



## EMPOWERING WOMEN

Actor Richa Chadha wants to have an all-female crew for her maiden production venture *Girls Will Be Girls*

LEISURE P2



## VAX CHAMP HP

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed the Himachal government for vaccinating 100% of its eligible population

TWO STATES P8



## INDIA BEAT ENGLAND

India take a 2-1 lead in the 5-match series beating England in the fourth Test by 157 runs at the Oval

SPORTS P12



## Another farmer dies due to crop loss

**Bolangir:** Yet another farmer committed suicide by consuming poison over alleged crop loss due to drought like condition at Bhalujuri village under Patnagarh block in this district. The deceased was identified as Yudhistir Bhoi, 40, in the village. He was a share-cropper and grew paddy and cotton on 6.5 acres of land on lease. He was pushed into distress after his crops wilted due to lack of rainfall. The incident comes four days after the suicide of a farmer under Turekela police limits in the district.



## Ex-UP Guv Qureshi booked for sedition

**Lucknow:** Former Uttar Pradesh Governor Aziz Qureshi has been booked for sedition over his alleged derogatory remarks against the Yogi Adityanath government in the state, police said Monday. The FIR was lodged following a complaint by BJP leader Akash Kumar Saxena at the Civil Lines Police Station in Rampur district Sunday. In his complaint, Saxena alleged that after visiting Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan's house and meeting his wife Tazeen Fatma, Qureshi made derogatory statements against the Yogi Adityanath government.

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**IRREGULAR by MANJUL**

Protesters are not farmers. They don't resemble farmers. Look carefully, they look just like us!



Passengers, flouting Covid-appropriate behaviour, travel in an overcrowded train amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic in Patna, Monday

# Dry spell affects farming in 20 dists

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** The state government Monday said farming in the ongoing kharif season was hit in 102 blocks spread over 20 districts due to deficient rainfall. The opposition BJP and the Congress demanded that the government declare the entire state as drought-hit and provide immediate assistance to the affected cultivators. The issue was debated in the State Assembly here after the government Chief Whip Pramila Mallick moved a motion on the prevailing dry spell. Both the opposition parties were demanding a threadbare discussion on the dry spell which is gradually taking the shape of an acute drought. Participating in the debate, BJP chief Whip Mohan Majhi said the state's BJD dispensation has completely failed to address the drought-like situation even as the party is ruling Odisha for over two decades. "The government has no

long term action plan to overcome the dry spell situation even as drought hit the state frequently. The BJD government also failed to keep its promises and provide 35 per cent irrigation facilities to agricultural land in each district," Majhi said. Congress member Adhiraj Panigrahi said the farmers should be provided with input subsidy of Rs 20,000 by the Centre and an equal amount by the state government. Farmers have been hit by the drought-like situation and the government has failed to meet the requirement of the cultivators during this crisis period, he said. However, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Sudam Marandi rejected the allegation levelled by the opposition, claiming that the state government was very sensitive towards the situation faced by the farmers. The District Collectors have been asked to monitor the situation and inform the government about the changing dry spell situation, he said.

## SC refuses to defer NEET-UG exam

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court Monday refused to defer the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-UG examination, scheduled for September 12, saying it does not want to interfere with the process and it will be "very unfair" to reschedule it. A bench headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar said if students want to appear in multiple exams, then they need to prioritise and make a choice as there may never be a situation where everyone is satisfied with the date of exams. The petitioners, however, can make a representation before the competent authorities on the issue.

# Centre has no respect for our judgments: SC

The apex court takes strong exception to the enactment of the Tribunals Reforms Act that reduces the tenures of chairmen and members of various tribunals

AGENCIES



and NCLAT. "You are emasculating the tribunals by not making the appointments," said the bench, also comprising Justices DY Chandrachud and L Nageswara Rao. The court took note of the submissions of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, and adjourned the hearing on a batch of pleas pertaining to the vacancies at the tribunals and a new law related to them for further hearing on September 13 saying, "We hope the appointments will be made by then".

"It is clear that you do not want to respect the judgments of this court. Now, we have the option to stay the Tribunal Reforms Act or close down the tribunals or we ourselves appoint the people or the next option is to initiate the contempt of courts proceedings..." the bench said. "We do not want confrontation with the government and we are happy with the way the nine Supreme Court judges were appointed. The entire legal fraternity appreciated this... These tribunals are collapsing with no members or chairperson. Tell us about your alternative plans," it observed. Mehta said the government does not want any confrontation either and sought time on the grounds that Attorney General KK Venugopal, who has been assisting the bench in these matters, has been facing some personal difficulties. The top court also issued notices on several fresh pleas including the one filed by Congress leader Jairam Ramesh challenging the Constitutional validity of various provisions of the Tribunal Reforms Act, 2021.

# STATE WITNESSES SURGE IN CRIMES

1,34,230 crimes were registered across Odisha in 2020 compared to 1,21,525 cases in 2019 which works out to a rise of 10.45 per cent

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** Despite lockdown imposed in view of Covid-19 infection, Odisha witnessed an increase of 12,705 crime cases in 2020 as compared to 2019, said Home Minister in State Assembly Monday. In a written reply before the Assembly, Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra said 1,34,230 criminal cases have been registered in various police stations across Odisha during 2020 as compared to 1,21,525 cases in 2019. It means the crime cases have increased by 10.45 per cent in the state during 2020. As per Mishra's reply, the highest cases at 7,858 were registered in Ganjam district while 1,235 cases in the Deogarh district during 2020. The Odisha Crime Branch has registered 149 cases in 2020 whereas 474 and 255 cases were registered by railway Cuttack and railway Rourkela police wings in the same year, respectively. Similarly, 13,297

cases were registered by the Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Police Commissionerate in 2020, which is a jump of 272 cases in comparison to the cases lodged in 2019. As many as 7,024 cases were filed in Angul district, 6591 in Jajpur, 6216 in Sambalpur, 6154 in Puri, 5848 in Mayurbhanj, 5578 in Balasore and 5401 in Bolangir. All other remaining police districts have recorded below 5,000 cases during 2020, as per the statement of the home minister. Mishra further said 11,456 posts are lying vacant in the police department, of which 3 are IG posts, 13 DIG, 15 SP and 16 Additional SP posts. Similarly, 248 inspectors, 1327 sub-inspectors, 693 ASIs, 449 havildars, 3489 constables and 2115 sepoy posts remain vacant in the state, the minister added. MLAs across party lines have raised questions related to setting up of new police stations, outposts and police beat houses in their respective areas. Congress leader Narasingha Mishra said 60 MLAs had proposed the state government to set up 68 new police stations, 103 police outposts and upgrade three police stations. Although, the Speaker had given a ruling on this, the BJD government is yet to take any steps, he added.

# Infections among children in state up to over 20 pc



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** The daily coronavirus infection rate among children and adolescents reached the all-time high of 20 per cent in Odisha Monday as 122 of 609 fresh patients are below 18 years of age, a health department official said. The single-day positivity ratio among people below 18 years of age was at 16.27 per cent on Sunday and 17.32 per cent Saturday, he said. "The daily Covid infection rate among children and adolescents rose to 20.3 per cent, which is a matter of concern as they have not been inoculated," the official said. However, the daily positivity ratio was at 0.93 per cent as the new cases were detected from 65,268 sample tests, he said. The fresh infections raised the COVID-19 tally in the coastal state to 10,12,167. Of the new cases, 354 were reported from quarantine centres and 255 detected during contact tracing, he said. Khurda district, which comprises the state capital Bhubaneswar, registered the highest number of fresh cases at 188, followed by Cuttack (113). Boudh, Kalahandi, Kandhamal and Nuapada did not report any new case in the last 24 hours. The death toll rose to 8,055 as eight more people succumbed to the infection, the official said. Of the fresh fatalities, three were reported from Khurda district, two each from Puri and Ganjam and one from Balasore, he said. Fifty-three other Covid patients have died due to comorbidities. Odisha now has 6,996 active cases, and 763 people were cured of the disease on Sunday, taking the total number of recoveries to 9,97,063. The state has so far conducted over 1.84 crore sample tests for Covid-19, and the overall positivity rate now stands at 5.47 per cent.

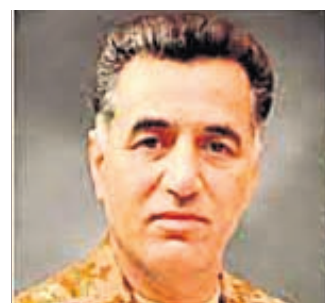
# Taliban confirm meet between ISI chief, Baradar

The Taliban Monday confirmed that Pakistan's powerful intelligence chief Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed has met its de-facto leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, amidst efforts by the insurgent group to finalise a govt in Afghanistan

AGENCIES

**Islamabad, Sept 6:** The Taliban Monday confirmed that Pakistan's powerful intelligence chief Lt Gen Faiz Hameed has met its de-facto

leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar amidst efforts by the insurgent group to finalise a government in Afghanistan. Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Director General Lt Gen Hameed dashed to Kabul on an unannounced visit last week, becoming the only high-ranking foreign official to visit Kabul since the Taliban seized the Afghan capital in mid-August. During a press conference in Kabul on Monday, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed that the ISI chief had met with Mullah Baradar during his visit to Kabul, BBC Urdu reported. The Taliban has assured Islamabad that Afghan territory will not be



used against Pakistan, it said. Earlier, Pakistani media reported that a delegation of senior officials led by Lt Gen Hameed was in Kabul at the invitation of the Taliban, but the insurgent group said that Islamabad had proposed



his visit to Kabul. On Sunday, the Taliban said that the top Pakistani spy was in Afghanistan to improve bilateral relations between Kabul and Islamabad. Ahmadullah Wasiq, deputy head of the Taliban's Cultural

Commission, said that the Taliban leaders talked with Lt Gen Hameed about bilateral relations and the problems of Afghan passengers at the border areas, especially in Torkham and Spin Boldak. They wanted (his visit to Kabul) and we accepted," Wasiq was quoted as saying by TOLO news. Pakistan Thursday temporarily closed the Chaman border crossing - the second-largest commercial border point with Afghanistan after the Torkham commercial town in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa -

due to security threats. At the press conference, Mujahid noted that the recent delegation to Kabul said the crossings had been closed due to security concerns linked to release of prisoners inside Afghanistan, and requested checks for those seeking to enter or leave the country. Citing sources close to Hizbe-Islami party leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the channel said Pakistan's intelligence chief also met him and discussed the current situation in the country. In a short video clip circulated in the media last week, Lt Gen Hameed was seen trying to respond to questions by journalists.

# leisure



## BLACK OAK ARKANSAS GUITARIST RICKIE LEE REYNOLDS DIES AT 72

Rickie Lee Reynolds, the guitarist for rock band *Black Oak Arkansas*, has died at 72. Reynolds' daughter, Amber Lee, confirmed the news of his death on Facebook, as did current *Black Oak Arkansas* member Sammy Seauphine Sunday.

## PENELOPE CRUZ TACKLES STRESS WITH MEDITATION

Oscar winning actress Penelope Cruz uses transcendental meditation to minimise stress and face life struggles. The Spanish star first experimented with meditation when she was a teenager but she started taking it seriously to decompress from her film sets and to ease any worries she may have, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
If you have children, it's likely you'll spoil them today. After all, it's for days like these that you work hard, says Ganesh. You will also complete pending assignments and it's a productive day for those in medical professions and public services.

**TAURUS**  
You may feel frustrated and stranded in family matters today, says Ganesh. Shower your warmth and care to make up for past mistakes. Your spouse will be supportive and lend you a helping hand to regain your mental composure. Reciprocate with intimacy and go with the flow, suggests Ganesh.

**GEMINI**  
Today, a strong emotional link with someone special may get established, predicts Ganesh. So you will remain delighted and elated for most part of the day. Still, some petty problems may spoil your happy mood later in the day. Diffuse tension with a light-hearted approach.

**CANCER**  
Today, you will realise that in this materialistic world, everything is judged by its appearance, and what is unseen counts for nothing. You will work hard to be seen and will crave for attention. Though Ganesh strongly suggests that this will only bring you grief as the most beautiful of flowers shrivel and your appearance will not help you beyond a point, you are not likely to follow his advice. However, there is not denying that outward appearance does have its advantages.

**LEO**  
Though God is benevolent, it is but necessary that we reciprocate the magnanimity of the Almighty through our actions. So wake up today with a little prayer on your lips. Make it a point to visit a temple for some peace of mind. The other alternative is to do a small puja at home. Connect with your spiritual side through meditation and find peace with yourself, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
If curiosity killed the cat, it is going to inspire you to go to exotic places and meet new people, says Ganesh. Enriching experiences enter enthusiastically today. But hold on, don't unpack, as you may set off on yet another adventure. Ganesh sees you being crack ductile and malleable.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says today you may be able to undertake travel for business or pleasure purposes. It may be a busy day for you work wise and you may not be able to completely focus on your family or family issues. Try your luck in the stock market today, as it may prove beneficial to you. If there are certain issues or problems they will be sorted out today because of your varied skills and past experiences. Ganesh wishes you a day full of happiness and joy today.

**SCORPIO**  
You've been keeping things within for too long now, and today may just be the day when you vent it all out, says Ganesh. This overwhelming pressure may have an effect on your health. Ganesh counsels you to spend quality time with your loved ones to ease up a bit.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Skilled at multi-tasking as you are, today you may just take things one by one. Instincts will rule the roost for most of the time. And govern your actions too. But as peculiar as the day may be, you shall find yourself back to being your own assured self.

**CAPRICORN**  
If trouble happens to knock at your door today, your guardian angel will come to your rescue, foresees Ganesh. Unlike many others who waste life running after impossible goals, you will be content with your achievements. But that does not, by any means, imply that you aren't ambitious. Just like yourself, your ambitions will be simple in nature, to the extent that it may elicit awe among people.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will seek spirituality as you feel thoroughly dejected by your present situation. Ganesh says that even struggling courageously with circumstances requires a spiritual endeavour. These trying times give you the patience to deal intelligently with challenges and setbacks.

**PISCES**  
Your spiritual and religious streak comes to the fore. You will likely visit a place of worship to soothe your troubled soul. Meditative techniques may also be resorted to in your quest for peace and calm, says Ganesh.

## Kim makes relationship with Leander official

**MUMBAI:** Kim Sharma and tennis ace Leander Paes are officially dating, according to a social media post shared by the actress.

The rumours about Kim and Paes' relationship have been doing the rounds for a long time and the actress put an end to the speculations by confirming her relationship status with a picture she shared on Instagram.

In the image, Kim and Paes are seen posing. The tennis player is lovingly looking at her while the *Mohabbatein* actress is smiling at the camera.

For the caption, the 41-year-old actress dropped an evil eye and girl heart boy emoji. Kim was earlier in a relationship with actor Harshvardhan Rane, Paes was previously married to model Rhea Pillai.



## Anita, Rupak's brilliance keeps audience engaged



Odissi vocalist Guru Rupak Parida presents a traditional song

**BHUBANESWAR:** Famous Bharatanatyam dancer Anita Mallick from Kolkata and Odissi vocalist Guru Rupak Parida spellbound the virtual audience on the second evening of the 27th OMC Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Award Festival. The event was streamed live on *Srjan's* Facebook

page and YouTube channel at 7.30 pm, Monday.

Ranjan Kumar Das, Director-cum-Additional Secretary, Dept. of Odia Literature Language and Culture, Govt. of Odisha, was the chief guest of the evening.

Mallick, also a choreographer and founder of Saraswat Sanskriti Kendra commenced her recital with *Ambika Pallavi*, from the *Lalitha Sahasranamam*, in praise of the omnipotent Devi Ambika. This was followed by *Krishna Anubhavam*, in *Raga Malika*, and *Adi Talam*, presenting a reflection of Lord Krishna's ma-

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An artistic display by Bharatanatyam dancer Anita Mallick from Kolkata

## Richa wants all-female crew for her venture

**MUMBAI:** Actress Richa Chadha aspires to have an all-female crew with her maiden production venture *Girls Will Be Girls*, where women can showcase the best of their abilities in front of and behind the camera.

Richa said: "It's always refreshing that a story centred around a feminist story is told by the voices of women. It's always exciting and we have seen so many such examples in films and it's always refreshing when these stories are told by a female voice."

*Girls Will Be Girls*, directed by Shuchi Talati, will be produced through the banner Pushing Button Studios, Crawling Angel Films, Dolce Vita Films, France.

Set in a Himalayan boarding school in a hill station in northern India, the plot of the film revolves around the com-

ing of age of a 16-year-old girl and her relationship with her mother.

Richa added: "Ours is an effort in that direction. It has become increasingly important today to acknowledge women's representation in the business of films, and I feel great over the years to have known some amazing talent across filmmaking departments and am looking forward to working with many more through the course of this film."



## Jagadish, Jayant to be conferred with Ila-Banshidhar Panda Kala Samman

**BHUBANESWAR:** Senior artist Jagadish Chandra Kanungo and renowned Ghumura artist Jayant Kumar Behera will be honoured with Ila-Banshidhar Panda Kala Samman-2021, instituted by Indian Metals Public Charitable Trust (IMPACT), for their excellence and life time achievements in the field of Art and Music. The two will receive citations along with a cash award of Rs 1.5 lakh each.

The Sarala Puraskar for the year 2021 has also been announced. Renowned narrator Paramita Satpathy will receive the award this year for her novel *Abhipret Kaal*.

Jagadish and Jayant will get the honour at the Sarala Puraskar Awards ceremony in October, officials of the Trust said.

The annual Sarala Puraskar, instituted by eminent Odia industrialist late Dr Banshidhar Panda and late Mrs. Ila Panda in the year 1980,



Painter Jagadish Chandra Kanungo



Ghumura artist Jayant Behera

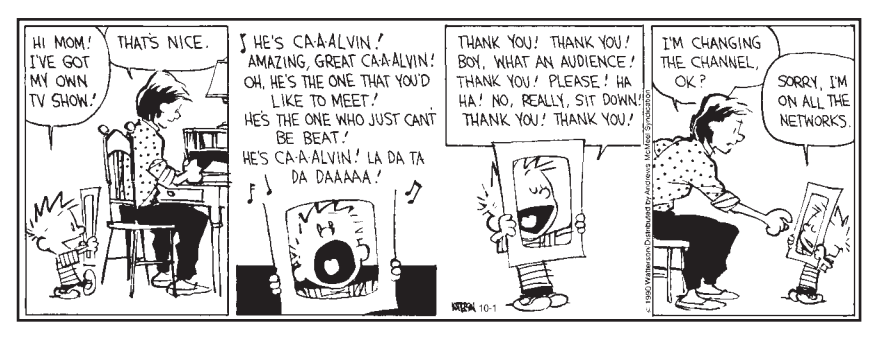
has been given by Indian Metals Public Charitable Trust (IMPACT). IMPACT is the charitable wing of IMFA Ltd., the leading fully integrated producer of Ferro Alloys in India. Considered as the foremost literary award of the state, Sarala

Puraskar is one of the finest contributions of IMPACT to promote Odia literature. The Ekalabya Puraskar has been instituted by IMPACT to encourage promising sports talents of Odisha.

### PEANUTS



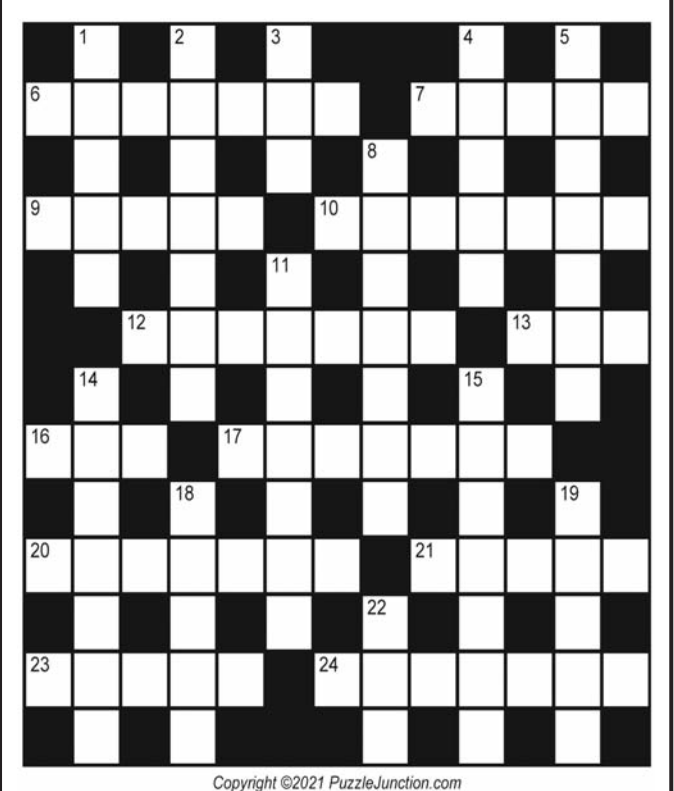
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



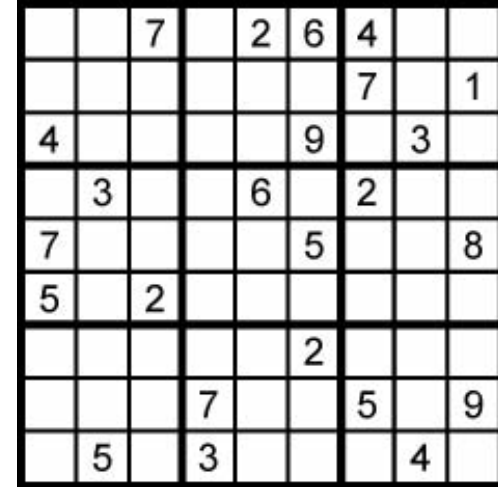
### FUN post CROSSWORD



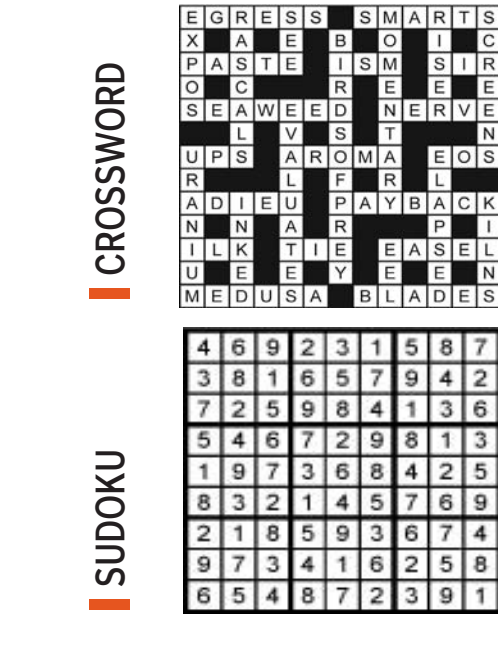
- Across**
- 6 Narratives
  - 7 Saltpetre
  - 9 Lively
  - 10 Undertake
  - 12 Cargo
  - 13 Do film work
  - 16 Go for the gold?
  - 17 Pipe type
  - 20 College
  - 21 Skeleton part
  - 23 Comical
  - 24 Detectives
  - 4 Musk
  - 5 producer
  - 8 Hot spots
  - 9 Engraving
  - 11 Pirouetted
  - 14 Cautious
  - 15 Exercise
  - 18 Pilotless plane
  - 19 Luau greeting
  - 22 Pub order
- Down**
- 1 Loft
  - 2 Get ready
  - 3 Checkers colour

### SUDOKU

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



### SOLUTIONS



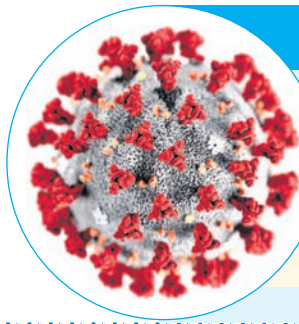
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## LORD OF WISDOM

An artist gives finishing touches to idols of Lord Ganesha in Unit-I area of Bhubaneswar, Monday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	22,17,71,844	19,83,00,235	45,85,433
India	3,30,27,621	3,21,81,995	4,40,752
Odisha	10,12,167	9,97,790	8,055

# Sundargarh MCH to start functioning from 2022-23

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** The proposed Medical College and Hospital (MCH) in Sundargarh district will start functioning from 2022-23 academic session, Health Minister Naba Kishore Das informed the Assembly, Monday.

Making a statement in the House, Das said that the medical college being set up with support from National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) will function with 100 MBBS seats while the hospital will have 500 beds.

The state government had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the NTPC in December 2013 to set up the medical college with a preliminary estimate of ₹350 crore. For this, the state has provided 21 acres of land free of cost, he said.



## IN THE HOUSE

The state government has also created 160 teaching posts, 85 non-teaching posts, 10 posts for the office of the Dean and Principal, and 16 posts for the office of Superintendent for the medicinal

## ASSERTION IN ASSEMBLY



The state government had signed an MoU with the NTPC in December 2013 to set up the medical college with a preliminary estimate of ₹350 crore and provided 21 acres of land free of cost

The medical college will function with 100 MBBS seats while the hospital will have 500 beds

160 teaching posts, 85 non-teaching posts, 10 posts for the office of the Dean and Principal, and 16 posts for the office of Superintendent for the medicinal

college, Das said.

In the meantime, politicians, intellectuals, lawyers and the general public of western Odisha have demanded a second All India Institute of Medical Sciences

(AIIMS) in Sundargarh. At present, the state has one AIIMS in Bhubaneswar.

Accordingly, the state Chief Secretary had written a letter to the Union Health secretary in November last year requesting for establishment of a second AIIMS at the infrastructure developed by NTPC for the proposed medical college, the minister informed the House.

Later in March, 2021, Das himself requested the Union Health Minister to set up the second AIIMS of Odisha at the proposed infrastructure in Sundargarh district.

A six-member central team in April had made a field visit to assess the ground situation and expressed satisfaction. After the visit, the team during a discussion with Sundargarh Collector said that 200 acres of land would be needed for the AIIMS. The Collector told the team that besides land, funds from District Mineral Fund would be provided for setting up the institute.

The state Director of Medical Education and Training (DMET) had also written to a member of the team for the setting up the institute in Sundargarh but the state government has not received any response from the Union government even after five months. "If the Centre decides to set up AIIMS

this year.

In 311 of the total 1,470 murder cases in 2020, relatives of the victims alleged dowry related torture. The number of such cases is 184 out of the total 782 murder cases recorded during the first half of the 2021.

Incidents of sexual harassment and molestation also increased during 2020. As many as 6,848 cases were registered on molestation of women in 2019 which rose to 7,937 in 2020.

With 4,949 cases, the state recorded a significant rise in molestation incidents till the end of June this year. Similarly, as many as 1,460 women lodged sexual harassment cases at different police stations in 2020 as against 1,305 in 2019. Till June end, 792 sexual harassment cases have been registered in the state.

# 2,984 RAPES IN 2020: MIN

POST NEWS NETWORK

**BHUBANESWAR:** The state witnessed a significant rise in crimes against women during Covid-hit year 2020. Minister of state for Home department Dibya Shankar Mishra, while responding to a question by Congress leader Santosh Singh Saluja in the Assembly, revealed that the state police registered 2,984 rape cases in 2020 as against 2,950 in 2019.

Meanwhile, as many as 1,563 rape cases have been reported at different police stations in the state during the first half of 2021.

Similarly, incidents of rape of minor girls also increased in 2020. As many as 1,646 minor rape cases were reported last year while police registered 1,635 such cases in 2019. The state has recorded 786 incidents of rape against minor till



the end of June 2021. Only three acid attack cases were registered across the state in 2019. However, the number rose to six in 2020. Only one acid attack case has been recorded till June

# WEB PORTAL CEO NABBED FOR BIZMAN'S ABDUCTION

Kalinga Live CEO Raj along with his colleagues had assaulted the Kendrapada businessman before calling his home for ₹10 lakh ransom



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** The Commissionerate Police Monday claimed to have arrested the chief executive officer (CEO) of a web portal from Kolkata late Sunday night on the charge of abducting a Kendrapada businessman Purnachandra Sahoo, 32, and his partner Bhigunath Singh in August this year.

Nandankanan police along with a special squad of the Commissionerate Police has arrested Raghunath Sahoo alias Raj, the CEO of Raghunathpur-based Kalinga Live, an official said, adding that he was being interrogated in

connection with the incident. Purnachandra in his complaint alleged that the accused persons inflicted inhuman torture on him and his business partner Singh, a resident of Asanol in West Bengal. Singh is currently staying at Barbil in Keonjhar. On August 2, Singh reached Bhubaneswar and sought the help of Sahoo to arrange a financier in the city to invest in his mining business. Meanwhile, a friend of Singh, Ramanuja Mishra advised them to contact Raj, the owner of Kalinga Live. On August 5, they met Raj

who assured them that he would help them to get ₹50 lakh from noted a City-based businessman.

Later, he told them to come to the portal's office at Raghunathpur in Patia area where an employee of the City-based businessman would come to discuss the issue. When the duo reached the office, the security guard deployed at the entrance took their mobile phones away. However, within a few hours, the duo realised that they have been trapped by Raj. The accused demanded ₹10 lakh from both Singh and Sahoo.

Raj along with other staffers of the portal locked them in the office and thrashed them with plastic pipes and belts. They allegedly inflicted injuries on different parts of their body, including the private parts, with cigarette butts.

On August 7, Ramanuja came to know about extortion and contacted Raj and asked him to immediately release the duo or else he would inform the police.



Artistes perform at a cultural outreach programme organised by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Infosys Foundation at Unit-III Kharavela Nagar in Bhubaneswar, Monday

# OJEE-2021 BEGINS AT 57 CENTRES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** The Odisha Joint Entrance Examination (OJEE)-2021 began at 57 centres across the state Monday. The entrance exam is scheduled to conclude September 18.

Around 55,500 candidates have registered themselves for the test, which is being held in computer-based test (CBT) mode.

Apart from Odisha, exam centres have been arranged in Kolkata, Ranchi and Patna. The test is being conducted in three shifts- 9am to 11am, 12:30pm to 2:30pm and 4pm to 6pm. Monday's examination was held for B Pharm course in three shifts.

The dates of the much awaited OJEE-2021 were announced August 13. The exam, which was originally scheduled for June, had to be postponed due to Covid-19.

# Nat'l recognition for Odisha's Manda buffalo

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** In what has come as a shot in the arm for Odisha's indigenous livestock, 'Manda buffalo' of the state has been accorded national recognition by National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR). It has been declared as the 19th recognised buffalo breed in the country.

This buffalo germplasm was first identified by the Fisheries and Animal Resources Development (FARD) department in collaboration with the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT), under the leadership of Bishnupada Sethi (IAS) and Susanta Kumar Dash, an animal geneticist. After conducting a detailed survey, the findings were sent to NBAGR for national recognition of the unique indigenous buffalo 'Manda'.

Manda buffaloes are native to Odisha and have ash grey and grey coloured coat with copper-coloured hair. The lower part of their legs



These sturdy buffaloes are relatively small in size

is light-coloured up to the elbows, with copper-coloured hair at the knee. Some Mandas are silver-white in colour.

These sturdy buffaloes are relatively small in size. People use

both male and female buffaloes in agricultural practices in the native tract of Koraput, Malkangiri and Nabarangpur districts. These animals are resistant to parasitic infection, less prone to diseases, and can live, produce and reproduce at low/nil input systems. Around one lakh buffaloes of

**INDIGENOUS BREED**  
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PEOPLE USE BOTH MALE AND FEMALE BUFFALOES IN AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES IN THE NATIVE TRACT OF KORAPUT, MALKANGIRI AND NABARANGPUR DISTRICTS  
FROM ODISHA, TWO BUFFALO BREEDS (CHILIKA AND KALAHANDI), FOUR CATTLE BREEDS (BINJHARPURI, MOTU, GHUMUSARI AND KHARIAR), AND ONE SHEEP BREED (KENDRAPADA SHEEP) HAVE ALREADY BEEN REGISTERED AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

this breed are there in the native tract, mostly contributing to agricultural operations and family nutrition of households in the undulated landscaping of the hilly terrain for generations. The average milk yield of these buffaloes is 2 to 2.5 litre in single milking with more than eight percent fat. However, a few of those yield up to four litre.

These buffaloes mature at around three years of age and drop the first calf at around four years. The female can give birth in every 1.5 to 2 years, throughout its life spanning around 20 years.

From Odisha, two buffalo breeds (Chilika and Kalahandi), four cattle breeds (Binjharipuri, Motu, Ghumusari and Khariar), and one sheep breed (Kendrapada sheep) have already been registered at the national level. Binjharipuri cattle semen production and use through artificial insemination is a remarkable achievement for the country in the field of the conservation process.

# OFFLINE CLASSES RESUME AT TECH INSTITUTIONS



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** After a long gap, the state technical institutions universities, engineering and professional colleges, polytechnics, diploma institutions and ITIs were opened for physical classes Monday.

The state government had August 31 decided to reopen all the institutions from September 6.

The decision was taken due to "improvement in Covid-19 situation in the state," an official notification reads. Skill Development and Technical Education department has directed all the institutions to reopen physical classes following all Covid-19 protocols such as sanitisation and disinfection of all classrooms, hostels, and laboratories as the government guidelines.

# Fresh bout of rain may end dry spell

Under the influence of the low-pressure area formed off the south Odisha coast, heavy rainfall, coupled with thunderstorms and lightning, is very likely to occur in most of the districts till September 8



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** The Odisha government Monday put several districts on alert as the weather office predicted that a low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal may trigger heavy rainfall across the state, officials said. District Collectors were asked to monitor the emerging situation closely, they said. A low-pressure area has been formed over northwest and adjoining the westcentral Bay of Bengal off the south Odisha coast.

In the last 24 hours, 29 districts have received some amount of rainfall. Jagatsinghpur received the most amount of rainfall at 42.9mm, followed by Koraput (36.2mm), Gajapati (34.9mm), Cuttack (29.1mm), Malkangiri (26.1mm), Bhadrak (26mm) and Puri (25mm). Boudh was the only district where no rainfall was recorded in the last 24 hours.

Under the influence of the low-pressure area, heavy rainfall, coupled with thunderstorms and lightning, is very likely to occur in most of the districts till September 8, the weather officer predicted. Alert for heavy rain has been issued for Gajapati, Ganjam, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Koraput and Puri. Similarly, heavy rainfall is very likely in Malkangiri, Rayagada, Khurda, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj and Nabarangpur districts. Fishermen have been asked not to venture into the sea Monday and Tuesday.

## BJP calls for Cuttack bandh September 13

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Sept 6:** Expressing strong resentment over the state government's decision to cap the height of Goddess Durga's idol at 4ft and other restrictions on puja, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders here Monday decided to call a bandh in the Silver City September 13. Addressing the media here, senior BJP leader Samir Dey urged the state government to revisit the decision. He said, "Keeping in view the falling Covid graph, the government has eased restrictions and reopened religious institutions, though with riders. Durga Puja is one of the major festivities in the Millennium City Under such circumstances, the government should revisit its decision," Dey added.

## Bills to amend PR laws tabled

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** Moving a step ahead towards conduct of the long-awaited Panchayati Raj and urban elections in the state, the state government Monday introduced two bills to amend the Panchayati Raj and municipal laws. Minister Pratap Jena, who is in charge of both the departments, introduced the Bills in the house Monday evening. The bills are—Odisha Municipal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 and the Odisha Panchayat Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021. These two bills have been brought by the state government to make necessary provisions in the existing five laws. Odisha Panchayat Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 has

been tabled to amend three Panchayat laws—the Orissa Grama Panchayat Act-1964, the Orissa Panchayat Samiti Act-1959 and the Orissa Zilla Parishad Act-1991 to make suitable provisions for reservation of seats for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, women, and Other Backward Castes with a ceiling of 50 per cent, as per the Supreme Court order. Similarly, the minister also tabled the Odisha Municipal Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021 to make such provisions in the Orissa Municipal Act-1950 and Orissa Municipal Corporation Act-2003. The amendments in the laws are necessary for reservation of seats for SC, ST and OBCs in the upcoming Panchayati Raj election and ULB polls which is due for over two years now.

## AT LORD'S ABODE



Union Minister Bishweswar Tudu poses for a photo op after paying obeisance to Lord Lingaraj in Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

## Students flay Plus II evaluation

THE STUDENTS' WING OF CONGRESS PARTY ALSO BACKED THE PROTEST SAYING THAT THE FATE OF THE STUDENTS NOW HANGS IN BALANCE DUE TO THE APATHY OF THE GOVT

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** Hundreds of ex-regular and dropout students Monday attempted to march towards Naveen Niwas alleging disparity in Plus II evaluation process. Their attempt to gherao the Chief Minister's residence was foiled by the police at the demonstration venue near Master Canteen Square. The students' wing of the Congress party also backed the protest saying that the fate of the students now hangs in balance due to the 'apathy of the state government and Council of Higher Secondary Education (CHSE)'.



Students alleged that as per the assessment formula devised for Plus II students, regular students have been awarded scores in their papers on the basis of their performances in Class X board exam. However, in case of ex-regular students, marks have been awarded in theory papers based on their performances in previous CHSE examinations which is unacceptable. An ex-regular student said, "We want marks to be awarded as per the performance in Class X since we were not told in advance that an offline exam will be conducted. We have been neglected and cheated. Regular students, who had passed Class X with 70 per cent marks, were awarded similar marks in Plus

II. But many of us who scored good marks in the matriculation exams have been marked failed." Congress MLA Suresh Routroy too urged the state government to look into the grievances of the dropouts and ex-regular students. "Due to the wrong process adopted by the council, only 26 per cent ex-regular students passed Plus II exams while the pass percentage of regular students stood at 99 per

cent. We demand that the results of ex-regular and dropout students be announced by taking into consideration their Class X scores. The government should not play with the lives of the students," Routroy said. The pass percentage of ex-regular students in Arts stream was 26 per cent as only 7,161 students passed the exam while 27,595 had appeared for it. In commerce, 2,530 ex-regular students were assessed. A total of 1,386 students passed and the pass percentage is 54.78 per cent. "We faced difficulties in assessing ex-regular students as many of them did not appear any examination under the CHSE in the last few years. The council searched for the marks they had secured in their last examinations," said School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash. The unsatisfied or unsuccessful ex-regular students can also apply for the offline examination, the minister said.

## HE dept seeks hostel info through e-Space

**BHUBANESWAR:** Higher Education department Monday directed all the government and aided colleges under the department to provide complete hostel information in e-Space. Higher Education deputy director Rajesh Kumar Sahoo said that in order to provide accommodation for SC/ST/OBC students and poor students of general category pursuing higher education, it is necessary to gather complete information on availability of hostels and its related information. The institutions have been asked to provide complete information in their respective e-Space within two days starting from September 7. "You must login to the e-Space using your credentials after that click on the college profile, then click on hostel information and fill up the form before submitting it," the directive reads.

## KVK opens 'Maheera'

**BHUBANESWAR:** Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Khurda in association with NIGAM, a voluntary outfit, launched a Farmer Producer Company (FPC) 'MAHEERA' at Balipatna block in the district Monday. Padma Shri Batakushna Sahoo, the chief guest on the occasion, inaugurated the FPC. He applauded the coordinated efforts of KVK, the NGO, farmer members, FPC chairman Kumudini Swain and the Board of Directors for establishing the FPC for increasing income of the farmers of the district.

## ITI Bhub students train SHG women

**BHUBANESWAR:** ITI Bhubaneswar and Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar Meadows organised a training session for the women of self-help groups (SHGs) of Kalyanpur panchayat, Khurda district recently. In this event, students of food trade of ITI Bhubaneswar imparted skill training to the SHG members on easy way of preparation of processed food like mixed chhattua, lia papad, arisha pitha and lemon pickle. More than 25 women took part in the training initially. This session will help make the economically backward women employable and become small entrepreneurs in their local areas as well as freelance. An MoU is going to be signed between ITI Bhubaneswar & Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar Meadows to continue the initiative.

## AIRING GRIEVANCES



Congress workers stage a demonstration near CMC office in Cuttack, Monday, highlighting the civic issues in the Millennium City

OP PHOTO

## SCPD releases book on inspiring accounts of PwDs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** State Commission for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) has come up with inspiring accounts of 18 specially-abled persons who possess unique skills, talents and capabilities, and State's visually-challenged women's cricket team, through a coffee table book. Releasing the coffee table book 'Inspire...Empower, Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disability (SSEPD) Minister Ashok Chandra Panda said, "A number of Persons With Disabilities (PwDs) in Odisha have extraordinary exposure in various fields, even fighting against all odds with their will power, practice and fortitude." SCPD chairperson Sulochana Das said that the commission has made a humble attempt to recognise these special individuals by highlighting their achievements through photography and text. The coffee table book illustrates amazing stories of success, forti-



tude and victory scripted by the differently-abled in Odisha. These successful individuals have not let their disability come in their way to achieve different feats in their lives. "Who can be a better example of the achievers than Pramod Bhagat? Bhagat has made the country proud by winning gold medal in the recently concluded Tokyo-Paralympics," said Das. The book also features Sriharsa and Sidhartha Sukla (painting), Prachurya Kumar Pradhan and

Soundarya Kumar Pradhan (chess), V Ramesh Rao and Rakkhal Kumar Sethy (wheelchair fencers), Rasmii Rekha Sahu (Odissi dance), Tapaswini Das (OFS officer), Baraj Das (student topper), Sabita Rana (Asha worker), Jayanti Behera (para athlete), Pankaj Bhue and Sukharam Majhi (cricketers), Srinivas Rao (singer), Abhijit Kundu (corporate executive), Niranjan Behera (disability right activist), Dillip Sahu (singer) and visually challenged women's cricket team.

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# Parlous boat rides endanger tourists as admin sits pretty



People are being ferried on perilous boat rides to various tourist sites despite a ban in place for country boats after the Chilika tragedy claimed six lives

As many as 27 persons have drowned in boat mishaps since 2003. Due to absence of fitness certificate, if the boat sinks then people travelling in it will not be entitled to any compensation

Many of these boatmen are minors and lack any skill or experience. Overloading of boats is attributed as the main reason behind such mishaps

taken while travelling through the water routes. However, the local boatmen and even tourists overlook these aspects and endanger their lives while traveling to various tourist sites.

Fourteen years back, 13 members of a local cricket team had drowned when the overcrowded boat sank in the Mahanadi near Bahakuda Ghat.

Mishaps and loss of life is a regular affair here. This has happened as the district administration has failed to implement the 2004 boat rules of the state government. Locals alleged that mishaps in these water routes have become a frequent occurrence due to apathetic attitude of the district administration.

A social activist Amitabh Chand alleged that most of the boats plying these water routes and their oarsmen are yet to be included in the insurance scheme on the basis of the boat rules of the state government.

Sources said, over 60 boats ply in these rivers in Bhitarkanika National Park without a proper fitness certificate and without life jackets for any of their travelers. Due to absence of fitness certificate, if the boat sinks then people travelling in them will not be entitled to any compensation.

Rajendra Sahu of Gupti panchayat under Rajnagar block said there are over 1700 saltwater crocodiles in the Bhitarkanika National Park adding to the risks in case of a capsizing.

People from Gupti, Chandbali, Khola, Jainagar, Kharinasi, Bahakuda and Jambu often travel to Bhitarkanika in boats. Moreover, many of these boatmen are minors and lack any skill or experience for which there is every possibility of boat mishaps in these rivers during risky weather conditions. Overloading of boats is attributed as the main reason behind such mishaps.

The residents have drawn the attention of political representatives and senior district officials towards the problem but their pleas are yet to be addressed.

When contacted, Basant Kumar Rout, ADM said that the district administration has directed all the boat owners to include their boatmen and boats in the insurance schemes. Action will be taken if anybody is found violating norms, he said.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, Sept 6:** Unsafe country boats without having adequate safety measures continue to ferry hundreds of tourists and locals across the water bodies to visit Bhitarkanika National Park, Hukitola island, Habelikothi, Batighara (Lighthouse) island, Barunei river mouth, Rangani, Talachua and other places in Kendrapara district

People are being fetched in a perilous ride to various tourist sites by country and tourist boats despite a ban in place for country boat after the Chilika boat tragedy claimed six lives.

These tourist sites witness heavy footfall during peak tourist season every year and around 60 unsafe boats are endangering the lives of the tourists visiting these sites. As many as 27 persons have drowned in boat mishaps since 2003.

Kendrapara district lies in the river delta formed by the Brahmani and the Baitarani rivers and the distributaries of the Mahanadi. The main medium of communication in 17 panchayats is water route as the district has several river networks.

A lot of precaution has to be

# Unlicensed clinics thrive in Nayagarh due to 'administrative ignorance'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, Sept 6:** Locals of Nayagarh district demanded stringent action against the unqualified doctors, owners of unregistered clinics and persons involved in activities like illegal abortion. Officials have been apathetic towards such sensitive issues, many local residents alleged Monday.

A number of unregistered clinics have been operating in Nayagarh district, in the absence of timely administrative action, they said.

One such health facility named Balaji Clinic, located near the community health centre (CHC) at Khandapada town in Nayagarh, had been providing healthcare services sans valid registration certificate.

According to a source, the owner of the clinic Trinath Barik died eight months ago. The registration obtained earlier became invalid following his demise. However, the clinic continued to operate as before, which was sealed Saturday after two consecutive cases of illegal abortion surfaced in Nayagarh town.

Contacted, the Additional District



Medical Officer (ADMO) of Health & Family Welfare department, Subash Chandra Nayak said, "We will inform the Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) about the demands made by local residents for stringent action against illegal activities in healthcare sector."

The Health department higher-ups will take appropriate steps at their ends, as they deem fit and necessary, Nayak further said.

Notably, 14 private hospitals and clinics were accorded permission to provide healthcare services in Nayagarh district. After Anand Bhawan Aditya Hospital & Clinic, and Balaji Clinic were recently sealed on charges of carrying out illegal abortion and not having valid registration respectively, only 12 other facilities are operating with proper certificate.

# Farmers seek aid over drought-like situation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhawanipatna, Sept 6:** Farmers in Kalahandi marched from a village to the district headquarters here Monday to seek compensation over the drought-like situation in the region due to deficient rainfall.

The peasants, around 100 in number, handed over a memorandum to Additional District Magistrate Sarat Chandra Srichandan, demanding that the entire Bhawanipatna block be declared drought-affected and incentives given to the affected farmers, an official said.



According to the weekly-crop assessment by the Agriculture Department, paddy fields have been affected in non-irrigated pockets till August as 10 out of 13 blocks experienced erratic rain.

# DEMO FOR IRRIGATION



Farmers demanding payment of crop insurance of 2020 and irrigation facilities to their farmlands staging a road blockade and sit-in on NH-16 in Khariar of Nuapada district, Monday

# DELAY IN ENVIRONMENTAL CLEARANCE

# Sand mining rampant as ₹48L fine collected in Jagatsinghpur

Officials have been alleged to be working hand-in-glove with plunderers by delaying the official formalities and providing window for the illegal act



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jagatsinghpur, Sept 6:** Delay in environmental clearance and execution of lease deeds has allegedly let loose the illegal sand mining at various river ghats in Jagatsinghpur district.

The whopping Rs48 lakh collected as penalty from the errant people is indicative of the extent of illegality in sand mining in the district. But the administration is allegedly sitting idle as sand mafia and some revenue officials have forged an unholy nexus to loot the minor mineral, a report said.

The administration has so far recovered penalties worth Rs 48 lakh from the errant.

In last four months, most sand mines in the district have been auctioned, but public hearings have not been conducted while environmental clearances are still pending.

Taking advantage of the situation, lease holders have been plundering sand even though they are yet to meet all prerequisite formalities

for sand mining. The administration was accused of delaying the official formalities to provide window for looters to steal sand.

As a result, the state government is losing crores of rupees as revenue. It is alleged that all such illegalities have been going on due to rackets.

Last year, the administration had leased out 18 sand quarries while this year, 29 sand mines were leased out including six in Naugaon tehsil, three each in Raghunathpur and Jagatsinghpur, two in Kujang and 10 in Tirtol.

It was learnt that though lease process has been over, the lease holders have not yet signed any agreements with the administration to carry on their work.

As per the rule, public hearing will be held for the mines which are spread over 12 acres or more. The tehsil authorities will have to seek permission of the state Environment Impact Assessment Authority. Meanwhile, public hear-

ings for six sand mines have been held in Biridi, Raghunathpur and Tirtol.

The delay in completing all official formalities has encouraged the lease holders to loot sand. The illegal mining has gone to such an extent that the revenue authorities have collected Rs 48 lakh as fine from violators in last eight months, it was learnt. As construction activities and infrastructure development projects are in full swing in various parts of the district, sand is in high demand in the area.

It was alleged that the enforcement squads at sub-divisional and district levels have failed to take action against those indulging in illegal sand mining.

Contacted, Jagatsinghpur deputy Collector Ajay Mohanty said that lease deeds are not being executed as environment clearances are pending. However, action will be taken if they are alerted about sand smuggling.

# Woman hacked to death; 4 including 3 minors detained

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rairakhol, Sept 6:** A 30-year-old woman, identified as Banita Mirdha, was allegedly killed in the courtyard of her house at Laindamal village under Rairakhol police limits in Sambalpur district, Sunday night.

According to a source, some neighbours found the body of Banita lying in a pool of blood Monday morning.

On being informed, Rairakhol SDPO Prashant Kumar Meher, along with IIC Surubabu Chhatra and some police personnel, immediately reached the spot. Exact reason behind the incident is yet to be ascertained. A case has been registered in this connection and probe is underway.



Following primary investigation, police have detained four persons including three juveniles for interrogation. They are Shantanu Mirdha, Sahadev Mirdha, Hari Mirdha and his son Kalia Sanjit Mirdha. As it appears, the murder has been committed due to past enmity, the SDPO said.

Police have sent Banita's body to the nearby hospital for post-mortem. A scientific team from Sambalpur Sadar will help reveal the reason behind murder, the SDPO added.

# POLITICAL STIR



Congress workers taking out a rally in support of Boudh bandh demanding inclusion of Boudh district under Sambalpur RDC division and other demands at Baunsuni, Monday

# 70-yr-old school sees poor student turnout owing to teachers' crunch

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, Sept 6:** A seven-decades-old high school in the Silk City is witnessing poor turnout of students, allegedly due to the lack of adequate number of teachers, a report said. One may blame parents' interest in sending their kids to private schools. However, one also has to keep in mind the government's apathy and negligence towards improving the situation.

The Government Queen of the Mission High School was established in 1947. In spite of its comparatively better infrastructure like a mini stadium, basketball court and a science laboratory the student turnout is not satisfactory. One of the primary reasons is the inadequate number of teachers in the school. It has been alleged that more than 50 per cent of the positions lie vacant till date.

Guardians have alleged that it has affected classroom teaching in the school. The school has many eminent alumni to boast of like Odisha Assembly Speaker Surjya Narayan Patro, Upendra Tripathy (IAS), M Akshaya (IPS), Dr Sanak Kumar Mishra (scientist) and Professor Dr Chittaranjan Kar. Reports said that the school re-



quires a minimum of 23 teachers to function smoothly, but at present there are only nine. This has been the case for the last two years. For example there are three positions for mathematics teachers, but only two have been appointed.

Similarly, there is no teacher for science subjects. Nine teachers are required for general subjects, but currently there are only four. All the three posts of teachers for IACT and MCT are lying vacant. The physical education teacher retired in March this year, but no new appointment has been made till date. There is only one teacher for Hindi and Sanskrit.

Guardians and students have alleged that if the problem continues then teaching of students from Class-VI to Class-X will be severely affected.

The school admitted 240 students for the 2020-21 academic session and 271 for the 2021-22 session. However, less than the 50 per cent of the total admissions are attending school on a regular basis.

Contacted, Headmaster Harekrushna Panda said that the process of transfer and appointment of teachers will start soon. He informed that new teachers will be appointed in the school within a month.

When asked about poor turnout of students, Panda pointed out that Covid-19 also has a part to play. He also blamed the present location of the school as one of the reasons leading to the poor turnout. He, however, expressed hope that the situation will improve and more students will start attending classes after improvement in the Covid situation in state.

# HP emerges as vax champion

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shimla, Sept 6:** With authorities now gearing up to complete the coronavirus vaccination of all above 18 by November 30, tough Himalayan terrain and inclement weather conditions in Himachal Pradesh didn't deter healthcare workers and local authorities to become country's first state of giving the first dose of vaccine to all eligible people.

Even authorities had to face an uphill task in the naturally secluded Malana village, known for Malana cream, the most sought-after forms of hashish across the globe in the far end of Parvati Valley in Kullu district, where locals had not been allowing the 'outsiders' to enter their area since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020. Elsewhere, Tribals, mainly Buddhists, settled in the Spiti Valley spread over the Himalayan peaks, have set an example for others in the country by demonstrating that vaccination is the only route out of this pandemic. Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday virtually interacted with healthcare workers and beneficiaries of the state's vaccination programme.

He complemented the state under the leadership of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur for setting a benchmark in the fight against Covid-19 by giving the first dose of vaccine to all eligible people.

Interacting with Prime Minister Modi, Dr. Rahul, who is posted in



the Shimla district's remotest Civil Hospital in Dodra Kwar, said the area comprising small, scattered villages, remains cut off owing to heavy snow accumulation for five-six months in a year.

"The communication network in the entire Dodra Kwar area was a major challenge, resulting in much delay in registering the beneficiaries on the Co-WIN app. An advance team of accredited social health activists (ASHA) and Anganwadi workers were sent to rope in the locals for the next day's vaccination. This helps minimising vaccine wastage," he said.

Health staff had to traverse at

least eight to 10 hours on foot from the nearest road heads to the remotest hamlet for the vaccination programme. Sometimes they had to register the beneficiaries on the Co-WIN app the next day of the vaccine. Interestingly, the locals in the landlocked Dodra Kwar have never used pesticides and fertilisers for growing crops. They are largely shepherds and keep on migrating for pasture of livestock.

ASHA worker Nirmal Devi apprised the Prime Minister about the challenges they faced in convincing the people of Malana, where the banned cannabis is the source of

prime livelihood.

Also the health workers were barred from entering the village as the locals consider outsiders untouchable. Nirmal Devi said with the permission from the local deity, Lord Jamlu, they were allowed to meet the locals and to convince them to go for inoculation.

Malana village, surrounded by snow-capped mountains, is located 45 km from Kullu town. Its nearest road is seven km down the hill that was constructed in 2007.

Before the road, the village, nestled at 2,700 meters (8,859 feet), is accessible only through three passes -- Jari, Rashol and

**India is creating a record by administering 1.25 crore vaccines every day. The number of vaccines administered in a single day by India is more than the entire population of several countries. Himachal Pradesh has become a champion by being the first state to administer the first dose of Covid vaccine to all eligible people**

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

Chandrakhani - which can be traversed only on foot with at least three overnight stays through breathtaking snow-capped mountains, lush forests and the rugged landscapes.

During the vaccination drive, the health workers had to trudge at least six hours to reach Malana.

A senior doctor, requesting anonymity, told IANS that since the locals don't interact freely with outsiders, even with the inhabitants living in the nearby areas, it was somehow difficult to access the exact situation there regarding the viral epidemiology. Modi in his address talked about the Malana inhabitants, who proclaim themselves as descendants of Alexander the Great, and have their own democratic 'government'.

# 'No coercive action against Adhikari'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, Sept 6:** In a big relief to BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari, the Calcutta High Court Monday not only stayed three of the five cases against him, but also told the police that no coercive action should be taken against Adhikari without the permission of the court.

The court also asked the police to interrogate Adhikari according to his convenience.

Justice Rajasekhhar Mantha directed the police and the CID that no coercive action should be taken against Adhikari without the permission of the court. The court also stayed the investigation proceedings into the death of his bodyguard Subhabrata Chakraborty, Chakraborty allegedly shot himself at the Contai police station in 2018.

The death of Chakraborty took a significant turn when in July this year his wife Suparna Chakraborty lodged a complaint with the Contai police station demanding a probe into her husband's death.

Taking a strong stance against the reopening of the case, Justice Mantha said, "Why did she lodge a complaint three years after her husband's death? Was she sleeping? And why suddenly claim it to be a murder and name Adhikari? The court is worried if it becomes an arrest only to harass Adhikari."

Along with this case, the single judge bench also stayed the inves-



tigation related to the political clash in Nandigram and a gold chain snatching case in Panskura, both in East Midnapore district.

However, the court allowed the cases pertaining to the threat to a Superintendent of Police when disaster management action was in place and another case of job scam at the Maniktala police station in Kolkata. The court also directed the police that keeping in mind Adhikari is the Leader of the Opposition, they will have to interrogate him as per his convenience. Meanwhile, Adhikari, who was summoned by the CID on Monday in connection with the death of his bodyguard, told the probe agency via e-mail that he would not be able to be present because of his pre-scheduled political programmes. "This is part of the state government's plan. They are harassing Suvendu Adhikari for no reason. The court verdict is enough to prove this," state BJP President Dilip Ghosh said.

# Bengal Cong decides to field candidate against Mamata

Congress had earlier announced that as a "courtesy" the party would not be fielding any candidate opposite Mamata Banerjee

## BHABANIPUR BY-POLL



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Sept 6:** Changing its earlier stance, the West Bengal Congress Monday announced it has decided to field a candidate against Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for the September 30 by-poll in the

Bhabanipur assembly seat and the name of the party nominee will be sent to AICC for consent.

The decision made at a Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) meeting to contest the by-election came at a time when the party and the Mamata Banerjee-headed

Trinamool Congress are maintaining a bonhomie at the national level since July.

"Majority of our members were in favour of contesting against Trinamool and we have decided to field our candidate from that seat (Bhabanipur). We will fight the elections with Left Front and announce candidates after discussion with them," state Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury told a press conference.

During the assembly elections held earlier this year, TMC nominee Sovande Chattopadhyay won from Bhabanipur in south Kolkata and he has vacated the seat later necessitating the by-poll.

The Congress, which fought the polls in alliance with the Left parties, fielded a candidate from there.

Chowdhury, who had earlier advocated not to put up any candidate against Banerjee in Bhabanipur as a matter of courtesy, said the ruling party is not showing political courtesy.

## PROTEST TURNS UGLY



Police detain West Bengal State Chhatra Parishad activists for protesting against Central government in front of Raj Bhavan, Kolkata

UNI PHOTO

# British-era police post renovated

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shimla, Sept 6:** Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur Sunday inaugurated the renovated 134-year-old police assistance room built by the British India at the historic Mall Road here.

He said the importance of this police assistance room functional for the last 134 years exists even today. The state is doing efforts for the preservation of its heritage buildings. The Chief Minister urged corporate organisations to assist in developmental works under corporate social responsibilities. He said even during the coronavirus period many organisations helped in strengthening

the health infrastructure in the state. Thakur appreciated the efforts of police department to renovate the heritage police assistance room. He said that people, especially tourists would get police assistance through this assistance room.

Urban Development Minister Suresh Bhardwaj also appreciated the efforts of police department for renovating the police assistance room and said Shimla is a tourist place of historical importance. Therefore, the government is doing all efforts for the preservation of heritage buildings of Shimla. Director General of Police Sanjay Kundu said Rs 25 lakh were spent on the renovation of the assistance room.



# DURGA PUJA COMMITTEES CUT COSTS TO SUPPORT ORPHANS, POOR

**THE POPULAR COLLEGE SQUARE DURGA PUJA COMMITTEE WILL BE DISTRIBUTING BOOKS AND TOYS AMONG CHILDREN IN THE SUNDARBANS REGION, WHERE TWO CYCLONES HAVE WREAKED HAVOC IN THE COURSE OF A YEAR**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Sept 6:** With West Bengal still recovering from the ravages of the Covid-19 second wave and cyclone Yaas, several Durga puja committees here have decided to allot a portion of this year's budget for humanitarian causes.

Samajsebi Sangha Durga Puja, one of the big-ticket pujas in the city, said it would bear a year's educational and medical expenses of 10 children orphaned due to Covid-19,



Women devotees wearing PPE kits perform rituals during 'Bijoya Dashami' celebrations at a community Durga Puja pandal, in Kolkata

PTI FILE PHOTO

as part of its project 'Sneho'.

"Puja is all about serving humanity. We have decided to shun all pomp and show this Durga puja. In our locality, a child lost both his parents to the second wave. "Our members have unanimously decided to chip in for 10 such children. Those deprived of 'sneho' (affection) by a sudden cruel blow of fate," Arijit Moitra, the committee's general said.

Lauding the initiative, Rasbehari MLA Debashis Kumar said Goddess Durga will be happier, if the puja organisers reach out to the poor and

the needy. He promised to extend all possible support to the Samajsebi puja committee. The popular College Square Durga Puja committee will be distributing books and toys among children in the Sundarbans region, where two cyclones have wreaked havoc in the course of a year. "Our team will visit Chhoto Mollakhali area in Sundarbans on October 3 to hand over books and games to children. We will give extravagant illumination a miss this year," one of the organisers said. The Bhawanipore 75

Pally has decided to come to the aid of 'Chhau' artistes of Purulia district, who have been badly hit by the lockdown. 'Chhau', a traditional dance form, has performers retelling episodes of Ramayana, Mahabharata and the puranas, donning colourful costumes and masks. "Many artistes, craftsmen are facing financial hardships as festivals and fairs have been called off across the country. We will do our bit to help at least some of them," Subir Das, the secretary of Bhawanipore 75 Pally, said.

# Tap water at Tashigang village

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Shimla, Sept 6:** Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the Himachal Pradesh government under the Jal Jeevan Mission has managed to provide potable water to Tashigang, a remote village located at an altitude of 15,256 feet in Lahaul-Spiti district, officials said Sunday.

**Tashigang is a remote village located at an altitude of 15,256 feet in Lahaul-Spiti district**

Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the government is implementing 'Har Ghar Nal Yojna' at grassroots level.

About 17 lakh households in the state would be provided tap water supply, out of which 14.50 lakh households have been provided with water connections. With the launch of Jal Jeevan Mission, in a short span of about 18 months, about 6.05 lakh water connections have been provided. The Jal Shakti Department aims to provide tap water connection in every rural household by August 15, 2022.

A sum of Rs 2,260 crore has been allocated for work to be done under the Jal Jeevan Mission, out of which Rs 1,107 crore has been spent by the Jal Shakti Department, an official statement said.



of the day quote

The Karnataka government is working with a target to fully vaccinate the entire adult population against Covid-19 by the end of November

K SUDHAKAR | KARNATAKA HEALTH MINISTER

If we want to be able to tell the world that not a single child in India suffers from malnutrition, then it is important for members from all communities to come forward

SMRITI IRANI | UNION MINISTER

We can celebrate festivals later. Let us prioritise the lives and health of our citizens. The situation can go out of hand in view of the spike in daily cases

UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Khalid files fresh appeal

**New Delhi:** Former JNU student leader Umar Khalid, arrested under stringent anti-terrorism law UAPA in the 2020 Delhi riots conspiracy case, has withdrawn his bail application and filed a fresh one after the city police objected to its maintainability. Senior advocate Trideep Pais, appearing for Khalid, told Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat that the application seeking bail under section 439 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) has been substituted with the one under section 437 after the police objected to it.

3 women shot at by jawan

**Patna:** An Indian Army soldier opened fire at three women, including his wife in Bihar's west Champaran district, Monday morning. The accused Naresh Shah was posted in Delhi Cantonment and had come to Bihar on leave. He was in an inebriated state at the time of the incident.

20 dogs found poisoned in UP

**Mahoba (UP):** In a shocking incident, about 20 dogs were poisoned by some unidentified persons in a village in the Shringeri area in Uttar Pradesh's Mahoba, police said. An FIR has been lodged against unidentified persons based on a complaint filed by Basaura village head Sukh Nandan Prajapati. Station House Officer (SHO) Anil Kumar said that the dead dogs had been buried. All the dogs were strays.

Ants found in business class

**New Delhi:** Air India's Delhi-London flight, which was to depart from the IGI airport here at 2 pm Monday, got delayed for more than three hours after a swarm of ants was found in the business class, sources said. The AI-111 flight departed from the Delhi airport at around 5.20 pm instead of its scheduled departure time of 2 pm, they said.

Ruckus in J'khand Assembly

**Ranchi:** Ruckus by the opposition BJP over allotment of a room for offering namaz and protests over the state's employment policy stopped Jharkhand Assembly from transacting any substantial business for the second day of its moonsoon session Monday. Opposition BJP demanded adjournment motion to discuss the two issues.



The BJP government should have respected the struggle of the farmers and withdrawn the three farm laws. The nation will not accept any insult to the farmers

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

APEX COURT RAPS MANIPUR GOVT

The Supreme Court Monday pulled up Manipur government for the "pathetic" conditions in Covid-19 quarantine Centres in the state and said "we are not going to give you character certificate"



Govt plans to ramp up O2 production

The target implies a 50% jump from the maximum output of almost 10,000 tonnes reached earlier this year during the peak of the second Covid-19 wave

COVID CRISIS



AGENCIES

**Bangalore, Sept 6:** India aims to ramp up its medical oxygen production capacity to 15,000 tonnes per day before a potential third wave of coronavirus infections that is expected to hit the country as soon as mid-September, an industry executive said.

The target implies a 50% jump from the maximum output of almost 10,000 tonnes reached earlier this year during the peak of the second COVID-19 wave, when hospitals ran short of the gas and relatives of patients had to search out oxygen cylinders.

Linde India supplied nearly one-third of the total oxygen demand during the peak.

Moloy Banerjee, head of Linde South Asia, said that while the government is targeting 15,000 tonnes of medical oxygen per day, Linde and other manufacturers were hoping to hit production of at least 13,500 tonnes per day ahead of the third wave. As of Monday,

Lowest daily fatalities

India logged 38,948 new coronavirus infections and 219 fresh fatalities, the lowest in 167 days, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Monday. With the fresh cases, the total tally of Covid-19 cases has climbed to 3,30,27,621, while the death toll has climbed to 4,40,752.

The case fatality rate has declined to 1.33 per cent after 48 days, according to the data updated at 8 am. India had reported 199 deaths in a single day March 23.

India's total COVID-19 cases had reached 33.03 million, with deaths at 4,40,752, according to health ministry data. While demand for medical oxygen in India has considerably reduced since the peak, reaching near pre-COVID levels, gas companies along with the government are gearing up for a scenario where the third wave could be worse than the previous one.

The Delhi government said last month it will increase oxygen production by setting up new manufacturing units or expanding the production capacity of existing units for uninterrupted oxygen supply during a health crisis.

Shares of Linde India rose to record levels in the days following the Delhi government's notification and have more than doubled for the year as of Monday's closing price.

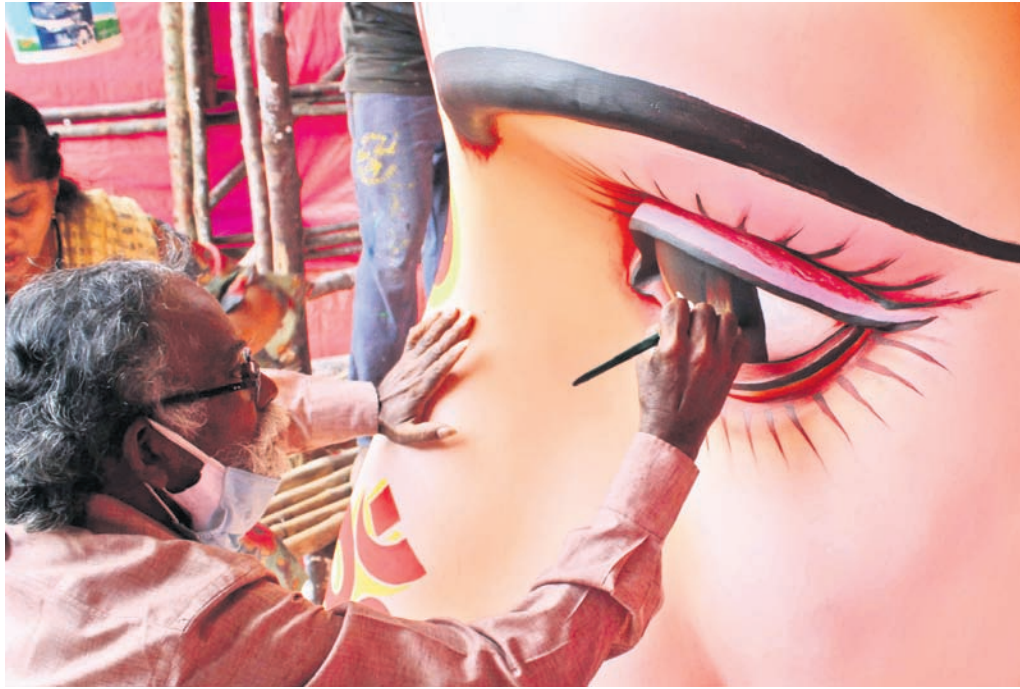
"There have been discussions with the Delhi government since the second wave of COVID-19. We are still reviewing the policy and trying to see if it is workable for Linde," Mr Banerjee added.

The company has not entered any formal agreement with the government. Linde has also been in touch with the governments of Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh states to support setting up of additional oxygen storage capacities and manufacturing units.

For a third time in the last 11 days, India administered more than one crore doses of COVID-19 vaccine in a day on Monday taking the total number of doses given in the country to over 69.68 crore, the Union Health Ministry said.

"September has started on a high note as India touches 1 crore COVID-19 vaccinations today. Under PM Narendra Modi's leadership, world's largest vaccination drive is scaling massive heights," Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandavিয়া tweeted. A total of 1,05,76,911 doses were administered on Monday, officials said, adding that the figure is expected to increase with the compilation of the final reports for the day by late night.

TOUCH OF ELEGANCE



An artist applying finishing touches to a 30 feet tall Lord Ganesha idol in Hyderabad

UNI PHOTO

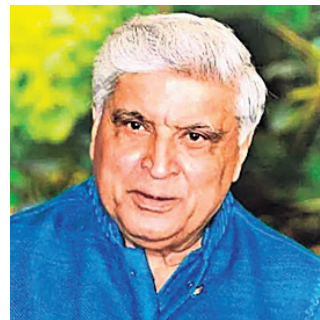
Shiv Sena backs RSS over Javed Akhtar's Taliban remark

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Sept 6:** The Shiv Sena Monday said lyricist Javed Akhtar was "completely wrong" in comparing the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh with the Taliban.

"How can you say those who favour the concept of a Hindu Rashtra are of Taliban mindset? We don't agree with this," an editorial in the Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana' said. Akhtar recently told a news channel that right wing all over the world has an uncanny similarity.

"The Taliban want an Islamic country. These people want to make a Hindu Rashtra," the lyricist said without naming the RSS. Referring to his remarks, the editorial in 'Saamana' said, "Even though Javed Akhtar is a secular man and speaks against fundamentalism, he is completely wrong in comparing the



RSS with the Taliban. The Marathi publication further said the stand of those who propagate a Hindu nation is moderate. "The partition which led to the creation of Pakistan was based on religion. Those who support a Hindu nation only want that the majority Hindus shouldn't be sidelined. Hindutva is a culture and people of the community demand the right to stop those who attack this culture," it said. The

Sena edit further said comparing Hindutva with the Taliban is an "insult" of the Hindu culture. "Despite being a Hindu majority country, we have raised the flag of secularism. The proponents of Hindutva only want that Hindus shouldn't be sidelined," it said. "You can have differences with the RSS, but to call their philosophy Talibanism is completely wrong," it added.

"The Taliban is a terrorist organisation which believes in violence and is anti-women. Comparing such organisations with the RSS, VHP and Bajrang Dal...I condemn his statement. All these three organisations do not believe in violence and do not work against anyone. They do social service. Strict action should be taken against him," VHP national general secretary Milind Parande told reporters when asked about Akhtar's statement.

More contacts of child identified

AGENCIES

**Kozhikode, Sept 6:** The Kerala health department has identified 251 persons who have come in contact with the 12-year-old boy, who succumbed to Nipah virus infection, out of which 38 are in isolation at the Kozhikode Medical College hospital and of which 11 have shown symptoms, Health Minister Veena George said Monday.

NIPAH DEATH CASE

George, in a press meet here, said of the 251 contacts, 129 are healthcare workers. "There are 38 persons in isolation at the Kozhikode Medical College hospital of which 11 have shown symptoms. Samples of eight persons have been sent to Pune NIV for testing," the minister said, adding that the health condition of all those who have shown symptoms are stable. She said of the 251 contacts, 54 are high risk contacts out of which 30 are healthcare workers. This includes parents and few close relatives

of the child too. "These contacts were identified following strict protocol," she said.

She said the special laboratory set up at the medical college hospital here by the Pune NIV team, which reached the state in the afternoon, will start testing the samples from tonight. A medical expert team has visited the house and locality of the child. Another team from the Animal Husbandry

Department also inspected the locality. "The blood and serum samples of the two goats, owned by the child's family, will be tested at the National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases in Bhopal," the Minister said, adding that a team from Bhopal NIV will reach Kozhikode on Wednesday. However, testing and other related activities will continue. Special teams have been formed for a detailed collection of information from the locality of the child's house.

Sec 144 imposed in Karnal ahead of farmers' protest

AGENCIES

**Karnal (Haryana), Sept 6:** Central forces were deployed, mobile Internet services suspended and prohibitory orders banning gathering of people were imposed here Monday, a day ahead of the gherao planned by farmers at the mini-secretariat over the August 28 lathicharge.

The Haryana government ordered suspension of mobile Internet services from 12:30 pm Monday to Tuesday midnight to "stop the spread of misinformation and rumours" on social media, according to an order of the Home Department. Forty companies of security personnel, including 10 companies of central paramilitary forces, have been deployed in the district where local authorities have also imposed prohibitory orders under section 144 of the CrPC, officials said. Haryana BKU chief Gurnam Singh Chaduni said that they had given a deadline of September 6 to the administration to meet their demands. He said a



meeting with district administration officials was held here on Monday but after failing to get any satisfactory response about their demands they decided to hold a big panchayat Tuesday morning before proceeding to the mini-secretariat to gherao it.

"We will hold a peaceful protest, but if the administration stops us, then we will break barricades," Chaduni told reporters here, adding that farmers have no plan to block the national highway. The order suspending mobile Internet services stated that "to prevent any distur-

bance of peace and public order" here, mobile Internet services (2G/3G/4G/CDMA/GPRS), SMS services, including bulk SMS (excluding banking and mobile recharge) and all dongle services etc, except voice calling, will remain suspended with effect from 12:30 pm Monday till 11:59 pm Tuesday. Earlier, the district administration issued prohibitory orders under section 144 of the CrPC, banning the assembly of five or more people, and a traffic advisory with planned route diversions, the officials said.

K'taka local polls: BJP wins Belagavi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, Sept 6:** Karnataka's ruling BJP has managed to wrestle Belagavi City Corporation by winning a clear majority in local body elections, but fell short of a majority in Hubballi-Dharwad, whereas Congress suffered a setback in Kalburgi.

However, the BJP is all set to elect its mayoral candidates in all three major city corporations. The AIMIM of Asaduddin Owaisi marked its arrival in Karnataka by winning one seat in Belagavi and three seats in Hubballi-Dharwad.

The BJP won 36 seats in the 58-member Belagavi City Corporation as both Kannadigas and Marathi-speaking people came together to vote for it.

The Congress won 10 seats, while the Maharashtra Ekkikarana Samithi (MES), which had wielded influence in local elections for decades, was reduced to two seats. The AIMIM won one of the six seats it contested.

In the 82-member Hubballi-Dharwad city corporation, the BJP won 39, while the Congress bagged 33 seats.

THE CHANDRAYAAN-2 IS INDIA'S SECOND MOON MISSION

ISRO commemorates 2 yrs of Chandrayaan-2 Orbiter

AGENCIES

**Chennai, Sept 6:** Commemorating the completion of two years of operation of Chandrayaan-2 orbiter around the moon, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space K. Sivan inaugurated two day Lunar Science Workshop 2021 Monday.

He also released Chandrayaan-2 data product and science documents, along with data from Chandrayaan-2 orbiter payloads.

The eight payloads onboard Chandrayaan-2 are conducting scientific observations of the Moon by remote sensing and in-

situ techniques.

According to ISRO, the science data are being made available for analysis by academia and institutes, for a greater participation to bring out more science from Chandrayaan-2 mission.

The two-day Lunar Science Workshop, is live-streamed on ISRO's website and Facebook page, for effectively reaching the students, academia and institutes, to engage the wisdom of the scientific community to analyse Chandrayaan-2 data. In his inaugural address, ISRO Chairman, K Sivan said the eight payloads on board the Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft are conducting remote sens-



ing and in-situ observations of the Moon at around 100 km altitude from the lunar surface.

"Till date, the Chandrayaan-2

has completed more than 9,000 orbits around the Moon," added Sivan, also Secretary in the Department of Space (DoS).

According to the Bengaluru-headquartered ISRO, data product and science documents were released by Sivan, along with data from Chandrayaan-2 orbiter payloads.

"The science data are being made available for analysis by academia and institutes, for a greater participation to bring out more science from Chandrayaan-2 mission," ISRO said.

Sivan said he has reviewed the science results, and found them to be "very much encouraging".

Chairman of Apex Science Board, ISRO, A S Kiran Kumar said the imaging and scientific instruments on board the

Chandrayaan-2 satellite have been providing excellent data.

The science results from the eight payloads will be presented by the scientists in this workshop.

In addition to the science results, during September 6-7, there will be lectures on the Chandrayaan-2 mission, tracking, operations, and data archival aspects as well. Along with the scientists from ISRO/DOS, there will also be lectures on lunar science to be delivered by scientists from Indian Institutes of Science Education Research, Kolkata, IISc, Bengaluru and IIT Roorkee.

The Chandrayaan-2 is India's second moon mission.



I would like to govern together with the Greens  
**OLAF SCHOLZ** | GERMAN CHANCELLOR CANDIDATE

**BITCOIN BRINGS HOPES, DOUBTS**

El Salvador is betting that this week's pioneering adoption of Bitcoin will spur its economy, especially one of its most crucial sources of revenue: money sent home by Salvadorans in the US. President Nayib Bukele has asked over 2 million Salvadorans who live overseas to send their remittances in Bitcoin



**international**

**of the day quote**

**Radical Islam** believes not only in Islamism – the turning of the religion into a political doctrine – but in the justification of struggle if necessary armed struggle to achieve it. Other Islamists agree with the ends but eschew violence

**TONY BLAIR** | FORMER UK PM

**We do not expect a decrease in tensions on the eastern border because in a few days the biggest military exercises in 40 years will start.** 'Zapad-2021'

**MATEUSZ MORAWIECKI** | POLAND PM

**Community safety is not up for negotiation with the gun lobby. And you certainly don't hand them the pen to write your platform**

**JUSTIN TRUDEAU** | CANADIAN PM

**Taliban claim control of Panjshir**

**ISLAMIST GROUP PROMISES FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT 'SOON'**

Kabul, Sept 6: The Taliban claimed victory Monday over opposition forces in the Panjshir valley northeast of Kabul, declaring that it completed the Islamist group's takeover of Afghanistan and promising to announce a new government soon.

Pictures on social media showed Taliban members standing in front of the gate of the Panjshir provincial governor's compound after fighting over the weekend with the National Resistance Front of Afghanistan (NRF), led by Panjshiri leader Ahmad Massoud. "Panjshir, which was the last hide-out of the escapee enemy, is captured," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid told a news conference. Earlier, he had said: "With this victory and latest efforts our country has come out of the whirlpool of the war and our people will have a happy life in peace, liberty and freedom."

The Taliban assured the people of Panjshir, who are ethnically distinct from the Pashtun-dominated Taliban and fought against the Islamists during their rule from 1996 to 2001, that there would be no "discriminatory act against them."



"They are our brothers and would work together for a joint purpose and welfare of the country," Mujahid said.

Massoud, who leads a force drawn from remnants of regular Afghan army and special forces units as well as local militia fighters, said in a Twitter message he was safe, but gave no details. Mujahid said he had been told that Massoud and former vice president Amrullah Saleh had escaped to neighbouring Tajikistan.

Alli Maiman Nazary, head of foreign relations at NRF, said the Taliban's claim of victory was false and opposition forces continued

to fight. "The NRF forces are present in all strategic positions across the valley to continue the fight," he said on his Facebook page.

Mujahid, the Taliban spokesman, denied there were any disagreements within the movement about the formation of a new government and said it would be announced soon, but he did not set a date.

He also said women were back at work in the health and education sectors and "other fields will be provided, one by one, once the system has been established for them."

**LAST POCKET OF RESISTANCE**  
The militants, who swept to

**Resistance leader calls for 'national uprising'**

Kabul: The leader of the resistance movement in Afghanistan's Panjshir Valley Monday called for a 'national uprising' against the Taliban. In an audio message sent to media, National Resistance Front (NRF) commander Ahmad Massoud said: "Wherever you are, inside or outside, I call on you to begin a national uprising for the dignity, freedom and prosperity of our country." The NRF in Panjshir -- made up of anti-Taliban militia and former Afghan security forces -- Sunday acknowledged suffering major battlefield



losses and called for a ceasefire. But Monday the group said in a tweet that its fighters were still present in "strategic positions" in the valley. The NRF includes local fighters loyal to Ahmad Massoud -- the son of the famous anti-Soviet and anti-Taliban commander Ahmad Shah Massoud -- as well as remnants of the Afghan military that retreated to the Panjshir Valley.

power last month as the United States withdrew its troops after a 20-year war, banned girls and women from schools and most work when they last ruled the country, from 1996 to 2001.

The group has now said women would be allowed to work across important sectors of society, in line

with Islamic law, and their rights would be protected.

The Taliban seized control of most of Afghanistan three weeks ago, taking power in Kabul August 15 after the Western-backed government collapsed and President Ashraf Ghani fled the country.

**Florida gunman kills mom holding baby among four**

Fort Lauderdale (US), Sept 6: A man wearing full body armour fatally shot four people, including a mother and the 3-month-old baby she was cradling, and engaged in a massive gunfight with police and deputies before he was wounded and surrendered, a Florida sheriff said Sunday. An 11-year-old girl who was shot seven times survived.

Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd said during a press conference that even after 33-year-old Bryan Riley was arrested Sunday morning, he was so aggressive that he tried to wrestle a gun from police as he lay on his hospital gurney.

Judd said Riley, a former Marine who served as a sharpshooter in both Iraq and Afghanistan, seemed to have targeted his victims at random and appeared to be suffering from mental health issues. Judd said Riley's girlfriend told authorities Riley had been slowly unravelling for weeks and repeatedly told her that he could communicate directly with God. "They begged for their lives and I killed them anyway," Judd said Riley told them during an interrogation.

**Kono gains popular support to become next Japanese PM**

ASOCIATED PRESS

Tokyo, Sept 6: Japan's outspoken Cabinet minister in charge of vaccinations, Taro Kono, has the most popular support to become the country's next leader, according to opinion polls released Monday, as potential candidates jockey to replace outgoing Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga.

Kono, 58, a graduate of Georgetown University and fluent in English, is a rarity in Japanese politics, which are dominated by elderly men. He has many fans among younger people, with whom he communicates via social media. He has also served as foreign and defense ministers.

Suga's sudden announcement Friday that he will not seek another term as head of the governing Liberal Democratic Party in a Sept. 29 vote opened the way for an array of candidates.

The head of the governing party is normally elected prime minister by parliament because the party and



its coalition partner hold a majority of seats.

Suga, who took office a year ago, has faced nosediving popularity over his government's coronavirus response, which many saw as slow and limited, and for insisting on hosting the Olympics despite widespread opposition over health concerns.

Having a fresh leader is important for the Liberal Democrats ahead of an upcoming general election that must be held by late November.

A telephone survey conducted Sept. 4-5 and released Monday by Japan's Kyodo News agency

showed nearly 32% of the 1,071 respondents said they preferred Kono as the next prime minister, with former Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba trailing with 27%. Former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida, the only person who has announced their candidacy, was third with 19%.

Both Kono and Ishiba have expressed interest in running but have not announced their candidacies as they continue to seek support from party lawmakers.

As is customary in Japan, the survey did not provide a margin of error. Polls of that size normally have a margin of error of about 3 percentage points.

Two other weekend surveys, by the Yomiuri newspaper and TBS television, also ranked the top three potential contenders in the same order.

Public popularity does not directly affect the choice of prime minister, who is elected by parliament from candidates presented by various parties.

**BRAVING THE ODDS**



A migrant woman carries her baby as members of the National Guard block the street during an operation to dissolve a caravan of migrants and asylum seekers from Central America and the Caribbean as they try to make their way to the US, in Huixtla, Chiapas, Mexico.

**Life expectancy drops in pandemic-struck Italy**

ASOCIATED PRESS

Rome, Sept 6: Life expectancy for men in some of Italy's worst-hit provinces in the pandemic dropped by more than four years.

ISTAT, Italy's national statistics bureau, in a report Monday said that compared with 2019, nationwide life expectancy for those born in 2020 dropped by 1.2 years.

"In 2020, the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and the sharp increase in the risk of mortality that derived from it abruptly interrupted the increase of life expectancy at birth that had marked

a trend up to 2019," ISTAT said. The pandemic first erupted outside Asia in northern Italy, and much of the north reeled with confirmed COVID-19 deaths in the initial wave of cases.

In the northern provinces of Bergamo, Cremona and Lodi, life expectancy for men decreased by some 4.3 to 4.5 years. For women in those provinces, the reduced expectancy ranged from 3.2 to 2.9 years.

For a child born in 2020, male life expectancy nationwide is 79.7 and female life expectancy is 84.4, ISTAT said.

**West cries foul as Belarus protest leader sentenced to 11 yrs**

REUTERS

Kyiv, Sept 6: Maria Kolesnikova, one of the leaders of mass street protests against Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko last year, was sentenced to 11 years in prison Monday, leading to an outcry from Western countries.

Kolesnikova, 39, had been detained after ripping up her passport to prevent Belarusian security forces from deporting her in a standoff at the Ukrainian border in September.

The musician-turned-politician became one of the faces of the mass opposition movement during the August 2020 presidential election, which the protesters say



was rigged to extend Lukashenko's grip on power.

Lukashenko, who has denied electoral fraud, has been in office in the former Soviet republic since 1994 and has faced fresh Western

sanctions since launching a violent crackdown on his opponents. Kolesnikova and another senior opposition figure, Maxim Znakh, were charged with extremism and trying to seize power illegally. Both denied wrongdoing and Kolesnikova called the charges absurd.

Znakh was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Both prisoners will appeal the verdict, Znakh's lawyer told reporters.

The European Union denounced the verdict, while Britain's foreign minister called it an assault on defenders of democracy. "The EU deplors the continuous blatant disrespect by the Minsk regime of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Belarus," the European Union's spokesperson said in a statement.

Belarus has denied committing human rights abuses and portrayed the protesters as bent on violent revolution, backed by foreign powers.

**Floods inundate houses in Nepal**

**Kathmandu:** Flash floods triggered by heavy rainfall have inundated over 380 houses and damaged several residential areas in Kathmandu, police said Monday. Heavy rainfall Sunday night inundated more than 100 places in Kathmandu. Teams of Nepal Police, Armed Police Force and the Nepal Army have rescued more than 138 people last night, said Sushil Singh Rathore, spokesperson at the Metropolitan Police Office. "Rescue work was carried out at Mulpani settlements on the bank of Manohara River, Kadagari, Teku and Balkhu areas," Rathore said. Most of the human settlements on the river banks in Kathmandu have been inundated by the flash floods. Kathmandu witnessed 105 mm of rainfall within four hours, according to officials.

**No cashiers, please: Futuristic supermarket opens in Mideast**

ASOCIATED PRESS

Dubai, Sept 6: The Middle East Monday got its first completely automated cashier-less store, as retail giant Carrefour rolled out its vision for the future of the industry in a cavernous Dubai mall.

Like Amazon's breakthrough unmanned grocery stores that opened in 2018, the Carrefour mini-market looks like any ordinary convenience store, brimming with sodas and snacks, tucked between sprawling storefronts of this city-state.

But hidden among the familiar fare lies a sophisticated system that tracks shoppers' movements, eliminating the checkout line and allowing people to grab the prod-

ucts they'll walk out with. Only those with the store's smartphone app may enter.

Nearly a hundred small surveillance cameras blanket the ceiling. Countless sensors line the shelves. Five minutes after shoppers leave, their phones ping with receipts for whatever they put in their bags.

"This is how the future will look," Hani Weiss, CEO of retail at Majid Al Futtaim, the franchise that operates Carrefour in the Middle East, told The Associated Press. "We do believe in physical stores in the future. However, we believe the experience will change."

The experimental shop, called Carrefour City+, is the latest ad-



dition to the burgeoning field of retail automation. Major retailers

worldwide are combining machine learning software and artificial

intelligence in a push to cut labour costs, do away with the irritation of long lines and gather critical data about shopping behaviour.

"We use (the data) to provide a better experience in the future ... Whereby customers don't have to think about the next products they want," Weiss said. "All the insights are being utilised internally in order to provide a better shopping experience."

Customers must give Carrefour permission to collect their information, Weiss said, which the company promises not to share. But the idea of a vast retail seller collecting reams of data about shoppers' habits already has raised privacy concerns in the United States,

where Amazon now operates several such futuristic stores, known as Amazon Go.

It's less likely to become a public debate in the autocratic United Arab Emirates, home to one of the world's highest per capita concentrations of surveillance cameras.

With the pandemic forcing major retailers to reassess the future, many are increasingly investing in automation — a vision that threatens severe job losses across the industry. But Carrefour stressed that human workers, at least in the short-term, would still be needed to "support customers" and assist the machines.

"There is no future without humans," Weiss said.



I expect that the general tightness of the supply chains will continue in the next 6 to 12 months  
**OLIVER ZIPSE** | CEO, BMW

**NALCO SHARES HIT 10-YEAR HIGH**

Shares of the National Aluminium Company Ltd (NALCO) surged to a decade high Monday due to a military coup and political unrest in Guinea, a major supplier of bauxite. The political instability in Guinea has fuelled supply concerns for the raw material used in production of the metal, which may eventually hike aluminium prices



of the day quote

Touchless travel with an enhanced focus on safety and well-being are key to customers today. The uptake in VAYD (Visa at your doorstep) services is another great indication of changing customer preferences. With the digital consumer experience evolving rapidly, we foresee a higher demand for such premium services that enable our customers to prioritise safe travel  
**VINAY MALHOTRA** | REGIONAL GROUP COO (SOUTH ASIA), VFS GLOBAL

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi road infrastructure is being developed faster, safer and more sustainable than ever before  
**NITIN GADKARI** | UNION ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS MINISTER

These steps (TRAI's recommendations) will go a long way in boosting India's 4G services and infrastructure, and in paving the way for the smooth roll out of 5G services in India in the near future. We are confident that the suggestions provided by TRAI will be duly considered and implemented by the central government  
**SP KOCHHAR** | DIRECTOR GENERAL, COAI

Aug gold imports nearly double as prices dip

**Mumbai, Sept 6:** India's gold imports in August nearly doubled from a year earlier to the highest in five months on strong demand and as weaker prices prompted jewellers to ramp up purchases for the festive season, a government source said.

Higher imports by the world's second-biggest bullion consumer could support benchmark gold prices, which have corrected nearly 12% from an all-time high of \$2,072 in August 2020. The surge in imports could increase India's trade deficit and pressure the rupee.

India imported 121 tonnes of gold in August, compared to 63 tonnes a year earlier, the source said on Monday on condition of



anonymity as he is not authorised to speak to media.

In value terms, August imports surged to \$6.7 billion from \$3.7 billion a year ago, he said.

A price correction in the first half of the month gave an ideal oppor-

tunity for jewellers who wanted to build inventories for the upcoming festive season, said a Mumbai-based dealer with a gold importing bank. Local gold futures fell to 45,662 rupees per 10 grams on Aug. 10, the lowest in four

**AHEAD OF FESTIVALS**

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In value terms, August imports surged to \$6.7 billion from \$3.7 billion a year ago

Indian authorities had imposed localised lockdowns in the June quarter as Covid-19 infections surged to a record high, but allowed businesses to reopen in a phased manner as cases fell

months. "Retail demand was good in August as coronavirus cases fell

and people stepped out to shop," said Harshad Ajmera, a gold wholesaler in Kolkata.

Indian authorities had imposed localised lockdowns in the June quarter as Covid-19 infections surged to a record high, but allowed businesses to reopen in a phased manner as cases fell.

India's gold imports in the first eight months of 2021 tripled to 687 tonnes from the lower base of 2020, when the coronavirus outbreak forced authorities to impose a nationwide lockdown, the government official said.

The country's gold imports in September could rise above 80 tonnes from 12 tonnes a year earlier if prices remain stable ahead of festivals, said a Chennai-based bullion dealer.

**Volvo Buses, OSRTC sign MoU, state receives 10 coaches**



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** The Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik dedicated 10 Volvo B8R 12-metre coaches to the state. Volvo Buses India, a part of VE Commercial Vehicles (VECV) had earlier delivered these buses to the Odisha State Road Transport Corporation (OSRTC).

"We look forward to deploying these premium buses on a range of long-haul inter-state routes radiating from Odisha to adjacent states. Our objective is to leverage Odisha's strategic location to provide connectivity to the whole region," said Diptesh Kumar Pattanayak, IPS, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, OSRTC. The state transport undertaking currently has a fleet of over 600 buses.

"The class-defining coach is a proven performer on a diverse array of routes and duty cycles across the globe. We are confident that the bus will provide the highest level of comfort and safety that Odisha's discerning passengers deserve," said Akash Passey, President of Bus Division, VECV.

The fully built Euro-VI compliant coach is powered by Volvo's proven 300HP D8K six-cylinder, direct injection diesel engine. This assures customers of best-in-class power to weight ratio. Ride quality is optimised through the Electronically Controlled Suspension (ECS) System, while safety is bolstered by the Electronic Braking System (EBS).

A MoU on Skill Development was signed with the OSRTC. "OSRTC invests heavily in skill development of the public transport landscape in Odisha. Access to VECV's knowledge-base and facilities will help to broad base our in-house programmes," OSRTC CMD said.

**BPCL's privatisation may get delayed, says Fitch**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 6:** Fitch Ratings Monday said uncertainty over the bidder consortiums and process complexity, including valuation, may lead to potential delays in privatisation of India's second-largest fuel retailer, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL).

Affirming BPCL's rating at 'BBB-' with a negative outlook, Fitch said it continues to treat the potential divestment of the company by the Indian government as an event risk.

"Bidders are conducting due diligence, but uncertainty over the bidder consortiums and process complexity, including valuation, may lead to potential delays.

"We believe the risks of further COVID-19 waves and global oil and gas companies' increased focus on energy transition lead to additional uncertainty over the timing and valuation of potentially large acquisitions in the sector," it said.

The rating agency said it will review the ratings once significant progress is achieved.

The government is selling its entire 52.98 per cent stake in BPCL for which three expressions of interest (EOIs) including one from billionaire Anil Agarwal-led Vedanta Group have been received. Financial bids are yet to be called.

Fitch expected BPCL's marketing sales to improve to 43 million



**Affirming BPCL's rating at 'BBB-' with a negative outlook, Fitch said it continues to treat the potential divestment of the company by the Indian government as an event risk**

tonnes (MT) in FY22 from 41 MT in FY21, still 6 per cent below the FY20 level. "This reflects the impact on India's petroleum product demand from the pandemic's second wave in 1QFY22 and the risks of further waves.

"We expect the demand fall in FY22 to be less severe than FY21 as

business and societal behaviour has adjusted, supporting activity, and the vaccination programme may prevent a severe recurrence in infections," it said.

BPCL's gross refining margins (GRM) are expected to improve to USD 3.5 per barrel in FY22 from core GRM of USD 1.9 in FY21.

"We expect the OMCs, including BPCL, to maintain steady base marketing margins (MM) in FY22, including price increases to re-coup capex on making their refineries compliant with new emission norms.

However, MM will be below the record highs of FY21 when the decline in oil prices was not fully passed through to consumers," it said.

**India's July-Sept GDP growth seen at 7-8%**

According to the EcoScope report of MOFSL, there would be some moderation in Economic Activity Index-Gross Value Added (EAI-GVA) growth in July 2021, largely on account of weaker fiscal spending

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Sept 6:** The growth rate of India's GDP for the July-September quarter is likely to remain in the range of 7-8 per cent. In the first quarter of financial year 2021-22, India's GDP witnessed a growth of 20.1 per cent compared to the same period of the last fiscal.

According to the EcoScope report of Motilal Oswal Financial Services Limited (MOFSL), there would be some moderation in Economic Activity Index-Gross Value Added (EAI-GVA) growth in July 2021, largely on account of weaker fiscal spending.

It, however, noted that private spending, consumption and investments, on the other hand, has grown decently.

"Although there is no one-to-one correlation between our EAI and the official GDP/GVA due to the underlying differences, our composite indices move in sync with the official real GDP (ex-discrepancies) and real GVA estimates," it said.

"Accordingly, we expect real GVA growth of 7-8 per cent Y-o-Y in 2QFY22 v/s 20.1 per cent Y-o-Y growth in 1QFY22."

As per Motilal Oswal's estimates, total consumption grew 5.1 per



cent Y-o-Y in July 2021 against 2.7 per cent in June 2021 and -12.1 per cent in July 2020.

Within consumption, private consumption grew at a three-month high of 6.9 per cent Y-o-Y, though government consumption fell 31 per cent Y-o-Y in July 2021.

Excluding government consumption, EAI-GVA grew faster at 7.1 per cent Y-o-Y in July 2021, faster than 3.2 per cent Y-o-Y in June 2021, but slower from March-May 2021.

Further, faster growth in imports compared to exports led to negative contribution from external trade to EAI-GDP in July 2021.

Total investments grew at five-month lows of 12.1 per cent Y-o-Y in July 2021 against 18.5 per cent in June 2021 and 21 per cent decline in July 2020.

**SHORT TAKES**

**MSI hikes vehicle prices**

**New Delhi:** The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) Monday said it has increased prices of its entire product range, except Celerio, by up to 1.9% with immediate effect. The company noted that it has taken the decision to hike prices due to an increase in various input costs. The weighted average price rise in ex-showroom prices (New Delhi) across select models is 1.9%, it added. This is MSI's third price hike this year. The auto major has already raised prices in January and April.

**Amazon Pay UPI reaches 5cr users**

**New Delhi:** Amazon Pay said that around 5 crore customers are the users of Amazon Pay UPI. To celebrate this milestone, Amazon Pay is offering daily rewards through the month of September to all customers using Amazon Pay UPI for shopping, paying bills, paying at online merchants and sending money to their contacts. Customers are using the Amazon app to pay at 2 crore local shops by simply scanning any UPI QR code.

**Byju's FY20 profit grows over 2-fold**

**New Delhi:** Byju's, India's most valuable education tech startup, has seen profit more than double to ₹50.76 crore in FY20 with the sale of tablets, SD cards and books getting it the bulk of its revenues. Byju's standalone income from operations of ₹2,110 crore came from three major businesses - tuition fee (Rs 144 crore), sale of education tablets and SD cards (Rs 1,675 crore) and sale of reference books (₹560 crore).

**Sebi bans 85 entities**

**New Delhi:** Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) Monday barred total 85 entities, including Sunrise Asian Ltd, from the capital markets for up to one year for manipulating the company's share price. In its order, the regulator restrained Sunrise Asian and its then five directors from the capital markets for one year and the 79 connected entities for six months.

**ODISHA-BASED STEEL INDUSTRIES**

**'Only pre-emption policy can save MSMEs'**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 6:** The Utkal Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UCCI) and Orissa Sponge Iron Manufacturers' Association here have jointly urged the state government to reserve at least 50 per cent iron ore for Odisha-based steel industries under its pre-emption policy as it would go a long way to save the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in steel sector and livelihood of lakhs of people in the state.

Amid the alleged acute crunch of iron ore and reports of closure of several MSMEs in the state, the UCCI and Odisha Sponge Iron Manufacturers' Association said



that 60 per cent iron ores are diverted outside state despite protest from local industry.

"Merchant mines are profiteering as iron ore prices skyrocket in Odisha, while several sponge units have been closed due the

scarcity of iron ore, because of which thousands of jobs are in peril," said the UCCI and Sponge Iron Manufacturers' Association.

Only pre-emption can save the industry by doing real value addition in the state and will gen-

eral more state revenues and employment for local youths, they suggested.

"There are around 100 small and big plants in the state. As we are facing an acute crunch of iron ore now, we request the state government to redirect the mines owners to channelise only 50 per cent of their products outside Odisha while they have to reserve the rest for the state-based industries," they pointed out.

UCCI president Brahmananda Mishra said that the state government had defended the pre-emption policy where the mines owners in Odisha had to reserve 50 per cent of their raw materials for state-based plants.

**Ola Electric ties up with banks for loans to customers**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 6:** Ola Electric Monday said it has tied up with leading banks and financial institutions, including HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Prime and TATA Capital, for providing loans to customers for its S1 electric scooter that will be available for purchase from September 8.

The company, which had last month launched the Ola S1 electric scooter in two variants - S1 and S1 Pro - at prices ₹99,999 and ₹1,29,999, respectively (ex-showroom including FAME II subsidy and excluding state subsidies), said it will start deliveries in October.

"We have tied up with all the

major banks and (financial) institutions... We will have many of them live starting September 8 and then others will be live soon after," Ola Electric Chief Marketing Officer Varun Dubey told PTI.

The banks and financial institutions that Ola Electric has tied up include Bank of Baroda, Axis Bank, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, IDFC First Bank, IndusInd Bank, AU Small Finance Bank, Jana Small Finance Bank, Kotak Mahindra Prime, TATA Capital and YES Bank.

Dubey said as consumers will be buying online the entire process is going to be "very seamless" and all those who choose financing should be able to avail of the option.

**We have tied up with all the major banks and (financial) institutions... We will have many of them live starting September 8 (tomorrow) and then others will be live soon after**

**VARUN DUBEY** | CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, OLA ELECTRIC



"They will be able to also get all the details in terms of what is the loan approval amount they have, what they need to do... Also, we

have got very attractive financing options, with the EMI starting at just ₹2,999 for S1..." he added.

When asked about the delivery

plans for the scooters, Dubey said from September 8 onwards, people who have reserved can convert that to a purchase by paying the remaining amount and finalise vehicle variant and colour options.

"Then we will start deliveries for them from October onwards. We will be doing home delivery and we will actually take the scooters to their doorsteps," Dubey added.

When asked about the impact of the current semiconductor shortage on the company's ability to meet demand, he said, "It's definitely an evolving situation. Currently the timelines that we have given out factor in the various constraints."

As people keep converting or-

ders into purchases, he said Ola Electric will update its customers about the waiting period on the basis of "where they are in the queue or when they have exactly purchased how many people purchased before them."

Ola Electric had opened pre-launch bookings of its electric scooters in July for ₹499 and had received 1 lakh orders in just 24 hours but it has not disclosed how many orders it has received so far. The company, August 15, announced its foray into the green mobility space with the launch of its first electric scooter, Ola S1.

The scooter comes in 10 colours with in-house development 8.5 kW motor and 3.97 kWh battery packs.

