy* fuelled her passion to be recognised as a versatile artiste. IANS



Shatru recalls his first encounter with Dharam



Shatru and Dharam on *The Kapil Sharma Show* set

Veteran actors Dharmendra and Shatru Sinha will be the special guests on *The Kapil Sharma Show* this Sunday.

While Kapil Sharma and his team will entertain the audience with funny banter and conversations, the legendary actors on the other hand will share some memorable and interesting anecdotes of their journey in the entertainment industry.

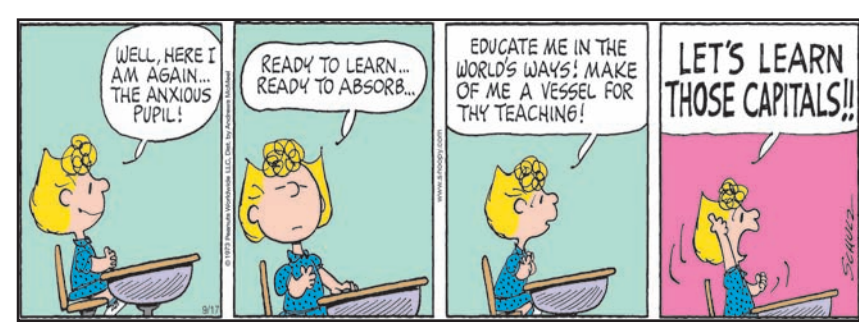
In a conversation with them, Kapil Sharma asks Shatru Sinha to narrate his first meeting with Dharmendra. To which, Sinha shared: "I first met Dharmendra Ji at a film institute where he had arrived to make a speech. The first thoughts that came to my mind at that

time was that he is so handsome, has such flawless hair and a magnetic personality."

He further added: "I chose to ask a question to him but didn't know what to ask, so I ended up asking, 'Dharam ji which oil do you apply in your hair?' to which he answered, 'I never apply any oil.'" Hearing this, everyone bursts out in laughter.

Sinha shared: "I have always loved him (Dharmendra) like my elder brother and just seek his blessings. He also has a terrific sense of humour, which many people are unaware of. Moreover, whenever I have done any movie with him, the initial three to four days were like unbelievable that I am doing a film with Dharam ji." AGENCIES

PEANUTS



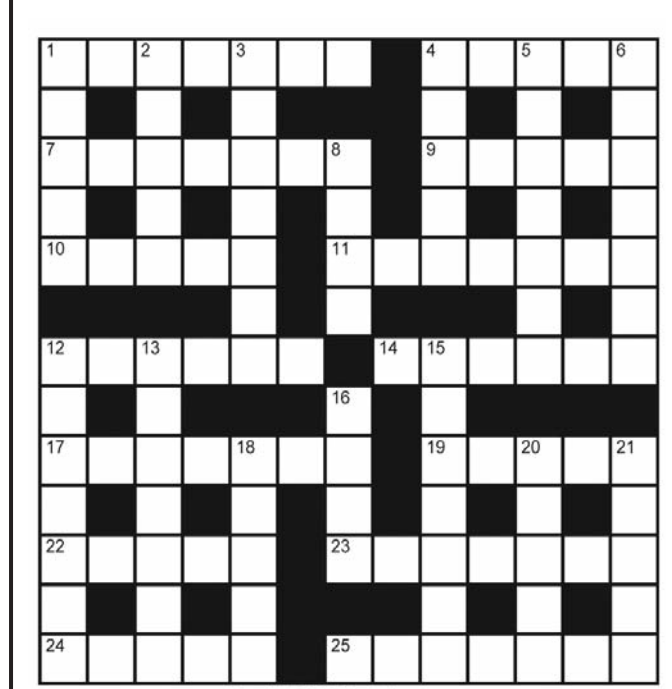
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



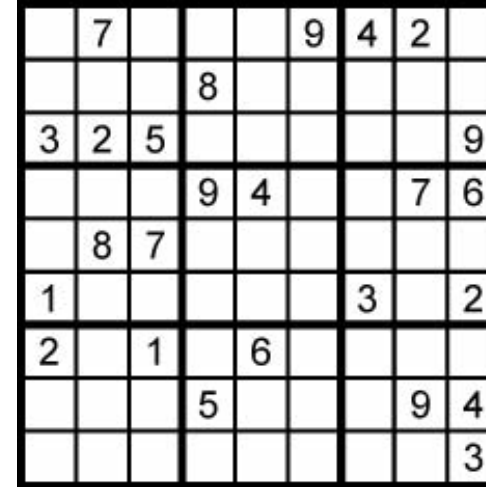
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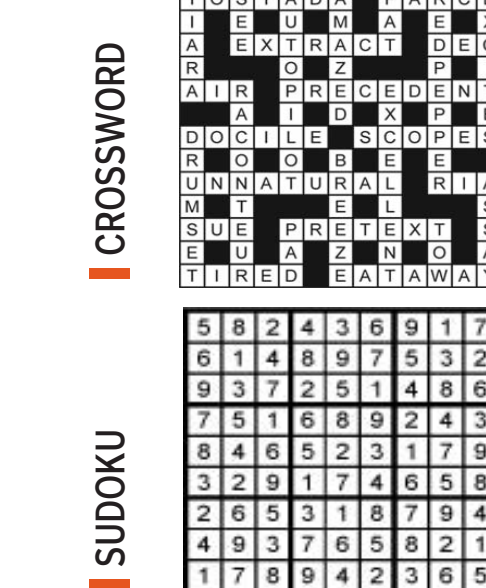
- Copyright ©2021 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Spirit rapping sessions
 - 4 Gallivant
 - 7 Glassy thermoplastic
 - 9 Torcher's misdeed
 - 10 Argentine dance
 - 11 Tabloid topic
 - 12 Rise and shine
 - 14 Sounded like a cat?
 - 17 Canadian police officer
 - 19 Primitive weapon
 - 22 Worker's demand
 - 23 Cheops, e.g.
 - 24 Not heavy
 - 25 Place for a soak
 - 4 Video store category
 - 5 One in the know
 - 6 Snarled
 - 8 Skin problem
 - 12 Fleet commander
 - 13 Humorous
 - 15 Social climber
 - 16 Half-moon tide
 - 18 Larceny
 - 20 Put into law
 - 21 Doctor's order

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



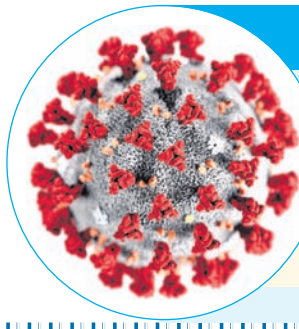
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



UP FOR SALE

A vendor roasts groundnuts alongside the CDA Ring Road in Cuttack, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	21,43,12,188	19,18,04,233	44,70,329
India	3,25,12,366	3,17,54,281	4,35,758
Odisha	10,03,210	9,88,090	7,562

HC seeks reply on delay in civic polls

Opposition parties have alleged that the State Election Commission is deferring elections to the ULBs. The High Court, against such a backdrop, has sought answers from the authorities

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 25: The Orissa High Court Wednesday asked Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra and the State Election Commission (SEC) to furnish replies within four weeks on the issue of conduct of civic body polls in urban local bodies (ULBs). The HC has sought the replies in connection with the writ petitions filed for immediate conduct of civic body polls, said senior lawyer Pitambar Acharya.

It must be stated here that three writ petitions were filed in the High Court by several leaders seeking direction from the Odisha government and the SEC for conducting civic polls in the cities of Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Puri. The three who have filed the writ petitions are: BJP leader Samir Deo, saffron party MLA Jayanta Sarangi and ex-bureaucrat Prasanna Mishra. Elections to



THREE WRIT PETITIONS WERE FILED IN THE HIGH COURT BY SEVERAL LEADERS SEEKING DIRECTION FROM THE ODISHA GOVERNMENT AND THE SEC FOR CONDUCTING CIVIC POLLS IN THE CITIES OF BHUBANESWAR, CUTTACK AND PURI

THE THREE WHO HAVE FILED THE WRIT PETITIONS ARE: BJP LEADER SAMIR DEO, SAFFRON PARTY MLA JAYANTA SARANGI AND EX-BUREAUCRAT PRASANNA MISHRA

ELECTIONS TO THESE URBAN BODIES ARE PENDING SINCE 2018

these urban bodies are pending since 2018. Efforts to conduct the polls have also been affected by

Covid-19 situation in the state. "The SEC has failed to discharge its Constitutional duty and is de-

liberately delaying the civic polls. It is acting hand in glove with state government to ensure that administrators are roped in to looking into the management of the municipal corporations," alleged Acharya.

Acharya said that the HC will further hear the matter after the concerned parties submit their replies within the stipulated time.

Recently, a BJP delegation had met Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal seeking his intervention in the matter.

The party had urged the Governor to direct the SEC to hold simultaneous elections to the civic bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions in Odisha.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Opposition parties, including the BJP, have been accusing the Odisha government and the SEC of creating a crisis by deferring the civic polls for nearly three years.

362 cases against Odisha MPs, MLAs pending with judiciary

The amicus curiae suggested that bail should be cancelled if the accused persons do not appear before the Special Court within two weeks

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 25: The Registrar General of the Orissa High Court has submitted to the Supreme Court that as many as 362 cases against Odisha's MPs and MLAs are pending with the judiciary.

In a status report submitted in the apex court, the Registrar General said that as many as 178 cases seek appearance in the court. Furnishing the district-wise report, the Registrar General stated that 31 cases are pending before Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) Angul out of which 16 cases are for appearance. It also said that 37 cases are pending before Third Additional Sessions Judge, Bhubaneswar of which seven are for appearance and three have been stayed by Orissa High Court.

Significantly, 200 cases are pending before JMFC, Special Court, Bhubaneswar, out of which almost half are at the stage of appearance and 31 cases are for trial.

Backlog woes



The Registrar General stated that 31 cases are pending before JMFC, Angul out of which 16 cases seek appearance

It also said that 37 cases are pending before Third Additional Sessions Judge, Bhubaneswar of which seven are for appearance and three have been stayed by Orissa High Court

Likewise, 200 cases are pending before JMFC, Special Court, Bhubaneswar, out of which almost half are at the stage of appearance and 31 cases are for trial

The judicial officer was posted June 7, 2021 and during this period not a single case has been disposed of.

Further, 47 cases are pending before JMFC, Sambalpur and most of the cases are for appearance. A judicial officer was posted there in November 2019 but not a single case has been disposed of since the appointment.

In order to expedite the cases against lawmakers, amicus curiae Vijay Hansaria submitted in the SC that the High Court may seek explanation from the judicial officers for non-disposal of cases for

longer periods. The amicus curiae also suggested that the HC should be requested to dispose of all cases pending before it within two months.

"The prosecution may be directed to produce the accused persons in cases which are pending at the stage of appearance and/or summons to the accused. In case, the accused persons do not appear before the Special Court within two weeks; bail, if any, granted shall stand cancelled automatically and the accused persons shall be taken into custody," the amicus submitted.

POOR MAINTENANCE



Proper maintenance eludes this park at Belview Square in Cuttack as it has remained shut for the last several months due to Covid-19 pandemic

Covid norm violation at Srimandir alleged



As per SJTA norms, devotees can buy Mahaprasad from Anand Bazar but can't partake the temple delicacies on the shrine premises

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, August 25: Two days after Srimandir reopened for all, allegations regarding violation of Covid norms on the shrine premises came to the fore Wednesday.

As per the allegations, some devotees were seen relishing Mahaprasad at Anand Bazar on Srimandir precincts in violation of the Covid-19 guidelines issued by the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA).

As per SJTA guidelines, devotees can buy Mahaprasad from Anand Bazar but can't partake the temple delicacies on the shrine premises.

"The Covid guidelines are not being adhered to on Srimandir premises. I was shocked to see that devotees were partaking Mahaprasad at Anand Bazar by flouting the guidelines issued by the SJTA. I could not understand how the devotees were flouting the guidelines despite the presence of SJTA

officials and Jagannath Temple Police Service (JTSP) personnel," said Rajesh Kumar Sahu, a devotee from Nayagarh.

Sahu urged the temple administration to take a clear stand on the issue. "My intention is not to hurt the religious sentiment of anyone. If the SJTA allows devotees to partake Mahaprasad at Anand Bazar then it should make it public," Sahu said.

When contacted, SJTA administrator (development) Ajay Kumar Jena said he has no information regarding devotees partaking Mahaprasad at Anand Bazar. "We will look into the allegation," he added.

Notably, the 12th century shrine was out of bounds for devotees for around four months due to the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

Book vax slot on WhatsApp

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: The Union Ministry of Health and MyGov announced the launch of MyGov Corona Helpdesk on WhatsApp that allows users to locate their nearest vaccination centres and book their slots.

To contact MyGov Corona Helpdesk chat bot, citizens can type 'Book Slot' and send it to WhatsApp number +91 9013151515. This will generate a 6-digit one-time password on the respective mobile phone number.



To contact MyGov Corona Helpdesk chat bot, citizens can type 'Book Slot' and send it to WhatsApp number +91 9013151515

Users would then choose a date and location, based on the pin code and vaccine type. The MyGov Corona Helpdesk on WhatsApp, since its launch in March 2020, has emerged as one of most authentic sources of Covid-related information during the pandemic and served as a critical instrument in fighting the public health crisis for over 41 million users across India.

Mohan Bhagwat starts Odisha visit

Bhubaneswar: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat arrived here on a five-day tour of Odisha and held discussions with some prominent persons of the state, a Sangh member said Wednesday. Bhagwat arrived here late Tuesday night. The RSS chief, however, did not hold any public meeting in accordance with the Covid-19 protocol, the Sangh member said. Bhagwat is scheduled to discuss organisational issues with RSS leaders of Odisha and will visit Puri for a darshan of Lord Jagannath and meet Govardhan Peeth Shankaracharya Swami Nischalananda Saraswati Thursday. He will also review the work done by swayam sevaks among the coronavirus affected people and suggest to them ways to deal with the possible third wave of the pandemic, which is likely to hit the state in October.

Man ran over on way to office

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: A youth died in a road mishap on National Highway-16 near Kalinga Vihar under Tamando police limits Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Nrusingha Charan Sethi of Bada Nayapalli village under Begunia police limits in Khurda.

The deceased's farther-in-law informed the police that Sethi was going to his office of Fortune Groups near Nalco Square in Chandrasekharpur area Wednesday morning. Sethi lost his balance over his motorcycle (OR 02 AX 4911) due to heavy traffic and



The deceased was identified as Nrusingha Charan Sethi of Bada Nayapalli village under Begunia police limits

fell down near Kalinga Vihar Square. Suddenly, a bus that followed his bike ran over him.

On being informed, police reached the spot and sent Sethi to All India Institute of Medical

Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar where the doctors declared him brought dead. Police have started an investigation into the incident after registering an unnatural death case.

Pujari's missive to Modi for revival of DDK Sambalpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: Senior BJP leader and Bargarh MP Suresh Pujari Wednesday sought personal intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for revival of the Doordarshan Kendra in Sambalpur.

In a letter to Modi, Pujari said the Sambalpur Doordarshan Kendra, which was commissioned way back in 1978 as the eighth DD centre of the country, has started losing its past glory and is standing as a structure only.

"The DDK Sambalpur has played a pivotal role in promoting and enriching the rich culture, heritage, tradition, music, dance and Sambalpur folk and heritage of our area including that of the tribals of the region. It also broadcast programmes for the farmers,"

In a letter to Modi, Pujari said the Sambalpur Doordarshan Kendra, which was commissioned way back in 1978 as the eighth DD centre of the country, has started losing its past glory

Pujari said in his letter.

Pujari also said that the programme generating facility (PGF) studio has almost become defunct as there are no programme staffers even though there is a sanctioned strength of 15.

The sorry state of affairs could be understood from the fact that the lone cameraman available against

two sanctioned posts was withdrawn and transferred by the Prasar Bharati, thereby putting the last nail in the coffin, he further stated.

The Parliamentarian urged the PM to ensure that the vacant posts including that of two cameramen in the production unit be filled up at the earliest.

Pujari also demanded upgradation of the centre to a full-fledged DDK with ultramodern studio, DD-6 (RLSS) channel for 24X7 service and a fully digitised news van (broadcast van).

He wrote this letter after receiving a memorandum from Western Odisha Artistes' Association led by Padmashree Haladhar Nag, Padmashree Jitendra Haripal and Padmashree Mitrabhanu Gontia.

NGT notice to NHAI on jumbo underpass

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: The Eastern Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued a notice to the regional office of the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) seeking its response on apprehensions regarding a proposed underpass for elephants.

This comes after a petition was filed before the environment watchdog seeking its intervention in the case where the design of an underpass on the proposed stretch of National Highway-55 was not according to the needs of an elephant passage.

The petitioner in the case, Wildlife Society of Odisha, had earlier claimed that the proposed highway which was planned to be constructed under expansion/upgradation of NH-55 from Manguli to Angul and from Angul to Sambalpur passed through four districts of Odisha which are known to host a good population of



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

the elephants.

It was claimed that the stretch of NH-55 fell under the Mahanadi Elephant Reserve and adjoined the buffer zone of Satkosia Tiger Reserve.

The petitioner had claimed that the guidelines of Wildlife Institute of India Report-2016 regarding 'Eco-friendly Measures to Mitigate Impacts of Linear Infrastructure

on Wildlife' recommended the limit of a span of an underpass as 50 metres with height of 6-8 metres and width of 10-12 metres.

However, the underpass, in no case, should be less than 7 metres in height and the span should not be less than 50 metres. The petitioner had claimed that NHAI had reduced the span of the underpass to 25 metres instead of 50 metres

NORMS SAY THAT THE UNDERPASS, IN NO CASE, SHOULD BE LESS THAN 7 METRES IN HEIGHT AND THE SPAN SHOULD NOT BE LESS THAN 50 METRES

THE PETITIONER CLAIMED THAT NHAI HAD REDUCED THE SPAN OF THE UNDERPASS TO 25 METRES INSTEAD OF 50 METRES WHICH COULD DETER THE MOVEMENT OF ELEPHANTS ON THE STRETCH

which could deter the movement of elephants on the stretch.

"In our opinion, the matter requires consideration. Issue notice to Respondent No 4, Regional Officer, National Highway Authority of India, Bhubaneswar; returnable within four weeks," the NGT order said. The next hearing of the case has been fixed on September 27, 2021.

3rd wave to be less severe: DMET

Infection among kids inches up to 14.76%



As per the study, the cases in Odisha would go up to 2,000 per day if we lower our guard against the virus. The daily infections may go up to 5,000 if there are some new mutants

third wave would be less in comparison with the second wave," Mohanty said. Citing the IIT study, Mohanty said that Odisha would witness fewer cases during the third wave. "Now, our state is reporting less than a thousand cases daily. The state may see an upward trend in infection if there are some mutant variants of Covid," he added.

Odisha reported 887 new Covid-19 cases and confirmed 69 more deaths Wednesday, a Health department official said. Among the new patients are 131 children, which is 14.76 per cent against the previous day's 12.8 per cent, indicating the rise in the number of cases among those below 18 years, he said. As many as 1,260 persons below 18 years were found to be Covid positive since August 15 when the government started mapping the paediatric population, he said, adding that 30 of them have died. The state has so far reported 10,03,210 Covid-19 cases and 7,562 deaths. The new cases were reported after testing 68,717 samples, recording a positivity rate of 1.29 per cent. Khurda district of which state capital Bhubaneswar is a part reported the highest 323 fresh cases

UU to hold semesters of law students online

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: Two days after students of various law colleges staged a demonstration in front of the Utkal University (UU) here, the varsity authorities Wednesday decided to hold pending semester examinations online. According to UU's Controller of Examination Sarat Majhi, the pending semester examinations of law students will be held online on an emergency basis. "As per the fresh guidelines of Bar Council of India (BCI), examinations are a must. Hence, we have no option than to hold examinations for the pending semesters. Students will get adequate gaps between each test for preparation," Majhi said. While the third and seventh semester examinations will start September 3 and 9 respectively, the test for the first and fifth semesters will begin September 13 and 19 respectively, Majhi said, adding that the remaining semesters like eighth, ninth and 10th will be held after Durga Puja holidays. Earlier in the day, the law students met Higher Education

Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo and discussed the postponement of the exam. Sahoo is reported to have highlighted the issue with UU Vice-Chancellor Sabita Acharya. Meanwhile, Deep Kumar Mohanty, a fourth year student of University Law College here, said that they are not satisfied with the decision. "We are not happy with the varsity's decision to hold exams that too online. Anyways, now our only demand is that the university must declare results on time so that we can prepare for different entrance exams," Mohanty added. Sources said that students of law colleges, including University Law College, Capital Law College and The Law College in Cuttack, Monday demonstrated in front of Utkal University, condemning the varsity's earlier decision to hold examinations of four semesters within six months. Demanding auto-promotion in pending semesters, the agitating students urged the varsity authorities to resume classes for the current semester and subsequently hold its examination online.

Migrate to NAD portal, edu institutes told

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: The Higher Education department Wednesday directed all the state public universities and all government and non-government autonomous colleges under the department to implement the National Academic Depository (NAD) in the academic institutions. The department directed that from January 1, 2022, all universities and autonomous colleges should completely migrate to NAD portal. National Academic Depository (NAD) is a 24x7 online storehouse of all academic awards, certificates, diplomas, degrees, mark sheets etc. NAD not only ensures easy access to and retrieval of an academic award but also validates and guarantees its authenticity

National Academic Depository is a 24x7 online storehouse of all academic awards, certificates, diplomas, degrees and mark sheets



and safe storage. Saswat Mishra, Principal Secretary of Higher Education department said that till now 13 universities and 18 government autonomous colleges have registered under the NAD portal. He also informed that out of 17 non-government autonomous colleges, four colleges have not yet been registered. Those are Banki Autonomous College, Nayagarh Autonomous College, Udayanath Autonomous College, Adaspur and Khariar

Autonomous College, Khariar, Nuapada. Mishra said that all the colleges and universities are requested to take steps for immediate registration under NAD portal, if not already registered. Further, you are requested to upload past academic certificates and mark sheets issued from 2015 calendar year and onwards by December 31, 2021 positively. Earlier, the University Grants Commission (UGC) had urged all colleges and universities to implement

the NAD to store academic awards like degrees, certificates, mark sheets in a digital format. This will help students to access their academic certificates from anywhere, anytime, and will also help in validating their authenticity, safe storage, and easy retrieval. The UGC has asked the colleges and universities to upload/link their academic award data with DigLocker-NAD and advise their students to register themselves as well. The HEIs are also instructed to create a hyperlink of the NAD URL on their respective websites and set up a NAD cell for proper implementation. The details of all the HEIs who have registered themselves with NAD will reflect on its official portal. Students can also register themselves by visiting the same.

MEET ON BORDER DISPUTE



Speaker Suriya Narayan Patro presides over a Standing Committee Meeting on border dispute through videoconferencing at Odisha Legislative Assembly in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

Reconstituted Srimandir panel to meet today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, August 25: The maiden meeting of the newly-constituted Srimandir Managing Committee is scheduled to be held Thursday, temple sources said. In the first meeting, sub-committees on rituals, budget, welfare, establishment and Ratna Bhandar (temple treasury) would be formed, temple sources added. The managing committee may discuss issues pertaining to structural status of Ratna Bhandar and audit of the ornaments and other precious items stored in the temple treasury. There were reports which claimed that several cracks have appeared on the walls of Ratna Bhandar the roof of which is also leaking. "The state government has reconstituted the committee whose duration will be three years. There are several challenges before the new committee. Timely implementation of the heritage corridor project would be the priority of the temple panel," said a social activist.

Ganjam contractor duped by godman

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: More trouble for the self-proclaimed godman, Bijayanandji Maharaj, recently arrested by the crime branch on the charges of fraud, as sources in the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch revealed about his involvement in another cheating case. Bijayanand Choudhary alias Bijayanandji Maharaj had allegedly duped a class 1 contractor from Ganjam of Rs 25 lakhs by promising to help him get a tender few years back. The EOW officials told media

persons that probe is on to find out whether the allegations are true or not. Meanwhile, two bank accounts of the fake godman with the State Bank of India have already been frozen by the EOW. The sleuths found the transaction of Rs 1 lakh in the account of the Baba. Earlier, Bijayananda and one of his associates were recently arrested by the EOW for defrauding special class contractor of Rs 3 crore by impersonating officials of Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC).

SECURITYMEN FOIL ATM LOOT BID; 2 HELD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: The officials of a private security agency Wednesday foiled a loot attempt on an ATM located at Badheibanka in Old Town area under Lingaraj police limits here. The officials also succeeded in collaring two looters while another managed to get the officials a slip. The accused duo who reportedly hails from Uttar Pradesh was handed over to the Lingaraj police for interrogation. Police have started an investigation into the matter by detaining the duo at Lingaraj police station.



Police sources revealed that the duo is found involved in several cases of loot, bank fraud incidents across the state. Police came to know during the initial probe that the accused persons possessed an advanced chip used to steal personal banking details of different account holders and later withdrew money from their accounts through ATM machines without the knowledge of the bank. Subsequently, the banks were forced to pay the withdrawn amount into the bank accounts of the victims targeted by the fraudsters. The accused have allegedly looted several lakhs of rupees from around 20 ATM kiosks in Cuttack, around 25 ATM kiosks in Puri and the Capital. The officials of State Bank of India had recently lodged a case at the Capital police station in June 2021 following the withdrawal of money through similar modus operandi from an SBI ATM in the locality.

3 colleges get new principals

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: Higher Education (HE) department Wednesday appointed principals-cum-secretary of three colleges in the state. Sources said Rajib Lochan Acharya, Reader in Economics, has been appointed as the principal-cum-secretary of Sonepur College in Subarnapur district. Similarly, Surendranath Dash, Reader in Economics, has been posted as the principal-cum-secretary of Mahanga Puspagiri Mahavidyalaya, Mahanga in Cuttack district and Prabhakar Rout, Reader in English, as principal-cum-secretary of Pattamundai (Degree) College in Kendrapada. In a letter, HE additional secretary Surendra Kumar Panda said that the newly-appointed principals will work temporarily as principals in addition to their duties and teaching in their own subjects. They cannot claim the posts of regular principals in future, said the letter.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Notary Public, B.M. Satapathy, Boudh, I, Swastimala, C/o. Manas Ranjan Mahakul have changed my first name from "Swastimala" to "Swastika". Henceforth, I shall be known as "Swastika Mahakul" for all purpose.

TAKING TO STREETS



Construction workers' body stages a demonstration in front of the Labour Commissioner's office in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, to press for fulfilment of their demands

IMD: Heavy rain may lash state from Friday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: The regional office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Wednesday said that heavy rain would lash several parts of the state from Friday onwards. The department also predicted that different parts of the state could see thunderstorms and lightning Thursday. The IMD said, "Thunderstorms with lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places in Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Kalahandi, Bolangir, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj." It said that light to moderate rain could occur in different parts of the state Thursday and that it is likely to continue throughout the state. The department also issued thunderstorm warning for Friday besides issuing warning of heavy rains. "Thunderstorms along with

lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Kandhamal and Boudh." It also added, "Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places of Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak and Jagpur." The weatherman also issued heavy rain warning for Saturday and Sunday though it didn't issue any such warning after that period. The Met department did not issue any alert for fishermen. It said that the state capital might see one or two spells of rain or thundershower. The maximum temperature in the Capital city might go up to 34 degrees Celsius, the IMD said. Only 11 districts reported normal, excess/largely excess rainfall in the last 24 hours, said the IMD.

KISS celebrates 4th Foundation Day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: The Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences Deemed-to-be University (KISS-DU) celebrated its fourth Foundation Day Wednesday. Founder of KISS & KIIT Achyuta Samanta said many research articles have been published under the aegis of all the Research Chairs instituted in the university. "I am glad to share in this forum that we're going to start KISS-Technology Business Incubator on KISS-DU premises," he stated.

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Livelihood boost for Swabhiman Anchal

ADMIN HAS RELEASED 2.25 LAKH FINGERLINGS IN BALIMELA RESERVOIR; THE MOVE IS PART OF AN INITIATIVE TO ENSURE LIVELIHOOD AUGMENTATION OF FISHERMEN LIVING IN THE REGION

Cong seeks high level probe into scrapped mining leases

POST NEWS NETWORK



FILE PHOTO

Malkangiri, August 25: A day after the tenders for 48 mining leases for minor minerals were cancelled in the district over irregularities, the Congress has demanded a high level investigation into the mess Wednesday.

Senior Congress leader and former MP Pradip Majhi said he and his party leaders had been alleging tender fixing in the lease process for stone mines in the district.

Stating that the cancellation of 48 leases by Collector Vishal Singh has substantiated their allegation, Majhi observed that if a high level probe is conducted, more skeletons will tumble out of the cupboard.

He also pointed out that permission to operate seven stone quarries had been granted to a mine owner of Andhra Pradesh while the Revenue Divisional Commissioner (South) had looked into the illegalities.

Former Collector Yeddula Vijay had shown favouritism to

the Andhra mine owner. The former Collector was also accused of taking boxes containing the tender papers to his house, he added.

Pradip Majhi alleged that Vijay had received kickbacks worth crores of rupees and an SUV from the mine owner of Andhra Pradesh for awarding him the lease of seven stone quarries. Majhi further alleged that many officials of the district administration are involved in the tender fixing issue, but no action has been taken against them.

"Hence, there is a need for a high level probe into the matter to bring those involved in the scam to the fore," he noted.



A fisherman receiving a life jacket at a programme

The Collector and MLA gave away life jackets and fishing nets worth ₹20,000 to over 2,000 families residing in the Swabhiman Anchal. The distribution of life jackets and fishing nets will benefit over 2,000 families

and strengthen the tribal economy in the region, the Collector said.

Sources said fishing is the primary occupation for most of the residents in the area which was once cut off from the mainland due to absence of liveli-

Last year, over 70 lakh fish fingerlings were released on various river ghats of Janbai, Muktaba, Maliguda, Karlamal, Gurupriya, Chittrakonda reservoir dyke no-1, Pipalpadar and Kenduguda

The state government decided to release fingerlings in the reservoir, provide life jackets and safety kits to the fishermen. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had announced a ₹100-crore package for the Swabhiman Anchal while inaugurating the Gurupriya bridge. Over ₹20 crore from this package is being spent for livelihood augmentation of the fishermen

Naveen Patnaik had announced a ₹100-crore package for the Swabhiman Anchal while inaugurating the Gurupriya bridge. Over ₹20 crore from this package is being spent on livelihood augmentation of the fishermen

Last year, over 70 lakh fish fingerlings were released on various river ghats of Janbai, Muktaba, Maliguda, Karlamal, Gurupriya, Chittrakonda reservoir dyke no-1, Pipalpadar and Kenduguda.

Meanwhile, six fishermen cooperative societies have been formed in the area. There is a plan to induct over 2,000 fishermen as members from the Swabhiman Anchal. Some of the cooperative societies are Maa Durga Primary Fishermen's Cooperative Society (Spillway), Gurupriya Primary Fishermen's Cooperative Society and Sudangeswar Primary Fishermen's Cooperative Society.

Deputy fisheries officer Surendra Sekhar Achari, cooperative inspectors Sangram Keshari Biswal and Kailash Chandra Patra conducted the programme. Chief Minister

hood opportunities. The residents risk their lives while catching fish from the reservoir. Some of them often drown due to lack of safety kits and proper boats.

The state government decided to provide life jackets and safety kits to the fishermen. Chief Minister

AP vets hold checkup camp for livestock in Kotia panchayat

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pottangi, August 25: Even as the district administration has offered stiff resistance to the land grabbing bid by Andhra Pradesh in Kotia panchayat of Koraput district, the latter is leaving no stone unturned in creating an atmosphere of unrest in the Odisha panchayat, a report said.

Officials of the neighbouring state repeatedly make attempts to stray into the Kotia panchayat bordering their state and creating unrest by arranging various programmes.

In the latest move, some veterinarians of Salur block in Andhra Pradesh visited the panchayat and conducted the health examination of the livestock at Upar Sembli, Dhulipadar and Tala Sembli vil-



lages. The move is allegedly a part of their strategy to lure away the residents towards Andhra Pradesh and bring the panchayat under its jurisdiction.

Assistant director Dr P Sanyasi Rao, Dr D Suresh and Dr M Sanyasi Rao of Salur veterinary hospital visited the villages with a medical team. They conducted the health examination of livestock. The team also distributed medicines to the villagers for their livestock.

The visiting officials claimed

that the programme would continue till September 4 and be organized in all villages of the panchayat. The officials also announced that health cards for the livestock would be distributed to the villagers soon.

Attending the programme, Bisu Gemei, a former sarpanch of Andhra and a resident of Talaganjeipadar village in the panchayat, expressed thanks to the Andhra Pradesh government for carrying out developmental work in the panchayat. He said residents of his panchayat are always with the Andhra government and will forever stay with it.

Officials of the Salur block also conducted a plantation drive at Phagunsineri and Phatusineri villages August 21 and urged the people to plant more trees in the area.

FESTIVE FERVOUR



An artisan busy carving a Ganesha idol ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi in Berhampur

OP PHOTO

Lifer to youth for kin's murder

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, August 25: A local court sentenced a youth to life imprisonment after convicting him for the murder of his brother-in-law, Wednesday.



District judge Rekha Prasad also slapped a fine of ₹10,000 on Jinu Sisha while handing down the punishment for murdering his brother-in-law Panda Pujari in 2019. In default of the fine, the convict has to undergo an additional one year of imprisonment, the court said.

According to the case diary, Jinu, while visiting his brother-in-law Panda Pujari's house, murdered him and fled, October 26, 2019. Later, the victim's father lodged a complaint leading to his arrest.

Mineral mafia plays havoc on cashew fields

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayarath/Ranpur, August 25: Mineral mafia has been playing havoc with cashew forests under the Odisha Cashew Development Corporation in Ranpur area of Nayarath district. They have cleared thousands of cashew trees and looted minor minerals like laterite stone and murrum worth crores of rupees, reports said.

Locals alleged that despite repeated complaints, the administration is not taking action against mineral smugglers

The reports said mineral mafia has chopped off 5000 cashew trees in Mayurjhalia mouza within a year while cashew forests have been dotted with massive pits due to extraction of minor minerals. Even pasture land has not been spared in the area.



Illegal extraction of laterite and murrum is still going on while the state government has to incur huge revenue losses, locals alleged, stating that despite repeated complaints, the administration is not taking action against mineral smugglers.

Upset over the damage to valuable cashew forests, people of Janjikia have reported the matter to the cashew corporation and the Chief Minister.

According to reports, the cashew forests spread over 144 acres near Mayurjhalia. These forests were developed by the Odisha Cashew Development Corporation with the help of locals about 50 years ago.

Over 30,000 cashew plants had been raised in the forest. Earlier, local people used to take the forest on lease and earn lakhs of rupees. However, over the last one year, the cashew forests had not been leased out.

Taking advantage of this situation, mineral mafia has been active in the forests. They have been digging out tonnes of murrum and laterite every day.

A number of Hyva trucks have been transporting minerals to Bhubaneswar, Khurda, Puri and Nayarath on NH-16.

Basant Parida, a resident of Jankia, said, "We have appraised the Ranpur tehsildar, Chandpur police and the sub-collector of the ongoing illegal mineral mining. This is happening because the forests have not been leased out. 5000 trees have been felled." Manoranjan Senapati, another local, said the cashew forests are now pockmarked with huge pits as deep as 20 to 30 feet all over the area.

Similarly, pasture land is also being targeted by mafia while the administration has no control over such illegal activities, it was alleged.

When contacted, tehsildar Sanjay Kumar Samantray said he has not received any complaint. "If I get such complaint, raids will be conducted," he added.

DENGUE SPREADS IN GANJAM; FIVE MORE CASES DETECTED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 25: Dengue cases are on the rise in most parts of Ganjam district. Five new cases were detected in the district over last 48 hours, taking the tally this year to 23, a report said.

Amid the ongoing second wave of Covid-19, surfacing of dengue has caused panic among people in five blocks including Sadar, Sorada, Purusottampur, Kukudakhandi and Kabisuryanagar. Two new cases were reported from Sorada and Purusottampur Wednesday. Three cases had been detected Tuesday, according to sources of the health department.

The test report of a 25-year old youth of Lokamari under Sorada block came out positive Wednesday while a 70-year old of Gopinathpur under Purusottampur block was down with dengue.

A 18-year-old girl has tested positive for dengue while a 48-year old has reported positive in Kabisuryanagar. Another case was reported from Patiguda under Sanakhemundi block.

All the five patients are undergoing treatment at MKCG Medical College and Hospital here.

As dengue cases are on



the rise, a team of health officials visited affected villages like Gandhiagad and Ananatei while another team has visited Patiguda under Sanakhemundi block. Meanwhile, the health department has taken up a number of preventive measures in the affected areas.

A special dengue ward has been opened at the district headquarters hospital. Anganwadi ASHAs workers and ANMs are carrying out awareness drive.

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Angul farmer's innovations attract attention

A young farmer from Putagadia village under Chhendipada block in Angul district has come out with a mini-power tiller using scrap materials

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhendipada, August 25: Proving the adage 'Necessity is the mother of invention' true, a young farmer from Putagadia village under Chhendipada block in Angul district has manufactured a mini-power tiller. Pratap Dandapat has been talked about in his locality for his achievement.

As a farmer, Dandapat had always been living a life full of stress and pressure. He did not have bullocks to plough his land and nor did he have the financial ability to hire



a tractor for agricultural work. However, his 'never-say-die' attitude and urge to produce crops saw him trying out new methods and he finally came out with a power tiller.

Once the idea of making a mini-power tiller using discarded materials and an old motorcycle came to his mind, he acquired iron scraps. Subsequently, he started working on the tiller and managed to achieve

his goal of making one. He is now using it to grow paddy.

However, Pratap's desire to innovate did not end there. He has also made a machine using discarded bottles for spraying insecticides.

Pratap said his family depends on farming and does not have any other source of earning. "Every year, we have to hire bullocks and tractors and I lose a lot of money. This

Pratap says: Every year, we have to hire bullocks and tractors and I lose a lot of money. This year, however, it has been different. Due to my inventions I have managed to save a lot of money. I am happy that my plans have come off

Bapuji Dehury, a villager, says: Pratap has set an example for others. He has proved 'where there is a will there is a way.' The mini-power tiller manufactured by Pratap will be of great help

year; however, it has been different. Due to my inventions, I have managed to save a lot of money. I am happy that my plans have come off," said Pratap.

Bapuji Dehury, a villager, was all praise for Pratap and his invention. "Pratap has set an example for others. He has proved 'where there is a will there is a way.' Engaging a tractor to plough fields made a huge dent in our little savings. The mini-power tiller manufactured by Pratap

will be of great help," said Dehury. Lambodar Dandapat, a resident of Putagadia village, echoed the same sentiments. "When we heard that Pratap was making a mini-power tiller, we were a bit skeptical regarding the success of the project. But Pratap proved us wrong. He surprised us with his innovation. Other farmers and agriculture students are visiting him to see his creation," observed Lambodar.

Anil Pradhan, sarpanch of Korada panchayat, heaped praises on Pratap. "He is talented and he should be given enough opportunities and help. The district agriculture department should come forward to help Pratap and invest in manufacturing low-cost agricultural equipment.

When contacted, block agriculture officer Binod Kumar Dalei said they had had no information about Pratap's invention. "However, assistance would be provided to him to manufacture agriculture equipment. His name will also be recommended for state-level award," Dalei informed.

No. B-335

Govt. of Odisha

"e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Bid Identification No. E.E. PKL (R&B) - 06/2021-22
E-mail address: eepwd.pkl@rediffmail.com

1. Name of the Work	: Road Works
2. Numbers of Work	: 11 (Eleven)
3. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 22.00 lakh to Rs. 50.00 lakh
4. Period of Completion	: 3 (Three) Calendar Months
5. Date & time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From 11.00 A.M. of Dt.27.08.2021 to 05.00 P.M. of Dt.05.09.2021
6. Last date/time for receipt of bids in the portal	: 05.00 P.M. of Dt.05.09.2021
7. Date of Opening of Bid	: 11.30 A.M. of Dt.07.09.2021
8. Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Executive Engineer, Panikoli (R&B) Division, Panikoli

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>.

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Panikoli (R&B) Division
OIPR-34067/11/0007/2122

FOCUS DIPLOMACY

INDIA AND THE TALIBAN



Expecting the Afghan government to fight let alone win against the Taliban was in effect depending on continued US occupation of Afghanistan to prop up that government. That has the effect of making Indian policy subservient to the United States and its fickle positions and sharp self-interests

Only last month, Foreign Minister S Jaishankar said: "We were very clear that there must be a negotiated political settlement in Afghanistan, that there cannot be a military solution, there cannot be a takeover by use of force in Afghanistan...we would never accept any outcome which is decided by force." This was the time the Chinese had formal meetings with the Taliban.

Expecting the Afghan government to fight let alone win against the Taliban was in effect depending on continued US occupation of Afghanistan to prop up that government. That has the effect of making Indian policy subservient to the United States and its fickle positions and sharp self-interests.

At this stage, India appears to be in a very uncomfortable spot. Reports say the Taliban requested the Indian government to retain its diplomatic presence in the country before India evacuated its personnel. That 'Taliban request is a good sign. After all, how can a major political and military force like India stay on the sidelines when the US, the Chinese, of course the Pakistanis, and even the Russians begin talks, open business and prepare for collaborations with the Taliban? Talks must secure Indian interests, with clear messaging that it is in the interests of the Taliban not to support any anti-India activities.

Diplomacy demands that channels of communications remain open, confidence be built and areas of collaboration be explored directly with the Taliban, however loathsome they may seem to be. That is the only way India can continue to engage in Afghanistan, protect its interests and guard the investments that have been poured into that country, including in infrastructure and other assets. And if that does not happen soon, the US would have lost the war in Afghanistan but India would have lost the war, given up its interests and become a helpless bystander. It would be something to lose a war that was not ours to lose.

The writer is a journalist and a faculty member at SPJIMR. Views are personal.

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The developments in Afghanistan send out many complex messages but the one that is not in doubt is that an endless supply of money weaponry and soldiers cannot help secure a rugged land or decimate its hardy, rag-tag fighters. VP Singh used to say you can lose an election for want of money but you never win an election just because you have money. Of wars and occupations, it can similarly be said, that you can lose a frontier for want of money or guns or technology but you can never win it just because you have access to money, technology, people or for that matter highly paid consultants and mercenaries of the Blackwater variety.

The Afghan forces that the US trained and hoped would take over security duties eventually were never really up to the task, given that the story never went away that the Taliban would eventually return. The only incentive for the propped-up forces then was to keep the money flowing, and more that flowed, the more it corrupted them and the weaker it made them. The Taliban, not to be lionised, still had some kind of drive and direction; the American-supported troops only worked as brown mercenaries to the white ones that America imported from its increasingly privatised business of war-making.

The Americans knew all of this more than anybody else. From a US standpoint at least, this was known to be the inevitable, even an immediate outcome they would live with, and in fact not as bad as the initial PR disaster it creates. This is because the US has by now known, understood and even befriended players in the Taliban.

The 2012 book 'Afghanistan: The Perfect Failure' by the sharp military analyst John Cook noted: "If the (Afghan) soldiers feel like simply walking away from their unit, they do it and there is no retribution. If they feel like coming back, they come back. If they don't, the recruiters find a replacement. They are in the army for one reason and one reason only: for the money." The difference between the Afghan army and the energised and committed Taliban, he

wrote, was easy to understand, yet impossible to correct.

That situation only worsened with time. The last two years have been the worst, and just as the Trump administration made it clear that the US would after all withdraw, the pace of collapse intensified. The Afghan forces gave up their posts even before the Taliban marched on them. And the Taliban were no less funded through the flourishing opium trade. Afghanistan is the world's largest supplier of illegal opiates, with the crop generating USD 3 billion at the farm gate, and creating the equivalent of roughly 600,000 full-time jobs, more than the number employed by the Afghan defence forces, according to a 2021 report by the US Institute of Peace.

The reports of various US agencies on the inevitability of the Taliban make for fascinating reading. For example, the 46th quarterly report by SIGAR (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction) noted that "enemy attacks" in Oct-Dec 2019 were as many as 90 a day, a total of 8,204 in that quarter, the highest in the entire decade! As the attacks rose, the Afghan forces, often stoned, sleepy and irreverent, carried out just 31 per cent of operations in-

dependently US forces commanded and executed 70 per cent of the counter offensives as 2019 ended.

All this begs the question: What was New Delhi thinking, doing and strategising while the situation deteriorated and slipped from bad to worse, in full view of anyone who cared to take notice? Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu told the Afghan President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani that "stability and prosperity will come to Afghanistan only if the gains of the past 18 years...are preserved." This came in October 2019, on the sidelines of the 18th NAM summit, just about the time the Center for Strategic and International Studies warned: "The very survival of the Afghan government is uncertain after a legislative election that has left the Afghan parliament just as weak and ineffective as it has been since its creation."

The Indian government did open back-channel talks with the Taliban last year, but the delayed effort, coupled with the apparent reluctance to intensify the dialogue and the consequent half-hearted nature of the engagement meant that India has not built much influence with the players who will now control Afghanistan while every other power has secured its position.



Jagdish Rattanan

DIPLOMACY DEMANDS THAT CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATIONS REMAIN OPEN, CONFIDENCE BE BUILT AND AREAS OF COLLABORATION BE EXPLORED DIRECTLY WITH THE TALIBAN, HOWEVER LOATHSOME THEY MAY SEEM TO BE



Gloria Abraham Peralta

The COVID-19 pandemic, economic downturns, climate change, and conflict have all contributed to an increase in hunger and malnutrition

Let us keep flaming in our heart the fire of progress.
THE MOTHER



Fairer Food Future

This year, governments can ensure that better international rules help get us back on track toward a fairer and more sustainable agricultural trading system, and overcome recent setbacks in our efforts to tackle hunger and malnutrition. The United Nations Food Systems Summit in September, the UN climate conference (COP26) in November, and the World Trade Organisation ministerial conference starting later that month provide policymakers ample opportunity to deliver.

The COVID-19 pandemic, economic downturns, climate change, and conflict have all contributed to an increase in hunger and malnutrition. And the recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is the latest in a series of warnings that show why governments must take immediate bold action to address the challenges we face.

In particular, governments should focus on correcting and reducing the distortions currently burdening food and agricultural markets. If policymakers can improve how these markets function, vulnerable producers and consumers stand to benefit the most.

Clearly, business as usual is not an option. According to recent estimates from UN agencies, between 720 million and 811 million people faced hunger in 2020. Moreover, moderate or severe food insecurity has climbed slowly for the past six years, and now affects nearly one in three people globally. We must change course if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger and malnutrition by the end of this decade.

The expected increase in the world's population to nearly 10 billion by 2050 adds a further element of urgency. Better rules regarding trade and markets can help improve food security by supporting efforts to create jobs, raise incomes, and boost agricultural productivity sustainably. Better-functioning markets would also bolster the food system's resilience to global warming, as temperature and precipitation patterns change, and extreme weather events such as droughts, floods, and storms become more frequent and intense.

At the same time, the recent uptick in hunger and malnutrition must be seen in the context of the significant progress achieved in the last quarter-century. During this period, tens of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty and food insecurity as average incomes have risen and markets have become more integrated.

According to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation, trade in food and agriculture has more than doubled in real terms since 1995, with the share of trade between developing countries also growing rapidly. Recently, new digital technologies have contributed to a transformation in food and agricultural markets by increasing productivity and easing cross-border trade in goods and services.

Furthermore, countries have negotiated and signed a growing number of new bilateral and regional trade agreements as they seek to improve their market access and deepen integration with trading partners - both in neighbouring regions and farther afield. But, efforts to update global trade rules for food and agriculture have advanced only slowly.

At a 2015 meeting in Nairobi, trade ministers struck a deal to end agricultural export subsidies, thereby fulfilling one clear commitment under the SDGs. And in Bali two years earlier, countries reached an agreement under WTO auspices on other food and agriculture issues as part of a broader trade package. But much more needs to be done in order to address longstanding problems in food and agricultural markets, and ensure that global rules are also fit for purpose in the future.

In the run-up to the WTO's ministerial conference, I am chairing talks among negotiators on a slate of seven farm-trade topics, including subsidies for goods such as cotton, restrictions on food exports, and the challenge of improving farmers' access to markets. Also on the agenda are rules governing the procurement of food for public stocks, safeguards for farm goods, and rules on measures that resemble export subsidies. In all areas, improving transparency by making more information easily available is a critical concern for many countries.

Ministers could take a significant step forward at the WTO conference by agreeing to an outcome on food and agriculture that helps to rebuild trust, lays out a path forward, and galvanises political engagement. This would enable us to re-establish confidence in our collective ability to address the challenges we face.

Today, we must strive to overcome the pandemic, build more inclusive and sustainable economies, and lay the foundations for a fairer and more resilient future. An agreement at the WTO that improves food and agricultural trade rules would be an important start.

The writer, Ambassador of Costa Rica to the WTO, is Chair of the Special Session of the WTO Committee on Agriculture.

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WISDOM CORNER

- I don't think of all the misery but of the beauty that still remains.** ANNE FRANK
- I have never met a man so ignorant that I couldn't learn something from him.** GALILEO GALILEI
- Let us be grateful to the mirror for revealing to us our appearance only.** SAMUEL BUTLER

WORDSWORTH

Palooka

The word has two main senses, both principally American. One refers to an unsuccessful boxer, especially one who is both large and stupid, the other to any large and stupid or clumsy person, an oaf or lout. Many older people first came across the word as the name of the boxer in Ham Fisher's famous comic strip. This is variously stated as having begun in 1928 or 1930, though the truth seems to be that it was briefly syndicated in the earlier year but then disappeared for a while, only becoming widely available two years later. The strip featured the eponymous Joe Palooka as a slow-witted and inarticulate boxer, even though "his heart was pure and his ideals high." But Ham Fisher didn't invent the word: it had been around for several years by the time his strip first appeared. (The earliest one can find is in the Lincoln Star, Nebraska, in March 1923: "But [Jack] Dempsey against some palooka who had been press agented into greatness and into the form of a Dempsey menace - that would pack any outdoor arena." The casual reference shows that it was even then familiar to the writer and that he expected his readers to know it.) The boxing associations seem to have been particularly strong, to judge from the magazine The Ring, which in November 1926 glossed the word to mean "A tenth rater, a boxer without ability, a nobody" and which implied it had been known for some time. It's often said - following the statement by HL Mencken in the 1945 supplement to his work The American Language, which in turn echoes the belief of a writer in Esquire in September 1936 - that palooka was the invention of Jack Conway, the editor of Variety magazine in the 1920s who was largely responsible for developing the magazine's weird style; he is credited by Mencken with creating a whole group of slang terms that include pushover and baloney.

SPECTRUM SOCIETY

3 R's to 4 C's: Rethinking education



Chandra Shekhar Chitrata

EVEN THE MUCH VAUNTED NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020, CONTINUES TO PERPETUATE THE MYTH OF CREATING EMPLOYABILITY THROUGH THE EXISTING SYSTEM OF FORMAL EDUCATION

Susant can be described as literate but uneducated for though he has a degree, in engineering no less, his education hasn't made him employable in any of the sectors that he would like to work in. Instead, he today earns a living by delivering food - an occupation without job security or prospects of a career.

When asked what his plans for the future were, he stares blankly for a little while before mumbling that whatever the future brings, he will face it.

As a society, we have thousands of such young people trapped in such temporary occupations, without any idea of how they will be able to afford to transition into their next phase in life - as spouses, as parents, as support for their parents.

The tragedy is that we are continuing to add to this population by not taking steps to ensure our youth are prepared to face the future.

Even the much vaunted National Education Policy 2020, continues to perpetuate the myth of creating employability through the existing system of formal education.

But never before has our society faced the prospect of such rapid growth in technology, and it is practically impossible to predict the

knowledge and skills that will be relevant going forward.

This is why an education system that is based only on the 3 R's (reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic) and stresses on memory and recall of subject knowledge, without incorporating the 4 C's - curiosity, creativity, compassion and courage, will be woefully inadequate in preparing children for the approaching challenges.

Children by nature are extremely curious as they explore the world around them. Unfortunately our education system douses this instinct by forcing them into the strait-jacket of formal learning that is linear in nature and completely inflexible, treating every child the same way. This leads the child to internalise that curiosity is something that killed the cat and hence should be avoided at all costs. This stifling of curiosity does immense harm going forward as the child is taught to accept and not question. While this could be an ideal attitude for a soldier, an assembly line worker or maybe a member of the bureaucracy, it portends disaster for anyone preparing to face a future filled with uncertainty. Encouraging curiosity needs a different breed of teachers and edu-

cators who do not patronise or look down upon children, but instead, treat them as equals and make learning a joint exercise.

We are conditioned to think of creativity in terms of arts and literature - a mysterious talent that is the preserve of a few. Truth is, creativity is very often a direct consequence of curiosity. Questions posed by a curious child, when encouraged, help in increasing unconstrained knowledge enabling the child to make previously undiscovered connections and relationships, leading to the creation of something entirely new. The foundation of all forms of entrepreneurship is this creativity that enables the recognition of an unfulfilled need that could become a business opportunity. While earlier this was limited to traditional business models, thanks to technology, curiosity and creativity have enabled young people to create innovative products, services and business models that drive the economy today.

But it isn't money alone that drives the world - it is only when the 'haves' recognise the existence of the 'have-nots', and understand their responsibility in bringing about an inclusive society, that true

prosperity and harmony can come about. For this to happen, children need to be empathetic in order to develop the compassion required to motivate them to work for a greater good. That the rewards of compassion include achieving self-actualisation - the path to true happiness - is an added bonus.

The current system also destroys the ability and desire to exhibit courage. By promoting the path of least resistance and avoiding conflict, our children learn that it is acceptable to only choose battles that are winnable and avoid those that are not. Hence in addition to teaching what is right and what is wrong, it is also essential to instill the courage to stand up to anything that is wrong, if we want to ensure a safe and just world. Without this courage, it would only be a matter of time before our society is brought under the subjugation of those with power - monetary or physical.

Which is why, it is essential that we begin preparing teachers and infrastructure required for an education incorporating the 4 C's as soon as possible.

The writer is an XIMB alumnus, an IT entrepreneur and a startup mentor. Views are personal.

ISRO and its missions

Sir, The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is known more for its successful launches than its odd failures. When the organisation fulfills its mission, it is considered a routine but when it fails, all hell breaks loose. So, when the earth observation satellite (EOS-03) launch in a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F10) failed in its mission August 11, all and sundry started questioning the intent, planning and perseverance of the reputed institution. EOS, also known as geo imaging satellite (Gisat-1) was initially planned to take off in early 2020, but there were some technical issues then. Later in early 2021, too, the mission was aborted before take-off. This time, after two initial core stage burn out and ignition, and the separation of payload fairing of the rocket, the ignition of the cryogenic upper stage (CUS) did not happen as the rocket veered off from its intended path. Altitude and velocity control were lost signalling the failure of the mission. Although the new payload fairing is seen as a salutary phenomenon, because the same is being planned for ISRO's future human space programmes, the larger failure is worrying. Due to its near-real-time image capturing ability, the EOS-03 was considered important for the country. Consistent, but low resolution viewing of the EOS was considered an asset in meteorology and agriculture. The indigenous GSLV-F10 rocket launcher was commendably used in ISRO's earlier programmes; therefore it is futile to blame the launcher. It is imperative for ISRO to take stock of what went wrong with GSLV.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

Dangerous diktats

Sir, The latest diktats of the Taliban show that they will never be able to discard their barbaric fundamentalist thoughts and practices. Just days after assuring that they will respect women's rights in Afghanistan, in a new order in Herat province the Islamic fundamentalists have banned co-education in government and private universities, describing it as the 'root of all evil in society'. The first 'fatwa' issued by the Taliban after their swift takeover of Afghanistan last week obviously exposes their misogynistic perspective and their lack of consideration for women. Notoriously known for their ways of ill-treating and abusing women in the past the latest diktat is not something new and goes to show how dangerous these extremists are for the whole human society.

M Pradyu, KANNUR

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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DROUGHT STARES AT FARMERS IN ATHAMALLIK



Farmers are hopeful about a good spell of rain in the first week of Bhadraba (end August-early September). If that turns out to be a dry week, their hopes of saving the planted paddy will disappear

Paddy fields in panchayats like Thakurgarh, Ambasaramunda, Maimura, Sanahula, Kruttibasapur, Pedipathar, Tapadhol, Sapaghara, Kurumatapa, Kantapada, Paikasahi, Nagaon, Aida, Jamudoli, Purunamanitri, Kiakata and Tusar have developed cracks due to dry and scorching weather

POST NEWS NETWORK

Athamallik, August 25: Farmers of this block in Angul block are under severe stress as a drought like situation is looming large over the block. While half the monsoon season has gone, most of the villages in the block are yet to receive enough rain.

Farmers are now pinning their hopes on a good spell of rain in the first week of Bhadraba (end August-early September). If that turns out to be a dry week, their hopes of saving the planted paddy will disappear.

There is a total of 36,078 hectares of farmland in Athamallik block. Of it, 12,186 hectare is usually used for transplantation. Due to lack of rain this season, paddy has been transplanted on 9,711 hectares. For better results, 347.7mm rain

is required in Ashadha. But the block received only 201.8mm. Even though the amount was not sufficient for paddy plantation, farmers went ahead with it. They had hoped there will be good rainfall in Shrawan.

But it was not to be. Against normal rain of 357.5mm for Shrawan, there was only 30mm of rainfall in the entire month. As of now, farmers are worried about the saplings that are already planted. "If they don't get water, they will die," the farmers said.

Paddy fields in panchayats like Thakurgarh, Ambasaramunda, Maimura, Sanahula, Kruttibasapur, Pedipathar, Tapadhol, Sapaghara, Kurumatapa, Kantapada, Paikasahi, Nagaon, Aida, Jamudoli, Purunamanitri, Kiakata and Tusar have developed cracks due to dry and scorching weather. On the other hand, farmers of Kampa,

Kandhapada, Madhapur and Lanahandi panchayats who depend on Manjor dam for water alleged they are not getting adequate supply for their paddy fields.

Local farmers' leader, Anjan Kumar Pradhan, said farmers badly require rain now. If it comes later, it will be of no use. "There are 24 panchayats in Athamallik block. Of them, only four get water from the Manjor dam. The rest 20 panchayats don't have irrigation facility. A mega irrigation project can make some differences," observed Sudarshan Gaigaria, a farmer.

Contacted, Athmalk assistant agriculture officer Rajendra Kumar Das admitted it that agricultural activities have been affected due to rain shortage. "For lack of water, saplings have wilted. Only a good spell of rain can save them," he said.

Dongria village in darkness for 7 decades

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bissamkatak, August 25: Residents of Huruma village, five kilometers from Kankubadi panchayat headquarters in Rayagada district, are yet to reap the benefits of the 'Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana', better known as the 'Saubhagya' yojana. For over seven decades, the village has been without electricity.

Eight Dongria households, totalling about 35 people, live in the village. Bandhuguda, a neighbouring community, received electricity in October 2018. However, their village, which is only three kilo-



metres distant, is still in the dark. The residents had seen the energy department contractor multiple times throughout the construction work for supply of power

to Bandhuguda hamlet. They had notified him of their distress. The contractor then informed them that they would be able to use solar energy. The locals eventually re-

SAUBHAGYA YOJANA FLOPS

alised that they had been duped.

Residents are unable to purchase equipment and are thus forced to live in darkness. The locals are concerned because it is reported that the scheme has been discontinued. The residents have urged the energy department officials to visit their village for survey and take steps to provide electricity.

Assistant engineer Sibaprasad Lenka said Huruma village was not in the list of beneficiaries. However, other sources said that since the District Collector has directed that power supply be provided to all villages, Huruma village should get first preference.

Expansion of Lanjiberna limestone mine opposed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kutra, August 25: Locals have opposed the expansion of Lanjiberna mine owned by Dalmia Bharat Cement in Kutra block of Sundargarh district. The district administration held a public hearing on the proposed expansion of the mine to obtain environmental clearance.

According to reports, a Dalmia Cement factory operates at Rajganagpur. The company transports raw materials through conveyor belts from Lanjiberna mine.

The company has proposed expansion of the mine for more raw materials. The forest and environment department organized a public hearing at Kukuda and Alanda villages while 12 platoons of police were deployed there.



However, hundreds of people from the locality gathered and opposed the mining expansion.

Angry people prevented officials and police from entering the village. The administration had tried to hold public hearing at Alanda village. The villagers also opposed it. "We will not spare an inch of land in the area in any circumstance," locals fumed.

Faced with stiff opposition from locals, police and officials had no way but to return empty-handed.

UT prisoner sets example by becoming self-reliant

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, August 25: An undertrial (UT) prisoner lodged at Chhatrapur sub-jail in Ganjam district has set an example for others by becoming self-reliant. During his stay in the prison he is painting on earthen pots and earning money.

A resident of Malad village under Ganjam police limits, R Chittaranjan was arrested in connection with a rape case in 2017 and has since been lodged in Chhatrapur sub-jail.

These days, he is busy with colours and brushes. Any day, he can be found busy striking brushes on pots. And these pots have many takers at Ganjam haat, promoted by Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS), Mission Shakti and Odisha Livelihoods Mission (OLM) with the support of the district administration.



Beautiful colour combination and aesthetic designs and patterns on the pots are his hallmark. Buyers instantly fall in love with the pots.

Asked how his hidden talent was spotted, jail superintendent Subhasmita Biswal narrated an incident. "A few days ago, Ganjam District Collector Vijay Amruta

Kulange paid a visit to the sub-jail. While going around the campus, his attention was drawn towards some wall paintings. He was eager to know who did the paintings. He was taken aback when he learnt about the skills of an undertrial prisoner," she said.

This incident proved to be a

resident of Malad village under Ganjam police limits, R Chittaranjan was arrested in connection with a rape case in 2017 and has since been lodged in Chhatrapur sub-jail

Learning from R Chittaranjan's successful story, the jail authorities will give training to other inmates on how to prepare jackfruit chips and brooms so that they don't face difficulties in becoming self-reliant when they are released from the prison

turning point in R Chittaranjan's life. At Ganjam haat, earthen pots are sold to store molasses. R Chittaranjan was entrusted with the job of making these pots attractive with his strike of brushes. Since painting has been his passion, he accepted the offer and put his heart and soul into the job.

"We provided him colours and brushes. ORMAS procured earthen pots from a women's association at Niladripur village under Ganjam block and the same were provided to R Chittaranjan," said Biswal.

"R Chittaranjan is capable of colouring a maximum of six to seven pots a day and each finished pot earns him ₹15. So far, he has painted 500 pots. Most importantly, the job has resulted in a lot of changes in his behaviour," she maintained.

As many as 167 undertrial prisoners are currently housed at Chhatrapur sub-jail. Of them, 164 are males and the rest are females.

Learning from R Chittaranjan's successful story, the jail authorities will give training to other inmates on how to prepare jackfruit chips and brooms so that they don't face difficulties in becoming self-reliant when they are released from the prison.

LABOURER DIES IN FREAK MISHAP

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kalinganagar, August 25: A crane operator died in a freak mishap on the Tata Steel plant premises after he was strangled with the belt of a crane at Kalinganagar in Jajpur district, Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Rohit Kumar Paswan, 24, of Jharkhand. Sources said a group of labourers were working in the plant of Tata Steel in the afternoon.

The mishap occurred when he was looking down for some work while going up in the lift of the crane. Suddenly his neck got entangled in the belt and he was strangled. Officials stopped the crane and rushed him to Tata Steel Medica hospital where doctors pronounced him dead on arrival.

Kalinganagar police reached the spot and launched an investigation. Police registered a case and sent the body for postmortem, Kalinganagar IIC Susant Kumar Das said.

IDCO land acquisition for sawmills opposed

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balia/Biridi, August 25: The land acquisition by IDCO for sawmills has faced opposition from locals in Biridi tehsil area of Jagatsinghur district.

According to reports, 3 acres and 89 decimal of land has been acquired by IDCO at Tentulia under Biridi tehsil about five years ago. Six entrepreneurs have proposed to set up sawmills on this fallow land.

As revenue officials and sawmill owners came to the spot for land demarcation, locals opposed the effort. They alleged that operation of sawmills will trigger air and sound pollution in the area. An Anganwadi centre and a temple are in the area. Operation of sawmills will affect their activities, villagers argued. The villagers said they had earlier drawn attention of the block and the district administration toward the pollution issue. They demanded that the sawmill projects be shifted elsewhere.

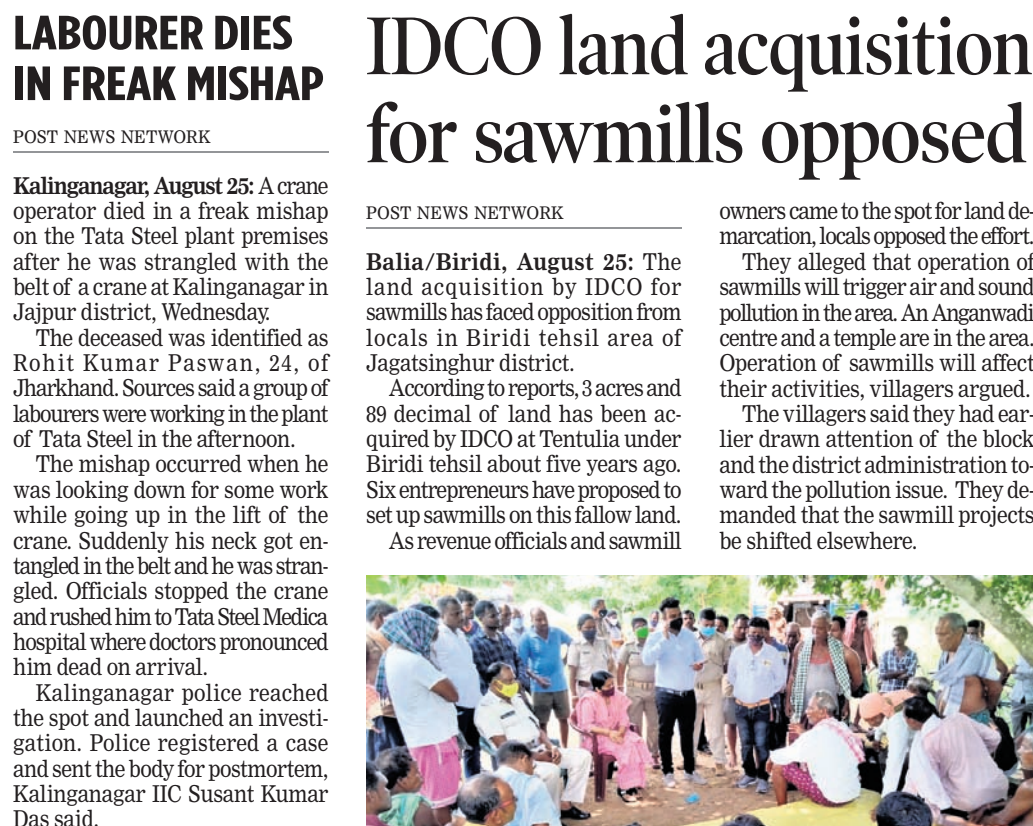
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Members of other backward castes demanding 27% quota in education taking out a rally at Chandahandi in Nabarangpur district, Wednesday

OP PHOTO



OP PHOTO

'77 riots cases withdrawn by UP without any reason'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 25: The Supreme Court was informed Tuesday that the Uttar Pradesh government has withdrawn 77 cases in connection with 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots under section 321 of the CrPC, without giving any reasons.

Senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, appointed amicus curiae in a 2016 petition filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay seeking direction to fast-tracking of criminal trials against sitting and former MPs/MLAs, has filed a report in the top court. He has been assisted by advocate Sneha Kalita in the matter. A bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana is scheduled to take up the petition. The report said the state government has informed the amicus that 510 cases relating to Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013 were registered in five districts of Meerut zone against 6,869 accused. Out of these, in 175 cases, the charge sheet was filed, in 165 cases final reports were submitted, and 170 cases were expunged.

"Thereafter 77 cases were withdrawn by the state government under Section 321 of CrPC. The Government Orders do not give any reasons for withdrawal of the case under Section 321 of CrPC.



It merely states that the administration, after full consideration, has taken a decision to withdraw the particular case," said the report.

The amicus submitted that the 77 cases may be examined by the high court by exercising revisional jurisdiction under Section 401 of CrPC, in the light of the law laid down by the top court in the case of State of Kerala vs K. Ajith 2021.

The report added that Karnataka government passed an order August 31, 2020 granting permission for withdrawal of 62 cases. The order merely states that the government has granted permission for withdrawal without assigning any reason for the same, it said.

The amicus suggested directions that may be laid down in view of the repeated misuse of power by the

state in withdrawing prosecution for political and extraneous considerations. "The appropriate government may issue instructions to the public prosecutor only if the government, in a given case, is of the opinion that the prosecution was launched maliciously and there is no foundation for prosecuting the accused," said the report.

It further added that such an order can be passed for reasons to be recorded for each individual case by the Home Secretary of the state concerned. "All the cases which have been withdrawn under Section 321 CrPC after the order of this Hon'ble Court dated September 16, 2020 may be examined by the respective High Courts by exercising revisional jurisdiction under Section 401 CrPC," added the report.

Communal harmony being sought to be finished: Mufti

Former CM claims over 1,000 people from Jammu and Kashmir are still lodged in various jails in the country

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 25: Jammu and Kashmir acceded to the secular India of Mahatma Gandhi, which was founded on brotherhood and communal harmony, but these are now being sought to be finished, PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said Wednesday.

She also slammed the Centre's decision to monetise its assets across key sectors, saying whatever has been made in the country over the last 70 years is now being 'sold off'.

"Jammu and Kashmir acceded to the India of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira (Gandhi) ji ... The secular India where there was brotherhood and communal harmony. All this is now being sought to be finished," Mehbooba said while talking to reporters after a party convention in Shopian district.

She said that Jammu and Kashmir would not have acceded to India if it was not a secular na-



Jammu and Kashmir acceded to the India of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira (Gandhi) ji ... The secular India where there was brotherhood and communal harmony. All this is now being sought to be finished

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP CHIEF

tion. On the Centre's move to monetise assets, the former chief minister said the government is selling off all the assets created over past 70 years, mainly during the Congress' rule.

"What can you expect of this government which is selling off petrol pumps, highways, power projects? Whatever was made in past 70 years is being sold off," Mehbooba said.

1 booth, 100 votes: BJP to woo Muslims ahead of UP elections

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 25: In an attempt to win support of minorities especially Muslims in next year's Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls, the BJP is launching a campaign 'ek booth, 100 votes' (one booth, 100 votes) from next month. The campaign will be carried out in minority dominated constituencies and booths across the state.

BJP Minority Morcha national president Jamal Siddiqui told IANS that the campaign 'ek booth, 100 votes' will be launched in September and it will run till the Assembly polls next year.



"During the campaign, workers of the BJP's minority morcha will work to ensure minimum 100 votes for party candidate in minority dominated booths by reaching out to the community specially Muslims," Siddiqui said.

Through the effort the saffron party is trying to secure a minimum of 5,000 Muslims or minority votes in each Assembly constituency. "Target is to get minimum five thousand new Muslim votes in each Assembly seats and more votes from other minority communities," he said.

The BJP Minority Morcha workers will reach out to members of the minority community and try to dispel misconceptions about the BJP and the Narendra Modi government created by the Opposition parties. "Our workers will explain the welfare initiatives of the Modi government which benefited everyone including Muslims and other minority communities. The Modi government has not discriminated against anyone in the name of religion in the last seven years and only opposition parties created a false narrative against us," Siddiqui said. In order to achieve the target, the saffron party minority morcha has already started appointing 'panna pramukh' (in-charge for one page of voter list) at the Muslim dominated booths and constituencies.

"Process for appointment of panna pramukh has started and it will be completed soon. Panna pramukhs will work minutely on the ground to ensure minimum 100 votes in their booth," he said.

Muslims constitute a little less than 20 per cent of Uttar Pradesh's total population and other minorities are around one per cent. Muslims play a decisive role in many Assembly seats in the state.

UP's Miyaganj to become Mayaganj

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Unnao (UP), August 25: The name changing game seems to be gathering momentum in Uttar Pradesh as the Assembly elections come near.

After districts, airports and railway stations, it is now the turn of gram panchayats to change their names.

The district magistrate of Unnao has written a letter to the government seeking change of the name of Miyaganj village to Mayaganj.

Official sources confirmed that the district magistrate's letter had been received by the Chief Minister's Office but the District Magistrate Ravindra Kumar declined to comment on the issue.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath apparently has a penchant for renaming places. As MP of Gorakhpur, he had declared that Urdu Bazaar would be known as Hindi Bazaar, Humayunpur as Hanuman Nagar, Miyan Bazaar as Maya Bazaar and Alinagar as Arya Nagar.

However, the names were not official as they were never rati-

NAME CHANGING GAME

CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH APPARENTLY HAS A PENCHANT FOR RENAMING PLACES

THE CHIEF MINISTER HAS ALREADY CHANGED THE NAME OF ALLAHABAD TO PRAYAGRAJ, FAIZABAD TO AYODHYA AND MUGHALSARAI TO DEEN DAYAL UPADHYAYA NAGAR	AFTER DISTRICTS, AIRPORTS AND RAILWAY STATIONS, IT IS NOW THE TURN OF GRAM PANCHAYATS TO CHANGE THEIR NAMES
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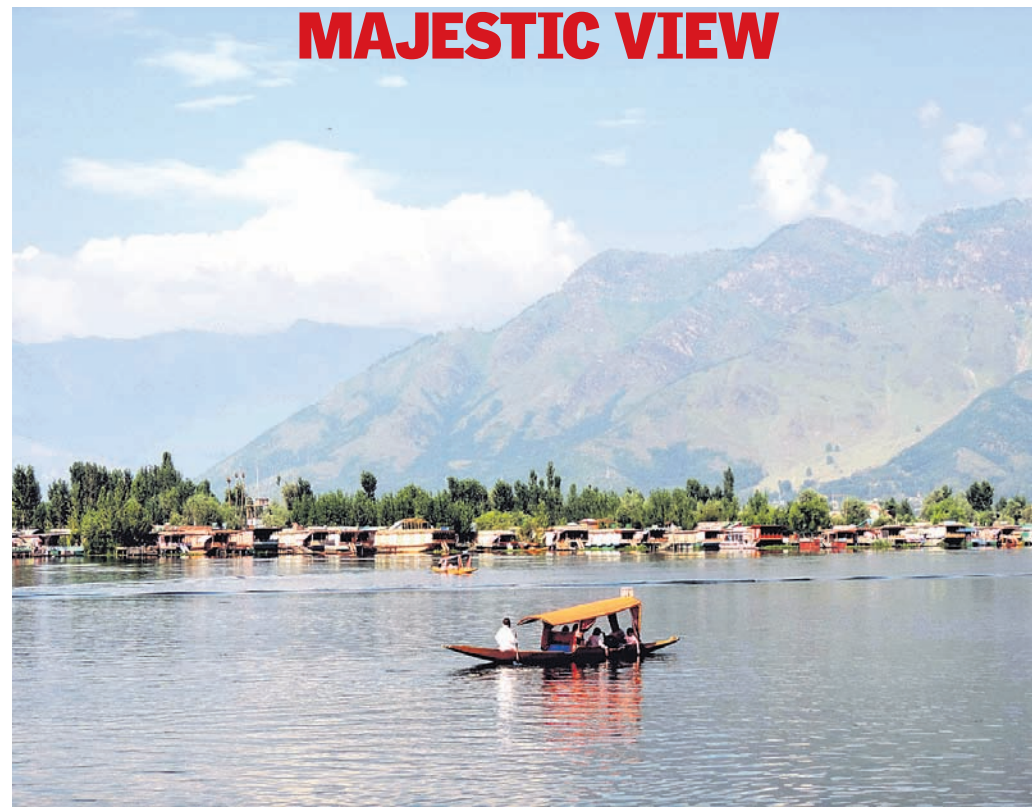
fied by the Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation but local people gradually started using the new names.

Several shopkeepers in Urdu Bazaar had even put up 'Hindi Bazaar' signboards. Similarly, Maya Nagar' boards had come up at Miyan Bazaar.

The chief minister has already changed the name of Allahabad to Prayagraj, Faizabad to Ayodhya and Mughalsarai to Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Nagar.

According to the sources, the panel members were reported about the delay and red tapism in the bureaucracy which has been hampering the pace of development in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh and many new schemes announced by the Union government were getting affected.

"Both the UTs are waiting for development that has been hampered by bureaucratisation of the process and a monopoly over releasing funds," a source familiar



A view of the world famous Dal Lake in Srinagar, Wednesday.

UNI PHOTO

Parl panel raises concern over delay in J&K projects

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 25: The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, in a recently concluded visit to both Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, has raised serious concern over the delay in execution of various projects and red tapism in the bureaucracy.

Expressing satisfaction over militancy which is at an all-time low and over the fact that there have been no instances of stone pelting in the Valley, the members also visited the CRPF camps and the border areas. The sources also said that Committee members were not happy to see the living conditions of the CRPF personnel and quality of the food being provided to them and noted that these should be improved at the earliest.

The panel members also vis-

ited border areas on the Line of Control and raised concern over the pathetic conditions of the roads leading to Border Out Posts. "The panel also observed that in a tense situation, the army has to mobilise in a short period of time, thus, the roads have to be improved," the sources said.

With an aim to review the administration and development of the region and review the working conditions of central police forces, the parliamentary panel visited the two UTs after two months when Prime Minister Narendra Modi met top politicians of Jammu and Kashmir June 24. It was the first high-level interaction between the Central government and political leaders from J&K after August 5, 2019, when the Centre revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated it into two union territories.

He said with women accessing the LPG cylinders, they will not have to face problems in their eyes and it will also reduce the cutting of trees.

Ujjwala 2.0 was launched by Prime Minister Modi August 10 from the Mahoba district of the state.

He said in this phase of the scheme, 20 lakh people will be given free LPG connections in 10 districts of the state. Reacting to the CM's statement, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav said here in a statement that the second phase was started just before the Assembly elections only to betray people. "This scheme has turned out to be 'mehnga indhan bekar jeevan' (costly fuel, worse life) contrary to its slogan 'swachh indhan, behtar jeevan' (clean fuel, better life)."

Contrary to the government's claims in advertisements, the reality is that "cylinders have become showpiece" due to the steep hike in LPG prices.

He claimed that 78 per cent of the beneficiaries of this scheme have once again started cooking on traditional 'chulha' (stove lit by wood).

Study bats for GI tag for Kashmir willow bat



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, August 25: Differentiating the Kashmir willow cricket bat with Geographical Indication (GI) tag can serve as an important marketing strategy for cricket bats in the export markets, says a study by the Export-Import Bank of India.

The study, titled "Indian Sports Goods Industry: Strategies for Tapping the Export Potential," was recently released by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

"Currently, there are no registered GIs in the sports goods industry, in spite of some products being unique to the country. Kashmir willow bat is one such product, which holds significance as it is made from some of the best quality wood in the world," the study says.

The Kashmir willow bats fetch a maximum of Rs 1,000 (approx

\$15.36) per bat, as against the English willow bats whose retail price range between \$220 to \$450 per bat in the international markets.

The price differential arises as Kashmir willow bats are considered heavier than their English counterparts, as per the Exim Bank study. However, while heavy bats have lesser swing, they are about one per cent more powerful than light bats. Kashmir willow bats are also sturdier and have longer use-life.

These attributes of Kashmir willow bats have not been popularised, and they are often considered an inferior variety of bat, thereby leading to price disadvantages, it said.

"Getting a GI tag for Kashmir willow could help in marketing the locally made cricket bats at the international level, and highlighting its positive attributes,"

the study said. Issuing GI to Kashmir willow bats could ensure better product recognition, competitive pricing, better marketing and promotion, and eventually lead to greater exports, it said.

To reap the benefits of GI Status, a GI brand name for Kashmir willow bats also needs to be developed and marketed, and a mechanism needs to be devised for ensuring that all products marketed under the GI brand meet minimum specific standards, the study maintained.

A certification body could be set up to provide certificates of authenticity for the bats, it said, adding that a repository of information about companies/artisans involved in production and exports of Kashmir willow bats could be maintained by the certifying body to ensure quality and uniqueness of the product.

national

of the day quote

Tamil Nadu government does not have any plans to demolish the Madurai building where the Mullaperiyar dam's architect, Colonel John Pennycuik, had stayed

The BJP should be ashamed. No one has given them the right to sell our nation's assets

Work is my passion and I do not want any work to stop because of my illness

Govt plans to vaccinate all school teachers

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 25: Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya Wednesday said more than two crore additional Covid-19 vaccine doses are being made available to states this month and they have been asked to vaccinate all school teachers on priority before Teachers' Day on September 5.

Schools across the country were closed in March last year ahead of a nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of novel coronavirus infection.

The Centre had allowed the reopening of schools as per the Covid-19 situation in October last year. While several states began partial reopening of schools, there was a complete closure again in April when an aggressive second wave of Covid-19 hit the country.

With an improvement in the Covid-19 situation again, several states have begun reopening schools now even as concerns have been expressed over the staff and teachers not being completely vaccinated.

"In addition to the plan to provide vaccines to every state this month, more than 2 crore vaccine doses are being made available. We have requested all states to try to vaccinate all school teachers on priority before Teachers' Day, which is celebrated on September 5," Mandaviya said in a tweet in Hindi.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhusan chaired a high-level meeting on Wednesday with all states and Union Territories to review the progress of the Covid-19 vaccination drive.

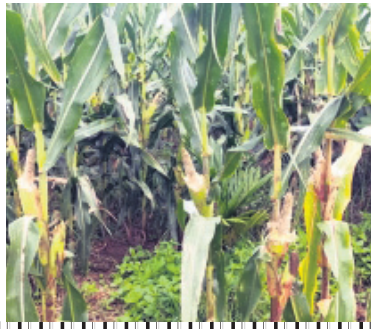


Everything that has happened in Afghanistan was something that had been anticipated but the timeline had changed

GEN BIPIN RAWAT | INDIA'S CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

PARROTS CAUSE HAVOC

Hundreds of acres of Maize crop in Channagiri taluk of Davangere district of Karnataka have been laid waste after parrots invaded them. Usually, 30 to 40 or 40 to 50 parrots make up these flocks and are referred collectively as a 'pandemonium of parrots'



GEARING UP



Boatmen with their snake boats participate in Aranmula boat race, at Aranmula in Pathanamthitta district

PTI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

25 yrs jail term for ex-MLA in rape case

Shillong: Former Meghalaya MLA Julius Dorphan was sentenced to 25 years in jail by a special court in Ri-Bhoi district for raping a girl in 2017 when he was a legislator. Special Judge (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences - POCSO) Febroneous Silkam Sangma also imposed a fine of Rs 15 lakh on Dorphan, who was the founder-chairman of insurgent group Hynniewtrep National Liberation Council (HNLC).

New chiefs of BSF, ITBP appointed

New Delhi: IPS officers Pankaj Kumar Singh and Sanjay Arora were Wednesday appointed the new Directors General of the Border Security Force and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), respectively. The Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal of the Ministry of the Home Affairs for appointments of Pankaj Kumar Singh, IPS (RJ:88) presently Special DG, BSF as Director General, Border Security Force from the date of joining the post and up to December 31, 2022, that is day of his superannuation or till further orders, whichever the earlier.

Ker Covid cases up 30% in 24 hrs

New Delhi: The number of Covid cases in Kerala jumped nearly 30 per cent over the past 24 hours to over 31,000 as the state government flagged an 'Onam spike'. The state recorded 215 deaths along with a test positivity rate of 19.03 per cent. The southern state Wednesday logged 31,445 fresh coronavirus infections and the toll mounted to 19,972 with 215 new deaths.

MiG 21 aircraft crashes in Barmer

Barmer (Raj): A MiG-21 fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force crashed in Rajasthan's Barmer district Wednesday evening but the pilot ejected safely, a defence spokesperson said. "The aircraft was on a routine sortie when it crashed," the spokesperson said. The incident occurred near Bhurtiya village under Sadar police station area, Superintendent of Police.

Medical student gang-raped

Mysuru: A medical student studying in a private college here was allegedly gang-raped by unidentified people on the outskirts of the city near Lalitadripura, police said. The student, riding pillion with her male friend, was on her way to Chamundi Hills when a few people waylaid them. The gang initially demanded money, but when they found nothing, attacked her friend and dragged her to a place where they committed the crime.

FIGHT AGAINST COVID

The cumulative number of vaccine doses administered in the country surpassed the 60-crore mark Wednesday

The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) will soon hold a meeting to devise a roadmap for introducing Zydus Cadila's Covid vaccine in the inoculation drive

At the meeting, the states were advised to focus on enhancing second dose coverage as well as immunization of school teachers and staff, both government and private. States were apprised on prompt utilisation of Emergency Covid Response Package (ECRP) funds and also advised to ensure compliance of Covid-appropriate behaviour and other precautionary measures ahead of the upcoming festival season. In line with the announcement made by the Union health minister, more than 2 crore additional vaccine doses will be dispatched to the states from August 27 to 31 to vaccinate school teachers and non-teaching staff on a priority basis, an official release said.

States and Union Territories may use Unified District Information System of Education data and co-ordinate with the state education departments, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan, Navodaya Vidyalaya Sangathan and others providing a necessary fillip to this vaccination programme, it said.



SC lays down guidelines for high courts on bail petitions

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 25: The Supreme Court Tuesday laid down guidelines for high courts for deciding bail applications as it quashed the bail granted to a murder accused by the Uttarakhand High Court.

"Considering the overall facts and circumstances, we have held that the high court has committed grave error in releasing the accused on bail," a Bench led by Justice DY Chandrachud said setting aside the high court's order. It ordered the accused to surrender.

The Bench — which had Monday taken strong exception to the Uttarakhand and Allahabad High Courts passing orders for protection from arrest "without application of mind" despite its directions to high courts to use their inherent power sparingly — enumerated several parameters to be considered by high courts for grant of bail.

The top court said high courts needed to consider if there were



prima facie or reasonable grounds to believe that the accused has committed the offence; nature and gravity of the accusation; severity of the punishment in the event of conviction; and danger of the accused absconding, if released on bail.

Character, behaviour and standing of accused, including his/her antecedents; likelihood of the offence being repeated; reasonable apprehension of the witnesses being influenced and danger of justice being adversely affected

have to be duly considered while deciding bail pleas, it noted.

"This is a serious matter. Just see the anxiety of the High Court, it directs that the person should surrender by August 10 and the bail be decided on the same day and if the bail application is rejected, then the sessions court should hear the bail plea the same day," the top court had said Monday while hearing a petition against an order of Uttarakhand High Court on a petition seeking quashing of the FIR in a murder case.

DRUGS CASE

ED summons Rakul, Rana Daggubati and 10 others

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 25: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned 12 Tollywood actors and directors, including Rakul Preet Singh, Rana Daggubati and Ravi Teja, in connection with a four-year-old drugs case.

An ED official confirmed that the financial probe agency has summoned Rakul Preet, Daggubati, Teja, Puri Jagannadh, Charmme Kaur and Mumaith Khan, among others, for questioning on separate dates.

The official said that the agency has asked Jagannadh to appear before it on August 31, Rakul Preet has been asked to join the probe on September 6, while Daggubati and Teja have been asked to appear before the agency on September 8 and 9, respectively.

The official said that the agency had taken over the probe on the basis of a case registered in Telangana in 2017 in connection with a high-end drugs racket.

The Telangana SIT had arrested a South African national in August 2017 for allegedly supplying cocaine from Mumbai to Hyderabad.

'Amarinder to lead Pb poll battle'

The announcement by Harish Rawat is being seen as a setback to the dissident leaders

AGENCIES

Chandigarh/Dehradun, August 25: AICC general secretary Harish Rawat Wednesday said the next year's Punjab Assembly polls will be fought under the leadership of CM Amarinder Singh, delivering a snub to ministers in the Navjot Singh Sidhu camp who want the CM replaced.

"Navjot Singh Sidhu comes from a different background. We made him the Punjab Congress president with an eye on future. But that doesn't mean the entire party has been left to him," Rawat told reporters in Dehradun where four disgruntled ministers and three party MLAs met him. The Punjab Congress has no dearth of leaders, said Rawat, who is the in-charge of Punjab affairs at the AICC.

"Sidhu ji is there, Amarinder Singh is there, Rajinder Singh Bajwa is there, Sukhjinder Randhawa is there and above all a stalwart like Ambika Soni is there. They will all be taken into confidence to resolve the issue," he said.



Punjab ministers Tript Rajinder Singh Bajwa, Sukhjinder Singh Sarkaria, Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and Charanjit Singh Channi besides several Congress MLAs had on Tuesday sought the CM's removal, saying he failed to fulfil some key poll promises.

There is no threat to the Amarinder Singh-led government in Punjab and the party's victory prospects for the upcoming Assembly elections, Rawat said.

Before meeting the Congress leaders at a hotel, Rawat said, "We will fight the (Punjab) elections in 2022 under the leadership of

Amarinder Singh." After the meeting, Rawat said the Congress leaders told him that they were not against any individual but were concerned about winning prospects of the party in the Assembly polls.

Asked whether they sought replacement of the CM, Rawat said whatever discussion took place is not meant for sharing with the media.

The legislators brought up a matter to which a solution will be found in consultation with party leaders, he said. Rawat further stressed, "If any Congress MLA feels insecure and feels that the administration could work against him, it is worrisome." However, he said if someone is upset with anyone, then it should not come in the way of the Congress and stressed that it is important for the party to fight the polls unitedly.

The Congress leaders assured that they have full faith in the party high command, said Rawat, adding that he told them he would talk to people concerned if need arises.

TOP COP APPOINTMENT

SC sets deadline for HC

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 25: The Supreme Court Wednesday asked the Delhi High Court to decide, within two weeks, the plea against the appointment of Rakesh Asthana as Delhi Police Commissioner.

Hearing a petition filed by the Centre for Public Interest Litigation challenging Asthana's appointment, a bench, headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana, said, "There are issues, one is about my participation in my matter as one ground. I have expressed my views about this gentleman in CBI selection." The Chief Justice, while participating in the High-Powered Committee, had objected to the appointment of Asthana as the head of the CBI.

He said that the second issue is that somebody had filed a plea against Asthana's appointment, which is pending in the high court.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing the petitioner, submitted: "I don't think that disables your lordship at all." The bench, also comprising Justices D.Y.



Rakesh Asthana

Chandrachud and Surya Kant, noted that a petition on the same issue has been filed in the Delhi High Court. "We know time is of essence... we will give time of 2 weeks to the high court to dispose of (the petition)," it noted, adjourning the plea for two weeks. It added it will have the benefit of the high court order in the matter.

The bench, in its order, said: "In the meanwhile, we request the High Court of Delhi to consider hearing the Writ Petition (Civil) No 8654 of 2021, which is pending adjudication before it, as early as possible and preferably within a period of two weeks from today to enable us to have the benefit of the Judgment of the said Court."

e-Visa must for Afghans: Govt

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 25: The Union home ministry Wednesday announced that all Afghan nationals henceforth must travel to India only on e-Visa in view of the prevailing situation in Afghanistan

The decision comes days after the government introduced a new category of visa called "e-Emergency X-Misc visa" for the Afghan nationals after the Taliban captured power in that country. "Owing to the prevailing security situation in Afghanistan and streamlining of the visa process by introduction of the 'e-Emergency X-Misc visa', it has been decided that all Afghan nationals henceforth must travel to India only on e-Visa," a home ministry statement said. The home ministry also announced that keeping in view some reports that certain passports of Afghan nationals have been misplaced, previously issued visas to all Afghan nationals, who are presently not in India, stand invalidated with immediate effect.

India to soon launch 'mission' for improving air quality

INDIA IS CONSIDERED AS THE SECOND MOST POLLUTED COUNTRY IN THE WORLD WITH REGARD TO AIR POLLUTION

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 25: With the aim at tackling the pan-India problem of air pollution, India is set to announce a 'mission' for air quality management soon.

In all likelihood, the announcement would be made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This will replace the existing National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

A top government official told IANS: "The countours are being

worked out, modalities are being set."

He, however, refused to put a date for the announcement. It may or may not be ahead of the annual global climate change meet to be held at Glasgow in November this year.

The Centre had launched the NCAP in January 2019 as a long-term, time-bound, national level strategy to tackle the air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner. It had tar-



getted to achieve 20 to 30 per cent reduction in Particulate Matter

BIG CHALLENGE

Most countries such as India and China, have high air pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. China is the world's leading total GHG emitter and India is on track to join it at the top and they are two top ranked countries to emit toxic air pollution

While monsoon is considered the cleanest season, with relatively low air pollution, experts say air pollution is likely to reduce the southwest monsoon rainfall by 10%-15% for the entire country

Air pollution in India results in serious health issues and also decreases the quality of life

NCAP programme. India is considered as the second most polluted country in the world with regard to air pollution. Some of the most polluted cities are in India. Domestic firewood burning, construction dust and that from roads, open fields, agri-waste burning, industrial burning of coal and other fossil fuels, thermal power plants, brick kilns, vehicular emissions and diesel-powered generator sets are some of the prominent sources of air pollution.

international



Our commitment to Afghanistan doesn't end when this current phase, this current deadline comes. We will continue to put pressure on the Taliban to allow people to leave the country JUSTIN TRUDEAU | PM, CANADA

WORLD'S LARGEST, TALLEST OBSERVATION WHEEL IN DUBAI

The world's largest and tallest observation wheel will open here in the UAE October 21, the latest landmark to join Dubai's long list of record-breaking attractions, according to an official announcement



of the day quote

We need to find ways to pressure, raise the pressure on Beijing to abide by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and to challenge, its bullying and excessive maritime claims

KAMALA HARRIS | VICE PRESIDENT, US

The circulation of fake news on vaccine has increased and is really becoming our worst challenge. The government needs to improve the ability to communicate better

JOE PHAAHLA | HEALTH MINISTER, S AFRICA

Dealing with the crisis is forcing us to change everything; the way we produce agricultural products, how we move around, how we generate energy and the way we build our homes

KYRIAKOS MITSOTAKIS | PM, GREECE

UK warns Taliban against sealing Af

The UK has evacuated more than 9,000 people from Afghanistan since August 15, including 2,000 people in the last 24 hours

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



ercively blocking the border, he told Times Radio.

You'll just see a larger flow of refugees going out and they'll have to be processed. They're not going to be able to avoid the refugee crisis by just a few roadblocks, they're not going to be able to hermetically seal the Afghan border, which is rugged and wide-ranging, he said.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who chaired the G7 virtual meet, told reporters following the talks that the West's number one condition for releasing the frozen assets was "safe passage" for people fleeing the country. Last week, the US froze USD 9.5 billion in assets

belonging to the central bank of Afghanistan.

If those huge funds are going to be unfrozen eventually for use by the government and people of Afghanistan then what we're saying is Afghanistan can't lurch back into becoming a breeding ground of terror, Afghanistan can't become a narco state, girls have got to be educated up to the age of 18, said Johnson.

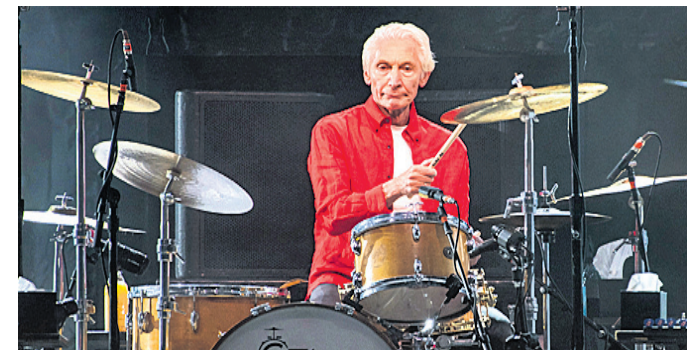
Those are important things that we value. Those are things we fought for years in Afghanistan, for which people in this country gave their lives. We remain committed to those values and we re-

Veterans to take up ministerial posts

Afghanistan's Taliban have appointed senior veterans to the posts of Finance Minister and Defence Minister, two members of the group said, as it switches focus from a stunning military conquest to how to run a country in crisis. The movement's unexpectedly swift victory has left it struggling to govern, and it has turned to several lower-level administrators to keep Kabul running. The Taliban have not formally announced the appointments, which a commander said were provisional, but Afghanistan's Pajhwok news agency said on Tuesday that Gul Agha had been named as finance minister and Sadr Ibrahim acting interior minister. Former Guantanamo detainee Mullah Abdul Qayyum Zakir was named acting defence minister, Al Jazeera news channel reported, citing a Taliban source.

main committed to Afghanistan. The No 1 condition we're insisting on is safe passage," he said.

Rolling Stones members salute late drummer



ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, August 25: Members of the Rolling Stones have saluted their unshakable drummer Charlie Watts, who died Tuesday at the age of 80.

Mick Jagger, the legendary rock band's frontman, posted a photo on Twitter of a smiling Watts seated behind a drum.

Lead guitarist Keith Richards shared a picture of a drum set with a hanging "Closed" sign.

Watts' publicist announced Tuesday afternoon that the musician had "passed away peacefully in a London hospital earlier today surrounded by his family."

Guitarist Ronnie Wood posted a photo of himself and his late bandmate captioned "I love you my fellow Gemini - I will dearly miss you - you are the best."

On the Rollingstones.com website, only a black-silhouetted portrait of Watts appeared. Having joined the Stones in 1963, the drummer ranked just behind Jagger and Richards as the group's longest lasting and most essential member.

Watts was present throughout the

band's 30 studio albums, largely holding himself apart from the drug abuse, creative clashes and ego wars of rock 'n' roll.

He had previously announced he would not tour with the Stones in 2021 because of an undefined health issue. He was replaced by American musician Steve Jordan for the "No Filter" series of shows in the United States, due to begin in St Louis Sept 26.

The 80-year-old's death has drawn tributes from across the music industry, including from Paul McCartney, Elton John and Patti Smith. Fellow drummers praised the talent and influence, who also recorded jazz albums.

Watts is survived by his wife Shirley, sister Linda, daughter Seraphina and granddaughter Charlotte. He was named the 12th greatest drummer of all time by Rolling Stone in 2016.

The band were last seen at the One World: Together At Home concert in April 2020, performing a socially distanced rendition of their 1969 classic "You Can't Always Get What You Want."

G7 LAWMAKERS SEEK INDIA'S PARTICIPATION

WASHINGTON: Influential lawmakers from the G7 countries have urged that India should be invited to attend the bloc's meetings that seeks to develop a common and united front for global security and regional stability in the aftermath of the Taliban taking control over Afghanistan.

US Senator Bob Menendez, who is also the Chairman of the pow-



erful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and his counterparts from Italy, France, Germany, Japan,

the UK and the European Parliament in a joint statement also said African Union should be invited to attend individual G7 meetings when appropriate.

"With the spillover of terrorism possible, we would like to see India invited to attend this G7 meeting. As other terror groups are beginning to muster in the Horn of Africa and reawaken movements

elsewhere, we believe the African Union should be invited to attend individual G7 meetings when appropriate," the lawmakers said.

"This would promote a regional shift for governments and ensure that the spillover effects of Afghanistan which could destabilise neighbouring countries are constantly monitored by those closest to the likely areas of threat," they said.

SHORT TAKES

US House okays \$3.5T budget plan

Washington: Striking a deal with moderates, House Democratic leaders have muscled President Joe Biden's multitrillion-dollar budget blueprint over a key hurdle, ending a risky standoff and putting the party's domestic infrastructure agenda back on track. The 220-212 vote Tuesday was a first move toward drafting Biden's \$3.5 trillion rebuilding plan this fall, and the narrow outcome, in the face of unanimous Republican opposition, signaled the power a few voices have to alter the debate and the challenges ahead still threatening to upend the president's agenda.

Pak tightens curbs for unvaccinated

Islamabad: Pakistan has announced that those who have not been fully vaccinated against coronavirus will not be allowed to use public transport from October 15. School teachers and staff will also not be allowed to work after October 15 if they have not taken the jabs, Geo TV reported. Vaccination has been declared mandatory for air travel after September 30 while those working in schools, and transportation must take their doses before the date.

Algeria severs ties with Morocco: FM

Algiers: Algeria is severing diplomatic relations with Morocco, Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra announced here. Lamamra read a letter on behalf of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune during a press conference held at the International Conference Centre here Tuesday, saying "Algeria has decided as of today to break off its diplomatic relations with Morocco", reports Xinhua news agency. He added that this decision is motivated by the fact that Algeria rejects the logic of the "fait accompli" and the unilateral policies that Morocco has been taking.

Oz records worst day of pandemic

Canberra: Australia Wednesday reported a new record number of coronavirus cases for the third time in a week. There were 973 new locally acquired cases of Covid-19 reported across Australia Wednesday, taking the total number of confirmed cases since the start of the pandemic to above 46,700, reports Xinhua news agency. However, the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) recorded only nine new cases, its lowest in four days, after a record 30 Tuesday.

Japan expands virus emergency

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, August 25: Japan expanded its coronavirus state of emergency Wednesday for a second week in a row, adding eight more prefectures as a surge in infections fueled by the delta variant strains the country's health care system.

The government last week extended the state of emergency until Sept 12 and expanded the areas covered to 13 prefectures from six including Tokyo. With four new prefectures added to a separate "quasi-emergency" status, 33 of Japan's 47 prefectures are now under some type of emergency measures.

Eight prefectures were upgraded from quasi-emergency status to a full emergency. They include Hokkaido and Miyagi in the north, Aichi and Gifu in central Japan, and Hiroshima and Okayama in the west.

"In order to protect the people's lives, the priority is to maintain the health care system," Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said as he announced the emergency. "In order to overcome this crisis led by the delta strain, I seek further cooperation from everyone."

Japan's state of emergency relies on requirements for eateries to close at 8 pm and not serve alcohol, but the measures are increasingly defied. Unenforceable social distancing and tele-working requests for the public and their employ-

More than 35,000 patients in Tokyo are recovering at home, about one-third of them unable to find a hospital or hotel vacancies immediately

ers are also largely ignored due to growing complacency.

The Japanese capital has been under the emergency since July 12, but new daily cases have increased more than tenfold since then to about 5,000 in Tokyo and 25,000 nationwide. Hospital beds are quickly filling and many people must now recover at home, including some who require supplemental oxygen.

Suga said Wednesday that those recovering at home will receive medical attention via phone calls, online or with visits by community doctors, and that the government will set up temporary hospitals where patients can receive supplementary oxygen or other treatments.

The government has faced criticism for holding this summer's Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics despite strong opposition from the public. Officials deny any direct link between the games and the spike in infections.

ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY



Extinction Rebellion climate activists glued themselves to the wall of the Selfridges department store at Oxford Street during a protest in London, Britain

US SC orders 'Remain in Mexico' policy reinstated

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, August 25: The Supreme Court Tuesday said the Biden administration likely violated federal law in trying to end a Trump-era program that forces people to wait in Mexico while seeking asylum in the US. With three liberal justices in dissent, the high court refused to block a lower court ruling ordering the administration to reinstate the program informally known as Remain in Mexico.



It's not clear how many people will be affected and how quickly. Under the lower court ruling, the administration must make a good faith effort to restart the program. There also is nothing preventing the administration from trying

again to end the program, formally called Migrant Protection Protocols.

A federal judge in Texas had previously ordered that the program be reinstated last week. Both he and the 5th US Circuit Court of Appeals refused the administration's request to put the ruling on hold.

The administration has failed to show a likelihood of success on the claim that the memorandum rescinding the Migrant Protection Protocols was not arbitrary and capricious, the court wrote Tuesday

Russia to deliver missile systems to post-coup Myanmar

AGENCIES

Moscow, August 25: Russia will deliver Pantsir missile defence systems to Myanmar on schedule as outlined in the relevant sales contract, the RIA news agency cited the head of Russia's Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation as saying Wednesday.

The truck-mounted systems are used to shoot down aircraft, drones and cruise missiles. Rights activists have accused Moscow of legitimising the junta, which seized power in a Feb 1 coup, by continuing bilateral visits and arms deals.

Russia says it has a long-standing and strategic relationship with Myanmar and believes the authorities are doing all they can to try to stabilise what it has called the "quite serious" situation there.

Myanmar and Russia struck the deal for the Pantsir systems in January, RIA cited Dmitry Shugayev, the Russian weapons official, as saying.

He will deliver (the systems) in line with the terms and conditions stipulated in the contracts, he was quoted as saying.



China debt-traps nations with confidentiality clauses: Report

THE CREDIT TERMS ARE KEPT SECRET FROM OTHER CREDITORS TOO INCLUDING THE IMF AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

AGENCIES

Beijing, August 25: China, which is the world's largest creditor, is shockingly using confidentiality clauses barring borrowers from revealing terms and conditions of the engagement or even the existence of the debt itself.

International Forum for Right and Security (IFFRAS), reported that recent joint research by the Peterson Institute for International Economics, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, and the Centre for Global Development & Aid Data concluded that it uses these contracts to debt-trap a nation.

The study referred in this article looked at 100 contracts signed during 2000 - 2020 to systemically analyse the legal terms of lending followed by Chinese state-owned

Insights into Chinese lending system

- Chinese contracts contain unusual confidentiality clauses particularly since 2015 wherein the borrower is prevented from revealing the details
- Chinese lenders seek an advantage over other creditors including collateral arrangements like control over revenue accounts
- Cancellation, acceleration, and stabilisation clauses in Chinese lending contracts are far more common allowing lenders to influence the debtors domestic and foreign policies



entities and government borrowers across 24 developing countries in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Oceania with a commitment amounting to the tune of USD 36.6 billion. Chinese credit terms remain

highly skewed in favour of Chinese lenders over other creditors. The credit offered contains collateral arrangements, no Paris Club clauses, clauses allowing lenders to influence debtors' domestic and foreign policies, etc.

Apart from this, the Chinese also stress keeping the credit terms secret from the citizens in both the borrowing as well as the lending country, who otherwise have a legitimate right to know.

Thus the predatory debt policies of China across countries in the Indian subcontinent such as Sri

Lanka, Pakistan, or the Indo Pacific such as Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, or Africa for that matter such as Sudan, Ethiopia, etc to name a few are testimonies to the fact that borrowing countries are now pleading for an independent existence while being on the verge of losing their sovereignty, reported IFFRAS.

'Xi Jinping Thought' in nat'l curriculum

China will incorporate "Xi Jinping Thought" into its national curriculum to help "establish Marxist belief" in the country's youth, the education ministry said in new guidelines published Tuesday. The Ministry of Education said Chinese President Xi Jinping's "thought on socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era" would be taught from primary school level all the way to university. The move is aimed at strengthening "resolve to listen to and follow the Party" and new teaching materials must "cultivate patriotic feelings", the guidelines said. "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism With Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" was formally enshrined in the country's constitution in 2018.



The Indian retail segment has its own uniqueness and the country is one of the most exciting markets globally that is poised to grow to over a trillion dollars by 2025

DOUG McMILLON | PRESIDENT AND CEO, WALMART INC

SEBI ORDERS DEFREEZING OF BANK, MFs ACCOUNTS

Markets regulator Sebi Wednesday ordered defreezing of bank accounts as well as share and mutual fund holdings of Rana Kapoor, former MD and CEO of Yes Bank. Kapoor is currently in judicial custody after being arrested in March 2020 in the alleged Yes Bank fraud case



of the day quote

Bewakoof has emerged as the largest D2C fashion brand in India. This growth has come on the back of rolling out new categories, exclusive fashion range with brands like Coca Cola. With the new fund raise, we are gearing to take the brand to an unexplored new customer base

PRABHAKIRAN SINGH | FOUNDER AND CEO, BEWAKOOF

International banking and investing has been complicated and expensive for Indians. With a vision to make this seamless and convenient, we have brought global banking and investing to the fingertips of every Indian investor with an easy and hassle-free process

SWASTIK NIGAM | FOUNDER AND CEO, WINVESTA

The transition of automobiles towards electric mobility is inevitable and it is for the auto industry to make the change and drive it to make India a global leader in electric vehicles

AMITABH KANT | CEO, NITI AAYOG

Industry honchos call for 'concrete action'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 25: Auto industry leaders, RC Bhargava of Maruti Suzuki India and Venu Srinivasan of TVS Motor, Wednesday hit out at government officials for only paying lip service to the sector and not taking any "concrete action" to reverse the decline in growth over the past few years.

Speaking at industry body SIAM's 61st Annual Convention, the veteran industry leaders wondered if con-

tribution of the auto industry towards India's growth is being recognised and lamented that cars seem to be still considered as luxury, that only the rich could afford.

"We have been going through a situation where this industry has been declining over a long period of time," Bhargava, who is the Chairman of the country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India, said.

"There have been a lot of statements made about the importance of the automobile industry but in

terms of concrete actions, which would reverse the decline, I haven't seen any action on the ground," Bhargava said.

Bhargava further asserted, "I'm afraid words don't get us very much in the terms of extra sales but you need concrete action to make this happen."

High tax structures, additional costs in order to meet new emission norms and safety norms have led to increase in cost of automobiles, thereby making them unaffordable for consumers, he said.

AUTO SECTOR REVIVAL



"I don't think the car industry would revive either with ICEs or with the CNG, biofuels and such things or EVs unless we address the

question of affordability of cars for the customer," Bhargava asserted.

Expressing similar views, TVS Motor Co. Chairman and MD Venu Srinivasan said a 2W which is "the basic mode of transportation for the country" is being taxed at 28% GST.

He said the automobile industry has moved from importing and assembling to designing and making in India with both homegrown firms and MNCs making large investments in design infrastructure.

Google introduces global kids safety programme in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 25: Google Wednesday launched its global 'Be Internet Awesome' programme for children in India in partnership with Indian comic book publisher 'Amar Chitra Katha' to interweave critical internet safety lessons across eight Indian languages.

The tech giant has also launched an enhanced Google Safety Centre in eight Indian languages as part of its efforts to step up safety of users on the internet.



Google has significantly increased its resources dedicated to India's Trust Safety teams, including product policy analysts, security specialists, and user trust experts that support over 10 vernacular Indian languages.

This will help Google India continue its work around misinformation, fraud, threats to child safety, violent extremism, phishing attacks, and malware. It will also further strengthen Google's global trust and safety operations of over 20,000 people, who are dedicated to identifying, fighting and preventing online harm.

"Our north star is to make the internet helpful for Indians. Every single day, more people are placing their trust in the internet and adopting new services and all of us in the technology industry have a responsibility to honour their trust," Google India Country Manager and Vice-President Sanjay Gupta said.

Can't say there is no demand for credit: FM



AGENCIES

Mumbai, August 25: Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman Wednesday said it is too early to say if there is a lack of demand for credit and announced a district-wise outreach to be undertaken by banks to help credit growth from October.

A push to credit growth from such outreach efforts will also help the momentum set by the stimulus packages, which have been extended by the government since the onset of the pandemic.

It can be noted that in late 2019, banks had conducted the "loan melas" in 400 districts to push up sagging credit growth. Even now, the credit growth is stuttering at around 6 per cent.

"I think it is too early to conclude whether there is a lack of demand... I don't think it is time yet to conclude that there is no credit pick-up. Even without awaiting indications, we have taken steps to ramp up credit," Sitharaman told

A push to credit growth from district-wise outreach efforts will also help the momentum set by the stimulus packages, which have been extended by the government since the onset of the pandemic

Sitharaman added that the government had announced that credit up to ₹1.5 lakh will be given to borrowers through NBFC-MFIs

reporters here. She noted that over ₹4.94 lakh crore was disbursed by the banks between October 2019 and March 2021 through the outreach initiatives undertaken by them. "This year too sometime in October, there will be a credit outreach in every district of the country," she said.

Sitharaman added that the government had announced that credit up to ₹1.5 lakh will be given to borrowers through NBFC-MFIs. "In order to keep up the momentum of stimulus that we are periodically giving, we have also asked banks to go out and give credit," she said.

'Sharp uptick in blue-collar employment likely in H2'

THE REPORT IS BASED ON DATA FROM THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF 2021 AND SPANS HIRING TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS ACROSS MORE THAN 1,500 CUSTOMERS, 10 MILLION EMPLOYEES AND 20,000 PIN CODES

AGENCIES

Mumbai, August 25: With the gradual easing of Covid-19-related restrictions and an increase in movement, over 50 per cent jump in demand for blue-collar workers is likely in the second half of this year across four major industrialised states - Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, according to a report.

There is likely to be seven million new blue-collar jobs (50 per cent jump as compared to the first half of this year) in the second half of 2021 in Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to drive demand, according to a report by technology platform for blue-collar workforce management BetterPlace.

Maharashtra is expected to be the largest contributor, accounting for 17 per cent of the demand, it added.

The report is based on data from the first six months of 2021 and spans hiring trends and projections across more than 1,500 customers, 10 million employees and 20,000 PIN codes.

"Since the onset of the pandemic, the country has witnessed a steep fall in employment. The worst-hit was the blue-collar workforce, which struggled to retain jobs or secure opportunities," BetterPlace CEO Pravin Agarwal said.

He added that the report shows that the impact of the second COVID-19 wave on jobs was not as severe as the first with the overall job demand rising marginally. "In



Since the onset of the pandemic, the country has witnessed a steep fall in employment. The worst-hit was the blue-collar workforce, which struggled to retain jobs or secure opportunities

PRAVIN AGARWAL | CEO, BETTERPLACE

time, the demand is likely to reach pre-COVID-19 levels, which was 104 per cent by 2019."

During the second wave, segments like drivers and security personnel were affected badly, he said. Agarwal added that the drivers, facility workers and security segments shrank quarter-on-quarter by 40 per cent, 25 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, during the second wave.

"The delivery segment, meanwhile, grew 175 per cent quarter-on-quarter. Logistics, healthcare, e-commerce and retail are witnessing a hiring pick-up," he added. He also said that if there is a

third wave, the transportation, facility workers, security and retail segments will be negatively impacted by as much as 25-50 per cent. "We don't expect any impact on the delivery segment."

The report also showed that with increased mobile and internet penetration, blue-collar workers are adopting digital tools to find jobs that match their skills and desired locations.

The pandemic has also accelerated the adoption of technology by employers looking at large-scale applications to make informed decisions through smarter data analytics, it added.

SHORT TAKES

Adidas campaign to feature Chanu

New Delhi: German footwear and accessories major Adidas Wednesday said it has roped in Tokyo Olympic Silver medalist Mirabai Chanu as the face of its "Stay in Play" campaign for its latest product innovation designed to keep more menstruating women in sports. The new TechFit Period Proof tights, featuring an absorbent layer to help protect against leaks when worn with a tampon or pad, Adidas said in a statement.

Nayak becomes Future Retail CEO

Mumbai: Future Retail Wednesday announced the appointment of Sadashiv Nayak as the CEO of the company with immediate effect. Nayak was the CEO of Big Bazaar for the past eight years. "The board of directors of the company at its meeting held Wednesday inter-alia considered and approved the appointment of Sadashiv Nayak as the CEO of the company with effect from August 25, 2021," the company said in a regulatory filing.

TCS' m-cap crosses ₹13.5L cr

New Delhi: The market capitalisation (m-cap) of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Wednesday breached the ₹13.5 lakh crore mark, the second company after Reliance Industries Ltd to achieve the feat. At close of trade, the market valuation of TCS stood at ₹13,53,667.85 crore on BSE. The company had touched the ₹13 lakh crore valuation level August 17, when its market capitalisation stood at ₹13,14,051.01 crore.

WD forays into wireless charging

New Delhi: Data storage firm Western Digital (WD) Wednesday announced its foray into the wireless charging segment with a new range of solutions, as it looks to tap into the estimated USD 4.5 billion global market for such products. Western Digital has launched SanDisk IxpanD Wireless Charger Sync (first wireless charger that includes wireless charging and automatic data storage and backup for Qi-compatible devices) and SanDisk IxpanD Wireless Charger 15W with adapter.

Sony launches 2 large screen TVs

New Delhi: Sony India announced two large screen televisions - BRAVIA XR 77A80J and KD-85X85J to provide exceptional viewing experience to its customers. The new large screen BRAVIA XR 77A80J is powered by the new Cognitive Processor XR and the 85X85J television is powered by X1 4K HDR picture Processor. Both the new large screen televisions come loaded with supreme gaming capabilities such as HDMI 2.1, 4K120, ALLM and VRR. Enjoy cinema at home with Dolby Vision, Dolby Atmos, IMAX Enhanced along with ambient optimization and acoustic auto calibration technology.

Colgate launches recyclable toothpaste tube

New Delhi: Colgate-Palmolive, the market leader in oral care in India launched the first-of-its-kind recyclable toothpaste tubes in India. Launching the initiative in partnership with EPL Limited (Formerly known as Essel Propack Limited), Colgate is manufacturing recyclable tubes for its Colgate Active Salt and Colgate Vedshakti toothpaste portfolio. These toothpaste tubes launched nationally with recyclable packaging will contain the identifiable Recyclable logo to help its customers differentiate between the packaging effectively.

'Increase share of manufacturing in GDP'

New Delhi: Heavy Industries Minister Mahendra Nath Pandey Wednesday urged the domestic industry to work towards increasing the manufacturing sector's share in India's GDP. He said steps like the PLI schemes would help in boosting domestic manufacturing. Share of manufacturing in GDP should be increased to 20-25%, he said at an ASSOCHAM webinar. Its share in country's GDP is estimated at around 17% currently. The minister added that the government is taking steps towards promoting EoDB and enhancing the quality and standards of products.

Digital identifiers to help crypto market go mainstream

REUTERS

London, August 25: Tags for identifying bitcoin, ethereum and other crypto assets will be launched in September in the latest sign of how the fast growing, unregulated market is adopting the hallmarks of mainstream investing.

The ability to monitor cryptocurrencies has become a major worry for regulators as the ballooning market, which reached a record \$2 trillion capitalisation in April, has experienced wild volatility and central bank warnings that investors could lose their shirts.

Individual stock and derivatives are already assigned a unique identification number to allow regulators and market participants to identify, track and quantify risks from trades. The new digital token



identifiers or DTIs will be registered at the DTI Foundation, a not-for-profit unit of Etrading Software, a fintech company that provides market infrastructure.

As the crypto assets sector grows in size, regulators and the market will need identifiers to track it better, Sassan Danesh, managing part-

ner at Etrading Software, told Reuters. DTIs will create a bridge between traditional securities and the new tokenised world, using norms from the global International Organization for Standardization (ISO) that are set to be finalised by the end of September.

At that time the DTI registry

will formally issue identifiers for the 100 most important crypto assets and tokens which represent more than 80% of the current crypto market and include bitcoin, ethereum, Dogecoin and Ripple, Danesh said.

Identifiers will also make it easier to compare which exchanges offer the best prices for specific crypto assets, he added.

ISO based identifiers are already used for reporting securities and derivatives trades to regulators for spotting market abuses and build up of risks, and Danesh expects DTIs will lead to a similar requirement for crypto transactions.

"We absolutely see there will be regulatory mandate for reporting of digital assets and that's driven by just the size of the digital market, which now cannot be ignored

'Citi may offer Bitcoin future trading'

New York: Citigroup Inc is considering offering bitcoin futures trading for some institutional clients, a spokesperson for the bank said Tuesday, citing increased demand in the cryptocurrency space. Bitcoin prices rose past \$50,000 Monday, after having weathered a crackdown by Chinese authorities on domestic cryptocurrency mining companies earlier this year, as mainstream adoption by corporations and the wider public gathers pace. Media outlet Coindesk reported earlier Tuesday that Citi is awaiting regulatory approval to begin trading bitcoin futures on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, citing a source within the bank.

"Given the many questions around regulatory frameworks, we are being very thoughtful about our approach," a Citi spokeswoman said.

by regulators," Danesh said. Given the time needed for the DTIs to be embedded in markets, the end of 2023 would probably be the earliest practical date for introducing mandatory reporting, he added. The IT systems of big investors already reference ISO based identifiers and adding DTIs would

mean no major recalibration, making it easier to add digital assets.

"The financial institutions when they are looking to add digital assets to the scope of assets classes that they are willing to trade, the compliance officer doesn't want to come up with entirely new policies," Danesh said.

OVERPOWERED

England bowlers, led by Anderson, skittle India out for a paltry 78 in the first innings; hosts reach 120 for no loss at stumps on the opening day of the third Test

Verbal volleys at Lord's Long Room



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, August 25: India and England cricketers had an hostile exchange of words in the Lord's Long Room following on-field arguments on the third day of the second Test which the visitors won by 151 runs, a media report has claimed.

India had won in dramatic fashion, bowling out the hosts inside two sessions on the final day. "The players were pictured arguing as they left the playing field but the rows carried on in the Long Room, which was packed with India officials, support staff and squad players, who gave their team a rousing reception as they walked inside," the 'Daily Telegraph' reported. "Joe Root, who had just scored a brilliant unbeaten 180, and Virat Kohli are believed to have exchanged words on their way to the dressing rooms as the situation threatened to escalate before tempers cooled."

Lord's Long Room is usually packed with MCC members and

the two teams go their separate ways through different staircases to their dressing rooms.

But due to COVID-19 restrictions last week, the Long Room was closed to members as was the players' dining room. "It allowed the two sides to mingle more freely at the end of a day, making confrontation more likely in the event of a heated passage of play," the report added.

The third day witnessed India pacer Jasprit Bumrah unleashing a barrage of short-pitched deliveries on England's No.11 batsman and premier fast bowler James Anderson.

India skipper Virat Kohli had Tuesday said that his side was provoked by England but did not divulge the words that were spoken.

"I cannot give you the details of the words that were spoken. I think it's for the cameras and the stump mics to pick that up for both teams. What is said on the field and what's done in the moment, gives you extra motivation."



(From L): Craig Overton, Ollie Robinson and James Anderson regroup after fall of an Indian wicket at Headingley

catches that Jos Buttler took.

Cheteshwar Pujara (1) is plain and simple out of form and clueless about his off-stump as a classic outswinger found his edge. Then Anderson dismissed Kohli (7).

However, the eagerness to over-compensate made him jab at the ball to make it 21/3. Rohit did display impeccable defence but once Rahane was out at the stroke of lunch with Robinson getting one to rear up awkwardly and Rishabh Pant playing away from his body without any feet movement, he didn't have resources to accelerate.

But credit should also go to the English bowlers who extracted every bit of juice that was available during the 40.4 overs. India lost their last six wickets for 22 runs and this time, the Indian tail had no pleasant surprises in their kitty as India were bowled out for their second lowest first day score in last 34 years.

The lowest first day score for India was back in 1987 when fiery Jamaican Patrick Patterson scared the hell out of Dilip Vengsarkar's team, skitting them out for 75 at the Feroz Shah Kotla in New Delhi.

The batting performance certainly increased pressure on the bowlers and it didn't help that veteran Ishant Sharma looked completely out of sorts as Kohli gave him the new ball. Once the sun started beating down and made batting easier.

BRIEF SCORES

India 78 (Rohit Sharma 19, Ajinkya Rahane 18; James Anderson 3/6, Craig Overton 3/14); England 120 for no loss (Haseeb Hameed 60 batting, Rory Burns 52 batting). Match to continue.

embarrassment would have been more like the Adelaide Test match

It was a shoddy performance as the pitch although termed 'tacky' by England skipper Joe Root did-

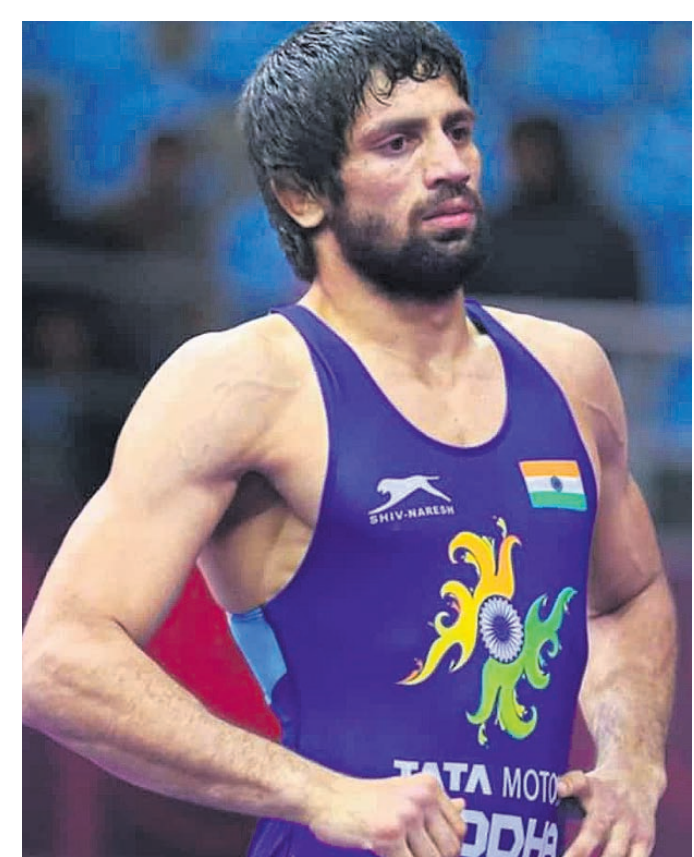
n't have any exaggerated off-the-pitch movement that could have troubled the batsmen.

Having seen an in-form KL Rahul (0) leave the outswingers alone,

Anderson started with inswingers before unleashing one with a wobbly seam with a hint of outward movement as the opener went for a drive and became one of the five

RAVI DAHIYA TO MISS WORLDS Sunny rebukes Hussain for India teams' assertion

TO MISS WORLDS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 25: The legendary Sunil Gavaskar Wednesday rebuked former England captain Nasser Hussain for his assertion that Indian cricket teams of the bygone era were easily bullied unlike the current side under Virat Kohli.

Gavaskar, the first man to score 10,000 Test runs and someone who toured England five times in his international career (1971, 1974, 1979, 1982, 1986), told Hussain that he would be "very upset" if his generation of cricketers were termed as ones who were "bullied".

Gavaskar and Hussain had an on-air debate on 'Sony' over a column that Hussain wrote in a British newspaper in which he said that Indian teams of the past weren't as tough as this unit, which is leading England 1-0 in the ongoing series.

"You said this India will not be



bullied as perhaps the previous generations would be. (I) Belonging to previous generation, could you perhaps enlighten which generation? And what is the exact meaning of 'bully'?" Gavaskar, also a former India captain, asked Hussain on air.

Hussain, a respected voice in world cricket, tried to explain what

he meant in his column, which wasn't very different from what Gavaskar had assumed. "I just think, the Indian side under the aggression of the past, would have said 'no no no'. But what Kohli has done is to make them go doubly hard.

"I saw a little bit of that in Sourav Ganguly's side and he started that, Virat is continuing with it. Even

talked about as being bullied. If you have a look at the record, in 1971 we won, that was my first tour in England.

"(In) 1974, we had internal problems so we lost 3-0. (In) 1979, we lost 1-0, it could have been 1-1 if we chased down 438 at the Oval (match ended with India stranded at 429 for 8).

"(In) 1982, we again lost 1-0. In 1986 we won 2-0, we could have won it 3-0. So, I don't think my generation we were bullied."

While Kohli's verbal duels with Englishmen did get a lot of traction, Gavaskar feels that being aggressive doesn't necessarily have to be "in your face".

"I don't think aggression means you have always got to be at the face of the opposition. You can show passion, you can show your commitment towards your team without yelling after each fall of wicket," Gavaskar said without taking Kohli's name.

Serena opts out of US Open 12-member contingent departs for Paralympics

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, August 25: Serena Williams added herself to the list of big-name withdrawals from the US Open Wednesday, pulling out of the year's last Grand Slam tournament because of a torn hamstring. Williams hasn't competed since injuring her right leg in the first set of her first-round match at Wimbledon in late June.

The American, who turns 40 next month, announced her decision to sit out the US Open via a social media post. She joins Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal in sitting out the competition in Flushing

Meadows, where play begins next Monday, raising questions about what the future of tennis might look like without them. The draw for the tournament is Thursday.

This will be the first major tournament since 1997 without any of Williams, Federer or Nadal in the singles brackets. Williams made her Grand Slam debut at the 1998 Australian Open; Federer made his the following year; Nadal in 2003.

Williams has won 23 Grand Slam singles titles, a record in the professional era. Only one player in tennis history owns more, Margaret Court with 24. Federer, Nadal and Novak Djokovic share the men's

record of 20.

"After careful consideration and following the advice of my doctors and medical team, I have decided to withdraw from the US Open to allow my body to heal completely from a torn hamstring," Williams wrote in Wednesday's post. Her note ended with: "I'll see you soon."

Williams' coach, Patrick Mouratoglou, also put up a post on social media, saying, "we've done everything we could" and adding: "It is heartbreaking, but this is the only possible decision."

Williams has won six singles championships at the US Open, most recently in 2014. In her five appearances at the hard-court tournament in New York since then, she has made it to the final twice — losing to Naomi Osaka in 2018 and Bianca Andreescu in 2019 — and the semifinals three other times, including last year.

This season, she was a semifinalist at the Australian Open in February, before losing to eventual champion Osaka there. At the French Open, played on red clay, Williams lost in the fourth round to Elena Rybakina. At Wimbledon, Williams was serving while leading 3-1 in her opening match when her left shoe seemed to lose its traction while she was hitting a forehand and her right leg flexed awkwardly.

She tried to continue but eventually needed to stop playing, only the second mid-match retirement of her Grand Slam career and first since 1998.

12-member contingent departs for Paralympics



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 25: Veteran Devendra Jhajharia and reigning world champion Sandeep Chaudhary were among five javelin throwers in a 12-strong Indian contingent that left for Tokyo Wednesday to compete in the Paralympics.

The contingent also included two high jumpers — Nishad Kumar and Ram Pal — and discus thrower Yogesh Kathuniya.

One of the top medal prospects, Jhajharia had won the gold medal in Athens and Rio Paralympics. The 40-year-old javelin thrower had rewritten his world record of 63.97m when he sent the spear to a distance of 65.71m in a qualifying event in June.

His main competition comes from compatriots Ajit Singh and Sundar Gurjar. With a little bit of luck, India could grab all three medals in the men's F-46 category, which is for athletes with arm deficiency, impaired muscle power or impaired passive range of movement in arms while competing in a standing position.

After Neeraj Chopra's historic performance at the Tokyo Olympics, javelin throwers have been in the limelight. "Neeraj's gold medal has put the spotlight on javelin throwers and being the senior most of the lot, I can say this with assurance that after Tokyo Paralympics, javelin (throw) will be the second most popular game in this country after cricket," Jhajharia said.

