



A WELCOME CHANGE
Actor Ananya Sengupta says filmmakers are now open to investing in horror films with A-list cast and elaborate sets
LEISURE P2



WHO MONITORING 'MU'
WHO is monitoring new Covid-19 variant 'Mu' as it has mutations that indicate a risk of resistance to all vaccines
INTERNATIONAL P10



4TH TEST STARTS TODAY
India look to bounce back from loss in the last match when they face England in the fourth Test
SPORTS P12



Odia IRS officer appointed CBDT head
New Delhi: The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) approved Wednesday the appointment of Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer, Jagannath Bidyadhar Mohapatra as Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). Mohapatra currently is working as a member of CBDT. He is a 1985-batch IRS officer and was given the additional charge as chairman after the extended tenure of incumbent PC Mody ended in May 2021. Mohapatra, who was inducted May 27 into CBDT, is scheduled to retire in April next year.



5 including 3 kids electrocuted
Ghaziabad: Five people, including three children, were electrocuted here Wednesday, police said. The tragic accident took place in Street No. 3 near 'Ten Singh' palace at Rakesh Marg of Sihani gate police station locality. The five were under a tin shade placed to protect a grocery shop. Due to strong winds and incessant rains a live electric wire came in contact with the shade and five people who were taking shelter under it got electrocuted. Among them were two kids who had come buy some essentials from the shop.

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MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	CHANGE	DIFFERENCE
SENSEX	57338.21	↓	214.18
NIFTY	17076.30	↓	55.90
DOLLAR	73.48	↑	₹0.11
EURO	86.65	↑	₹0.01
GOLD	₹47,231	↑	₹111
SILVER	₹63,588	↑	₹672

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	34.2°C	33.5°C
TEMP MIN	25.5°C	25.5°C
Humidity	81%	91%
Rainfall	30.3mm	3.2mm
Forecast	Cloudy Sky	Generally



GUNNING FOR GOLD
Athletes gear up Wednesday on the track for the start of the men's H1-2 cycle road race at the ongoing Tokyo Paralympic Games, Wednesday
PTI PHOTO

Maoists murder 'police informer'
POST NEWS NETWORK
Rayagada, Sept 1: Maoists shot dead a 45-year-old village guard late Tuesday night after branding him a 'police informer' at Tikarpada village under Ambadala police limits. The deceased has been identified as Santosh Dandasena. Police said a group of 10 suspected Maoists called Dandasena out from his home and killed him. "His bullet-riddled body was found Wednesday morning 50 metres outside his house," said Nilambar Jani, a local police officer. The Maoists left two handwritten notes at the spot, mentioning that they killed Dandasena as he was working as a police informer. One of the posters said, "(Dandasena) had been warned several times not to share information with the police. However, he disobeyed the order and encouraged some youths of the village also to become police informers. If these youths do not apologise quickly, they will face similar consequences." On being informed, police reached the spot, recovered the body and sent it for post-mortem. They also started an investigation into the matter. Dandasena's killing is the first such instance in the state since January when Maoists in Kandhamal district killed two civilians for being alleged police informers.

STORMY START TO SESSION

The inaugural day of the Monsoon Session saw both the Congress and the BJP blaming the government for failing to provide relief to drought-hit districts

Bhubaneswar, Sept 1: The Monsoon Session of the Odisha Legislative Assembly began on a stormy note Wednesday, with the Congress trying to disrupt proceedings while demanding a debate on the drought-like situation in different districts of the state. The proceedings of the House started sharp at 11.00am with obituaries of the deceased members being read out. Immediately after that, Congress members created a ruckus. Party leader Narasingha Mishra demanded a debate on the drought situation during the Question Hour. However, it was declined by Speaker Surjo Narayan Patro. Congress



MLAs including Taraprasad Bahinipati and Suresh Routray then rushed to the Well of the House and tried to disrupt proceedings. They said that the drought-like situation must be discussed. Due to repeated disruptions and the thumping of glass shield of the Speaker by Congress MLAs, Patro had no option but to adjourn the House from 11.30am till 12.34am. When the House resumed, the drought situation came up for discussion. Opposition Chief Whip Mohan Majhi of the BJP criticised

BJD protests fertiliser crunch
BHUBANESWAR: Workers and leaders of the BJD staged a protest near the Raj Bhawan here Wednesday alleging short supply of fertilisers by the Centre. The agitators also submitted a memorandum to Governor Ganeshi Lal in this regard. BJD leader Sanjay Das Burma informed that farmers have cultivated paddy and non-paddy crops on 61.96 lakh hectares of land. However, the Centre has failed to provide the requisite amount of fertilisers in the stipulated time frame as per the 'Agreed Action Plan'. The BJP however, refuted the allegation and said that there is no scarcity of fertilisers in Odisha. P3

at least eight times in the last two decades. Sahoo also pointed out that 23 out of the 28 districts have received deficient rainfall. The CM has asked authorities to repair all defunct lift irrigation projects within seven days and also made a provision of enhancing man-days under the MGNREGA to help farmers, Sahoo added.

LPG price hiked, 3rd time in two months

Petrol, diesel rates decreased by 15 paise each after a gap of more than one week

New Delhi, Sept 1: The government Wednesday hiked LPG prices by ₹25 per cylinder making a further dent into the customers' pockets. This is the third time that LPG prices have been increased in less than two months. Even though the government reduced petrol and diesel prices by 15 paise each, the increase in LPG rates dampened the mood of the people. Subsidised as well as non-subsidised LPG now costs ₹884.50 per 14.2-kg cylinder according to a price notification of oil companies. Subsidised and non-subsidised LPG rates were hiked by ₹25.50 per cylinder July 1. Non-subsidised LPG rates rose by ₹25 per cylinder August 1 and by the same amount August 18. Industry sources said the subsidised LPG price was not raised August 1 because Parliament was in session. The government did

not want to provide the opposition the chance to criticise it over the hike in LPG prices. The latest increase in subsidised LPG price now has taken the cumulative rate hike since January 1 to ₹190 per cylinder. The price of domestic cooking gas has more than doubled in the last seven years. The retail selling

CITY FUEL PRICE

Petrol	₹102.21 (-0.16)
Diesel	₹96.81 (-0.16)

price of domestic gas was ₹410.50 per 14.2kg cylinder, March 1, 2014. In Mumbai, a 14.2 kg LPG cylinder now costs ₹884.50 while in Kolkata, it is priced at ₹911 - the highest among the four metros. Meanwhile, the cut in petrol and diesel prices came down after more than one week. Petrol price in Delhi now stands at ₹101.34 and in Mumbai, it is ₹107.39 per litre. On the other hand, diesel is being sold at 88.77 a litre and in Mumbai at ₹96.33/litre. The Congress meanwhile hit out at the government over the rise in prices of domestic cooking gas. It said the country is uniting against this injustice.



Pollution reducing life's longevity drastically

People living in northern India are suffering the most due to pollution with life expectancy cut short by a minimum of nine years

due to pollution, according to a report published by the University of Chicago. The Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) report states 40 per cent or 480 million people of India, mostly in the Indo-Gangetic plains have been worst hit by pollution. Residents of northern India are on track to lose more than nine years of life expectancy if pollution levels of 2019 persist the report stated and added that this region experiences the most extreme levels of air pollution in the world. In 2019, India's average particulate matter concentration was 70.3 microgram per cubic metre (µg/m3), the highest in the world



and seven times the World Health Organisation's (WHO) guideline of 10 µg/m3. The report informed that alarmingly India's high levels of air pollution have expanded geographically over time. "Compared to a couple of decades

ago, particulate pollution is no longer a feature of the Indo-Gangetic plains alone. Pollution has increased substantially in the states of Maharashtra and MP. For example, the average person in those states is now losing an additional 2.5 to 2.9 years of life expectancy, relative to early 2000," the report said. For Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, the AQLI data re-

vealed that an average person would live 5.6 years longer if pollution was reduced to meet WHO guidelines. These countries consistently rank among the top five most polluted countries in the world, the report said. "Average life expectancy across these four countries would increase by 5.6 years," it added. The report also pointed out the reasons for the extreme level of pollution. It said that in India and Pakistan, the number of vehicles on road has increased about four-fold since the early 2000s. Also electricity generation from fossil fuels has tripled from 1998 to 2017 in these four countries.

leisure



CAMILA CABELLO SAYS HER BEAU TALKS IN HIS SLEEP

Singer Camila Cabello has revealed that her singer beau Shawn Mendes has a habit of talking in his sleep. "He's always sleep-talked, but it happened a lot during the pandemic as we were going to sleep together every night," she added.

NAOMI GAVE UP FINDING 'SOULMATE' FOR CAREER

Supermodel Naomi Campbell revealed that she had to 'sacrifice' finding a 'soulmate' for her career in modelling. Campbell has never been married but was previously engaged to U2 bassist Adam Clayton and businessman Flavio Briatore, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.



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ARIES
You are an imaginative and enterprising person, and today you may taste success. Ganesh says that you are ambitious but warns you not to take on more work than you can handle. You are positive about your capabilities, so work sincerely and have faith in God.

TAURUS
Today, you are likely to be more reckless than ever in splurging your hard earned money. Ganesh strongly advises you to leave your credit card at home today. Using it for making purchases will only make matters worse.

GEMINI
Today will be a day filled with energy and enthusiasm. You will have an optimistic view of life and this will help you attain success. You will be able to exercise your free will and take up tasks to your liking. While the day will be busy, it will also be rewarding, says Ganesh.

CANCER
A restless or irritating mood is indicated. Keep you cool and be calm even in adverse circumstances, suggests Ganesh. If you do so, you will always succeed in life. It is difficult to wriggle out of adversity, if you have hot temper.

LEO
You will be filled with extraordinary self-confidence today. You will be able to take firm decisions when it comes to work related issues. You will not face any difficulties in completing your tasks today, and will achieve success.

VIRGO
It is quite possible that you will love financial challenges that are thrown at you, as they whet your appetite for success. You will come up with innovative ideas and improved methods of problem-solving. Ganesh assures you that your current business ideas will work wonders.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will showcase your ability and skills today in your work field and impress people. You will develop and express your inner love for art and artistic things and you will purchase a new work of art today. Ganesh showers you with all his blessings.

SCORPIO
According to Ganesh, you will be soaked in your work today. During the day, you may be loaded with duties and responsibilities, however, evening has a different story to reveal. Exciting as ever, a get away with friends may be liberating and relaxing.

SAGITTARIUS
Take it as a piece of advice: tough times don't last; tough people do. The day has a lot of ups and downs in store for you. However, you are the sailor of stormy seas and would sail through all the troubles easily. Take the advice given by your near and dear ones, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Forced to some backbreaking work today, you will feel exhausted by the end of the day. It is a cut-throat competition when it comes to the business world. Your arch rivals are looking out for one small opportunity to damage your business and reputation. But, you are no less. You understand their moves.

AQUARIUS
You may receive some good news from the foreign shores today. The day will bring on a positive note and it will remain like that for the whole twenty-four hours. You'll be in a mood to merry and it will be transformed to everyone around you, says Ganesh.

PISCES
Those who work hard to move towards their goals will do well today. It is a good day for business. You will be able to do a lot of new things in your job-business today. With Ganesh's blessings you will definitely succeed, but you need to work hard without getting disappointed.

'Indians warming up to the horror genre'



New Delhi: When actor Ananya Sengupta signed her first supernatural thriller, *The Final Exit*, her gut might have warned that it may not do well at the box-office, but she was proven wrong. "Over the past two decades, the audience has warmed up to horror movies. Filmmakers are now open to investing in a horror film with A-list cast and elaborate sets. However, horror as a genre is still evolving, and India has a long way to go to tap its full potential. I am confident it is just a matter of time before we get there," said Sengupta, who was also seen in the movie *Ghost*.

Intentionally choosing varied genres to prove her versatility, the actor, who has done multiple films down south too will now be seen in the web series *Highdose*. "The makers were keen to cast me for the lead role of 'Revati'. The concept appealed to me and I was quite impressed with their commitment," said the actor who won the Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress for short films *Engina* and *Silver Gandhi* at Port Blair International Film Festival and Golden Sparrow International Film Festival respectively.

Saira hospitalised; condition stable



Mumbai: Veteran actress of yesteryears, Saira Banu who suffered from a heart problem called ischemia, has been admitted to Hinduja Hospital to treatment but is said to be stable now, her doctor said Wednesday. Saira Banu, 77, - the widow of legendary actor, the late Yusuf Khan alias Dilip Kumar - was rushed to the ICU of the hospital in Khar, three days ago.

According to eminent cardiologist Dr Nitin S. Gokhale who is attending on her, the left ventricle in her heart had stopped functioning and led to ingress of water in her heart and lungs.

"The problem has been controlled for now and she is medically much better now. We shall shift her out of the ICU tomorrow (Thursday) and then decide further measures," informed Gokhale.

Saira Banu's health sparked concerns on social media with many praying and wishing for her speedy recovery and early discharge from the hospital.

In the past few years, she earned legions of admirers for the manner in which she stood by and cared for her husband Dilip Kumar who was ailing for several years before he passed away on July 7 aged 98.

Kiara Advani talks about meeting Dimple Cheema



Mumbai: Actors Kiara Advani and Sidharth Malhotra will be the special guests on *The Kapil Sharma Show* Saturday.

Shershaah actors Sidharth Malhotra and Kiara Advani spoke at length about their experience shooting for the movie. The film portrays the love story of Captain Vikram Batra and Dimple Cheema.

During an interaction with the cast, Kapil Sharma asks Kiara to reveal the reason behind meeting Dimple Cheema, to which Kiara Advani says: "I did meet Dimple ji before shooting for the film but it was not because I wanted to understand how she speaks and behaves."

She added: "I wanted to connect with her emotionally and understand her sentiments because, we as civilians, when reading about the soldiers, think about what their families must be going through. Their journey is a different kind of strength."

F9: The Fast Saga: Action-packed and over-the-top



Though every frame is flamboyant and blockbuster in appearance, and is layered with surgical precision, the film fails to awe the audience

The fizz in the Fast & Furious franchise seems to be flattening out progressively. The ninth edition of this over-the-top, frenetic-paced, action-packed franchise opens with a promise but ends on a ridiculously convoluted and low note.

The film is a bloated thriller with a weak and worn-out storyline that only die-hard Fast & Furious fans would

be able to follow. The narrative takes off from two years after the events of *F8: Fate of the Furious*. Dominic Toretto (Vin



Diesel) is now leading a retired life in the countryside, raising his son Brian with his

wife Letty Ortiz (Michelle Rodriguez).

Their old associates, Roman Pearce (Tyrese Gibson), Tej Parker (Chris Ludacris' Bridges) and Ramsey (Nathalie Emmanuel), arrive with the news that the plane of Mr Nobody (Kurt Russell), an intelligence operative, has crashed in Montequinto, Central America, after being attacked by rogue agents when he was capturing Cipher (Charlize Theron), a criminal mastermind.

Dominic, who is fondly called 'Dom', agrees to help them investigate who the rogue agent is after realising his brother Jakob (John Cena) is involved.

DIRECTOR: Justin Lin
CAST: Vin Diesel, John Cena, Michelle Rodriguez, Charlize Theron, Helen Mirren and Kurt Russell.

Searching through the debris of the crashed plane, they find a part of a device named Aries, which can hack into any computer-controlled system that includes all satellites and weapons of the world.

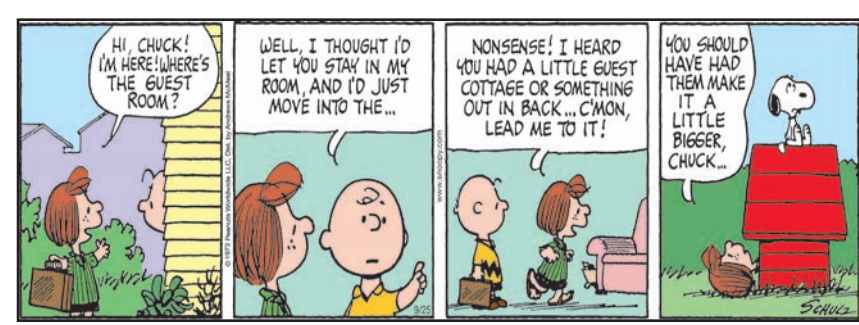
How, after travelling to Cologne, London, Tokyo and Edinburgh, the team finds the other part of the device, forms the crux of the narrative. The plot, punctuated with

emotional flashbacks of events in Dom and Jakob's lives, breaks the momentum of the mayhem-laden sequences and thus crashes the viewing experience.

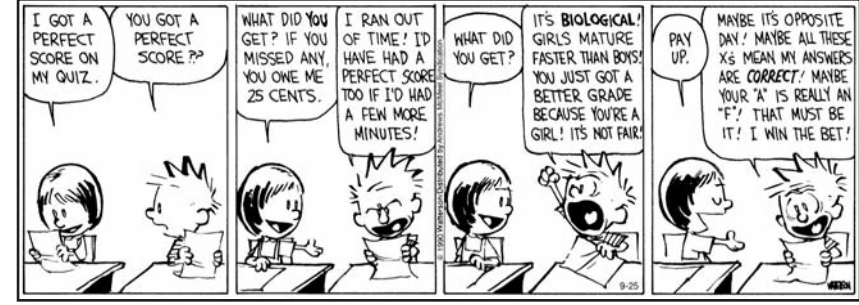
Vin Diesel and John Cena put up a balanced performance, neither outshining the other. The rest of the veteran star cast with their superb on-screen chemistry are clearly at home in their roles and they seem to be having a great time delivering their chops.

Though every frame is flamboyant and blockbuster in appearance, and is layered with surgical precision, the film fails to deliver an awe-inspiring feel.

PEANUTS



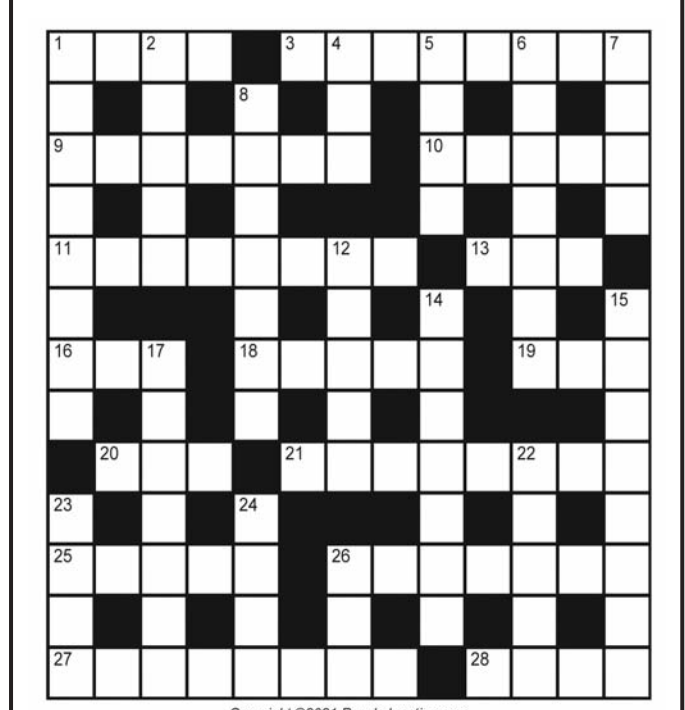
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



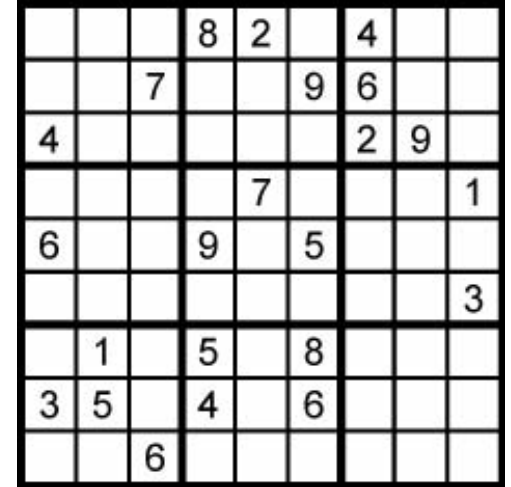
FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Duo
 - 3 Dashboard feature
 - 9 Tetanus infection
 - 10 Magician's cry
 - 11 Printer output (4,4)
 - 13 Buffoon
 - 16 Gun, as an engine
 - 18 Irregularly notched
 - 19 Historic period
 - 20 Metal in rocks
 - 21 Piston chamber
 - 25 Merger
 - 26 Brisk, in music
 - 27 Sailing vessel
 - 28 Eye affliction
 - 5 Cheer starter
 - 6 Army unit
 - 7 Picture of health? (1-3)
 - 8 Booted out
 - 12 Spring bloom
 - 14 Cyst
 - 15 Ballet move
 - 17 Shellac
 - 22 Finger or toe
 - 23 Wacko
 - 24 Menu option
 - 26 High card
- Down**
- 1 Pacific sardine
 - 2 Bring upon oneself
 - 4 Fan setting

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



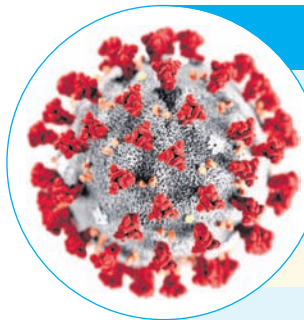
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



RAIN-SOAKED CITY

People travel amid heavy rain in the Capital city of Bhubaneswar, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

Table with columns: World, India, Odisha; and rows: INFECTED, RECOVERED, DEAD. World: 21,88,30,338 Infected, 19,56,51,489 Recovered, 45,38,484 Dead. India: 3,28,10,845 Infected, 3,19,93,644 Recovered, 4,39,020 Dead. Odisha: 10,08,469 Infected, 9,93,901 Recovered, 8,022 Dead.

D-bros' aide arrested in 7-year-old murder case



Accused Deepak Nayak in police custody

Shankar had planned to leave Cuttack once again after the recent arrest of Dhalasamanta brothers' aide Pradeep Sahu

tered a case in this regard and launched a probe. The police had arrested three persons in connection with the incident. However, Shankar managed to escape to a neighbouring state, police said. "Shankar recently returned to Cuttack after spending seven years outside Odisha. He had planned to leave the city once again after the recent arrest of Dhalasamanta brothers' aide Pradeep Sahu. On a tip-off, a special team of the Commissionerate Police nabbed Shankar from near the railway station," said a police officer.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Sept 1: The Commissionerate Police Wednesday claimed to have arrested one of the accused, an associate of Dhalasamanta brothers, in the murder of pulses trader Mohammed Farooq Tayab in Malgondwan area of the city November 12, 2014. Accused Deepak Nayak, alias Shankar, 33, of Gopal Sahi in Ranihaat area was on the run since the incident, police said. Shankar was a close associate of gangster brothers Sushant and

Sushil Dhalasamanta. Shankar along with three others had killed the pulses wholesaler at the behest of the Dhalasamanta brothers. The prime reason behind the crime was extortion, said Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi at a presser here. According to police, Shankar and three others had opened fire at Farooq when the latter was in his godown on the fateful day. A critically-injured Farooq was rushed to SCB Medical College and Hospital where he was declared 'dead on arrival'. Malgondwan police had regis-

Police seized a gun and two bullets from Shankar. They also took Shankar to Malgondwan and recreated the crime scene. "Shankar has confessed to the crime during interrogation. He was produced in a local court. The Commissionerate Police will soon take him on remand to conduct further investigation into the murder case. We suspect the involvement of several others in the crime," said the police officer.

STIR OVER FERTILISER CRUNCH



BJD workers stage a dharna in front of the Governor's House in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, seeking adequate supply of fertilisers from Centre to Odisha

LoP's live speech from City AIIMS

Bhubaneswar, Sept 1: Leader of Opposition Pradipta Naik, who has been admitted to All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar for Covid, stunned many Wednesday when he took part in the House proceedings live.

A masked up Naik with a cap on his head was speaking live sitting on a chair with medical clip on his finger monitoring his health conditions. Regular beeps from the medical equipment were heard throughout his speech he made on the maiden day of the Monsoon Session of the House. Assembly Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro, after allowing Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to speak on the obituary statements, allowed Naik to read out the obituary statements on the role and contributions of several deceased members of the House.

Centre blamed for farm distress



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Sept 1: Several legislators and workers of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) staged a demonstration near Raj Bhawan here to protest against 'inadequate supply' of fertilisers to Odisha by the BJP-led government at the Centre, a charge the saffron party denied. The ruling party in the state alleged that the Union government did not supply fertilisers, particularly urea, as per the plan prepared earlier for the ongoing Kharif season. "The Centre is responsible for the farmers' distress. Though Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had earlier informed the central government about the scarcity of fertilisers for the Kharif season, it did not address the issue," BJD vice president Debiprasad Mishra told reporters here. Farmers are facing fertiliser shortage, particularly urea, at a time when Kharif crops have been sown on 61.96 hectares of land in

the state, BJD leader Sanjay Das Burma said. A team of the ruling party leaders also submitted a memorandum to Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal. The BJD held the demonstration a day after the opposition BJP and the Congress decided to raise the farmers' issue during the state Assembly's Monsoon Session that began Wednesday. Though Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan had earlier assured the state of completing work for a fertiliser plant at Talcher within 36 months in 2018, it has not been done, another BJD leader Sulata Deo alleged. However, the BJP denied all the allegations and claimed that the ruling party created an "artificial fertiliser scarcity" in the market. The saffron party accused the BJD leaders of diverting fertilisers to businessmen and indulging in black marketing of it.

SC: Prepare timeline for vaccinating mentally-ill

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Sept 1: The Supreme Court Wednesday directed Odisha and other states to lay down a timeline for inoculating inmates lodged in mental healthcare institutions for Covid-19. A three-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices DY Chandrachud, Vikram Nath and Hima Kohli asked the state governments to lay down a time-bound schedule for vaccination of inmates as well as the healthcare staff associated with such institutions within a period of one month. The bench asked the state governments to submit status reports on vaccination of such inmates by October 15 with the Union ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The Supreme Court also directed the states to set up online dashboards within four weeks containing information about availability of mental healthcare institutions, facilities provided, occupancy and region wise distribution of halfway homes in the states. The bench said that the information is to be updated on the portal on a real time basis. The top court directed that halfway homes must be established

COVID SCOURGE



The apex court directed the states to set up online dashboards within four weeks containing information about availability of mental healthcare institutions, facilities provided, occupancy and region wise distribution of halfway homes in the states. The SC also directed that halfway homes must be established by all states as expeditiously as possible within a period of six months and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment was asked to hold meetings at least once in a month with all states keep a track of the progress of establishment of halfway homes and rehabilitation of mentally-ill persons. Significantly the order came after a petition was filed by advocate Gaurav Kumar Bansal seeking rehabilitation of mentally-ill patients and directions to the state governments to protect, safeguard and promote the rights of inmates lodged in mental healthcare institutions. The petitioner pleaded the court to ensure that persons institutionalised in Mental Health

Establishments have adequate sanitary conditions and their privacy intact. He pleaded the court to direct respondents to issue Aadhaar card and voter card to the persons institutionalised in mental health establishments and issue disability certificates as well as pension. "Direct the respondents to allow women institutionalised in Mental Health Establishments to keep their children with them by way of establishing separate 'mother child ward' in each and every Mental Health Establishment as mentioned under the Mental Healthcare Act 2017 & Section 21 (2) and 24 (3) (d) of Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016," the petition reads.

by all states as expeditiously as possible within a period of six months and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment was asked to hold meetings at least once in a month with all states keep a track of the progress of establishment of halfway homes and rehabilitation of mentally-ill persons. Significantly the order came after a petition was filed by advocate Gaurav Kumar Bansal seeking rehabilitation of mentally-ill patients and directions to the state governments to protect, safeguard and promote the rights of inmates lodged in mental healthcare institutions. The petitioner pleaded the court to ensure that persons institutionalised in Mental Health

Connectivity mars ONORC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 1: Over 18.74 lakh ration card holding families in the state are yet to be covered under the One Nation, One Ration Card (ONORC) scheme, owing to lack of internet connectivity, Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare (FS&CW) Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain said Wednesday. The minister revealed this while replying to an unstarred question (No 6) asked by BJD leader Mukesh Mahaling in the Assembly. According to Swain, out of the 92.75 lakh families covered under National Food Security Act (NFSA), 18.74 lakh are yet to be covered under the ONORC

scheme, which allows for inter- and intra-state portability, due to lack of proper internet connectivity at local fair shops. For the time being, they have been deprived of the benefit. He said that a highest of 13.97 lakh beneficiaries in Keonjhar district are yet to be covered under the scheme, followed by Kalahandi (8.50 lakh), Koraput (6.48 lakh), Rayagada (6.26 lakh) and Kandhamal (5.58 lakh). Similarly, 3.27 lakh families in Sundergarh, Nuapada (3.05 lakh), Gajapati (3.04 lakh), Nabarangpur (2.29 lakh), Bolangir (2.19 lakh), Sambalpur (2.02 lakh) and Malkangiri (1.21 lakh) who are covered under the NFSA are yet to be covered under the scheme.

4 districts get new courts



POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Sept 1: Orissa High Court Chief Justice S Muralidhar inaugurated six new courts in four districts of the state on digital mode Wednesday. The new courts were inaugurated at Telkoi in Keonjhar, Bangomunda in Bolangir, Rasagovindpur, Morada and Jashipur in Mayurbhanj, and Jharigaon in Nabarangpur. Justices Satrugana Pujahari, Krushna Ram Mohapatra, Bibhu Prasad Routray, Sanjeeb Kumar Panigrahi, Bidyut Ranjan Sarangi, Sangam Kumar Sahoo and Savitri Ratho were present on the inaugural occasion.

BLOT ON KHAKI

NHRC notice over differently-abled's rape

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 1: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Wednesday served a show cause on the state government in connection with the rape of a 19-year-old differently-abled girl by police official under Thakurmunda police limits in Mayurbhanj in June 2020. Hearing a plea filed by rights activist Himanshu Sekhar Nayak (Case-1548/18/9/2020-WC), the commission asked the state government, through the Chief Secretary, to show cause within six weeks as to why adequate amount of interim relief should not be recommended for the rape victim at a time when her human rights have been violated by a public servant. The NHRC has also asked the Director General of Police (DGP) to turn up within the same period with the report on the outcome of the



departmental action initiated against the delinquent police official in the case. The commission posted the hearing to October 21, 2021. Accused Mohammed Azaruddin Khan, who had been working as a driver at Thakurmunda police station, found the hapless girl alone at her home in the tribal-dominated district and outraged her modesty June 4, 2020, the petitioner informed

the commission quoting the police complaint. The apex rights body took cognisance of the case July 1, 2020 and sought a report from the Mayurbhanj superintendent of police (SP) within four weeks. In response, the SP informed the NHRC that a case (54) under Sections 457, 376(2) (I) and 506 of the IPC had been registered with the Thakurmunda police and the ac-

ACCUSED MOHAMMED AZARUDDIN KHAN, WHO HAD BEEN WORKING AS A DRIVER AT THAKURMUNDA POLICE STATION, FOUND THE HAPLESS GIRL ALONE AT HER HOME IN THE TRIBAL-DOMINATED DISTRICT AND OUTRAGED HER MODESTY JUNE 4, 2020

THE APEX RIGHTS BODY ASKED THE STATE GOVT, THROUGH THE CHIEF SECRETARY, TO SHOW CAUSE WITHIN SIX WEEKS AS TO WHY ADEQUATE AMOUNT OF INTERIM RELIEF SHOULD NOT BE RECOMMENDED FOR THE RAPE VICTIM

cused, who hails from Pandua under Ramchandrapur police limits in Keonjhar, was arrested June 5, 2020. Subsequently, Khan was also suspended from his service a few hours after his arrest. "Following investigation, a chargesheet has been filed vide Thakurmunda PS C.S No.101 dt.31.08.2020 u/s 457/376(2)(I)/506 IPC and the case is now sub-judice," the SP said in his response.

NHPC Limited advertisement for recruitment of various posts including Senior Medical Officer, Assistant Rajbhasha Officer, Junior Engineer (Civil), Junior Engineer (Electrical), Junior Engineer (Mechanical), and Sr. Accountant. Includes details on application dates and website.

national



The Congress vision is clear, what we have to do to revive the economy, as the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister have no idea. They should take advice from the Congress think tank, otherwise we can send experts from the Congress

RAHUL GANDHI | FORMER CONGRESS PRESIDENT

'COW SHOULD BE MADE NATIONAL ANIMAL'

The Allahabad High Court on Wednesday said Parliament should make a law declaring cow a national animal and to punish those who harm it



of the day quote

Arvind Kejriwal has deserted Delhi yet again, and left the people at the mercy of God to go for a 10-day Vipassana meditation in Jaipur



ANIL KUMAR | DELHI PCC PRESIDENT

In the case of Noida's Supertech Emerald court case, the orders of the Supreme Court should be ensured in letter and spirit. Irregularities in this case have been going on continuously since 2004



YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

Nutrition has two main components -- affordable and readily available for holistic well-being. This is where Ayurveda can prove to be very beneficial



SMRITI IRANI | UNION MINISTER

COVID-19 SURGE

'Kerala needs strict lockdown'

Kerala has not been following the Centre's advice while reporting the highest daily cases in the country, officials insisted, adding that neighbouring states are feeling the impact



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 1: With over 85 per cent Covid patients in Kerala isolated at home, the state needs to step up measures to curb the daily surge, Union Health Ministry sources said today, stressing on a "smart and strategic lockdown". Kerala has not been following the Centre's advice while reporting the highest daily cases in the country, officials insisted, adding that neighbouring states are feeling the impact.

Highlighting the importance of micro-containment zones, government sources said Kerala needs to follow curbs, not just at the district level, and penetrate deeper to focus on affected neighbourhoods. Patients recovering at home are not following all safety rules and this is why Kerala is not able to contain the spread of the virus, they added. Officials said the coastal state, which is a popular holiday destination, urgently needs to apply stricter measures in containment zones and restrict movement.

Kerala's weekly positivity rate remains at 14-19 per cent and it is bound to spill over to its neighbours, officials stressed.

No cases of new C.1.2 yet: Health Ministry

Amidst the threat of new Covid variant C.1.2, which has been detected in South Africa and many other countries globally, the Union health ministry Wednesday clarified that no case of this variant has been detected in India so far. A new study has revealed that the new Covid-19 variant C.1.2 could be more transmissible and evade protection provided by vaccines.

Karnataka has already announced seven-day mandatory institutional quarantine for those arriving from Kerala.

The southern state - that earlier drew applause for its handling of the pandemic - recorded over 30,000 fresh cases in the last 24 hours, while India's tally was 41,965. The state has been reporting more than 10,000 new cases every day for more than a month even as other states witnessed a drop in daily surge.

Kerala has logged over 40 lakh cases since the start of the pandemic, and over 20,000 deaths linked to the virus.

2 Bengal ministers, 3 others summoned in Narada sting case

AGENCIES

Kolkata, Sept 1: A special court Wednesday ordered issuance of summonses to West Bengal ministers Subrata Mukherjee and Firhad Hakim besides three others after taking cognizance of a chargesheet by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in the Narada sting tapes case.

The ED, which is probing the money laundering aspect of the Narada sting operation, had submitted the chargesheet against the five in the special court earlier in the day, sources in it said.

The special CBI judge taking cognizance of the prosecution complaint of the ED, which is equivalent to chargesheet, ordered the appearance of the accused November 16.

Apart from the two ministers and Trinamool Congress MLA Madan Mitra, cognizance was also taken against former Kolkata mayor Sovan Chatterjee and suspended IPS officer SMH Mirza.

The court directed that the summonses to Mukherjee, Hakim and Mitra be served through the office of the West Bengal assembly speaker since the three are MLAs. Summonses to the other two are to be served directly at their addresses, the court directed.

Sources in the central agency said, "The ED has prayed for awarding maximum punishment to the accused for committing the offence of money laundering and confiscation of the bribe money accepted by the accused".

The Narada sting operation was conducted by Narada news founder Mathew Samuel for over two years in West Bengal.

Samuel had formed a fictitious company and approached several TMC ministers, MPs and leaders for favours.

In the video footage released in 2014 just before the Lok Sabha polls several TMC leaders were allegedly seen accepting money from a person posing as a businessman.

The man was purportedly offering the money to get favours for starting a business in the state.

Mathew Samuels, CEO of the Narada news portal, posed as the businessman in the purported video.

EVMs, VVPATs stuck, need them for upcoming polls, EC tells SC



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 1: The Election Commission Wednesday urged the Supreme Court to grant urgent hearing on its plea alleging EVMs and VVPAT machines used in polls of six states are currently stuck and cannot be used for future elections.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, representing the poll panel, submitted a large number of EVMs and VVPAT machines are still being preserved and need to be released.

Submitting that they are preserved due to an order extending

the limitation period for filing pleas, which includes election petitions, the poll body sought that a timeline be fixed for filing election petitions in connection with polls held in Assam, Kerala, Delhi, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. "We have to maintain these EVMs and VVPAT machines and hearing is necessary as elections in states like Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Punjab are coming up," Singh said.

At this, a bench headed by Chief Justice N.V. Ramana and comprising Justices Surya Kant and A.S.

Bopanna, said: "Alright, we will fix it next week." The top court on April 27, taking into account the onset of second Covid wave, had relaxed the statutory period for filing petitions, including the election petitions, under the Representation of the People Act, 1951. "As a result of the aforementioned statutory provisions/rules, the relevant instructions issued by the Election Commission of India and the Order dated April 27, 2021 passed by this Hon'ble Court, the Election Commission of India is unable to use a substantial number of EVMs," said the EC's plea. The plea further added that it is a cause for concern as the poll body is scheduled to conduct Assembly elections in states like Goa, Manipur, Uttarakhand, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh next year. "All the EVMs and VVPATs belonging to the Election Commission of India that were used in recently held Assembly Elections are blocked and cannot be used in future/upcoming elections," it said.

SHORT TAKES

Hurriyat leader Geelani dies

Srinagar: Pro-Pakistan separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani died here Wednesday after a prolonged illness, officials said. Geelani, who was a member of banned Jamaat-e-Islami and chairman of hardline Hurriyat Conference, had been suffering from various ailments for nearly last two decades. He was a former MLA. Former J&K chief minister Mehbooba Mufti informed about his death on Twitter.

Panneerselvam's wife passes away

Chennai: AIADMK coordinator and former Chief Minister O Panneerselvam's wife Vijayalakshmi died here Wednesday at a hospital following a brief illness. Leaders cutting across party lines including DMK president and Chief Minister M K Stalin visited the hospital and offered their condolences to Panneerselvam. She was 66 and died of heart attack at a private hospital, where she was admitted for treatment days ago, party sources said. V K Sasikala, aide of late Chief Minister J Jayalithaa and who was eased out of the AIADMK years ago visited Panneerselvam in the hospital and extended her condolences.

Vietnam PM to visit India

New Delhi: Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh will visit India at the end of 2021 to discuss with PM Narendra Modi measures to advance bilateral comprehensive and strategic partnership, the country's ambassador, Pham Sanh Chau, said here Wednesday. This will be his first visit to India since taking charge in April this year. During a telephonic conversation in July, Prime Minister Modi had congratulated Chinh on his appointment as the premier of Vietnam and invited him to undertake an official visit to India at an early suitable date.

Rawat apologises

Chandigarh: AICC general secretary Harish Rawat on Wednesday apologised for referring to the party's Punjab leadership as "Panj Pyare" and will atone for his remark by sweeping the floor at a gurdwara. Rawat, who had arrived in Chandigarh Tuesday amid the ongoing rift in the party's state unit, had used the word 'Panj Pyare' for the Punjab Congress chief and four working presidents after a meeting at the Punjab Congress Bhawan.



Workers transport a Lord Ganesha idol to a pandal ahead of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Bangalore

PTI PHOTO

Students in several states get back to school

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 1: With trepidation and some excitement too, thousands of students returned to their classrooms to face a new Covid reality of masks and socially distanced camaraderie as schools in several states reopened Wednesday.

Fifty per cent attendance, no shared tiffin or even stationery, staggered lunch hours and parental consent were some of the dos and don'ts for schools in several parts of the country, including Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, that opened their doors amid concerns that students had not been vaccinated and neither had all the staff.

While some schools opened for the first time since the pandemic

last year, others restarted physical classrooms after the devastating second Covid wave. Now, with many states reporting a dip in numbers, it seemed time to get back on the school track, albeit in a hybrid online-offline format that would enable at least half the children to continue classes from home.

The return to a semblance of normalcy in the national capital began on a rain-drenched note with students of Classes 9-12 trooping into classes, 'rain-coated', carrying umbrellas and all masked up.

A school in Uttar Pradesh, where students of Classes 1-5 returned for the first since the lockdown in March last year, used balloons to say welcome back. In Tamil Nadu, offline teaching for Classes 9 to 12 resumed with strict COVID-19 pro-



Students sanitise their hands as they enter a school in Tamil Nadu

PTI PHOTO

toocol in place. Physical classes in colleges also began.

In March this year, during the second wave, the government or-

dered the closure of schools for classes 9, 10 and 11 from March 22. However, it announced that they would continue to function for

Above normal rain in Sept: IMD



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 1: The country received 24 per cent less rainfall than normal in August, belying the IMD's predictions for the month, but rainfall is expected to be above normal in September.

Above normal rainfall to normal rainfall is likely over many parts of central India in September, India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General Mrutunjay Mohapatra said on Wednesday. The monsoon deficit now stands

at nine per cent and this is expected to come down due to good rainfall during September, he said. July too had recorded seven per cent less rainfall.

The country received 24 per cent less rainfall than normal in August, but rainfall is expected to be above normal in September, the IMD said in its forecast for the month. Mohapatra also said that normal to below rainfall is expected over north and northeast India and southern parts of south India.

Class 12 students who had to appear for board exams. In Rajasthan, too, government and private schools reopened for Classes 9 to 12 after the second wave. The turnout on the first day was low as online classes are also being held simultaneously.

With cases falling significantly in Madhya Pradesh, physical school for Classes 6 to 12 started with a 50 per cent cap on attendance. The state government had earlier reopened schools for Classes 9 to 12 in the last week of July with classes on specific days a week.

In Telangana, schools, barring residential government institutions, as well as colleges resumed offline classes with COVID-19 protocols in place.

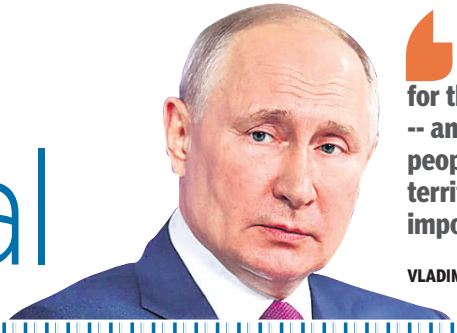
The resumption of Classes 1 to 12 followed a high court order

Tuesday, granting schools permission to do so while staying government residential schools from holding offline classes for four weeks.

In Chhattisgarh, the return to school process will take place a day later. The state government on Wednesday issued an order permitting private and government schools to reopen for Classes 6, 7, 9 and 11 with 50 per cent attendance from Thursday, an official said. Schools resumed for Classes 1 to 5, 8, 10 and 12 from August 1.

According to the order, schools in rural areas will have to get recommendations from gram panchayats and parents' committees, while recommendations will be mandatory from ward corporators and parents' committees for institutions situated in urban areas.

international



The result is only tragedies, only losses for those that did it -- for the US -- and even more so for the people who live on Afghan territory. It is impossible to impose anything from outside

VLADIMIR PUTIN | PRESIDENT, RUSSIA

TWIN ELEPHANTS BORN IN SL

An elephant in Sri Lanka gave birth to twins Tuesday for the first time in nearly 80 years, wildlife authorities said. The twins, both males, were born to 25-year-old Surangi at Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage in the central hills of the country, an orphanage spokesperson said



of the day quote

Israel believes the Biden administration's plan to reopen the US consulate in Jerusalem to provide diplomatic outreach to the Palestinians is a bad idea

YAIR LAPID | FOREIGN MINISTER, ISRAEL

We have thrown everything at this, but it is now clear to us that we are not going to drive these numbers down, they are instead going to increase

DANIEL ANDREWS | PREMIER, VICTORIA

India and US can collaborate in fight against terrorism in many ways, including through intelligence gathering and sharing, and also assisting each other with augmenting capabilities to act against terrorists and thwart their plots

RAJA KRISHNAMOORTHY | CONGRESSMAN, US

SHORT TAKES

Google extends WFH till next yr

San Francisco: Google Tuesday extended the option for its employees to work from home into next year due to the pandemic. Returning to Google campuses will remain voluntary globally through January 10, with local offices given the discretion to decide when to require employees to return to their desks, according to chief executive Sundar Pichai. He promised Google workers 30 days' notice before they would have to return to their offices, and announced they would be able to take off an extra day in October and December as "reset days" to "rest and recharge."

Texas abortion ban takes effect

Texas: A Texas law banning most abortions in the state took effect at midnight, but the Supreme Court has yet to act on an emergency appeal to put the law on hold. If allowed to remain in force, the law would be the most dramatic restriction on abortion rights in the United States since the high court's landmark Roe v Wade decision legalized abortion across the country in 1973. The Texas law, signed by Republican Gov Greg Abbott in May, would prohibit abortions once a fetal heartbeat can be detected, usually around six weeks and before most women even know they're pregnant.

S'pore PM wins defamation suits

Singapore: Singapore's high court ordered two news bloggers to pay Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong a combined \$5370,000 (\$275,113) in damages Wednesday, over an article about the status of the home of his late father and the city-state's modern-day founder, Lee Kuan Yew. The premier filed lawsuits against writer Rubaashini Shunmuganathan and editor Xu Yuan Chen, also known as Terry Xu, over the August 2019 article published on The Online Citizen that included references to a disagreement within the Lee family about what to do with the property. High court judge Audrey Lim said the article "impugned Lee's reputation and character" by alleging he was dishonest.

Bus falls off cliff in Peru; 32 killed

Lima: Thirty-two passengers died, including two children, and more than 20 were injured when a bus plummeted from a cliff in Peru early Tuesday, officials said, in the country's third multiple-victim transport accident in four days. The accident happened on a narrow stretch of the Carretera Central road some 37 miles (60 kilometers) east of the capital Lima.

New era for Afghan marred by crises

Taliban officials have said the problems will ease once a new government is in place to restore order to the market and have appealed to other countries to maintain economic relations

AGENCIES

Kabul, Sept 1: As Kabul began a new era of Taliban rule, long queues outside banks and soaring prices in the bazaars underlined the everyday worries now facing its population after the spectacular seizure of the city two weeks ago.

For the Taliban, growing economic hardship is emerging as their biggest challenge, with a sinking currency and rising inflation adding misery to a country where more than a third of the population lives on less than \$2 a day.

In an effort to get the economy moving again, banks which closed as soon as the Taliban took Kabul have been ordered to re-open. But strict weekly limits on cash withdrawals have been imposed and many people still faced hours of queuing to get at their cash.

In a cash-based economy heavily dependent on imports for food and basic necessities and now deprived of billions of dollars in foreign aid, pressure on the currency has been relentless.

In the Pakistani city of Peshawar, close to the border, many money traders are refusing to handle the Afghan currency, which has become too volatile to value properly.

Kabul market traders said a 50 kg bag of flour was selling for 2,200 afghanis, around 30% above its price before the fall of the city, with similar rises for other essentials like cooking oil or rice. Prices for vegetables were up to 50% higher, while petrol prices were up by 75%.

Even when its economy was floating on a tide of foreign money, growth was not keeping pace with the rise in Afghanistan's population.

Apart from illegal narcotics, the



country has no significant exports to generate revenue, and aid, which

accounted for more than 40% of economic output, has abruptly dis-

Afghan economy in crisis after Taliban's sudden takeover. Much international aid has abruptly stopped. Many financial officials have fled, complicating any recovery. Afghan currency has weakened, prices for staples are soaring

appeared. A new central bank chief has been appointed but bankers outside Afghanistan said it would be difficult to get the financial system running again without the specialists who joined the exodus out of Kabul.

Taliban to follow Iran model of governance

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

KABUL: The Taliban have said that Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada will be the leader under whom a Prime Minister or President will run the country, as per a report by Tolo News.

Anamullah Samangani, a member of the Taliban's cultural commission, said that Akhundzada will also be the leader of the new government, Tolo News reported.

According to sources, the insurgents are designing a government based on Iran's model - an Islamic republic where the Supreme Leader is the head of state and the highest-ranking political and religious authority even above the President.

Consultations are almost fi-



nished on the new government, and the necessary discussions have also been held about the cabinet. The Islamic government that we will announce will be a model for the people. There is no doubt about the presence of the Commander of the Faithful (Akhundzada) in the government. He will be the leader of the gov-

TAIWAN SAYS CHINA CAN PARALYSE ITS DEFENCES



AGENCIES

Taipei, Sept 1: China's armed forces can "paralyse" Taiwan's defences and are able to fully monitor its deployments, the island's defence ministry said, offering a stark assessment of the rising threat posed by its giant neighbour.

In its annual report to parliament on China's military, Taiwan's Defence Ministry presented a far graver view than it did last year, when the report said China still

lacked the capability to launch a full assault on Taiwan.

This year's report said that China can launch what it termed "soft and hard electronic attacks", including blocking communications across the western part of the first island chain, the string of islands that run from the Japanese archipelago, through Taiwan and down to the Philippines.

China has also improved its reconnaissance abilities using Beidou, China's answer to the US-owned

GPS navigation system, the ministry added.

This means Beijing can monitor movements around Taiwan, helped by China's regular use of its own spy planes, drones and intelligence gathering ships, it said.

Although Taiwan's report noted, like last year, that China still lacked transport abilities and logistical support for a large-scale invasion, the Chinese military is working to boost those abilities.

Chinese spies in Taiwan could launch a "decapitation strike" to destroy political and economic infrastructure, it added.

With the deployment of mid- and long-range missiles and more exercises involving its aircraft carriers, China is trying to position itself to delay "foreign military intervention" in an attack on Taiwan, the ministry said.

President Tsai Ing-wen has made bolstering Taiwan's own defences a priority, building up its domestic defence industry and buying more equipment from the United States, the island's most important arms supplier and international backer.

STIR AGAINST GOVT



Anti-government protesters escape from a police water cannon with purple dye and tear gas during a protest against the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic in Din Daeng district of Bangkok, Thailand

H-1B VISA HOLDERS US lawmakers seek permanent residence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, Sept 1: A group of 40 US lawmakers led by Indian-American Raja Krishnamoorthi has sought a path to lawful permanent residence for the 1.2 million people in the employment-based green card backlog, a significant majority of whom are from India.

In a letter to Speaker of House Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority

Leader Chuck Schumer, the lawmakers said the budget reconciliation package provide relief to these individuals stuck in the employment-based green card backlog.

"Failure to provide a path to lawful permanent residence for the 1.2 million people in the employment-based green card backlog, most of whom are H-1B visa holders, would be tantamount to staging an economic recovery with

one hand tied behind our back," the letter said.

"Permanently relegating H-1B holders to non-immigrant status while China, Russia, and other major powers are ascendant on the world stage - and hungry to be home to the innovators of the 21st century - is simply nonsensical. This can and must be addressed in the budget reconciliation package currently under negotiation," it read.

UK regulator clears Piers Morgan over comments on Meghan

IN THE PROGRAMME MORGAN SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE A WORD MEGHAN AND HER HUSBAND PRINCE HARRY GAVE TO OPRAH WINFREY

AGENCIES

London, Sept 1: High-profile television personality Piers Morgan did not breach Britain's broadcasting code in his criticism of Meghan, Duchess of Sussex on ITV's "Good Morning Britain" show earlier this year, Britain's media regulator ruled Wednesday.

The programme in March, in which Morgan said he did not believe a word Meghan had said in a landmark interview she and her husband Prince Harry gave to Oprah Winfrey, attracted more than 50,000 complaints. Most concerned comments Morgan made on mental health and suicide.

Morgan, who during the Winfrey interview revealed she had felt suicidal while living as a royal in Britain, complained to both Ofcom



and ITV about the programme. Morgan left his job on the show following the incident.



"Our decision is that overall the programme contained sufficient challenge to provide adequate pro-

tection and context to its viewers," Ofcom said. In an interview that shook

Britain's monarchy, Meghan, a Hollywood actor who married Prince Harry in 2018, said the royal family had also rejected her pleas for mental health support. The couple have stepped back from royal duties and moved to the United States.

Morgan, a former presenter on CNN, has accused the couple of damaging the royal family and seeking publicity on their own terms without accepting the responsibility and scrutiny that come with their position. He had also dubbed her "Princess Pinocchio" in a tweet.

"I'm delighted OFCOM has endorsed my right to disbelieve the Duke & Duchess of Sussex's incendiary claims to Oprah Winfrey, many of which have proven to be untrue," Morgan said on Twitter.

"This is a resounding victory for free speech and a resounding defeat for Princess Pinocchio. Do I get my job back?"

Ofcom said that while it was concerned about Morgan's apparent disregard for the seriousness of anyone expressing suicidal thought, the extensive challenge offered by his colleagues throughout the show provided sufficient context. The broadcasting code allows for individuals to express strongly held and robustly argued views, including those that are potentially harmful or highly offensive, Ofcom said.

"The restriction of such views would, in our view, be an unwarranted and chilling restriction on freedom of expression both of the broadcaster and the audience," it said.

