



PROFESSIONAL RESPECT

Actor Bhumi Pednekar says co-actor Akhay Kumar has been a huge part of her career

LEISURE P2



MUSLIM MAN 'TORTURED'

Muslim scrap dealer allegedly threatened and forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' by two men in MP

TWO STATES P8



US STRIKES AGAIN

A US drone Sunday struck a vehicle carrying "multiple suicide bombers" from Afghanistan's Islamic State

INTERNATIONAL P10



Sero survey begins in 12 Odisha districts

BHUBANESWAR: The Odisha government Sunday launched a state-level serological survey during the day, he said. Regional Medical Research Centre of ICMR has been asked to conduct the exercise in 12 districts. "The serological survey will help assess the age-specific prevalence of SARC-CoV-2 antibodies among common people and healthcare workers in the state," the official said. The exercise will be conducted in Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Khurda, Puri, Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur, Kandhamal, Kalahandi and Nabarangpur.



Taliban ban music, female voices on TV

KANDAHAR: The Taliban have banned music and female voices on television and radio channels in Afghanistan's Kandahar. This comes after some media outlets removed their female anchors after the Taliban took over Afghanistan August 15. Local media in Kabul also reported that several women staff members were asked to return from their workplaces since the takeover. However, the Taliban has assured that they would let women continue working and would allow them to study under Islamic law.

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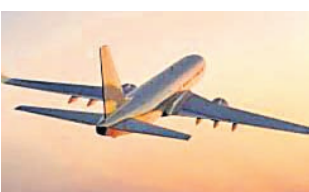
No, I don't want to read books and become a historian. I will rather burn books and join some political outfit!

Int'l flights ban extended till Sept 30

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 29: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has extended the ban on scheduled international commercial passenger flights to and from India till September 30.

The ban was previously extended till the end of August. In a circular Sunday, the civil aviation regulator said: "The competent authority has further extended the validity of circular issued on the subject cited above regarding scheduled international commercial passenger services to/from India till 2359 hrs IST of



September 30, 2021."

It added that this restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights approved by the DGCA.

However, international scheduled flights may be allowed on selected routes by the regulator on a case-to-case basis.

Scheduled international passenger flights were suspended in India in March last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	32.8°C	31.0°C
TEMP MIN	25.6°C	25.0°C
Humidity	91%	85%
Rainfall	15.0mm	Trace
Forecast	Light rains likely	



MAROONED: People transport their belongings on a boat in a flood affected village in Morigaon district of Assam, Sunday

UNI PHOTO

Rocket hits near Kabul airport

The attack comes a day after US President Joe Biden, citing military commanders, said that another terrorist attack at Hamid Karzai International Airport is "highly likely in the next 24-36 hours"

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kabul, August 29: A rocket struck a neighbourhood just northwest of Kabul's international airport Sunday as the US evacuation there winds down following the Taliban's lightning takeover of the country, killing a child, an Afghan police chief said. The rocket attack comes hours after US President Joe Biden warned about a credible security threat at the Kabul airport, saying another terrorist attack was "highly likely" in the next 24 to 36 hours.

"The situation on the ground continues to be extremely dangerous, and the threat of terrorist attacks on the airport remains high. Our commanders informed me that an attack is highly likely in the next 24-36 hours," Joe Biden had said.

After an Islamic State affiliate's suicide attack that killed over 180 people, the Taliban increased its security around the airfield as Britain ended its evacuation flights Saturday



Smoke billows out after the rocket attack in Afghan capital Kabul, Sunday

US Military cargo planes continued their runs into the airport Sunday, ahead of a Tuesday deadline earlier set by President Joe Biden to withdraw all troops from America's longest war.

The rocket struck Kabul's Khujwa Bughra neighbourhood, said Rashid, the Kabul police chief who goes by one name. No group immediately claimed the attack, however militants have fired rockets in the past. Meanwhile, the family of a folk singer north of Kabul says the Taliban killed him.

The shooting of Fawad Andarabi came in the Andarabi Valley for which he was named, an area of Baghlan province some 100 kilometers north of Kabul.

The valley had seen upheaval

since the Taliban takeover, with some districts in the area coming under the control of militia fighters opposed to the Taliban rule. The Taliban say they have since retaken those areas, though neighboring Panjshir in the Hindu Kush Mountain remains the only one of Afghanistan's 34 provinces not under its control.

Meanwhile, a band of veteran Afghan leaders, including two regional strongmen, are angling for talks with the Taliban and plan to meet within weeks to form a new front for holding negotiations on the country's next government, a member of a group said. The move comes as Western forces are heading to the final phase of troop-pull-out from Afghanistan.

3 medals for India at Tokyo Paralympics

Paddler Bhavina Patel, high jumper Nishad win silver medals, bronze for discus thrower Vinod Kumar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo, August 29: High jumper Nishad Kumar clinched a silver with an Asian record before discus thrower Vinod Kumar fetched a bronze which was put on hold after a protest over his disability classification as India began collecting what is expected to be an unprecedented haul of athletics medals in the Paralympics here Sunday.

Earlier in the day Bhavinaben Patel became the second Indian woman to win a medal at the Paralympics after she signed off with historic silver following a 0-3 loss to world number one Chinese paddler Ying Zhou in the women's singles table tennis class 4 final here. The 34-year-old

Patel's impressive run at the Games ended with a fighting 7-11 5-11 6-11 loss to Zhou, a two-time gold medalist, in the women's singles summit clash which lasted 19 minutes. With this medal, Indian team opened its account at the Games. Vinod's classification in F52, which is for athletes with impaired muscle power, restricted range of movement, limb deficiency or leg length difference, was done August 22 by the organisers.

It was not clear on what grounds the classification has been challenged. "Results of this event are currently under review due to classification observation in competing. The Victory Ceremony has been postponed to the evening session of 30th August," read a statement from the Games organisers.

India's Chef de Mission Gursharan Singh told PTI that Vinod's medal stands for now. The 21-year-old Nishad, who is a farmer's son in Himachal Pradesh's Amb town, cleared 2.06m to win the silver in T47 class before 41-year-old BSF man Vinod.



Bhubaneswar sees more dengue cases

With 2,069 cases of viral infection this year, Bhubaneswar witnesses a four-fold increase from the entire state's tally last year

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 29: With no let up in dengue cases, the number of patients in the state capital crossed 2,000, Sunday, - a four-fold increase from the entire state's tally last year.

Sources in the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) said the capital city Sunday reported 37 new cases. With this, the total number of dengue cases in the city reached 2,069. While only 496 cases were reported from the entire state last year, Bhubaneswar now accounts for almost 85% of cases registered across the state this year.

It may be mentioned here that more than 500 cases have been recorded in the city in less than 10 days. According to sources, while only 1,552 cases were registered till August 20, 517 new cases emerged were reported since then. Furthermore, while 551 cases were reported during July - the highest spike since the detection of the first case in January.

With such unprecedented rise, the city's health infrastructure, which is already under burden due to the Covid-19 pandemic, is virtually crumbling now. Sources at the Capital Hospital said the number of beds was doubled to 60 last month, but now it has been increased to 100 as a preparatory measure to deal with the situation effectively.

A BMC official, speaking on the condition of anonymity said, "Daily cases have increased from 30-40 to 60-70. But there's nothing to panic as about 1,771 patients have recovered. There has been no causality yet and there are only 298 active cases as of now. We are monitoring the patients and are prepared for any adverse situation."

The official also added that till date the BMC has visited 33,135 households covering 1,36,000 population and destroyed 85,299 breeding sources of Aedes Egypti (vector carrier of dengue).

MP tribal thrashed, tied to vehicle and dragged, dies

The victim was allegedly beaten up by eight persons who tied him to the rear side of a vehicle with a rope that dragged him some distance in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch district

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Neemuch (MP), August 29: A 40-year-old tribal was allegedly thrashed by eight persons who tied him to the rear side of a vehicle with a rope that dragged him some distance in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch district, police said

Saturday, adding five accused were arrested.

The tribal, identified as Kanhaiyalal Bheel, died during treatment at the Neemuch district hospital Friday.

The incident occurred Thursday morning after a minor road accident involving the victim and a milkman who was riding a motorcycle.

"Chhitar Mal Gurjar, a milkman, was riding a motorcycle which knocked down the victim Kanhaiyalal Bheel of Banda village when he was standing on the Neemuch-Singoli road, some 84 km from the Neemuch district headquarters," Superintendent of Police Suraj Kumar Verma told reporters here.



He said Gurjar lost his cool after the milk spilt on the road due to the accident and beat up Bheel. Gurjar then called up his friends who also roughed up Bheel and tied him to the rear side of a vehicle passing by with a rope. Bheel was dragged for some distance, Verma said.

"After a video of the incident became viral, the police swung into action but by then, the accused had fled. The victim was rushed to the district hospital where he died Friday," the SP said.

All the eight accused were charged with Sections 302 (punishment for murder) and other Sections of the Indian Penal Code and the SC/ST (prevention of atrocities) Act, he said. The five persons, identified as

Chhitar Mal Gurjar (32), Mahendra Gurjar and Gopal Gurjar (both 40), Lokesh Balai (21), and Laxman Gurjar have been arrested and efforts are on to trace others, the SP said.

He said the motorcycle and two four-wheelers - including a pickup vehicle and a nylon rope believed to be used in the crime have been seized.

Meanwhile, Madhya Pradesh Congress president Kamal Nath tweeted that the incident was very "inhuman" which he said is the testimony to lawlessness prevailing in Madhya Pradesh.

Nath demanded the state government take necessary actions immediately to check such incidents. He demanded strict action against the accused.

leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
So, busy bee, you finally realise you've been ignoring your near and dear. And now, it's going to cost you a lot of effort to make it up to them. Dinner at the finest restaurant, a trip to the theatre, shopping at a posh boutique... be ready to splurge, says Ganesh!

TAURUS
Your vision today will have a hue of green as you will draw to money like a fly to sweets. Taste the power of money with fortune as the monkey on your back. You may buy a pendant or a necklace today and your haggling skills will save you from being swindled, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
You will spend the day safeguarding sentiments of others and it is in your own interest. For most part of the day, probably the entire day, you will be away from your family, mostly on a trip for business or leisure purposes. Today, having a successful career will be only thing on your mind.

CANCER
You are a master of deception, and your sugar-coated comments play a pivotal role in your methods. Today, you will be able to smell trouble from a distance, and will know when to take a U-turn. Your methods may not make you very popular with the so-called moral brigade working with you, but you may think that this is the easiest way to the top.

LEO
Chess is a good start, but it is nothing compared to the strategic intrigues of your day today. Arguments will lead to further arguments, and nowhere else, reminds Ganesh. So, it only makes sense to counter a disagreement with an agreement.

VIRGO
You will shine exceedingly well in all the activities that you undertake today. Your dream of starting business operations on foreign shores will fructify today, says Ganesh. You may pay more attention to your personal appearance, which will boost your morale considerably.

LIBRA
Call it your generous side, but today is the perfect day to give back to all those from whom you have received so far. With roots set firmly in community service, it might do you well to extend that helping hand and return something back to them, preferably in the double.

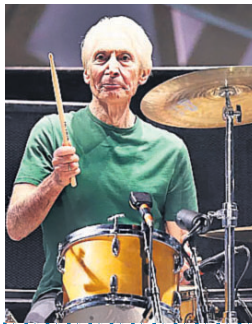
SCORPIO
An upcoming project of a new joint venture will capsize your personal life and keep you on your toes today, says Ganesh. You may not find the results in proportion to the efforts that you put in, but be patient because everything will fall in place only in due time. If all things in life came at an easy cost, then they would be grossly undervalued, reminds Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Be ready to receive advice - unasked and unwarranted. Don't overlook it either, as these suggestions can be worthy of consideration. But let the last word rest in your hands and look deep inside for the right verdict.

CAPRICORN
You may have sweated your guts out for an opportunity to pursue higher studies abroad, and met with disappointment. Try again today, advises Ganesh. For those of you engaged in speculation, transaction in stock and shares is likely and may fetch substantial gains. Opportunities galore, but you won't progress until you exploit them to the best of your interest.

AQUARIUS
Work, work, work! That is what will pay rich dividends. Of course, a pat on the back does matter, and with your commitment record, you may be getting a lot of it! You may back off from taking risks, and yet want change. Ganesh wonders how you will fulfill your wish.

PISCES
Arguments lead nowhere, and why argue when, at the end of the day, you can step back and watch them end up with egg on their faces, break a leg, get crushed under a falling safe, or otherwise suffer the numerous disasters you wish them to, for disagreeing with you. You will end up having the last laugh, so you might as well use your time more effectively, says Ganesh.



THE ROLLING STONES' VIDEO TRIBUTE TO CHARLIE WATTS

English rock band *The Rolling Stones* honoured their late drummer Charlie Watts with a two-minute video tribute on their social media. Shared on its social media handle, the video is a slideshow of photos and videos of Watts playing in the band, appearing in music videos, addressing the press, and more.

CO-STARS REMEMBER BOSEMAN ON HIS FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

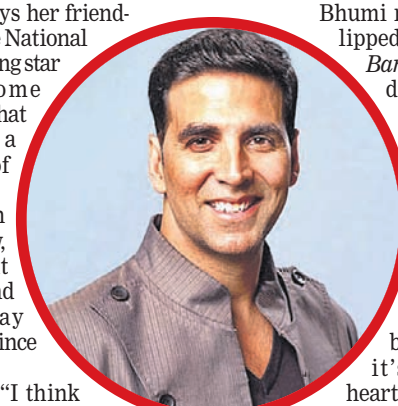
It has been a year since *Black Panther* star Chadwick Boseman passed away after battling colon cancer. The late actor's co-stars Lupita Nyong'o and Michael B. Jordan among many others have paid a poignant tribute on his one year death anniversary.



Akshay has been a huge part of my career: Bhumi

New Delhi: Actress Bhumi Pednekar, who is all set to share screen space with Akshay Kumar once again after *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha* in the upcoming film *Raksha Bandhan*, says her friendship with the National Award-winning star has become thicker and that he has been a huge part of her career.

been a huge part of my career and we've done some very successful things together. He is somebody who I learnt a lot from and only have love and respect for him."



Bhumi, in an interview, talked about how her bond with Akshay has evolved since 2017.

Bhumi remained tight-lipped about *Raksha Bandhan*, which is directed by Aanand L. Rai.

"I unfortunately can't (say). As a principle, I don't talk about any of my films till the makers do but all I can say is it's been a very heart-warming process for me to work with two people I love so much," she said.

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Arijit Singh to perform live in Abu Dhabi

Mumbai: Singing sensation Arijit Singh is all set to hit the stage for the first time ever since the Covid-19 pandemic began. Arijit will be performing live at the state-of-the-art Etihad Arena, in Abu Dhabi November 19.

Talking about the event, Arijit Singh shared: "Since the unfortunate coronavirus outbreak, this would be my first onstage performance. I am humbled to be a part of the concert and to be able to continue entertaining my fans."

This will be Arijit's first concert after five years in Yas Island, Abu Dhabi, organised by the Department of Culture and Tourism, Abu Dhabi and Portfolio Managing Events, a global event company.

"During this troubled time, I couldn't think of a better way in an attempt to keep the spirits high and heal through music. I always had an experience performing for the warm crowd of UAE. I am quite excited to perform there after five years," Arijit further said.

The tickets for the concert will be available for sale from August 30 onwards. The capacity of the hall will be reduced to half of its actual space, for the purpose of maintaining social distancing.

Kriti

still has a lot more to discover

New Delhi: Kriti Sanon has found her feet in Hindi cinema in just seven years. But the actress does not want to stop as she says she is not satisfied with where she is and is sure that there is still a lot more inside of her to discover.

Kriti made her Hindi film debut in 2014 with *Heropanti*, while her upcoming projects includes *Hum Do Humare Do*, *Bachchan Pandey*, *Bhediya* and *Adipurush*.

On her journey in the industry, Kriti said: "I think my journey has been very fruitful and I believe that your journey should have an upward curve and a graph it shouldn't go stagnant at any point."

The 31-year-old actress, who secured a degree in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering, added: "I am an engineer, who happened to find her luck in acting and found what she is meant to do. I have always been a thinker so I tend to think and question a lot. I want to learn."



Golden Jubilee celebrations of DAV-Unit 8 conclude

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: The valedictory ceremony of the Golden Jubilee year celebrations of DAV Public School, Unit-VIII was held recently. The event was inaugurated by Bhubaneswar Municipal Commissioner Sanjay Kumar Singh which preceded *Swarnim Sandhya*, a night of melodious rendition by singing sensations of the school.

It was followed by 'Keep Sake unveiling', where the idols of the DAV's founding fathers were unveiled by the dignitaries. A welcome note was delivered by school's



An event underway during the celebrations

chairman Bijay Kumar Patnaik.

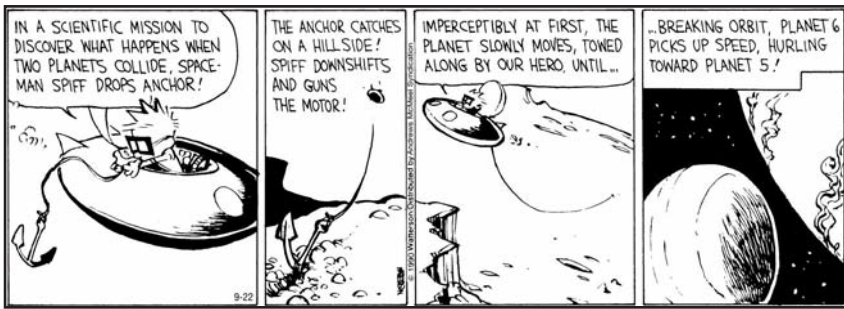
The event kicked off with an address by Roopa Mishra, IAS, and an alumnus of the school. She thanked the school for giving her a beautiful childhood. A Coffee Table Book was released by Odisha Governor Prof. Ganeshi Lal on the occasion.

Earlier, the school organised a series of week-long events and competitions beginning with an Inter School Quiz Competition followed by Inter DAV Expo where children showcased their scientific skills. The tiny tots also displayed their talent in an event titled *Swarnanjali*.

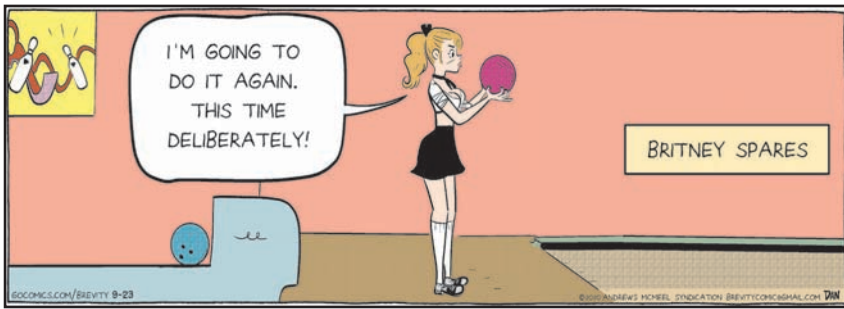
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

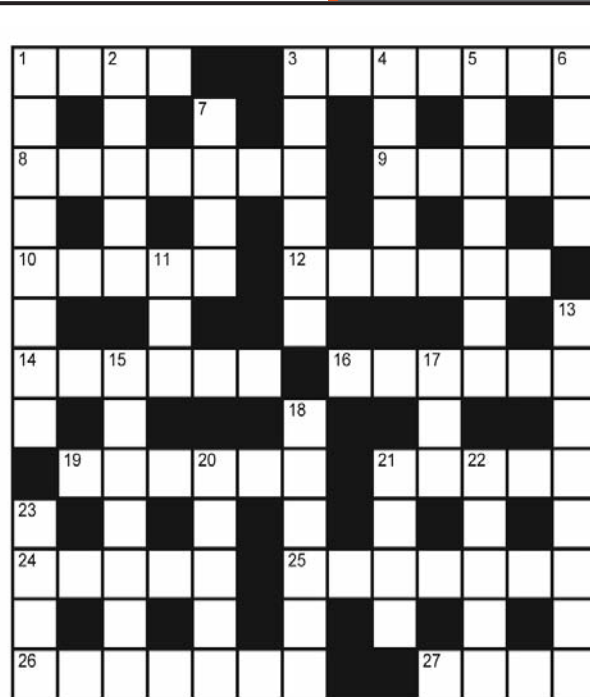


BREVITY



FUN post

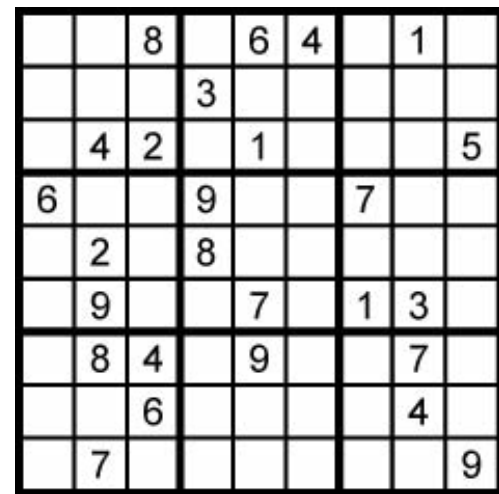
CROSSWORD



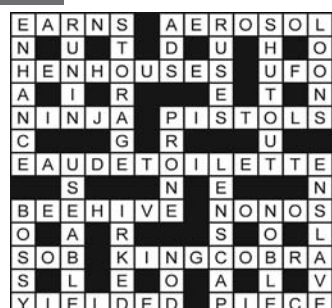
- Across**
- 1 Tempo
 - 3 Like the Bedouins
 - 8 Slumber (4-3)
 - 9 Circular domed dwellings
 - 10 Mini-lakes
 - 12 Legume
 - 14 Cure
 - 16 Irritate
 - 19 Stick to
 - 21 Vicious
 - 24 Russian prison camp
- Down**
- 1 World traveller's item
 - 2 Butter maker
 - 3 Tailor's tool
 - 4 Yucateco, e.g.
 - 5 Crane
 - 6 Wine holder
 - 7 Gambles
 - 11 Female hare
 - 13 Traffic stopper (3,5)
 - 15 Like some furniture or homes
 - 17 Negative joiner
 - 18 Watch out!
 - 20 Encourage (3,2)
 - 21 Zoo feature
 - 22 Join forces
 - 23 Prima donna problems

SUDOKU

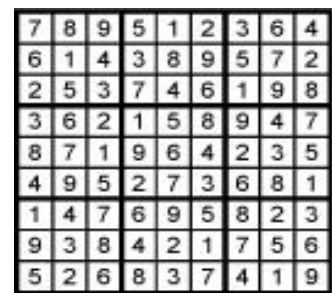
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

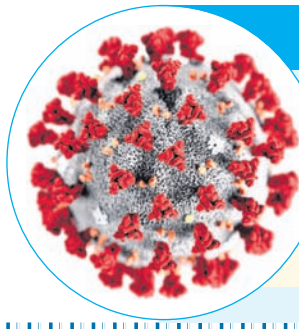
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



ETERNAL BONDING

The idols of Radha-Krishna being decorated at a mutt in Odia Bazar area of Cuttack on the eve of Janmashtami, Sunday

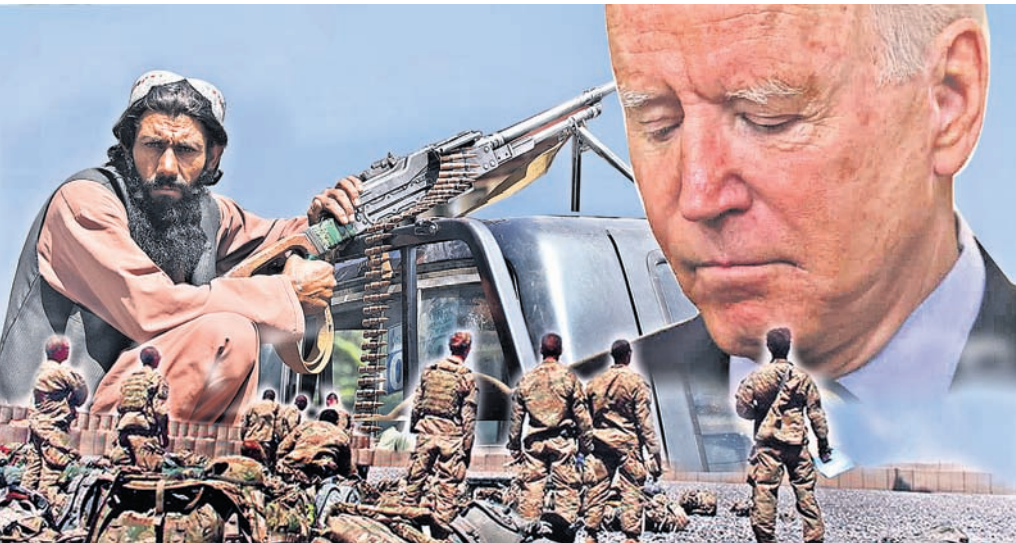


COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	21,70,36,991	19,39,57,947	45,12,414
India	3,26,95,030	3,18,88,642	4,37,830
Odisha	10,06,503	9,91,630	7,834

Odias in US speak on Taliban turmoil in Af

'WE COULD HAVE DONE BETTER IN READING THE TERRAIN'



ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 29: The last few weeks have been harrowing for the world with the Taliban's invasion, infestation and possession over Afghanistan. The United States of America (USA) is facing criticism for withdrawing its forces from the troubled land, a move regarded as the effective end of America's longest war, where as India has resorted to a "wait and watch" policy.

Meanwhile, Odias in America have shared their views on the chaos in Afghanistan and the US President Joe Biden's decision as well.

Rajesh Panda of Naperville, Illinois said that the withdrawal of US troops should not be surprising as the negotiation of withdrawal agreement happened early last year and the work towards it had started much earlier. The long war has taken the lives of many US servicemen and servicewomen and has cost US a trillion dollars.

He added, "I agree with our President's decision of pulling out from the long war. But we could have done better in correctly reading the intelligence about the imminent collapse of the Afghan government and armed force. I can never forget the disturbing pictures of people clinging on to air-

planes at Kabul airport in a desperate attempt to escape the Taliban. Citizens from various countries including USA are still stuck in Afghanistan. We have a long way to go but I have confidence that with our President's leadership and support from other countries, we will successfully come out of this difficult situation."

Sadyasnata Pattanaik of Chicago said, "The US and other superpowers have been depleting Afghan resources for about 50 years now. And US involvement, contrary to popular belief, is much longer than just 20 years. Our government helped create the Taliban."

Castigating the recent move of the US, She added, "I don't support US occupation of Afghanistan at all, but we left the wrong way. We owe safe asylum to Afghan refugees, especially to those who helped the American army. We needed a safe evacuation plan for as many men, women and children as possible. That was not done and now thousands and thousands of innocent lives are at the mercy of extremist groups these western nations helped create. Unfortunately, this isn't even unique to Afghanistan. We've seen this in Vietnam, Korea and multiple other countries. And I don't see this behavior stopping anytime soon as long as other coun-

ties have resources for the rich ones to deplete."

Sarmishtha Satpathy from California said, "What's happening in Afghanistan is terrifying and unfortunate. There was a semblance of democracy for a while and then everything changed overnight. There are Afghans who were helping the US troops, who were interpreters, who will now be prime targets of Taliban. Women especially will suffer death and worse, their education will actively be used to target them. The situation is complex and it is not just that the current administration took a rash decision. This has been initiated by the previous administration and has been in the works."

She further commented, "I'm sure the international community can do something collectively but it is beyond any individual. Right now, seeing people die and await their death is heartbreaking. Although the Taliban have mentioned in a press conference that they intend to be more respectful towards women and human rights, their actions speak otherwise."

Kuku das of Odia Society of America (OSA) termed the unfortunate fold of events as a very big loss for humanity. Civilians don't deserve to go through such atrocity, she added.

IMD PREDICTS SCANTY RAIN THIS WEEK

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 29: The regional office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), in its evening bulletin Sunday, issued warning of heavy rainfall only for Monday and said that chances of heavy rain across the state this week are low.

The met department said, "Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Gajapati, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi and Nuapada."

It also added, "Light to moderate rain or thundershower are very likely to occur at most places over the districts of Gajapati, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Malkangiri, Koraput, Kandhamal, Nabarangpur, Nuapada, Bolangir, Ganjam and at many places over the rest of the districts of Odisha."



The department in its weather forecast has not given any warning of heavy rain, thunderstorm and lightning till September 3 and has said that the weather is unlikely to change till September 5.

The weatherman has not issued any warning for the fishermen for the next few days. The state Capital could see one or two spells of rain or thunderstorm Monday while the maximum temperature in the City could go upto 33°C.

In the last 24 hours, the highest rainfall was reported in Chhatrapur with 91.4mm of rainfall, followed by Gopalpur with 72.2mm of rainfall.

The highest temperature in the state was reported in Boudh at 34°C whereas the lowest temperature was recorded in Daringbadi at 18°C.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



Legislators undergo Covid-19 test before Monsoon Session

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 29: Ministers, MLAs and others underwent mandatory Covid testing Sunday before the commencement of the Monsoon Session as per the schedule.

The Monsoon Session of the Odisha Legislative Assembly will start from September 1. The Covid testing for ministers and MLAs began Sunday on the Assembly premises. Three types of tests were done including RT-PCR, antigen and antibody tests.

"Like the previous few sessions which were conducted amid strict Covid protocols, we have decided to stringently follow Covid rules this session too for the legislators, media persons and others who would enter into the House," Speaker Surya Narayan Patro said.

He also added, "RT-PCR tests for all employees, MLAs, minister, media persons are being done before the session. In addition to this, all legislators will undergo immune test (antibody test)."

On the maiden day of the session, the Assembly is scheduled to work for five hours. The sessions have been planned in two phases every-



Samples being collected from Speaker Surya Narayan Patro and Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha, Sunday

day while the House will also sit on Saturday. The Assembly has allowed entertaining starred questions from the members of the House, unlike the practice adopted during the last few sessions.

The Assembly secretariat has decided to ensure adequate social

distancing of legislators inside the House whereas special arrangements for screening of all entering into the House have also been made. MLAs have been given liberty to attend the House proceedings through online mode even from their district headquarters.

Mo Bus on 3 new routes

The bus services will be available on Route-71 (Baramunda to Konark via Rasulgarh), Route-35 (Master Canteen to Jaydev Pitha) and Route-9 (Acharya Vihar to Patia via Niladri Vihar)

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 29: The Capital Region Urban Transport (CRUT) Sunday announced the introduction of Mo Bus services in three new routes from September 1.

According to CRUT, Mo Bus services will be available on Route-71 (Baramunda to Konark via Rasulgarh), Route-35 (Master Canteen to Jaydev Pitha) and Route-9 (Acharya Vihar to Patia via Niladri Vihar).

"The bus service from Acharya Vihar to Patia will cover major hospitals by the route. Route (9) is primarily aimed to cater to people needing health services at different hospitals in the City. The buses will run at an interval of 30 minutes from September 1," said a CRUT official.

On the other hand, CRUT also announced the discontinuation of Mo Bus services on Route-51 (Baramunda ISBT to Puri Bus Stand) from September 1 owing to extremely low ridership.

Meanwhile, people, mostly students, took to social media to thank CRUT for the introduction of services on Route-71. Sources said that the route covers a large number of colleges and coaching institutions, and the introduction of Mo Bus services on the route will help students immensely.

Sources said that CRUT's daily ridership, which earlier had peaked to 1 lakh per day, had fallen to less than 10,000 after Covid.

CUTTACK MAN CREATES SCULPTURES FROM SCRAP



Sanjib Biswal at work

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 29: Very often we find it difficult to deal with scrap materials. But, a man from the Silver City of Cuttack is using such junked items to create attractive sculptures.

Sanjib Biswal of BK Lane in Madhupatna area can create beautiful sculptures of animals, musical in-

struments and trees by using scrap materials like broken equipment, parts of old and discarded motor vehicles, and tin containers.

Sanjib had always a liking for painting since his childhood. He had tried his hand at modern art and oil painting at an early age. Noticing his interest in painting, some of his elders encouraged Sanjib to enroll himself into

TILL DATE, SANJIB HAS CREATED AT LEAST 50 BIG SCULPTURES AND MANY SMALL ONES FROM RECYCLED MATERIALS. FIGURES CREATED BY HIM HAVE BEEN DISPLAYED AT VARIOUS PLACES IN ODISHA, DELHI, KARNATAKA AND MAHARASHTRA

the BK Art College in 1993.

The young artist along with three of his friends was roped in to decorate the Odisha pavilion at a fair at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi in 1997.

"The idea to create sculptures from junked items struck me when I spotted some broken equipment and discarded vehicles near the fair venue in New Delhi. Soon after returning to Odisha, we made the sculpture of a horse head by using scrap. Many people appreciated our work," narrated Sanjib.

Till date, Sanjib has created at least 50 big sculptures and many small ones from recycled materials. Figures created by him have been displayed at various places in Odisha, Delhi, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

"I have been felicitated by the Lalit Kala Akademi, Embassy of Japan, Embassy of Chile and many other organisations and agencies for my work. Our world is the most beautiful creation of God. I am just making a small effort to save our world from scrap materials," Sanjib said.

Now, Sanjib has a desire to install some of his creations at various places in Cuttack city. "We can save our planet from pollution by recycling the scrap," he said.

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State's daily Covid +vity rate at 1.23%

ODISHA REGISTERS 849 MORE CORONAVIRUS CASES AND 69 FATALITIES

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 29: Odisha Sunday reported 849 new Covid-19 cases which took the tally to 10,06,503, while 69 more fatalities pushed the coronavirus death toll in the coastal state to 7,834, a Health official said.

At least 119 children are among the new patients. The infection rate among people below 18 years of age was at 14 per cent, up marginally from 13.47 per cent recorded Saturday, the official said.

The daily positivity rate was at 1.23 per cent as 849 new Covid cases were detected from 68,667 sample tests.

Of the 849 fresh cases, 491 were reported from quarantine centres and the rest detected during contact tracing.

Khurda district, which comprises the state capital Bhubaneswar, recorded the highest number of new infections at 361, followed by Cuttack (98) and Jajpur (32). Three districts—Gajapati, Nabarangpur and Subarnapur—did not register any new Covid-19 case in the last 24 hours, the official said.

Of the fresh fatalities, 19 were reported from Cuttack, 10 from Angul, nine from Jagatsinghpur and five each from Mayurbhanj and Nayagarh. Four patients each succumbed to the disease in Balasore, Dhenkanal and Kendrapara, three each in Bhadrak and Jajpur, two in Puri and one in Keonjhar, the official said. Fifty-three other Covid-19 patients have also died due to comorbidities.

Odisha now has 7,820 active cases and 956 people were cured of the disease Saturday, taking the total number of recoveries to 9,90,796.

The state has so far conducted over 1.79 crore sample tests for



IN SHORT

At least 119 children are among the new patients. The infection rate among people below 18 years of age was at 14 per cent, up marginally from 13.47 per cent recorded Saturday

Khurda district recorded the highest number of new infections at 361, followed by Cuttack (98) and Jajpur (32)

Over 2.17 crore people have been inoculated till Saturday with 52.53 lakh of them having received both doses of the vaccines

72-YR-OLD RETIRED COLLEGE PRINCIPAL HACKED TO DEATH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack Sadar, August 29: Unidentified miscreants hacked a 72-year-old retired college principal to death near Kandarpur Adivasi Sahi Square on National Highway-55 here Sunday, an official said.

The deceased was identified as Sudarshan Satpathy, a resident of Siddheswarpur village under Kandarpur police limits here.

According to sources, the incident occurred in the evening when Satpathy was crossing the Adivasi Sahi Square on his scooter.

Unidentified miscreants hacked Satpathy with sharp weapons, leaving the septuagenarian critically wounded, said a local. Informed, Kandarpur police reached the spot and rushed a profusely bleeding Satpathy to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack where he was declared 'dead on arrival'.

Satpathy started his teaching career at Kandarpur College here and retired as the principal of Alaka College in Jagatsinghpur, sources said.



Artistes performing Mahari dance in front of Srimandir in Puri, Sunday

OP PHOTO

DEVOTION IN THE AIR

CUO celebrates 13th foundation day

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 29: The Central University of Odisha (CUO), Koraput, Sunday celebrated its 13th foundation day through virtual mode.

On the occasion, Governor Ganeshi Lal, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan addressed the academic community through video messages. The foundation day lecture was delivered by Padma Bhusan G. Padmanabhan, eminent scientist and former director of Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. Vice Chancellor (in-charge) Sharat Kumar Pallita presided over the meeting.



While addressing the CUO community, the Governor suggested that the students should follow the path shown by Swami Vivekananda for achieving success in life. Patnaik greeted the university

fraternity and assured them of all help from the state government. Higher Education Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo also sent a congratulatory message. Speaking on the occasion,

Pradhan said, "The role of a university is not restricted to teaching and learning only. It has a significant role in the holistic development of our youths, who are the future of this country."

He applauded the commendable role of CUO in strengthening the digital literacy skill of tribal children of Koraput. Delivering the foundation day lecture, G. Padmanabhan said, "Reaching the unreached is the objective of CUO." He urged the university community to work for achieving that objective.

He stressed upon the need to introduce subjects of basic sciences, particularly life sciences, in the university. Padmanabhan also suggested more research on virology

Ruckus at fuel station

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 29: Tension ran high at Chandrasekharpur petrol pump here after a staffer of the filling station allegedly thrashed a cab driver following an altercation over online payment issue Sunday.

The cab driver has been identified as Santosh Puhan. He sustained critical injuries in one of his eyes and has been admitted to a nearby hospital.

Following the incident, several cab drivers assembled near the filling station immediately and staged a protest demanding the arrest of the petrol pump employee. They also pressurised the owner of the pump to bear the expense for Puhan's treatment.

45 kg ganja seized, 2 from Delhi held

THE ACCUSED WERE USING CITY-BASED COURIER AGENCY TO TRANSPORT THE CONTRABAND

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 29: The Commissionerate Police arrested two drug peddlers Sunday while they were trying to send cannabis weighing around 45 kg to Delhi through a City-based courier agency. The accused persons, identified as Manish Kumar and Anirudh Mishra, are residents of Chandni Chowk in Old Delhi area.

The duo used to follow unique modus operandi to hoodwink the police and other agencies. They had sent ganja of huge quantity through different courier agencies



in Bhubaneswar several times in the past as well. The contraband items were sourced from Gajapati and Kandhamal districts.

The accused persons would come to Bhubaneswar and stay here for two or three months till the transportation of the items completed.

Both Manish and Anirudh had been staying at Rasulgarh for last two months.

The duo used to bring the contraband items to Bhubaneswar from different places by buses. Later, they used to send the same through courier agencies to Delhi.

Sunday, the owner of a courier agency called the police upon suspecting the duo's conduct. Saheed Nagar police immediately reached the spot and checked the packets containing the contraband. Police arrested the duo registering a case(340/21) under various sections of NDPS and IPC.

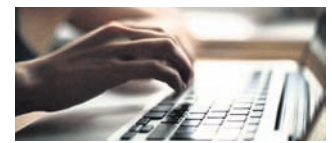
Mock tests ahead of OJEE examination

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 29: Ahead of the Odisha Joint Entrance Examination (OJEE)-2021, which is to be held from September 6, the authority Sunday said that all the candidates who have applied for the examination can sit for OJEE-2021 mock test to get a real test-like environment.

In a notification, OJEE chairman said Sunday that the practice has been made available in OJEE website www.ojee.nic.in, where registered candidates can appear a practice test in their subject.

Candidates can take the test as many times as they like. Also, they can continue to use the previously available mock test link in OJEE's



second website www.odishajee.com for unlimited number of times.

The OJEE-2021 will be held from September 6 to September 18. The exam was originally scheduled to be held in the month of June. However, it was postponed in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The entrance examination will be conducted as a computer based test (cbt) for all courses in three shifts each day of the examination schedule.

The exam is going to be held in all 30 districts of the state. The

nine new districts included in the list are - Bhawanipatna, Nabarangpur, Boudh, Nuapada, Deogarh, Puri, Kendrapara, Malkangiri and Sonepur. Three places outside Odisha - Patna, Ranchi and Kolkata - have also been added, official sources said.

The registered candidates can download their admit cards from the official website by using their application number and date of birth as credentials.

The candidates have been advised to take printout of their admit cards (all four pages, preferably in colour), check the details, read carefully the 'standard operating procedure' and 'instructions for the candidates' and prepare accordingly for the examination.

POOR MAINTENANCE



Commuters negotiating a potholed NH-16 at Gopalpur near Cuttack, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Silver City lady's tryst with handloom

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 29: Though garments prepared by power looms have virtually replaced handloom products, a few artisans in Odisha and other states are still leaving no stone unturned to keep the traditional form of weaving alive.

Jhuna Das, a woman from the Silver City here, leads by example in preserving the tradition of handloom. Jhuna has been weaving Maniabandha sari on the verandah of her house in Buxi Bazar area of the city for last three years.

The art of weaving was in Jhuna's blood as she was born to a weavers' family of Maniabandha Hariharpatna village of Badamba block in Cuttack district.

Jhuna had learnt the basics of weaving from her family members who were weaving cotton sari, lungi, towel and other garments. However, the young artisan was forced to discontinue weaving soon after she tied the knot with Rabinarayan Das of Buxi Bazar. Her in-laws' house did not have any facility to install



WEAVING SUCCESS

JHUNA IS THE ONLY ARTISAN IN THE MILLENNIUM CITY TO WEAVE MANIABANDHA SARI

THE YOUNG ARTISAN WAS FORCED TO DISCONTINUE WEAVING SOON AFTER SHE TIED THE KNOT WITH RABINARAYAN DAS OF BUXI BAZAR

THREE YEARS AFTER HER MARRIAGE, SHE HAD EXPRESSED HER DESIRE BEFORE HER IN-LAWS TO RESTART WEAVING TO WHICH THE LATTER AGREED

a handloom.

"I always had a desire to continue weaving. Three years after my marriage, I had expressed my desire before my in-laws. My in-laws agreed to cooperate but we did not have the money required to install a handloom and buy raw materials," narrated Jhuna.

However, a youth from her native village extended a helping hand. "He had assisted us to set up a handloom on our verandah and arranged raw

materials too. I start weaving clothes once I finish my daily household work," Jhuna revealed.

Incidentally, Jhuna is the only artisan in the Millennium city to weave Maniabandha sari.

However, the young weaver rued that she is not getting adequate remuneration for her work. "It usually takes 10-12 days to weave a Maniabandha sari. I am getting only Rs 500 as remuneration even though the product

fetches a substantially higher price," Jhuna said.

Jhuna's father-in-law Basanta Das said they have been trying to set up a special handloom in their house but they are unable to arrange the money. "We need around Rs 90,000 for the purpose. We have contacted a few banks but yet to receive any positive response in this regard," he said.

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REMINISCING THE LEGEND



Youths participating in a cyclothon organised on the occasion of National Sports Day in Deogarh, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Women block NH-59 over drinking water supply in Ganjam

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dharakote, August 29: Hundreds of women carrying pots and tumblers blocked the National Highway-59 Sunday demanding water supply to their village Pankalabadi under Dharakote police limits in Ganjam district.



The women blocked the Askadharakote stretch of the highway. The road blockade disrupted traffic on the route as commuters were left stranded for long hours. Sources said the residents of Pankalabadi are facing acute water scarcity even in the monsoon season. They are not getting pure drinking water. The district authorities are taking no action to address the basic demand of the people, despite submitting a number of memorandums.

Aggrieved over it, women demonstrated on the road and demanded swift action on the part of the authorities.

'Diversion of Kharasrota will only serve interest of industrial houses'

AGENCIES

Kendrapara, August 29: The Communist Party of India (Marxist) strongly opposed the Odisha government's move to divert the Kharasrota river water for supplying piped water to neighbouring Bhadrak district and alleged that it was a well-hatched conspiracy to protect the interest of industrial houses located in the neighbouring district.

Diverting water from the Kharasrota river in Kendrapara district to neighbouring Bhadrak district is bound to trigger depletion of water intake capacity. The natural flow of the river should be protected for the larger interest of the people of Kendrapara who are mostly dependent on agricultural income for a livelihood, said veteran CPI(M) leader and the party former state secretary, Janardan Pati.

Briefing reporters here Saturday, he said, "The way the government is trampling down the resistance movement against the mega drinking water project, it leads one to believe that the project is being implemented to meet the water requirement of industries including the Dhamra port in Bhadrak district."

If the port and other companies are allowed to draw water from the mega project, the water level will fall drastically and will adversely



FILE PHOTO

affect farming activities and the ecology of the nearby Bhitarkanika National Park, which is home to the country's second-largest mangrove forest cover, he claimed.

Since no environmental impact assessment had been done properly for the proposed mega drinking water project, it is an act of "impropriety" on the part of the state government to go ahead with the construction of the project, he said.

The ₹82 crore Buxi Jagabandhu Assured Water Supply to Habitations (BASUDHA) water project had evoked angry protests across Kendrapara district over the past fortnight after it came to the light that the Kharasrota river

water will be diverted to Bhadrak. As a precautionary measure, prohibitory orders have been enforced in Balakati, Bharigada and Barunadiha panchayats under Rajkanika block till October 8.

The project will provide safe drinking water to villages in Bhadrak district where the groundwater table is heavily salinated. The project requires 105 million litre per day and less than 4 per cent of water inflow of the river will be diverted for the mega project. The apprehension expressed by people in Rajkanika is unfounded and does not have a logical basis, said Niranjana Behera, Kendrapara sub-collector.

Sericulture boost in Bonai sub-division

SUNDARGARH ADMIN KICK-STARTS CONSTRUCTION OF TUSSAR SILK PARK

POST NEWS NETWORK

Lahunipara/Bonai, August 29: Sericulture or silk farming is all set for a big leap in Sundargarh as the district administration has initiated construction of the ambitious Tussar Silk Park at Khuntgaon under Lahunipara block Saturday. Although some locals had opposed it, majority of the people and people's representatives supported the project.

According to reports, an estimated ₹24 crore will be spent for the project which will come up on 5 acre of land.

The opponents said that the land being used for the Tussar Silk Park is currently used as a playground by students of Khuntgaon government high school. They demanded to shift the project somewhere else. In the past, the project supporters and opponents had taken up the issue to the Collector, the BDO, the sub-collector, MLA



and MP. Khuntgaon sarpanch Ajay Kumar Nayak said that the Tussar Silk Park will create a good scope of employment for local youths while playing a key role in boosting sericulture in the region.

Scores of farmers in the three blocks of Lahunipara, Bargaon and Bisra under Bonai sub-division have been producing silk. They are engaged in Seed Crop Rearing (SCR) and Commercial

Crop Rearing (CCR). They have been selling silk cocoons through local primary cooperative societies.

Tussar Silk Park is being established under the Odisha Livelihoods Mission (OLM) in association with the Sericulture department with funding from Sundargarh District Mineral Foundation (DMF).

The project envisages the concept

of 'Soil to Silk Ending in Fabric' and aims to provide livelihoods to the forest fringe communities.

It is said that there are about 5,000 registered sericulturists in Lahunipara, Koida and Bonai of Bonai sub-division besides Bisra and Bargaon blocks. However, about 3,000 of them are active in sericulture activities.

Silk farmers and their family members traditionally rear natural silkworms on host trees like Asan and Arjun in adjacent forests to get cocoons. The trees have been planted on around 500 hectare land in Bonai. Two crops are grown annually with seed crop rearing done during July-August and commercial crop rearing in November.

On an average, a farmer can earn a minimum of ₹20,000 from 100 healthy trees in a single crop season. The upcoming park will have reeling, re-reeling, spinning, weaving, textile printing and embroidery facilities.

Commissionerate police system in Berhampur hangs in balance

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 29: Even as Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has announced twice to roll out commissionerate system of police in Berhampur, the proposal still waits to see the light of the day.

Former police DG Rajendra Prasad Sharma had also reiterated in the past the decision of setting up commissionerate police system in Berhampur.

He spoke in this regard while addressing the foundation day celebrations of Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Commissionerate Police. However, the proposal is yet to be implemented.

The two other cities where the state government had announced to implement the system are Sambalpur and Rourkela. Locals are of the view that the delay has happened due to lack of adequate man power and infrastructure.

As the proposal hangs in balance, DGP Abhay is visiting the Silk City, Monday. He will inaugurate the newly constructed buildings of Gosaninugaon police station, Rambha police station and the Bhanja Vihar police outpost. All eyes are on him as residents look forward to hear something on implementation of the police commissionerate system in the city.

Reports said that seven years back the state government had taken a decision to implement police commissionerate system in Berhampur. A detailed report was prepared and submitted before the state government and at the police headquarters in Cuttack.

The report suggested having 15 police stations under the commissionerate system. It also suggested



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

7 years back, the state government had taken a decision to implement police commissionerate system in Berhampur. A detailed report was prepared and submitted before the state government and at the police headquarters in Cuttack

The report suggested having 15 police stations under the commissionerate system. It also suggested merging three police stations in Berhampur police district with Ganjam police district and vice versa for effective policing

As the proposal hangs in balance, all eyes are on police DG Abhay who is visiting the Silk City Monday, as residents look forward to hear something on implementation of the police commissionerate system in the city

merging three police stations in Berhampur police district with Ganjam police district and vice versa for effective policing.

Police stations like Baidyanathpur, Bada Bazaar, Gosaninugaon, Town, Sadar, Golanthara, Gopalpur, Mahila, Traffic and Marine police stations will be included in the commissionerate system. Police stations like Jarada, Digapahandi and K Nuagaon in Berhampur police district will be merged with Ganjam police district while Chhatrapur, Chamakhandi and Aryapalli police stations will be merged with Berhampur police district.

The proposal also envisaged to divide the police commissioner-

ate into three sub-divisions which will be manned by three DCPs. Each DCP will have five police stations under their jurisdictions. It was said that if police commissionerate system is implemented in Berhampur then it will lead to an increase in man power which will help in better management of the law and order situation.

When contacted, Berhampur MLA Bikram Panda said that the state government is aware of the problem and will make an announcement in this regard at an appropriate time. A lawyer Raghunath Prasad Panigrahi said that the decision is only limited to announcement and the state government has no plan in this regard.

6 years on, Boudh Mahanadi bridge still in the making

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boudh, August 29: Even as six years have passed, construction of a bridge on the Mahanadi river connecting Dhalapur in Boudh district with Athamallik in Angul district is yet to get over.

The bridge is going to become the lifeline of the residents in Boudh district which is geographically situated in the middle of the state. The bridge will open up communication facilities for the residents of western Odisha with that of people in southern and northern parts of Odisha.

The bridge once completed will improve facilities for education and healthcare services as well as new avenues and opportunities between Boudh and Angul districts as well as with south Odisha.



However, construction of the bridge which is of three kilometre long is showing no signs of completion. This has sparked resentment among residents who are waiting from the start to connect with their counterparts in Athamallik and south Odisha.

Reports said the Chief Minister had laid the foundation stone of the bridge in 2015 which was scheduled to get completed by December, 2020. ₹168 crore was sanctioned for the bridge and a consultancy agency Ranjit of Gujarat received the contract for its construction. However, the agency instead of completing the work within the scheduled period is going on extending the deadline.

Residents have demanded the administration to intervene and ensure that the project gets completed soon for the benefit of the residents. When contacted, Niranjana Dhal, assistant engineer of the Works department admitted that the consultancy had slowed down the implementation of the project. He however, said that the bridge construction works would get completed by December this year.

Delay in construction of rly overbridge adds to commuters' woes



POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, August 29: Construction of a new railway overbridge on Angargadia rail track in this district has long been delayed and thousands of residents and commuters are facing problems because of it, a report said.

The delay in construction has put thousands of residents and commuters in trouble as the service road they take to commute is in a bad shape. Travelling on the service road has become a commuters' nightmare due to frequent accidents. Locals alleged that this has happened due to the apathy and negligence of the departmental authorities, which they termed as unfortunate.

Reports said that the service road starts from Police Line Square in Balasure town and passes via Angargadia, Sobharampur and Saraswatipur before connecting with the National Highway at Bamapada. The road regularly witnesses heavy traffic as a number of offices and establishments like Vigilance, Adarsh Vidyalaya, various technical institutions,

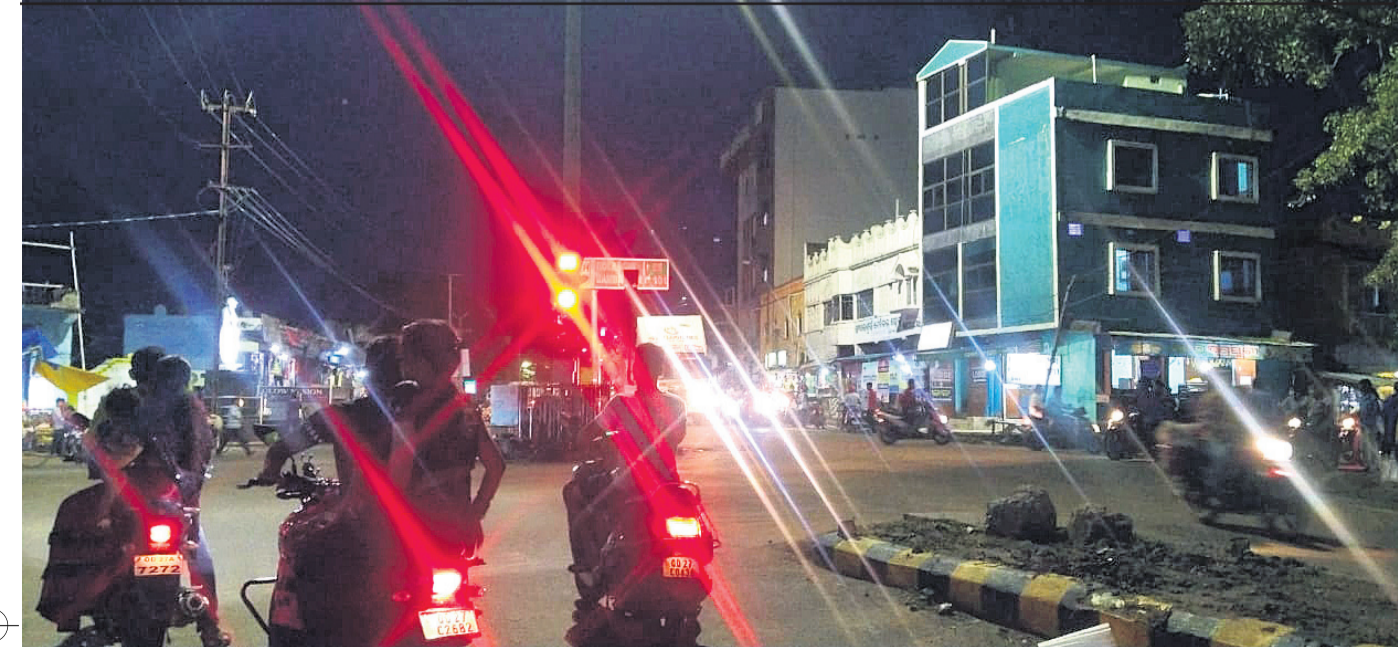
CIPET, a business park, LPG terminal, Birla Tyres plants etc are situated alongside the service road. Thousands of officials, labourers, students commute on this road daily to their destinations.

Moreover, the state government has recently sanctioned funds for construction of an indoor stadium on the government land which is on the roadside.

The diversion roads have become muddy and slippery since the onset of the monsoon and commuters riding a two-wheeler through the affected area are always on the receiving end. Large potholes have come up on the road with rain battering the area. The road gets filled with muddy water even at slight rainfall and commuters often fail to distinguish them and meet with accidents.

Contacted, Natabar Pradhan, assistant engineer of the Works department who is in-charge of the overbridge said the service road was earlier constructed but craters developed on it due to frequent rainfall. He however, assured to repair the service road very soon.

TRAFFIC CONTROL



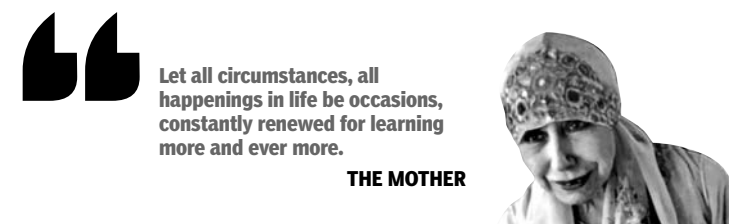
Bikers travel by NAC Square in Boudh lit up with new traffic lights as computerised traffic system was launched, Sunday

OP PHOTO

NOTICE

I Nityananda Gadia, S/o Jadaba Gadia, R/o Jaring, P.O.-Jaring, P.S./Tah.- Bijepur, Dist.- Bargarh declared that, I am the recorded owner of Khata No.297/365, total area of Ac. 0.69 dec. of Mouza - Jaring, P.S.- Bijepur, Dist.- Bargarh. The aforesaid land is myself acquired property being purchased through Regd. Sale Deed vide No.857 dt.11.05.2007. That, I have lost the said original R.S.D. vide No.857 dt.11.05.2007 somewhere at Jaring, P.S.- Bijepur, Dist.- Bargarh since five years ago. Further I declared that I have never mortgaged the above land / R.S.D. in any Bank or Financial Institutions. Now I am applying for a loan from the State Bank of India, Bijepur Branch, P.S./Tah.- Bijepur, Dist.- Bargarh by mortgaging the same. If anybody has any objection may kindly draw notice before State Bank of India, Bijepur Branch, P.O./P.S./Tah.- Bijepur, Dist.- Bargarh within 30 days of publication of this notice. Later on no objection or claim will not be acceptable in any circumstances.

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P.S./Tah.- Bijepur, Dist.- Bargarh



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THE MOTHER

Hour of Friendships

Finally, US President Joe Biden could meet the new Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett one-on-one for 50 minutes and then with their respective aides August 28. The meeting scheduled earlier was on the point of being shelved following the killings of scores of Afghans and 13 US army personnel by suicide-bombers at Kabul airport. It was held after getting postponed by two days and all the items on the agenda were covered. The most important issue was the US-Iran nuclear deal to which Israel is hyper-allergic, the Israel-Palestinian conflict and the Israel-China ties which is a sore point with the USA.

But, the first meeting between the US President and the Israeli Prime Minister turned out to be only a tone-setter; nothing more, nothing less. This was only expected. Bennett needed to silence his critics belonging to the camp of the just ousted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by showing to them that he could evolve a workable relationship with the new US President, who had never before met him, but had an excellent relationship for years with Netanyahu. In fact, the latter's supporters were euphoric when the announcement postponing the meeting was made, while Bennett and his entourage were cooped up in their hotel in the USA. As for Biden, he is in no mood to oblige Israel by torpedoing the restart of the US-Iran nuclear deal progressing fast despite strong opposition to it by both Bennett and his immediate predecessor. Nor was the Israeli Prime Minister prepared to sour his country's hugely profitable economic relationship with China even though the Biden administration has made hostility towards China and Russia the linchpin of the US foreign policy.

Both the US President and Israeli Prime Minister are now facing great challenges at home. It is, therefore, natural that they would avoid political surprises and fulmination in public that may disturb the special relationship the two countries have had for years. This is probably why the public statements they made after the meeting were bereft of any dramatic announcements and instead they reflected a sobriety of approach to the contentious issues.

Biden is in a soup over Afghanistan and Bennett suffers from a credibility crisis having won just 6 per cent of the votes in the last elections. Still, there might be more behind-the-scenes disagreement when they were closeted together for 50 minutes without their aides. No one knows what transpired between the two, but their statements do indicate that they had decided to put up a brave front that their stated positions have been mutually appreciated and they remain unchanged.

Biden's concern was how to push Bennett to abandon Israel's cooperation with China, mainly in the hi-tech sphere. The Biden administration is focused on its greatest strategic challenge being posed by China, which has been exploiting US blunders in Afghanistan and Iraq and expanding its influence with lightning speed in the Middle East, Asia and beyond. What causes dismay to the US is China's investment in Israel that has exceeded \$19bn in the past 18 years, including \$9bn in technology. Their bilateral trade reached \$17.5bn last year.

If Biden was unable to persuade Bennett to delink Israel from China, he had the Iran card to play to make Israel see the US point of view. For one thing, Tehran is a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and its nuclear programme remains largely peaceful, while Israel refuses to join the NPT and is the only nuclear military power in the Middle East. Biden's statement after the meeting clearly indicated the talks between them centered around this logic. Not only did he not give even the slightest hint that the USA was reconsidering its position on restarting the nuke-deal with Iran, but said, instead, the USA would first use diplomacy to rein in Iran's ambition of developing nuclear weapons with the enriched uranium it would obtain from the USA. Only when diplomacy fails, the USA would think of using 'other options.' It is easily understood the USA would think twice before looking for a military solution after its disastrous Afghan policy. For now, Bennett is happy with the US President's promise of harsher measures against Iran should the latter abuse the nuke deal. This also makes room for Israel's unilateral actions against Iran should such a situation arise. This is some gain for Bennett who can now boast before his critics at home that he hasn't returned from Washington empty-handed. He has the US President's pledge to resort to 'other options' against an errant Iran.

As for the establishment of a Palestinian state, Bennett had told the US press before the meeting that Israel won't make it a reality, reversing Israel's stated position. The controversial statement seemingly did not figure in the meeting. The Afghan crisis has rattled Biden so much that he might have deliberately decided not to further muddy the already muddied Israel-Palestine issue. Bennett should feel happy over the turn of events since his public statement did not attract official response from the US.

The meeting, therefore, achieved the main purpose of resetting the relationship between the two countries under the two new leaders. This was reflected in Biden's remark after the meeting when he said, "We've become close friends," even though he'd just met Bennett for the first time about an hour earlier.

FOCUS ASSET MONETISATION

SHOCK THERAPY



Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

THIS IS EXPLOITATION OF NATIONAL CRISES SUCH AS DISASTERS OR PANDEMICS TO ESTABLISH CONTROVERSIAL AND QUESTIONABLE POLICIES, WHILE CITIZENS ARE TOO DISTRACTED TO RESIST EFFECTIVELY

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman August 23 launched the National Monetisation Pipeline comprising brownfield assets with an aggregate monetisation potential of ₹6 lakh crore, which will be available for lease/licensing to private investors over four years from 2021-22 to 2024-25. For the current fiscal, the target is ₹88,000 crore.

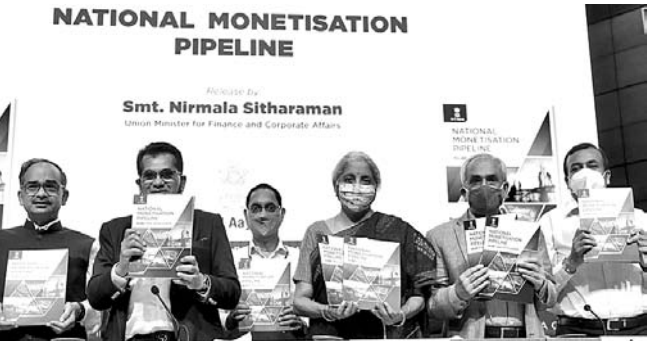
Roads, railways, and power sector assets will comprise over 66 per cent of the total estimated value of the assets to be monetised, with the balance coming from sectors including telecom, mining, aviation, ports, natural gas and petroleum product pipelines, warehouses, and stadiums.

Opposition leaders have dubbed the monetisation plan as 'legalised loot and organised plunder,' a 'grand closing-down sale,' a 'dangerous' move, and 'a surreptitious way of handing invaluable public assets, created over decades, to a chosen few.'

Sitharaman said monetisation will explore innovative ways of private participation without transfer of government ownership and whatever resource obtained by monetisation, the same can be used for further investment into infrastructure building. She cited some cases of asset monetisation during the UPA regime to justify her decision.

But monetisation involving most vital assets worth gigantic amounts is not the same as asset monetisation of a trivial amount during the UPA regime. The plan for such a gargantuan amount of asset monetisation shows the bankruptcy of the government, which is failing to raise resources by taxing the rich, the corporates and curbing tax evasion. This is clearly reflected in our abysmal tax-GDP ratio, one of the lowest in the world.

The government is defending its decision by labelling monetisation as an act of just leasing national infrastructural assets to generate revenue to create new infrastructure. This means the



Plan for such a gargantuan amount of asset monetisation shows the bankruptcy of the government, which is failing to raise resources by taxing the rich, corporates and curbing tax evasion

government will part with its assets for a specified period of time in exchange of lump sum payments. But the government obscures the fact that the leaseholders of those infrastructural assets will not be guided by philanthropy. There will be deliberate undervaluation of assets only to enable the corporate behemoths to take over those vital infrastructural assets at throwaway prices. In the process, the lease periods will be extended and finally ownership will be handed over to them.

Under the garb of monetisation, the leaseholders will be profiting out of this venture and will charge exorbitant rents from users of those assets. This is nothing but a way of weaponising the corporate and the rich to loot and plunder national assets.

The bigger question is why suddenly asset monetisation, disinvestment, and privatisation have become the government's core agenda while no efforts are being made to tackle the intricate problems of poverty, hunger, unemployment, inequality, inflation, erosion of people's purchasing power, banking frauds, massive tax evasion, and decline in corporate tax revenue. No amount of concern is expressed toward the sufferings of people who were affected by COVID-19 or whose fam-

ily members have succumbed to the disease.

Actually, this is nothing but the combination of 'disaster authoritarianism' and 'shock doctrine.' Canadian author and social activist Naomi Klein, in his book *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*, had used the term 'shock doctrine' to describe the atrocious tactic of using the public's bewilderment following a collective shock - war, coup, terrorist attack, market crash, or natural disaster - to push through radical pro-corporate measures, often called 'shock therapy.'

This is exploitation of national crises such as disasters or pandemics to establish controversial and questionable policies, while citizens are too distracted (emotionally and physically) to engage and develop an ample response, and resist effectively.

Shock tactic follows a clear pattern: wait for a crisis, declare a moment of what is sometimes called 'extraordinary politics,' suspend some or all democratic norms and then push the corporate wishlist through as quickly as possible.

For autocrats, the pandemic is a chance to grab even more power, while for the rich and the corporate, it is a way to accumulate more wealth and acquire national assets at cheaper price.

A paradoxical situation witnessed in India is that at a time when big government is back in advanced countries, India is going in the reverse gear. Recently, the UK has taken recourse to re-nationalisation of the railway with PM Boris Johnson saying the privatisation of the British Rail in 1993 was a botched one that led to "fragmentation, confusion and over-complication."

Democrats in Washington are working to enact the largest spending package in America's history—with a price tag of \$4.7 trillion. A \$1.2 trillion so-called 'infrastructure' bill package that includes funding for roads, bridges, electric vehicles, broadband, cyber security, water infrastructure, and grid resilience, among other priorities was passed by the Senate August 8. Two days later, a \$3.5 trillion 'infrastructure' reconciliation package that would expand Medicare, tax credits, and climate initiatives was approved by the Senate.

According to the World Bank (July 2018), social development focuses on the need to 'put people first' in the development processes. It is about improving the well-being of every individual in society so that they can reach their full potential. The success of a society is linked to the well-being of each citizen. Hence, social development means investing in people which requires the removal of barriers so that all citizens can make a journey toward their dreams with confidence and dignity. But the present Indian government is doing just the opposite and its policies are strewn with pitfalls.

After the 'Make-in India' fiasco, the demonetisation disaster, the GST imbroglio, the 'jumla' of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, the monetisation of assets is another flawed initiative which may lead to the intensification of crony capitalism, create private monopolies, and trigger outright plunder of people's wealth.

The writer is an Odisha-based economist and columnist.

SPECTRUM NATIONAL SECURITY

Protecting India's critical infrastructure



Padmalochan Dash

IN THE WHOLESOME PLANNING OF A COUNTRY'S INTERNAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT, THE FORTIFICATION OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE MUST REMAIN AT THE FOREFRONT

In the face of imminent threats from hybrid warfare imposed on India across spheres, the protection of critical infrastructure (CI) must be at the forefront of the country's internal security management.

Infrastructure is said to be critical when, first, it is indispensable to the core functions of a country with that country remaining unavoidably dependent on it; and second, its failures necessarily lead to major detrimental outcomes.

CI is composed of those tangible infrastructure and intangible service networks on which a country has an unavoidable dependency - where any sort of damage or disruption even for a shorter period could have serious politico-economic and societal consequences requiring calamitous reparations.

The idea of considering some of the importantly identified infrastructure as critical is not new. This concept, which emerged in the USA earlier; was given statutory credence in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The autopsy of the incident emerged with the precise conclusion that it was the CI which remained the most important attraction for terrorists to target.

This revelation invoked the US government to come up with specific initiatives by identifying certain sectors as 'critical' followed by prescribed measures for their

safeguard. Over time, other developed countries followed suit, and as of today, globally, there are about 18 sectors identified as critical.

Securing CI has emerged to be a serious global concern attracting unrelenting action. Sectors which have been identified as well as notified as critical are chemical; commercial facilities; communications; critical manufacturing; dams, defence industrial base; emergency services; energy; financial services; food & agriculture; health-care; information technology; nuclear-related facilities; transportation systems; water & wastewater management systems; and all major government facilities. The security of infrastructure covered under these identified critical sectors remaining in prominence has hard-pressed advanced nations to legislate special provisions of safety net. Also, several countries and international organisations like the United Nations have taken up specific measures toward protecting infrastructure of critical importance from cyber-physical assaults.

In this era of hybrid warfare, critical infrastructure protection (CIP) is taken up seriously on several international platforms. In the face of dangers inflicted by non-state actors, blanket plans of action are already in motion. Both governments and CI operators are now taking up several defensive

measures, which India also needs to take up. In the wholesome planning of a country's internal security management, the fortification of CI must remain at the forefront.

In 21st Century, standalone infrastructure is swiftly transfiguring into inseparable entities in cyber-physical provinces. In this given scenario, it is obvious that failure or disruption at one CI domain will lead to failure of others in that entangled cyber-physical chain. When socio-economic interdependencies are transforming beyond geographic and national boundary limits, CI is inevitably exposed to complex cyber-physical risks.

Infrastructure in India is now embedding into an integrated global economic network with the country's critical production sectors at its core. The future of India's sustained economic enhancement therefore depends upon the stability and safety of its CI.

When the future of a country's economic progress remains directly linked to the resilience of its CI, the country's security establishment has to provide the condition wherein i) incessant functioning of CI is ensured; ii) unrelenting functioning of critical supply-chains is guaranteed; and iii) all sets of plausible disruptions to their unrelenting functioning are preempted. Needless to say, without a surefire CIP pro-

gramme in place, the country's progress can never be assured.

In this era of hybrid warfare, while almost all critical sectors are at risk, there is a pressing need for India to think of appropriate CIP initiatives. Protection of CI from terrorism, hybrid warfare, and cyber-physical risk exposures is the need of the hour. The problem is, while there are threats to India's CI, the country is yet to take up its protection seriously. Although the National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre has been created for the purpose, its jurisdiction seems to be narrow and its function seems to be very much limited to critical information protection. It is incumbent upon the Union government to think of a comprehensive plan for the cyber-physical fortification of the country's CI.

When it comes to CIP, the country is still in its infancy and yet to consider globally identified sectors and notify them as critical. Further, a comprehensive cyber-physical security vision document is yet to be deliberated in length. An appropriate and all-encompassing CIP policy must be comprehended. By keeping CIP at its core, the country's internal security management must transform accordingly.

The writer is ICSSR Post-Doctoral Fellow, School of National Security Studies, Central University of Gujarat.

WISDOM CORNER

- A great deal of intelligence can be invested in ignorance when the need for illusion is deep. SAUL BELLOW
- There is only one thing in life worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about. OSCAR WILDE
- You only have to do a very few things right in your life so long as you don't do too many things wrong. WARREN BUFFETT

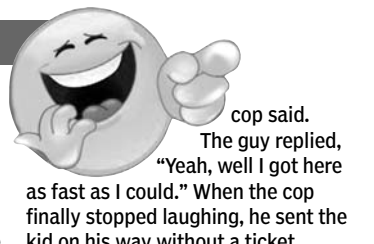
WORDSWORTH

Panel

Some years ago, the British government decided to set up a people's panel of 5,000 voters to test public reaction to its policies. In the sense that's being used here - of a group of people brought together to take part in a discussion, or to advise or judge on a proposal - the word panel goes back at least to the eighteenth century. But in its word origin it's no more than a small pane, a meaning which we still employ when we speak, say, of one of the sections of a door. When it first came into the language in the fourteenth century, from the Latin pannus (a piece of cloth), the Latin sense came over intact so that it referred exclusively to cloth (the word counterpane is the only survival of this connotation in modern English, though that word was created in the fifteenth century from the older and correct term counterpoint through false etymology). We got from cloth to people by a series of steps. Firstly, it started to be used of a small piece of anything, not just cloth. In particular, it was applied to the scrap of parchment on which the sheriff (as royal representative in the shire) wrote the list of jurors who were to try a case (and which he usually attached to the writ calling the trial). Eventually, by a process of transfer of meaning, panel came to be used of the jury itself, and also generated the verb empanel, as in to empanel a jury. Later still, the more general sense grew up that we still use. In a way this was a partial return to an older function of a jury, which was originally conceived as a group of knowledgeable local people who were to give evidence rather than decide the guilt of the accused.

LOL

Caught for speeding



The cop got out of his car and the kid, who was stopped for speeding, rolled down his window. "I've been waiting for you all day," the

cop said. The guy replied, "Yeah, well I got here as fast as I could." When the cop finally stopped laughing, he sent the kid on his way without a ticket.

Politics of caste

Sir, According to the Supreme Court guidelines, reservations must not cross the 50 per cent cap. Now, the demand for caste-based census by various political parties is a ploy to dilute the Supreme Court's guidelines. It smacks of appeasement politics. In every 10 years, census is conducted by the government of India to make a database of various population groups, their socio-economic status, health, financial condition and social security. Then, why there is a demand for a separate caste-based census? Many upper caste Hindus including Brahmins are leading hand to mouth lives without means of fixed regular income. They are suffering because they are born into upper caste. Are all upper caste people super rich and financially sound? It is a fallacy to think so. It is an erroneous idea to believe that the upper caste people are getting all benefits. After 74 years of Independence, the condition of socially and educationally backward (SEBCs) classes has improved a lot. They are enjoying the benefits of reservation in jobs. A Brahmin male candidate doesn't get a job although he secures more marks in the written test and in the interview. How long will this vote bank politics go? Will it last for eternity? Is there no end to this obsolete practice? Yes, it is a fact that OBCs form the majority of India's population. Caste-based census may be necessary, but it shouldn't be done to increase reservation of OBCs and other communities by violating the Supreme Court's guidelines. Caste should not override merit. Stop caste-based census. Stop appeasement politics for God's sake.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

Political niceties

Sir, Before we decide whether Union Minister Narayan Rane, who also happens to be the erstwhile Chief Minister of Maharashtra, is guilty or not and should be punished or not, let's talk about how politicians should behave in public. A person who holds such a high position should have known that nobody has the right to take the law into his own hands and use unparliamentary words or phrases. While expressing contrarian viewpoint, political leaders must take care of not crossing the 'Lakshman Rekha' of political niceties. Incumbent CM Uddhav Thackeray has also used inflammatory words against UP CM Yogi Adityanath. Should the same happen with CM Thackeray? The cops have to think about this.

Anushka Panwar, UJJAIN

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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CHIEF SECY REVIEWS WORKS IN KANDHAMAL

Eco-retreat hub to be set up at Daringbadi for five years



POST NEWS NETWORK

Daringbadi/Udaygiri, August 29: A five-year-long eco retreat hub would be set up at Daringbadi in Kandhamal district to boost tourism. This was revealed by Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, who was on a two-day visit to the district. He reviewed Sunday the progress of various ongoing developmental works at Daringbadi and G Udaygiri blocks. Mahapatra first visited G Udaygiri Sunday morning and took stock of the work for a 132/33 grid project of the OPTCL. He also visited the Government Girls' High School and reviewed the ongoing transformation programme under 5T scheme. He interacted with students and teachers and advised the latter to ensure quality education.

The chief secretary was accompanied by District Collector Dr Brunda D, ADM Basanta Kumar Sahoo, BDO Bijay Kumar Pradhan, tahsildar Janmejay Sahu and IIC Rebati Sabar. Later, Mahapatra visited Raikia block and visited the mango orchard of a local farmer. He then left

for Daringbadi where he visited an eco-retreat hub.

He informed that the eco-retreat hub at Daringbadi was quite successful last year. So another such hub would be set up at Daringbadi for a five-year period. He said he is confident that the hub will attract tourists all through the year.

Mahapatra visited also K Nuagon where he inspected a 132 KV grid project and conducted a review meeting with senior officers of various departments Saturday. He also visited an old age home at Saratoga.

Mahapatra said that in the last few years there had been significant development in Kandhamal district. The chief secretary claimed that forest cover has gone up substantially in the district while agricultural development has been taken up and new livelihood opportunities have opened up.

He added that the construction of the medical college was in full swing and all steps were being taken to complete the project on schedule. The scope for further development of horticulture and tourism activities was explored at the review meeting.

Job aspirants duped ₹5lakh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Digapahandi, August 29: Cyber criminals have duped eight job aspirants from Jharipadar village under Digapahandi police station limits in Ganjam district. A total of ₹5 lakh were taken from the victims on the pretext of giving them jobs in Dubai. The incident came to the fore after the duped youths lodged an FIR at Digapahandi police station Saturday.

The victims have been identified as Ranjan Kumar Goud, R Ganga Reddy, Binod Chandra Goud, Kedarnath Goud, Rabintra Behera, A Kalia Reddy, R Pantu Reddy and Krushna Chandra Goud of Jharipadar village.

According to the FIR, Kedarnath had received a message on his mobile August 14. He was asked to deposit money in a nationalised bank to get a job in Dubai. He was also asked to inform others about the job opportunity so that they could also avail of it. Kedarnath and seven others took the bait and deposited the required amount in an account with a nationalised bank.



Later, four of them received visa and flight tickets to Dubai. They were also told that all flight documents, tickets and visas for the remaining four would be handed over at the BPIA in Bhubaneswar. Kedarnath also received August 25 two calls allegedly from Dubai. All eight were asked to report at the airport for their travel to Dubai at a particular time.

Upon their arrival at the airport, they were taken aback when the security personnel detained them for questioning. That's when they realised that the documents given to them were fake and they have been duped. Subsequently, they lodged an FIR at Digapahandi police station in this context.

TESTING TIMES



Women candidates entering the Government College in Sundargarh in a queue to appear for the Revenue Inspectors' examination, Sunday

OP PHOTO

SAMBALPUR FARMERS SUFFER DUE TO UREA CRUNCH

Admin raids godowns hoarding fertilisers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur/Rairakhol, August 29: Amid allegations of shortage of urea fertiliser and its rampant black marketing, the administration has finally woken up from its slumber. Officials of the district administration carried out raids on several godowns in Sambalpur district. This action was taken following a report published in the Orissa POST about shortage of urea.

According to reports, officials of the Agriculture department raided Rashibeda village under Charnal police limits and seized 550 packets of urea from a godown. It has been sealed. However, the trader, who had hoarded the fertiliser and were selling it at a high price, managed to escape. Further investigation into the matter is on.

Reliable sources said, two trucks had unloaded urea packets July 13 at this godown. They alleged that a panchayat executive officer is hand in glove with the trader.



Two trucks had unloaded urea packets July 13 at this godown. Locals alleged that a panchayat executive officer is hand in glove with the trader in Rairakhol block of this district

The trader was planning to sell the urea in Sonepur for ₹800 to ₹1,000 per packet to cotton farmers. Also it is suspected that some dealers and cooperative societies are hoarding huge quantities of the fertiliser

A large number farmers had recently staged protests in front of the Collector's office in Sambalpur over irregularity in urea supply. They had also demanded that Sambalpur district be declared as a drought zone

They informed that the trader was planning to sell the urea in Sonepur for ₹800 to ₹1,000 per packet to cotton farmers.

Agriculture officer Dillip Kumar Nayak said that an investigation is in progress to trace the origin from where the urea was brought to the

godown. Also it is suspected that the seized fertilisers could belong to some dealers or cooperative societies. Nayak asserted that action will be taken against those involved in hoarding of urea.

It should be stated here that a large number farmers had recently

staged protests in front of the district Collector's office in Sambalpur town over irregularity in urea supply. They had also demanded that Sambalpur district be declared as a drought zone.

The farmers alleged that as cooperative societies do not have adequate stock of urea, they have to go through a tough time at the peak of the farming season. Black marketing of urea has made the situation doubly difficult for them, they lamented.

Agitating farmers had alleged that a packet of urea is officially priced at ₹267 but some traders and dealers are selling the same for ₹600 to ₹700 in the market while the administration is taking no action.

"We had earlier alerted the administration and the Agriculture department about the shortage of urea we will face in August and September. The officials and dealers have forged a nexus and are selling the urea packets in the black market," they said.

TEAM SPIRIT



A women's kabaddi match in progress on People's High School ground in Buguda of Ganjam district, Sunday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rajgangpur, August 29: The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is aimed at providing job opportunities for rural workers through various labour-intensive projects. However, the scheme is now marred in controversy due to irregularities in Rajgangpur block of Sundargarh district.

Surprisingly, job cards have been issued to people's representatives and their relatives.

According to reports, job cards have been issued in the names of Rajgangpur block chairperson Basant Toppo and his wife Sushila Toppo. The latter is an Anganwadi worker. It was learnt that a project to construct a road was un-

dertaken near Sai Temple in Kunumuru panchayat in 2018-20. For that wages have been credited to the bank accounts of the couple.

Even in July, wages towards MGNREGS work have been transferred to Sushila's account. This fact has posed a question mark on the execution of the rural job scheme in the block.

When contacted, Basant said that he and his wife have job cards since 2009. "In 2018-19, we both had worked in the road project. Our relatives had been engaged in the work. So their wages have been paid into our accounts," he said.

He also stated that due to Covid-19, the Anganwadi was closed. So his wife worked under MGNREGS scheme for a few days in July. "We are tribals. We work for a living,"

MGNREGS IN MESS



the chairperson explained.

When contacted, panchayat executive officer of Kunumuru panchayat said that all can work under MGNREGS and there have been no irregularities in the rural job scheme.

BDO Piyush Lohar said that there is no information about the

job cards issued to the block chairperson and his wife. According to information, there are over 60,000 job card holders in Rajgangpur block. Various outfits demanded that there is need for an investigation into how many job card holders are working in MGNREGS and how many have been left out.

Hockey losing its sheen in Dhenkanal district

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, August 29: National Sports Day is celebrated August 29 every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of the legendary hockey player Major Dhyan Chand. Once upon a time Hockey and Dhenkanal district used to be synonymous. It used to be the epicentre of hockey in Odisha with a large number of players and coaches coming from the district. They all made a name for themselves at the national level.

However, with the passage of time, the game has lost its sheen in the district. This has happened due to the lack of infrastructure. Nothing has been done in the industry-rich Dhenkanal district to promote hockey. Lack of encouragement, other facilities, financial assistance and shortage of equipment have also led to hockey losing its glory in the district.

For sports personalities, it is a matter of great concern that the district doesn't have a good training field for hockey aspirants. A few months ago, the Tata Naval Hockey Centre was established. However, since then no concrete plan has evolved for the development of the



Once upon a time Hockey and Dhenkanal district used to be synonymous. It used to be the epicentre of hockey in Odisha with a large number of players and coaches coming from the district

With the passage of time, the game continued to lose its sheen in the district due to the lack of infrastructure. Nothing has been done in the industry-rich district to promote hockey. Lack of encouragement, other facilities, financial assistance and shortage of equipment have also led to hockey losing its glory in the district

Three hockey talents from the district are working as coaches in Ranchi, Rourkela and Sundargarh towns. However, the plight of senior coach Giridhari Samal is heart-breaking. It proves how hockey players are suffering in the district. This nationally recognised coach is leading a life of poverty at Chandrasekharpur under Gandia block

game in the district. They also alleged that preference is given by the people who matter to games like cricket, badminton and lawn tennis. Three hockey talents from the district are working as coaches

in Ranchi, Rourkela and Sundargarh towns. However, the plight of senior coach Giridhari Samal is heart-breaking. It proves how hockey players are suffering in the district. This nationally

recognised coach is leading a life of poverty at Chandrasekharpur under Gandia block. Unavailability of support for Samal has shocked locals. They opined that the Odisha government should do something

for Samal to ease his miseries.

The only ray of hope is 50 youngsters (both boys and girls) of Jankhira village under Sadar block. Undeterred by the lack of facilities, they have continued playing the game.

"The success of Indian men's and women's hockey teams at the Tokyo Olympics has really been inspirational. So facilities and opportunities should be given to the boys and girls of Jankhira village, the administration should step in. One of the girls have represented Odisha in the school games and won a bronze medal. If facilities are provided to these youngsters, more talents will emerge," said Babula Prasad Mohanty, a coach.

Expressing her concern, Preetimayee Khuntia, a player, said the district badly needs an astro-turf field for practice. She said if players are provided sticks, jerseys, training and regular encouragement then a lot more youngsters would take up hockey.

Coach Sasmita Mohanty said youngsters in rural areas are attracted towards hockey. So, if training is given to them from the school level, then it would be beneficial for Odisha only.

UNDER VIGILANCE SCANNER

Sleuths arrest Bijepur BDO



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bijepur, August 29: A team of Vigilance officials have arrested Bijepur block development officer (BDO) Padmanabha Samantary early Sunday morning for allegedly carrying ₹3.5 lakh cash. The BDO failed to provide any document regarding the cash he was carrying.

According to a source, Samantary was on his way to Bhubaneswar from this locality of Bargarh district in a car when the anti-corruption agency sleuths intercepted the vehicle near Mahanadi bridge on Binika-Sonepur road in Binika. They searched the car and came upon the huge amount.

son why Samantary was carrying such a huge amount in cash, the BDO failed to come up with a proper reply. He was first detained for interrogation and then arrested.

The Vigilance officials informed that the BDO would have proceeded to his ancestral house at Gadachandapur village in Puri district. Samantary has been taken to the Vigilance office in Sonepur for further interrogation. He was produced in Vigilance court.

Houses owned by Samantary in Bargarh, Puri and Bhubaneswar were raided by the Vigilance officials. Cash to the tune of ₹2,70,000 was recovered from his government residence here. A further probe into the incident is underway.



Stalin keeps revival of LTTE at bay

THE TN CM RECENTLY DOLED OUT SOPS TO SRI LANKAN TAMIL REFUGEES LIVING ACROSS THE STATE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, August 29: Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin Friday in the state legislative Assembly announced a package of Rs 317.40 crore to Sri Lankan Tamil refugee camps spread across the state. The money was for the reconstruction of the camps as well as providing education to children and scholarships for postgraduate students among the refugees.

The government will also support self-help groups in the refugee camps and an amount of Rs 6.16 crore has been sanctioned for the same. The government also announced an amount of Rs 10 crore to provide skill development training to 5,000 youngsters.

Free of cost cooking gas connection and stove would be provided to camp inmates at a cost of Rs 7 crore and a subsidy of Rs 400 would be provided for five gas cylinders and an amount of Rs 3.80 crore per year is earmarked for this purpose.

The announcement of such a huge package for the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees by Stalin is being seen by political analysts and social activists as a brilliant political move to keep the revival of the LTTE at bay.

In April 2021, the Indian Coast Guard apprehended a Sri Lankan boat from Pakistan and headed towards the Island nation with drugs worth Rs 3,000 crore and 5 AK-47 assault rifles. Sri Lankan nationals were arrested from the boat. On interrogation and questioning, the arrested gave information that cer-



tain people living in Tamil Nadu and Kerala were behind the deal. Police acted swiftly and arrested a Sri Lankan national, Suresh Raj, who was staying in Aluva in Kerala without proper details. He had an Indian Aadhaar card, PAN card, and Indian Voter ID card and was staying near Nedumbassery airport under the guise of a cloth businessman.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) and other central agencies on questioning the apprehended Sri Lankan national found that the money to be received after the sale of drugs was for funding the LTTE movement and that in several European countries some groupings were taking place.

The government of India had in 2019 extended the ban of LTTE for five more years and the banned outfit was trying to regroup in India using sleeper cells and with the support of funds sourced

through dirty money raised through drug trade.

The DMK has always been under scanner over its covert and overt support to the LTTE and its alliance partners in the front. Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) and Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK) has always been vocal for the LTTE and Tamil Nationalism. While MDMK leader Vaiko was arrested and jailed after slapping the dreaded POTA charge against him in 2002, the VCK leader and MP Thol Thiruvamavalavn has also been a vocal supporter of the LTTE.

Actor-politician Seeman, who is the founder of Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) has also been a pro active supporter of Tamil nationalism and LTTE.

With all these factors looming large and the arrested Sri Lankan nationals spilling the beans that the contraband drugs and their sale

were for the funding the activities of the LTTE, the Tamil Nadu government and the Chief Minister wanted to keep a safe distance from these movements.

Chief Minister Stalin has announced a Rs 317 crore package for the Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in a swift move to prevent any unrest from being developed in these refugee camps in favour of the Tamil nationalist movement and sympathies.

With the LTTE trying to regroup and the DMK government with vocal supporters of LTTE like Vaiko and Thol Thiruvamavalavn as part of its alliance, the Chief Minister wanted to stay clear from the LTTE and its politics and hence to wade of any uncertainty in the Sri Lankan Tamil refugee camps, Stalin has announced this package.

C. Rajeev, Director, Centre For Policy and Development Studies, a Think Tank based out of Chennai while speaking to IANS said, "The Tamil people of Sri Lanka and Tamil Nadu are the same. The possible regrouping of LTTE and the financial support it could garner following drug trade can lead to a sympathy quotient developing for the outfit in the Sri Lankan Tamil refugee camps in Tamil Nadu. Stalin wants to stay clear of the LTTE and prevent the outfit from sowing the seeds of Tamil nationalism again in the minds of these refugees. The Chief Minister has announced a Rs 317 crore package for the Tamil refugees is a deft political move to prevent LTTE from garnering support from these refugee colonies."

MP Muslim man forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal/Ujjain, August 29: A Muslim scrap dealer was allegedly threatened and forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' by two men at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain district, following which the police have arrested the accused duo, an official said Sunday.

The incident occurred Saturday and two purported videos of it have gone viral on social media. Talking to reporters, RK Rai, Sub Divisional Officer of Police (SDOP), Mahidpur, said, "The incident happened Saturday when scrap dealer Abdul Rasheed, a resident of Mahidpur town who has been doing this business here for a long time, went to Sikli village under Jharda police station area to collect some scrap in his mini truck."

However, Rasheed was forced to leave the village and also threatened against doing his scrap business in the area. When he left the village, two men intercepted him at Pipliya Dhuma, manhandled him and forced him to chant 'Jai Shri Ram'. The man somehow got out from there after giving in to their demand, he said.

Jharda police station in-charge Vikram Singh Ivne said that a case was registered against the two accused - Kamal Singh (22) and Ishwar Singh (27) - for disturbing communal harmony, and they were arrested.

The duo was booked under IPC sections 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups on



grounds of religion), 505 (2) (public mischief), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), among others.

Meanwhile, two videos of this incident went viral on social media, which drew the ire of netizens.

In one purported video, the two men were seen throwing scrap from the victim's four-wheeler and asking him not to enter the village again, while another video shows them threatening and forcing him to chant 'Jai Shri Ram'. It shows them asking him how he dared to enter their village and the victim chanting as told by the accused.

Reacting to the incident, Madhya Pradesh Congress chief Kamal Nath said that similar incidents had earlier occurred in Indore and Dewas in the state.

"Has it been happening under a specific agenda? The government

is watching everything as a mute spectator. An atmosphere of anarchy is being created in the entire state and the law is being mocked," he said while demanding a strict action against the accused who are 'disturbing peace' in the state.

Minister for Medical Education Vishvas Sarang said the state government was taking strict action over all such incidents.

"We are committed to taking action and preventing such incidents. But the questions remain as to why such videos are being made viral from the social media department of Congress. Whether the Congress is behind making such videos and spreading them?" he said.

It is a matter of investigation whether these incidents are planned, the minister added.

TN to vaccinate all school, college staff by Sept 5

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, August 29: A statement from the office of the state health minister Saturday said that at least one dose of vaccine would be administered to the staff of all schools and colleges by September 5.

More than 90 per cent of the teachers and non-teaching staff of schools and colleges in the state have been administered a minimum of one dose of vaccine.

The colleges and higher classes in schools are scheduled to reopen in Tamil Nadu from September 1 and the state health department and higher education and school education department do not want to take any risk regarding the vaccination of staff, both teaching and non-teaching, the statement said.

The state would also be administering vaccines for super senior students in schools, especially those in Class 12 and all the college students. Tamil Nadu Minister for Health, Ma Subramanian and state higher education minister, K. Ponmudi had on Saturday attended a vaccine drive for the college students.

The state has been conducting vaccination drives for targeted communities and this focused vac-

ination has yielded the desired results, the statements said. In Pudukottai district almost all the differently-abled persons were administered the vaccine while in Ayilur district all the pregnant women were inoculated.

Health department stated that Saturday itself, 4.7 lakh people took the vaccine across the state taking the daily tally to 2.9 crore in the government centres. The state is expecting one crore doses of vaccines as a single allotment to become the overall top performer in the country. The officials are of the opinion that in the first four months of vaccination drive the allocation was poor to the state resulting in the poor performance in inoculating.

Ma Subramanian while speaking to IANS said, "We have received a special allocation of 22 lakh doses of vaccine for August and we are trying to get 1 crore doses as special allocation and this would take us to a higher level among the best performers as far as vaccination drives are concerned. We have administered vaccines to targeted communities like sports persons, differently-abled people, lactating mothers, and pregnant women."

FESTIVE SPIRIT



People purchase Lord Krishna idols a day ahead of Janmashtami at Anna Salai in Vellore district, Sunday.

PTI PHOTO

Special markets to showcase FPO products in TN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, August 29: The Tamil Nadu Agriculture Department will set up special markets at five places - Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai, Trichy, and Salem - to display branded products of Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), a statement said Sunday.

According to the statement from the office of state Agriculture Minister MRK Panneerselvam, an amount of Rs 8 crore has been earmarked for setting up these markets.

The department would also train farmers to become traders, with five members of each FPO to be selected for this.



According to a study conducted by it, around 1.6 lakh farmers would benefit from such a move and Rs 2.2 crore has been allocated for these training programmes.

A two-year diploma programme in agriculture engineering would also be launched at the Agriculture Engineering College and Research Institute in Kumlur, Trichy.

The statement said that 40 students would be admitted to this course and its main idea is to provide employment to students from rural backgrounds. The farmers would be benefited as students of this course would be equipped to repair agricultural instruments and tools.

The ministry has also proposed to open agriculture colleges in Karur district, Kilvelur in Nagapattinam district, and Chettinadu in Sivaganga district. An amount of Rs 30 crore is allocated for the three colleges to commence classes from the 2021-22 financial year. A Rs 12 crore micro-irrigation project which would benefit Adi Dravidar and Tribal farmers in Kancheepuram, Virudhanagar, Ramanathapuram, Theni, Pudukottai, Kancheepuram, Ariyalur, Krishnagiri and Chengalpettu areas was also announced. Talking to IANS, Panneerselvam said: "The Tamil Nadu government under Chief Minister MK Stalin is bringing up major changes in agriculture sector and this will benefit the farmers of the state. We are opening three new agriculture colleges as well as we are into promoting FPOs."

Fake death certificates issued to 23 in MP, probe ordered

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chhindwara/Bhopal, August 29: In a shocking case, an inquiry has been ordered by the Madhya Pradesh government after the financial compensation given by it in Chhindwara district was allegedly siphoned off by wrongly claiming 23 alive persons as dead. All these persons who are declared dead in government records are now knocking at the doors of the state administration to prove that they are alive.

This incident took place in Borkhedi village of Chhindwara where 23 persons were wrongly pronounced dead in government records and fake death certificates were issued in their names with a financial assistance of Rs 2 lakh per person siphoned off from the state government citing Covid-19 guidelines. After these persons came to know that they were declared dead in government documents, they have now presented the proof to the Superintendent of Police that they are alive.



Kamal Patel, the Madhya Pradesh Farmers Welfare and Agriculture Minister and also Chhindwara district minister in-charge, has taken cognisance of the matter related to issuance of fake death certificates of 23 living persons in Borkhedi village. He has directed the Chhindwara Collector to order a detailed inquiry into the matter and register an FIR ensuring strict action against the accused.

The Minister expressed his displeasure over the matter and said making fake death certificates of 23 living persons coming from just one village and withdrawing money in their name is not only worrying, objectionable and against the rule of law.

Patel told the Chhindwara Collector not to confine the investigation proceedings to Borkhedi village but conduct inspections in the entire district so that there are no similar cases reported anywhere.

Former Minister and Congress leader Jitu Patwari has taken a jibe at the Shivraj Singh Chouhan government and said, "Under the pretext of Covid-19 in Chhindwara district, fake death certificates of 23 persons were made and financial compensation of Rs 2 lakh per individual siphoned off as well. It seems that during Covid-19, there has been some deficiency in 'government killings'. That's why the ruling BJP government is now playing with people's lives."

Farmer in MP mines 6.47 carat diamond

For the sixth time in two years the farmer has mined a high quality diamond in a land taken on lease from the government

AGENCIES

Panna, August 29: For the sixth time in two years, a farmer in Panna district of Madhya Pradesh has mined a high quality diamond - this time weighing 6.47 carat - in a land taken on lease from the government.

The farmer, Prakash Majumdar, found this diamond from a mine in Jaruapur village in the district Friday, said Nutan Jain, in-charge diamond officer.

The 6.47 carat diamond will be put up for sale in the upcoming auction and the price will be fixed as per the government guidelines, she said.

Majumdar said that he will share the amount received from the auction with his four partners engaged in quarrying the mine.

"We are five partners. We got the diamond weighing 6.47 carat, which we deposited at the Government Diamond Office," he told reporters.

He said that he had found a 7.44 carat diamond last year. Besides, he



had also mined four other precious stones weighing 2 to 2.5 carat in the past two years.

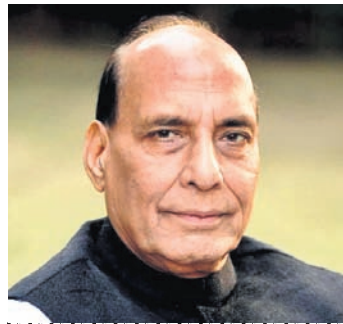
Officials said that the raw diamond would be auctioned and the proceeds would be given to the farmer after deduction of government royalty and taxes.

As per the private estimates, the 6.47 carat diamond is likely to fetch

around Rs 30 lakh in the auction.

Panna district is estimated to have diamond reserves of 12 lakh carats. The state government gives small patches of land on lease in Panna diamond reserve area to local farmers and labourers to mine diamonds and deposit them with the district mining officer.

national



The changing equation in Afghanistan is a challenge for us...These situations have forced our country to rethink its strategy. We are changing our strategy and the formation of Quad underlines this strategy
RAJNATH SINGH | DEFENCE MINISTER

PRESIDENT VISITS AYODHYA TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION SITE

President Ram Nath Kovind Sunday offered prayers to Ram Lalla, visiting the site where a Ram temple is being constructed in Ayodhya, a city which he said was nothing without the deity



of the day quote

The start-up culture has become very vibrant in India with youngsters in even smaller cities embracing it
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

A people's movement is needed to preserve the 'living culture' of language
M. VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

Heartiest congratulations to Bhavina Patel for winning the silver medal at #TokyoParalympics. We are extremely proud of you for this historic win! Wishing you the very best in all your future endeavours
MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

ED summons Anil Parab

New Delhi/Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned Shiv Sena leader and Maharashtra Transport Minister Anil Parab for questioning in the money laundering case registered against former state minister Anil Deshmukh and others, officials said Sunday. Parab, 56, is also a minister of parliamentary affairs in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government led by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and is a three-term member of the Maharashtra Legislative Council.

Floods hit Assam National Park

Dibrugarh/Golaghat (Assam): At least three feral horses have died in the deluge-hit Dibru-Saikhowa National Park while a hog deer was killed by a speeding vehicle when it was trying to escape floodwaters in Kaziranga National Park as vast tracts of the parks in Assam have been inundated, Forest officials said Sunday. Almost 70 per cent of the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park has been flooded, forcing animals to flee to highlands, a Forest department official told PTI.

Armaan Kohli held in drugs case

Mumbai: Hindi film industry actor Armaan Kohli, who was being questioned by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), was arrested this morning after banned drugs were allegedly recovered from his Mumbai house, said a NCB Official. The investigation has revealed that the case has international linkages as the cocaine seized has South American origin, the officer added.

15 injured in LPG explosion

Mumbai: Fifteen persons were injured, five of them seriously, after an LPG cylinder exploded and caused a minor fire at a shanty in Mumbai's Dharavi slum Sunday, an official said. Of the five persons who have suffered critical injuries in the incident, one is an eight-year-old boy, the fire brigade official said. The mishap occurred in Shahu Nagar locality of the slum in the afternoon, he said.

Less than normal rainfall in Aug: IMD

New Delhi: The rainfall in August has been deficient by 26 per cent so far, with shortfalls in two successive months triggering fear of a below normal monsoon this year. According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data, the rainfall in July was seven per cent less than normal.

Crackdown on 'white-collar jihadis' in J&K

The J&K Police recently arrested five suspected "white-collar jihadis" who were behind a campaign to spread falsehood about the sovereignty of the country

AGENCIES

Srinagar, August 29: The Jammu and Kashmir Police is cracking down on cyber terrorists, also known as "white-collar jihadis", as it feels that they are the "worst kind of terrorists" who remain anonymous but cause an "immeasurable" amount of damage and brainwashing of youngsters, officials said here.

According to an assessment provided by Director General of Jammu and Kashmir Police Dilbag Singh, senior army officers and officials from the security establishment, there is a fear that these "white-collar jihadis" could trigger a communal clash or influence some youths by manipulating news on social media while they themselves live comfortably in faraway countries.

The battleground is new where conventional weaponry and the fighting zones of a warren of narrow streets and forests are replaced by computers and smartphones to wage war from just about anywhere - in Kashmir or outside, safe inside their homes or out on the streets, from a nearby cafe or even just a convenient roadside.

A senior army officer termed them "white-collar jihadis" who mislead the youth and general population by peddling lies on social media and twisting the situation to suit

the separatists or terrorist groups. They, according to the police, were tasked with preparing a strategic hit list of government officers, journalists, social activists, lawyers and political functionaries to instil fear among people.

"A cyber terrorist is actually deadlier than an actual terrorist because first, he is in hiding and second, he is absolutely unknown - unknown till you get into certain very specific details," DGP Singh said.

"It is very difficult to find out those kinds of details to locate them and who is actually using that particular identity in the virtual world. People have taken advantage of anonymity in the cyber world and that is why they indulge in such kinds of activities," he said.

Singh has been laying special emphasis on putting a check on cyber terrorists as he feels that they are the "worst kind of terrorists (as) they are not seen but the amount of damage they do and the amount of pollution of the mind of the youth they do are immeasurable."

He says they are the people who are responsible for recruitment, they are the ones who would make some sort of comments and statements on social media which would create a communal wedge between various communities, between Hindus and Muslims and others.



A man extracts water chestnuts from Wular Lake in Bandipora district of North Kashmir

PTI PHOTO

Bharat Biotech scouts for int'l Covid-19 vax partners

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 29: Indian vaccine maker Bharat Biotech is seeking international manufacturing partners as it targets a billion doses of its Covid-19 vaccine each year, the company said Sunday.

COVAXIN, the company's home-grown Covid-19 vaccine approved for emergency use in India, is one of two shots driving the country's massive vaccination programme.

But Bharat Biotech has struggled to boost output, missing supply commitments to the Indian gov-



ernment, which is also relying on a version of the AstraZeneca (AZNL) vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India and Russia's Sputnik V vaccine.

On Sunday, the company rolled out the first batch of COVAXIN shots from a facility in Ankleshwar in western India that has the capacity to produce more than 10 million doses per month. Bharat Biotech said it was exploring opportunities with its international partners who have expertise in commercial-scale manufacturing

of inactivated viral vaccines.

"We want to ensure that Bharat Biotech can ably meet the demand for COVAXIN such that individuals across the country, and the globe, have access to the vaccine," chairman and managing director Krishna Ella said in a statement.

Last month, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya told parliament that Bharat Biotech would supply 25 million doses in July and 35 million in August, less than half what the government had initially expected.

45,083 FRESH CASES
India added 45,083 new coronavirus infections taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases to 3,26,95,030, while active cases registered an increase for the fifth consecutive day, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Sunday.

Rlys floats tender for 58 Vande Bharat trains

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 29: The railways has floated a tender for 58 Vande Bharat train sets after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced in his Independence Day speech that 75 such trains will be launched in 75 weeks of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' to connect different parts of the country.

Currently, only two such Shatabdi-type semi-high speed trains are in operation. The new coaches will be manufactured at the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, Modern Coach Factory, Rae Bareilly

and Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala.

The closing date for the tender is October 20. A pre-bid meeting will be held on September 21 with the cut-off date for the submission of pre-bid queries being September 14.

The tender floated August 28 has invited bids for the design, development, manufacturing, integration and testing of traction propulsion electrics for the 58 rakes of Vande Bharat trains.

In his speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort on August 15, Modi had said that in the 75 weeks of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' being celebrated to mark the journey of 75



years of Independence, the railways will launch 75 Vande Bharat

trains to connect far-flung areas.

The railways had in September last year floated a revised tender for procuring 44 semi-high speed Vande Bharat trains, mandating 75 per cent domestic component, making it a domestic tender.

That followed the government scrapping three global tenders for the ambitious project. With the latest tender, 102 such trains will be delivered to the Railways by March 2024, an official said, adding 75 of them will be available by August 15, 2023 itself.

The next lot of Vande Bharat trains with upgraded amenities,

better seating space, security and surveillance systems and features designed for emergencies, is expected to be commercially available from June 2022 onward.

The new passenger amenities and features planned to be added include four emergency windows for easy evacuation, backup disaster lights in all coaches and emergency push buttons increased to four per coach. The coaches will also have a Centralised Coach Monitoring System for all electrical, climate control and functioning of other vital systems of the train.

Girl gangraped by seven minors in Jharkhand

AGENCIES

Ranchi, August 29: A girl has been allegedly gangraped by seven boys in Jharkhand's Ranchi district, police said Sunday.

Four accused have been arrested and a manhunt has been launched to nab the others, an officer said.

The incident took place August 26 when one of the accused, who was an acquaintance of the survivor, took her out for a ride on his motorcycle and went to an isolated place in Mandar police station area where six of his friends were waiting, officer-in-charge Rana Singh said.

Now Mandar police has arrested 4 out of 7 accused in the case but the search for 3 is still on



On seeing the other boys, the girl attempted to flee but was overpowered and gangraped, the officer said. The girl's acquaintance then dropped her back home, following which she informed her family members about the incident, who then lodged a police complaint the next day, he said.

All the accused persons are from Mandar area and four of them have been arrested Saturday and forwarded to a juvenile home after being booked under sections of the Indian Penal Code and POCSO Act, the officer said.



4.50 lakh villages without optical fibre

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious plan to connect six lakh villages and panchayats through optical fibre network by August 2021 is turning out to be a pipe dream. Until July this year, of the 5.98 lakh villages, only 1.50 lakh Gram Panchayats have been connected under the BharatNet project which is around 25%. A peeved Prime Minister had to extend the target from August 15, 2021 to August 1, 2023 as the next date for completing the exercise. Of the six lakh inhabited villages,

Internet is available only 30% in villages and children living in such villages had no access to remote education facilities compared to those living in urban centers or developed villages. Bihar may be under the rule of 'Sushan Babu Nitish Kumar'. However, Punjab has 100% access to the Internet in the country and all 12,660 villages have full Internet service. The 3G/4G penetration is also 100% in all the villages. Kerala has 95% Internet access in its villages. Of the 37,478 villages in West Bengal, the Centre has provided optical fibre only in 2,114 villages. Of the 47,677 villages in Odisha, 5,913 villages have this facility.

Covid '3rd wave' prospects receding

Notwithstanding the report of the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) saying that third Covid wave threat continues to exist, health experts handling pandemic say the country may survive this anticipated wave.

Assuming, the third wave knocks at the doors in October, it will neither be deadly nor as devastating as the second wave was witnessed in March-April this year. Though the Centre's Task Force on Covid has refrained from commenting on the issue so far, a couple of its members told privately, "the third wave may not come. The way things are and even if it comes it will not be as widespread as believed by many." A senior Task Force member who is also associated with the Delta Plus study and key member of the INSACOG, said on the condition of not being quoted, "the cases will be below 20,000 per day and deaths will also come down. Even the states like Kerala and Maharashtra will start witnessing a slide." The vaccination program may cross 65 crore doses by August end which has been able to prevent deaths and even hospitalisation. Dr Soumya Swaminathan, chief scientist at the WHO, had also been quoted as saying, "there is no way to know for sure whether another wave will

occur and when". She also believes that if the third wave occurs, it may not be as bad as the second wave.

Next Prez, who?

The recent Monsoon Session may have been a washout in terms of any meaningful debates despite a record number of Bills passed in Parliament. But the corridors of power were agog with reports that BJP leadership started the process of evolving a consensus on the Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates July-August, 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had sprung a surprise in 2017 when Ramnath Kovind was named as NDA's candidate for the President's post. It was widely believed that the RSS would have liked someone belonging to its cadre in the Rashtrapati Bhawan after 70 years. But the Prime Minister had other plans and he picked up Bihar Governor for the coveted post. M Venkaiah Naidu was keen to continue to play an active role in politics and had age on his side too.

But Modi wanted a die-hard party man capable of running the Rajya Sabha as well as Vice President. He tops the ladder among the probable list for the President's post now. But there are many slips between the cup & the lip. The name of Karnataka Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot has suddenly emerged from the shadows. The BJP is on a path of social engineering and it is in this context Gehlot's name is being mentioned. Since Gujarat is the flavour and every key post is seeing a native occupying it, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel's name is also being mentioned. She is a woman and a Modi loyalist. A few knowledgeable persons also feel that Kovind may be considered for a second term too unless Modi has some other plans.

Delta+ big worry

Coronavirus cases may be falling across the country but the spread of Delta+ variant is worrying the health experts. A latest study released by the

INSACOG released last week rattled the government as 23% Delta+ infections of B.1.617.2 lineage were highest in Maharashtra. In all, the total was 10.7% in Kerala, 10.3% in Delhi, 7.3% in West Bengal, 4.8% in Odisha and 4% in Punjab. As many as 51,996 samples were analysed in 28 laboratories under the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) for genome sequences. There were 11968 cases in Maharashtra while 5554 cases were found in Kerala followed by Delhi with 5354, 3772 in West Bengal, 2511 in Odisha (4.8%) and 2072 in Punjab (4%). Maharashtra, Kerala, West Bengal, Odisha, Delhi and Punjab are worrying the government as Delta+ is not falling in percentage terms. Steps are being taken to counter the Delta spread. A senior member of the INSACOG said that Delta B.1.617.2 may be a cause of worry. But it may not be as deadly as earlier feared. However, the government is watchful and collects samples aggressively and samples are being picked up in all the states.

international

I ask all to continue to help those in need and to pray so that dialogue and solidarity can bring about a peaceful and fraternal coexistence that offers hope for the future of the country (Afghanistan)
POPE FRANCIS | HEAD OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

GUN AUCTIONED FOR \$6M

The pistol used to kill the notorious outlaw Billy the Kid in the days of the American Wild West has been auctioned for \$6.03 million, a world record for a firearm. The Colt single-action revolver owned by sheriff Pat Garrett had been estimated at \$2-3 million



of the day quote

No matter what choices the Americans make, we will maintain our presence in Iraq to fight against terrorism. This message is civilisational but also geopolitical. There will be no balance in Iraq if there is no respect for these communities



EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

We have crossed another milestone, where 80% of our population has received their full regimen of two doses. It means Singapore has taken another step forward in making ourselves more resilient to Covid-19



ONG YE KUNG | HEALTH MINISTER, SINGAPORE

We support the people of Afghanistan. Governments come and go. What remains is the Afghan nation. Afghanistan is Iran's brother country. The US is the source of Afghanistan's plights



AYATOLLAH ALI KHAMENEI | SUPREME LEADER, IRAN

US strikes at IS-K ultras again

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a message to journalists that the US strike targeted a suicide bomber as he drove a vehicle loaded with explosives

AGENCIES

Washington, August 29: A US drone strike Sunday hit a suicide bomber in a vehicle who was aiming to attack Kabul airport as US forces worked to complete a withdrawal that will end two decades of military involvement in Afghanistan, US officials said.

The strike was the second by the US military since an Islamic State suicide bomb just outside the airport Thursday killed 13 US troops and scores of Afghan civilians.

The airport has been the scene of a massive airlift by US and allied forces evacuating their citizens and Afghans desperate to leave a country since the Islamic State Taliban took control two weeks ago.

Officials said the strike targeted suspected militants from IS-K, a local affiliate of Islamic State that is an enemy of both the West and of the Taliban movement.

One US official said it was carried out by an unmanned aircraft piloted from outside Afghanistan, and that secondary explosions fol-



lowing the strike showed the target had been carrying a substantial amount of explosives.

US officials had said they were particularly concerned about the IS-K attacking the airport as American troops depart, in particular the threat from rockets and vehicle-borne explosives.

The drone strike took place while remaining civilians waited at the airport to be flown out before the

last troops leave.

The Taliban also said the explosion was caused by a US missile strike. "The vehicle and those inside it were killed in the drone strike," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said.

They had started their own investigations to determine whether it was really a suicide bomber driving a vehicle loaded with explosives, he said.

Biden pays tribute to slain US troops

President Joe Biden met in solemn privacy Sunday with the families of the 13 US troops killed in the suicide attack near the Kabul airport as the remains of their loved ones returned to US soil from Afghanistan. Biden and first lady Jill Biden were also to attend the "dignified transfer" of the fallen troops while at Dover Air Force Base, a military ritual of receiving the remains of those killed in foreign combat. The dead ranged in age from 20 to 31, and came from California and Massachusetts and states in between. Five were just 20, born not long before the attacks of Sept 11, 2001, that spurred the United States to invade Afghanistan in order to topple al-Qaida and dismantle their Taliban hosts who ruled the country. At their deaths, the 13 young service members were on the ground for the US coda to its longest war.

Hurricane Ida grows to Category 4 storm

The landfall of Ida, Sunday, also marks 16 years since Katrina, the devastating hurricane that had flooded 80 per cent of New Orleans



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New Orleans, August 29: Hurricane Ida blasted ashore along the Louisiana coast Sunday, with the eye of one of the most powerful storms ever to hit the US arriving near the barrier island of Grand Isle.

The powerful Category 4 storm made landfall on the same date Hurricane Katrina ravaged Louisiana and Mississippi 16 years earlier, about 40 miles (64 kilometers) west of where Category 3 Katrina first struck land.

Arriving with a barometric pressure of 930 millibars, Ida preliminarily goes down as tied for the fifth strongest hurricane to make landfall in the United States based on wind speed. Based on central pressure it is tied for 9th strongest US landfall.

Ida rapidly intensified overnight as it moved through some of the warmest ocean water in the world in the northern Gulf of Mexico, its top winds grew by 45 mph (72 kph) to 150 mph (230 kph) in five hours.

Hurricane force winds started to strike Grand Isle Sunday morning. Before power was lost on the Louisiana barrier island, a beachfront web camera showed the ocean steadily rising as growing waves churned and palm trees whipped. More than 100,000 customers had lost power in Louisiana by noon and were without electricity, according to PowerOutage.US, which tracks outages nationwide.

Wind tore at awnings and water began spilling out of Lake Ponchartrain in New Orleans. Officials there said Ida's swift intensification from a few thunderstorms to massive hurricane over three days left no time to organize a mandatory evacuation of its 390,000 residents.

In Port Fourchon, boats and helicopters gathered to take workers and supplies to oil platforms in the ocean and the oil extracted starts its journey toward refineries. The port handles about a fifth of the nation's domestic oil and gas, officials said.

President Joe Biden approved emergency declarations for Louisiana and Mississippi ahead of Ida's arrival.

Officials stressed that the levee and drainage systems protecting New Orleans had been much improved since Katrina. But they cautioned flooding was still possible, with up to 24 inches (61 centimeters) of rain forecast in some areas.

"Ida will most definitely be stronger than Katrina, and by a pretty big margin," said University of Miami hurricane researcher Brian McNoldy. "And, the worst of the storm will pass over New Orleans and Baton Rouge, which got the weaker side of Katrina."

Hurricane Ida nearly doubled in strength, going from an 85 mph storm to a 150 mph storm in just 24 hours, which meteorologists called "explosive intensification."

Nepal to finalise Cabinet expansion Monday: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, August 29: Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba Sunday met CPN (Maoist Center) Chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal and CPN (Unified Socialist) chief Madhav Kumar Nepal and reached an agreement with them to finalise the expansion of the Cabinet Monday, according to a media report.

Deuba could not expand his Cabinet for more than a month as the Madhav Nepal faction of the CPN-UML, which played a key role in the formation of the government, was in the process of getting recognition from the election commission.

The election commission granted official recognition to the newly-formed party CPN (Unified Socialist), which was created after splitting the CPN-UML led by former prime minister K P Sharma Oli. According to Dahal's Secretariat, the three senior leaders discussed the issue of expanding the Deuba-led Cabinet. An agreement was reached to finalise the expansion of the cabinet Monday, myrepublica.Com reported.

Nepal, a former prime minister, had gone against the party and supported the then Opposition alliance in its bid to topple the government led by Oli.

Nepal could form a new party after President Bidya Devi Bhandari issued an ordinance to amend the Political Parties Act 2071, aimed at easing the procedure for political parties to split.

Before the amendment, provisions of the Political Party Act required dissidents to have the support of 40 per cent of members in the parliamentary party and the central committee to split their mother party.

Prime Minister Deuba had earlier announced to allot six ministerial berths and "two more ministries if necessary" to the newly-formed CPN (Unified Socialist) party.

A meeting of the CPN (Unified Socialist) party later decided to form an interim high command and join the government until the office-bearers are selected from the national council.



Demonstrators hold up a sign on the National Mall near the US Capitol on the 58th anniversary of the historic "March On Washington" in Washington

Iran, Syria promise to confront US sanctions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Damascus, August 29: Iran and Syria vowed Sunday to take "mighty steps" to confront US sanctions imposed on the two regional allies, saying their relations will strengthen under Iran's new leadership.

The announcement was made by Iran's new Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who was received at the airport a visit to Damascus by his Syrian counterpart, Faisal Mekdad.

Iran has been one of Syrian President Bashar Assad's strongest backers, sending thousands of fighters from around the region to help his troops in Syria's 10-year conflict that has killed half a million and displaced half the country's pre-war population of 23 million.

With the help of Russia and Iran, Syrian government forces now control much of Syria. But the country has been suffering for



years under American and European Union sanctions.

US Treasury sanctions have targeted a network that spans Syria, Iran and Russia, and which is responsible for shipping oil to the Syrian government.

"The leadership of the two countries will together take mighty steps to confront economic terrorism and reduce pressure on our people," Amir-Abdollahian said at the airport. He did not say how the two countries will fight the sanctions.

Israel strikes Gaza after border clashes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Jerusalem, August 29: The Israeli air force attacked two sites in Gaza Sunday, the army said, after Gazans clashed with forces on the border and launched incendiary balloons into southern Israel.

Israeli "fighter jets struck a Hamas military compound used for manufacturing weapons and training as well as an entrance to a terror tunnel adjacent to Jabalia," the Israeli army said.

"The strikes were in response to Hamas launching incendiary balloons into Israeli territory and the violent riots that took place yesterday," it said in a statement.

The army said both incidents were "examples of how Hamas continues to employ terror tactics and target civilians."

There were no reports from the Gaza Strip of any casualties caused by the Israeli strikes.



Islamist rulers Hamas responsible for any unrest from the Palestinian enclave.

"As I have already said, our actions in Gaza will serve our interests," he told reporters before boarding a plane back to Israel.

"As far as I'm concerned, the address (of those responsible) has been and remains Hamas."

Saturday evening, two wildfires broke out in the Eshkol region

near the Palestinian enclave, Israeli firefighters said.

Protests erupted later in the day, with the Israeli army firing tear gas and stun grenades as Palestinians burned tyres on the border between Gaza and Israel, an AFP reporter said.

The health ministry in Gaza said 11 Palestinians had been hurt in the clashes, three of them by live fire.

Expedition discovers world's northernmost island

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Helsinki, August 29: A team of Arctic researchers from Denmark say they accidentally discovered what they believe is the world's northernmost island located off Greenland's coast.

The scientists from the University of Copenhagen initially thought they had arrived at Oodaaq, an island discovered by a Danish survey team in 1978, to collect samples during an expedition that was conducted in July.

They instead wound up on an

undiscovered island further north.

"We were convinced that the island we were standing on was Oodaaq, which until then was registered as the world's northernmost island," said expedition leader Morten Rasch of the university's department of geosciences and natural resource management.

"But when I posted photos of the island and its coordinates on social media, a number of American island hunters went crazy and said that it couldn't be true," he said in a statement Friday.

"Island hunters" are known as



adventurers whose hobby it is to search for unknown islands.

The yet-to-be-named island is 780 meters (about 850 yards) north

of Oodaaq, an island off Cape Morris Jesup, the northernmost point of Greenland and one of the most northerly points of land on Earth. The tiny island, apparently discovered as a result of shifting pack ice, is about 30 by 60 meters (about 100 by 200 feet) in size and rises to about three to four meters (10 to 13 feet) above sea level, the university said.

The research team reportedly doesn't consider the discovery to be a result of climate change and has allegedly proposed naming the island Qeqertaq Avannarq, which

means "the northernmost island" in Greenlandic.

The island consists primarily of small mounds of silt and gravel, according to Rasch. He said it may be the result of a major storm that, with the help of the sea, gradually pushed material from the seabed together until an island formed. The island isn't expected to exist a long time, Danish researchers believe.

"No one knows how long it will remain. In principle, it could disappear as soon as a powerful new storm hits," Rasch said.

SHORT TAKES

Dixie Fire nearly half contained

Los Angeles: Dixie Fire, the largest wildfire in the US this year and the second biggest in California's history, has so far scorched more than 756,000 acres with 48 per cent containment, according to authorities. The fire, which started July 14 about 10 miles northeast of Paradise, covered 756,768 acres Saturday morning in five counties, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). Humidity recovery was poor through the mid to higher elevations, allowing the blaze to continue to burn actively throughout the night, reports Xinhua news agency.

Melbourne enters sixth lockdown

Melbourne: A lockdown of Australia's second-biggest city Melbourne will be extended, authorities announced Sunday as they struggle to quash a stubborn coronavirus Delta variant outbreak. Almost seven million people in Melbourne and surrounding Victoria state were scheduled to exit a four-week lockdown Thursday, but state premier Dan Andrews said it would no longer be possible with case numbers rising by 92 overnight.

US airlifts aid to quake-hit Haiti

Jeremie: US military aircraft are now ferrying food, tarps and other material into southern Haiti amid a shift in the international relief effort to focus on helping people in the areas hardest hit by the recent earthquake to make it through the hurricane season. Aircraft flying out of the capital, Port-au-Prince, arrived throughout the day Saturday in the mostly rural, mountainous southern peninsula that was the epicenter of the Aug 14 earthquake.

Protest on wheels in Thailand capital

Bangkok: A long line of cars, trucks and motorbikes wended its way Sunday through the Thai capital Bangkok in a mobile protest against the government of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha. The protesters on wheels hope their nonviolent action, dubbed a "car mob," can help force the ouster of Prayuth, whom they accuse of botching the campaign against the coronavirus. "There is only one message from this car mob, which is Prayuth get out!", said a veteran social activist.



We are looking at going multiple and we are looking at obviously a four-wheeler as our future planning. We have a vision that is there. That is the reason we are increasing our R&D (research and development) team as well

RESEARCHERS URGE ACTION

Researchers who discovered a massive flaw in the main databases stored in Microsoft Corp's Azure cloud platform Saturday urged all users to change their digital access keys, not just the 3,300 it notified this week



of the day quote

The proposed FTA with the UAE can result in enhanced exports of gem and jewellery products to the Emirates which is really required presently as the exports from the sector to the UAE have declined significantly to \$2.77bn in 2020-21 due to the pandemic

COLIN SHAH | CHAIRMAN, GJPC

Telecom companies are focusing on building capacity for 5G so that they are ready for launch once they get spectrum in the proposed auction, while their strategy on roll out of services circle or city-wise is still in works

SANJAY MALIK | SENIOR VP & HEAD OF INDIA MARKET, NOKIA

Moodagent is quite different from other music streaming apps available. We depend primarily on technology which is AI and ML to understand the moods and behaviour of the end-consumer and recommend to them the music they would like basis their specific kind of moods

JYOTI HANDE | EXECUTIVE VP AND MD, MOODAGENT INDIA

AI asks US court to dismiss Cairn petition to seize assets

Cairn moved a US District Court seeking confirmation of the arbitration award and then filed a petition in the New York court to seek declaration of Air India as "alter ego" of the Indian government

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 29: Air India has asked a New York court to dismiss a petition filed by Britain's Cairn Energy for seizure of its assets to enforce USD 1.2 billion arbitral awards against the Indian government, saying the litigation was premature as an appeal against the arbitration award was still pending.

The petition by the airline, which is separate to Indian government's plea in a Washington court seeking dismissal of Cairn's lawsuit to seek confirmation of the arbitral award, said the New York district court lacks jurisdiction to adjudicate a "mere hypothetical question" or one that depends upon contingent future events that may or may not occur.

Cairn first moved a court in the US District Court for the District of Columbia seeking confirmation of the arbitration award and then filed a petition in the New York court to seek declaration of Air India as "alter ego" of the Indian government and so it should be made liable to pay the USD 1.26



billion arbitral award.

An international arbitration tribunal in December last year set aside the levy of capital gains tax, using a 2012 retrospective legislation, on a 2006 reorganization of India business that Cairn carried before listing it on local stock exchanges. It ordered India to return the value of shares seized and sold, dividend confiscated and tax refund withheld to enforce levy.

With India refusing to pay, Cairn moved courts in the US. "Cairn's petition to confirm the Award is pending in the District Court for the District of Columbia," Air India said in the August 23 petition seen by PTI.

It went on to state that the Indian

government has filed before a court in The Hague - the seat of the international arbitration tribunal - a Motion to Stay and a Motion to Dismiss the arbitral award.

"In effect, the Complaint (by Cairn Energy) is a premature enforcement action dressed up as a declaratory judgment action, invoking this Court's federal jurisdiction to get a head start on executing the Award before the DDC. Has had the opportunity to address the Republic of India's immunity defenses and its claims that the Award is not subject to enforcement under the New York Convention," Air India said.

"Such an attempt is improper, and the Complaint should be dismissed."

Ease of doing biz still cumbersome at grass-root level: CII

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 29: Cumbrous ease of doing business at the grass-root level and high cost of doing business is affecting the animal spirits of the private sector, according to a survey by industry chamber CII released Sunday.

However, it said that significant recovery in corporate performance is expected in 2021-22 as the government's pro-growth initiatives and announcements have helped nurture the animal spirits of the sector, according to a CII survey.

Responding to the question on what is affecting the animal spirits of the private sector, majority of the CEOs (51 per cent) indicated that ease of doing business was still cumbersome at the grass roots, followed by cost of doing business (other than capital cost) being high, as indicated by 32 per cent of the CEOs," CII said in a statement.

About one-third of the CEOs indicated that the current capacity is still in excess of demand, it added.

The survey also said about 46 per cent of the 117 CEOs, who participated in the survey, expected more than 10 per cent revenue growth of their respective company in the first half of the current fiscal as compared to the first half of pre-pandemic year 2019-20.

Airtel board to raise up to ₹21K cr via rights issue

AGENCIES

New Delhi August 29: Telecom major Bharti Airtel's Board of Directors have approved the raising of up to ₹21,000 crore through a rights issue. The issue price has been fixed at ₹535 per fully paid-up equity share, including a premium of ₹530 per share.

"The board approved the issuance of equity shares of face value of ₹5 each of the company on rights basis to eligible equity shareholders of the company as on the record date (to be notified later), of an Issue size of up to ₹21,000 crore," the company said in a regulatory filing.

It noted that at the meeting held Sunday, the board comprehensively reviewed the industry scenario, business environment, and the financial and business strategy of the company and approved the company's plan to raise further capital.

The terms of payment of issue price will be that 25% on application and balance in two more additional calls as may be decided by the board or the committee of the board from time to time based on the company's requirements within an overall time-horizon of 36 months.

The rights entitlement ratio will be 1 equity share for every 14 equity



The board approved the issuance of equity shares of face value of ₹5 each of the company on rights basis to eligible equity shareholders of the company

The terms of payment of issue price will be that 25% on application and balance in two more additional calls as may be decided by the board or the committee of the board

shares held by eligible shareholders as on the record date. Further the board has also constituted a 'Special Committee of Directors' to decide the other terms and conditions of the issue including issue period and the record date.

The promoter and promoter group of the company will collectively subscribe to the full extent of their aggregate rights entitlement. In addition, they will also subscribe to any unsubscribed shares in the issue.

Friday shares of the company on the BSE closed at ₹593.95, higher by ₹7.10 or 1.21% from its previous close.

SHORT TAKES

Saretsky appointed special advisor

New Delhi: IndiGo Sunday said it has appointed Gregg Saretsky as a special advisor and he will work closely with the executive leadership team to accelerate operational and commercial improvement opportunities at the airline. Saretsky joined the board of InterGlobe Aviation, the parent of IndiGo, as a non-executive director in October last year.

Industrial leasing rises 31%

New Delhi: Leasing of industrial and warehousing spaces in five major cities rose 31 per cent during the first six months of this year mainly driven by growth in e-commerce activities, according to property consultant Colliers.

GST's last date extended

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry Sunday extended the last date to avail the GST amnesty scheme, under which taxpayers have to pay a reduced fee for delayed filing of monthly returns, by three months till November 30. The GST council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and comprising state ministers, had in May decided to come out with an Amnesty Scheme to provide relief to taxpayers in late fee for pending returns.

CBDT extends due dates for e-filing of various I-T forms



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 29: In a relief for taxpayers, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has extended the due dates for filing of various electronic forms under the Income Tax Act, 1961. In a statement, the Finance Ministry said that the move comes on the back of difficulties reported by taxpayers and other stakeholders.

"On consideration of difficulties reported by the taxpayers and other stakeholders in electronic filing of certain Forms under the provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961, read with Income Tax Rules, 1962 (Rules), the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has decided to further extend the due dates for electronic filing of such forms," it said.

The application for registration or intimation or approval under Sections 10(23C), 12A, 35(1)(ii)/(iii) or 80G of the Act in Form No 10A required to be filed on or before June 30, 2021, and ex-

tended to August 31, may now be filed on or before March 31, 2022.

Further, the application for registration or approval under Sections 10(23C), 12A or 80G of the Act in Form No 10AB, for which the last date for filing falls on or before February 28, 2022, may be filed on or before March 31, 2022, it said.

"The Equalisation Levy Statement in Form No 1 for the Financial Year 2020-21, which was required to be filed on or before June 30, 2021, as extended to August 31, 2021 vide Circular No 15 of 2021 dated August 3, 2021, may be filed on or before December 31, 2021," said the statement.

Among other relaxations, the Finance Ministry said that uploading of the declarations received from recipients in Form No 15G/15H during the quarter ending June 30, which was originally required to be uploaded on or before July 15, and subsequently by August 31, may be uploaded on or before November 30.

'India's economy ready for faster growth'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 29: Notwithstanding the pandemic severe shock, India's macroeconomy is more healthy and ready for faster growth, eminent economist Ashima Goyal said Sunday, observing that recovery from both the first and second waves was faster than expected points towards inherent strengths of the economy.

Goyal in an interview, said there are already signs of a rise in private investment in sectors where capacity constraints have appeared.

"Despite the Covid-19 severe shock, India's macroeconomy is more healthy and ready for faster growth than it has been for a long time.



Despite the Covid shock, India's macroeconomy is more healthy and ready for faster growth than it has been for a long time. That recovery from both the first and second waves was faster than expected points towards inherent strengths of the economy

ASHIMA GOYAL | EMINENT ECONOMIST

That recovery from both the first and second waves was faster than expected points towards inherent strengths of the economy," she said.

The RBI has lowered the country's growth projection for the current financial year to 9.5 per cent

from 10.5 per cent estimated earlier, while the World Bank has projected India's economy to grow at 8.3 per cent in 2021.

Goyal, who is also a member of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank, said that al-

though many Indian start-ups are doing well but "we should not, however, expect the private infrastructure investment boom of the 2000s."

"Portfolio inflows into India are not only due to the quantitative easing of rich countries' central banks, they are also attracted by India's growth prospects. All emerging markets do not get such inflows," the eminent economist opined.

She pointed out that the government is leading infrastructure investment and more durable foreign direct investment has a larger share in recent capital inflows.

"India, moreover, has enough reserves to ride out any volatility while ensuring interest rates are aligned to the domestic policy cycle," she said.

BIZ BUZZ

Crypto fantasy gaming platform launched

New Delhi: Rainmaker, the world's first cryptocurrency fantasy gaming platform was launched to offer India's crypto enthusiasts and crypto curious a whole new and unique trading experience. It is the flagship product of First Stock Contest Limited, which is a tech startup established in 2021 in the Real Money Gaming (RMG) space. Rainmaker is based on the core vision of democratising knowledge for individuals interested in learning the nuances of this investment avenue in a user-friendly manner. It offers a near-real experience by gamifying trades and inviting players to learn analytical skills in crypto portfolio management. The platform also offers a similar experience in stock trading; replicating that of actual stock exchanges in India.

Vedix eyes to tap key regional markets

Bhubaneswar: Vedix, world's first customised modern Ayurvedic lifestyle and wellness brand is eyeing to strengthen its position across key regional markets in India. The brand, as part of twin-marketing strategy, is eyeing to tap both regional and international markets simultaneously. Jatin Gujrati, Business Head, Vedix says, "Combining over 30,000 hours of intensive research, collaboration with experts and historical evidence on Ayurveda, we have created a detailed evaluation process to offer our customers a hyper-personal remedy, backed by modern technology. We aspire to make Vedix a household name in the country. Currently, our annual run rate is over ₹160 crore and we aim to clock ₹500 crore by 2025."

Motherson Sumi eyes acquisitions

Mumbai: Auto components maker Motherson Sumi Systems is looking for more acquisitions and is in talks with many potential takeover companies. A letter to the shareholders by Motherson Sumi Chairman Vivek Chaand Sehgal in the Annual Report of the company also noted that acquisitions must create value for the customers and must allow the company to achieve revenue and ROCE (return on capital employed) targets simultaneously.

Children's park, water ATM opened by Gopalpur Port



Bhubaneswar, August 29: The Gopalpur Port inaugurated the purified drinking water ATM project and children's park, Sunday, in Ganjam district. The water ATM project was inaugurated in Takiria Brahmapur village in Kanmana panchayat and a children's park in Aryapalli Primary School in Arjepalli Panchayat under Chhatrapur block. Chhatrapur MLA Subash Chandra Behera inaugurated both initiatives.

The inaugural function was attended by Gopalpur Port CEO and Director Sandeep Agrawal and Vice President Human Resources Ajay Kumar Mishra. The sarchpanch of the Kanamana panchayat, S Chakrapani Reddy, the sarchpanch of the Arjepalli panchayat, P Balaji, the Chairperson of the Chhatrapur block, M Dhananjaya Reddy and other were also present during the inaugural event.

Under the port's CSR activities, the company has dedicated a hi-tech Eureka Forbes Aquaguard purified water ATM facility to the villagers of Kanamana panchayat. The initiative aims to facilitate safe and purified drinking water to the villagers.

The Gopalpur port has also developed a children's park in Arjepalli primary school with a unique offering of structured and unstructured play facilities.

Resting on climate action a \$11tn opportunity for India: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 29: India must act now to prevent the country losing USD 35 trillion in economic potential over the next 50 years due to unmitigated climate change, a new report from the Deloitte Economics Institute has said.

The report, titled 'India's turning point: How climate action can drive our economic future', also reveals how the country could gain USD 11 trillion in economic value instead over the same period, by limiting rising global temperatures and realising its potential to 'export decarbonisation' to the world.

"We have a narrow window of time - the next 10 years - to make the decisions needed to alter the trajectory of climate change. No one is immune to the impact of cli-

mate change, but for India this is a window of opportunity to lead the way and show how climate action is not a narrative of cost but one of sustainable economic growth," according to Atul Dhawan, Chairperson, Deloitte India.

As India aspires to be a USD 5 trillion economy, it is not just foreign and domestic investments that will be key in driving growth, the country must also take this opportunity to align its ambitions with climate choices, he noted.

With no action taken on climate change, the average global temperatures could rise by 3 degrees celsius or more by the end of this century. This will make it harder for people to live and work, as sea levels rise, crop yields fall, infrastructure is damaged, and other challenges emerge, threatening the progress and prosperity that the nation has enjoyed in recent



decades, the report said.

Over the next 50 years, the top five most impacted industries in terms of economic activity are expected to incur a significant share of climate-related loss.

These industries - services (government and private), manufac-

turing, retail and tourism, construction, and transport - currently account for more than 80 per cent of India's GDP. Together, they form the basis of the country's contemporary economic engine, it added.

Deloitte estimates that by 2070, these five industries alone would

The report, titled 'India's turning point: How climate action can drive our economic future', also reveals how the country could gain \$11tn in economic value instead over the same period, by limiting rising global temperatures

experience an annual loss in the value added to GDP of more than USD 1.5 trillion per year.

The report also said that if governments, businesses and communities act boldly and rapidly in the next decade to address climate change, average global tem-

perature rises can be limited to around 1.5 degrees celsius by 2050 - a scenario that will minimise the impact of climate change for India and the rest of the world. At the same time, India can achieve significant economic growth by supplying the products, services, and financing the world will need to limit temperature increases.

India is home to many enterprises that are already world-leading producers of the advanced solutions countries will need to address climate change. These include green hydrogen and negative-emission solutions, both natural and technological, the report said.

"We need to transform the world's economies towards new, low-emission pathways and India is well positioned to play a leading role in this process globally," said Viral Thakker, Partner and Sustainability Leader, Deloitte India.

Bhavinaben Patel becomes 2nd Indian woman to bag a silver medal at the Paralympics

Breaking barriers



₹31 lakh from TTFI

New Delhi: Table Tennis Federation of India announced Sunday a ₹31 lakh cash reward for Bhavinaben Patel, who became the first Indian to win a table tennis medal at the Paralympics. TTFI president Dushyant Chautala announced the cash reward via a social media post. Bhavinaben lost the final Sunday but capped off a memorable campaign at Tokyo with a historic silver medal.

able Bhavina Patel has scripted history! She brings home a historic silver medal. Congratulations to her for it. Her life's journey is motivating and will also draw more youngsters towards sports. #Paralympics.

Abhinav Bindra: Fantastic performance by @BhavinabenPatel to bag a silver and open India's account in the #Tokyo2020 @Paralympics. Wonderful show of skill and mental resilience. Extremely proud! #Praise4Para.

Deepa Malik: It is absolutely stunning to see Bhavina's performance, the way she has played the competition it has absolutely stunned the opponents. Her game, skill, patience, her coming back, the way she has kept her focus, it is beyond words, it is world class. Our silver girl has given this gift to the nation on National Sports Day, which is the most apt day to create history for any sportsperson.

Sachin Tendulkar: What a wonderful news for all of us on #National Sports Day Congratulations on the silver medal @BhavinabenPatel6. This

is a historic achievement! Every medal we win will inspire millions into the sport, & sow the seeds for more medals in future. Good start for us at #Paralympics.

Sourav Ganguly: Congratulations to Bhavina Patel for winning silver...it's been a successful journey for Olympics and Paralympics participants this year...great news for Indian sport...

Virender Sehwag: Congratulations to #BhavinabenPatel for creating history by winning India's first silver medal in women's singles class 4 table tennis event at the ongoing #Tokyo Paralympics. A wonderful display of focus, hardwork and mental strength.

VVS Laxman: Silver medal for India. Many Congratulations to #BhavinabenPatel who has created history by becoming the first Indian para-paddler to win a medal in #Paralympics history.

Anil Kumble: Congratulations #BhavinabenPatel Proud of you. Great feat."

Flying high on broken wing

NISHAD KUMAR BAGS INDIA'S 2ND SILVER WITH ASIAN RECORD AT PARALYMPICS



Nishad Kumar

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 29: Even as the euphoria over paddler Bhavinaben Patel's silver medal at the Tokyo Paralympics continued there was good news from the athletics segment. Nishad Kumar clinched a silver medal in the men's high jump T47 event while compatriot Vinod Kumar fetched a bronze in discus. However, Vinod's medal was put on hold after a protest over his disability classification.

India's Chef De Mission Gursharan Singh however, asserted that Vinod's medal stands for now. "There was a protest from one country or may be more than one, we don't know as it can't be revealed. There could be issues on the classification done on Vinod before the start of Paralympics," Singh said.

However, there was not an iota of doubt regarding Nishad's success. Nishad's right hand got cut

Nishad's parents still cry remembering the day on which the athlete lost his hand. They also cried Sunday, though for a different reason

by a fodder-cutting machine at his family's farm when he was an eight-year-old boy. However, it did not dampen his spirit at all and his single-minded dedication towards his sport paid off Sunday. The T47 class is meant for athletes with a unilateral upper limb impairment resulting in some loss of function at the shoulder, elbow and wrist.

Javelin gold medalist at the Tokyo Olympics, Neeraj Chopra took to Twitter to congratulate both Nishad and Bhavinaben. "Congratulations to Bhavina Patel

and Nishad Kumar on winning silver medals at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics and giving the country a wonderful #National Sports Day gift," wrote Chopra.

Nishad's parents Rashpal Singh and Pushpa Kumari remembered how, 14 years ago, Nishad lost his right hand. Rashpal currently works as a mason.

"As parents, whenever we remember the day when Nishad's hand got into the fodder-cutting machine at our home, we cry. Today's medal is the reward for his hard work. To see him hold the Indian flag and the silver medal at the Tokyo Paralympics has made us forget all the hardships," an emotional Rashpal stated.

Nishad lost his right hand when he was just six. Two years later he opted for athletics under coach Ramesh at his school Saraswati Vidya Mandir. He never felt out of place without one hand. "The rest, as they say, is history.

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 29: Following in the footsteps of the likes of Mirabai Chhanu and Ravi Kumar Dahiya, paddler Bhavinaben Patel bagged Sunday a silver medal at the Tokyo Paralympics. She lost to China's Ying Zhou in the table tennis Class 4 final. It was also India's first medal at the meet. The nation rejoiced at Patel's feat with people from all walks of life laud-

ing here feat on various social media platforms. Here's what they had to say.

Ram Nath Kovind: Bhavina Patel inspires the Indian contingent and sports lovers winning silver at #Paralympics. Your extraordinary determination and skills have brought glory to India. My congratulations to you on this exceptional achievement.

Narendra Modi: The remark-

SHORT TAKES

Sania-McHale loses

Cleveland (USA): Veteran Indian tennis player Sania Mirza and her American partner Christina McHale ended runners-up at the WTA 250 event after losing the title clash to top seeds Shuko Aoyama and Ena Shibahara here Saturday. Mirza and McHale lost 5-7, 3-6 to the Japanese pair in a final which lasted 84 minutes. Courtesy her first final of the season, Mirza added 180 ranking points to her kitty and earned prize money of USD 3,000.

Consistent show

Crans Montana: Shubhankar Sharma stayed on course for a top 10 finish as he carded a three-under 67 in the third round Saturday to tie ninth at the Omega European Masters golf tournament here. He now has rounds of 68-68-67 and is seven-under for 54 holes. Sharma landed a second eagle in the event, when he putted from 35 feet on the Par-5 ninth. He also had three other birdies against two bogeys on a day when the conditions were cooler and the wind was swirling, making scoring tough. Earlier, SSP Chawrasia missed the cut with 71-71.

Wood, Woakes back

London: Pacer Mark Wood and all-rounder Chris Woakes were Sunday added to the England squad for the fourth Test against India after regaining full fitness while Jos Buttler will miss the game as his wife is expecting their second child. Wood had hurt his right shoulder while fielding during the second Test at Lord's while Woakes has recovered from the heel injury that kept him out of international cricket since the ODI series against Pakistan in July. He will be a welcome addition to the squad in the absence of key players such as Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer.

1st in 18 years

Winston-Salem: Ilya Ivashka beat Mikael Ymer 6-0, 6-2 in the Winston-Salem Open to become the first player from Belarus to win an ATP Tour singles title in 18 years. Ranked 63rd in the world, the 27-year-old Ivashka is the lowest-ranked champion in the event's 10-year history. Max Mirnyi was the last Belarusian winner - in 2003 at Rotterdam. Ivashka lost only one set in six tournament matches. AGENCIES

BIJU PATNAIK AWARD FOR DEFENDER AMIT

COACHES KALU CHARAN CHOUDHURY AND SHIBA PRASAD DAS ALSO HONOURED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 29: Odia hockey player Amit Rohidas, who was part of the bronze-winning Indian team at the Tokyo Olympics, was conferred the 'Biju Patnaik Sports Award' at a function here Sunday. Incidentally, Rohidas also earned his 100th cap for India at Tokyo. Sports Minister Tusharkanti Behera handed over a citation and a cheque of ₹2,00,000 at a function.

Veteran hockey coach, Kalu Charan Choudhury who has produced many national and international players received the 'Biju Patnaik Sports Award for Lifetime Achievement' in promotion of sports and games. He was also presented with a citation and a cheque of ₹3,00,000. The award for excellence in coaching went to badminton coach for para players, Shiba Prasad Das. He was presented with a citation and a cheque of ₹1,00,000.

Congratulating the winners, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, in a video message said, "I extend my warm wishes to all of you on the occasion of the birth anniversary of the legendary hockey player Major Dhyhan Chand, celebrated as the



HONOURING TALENT: Odisha Sports Minister Tushar Kanti Behera (centre) hands over a cheque to Indian hockey player Amit Rohidas in presence of Sports Secretary R Vineel Krishna (extreme left) OP PHOTO

National Sports Day. This time we celebrate this day with all happiness, glory and splendour. The performance of the Indian hockey teams at the Olympics, is a true tribute to the legendary Dhyhan Chand."

Patnaik added, "Hockey has a special place in Odisha. I am happy that the lifetime achievement award has been given to Kalu Charan Choudhury, hockey coach and the outstanding performance award has been given to Amit Rohidas. Congratulations to both of you. It is a tribute to Odisha's players and coaches, who have contributed to the

development of hockey in the state. "I would also like to congratulate Shiba Prasad Das for the award for 'Excellence in Coaching'. His contribution towards Pramod Bhagat is well known. We are confident that Pramod Bhagat will make us all proud at the Tokyo Paralympics."

Others present during the award giving ceremony were former India captain and chairman Odisha Hockey Promotion Council, Dillip Tirkey and Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Sports and Youth services, R Vineel Krishna.

3 GOLD MEDALS FOR JUNIOR BOXERS IN ASIAN MEET

Gloves turn golden for boxers in Dubai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 29: Indian boxers Rohit Chamoli (48kg) and Bharat Joon (+81kg) notched up contrasting victories to clinch gold medals Sunday in the Asian Junior Championships in Dubai. Late in the evening Tanu (52kg) won gold in the girls' section.

Chamoli defeated Mongolia's Otgonbayar Tuvshinzaya in an intense final 3-2. Joon on the other hand, got the better of Kazakhstan's Yerdos Sharipbek 5-0 to clinch the yellow metal. On the other hand, Tanu edged past Tomiris Myrzakul of Kazakhstan in a split 3-2 verdict

Chamoli rallied after losing the opening round to prevail 3-2 in the hard-fought contest. Joon, on the other hand, easily out-manoeuvred his rival, who fizzled out after a decent start.

In another final, Gaurav Saini (70kg) signed off with a silver medal after losing 0-5 Boltaev Shavkatjon of Uzbekistan.

India have already won six bronze medals in the junior event after Devika Ghorpade (50kg), Aarzo (54kg) and Supriya Rawat (66kg) lost in the girls semifinals while Ashish (54kg), Anshul (57kg)

Chamoli had to fight hard in the final against his opponent. Joon however, had it easy in the summit clash round

and Ankush (66kg) also made it to the last four stage..

In the last Asian Junior Championships held in 2019 in Fujairah, UAE, India had finished third with 21 medals (six gold, nine silver and six bronze).

At the ongoing edition, gold medalists will be awarded with USD 4,000 while USD 2,000 and 1,000 will be given to the silver and bronze medal winners.

A delighted Chamoli was overjoyed with his gold-winning feat. "In spite of bad start, I was always confident that I could turn it around," Chamoli said after the slugfest. "I gave it my all in the third round and my aggressive intent stood me in good stead. This will certainly motivate me. My goal is to win a medal at the Olympics," he added.

'Amazing feeling' for England's Ollie

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Leeds, August 29: England pace bowler Ollie Robinson, who took seven wickets during the third Test against India which the hosts won by an innings and 76 runs, has said that his dismissal of Virat Kohli on the morning of day four was the most 'amazing feeling', and the crowd applauding him an 'unbelievable experience'. He said that he would cherish such moments for a long time to come.

"It was an amazing feeling, the crowd here was unbelievable. The noise when we got Kohli out was deafening, it was just an unbelievable experience and feeling to get that wicket," the 27-year-old pace bowler was quoted as saying Sunday by the 'Daily Mail'.

It's been an amazing turnaround for Robinson who was being reviled three months back following the emergence of historical racist and sexist tweets when he was making his Test debut at Lord's against New Zealand in June. However, his superb showing against India at Headingley has given the bowler a hero's status and he could well be handed the new ball on England's Ashes tour later this year.

"It's off the back of quite a few hard, hard years. I've had to work hard to get here, so to get the rewards in the last four Test matches has been very pleasing," Robinson said.

COVID-19 SITUATION IN AUSTRALIA FORCES CHANGE IN VENUES

Mithali hoping for good show

AGENCIES

Bangalore, August 29: The Indian women's cricket team departed Sunday for a full-fledged tour of Australia but fresh Covid-19 related restrictions Down Under means that the players will now have to complete a 14-day hard quarantine upon arrival in Brisbane. The BCCI was earlier hoping that the players would get to train after a week of hard quarantine but now the players are likely to be confined to their hotel rooms for 14 days.

"Training permission is highly unlikely after the first week in the current scenario. There could be further changes in the itinerary. Hard quarantine will be extremely tough for the players but that is what the situation demands," stated a BCCI official. A player, trying to see things from a positive aspect said, "It will be very tough but at least we get to play after that."

Skipper Mithali Raj Mithali admitted Sunday that there will be a number of firsts on the tour of



Mithali Raj

Australia. The skipper praised the flexibility of her playing group. She asserted her team will adapt to the conditions.

"We know we are playing against the best side in the world. But we are confident in the sort of preparations we managed to have here

in India," said Mithali on the eve of the team's departure.

"It (series) is going to be big because most of the questions are revolving around the pink ball, then the one day cricket and the T20 series. We don't go in with a set mindset. It's all about how we apply

"We as a group have to adapt to the different versions during matches and do that quickly. That is what we worked on during training"

MITHALI RAJ

ourselves according to the situation present at that moment. The Test match will be slightly different because we are playing with a pink ball and under lights. That's a very different experience for all of us," added Mithali.

The whole series will be played between two venues - the Metricon Stadium in Carrara hosting the sole Test and three T20Is, while Harrup Park in Mackay will stage the three ODIs in Queensland. The venues have been approved by the Queensland government. The series will begin September 21, two days after the original scheduled start fixed for September 19.

Spurs, Man U earn full points

AGENCIES

London, August 29: Tottenham Hotspurs maintained their 100 per cent record in the Premier League with a narrow 1-0 win Sunday over Watford. It was the third successive league victory for the Spurs and came courtesy of a free-kick by Heung-min Son.

In another game played on the day, a Mason Greenwood 80th minute strike helped Manchester United beat Wolverhampton 1-0. However, the Wolves were the better team and should have been up by two goals at the break.

Just as he had done against Manchester City, the Korean player



Heung-min Son

Son again proved to be very important for the Spurs who also had Harry Kane in their ranks. However, Son was by far the superior between the two attackers.

It was Son's 20th Premier League appearance and his 72nd goal, an impressive strike-rate even if it does not bear comparison to Harry Kane. The latter making his first start of the season appealed for a penalty in the very first minute, but referee Andre Marriner ignored his claims.

Watford, with Josh King up front and Sarr and Emmanuel Dennis on the flanks, always threatened with their pace on the counter-attack. However, they failed to create clear-cut chances. On the other hand, Spurs found the goal their territorial dominance deserved, three minutes before half time. Son swerved ball in towards the back post, keeper Daniel Bachmann remained transfixed to his line, confused by the blur of runners and could not react in time as the ball bounced past him and into the net.