



LITTLE CHOICE

Actor Urvashi Rautela says it is difficult to shoot following protocols but work has to go on

LEISURE P2



MINORS MOST EXPOSED

Coronavirus most prevalent in the 5-17 age group, according to findings of a Delhi serological survey

TWO STATES P7



'RE-ELECT TRUMP'

Top Republicans, including Nikki Haley urge the voters to re-elect Donald Trump for another term

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



To safeguard our democracy I hereby pledge not to raise inner-party democracy issue

SHORT TAKES

Fuel pain continues

New Delhi: Prices of petrol were raised by 9-11 paise per litre in Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai with effect from 6 am August 25, according to Indian Oil Corporation. Domestic petrol prices were raised in the metros for the sixth consecutive day Tuesday whereas diesel rates were left unchanged at existing levels. With Tuesday's hike, petrol prices have been raised nine times in the past ten days. In Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, the prices of petrol were raised by 9-11 paise per litre with effect from 6 am on August 25, according to notifications from the state-run Indian Oil Corporation.

Space research

Sambalpur: In a bid to provide technical and financial assistance to Veer Surendra Sai Space Innovation Centre' (VSSSIC) in Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT) in Burla, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Tuesday signed an MoU with the university. The VSSSIC will provide space research training to students across India. The virtual MoU signing ceremony was attended by ISRO secretary and ex-officio chairman K Sivan and Vice-Chancellor of VSSUT Atal Chaudhuri. Under the MoU, ISRO will provide a one-time grant-in-aid of ₹50 lakh to VSSUT for the development of infrastructure in the first phase.

State Covid toll 419

Bhubaneswar: Odisha's COVID-tally shot up to 81,479 Monday as 2,949 more people tested positive for the infection, while 10 fresh fatalities pushed the state's death toll to 419, a senior health official said. Cuttack registered the highest number of fresh cases at 589, followed by Khurda (474), Jajpur (215) and Ganjam (179), he said. A total of 1,826 cases were detected from quarantine centres, while 1,123 people tested positive for the infection during contact tracing, the official said. Ganjam reported five fresh fatalities, Sundergarh two and Cuttack, Nayagarh and Rayagada districts one each.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	38843.88 ↑ 44.80
NIFTY	11472.30 ↑ 5.80
DOLLAR	74.71 ↑ ₹0.10
EURO	88.17 ↑ ₹0.15
GOLD	₹51,000 ↓ ₹269
SILVER	₹64,712 ↓ ₹857

WEATHER		
BHUB	CTK	
MAX	27.8°C	28.0°C
MIN	26.3°C	25.0°C
Humidity	98%	95%
Rainfall	28.2mm	14mm
Forecast: Generally cloudy sky		

State joins postpone JEE-NEET movement

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik seeks intervention of Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal in postponing the national level tests

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday objected to the proposal of conducting JEE (Mains) and NEET examinations in the state in the first fortnight of September citing the threat of COVID-19 infection. The CM wrote a letter in this regard to Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal and sought his intervention in postponing of the exams. As per the government records, close to 50,000 students from the state are likely to appear for NEET while up to 40,000 students would appear for the JEE (Mains) this year.

"It would be highly unsafe and perilous for the students to visit the test centres physically to appear for these tests. Besides, as frequent lockdowns/shutdowns are being enforced by the concerned district administrations due to sudden escalation of COVID positive cases, the local transportation too gets disrupted," he said in the letter.

Vast tracts of the state are tribal areas and hence they are inaccessible and far off from towns. The Chief Minister expressed apprehensions that under such circumstances, there are chances of many students missing

the important examinations. Due to fewer examination centres, many students from remote areas would travel long distances.

"In view of the above, it is requested that the ensuing JEE (Main) and NEET examinations scheduled to be held in

1st fortnight of September, 2020 may be postponed to a later date to ensure safety and security of students," he said.

The CM also urged the HRD minister to open centres in all 30 districts of the state for all exams to be conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA).

STUDENTS GET GRETA POWER

NEW DELHI: Climate activist and global icon Greta Thunberg Tuesday put her weight behind the nationwide "postpone JEE NEET" movement saying conducting exams during coronavirus pandemic and extreme floods was "deeply unfair" on students. "I stand with their call to #PostponeJEE_NEETinCOVID," Thunberg, who has 4.1 million followers on Twitter, wrote on the microblogging website where the hashtag "#MODIJI_POSTPONEJEEENET" was already trending. While her tweet invited many responses from young men and women across the globe, the climate activist - who has just returned to school after a "gap year" of creating awareness about the climate emergency - also faced a lot of backlash for her stand. It's deeply unfair that students of India are asked to sit national exams during the Covid-19 pandemic and while millions have also been impacted by the extreme floods. I stand with their call to #PostponeJEE_NEETinCOVID. The demand to cancel the IIT and medical entrance exams has been gaining ground across the country with students and parents highlighting how they have been badly hit by floods that have affected many states, including Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.



GOVT SLASHES COVID TEST COST TO ₹1,200

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: The state government Tuesday reduced the price of Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) tests conducted to detect Covid-19 infections in private laboratories to ₹1,200 from ₹2,200.

The tests can be done only at four private laboratories in the state approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research.

"The (state) government, after careful consideration, has been pleased to refix the maximum price for RT-PCR Covid-19 test at Rs1,200 inclusive of GST and all other incidental charges for private individuals desirous of testing," a notification issued by the health department said.

The tests can be conducted at Apollo Hospital, IMS & SUM Hospital, InDNA Life Science at KIIT Technology Business Incubator (KIIT-TBI), and GenX Diagnostics. All these labs are located in Bhubaneswar.

The tests will be conducted by private laboratories under the supervision of Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC), Bhubaneswar following ICMR guidelines on the testing protocols for RT-PCR (Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction) Covid-19 tests, the notification said.

Earlier, the government had fixed ₹450 price for conduct of rapid antigen tests by the private laboratories.

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Heavy rains disrupt normal life in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: Incessant rainfall triggered by a fresh low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal disrupted normal life in parts of Odisha Tuesday. The low-pressure area has now become well marked, the Met office here said.

Besides triggering heavy to very heavy and even extremely heavy rainfall in parts of Odisha over the next three days, the system is likely to cause squally weather with the high-velocity wind having speed up to 55 kmph along and off the Odisha coast, it said.

This is the fifth low-pressure area formed over the Bay of Bengal in August. Four back-to-back low-pressure systems August 4, 9, 13 and 19 have caused heavy rainfall in the state, leading to flood-like situations in several areas, particularly Malkangiri district.

Under the influence of the new low-pressure area, several places in districts such as Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Jajpur, Cuttack, Khurda, Cuttack and Dhenkanal were lashed by rainfall of varying intensity since Monday night, officials said.

Water-logging was also experienced in some low-lying areas, disrupting life, officials said. Bhubaneswar and neighbouring Cuttack city also experienced rainfall, which affected normal life and the movement of the people, they said.

In view of the weather forecast, District Collectors have been asked to remain alert and closely monitor the situation. Special Relief Commissioner PK Jena said. Continuous vigil is being maintained in low-lying areas, including urban centres, and steps are being taken to dewater wherever required, Jena said.

CM okays package to revive rural economy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has approved a comprehensive package for rebooting rural economy to improve the life and livelihood of rural people affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Different departments like Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water, ST & SC Development and Women & Child Development & Mission Shakti will work for uplifting the livelihood of poor and very poor families in villages. Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water department said in a statement here Tuesday.

The government has rolled out four packages to revive rural economy, which was affected by the pandemic. In the package one, the government has decided to provide working capital support fund for individual nano and micro enterprises with one time loan up to ₹50,000 per entrepreneur. A member of SHG can avail the loan for taking up both farm and non-farm activities.

The second package involves one time financial assistance of ₹1.5 lakh to existing collective enterprises (enterprise group and producer group) for the agriculture and non-agriculture sectors. The loan assistance will be extended per group to invest in existing enterprises and livelihood



QUICK REBOOT

Working capital support fund for individual nano and micro enterprises with one time loan up to ₹50,000 per entrepreneur

One time assistance of ₹1.5 lakh to existing collective enterprises for the agriculture and non-agriculture sectors

projects, it said. The government has also decided to provide loan upto ₹20,000 to enterprises managed by very poor or destitute families like PwD, particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTG), widow, third gender, destitute, families with women as head, etc.

Similarly loans up to ₹1 lakh will be extended to skilled and semi-skilled migrant returnees who have returned during the Covid-19 pandemic for the development of existing enterprises and establishing new enterprises, the government said. The Chief Minister is hopeful that the package will be helpful in improving the economic condition of the poor, very poor and migrant returnees.

CHANCES BRIGHTEN FOR RATNABHANDAR OPENING

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, August 25: The possibility of inspection of ornaments at the inner chamber of Srimandir Ratnabhandar has brightened with the law department asking the temple administration to take appropriate action on a petition seeking assessment of the precious items stored at the temple treasure house.

According to sources, the law department has written to the Jagannath Temple Administration section office August 18 to take appropriate action as deemed fit on the petition of Dillip Kumar Baral with regard to the inspection of ornaments at the inner chamber of Ratnabhandar.

The department has also asked the temple administration to take action on the petition of another devotee with regard to filling of vacant posts at Srimandir Muktimandap.

The inner chamber of Ratnabhandar was opened last time in 1985. The temple administration had planned to open the inner chamber in 2018 and examine its structural status as part of a repair work at the 12th century shrine. However, the administration did not open the chamber. A group of experts and officials examined its structural status from outside. Later, it



was revealed that the temple administration did not have the keys to the inner chamber of Ratnabhandar.

Amid a public outcry on the issue, a packet containing the duplicate keys to the inner chamber was found from the district treasury. However, the temple administration is yet to open the inner chamber and inspect the ornaments.

In this scenario, many devotees and locals have raised apprehensions on the safety of orna-

ments and other precious items stored in Ratnabhandar. Baral, a devotee from Puri, had written to the Prime Minister, Odisha Governor, Chief Minister, Chief Secretary, law department principal secretary and the chief administrator of Srimandir to inspect the ornaments at the inner chamber of Ratnabhandar.

On the other hand, Durga Prasad Mohapatra had written to the law department and urged it to fill up vacant posts at Srimandir Muktimandap.

When contacted, Srimandir administrator (rituals) Jitendra Kumar Sahu said they have not received any letter from the law department with regard to the Ratnabhandar. "We will take appropriate action if we receive any letter," he added.



No recovery in demand in near term: RBI



AGENCIES

Mumbai, August 25: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Tuesday said demand in the economy will take quite some time to mend, and regaining pre-COVID-19 levels will depend on government consumption.

In its latest annual report, RBI said "deep-seats and wide-ranging" reforms are needed to regain losses and return to the path of sustainable economic growth.

"An assessment of aggregate demand during the year so far suggests that the shock to consumption is severe, and it will take quite some time to mend and regain the pre-COVID-19 momentum," the central bank said.

Private consumption has lost its discretionary elements across the board, it said, adding transport services, hospitality, recreation, and cultural activities were particularly hit in the economy, where consumption accounts for some 60 per cent of gross domestic product. "Going forward, government consumption is expected to continue pandemic-proofing of demand," it said. "Private consumption is expected to lead the recovery when it takes hold, with non-discretionary spending leading the way until a durable increase in disposable incomes enables discretionary spending to catch up."

RBI did not give out economic growth projections in the annual report as is usual. It, however, cited the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and OECD's forecasts of a 3.7 per cent contraction and 7.3 per cent decline for the fiscal to March 2021 respectively. Growth was slowing even before the outbreak of the pandemic. India's GDP growth of 4.2 per cent in 2019-20 was the lowest since the global financial crisis (GFC).

Ex-Pak envoy sold embassy house in Indonesia

AGENCIES

Islamabad/New Delhi, August 25: Pakistan's former ambassador to Indonesia allegedly sold the embassy building in Jakarta at a throwaway price around 10 years ago.

According to media reports from Islamabad, the country's anti-corruption body, National Accountability Bureau (NAB), August 19 filed a reference against the former envoy, Major General (retd) Syed Mustafa Anwar, for the alleged offence committed in 2001-02.

Pak's anti-corruption body National Accountability Bureau August 19 filed a reference against former envoy Major General (retd) Syed Mustafa Anwar



Anwar has been accused of illegally selling the building and causing a loss of \$1.32 million to Pakistan's national exchequer

Syed Mustafa Anwar, for the alleged offence committed

Anwar has been accused

of illegally selling the building and causing a loss of \$1.32 million to Pakistan's national exchequer, the Tribune reported.

The former ambassador, as per the documents submitted to the registrar, had issued an advertisement for the sale of the building without the Foreign Affairs Ministry's approval.

The sale was in violation of his powers under Section 9 (A) 6 of the NAB, the reports said. The NAB alleged that

Anwar in a clandestine manner, had started the process of selling the building immediately after his appointment in Jakarta. Once the process of the sale started, he then sent the proposal to the Ministry.

The Tribune said the reference in the court read that the Foreign Affairs Ministry had banned the sale of the building without its approval in several letters.

The Pakistan Supreme Court last month held that the NAB office was respon-

sible for delay in deciding corruption references including that against the former ambassador.

The apex court had said that the NAB officials were incompetent.

Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed had observed that NAB officers did not possess enough expertise to conduct proper inquiries and apparently there were no measures in place on the basis of which investigations were examined, the Tribune reported.

leisure



BAZAWULE TO DIRECT MUSICAL FEATURE BY WARNER BROS.

Ghana-born filmmaker Blitz Bazawule is set to direct Warner Bros' musical film *The Color Purple*, based on the Tony-winning Broadway musical of the same name. Producers- Oprah Winfrey, Steven Spielberg, Scott Sanders, and Quincy Jones- roped in Bazawule after watching his movie *The Burial Of Kojo* on Netflix.

'I BATTLED COVID-19 AROUND SAME TIME AS TOM HANKS'

Actor-comedian Kevin Hart has revealed that he battled Covid-19 around the same time as Hollywood superstar Tom Hanks. Hart made the revelation during a stand-up set, while performing at the iteration of Dave Chappelle's *An Intimate Socially Distanced Affair* show in Ohio, reports *pagesix.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Ganesh advises you to look before you leap. One hasty decision may undo a lot of hard work accomplished over a long period of time. After a tense morning, you may simply want an evening with kids, helping them grow the Dahlias.

TAURUS
Impulsive action kicks in as you work and interact today. Do not let the pressure and strain cloud your thoughts, and instead focus on acting on the things at hand. If you find things spiralling out of control, take a break and listen to some music that soothes your heart, suggests Ganesh.

GEMINI
Today, you are likely to be rather emotional and sentimental, says Ganesh. Your love for performing arts may make you take up lessons in classical music or traditional dance. And much to your delight, your sweetheart will treat you to a surprise candlelit dinner.

CANCER
Today, you will be extremely impulsive and spontaneous, feels Ganesh. You better get rid of your negative thoughts and beliefs and start taking charge of things at hand. Also, stop focussing so much on the pitfalls, and start working. Listen to music that speaks to your heart and you will be at peace with yourself.

LEO
If one were to put an earnest spirit and a frank attitude together, the result would be a Leo; it's like your hallmark. And with qualities like these in your kitty, don't be surprised if you happen to reach a milestone or two today. Will it be marital bliss or career success? No matter what the area is, be assured that your social standing shall get a heady boost today, assures Ganesh. Just don't let the success go to your head.

VIRGO
Stay clear of a coalition when it comes to business ventures, warns Ganesh. Alone, you can manage an entire stampede. By your own you are, by far, the best administrator of your department. Today, find yourself being the general and uniting people under your banner to achieve greater success, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
Today is the day when you seem to agree with everything that people say, without striking even a note of criticism. It's just one of those days when you are amazed by all things around you. Such an elastic approach will enable you to be reasonable in your views and sensible in your ways. Ganesh wishes you the very best.

SCORPIO
Ganesh warns you of a long, dreary day today. Though not completely at a loss, you may feel lost and desire to spend some time alone with yourself. The empty nest syndrome is likely to invade and hold your mental peace at ransom, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Today, your superiors at work are going to trust you with many complicated assignments. But, after exerting yourself, you are sure to come out with flying colors and have your work appreciated. Do not be surprised if cash incentives come your way. Such may indeed be your fortune, says Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Your exuberance and self-confidence will become the talk of the day for those around you. But it's not for nothing that you will attract so much attention. You will derive pleasure in accomplishing herculean tasks today, and Ganesh says you will do justice to work too. At home, everything will go smooth and you will enjoy and share the peace in your life with your wife. On the whole, you will have a cheerful day ahead.

AQUARIUS
Team work and cooperation bring out the best in you, so you must make the most of a chance to work in a group. It could be brainstorming, or campaigning for an environmental cause or even playing beach ball! A game of cards in the evening, and consider your day well spent, says Ganesh.

PISCES
The workaholic in your bursts to the fore with a vengeance, and today will see you tackle pending projects with the zeal of a Holy Templar crusader. Your energy levels will be unflagging, and your enthusiasm to wipe your slate clean admirable. Make the most of it, says Ganesh.



Urvashi Rautela

'Difficult to shoot film amid new normal'

HYDERABAD: Urvashi Rautela is in the city for her debut Telugu film, *Black Rose*, and she says it is difficult to shoot amid the new normal but work must go on. "We are following all precautionary measures amid the Covid pandemic. It's 'lights, camera, mask on and action'. We are following all new norms for *Black Rose*. It is a difficult time but work has to go on," Urvashi said about shooting for the Sampath Nandi directorial. About the film, which will also release in Hindi, she said: "My character is like Shylock in William Shakespeare's play *The Merchant Of Venice*. *Black Rose* deals with the point from (the perspective of) Kautilya's Arthashastra. She is the owner of a large group of companies called Lotus Capitals." Despite Covid restrictions, though, Urvashi says it feels amazing to be back on sets. "This is one of the first films to start shooting in the time of Covid pandemic along with Akshay Kumar sir's *BellBottom*," noted the actress. IANS

Kajol hopes compassion will outlast Covid

MUMBAI: Actress Kajol hopes compassion will outlast and outgrow Covid. She shared her thought in a new post on social media. In a new Instagram selfie, Kajol looks at the camera, with her specs placed on her head. "C for selfie, C for Compassion, C for COVID, aiming for the first two to outlast and

outgrow the last one. Keep on swimming! #CFor #GrowAndGlow," she wrote. Kajol's sister and actress Tanishaa Mukerji took to the comment section and wrote: "Miss you". On the work front, Kajol is set to make her digital debut with Tribhanga, directed by Renuka Shahane. It is a drama set in Mumbai, weaving a complex tale that goes back and forth through three generations of the same family, from the late 1980s to present day. IANS



SANJAY DUTT HAS A GOLDEN HEART: JISSHU

MUMBAI: Actor Jisshu Sengupta has described working with Sanjay Dutt as a learning experience, adding that he was very comfortable in his company. Jisshu worked with Dutt on the upcoming film, *Sadak 2*. "We shot nine days of climax, and every single day was about so much learning. The ease, the pain, the childlike innocence - I was so, so comfortable in his company. We spoke about music, about so many random things and laughed so much. He

has a golden heart," Jisshu said. With *Sadak 2*, Sanjay is revisiting the world of his 1991 hit, *Sadak*. The second part marks the return of Mahesh Bhatt as director after two decades. The film stars his daughters Alia and Pooja Bhatt along with Sanjay Dutt and Aditya Roy Kapur. The film will release August 28 on Disney+ Hotstar VIP. Jisshu was last seen in *Shakuntala Devi*, which is based on the life of the late Shakuntala Devi, who is widely revered as the human computer for her innate ability to make complex calculations within seconds. IANS

Curate your perfect work-from-home playlist

One needs to pick high tempo music to get into the zone and churn out things faster and have more output, suggests Dharini Upadhyay, educator of an online music school

NEW DELHI: Work-from-home is a big part of the new normal thanks to the Covid-19 pandemic. As we get comfortable in our designated work-from-home style, usually pyjamas with a formal top, the feeling of lethargy and laziness can kick in. This can make us de-motivated, especially with the lack of socialising. It's important to lighten up the mood while working, believes Dharini Upadhyay, co-founder of Furtados School of Music. The best way to do this is to create a playlist which will help you feel more motivated and alive, adding a fun element to your daily monotony. She offers some tips on choosing music based on the vibe you



want to create, emanate and feel. **For stressful situations** We all know sometimes deadlines can put us in stressful situations. It's important to calm yourself down and play music which

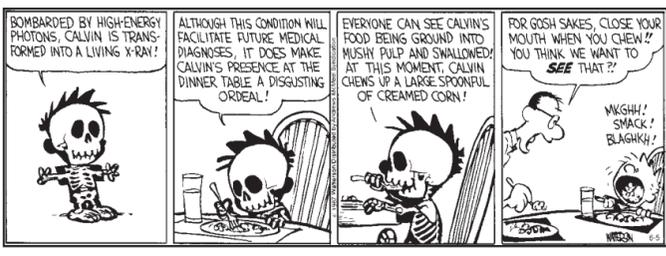
Work mode For the times when you want to get into the zone and churn out things faster and have more output, pick high tempo music. Genres like EDM, house, rock are great options for such situations. The higher beat count of such music can trick your body into working a little faster. **White noise** While you're working from home, sometimes you can feel a little lonely. To avoid the feeling, switching on some music can actually be quite therapeutic. You might not want to sing along and be distracted by it, but just have it on as white noise in the background. Jazz, instru-

mental covers can be great options for those times. **Prep for the weekend** Even though social distancing is keeping us away from unwinding with our friends, we can still prep for the weekend, starting Friday. Virtual parties and zoom get together are a part of the new normal and you want to get your upbeat self back for them. Listen to some great party music of your choice. Whether it's Hindi film music, English or Spanish, jam your way into the weekend. The next time you set your work from home station, prep it with your cup of your preferred beverage and turn the music on for a better working experience.

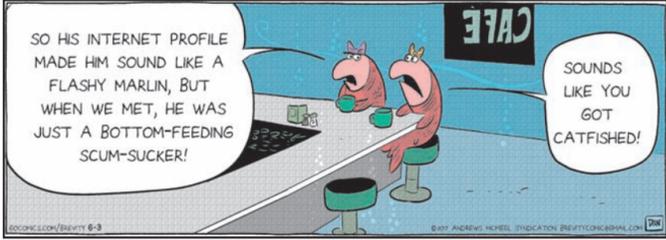
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

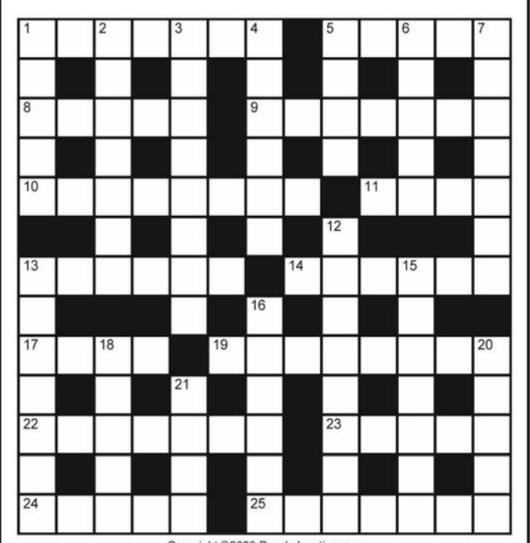


BREVITY



FUN post

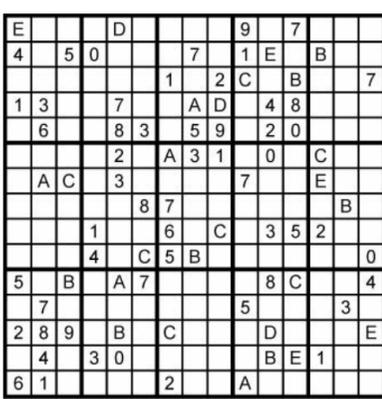
CROSSWORD



- Across**
1 Star's backup? (5-2)
5 Kingdom
8 Sparkle
9 Wander
10 Cruel
11 Orchard item
13 Breakfast bowlful
14 Collar
17 Fishing gear
19 Edible tubers
22 Give-up the ghost
- Down**
23 Expression
24 Newspaper section
25 Greek hero and king of Athens
1 Sweetener
2 Pilot
3 Impressive
4 Type of colony
5 Angry display
6 Sharp narrow ridge
- 7 Beaver-like aquatic rodent
12 Get it together
13 After Black and rain
15 Hard rubber
16 Australian marsupial
18 Duck hunter's lure
20 18-wheelers
21 Nobleman

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



SOLUTIONS

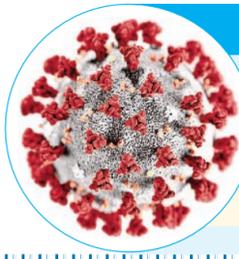


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



STREET FOOD

A vendor boils corns near Netaji Subhas bridge in Cuttack amid rain, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	2,39,06,360	1,64,41,170	8,19,213
India	31,95,401	24,28,185	58,838
Odisha	84,231	59,470	428

NIKIRAI GANGRAPE CASE

NHRC summons Kendrapara DM, SP

THE AUTHORITIES DID NOT PAY ANY HEED TO THE REPEATED REMINDERS FROM THE COMMISSION ASKING FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ATR ON BRUTAL GANGRAPE OF THE LADY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: A miffed National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has summoned the Kendrapara Collector and Superintendent of Police for their personal appearance before it along with the probe report in connection with the gang-rape of a middle-aged woman in Nikirai police limits in the district June 28, 2019.

The commission expressed its displeasure while hearing a petition (7489/IN/2019) filed by rights activist Himanshu Sekhar Nayak June 30, 2019.

The rights body has directed the said authorities to appear before it December 29 under Section 13 of the Protection of Human Rights Act. However, the authorities will be exempted from appearing in person if they manage to submit the action-taken report (ATR) on the issue by December 22.

The NHRC said, "Despite directions/reminders, the requisite reports have not been submitted by the concerned authorities. The Commission has taken serious note of the callous attitude of the con-



DISPLEASURE OVER INACTION

The incident took place around 1.30am June 28, 2019 when the victim, along with her family, was asleep

The desperadoes knocked the door on the pretext of asking for water, but the victim's husband denied sensing foul play

UPON ENTERING THE BEDROOM, THEY FOUND THE VICTIM ASLEEP AND TOOK TURNS TO OUTRAGE HER MODESTY

cerned authorities towards the directions of the Commission. In view of the above, the Commission directs its Registry to issue summons to the concerned authorities, u/s 13 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 to appear before the Commission on 29.12.2020 along with requisite reports."

The authorities did not pay any heed to the repeated reminders from the commission asking for the submission of ATR on brutal gang-rape of the lady.

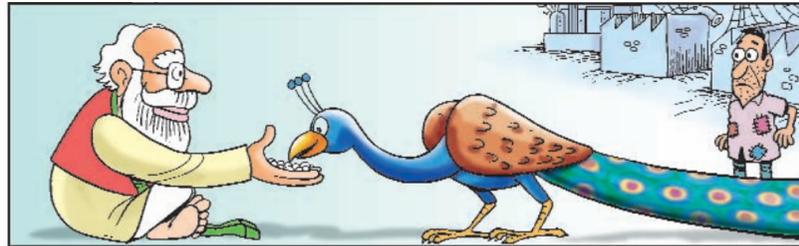
Notably, Nayak in his complaint claimed that the gruesome episode took place around 1.30am June 28, 2019 when the victim, along with her

family, was asleep. The desperadoes knocked the door on the pretext of asking for water, but the victim's husband denied sensing foul play. The trio broke open the door and assaulted the victim's husband with iron rods. Later, upon entering the bedroom they found the victim asleep and took turns to outrage her modesty. As if this wasn't enough, they inflicted severe injuries to her private parts before assaulting two of her minor sons who were asleep nearby," the petitioner informed the Commission referring to a police complaint lodged by the victim's husband.

Nayak said the desperadoes later decamped with cash and gold ornaments from the victim's place. The victim's husband raised an alarm following which fellow villagers reached his place and rushed the couple to the district headquarters hospital (DHH).

Later, after primary medication, the victim's husband approached Nikirai police which registered a case under Sections 457 (house-trespass), 397 (robbery) and 376 (rape) of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and began a probe.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



State ranks 3rd in budget process transparency

Chief Secy directs officials to work out composite index for tracking state's economy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: Adding another feather to its cap, Odisha has secured third position in the country in maintaining transparency in budget making.

This was revealed at a high-level review meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy Tuesday in virtual mode. Finance secretary Ashok Kumar Meena said that Transparency International in its annual report ranked Odisha in 3rd position next to Assam (1st) and Andhra Pradesh (2nd) with regard to transparency in budget making process.

Odisha secured 66 ranking points

while Andhra Pradesh got 67 and Assam 70. Other states in top five ranks include Jharkhand and Bihar which scored 60 and 59 points respectively, he said.

While complimenting the progressive procedural reforms achieved by Finance department in the matters of budget making, financial management and financial regulation, the Chief Secretary directed the department to work out a 'composite index' including agriculture, fishery and animal husbandry sectors for tracking States' economy during pre-Covid, Covid and post-Covid scenario.

He also directed the officials concerned to focus on surrender of

the funds lying idle in different government departments.

It was decided to include the indicators representing agriculture, fishery, animal husbandry, mining, GST, motor vehicle tax, electricity consumption, VAT on Non-GST goods, excise duty, total man-days created, aggregate bank credit, unemployment rate, revenue position, fiscal deficit/surplus, debt/GSDP ratio in the 'composite index'. It was also decided to use other high frequency data for a comprehensive objective raking. Tripathy advised the officials to apply the 'composite index' for assessing the states' economic trend on monthly and quarterly basis.

Vehicle lifting gang busted; 1 truck, 11 bikes seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: A special squad of Commissionerate Police busted a vehicle lifting gang by arresting two robbers and two buyers Tuesday.

According to sources at the twin city police, as many as 11 two-wheelers, one Hyva truck and four mobile phones were also seized from their possession.

The accused used to conceal the stolen vehicles in an isolated forest in Angul. The seized Hyva was taken away by the gang from Baliaanta area here.



While the arrested have been identified as Susanta Patra, 23, and Sahil Jani, 23, from Banki area in Cuttack district, the buyers were Biju Patra, 19, from Banki area and Pruthwiraj Pradhan, 25, from Bhubana area in Dhenkanal district. Susanta and Sahil have many cases pending against them at different police stations of Bhubaneswar, Jajpur and Puri. Sahil, the kingpin of the gang, has completed diploma in engineering.

The police said the culprits would move in a car in different areas mostly Ganjam, Khurda, Bhubaneswar, and Cuttack, Angul and Dhenkanal and spot different vehicles. They would steal them whenever they found them unattended. Many bike lifting cases had been reported from various localities in Bhubaneswar in the recent past. In order to nab these lifters, special squad and other police officers were directed to launch an investigation and detect the lifted vehicles.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: Issuing fresh set of instructions, Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) authorities here said that flight operations will remain suspended for four months owing to re-carpeting of runways which was postponed earlier due to the pandemic.

The re-carpeting work, a standard procedure of re-tarring the runways to ensure smooth landing for aircraft, is carried out in every 10 years or depending upon the traffic an airport receives. The last re-carpeting work at the BPIA was last taken up in 2007. It was scheduled to begin in February but was later postponed as COVID broke out.

"Come October, flight operations

at BPIA will remain suspended between 11pm and 7am every day for around four months for the runway re-carpeting work. The work was originally set to begin in November 2019, but was postponed to December and then again to February and further delayed amid the COVID-19 pandemic," said BPIA Director, VV Rao.

While international flights continue to remain suspended, the BPIA is now operating 17 domestic flights. As per sources, the re-carpeting for 2,742-metre wide runway will cost about Rs 28 crore and will include re-tarring, maintenance and overhauling of the entire stretch. The work will also involve enhancement of parallel taxi track.

"The daily re-tarred portions will be prepared for flight operations

by the time runway is handed back for normal operations. Flight timings will be rescheduled after holding discussions with various carriers and other stakeholders. The entire operation will be done in compliance with COVID guidelines issued by the government," Rao added. Meanwhile, detailing about the COVID impact on the airport, Rao mentioned that the airport had suffered over 50 per cent loss during the COVID-19 lockdown while the passenger traffic had dropped by 75 per cent.

"The passenger inflow of the airport was higher than the outflow in May and June. The traffic had increased from 9,721 in May to 58,953 in June and further to 65,137 in July," the airport authorities said.

BPIA re-carpeting to begin in Oct

Include specially-abled under NFSA: Centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 25: The secretary of Food and Public Distribution department under Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution has asked the Chief Secretary of Odisha and other states to ensure that all eligible persons with disabilities are included under National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013.

In the letter written to the Chief Secretaries, the secretary has requested to personally intervene in the matter and direct the departments concerned and especially

district administrations to ensure that appropriate mechanism is put in place and whole machinery is mobilised in mission mode for compliance of directions made by the department of Food and Public Distribution to states.

Earlier, the department had August 22 issued a direction to states to ensure that all disabled persons, who are eligible as per identification criteria of beneficiaries under NFSA, are covered under the National Food Security Act, 2013 and they get their entitled quota of food grains under NFSA & Pradhan Mantri Garib

Kalyan Anna Yojana as per provisions of the Act.

It was also stated in the letter that those not already covered should be covered with fresh ration cards to be issued as per the eligibility criteria. The Centre has reiterated that disability is one of the criteria for inclusion under Antyodaya Anna Yojana households and as differently-abled are vulnerable sections of the society.

The Section 38 of NFSA mandates that the Centre may from time to time give directions to the state governments for effective implementation of the provisions of the Act.



MOTHERLY LOVE

A doe feeds its fawn at Tulsipur Deer Park in Cuttack, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

Curbs on Durga Puja celebration in Cuttack

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 25: The district administration will put restrictions on community celebration of Durga Puja this year in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

The administration will not allow decorations and gathering at any Puja mandap in the Silver City, said Collector Bhawani Shankar Chayani Tuesday.

"Restrictions will be imposed on community celebration of Dussehra to avoid rush and gath-

ering at Puja mandaps," said the collector.

Cuttack Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Prateek Singh said he would not comment on this year

Dussehra celebration until there was a meeting of the Mahanagar Shanti Committee to deliberate on the issue.

Meanwhile, Cuttack Balu Bazaar Puja Committee, which is one of the oldest committees in the Silver City, has filed the petition in the HC urging the court to allow the festival in order to preserve the 500-year-old tradition.

Architectural marvel Krushi Bhawan in 'Dezeen'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 25: Newly-constructed Krushi Bhawan, the official building of state's Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment department here, has become the first government building in Odisha to feature in Dezeen, a prestigious international journal on architecture.

The news was shared by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on his Twitter handle.

Naveen took to the Twitter to say, "Glad to know that #KrushiBhawan, inspired by #Sambalpurikat has become #Odishas first building to be listed for #DezeenAwards2020 by widely acclaimed @dezeen. Constructed



ODISHA'S OWN CRAFT

The Rs 70-crore building was commissioned to Studio Lotus, a Delhi-based architectural firm, in 2013 and opened September 20, 2018

The brickwork elements that wrap the upper floor have a pattern designed to emulate Odisha ikat, a traditional dyeing technique from Odisha

with prize money of #KrushiKarmanAwards is symbolic of our farmer empowerment." The same building had received

international recognition in 2019 when it was shortlisted for the World Architecture Festival (WAF) Award, an official said.

The Rs 70 crore building was commissioned to Studio Lotus, a Delhi-based architectural firm, in 2013 and opened September 20, 2018.

The building shows how regional crafts can be integrated in a contemporary environment and exhibits the unique qualities of the state, the official said.

The light fixtures and metal screens in the corridors exhibit the tribal 'dhokra' craft.

The brickwork elements that wrap the upper floor have a pattern designed to emulate Odisha ikat, a traditional dyeing technique from Odisha.

Locally-sourced laterite and khondalite stones have been used in the building. It has hand-carved khondalite lattices and bas-relief carvings in the Odia pattachitra style in laterite stone depicting agricultural motifs of the state, the official pointed out.

Khurda back with highest single-day COVID cases

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 25: State's COVID-19 tally increased to 84,231 Tuesday with 2,752 fresh cases, while nine more fatalities pushed the death toll to 428, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

Of the new fatalities, two each were reported from Ganjam and Sundargarh districts and one each from Balasore, Bolangir, Cuttack, Gajapati and Khurda districts.

"Regret to inform the demise of Nine #COVID-19 positive patients while under treatment in hospitals," the H&FW department said on Twitter. Of the 428 deaths, Ganjam alone accounted for 181 fatalities followed by Khurda (55), Sundargarh (30), Cuttack (26), Rayagada (21), Gajapati (18), Nayagarh (12) and Puri (10), the official said, adding that these eight districts have reported more than 82 per cent of total COVID deaths in the state.

districts have the unique distinction of registering no COVID death so far while Jharsuguda and Nabarangpur districts have reported only one COVID death each.

Of the 2,752 fresh cases, 1,708 were recorded in quarantine centres and the remaining were detected during contact tracing.

This apart, as many as 53 more coronavirus patients in the state have died due to other ailments.

Sources said 12 districts in the state reported more than 100 cases Tuesday and a maximum number of 423 cases were registered from Khurda district followed by Cuttack (247), Jajpur (217), Ganjam (212), Rayagada (177), Koraput (174), Puri (144) and Mayurbhanj (137).

The state Monday conducted 58,338 tests, taking the total number of such clinical examinations to 14,21,958, the official pointed out.

Meanwhile, 2,546 COVID-19 patients recovered from the viral infection Tuesday, taking the tally to 59,470. We have shown how the

ISRO ties up with VSSUT to promote space research

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar/Sambalpur, August 25: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology (VSSUT), Burla, signed an agreement Tuesday for setting up of an innovation-cum-incubation centre at the technical institute to promote knowledge about space research among students.

As part of the memorandum of understanding (MoU), ISRO will offer technical consultancy support and financial assistance of Rs 50 lakh to VSSUT for development of infrastructure, a spokesperson of the university said in a statement.

The MoU was signed, through a videoconference, in the presence of ISRO chairman K Sivan and VSSUT vice-chancellor Atal Chaudhuri.

Skill Development and Technical Education Secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh highlighted the support of ISRO and its chairman Sivan for his nice cooperation. He stated that such type of programme will be



THE ISRO CHAIRMAN EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE PROPOSED VSSUT SPACE INNOVATION CENTRE WILL PROMOTE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SPACE RESEARCH AMONG STUDENTS

helpful to boost the talent of young scientists. He expressed that generally some good ideas come out from the students of small villages and towns and we have to discover them. He also narrated about TBI VSSUT for enriching startups and promoting the startup culture.

There will be collaboration for the development of high-end sim-

ulation tools, miniature test facilities like static test facility, solid propulsion research lab and establishment of testing facility for scaled down models.

A 'sounding rocket' developed by the VSSUT Innovation Club of the institute had found a place in the Limca Book of Records.

The ISRO chairman expressed

BOOSTING INNOVATION

ISRO will offer technical consultancy support and financial assistance of Rs 50 lakh to VSSUT for development of infrastructure, a spokesperson of the university said in a statement

There will be collaboration for the development of high-end simulation tools, miniature test facilities and establishment of testing facility for scaled down models



sub system and propulsion system.

ISRO will facilitate the limited utilisation of rocket launching facilities like Thumba, Sriharikota or Balasore (under DRDO), where all kinds of safety systems are available, for the launch of future sounding rockets developed at the Space Innovation Centre at VSSUT, the university spokesperson said.

On its part, the VSSUT will explore the latest global trend in space technology and take up related projects which will benefit the country.

BAGALA ROW



Activists of Congress (top) and members of BJP Mahila Morcha hold separate demonstrations to protest the alleged sale of Bagala Dharmashala land in Puri, Tuesday

Volunteers take up remedial classes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: With the Covid-19 pandemic showing no sign of abating and the glaring digital divide posing a massive challenge for rural children to attend online classes, a group of youths with the help of civil society organisations (CSOs) has started remedial classes for children in rural areas.

The initiative has so far benefited over 3,000 students in remote areas of 15 districts—Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Nuapada, Bolangir, Boudh, Kandhamal, Gajapati, Nayagarh, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Jharsuguda, sources said.

Till date, over 100 local youth volunteers have conducted more than 175 remedial classes in these districts while strictly following the Covid-19 guidelines of the state government.

They have been teaching the rural students since August 10 after being inspired by the local samitis to take up remedial classes in this critical time.

"Most of the parents are happy with our remedial classes as children are back to the teaching-learning environment and gradually catching up the courses from where they had left four months ago," said Binay Bhoi, a Plus II student who teaches pupils from Class I to V at the village club in Sundargarh district.

These volunteers are taking up remedial classes for two hours every day for different groups of children. Each group consists of five to six learners.

5.91L got ₹828cr incentive under housing schemes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: In an aim to ensure timely completion of projects sanctioned under rural housing schemes, the state government has released Rs 828 crore as incentive for 5.91 lakh benefici-

The govt is providing ₹20,000 to beneficiaries who complete construction in 4 months and ₹10,000 for those completing the same in 6 months

aries, official sources said here, Tuesday.

The government is providing Rs 20,000 as incentive to beneficiaries who complete the construction in four months while those completing the same in six months are getting Rs 10,000 under the rural housing schemes including Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and Biju Pucca Ghar Yojna (BPGY).

The state government has built 26, 84, 818 pucca houses under the rural housing schemes since financial year (FY) 2014-15 to till date.

Even in the midst of fighting Covid-19 pandemic, the state government has constructed 1, 14, 644 pucca houses, which is double the houses built in the last financial year.

An amount of Rs 18, 837 crore was sanctioned under PMAY (Rural) in FY 2016-17, out of which Rs 11, 463 crore was Central share and the

Govt work only on paper: BJP

Bhubaneswar: The state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Tuesday, accused the state government of doing works only 'on paper' and alleged that many poor housing scheme beneficiaries are deprived of government aid.

"Earlier, we had RTI replies from the government to cite the progress of housing works in rural areas. When our team visited some areas, it found that many projects were either incomplete or in dilapidated state," party spokesperson Golak Mohapatra said.

The state government has termed many incomplete projects as complete and also released money showing completion of works. He also alleged that many government officials are keeping with them the ATM cards of the housing scheme beneficiaries.

"We have shown how the Juang tribes who do not have houses but data at the block levels showed the construction completed. Their ATM

cards have also been taken away by government officials," he said.

He also said that the state government has been taking awards from the Union government by alleged manipulation of data of housing schemes. "Many government officials are siphoning off the

money meant for the poor for their construction of houses," he said.

The BJP leader also said, "What happened to the Rs 500 crore sanctioned for the welfare of returnee migrants. Most of the migrants are now depressed and want to migrate to other states. This shows the failure of the government in taking care them." Party leader

Leekshari Samantsinghar attacked the BJD MLA from Bari and tried to corner the legislator for her derogatory remarks against her party colleagues.



We have shown how the Juang tribes do not have houses but data at the block levels showed the constructions completed. Their ATM cards have been taken away by government officials

GOLAK MOHAPATRA
BJP SPOKESPERSON

Assign nodal officers for court cases, depts told

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: The state government has asked all departments to appoint nodal officers to deal with legal cases as office of Advocate General is facing difficulties in getting information in view of Covid-19 restrictions.

The Law department has asked all the departments to appoint nodal officers who will facilitate availability of instruction as and when re-



The Law department has asked all the departments to appoint nodal officers who will facilitate availability of instruction as and when required by the office of advocate general

quired by the office of advocate general.

Due to the prevailing pandemic situation, all government offices are functioning with minimal staff. As a result, the government officers dealing with their respective subject are not instantly available to provide information as and when required by the office of advocate general (AG) to comply the order of Orissa High Court, official sources said.

This move will help the AG office to present government's stand in the HC on time.

PARENTS' BODY WELCOMES CM'S MOVE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: Odisha Parents' Federation Tuesday thanked Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for writing a letter to Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' seeking his intervention in postponing the NEET and JEE exams.

As per the government records, close to 50,000 students from the state are likely to appear for NEET while around 40,000 students would appear for the JEE (Mains) this year.

Basudev Bhatt chairman of OPF said due to the growing cases of COVID-19, "We have received so many grievances from students of NEET and JEE aspirants who found it unsafe to take part in the NEET 2020 and JEE 2020 examination which is to be held September 13 and September 2, a month which is expected to witness a spike in corona cases."

Rail bicycle for inspection, repair of tracks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 25: The Indian Railways has introduced an innovative rail bicycle which will help the trackmen inspect, monitor, and repair the railway tracks.

These rail bicycles were prepared by Permanent Way (P-Way) units of Khurda Road Division by using damaged rail dolly wheels for balancing the cycle which will be used for mobile patrolling.

There are 18 P-Way units in Khurda Road Division of which eight units i.e. Brahmapur, Cuttack, Khurda Road, Goraknath, Cuttack, Bhadrak, Jajpur-Keonjhar Road and Dhenkanal units have prepared these rail bicycles.

The safety of tracks is primarily inspected and attended to by trackmen round the clock irrespective of all odds. Their movement was also insecure and by walk only. Now, with the invention of the bicycle which is capable of running on the tracks at an average speed of 10 km per hour, not only the movement of trackman has become easier, it



Trackmen with rail bicycle

OP PHOTO

PATROLLING ON WHEELS

These rail bicycles were prepared by Permanent Way units of Khurda Road Division by using damaged rail dolly wheels for balancing the cycle

The rail bicycle which is capable of running on the tracks at an average speed of 10 km per hour, not only the movement of trackman has become easier, it has also become faster

These bicycles can run at a maximum speed of 15 kmph. It weighs just around 30 kg and can easily be lifted, assembled and dismantled by a person

very helpful for patrolling. These bicycles can run at a maximum speed of 15 kmph. It weighs just around 30 kg and can easily be lifted, assembled and dismantled by a person.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, some of the sections over the division are currently closed for the traffic. In these sections, rail bicycle can be used for patrolling, ensuring safety and security.

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Two years on, where is Chandikhole oil refinery

The Dharmasala tehsil holding a public hearing for lease of black stone quarries has further raised doubts on the fate of the oil refinery project

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur, August 25: Even as two years have passed since the Centre gave its approval for establishment of an oil refinery at Chandikhole in this district, the fate of the project lies in uncertainty due to delay in land acquisition, a report said.

The project to be established by Union Petroleum Ministry at Dankari under Dharmasala tehsil will be the fourth and largest oil refinery in the country. The Union Cabinet gave its sanction to the project June 27, 2018. The refinery of 3.7 million metric tonne (MMT) capacity will provide petroleum products at times of emergency.

Meanwhile, the fate of the project was further pushed into uncertainty after a public hearing on leasing of 36 black stone quarries on Dankari, Rahadpur, Barada and Baramana hills was held at Mahisara panchayat office, Tuesday. The stone quarries will be spread over 347.96 acre of land on the above hills.

Sources said the public hearing received support from few people. Social activists Sarbeswar Behura, Satish Biswal and Sabitri Sahu, president of Nari Jagaran Samiti have opposed the project. Behura said he has filed a petition in the high court against the public hearing which he claimed to be sponsored. Earlier, Behura had filed cases in high court and the NGT alleging the state government has not provided 400 acre of land as asked by the Union government with quarries



The project to be established by Union Petroleum Ministry at Dankari will be the fourth and the largest oil refinery in the country. The Union Cabinet gave its sanction to the project June 27, 2018

reviewed the land identified for the project. However, works on the project is yet to make any progress as the state government is yet to hand-over the identified land.

Following the Cabinet approval, the state chief secretary in his letter-00063-CSPG/ March 20, 2018 directed to close down all the stone quarries in and around the project site. Later, the Dharmasala tehsildar in a letter-1186, dated- April 12, 2018 urged the Jajpur SP to close down all the stone quarries at Dankari.

Sources said the Dharmasala tehsildar clamped prohibitory orders Section-144 in the area after a case was filed in NGT alleging black stone extractions worth several crore in the area without having environmental clearance.

Later, the NGT directed the state government to deposit a penalty of ₹25 crore holding it responsible for the illegal stone mining on Dankari hill. The district administration has filed a petition against the order in the Supreme Court. This apart, a case regarding a demand notice of ₹59 crore is still pending the Chandikhole tehsil court.

When contacted, Pramod Kumar Behera, regional officer, State Pollution Control Board said the public hearing was held on the basis of government order. However, the subsequent order of government will be carried out once works on the oil refinery project starts, he added.

remaining in operation in the area. Locals alleged that the establishment of the proposed oil refinery is impossible if lease rights were given for stone quarries as the latter will blast explosives to extract stones from the quarries which will endanger the oil refinery.

Moreover, people have questioned the wisdom behind holding the public hearing during Covid times when cases regarding extraction of black stones from the Dankari hill beyond the lease rights is pending in Supreme Court, Orissa High Court and the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

Notably, two years back, a team led by the CEO Ajay Dasra of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) visited the project site on Dankari hill and

with traditional rice beer or handia to the ancestors.

The Khadia tribals reside in Kadomal village under Lefripada block of Sundargarh district. Even though they have gotten access to modernity, the villagers have retained their traditional values.

The day of Nuakhai starts with women or Dhangidhis going into the forest to collect koree, mahula and bheluan leaves accompanied by traditional songs. They take bath in the village pond and ready the materials



People of Buguda NAC in Ganjam block a road by lining up pitchers and buckets, demanding water supply through tankers

3 arrested for killing stray dog

The accused have been identified as Tutu Gouda, Sana Gouda and Sunil Gouda

POST NEWS NETWORK

Paralakhemundi, August 25: Gajapati police Tuesday arrested three persons for allegedly killing a stray dog at Batagouda Sahi area in this district.

The accused have been identified as Tutu Gouda, Sana Gouda and Sunil Gouda.

Police have arrested all the three under Sections 429 and 34 of the IPC after filing a suo motu case against



the three accused men. According to a source, the three accused killed the street dog for some unknown reason. The trio beat the dog with a stick

which resulted in its death on the spot. A video of the cruel act surfaced on social media and went viral. In the video, one of the accused was seen beating the dog to death with a rod. After that police filed a suo motu case against the three and arrested them.

It may be recalled here that a woman was also booked under various sections of the IPC for beating a pregnant stray dog to death in Bhubaneswar in April 2020.

How Sundargarh's Khadias celebrate Nuakhai fest

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, August 25: In certain pockets of Sundargarh, Nuakhai festival is being celebrated with religious fervour, but without fanfare amid Covid restrictions.

Tribals of Khadia residing in various parts of Sundargarh do celebrate with equal gusto but their mode of celebrations is a bit unique.

While the rest of the populace celebrates by offering Nabanna to the local presiding deity, the Khadias offer



the same to their deceased ancestors. And while several delicacies form the part of Nuakhai celebrations in rest of Western Odisha, this tiny group of indigenous people offer chicken along

required for pooja. Meanwhile, the men or Dhangadas march off to their farmlands and offer the first prayer to Mother Earth and come back home with new produce or nabanna.

Once they are back, the head of the family offers prayers and new paddy to the deceased ancestors. Then, chicken is offered. Taking modernity in the stride, the tribals have let go of the ritual of sacrificing and release the chicken once the rituals are completed. Next to be offered to the ancestors is handia.

ICDS goes awry in Binika as 30 kids 'malnourished'

BINIKA AREA HAS NO NUTRITION NOURISHMENT CENTRE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Binika, August 25: The Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) under the integrated child development scheme (ICDS) has reportedly gone awry in Binika and its NAC of Sonepur district as 30 children were found to be 'malnourished', a report said.

Sadly, as the Binika area has no nutrition nourishment centre, the SNP is far off from achieving its objective amid allegations that many mothers and kids are affected with malnutrition.

The SNP is aimed at dealing with malnutrition among pregnant women and children. Under the SNP, the department provides eggs and sattu to pregnant women and children, but many kids are found underweight.

It has allegedly failed to achieve its objective in Binika for lack of proper monitoring and sincerity of officials concerned.

According to a report, there are 258 Anganwadi centres and 64 mini Anganwadi centres in Binika and the NAC area. Over 9,200 kids are being taught and covered under the ICDS.

Despite all this, about 30 kids in Binika area are affected by malnutrition. In case of malnutrition, the malnourished kids are entitled to get treatment at nutrition nourishment centres. Binika is deprived of such centres.

Such centres function at Ullunda and Sonepur. As these places are far off from Binika, guardians are reluctant to take their malnourished children there.

The ICDS is also plagued by its shortcomings. It is alleged that many Anganwadi centres do not have electricity.

Binika block was divided



There are 258 Anganwadi centres and 64 mini Anganwadi centres in Binika and the NAC area

Over 9,200 kids are being taught and covered under the ICDS here

In case of malnutrition, the malnourished kids are entitled to get treatment at nutrition nourishment centres. Binika is deprived of such centres

into six sectors for execution of ICDS. Six supervisors are monitoring the programme in each sector. They are supposed to look into problems of AWCs and monitor proper execution of SNP.

It was alleged that supervisors are overlooking the problems of the AWCs.

Besides, most AWCs do not have their houses. There are 43 AWCs in Binika NAC, but only 10 of them have their own houses. Funds have been provided for AWC houses at Batrapada, Mishrapalli, Nuapada and Dabhala-2 in 2017-18. However, funds were left unused as the administration has not yet earmarked places for

YOUTH RESCUES RARE EAGLE IN ANGUL DIST

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, August 25: A youth of Kusasingha village in Angul district Tuesday rescued a rare species of eagle. Eagles are found at many places in India. However, the rare species saved Tuesday is found only in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Sources said the bird entered Abani Rout's house, apprehensively, thinking that other birds in the vicinity would harm him.

"The eagle was in great danger. It looked like the bird was about to fall from the window on which it had perched. I caught it and gave the bird some water to drink," informed Abani. He however, was aware that the eagle was in poor shape.

Forest officials say that the species rescued is known as the 'Crested Serpent Eagle'

This species is found in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Not knowing what to do, Abani informed about the eagle to the local snake helpline members Aditya Behera and Sanjay Behera. They in turn passed on the information to forest department officials.

The officials arrived at Abani's house and treated the bird. After a while when the condition of the eagle improved, it was released.

Forest officials stated that species rescued by Abani is known as the 'Crested Serpent Eagle'. It usually



The rescued eagle

preys on snakes and small reptiles. They said the eagle is about one-and-half-feet in height weighing approximately two kilograms. They assumed that the eagle is approximately four years old.

Cop-sand mafia nexus out in the open in Bhadrak

An audio tape where an IIC could be heard talking to a member of the sand mafia in Bhadrak goes viral, the cop has been shifted

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhadrak, August 25: An audio tape featuring talks of an IIC with a sand mafia has gone viral in Bhadrak. Taking serious note of the matter, the SP has shifted the cop from Bhandaripokhari police station.

According to reports, the voice in the audio tape was similar to that of Bhandaripokhari IIC Sanatan Sahu. It was learnt that he was talking to a sand mafia who had been illegally lifting sand from Baitarani riverbed.

An investigation had confirmed the talks of the cops with the sand mafia. The IIC was transferred to the office of the district police. SP Rajesh Pandit said that further investigation into the matter is on.



Why these Keonjhar villagers revere bats

THE VILLAGE OFFERS A VIEW OF HUNDREDS OF BATS HANGING UPSIDE DOWN FROM THE BRANCHES OF AN OLD SPRAWLING BANYAN TREE NEAR THE VILLAGE SHRINE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, August 25: Despite bats earning notoriety for COVID-19, these mammals are being taken care of at Taramakant village under Bansapal block in Keonjhar district.

The village offers an unusual view of hundreds of bats hanging upside down from the branches of an ancient huge banyan tree near the village shrine.

The village's presiding deity is 'Kandeibira' and she is worshipped at the shrine. The tree provides a natural canopy to the place.

According to some elderly villagers, these winged mammals have made the tree their house for many years. "We believe that these bats are closely associated with our presiding deity. It is



even believed that they are parts of the deity. So, we never ever think of causing any harm to them," they observed. For the villagers' love and reverence towards these mammals, the village is well known as a protected place for bats in the locality. The village is so famous for this strong reason that

even poachers from nearby villages know better than to cause any harms to the bats, let alone poaching them.

According to local resident Ramchandra Behera, the villagers have a deep belief that if their village has not been affected by any natural calamities as yet it is only due to the village's presiding deity. "She is protecting us and the bats," he added.

"Whatever may be the reason, the bats have found a safer place. Their population is also increasing. The villagers are to be lauded for their efforts. If the forest department identified such areas where a kind of faith is associated with birds and animals and take initiative to protect them, it would make a difference in conserving them," observed honorary animal conservator Harekrushna Mohanta.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION-II, NABARANGAPUR, UMERKOTE
No. O-271- E-mail: eerwukt@gmail.com, eerwukt@ymail.com
Procurement Notice | Identification No. Online Tender/10/RWD-UKT/2020-21
Letter No. 2437 Date: 20.08.2020

01. Name of the work	: Road Works.
02. Total Number of works	: 1 No.
03. Estimated Cost	: Approx. 88.68 lakhs.
04. Class of Contractor	: 'A' and 'B'
05. Period of Completion	: As per TCN
06. Other Details	

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Executive Engineer, R.W. Division-II, Nabarangpur, Umerkote	Online Tender/10/RWD-UKT/2020-21	27.08.2020 at 11.00 AM	07.09.2020 at 05.00 PM	05.09.2020 at 01.00 PM	10.09.2020 at 11.00 AM	To be intimated to the Qualified Bidder.

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division-II, Nabarangpur, Umerkote
OIPR-25155/11/0010/2021



In each heart, the Divine's Presence is the promise of future and possible perfections.



THE MOTHER

Denials and Dawood

When it comes to a mention about underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, Pakistan, that harboured him for nearly 20 years, has famously and always been in a state of denial. India too, in a different manner, is in a state of denial about his actual whereabouts. So much so, when everyone knew where exactly Dawood was holed up for many years, India kept looking for 'proof' to assert its right to seek his extradition. One of the promises of the first Modi government, at its very outset, was to get Dawood back to India and make him face trial for his heinous crimes. Successive governments slept over the matter. Feelings are rife that the leaderships wanted to avoid strong actions or calling a spade a spade.

A new frenzy about Dawood is evident in Indian media after Pakistan added his name this past week to a list of banned terrorists and uploaded this on the website of Pakistan's ministry of foreign affairs. Word also spread that this was another of Pakistan's deceitful acts to escape blacklisting by international financial funding watchdogs. The Paris-based International Financial Action Task Force had put Pakistan in the grey list, two years ago, stating that funding will be blocked if it failed to take action against terrorists and their outfits in its soil. This is seen as the context in which Pakistan, hard for cash, sought to create an impression it was acting against Dawood and imposed sanctions on him. Interestingly, the UAE had ordered seizure of Dawood's assets in that emirate four years ago on several counts of law violations.

Dawood is believed to be the mastermind of the Mumbai blasts and ensuing riots by way of a retaliation to the demolition of the Babri Masjid by the VHP-BJP crowd, after he reigned supreme in the underworld in the western metropolis for many years. After his exit from India and seeking sanctuary in Pakistan, he is known to have masterminded several lethal hits on India. Many also believe he had a hand in the serial Mumbai terror attacks in November 2008, which held the city to ransom for days and killed nearly 170 people. While that attack was reportedly masterminded by the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Dawood's footprint was prominently noted in its planning. Dawood frequented Dubai from his base in Pakistan and had huge underworld and other business interests in the UAE. He openly engaged in and brokered deals even while Indian diplomatic presence was prominent. He could travel around the world and yet India was helpless to rope him in. Reports are that Dawood is given sanctuary in Pakistan by the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) indicating the top military brass was taking interest in his security. The Pakistani political establishment has little say in such matters as the military calls much of the shots and democracy is, even in the best of times, a sham of sorts. The Indian leadership, lacking the nerve to confront situations, often thought it fit to feign ignorance or look the other way. This became applicable in most cases, be it about the presence of Dawood in Pakistan or of border encroachments and usurpation of land by the Chinese PLA off and on along the northern regions.

There might be a notion of a reduction in terrorist activities across India and even in Kashmir because news reporting has been completely brought under control by the government. The busting of a terrorist module in Delhi recently, with stocks of explosives to target key installations on Independence Day is an eye opener. This and the continuing infiltrations of trained and motivated terrorists in Kashmir Valley even after the Centre took direct control of the erstwhile state means there is no guarantee to future safety. Beirut is bleeding and the sights are before us. The presence of the likes of Dawood in Pakistan only adds to the neighbour's mischief potential. At the same time, India is faced with a larger threat from China as well.

These are times for the leadership to act in ways as to acquit themselves honourably from the given situations. A change of government every five years was a dampener. But, with the present dispensation getting full ten years at a stretch, this was hoped to be a time to settle many serious issues confronting the nation.

Unfortunately, the sincerity of purpose seems to be lacking at top command level.



Kaushik Basu

IN TODAY'S GLOBALISED WORLD, WE MUST RECOGNISE THAT ALL HUMAN BEINGS, NOT JUST ALL CO-NATIONALS, ARE BORN EQUAL. HYPER-NATIONALISM IS NOT ONLY BAD ECONOMICS, BUT IS ALSO MORALLY WRONG

Neither Joe Biden nor Kamala Harris was my first choice among the contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination in the United States. But, when Biden, by then the party's presumptive nominee, announced earlier this month that Senator Harris would be his vice-presidential running mate, it felt like a breath of fresh air.

Speakers at the recently concluded Democratic National Convention - including some Republicans like former Ohio Governor John Kasich - stressed the importance of decency and empathy in politics. And in his inspiring acceptance speech, Biden emphasised the need for America to be "a light to the world once again." Listening to these words, I felt a rush of hope.

If Biden and Harris win in November, they will introduce important policy initiatives. They will improve the embarrassing US healthcare system, which walls off a large section of the population from cutting-edge medical research and the world's finest health facilities. They will try to remedy the worsening conditions confronting America's working class, and restore some US efforts to combat climate change. But I do not think they will push for the sort of radical reforms that someone like Elizabeth Warren or Bernie Sanders would have attempted.

Nevertheless, there are two reasons to feel hopeful. First, Biden and Harris are more likely to win the election than more radical Democratic contenders would have been. Second, they will bolster the institutions that previously made America strong and restore its leadership in the world. That will be crucial: although much has been written about what Biden and Harris should do for America, they also have a global responsibility. One of the most damaging consequences of Donald Trump's presidency has been the loss of America's international stature. This has had a huge adverse impact, spawning populism and authoritarianism around the world.

To be sure, America's record of global engagement is not without blemish. In the 1960s and early

FOCUS US POLLS

BREATH OF FRESH AIR



Although much has been written about what Biden and Harris should do for America, they also have a global responsibility. One of the most damaging consequences of Donald Trump's presidency has been the loss of America's international stature. This has had a huge adverse impact, spawning populism and authoritarianism around the world

1970s, for example, it was on the wrong side of history several times - including in prosecuting the Vietnam War, tacitly supporting the overthrow of Chilean President Salvador Allende, and attempting to thwart Bangladeshi independence.

Fortunately, this coldly 'realist' US foreign policy slowly gave way to one with some moral compass and global concern. The president who deserves the greatest credit for this shift is Jimmy Carter. Although he was low-key and not good at politicking, Carter had the rare mettle - evident in his moving 2018 interview with The Late Show's Stephen Colbert - to be prepared to lose for a moral cause.

In today's globalised world, we must recognise that all human beings, not just all co-nationals, are born equal. Hyper-nationalism is not only bad economics, but is also morally wrong. I have no doubt that a time will come when we regard hyper-nationalism - the belief that one's compatriots are special and more deserving than others - the way we view racism or caste systems as they are today.

Because we currently live in a world of nation-states, nationalism

is unavoidable. But we need leaders who can pioneer an international mindset and help build a better future for all of humanity, including the poor and dispossessed wherever they live. This is the big responsibility that Biden and Harris must shoulder in seeking to re-establish the global leadership from which America has retreated under Trump.

On the subject of internationalism, Biden and Harris may wish to consider the thoughts of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, who spoke more eloquently about these values than perhaps any other leader. Nehru fought for India's independence, in which nationalism was obviously a driving force. But he was mindful that we have to strive for a world in which human identity takes precedence over racial, religious, and national identity.

Nehru made his position clear in a remarkable 1953 letter to India's chief ministers. "The feeling of nationalism is an enlarging and widening experience for the individual or the nation," he wrote. "More especially, when a country is under foreign domination, nationalism is a strengthening and

unifying force. But, a stage arrives when it might well have a narrowing influence [...]"

That stage arrives, Nehru believed, because "Every people suffer from the strange delusion that they are the elect and better than all others. When they become strong and powerful, they try to impose themselves and their ways on others," but eventually "overreach themselves, stumble, and fall."

Nehru concluded with a warning to his newly independent country. "We, in India, have to be particularly careful of this because of our tradition of caste and separatism. We have a tendency to fall into separate groups and to forget the larger unity."

I shall leave it to Biden and Harris to substitute the US for India, and draw the lesson they may. And I will not give up hope that they will affirm America's global responsibility and revive its leadership role, using it to promote the interest of all humanity.

The writer is a former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India.

@PROJECTSYNDICATE

WISDOM CORNER

- Life is really simple, but we insist on making it complicated. CONFUCIUS
- Every neighbouring state is an enemy and the enemy's enemy is a friend. ARTHASASHTRA
- The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. MAHATMA GANDHI

WORDSWORTH

The ending -nomics

Poor old Thomas Carlyle, permanently and irretrievably burdened with having described economics as "the dismal science". He was really talking about political economy, at the time a slightly different beast. But whatever one's view of economics, lexicographically speaking it has been a fruitful term. These opaque musings were prompted by what journalists have started to call Enronomics, in reference to the accounting practices of the failed US corporation Enron and their implications for the Bush administration. It's not as popular yet as Enrongate for the same imbroglio, but shows slight signs of fashionableness, having appeared in several US newspapers recently, and having even made it across the Atlantic to a British Sunday newspaper within hours. However, its chances of taking a permanent place in the language seem vanishingly small. Before we tar journalists too heavily with the brush of knee-jerk word invention for the sake of novelty, in fairness it has to be said that people have been borrowing that ending for at least 150 years. Agronomics, for example, was coined in the 1860s as a term for what is now often called agronomy, and ergonomics was invented about 1950. The Greek original of economics splits nicely in two to make -nomics, since its source was oikos, house, plus nemein, to manage (so economics literally means "household management", which really brings it back to earth, or at least to home and hearth). But its move into the overtly political arena really dates from late 1969, when Nixonomics was invented as an umbrella term for the economic policies of President Richard Milhous Nixon. But the word which settled its popularity - Reaganomics - arrived in the early eighties; it was followed in the early nineties by Clintonomics. In the eighties, Britain briefly had Thatcheronomics, though it was never very popular; New Zealand's former Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas, provoked Rogernomics (a rare case of a politician's first name rather than family name being borrowed). Other British politicians have had it applied to them in a half-hearted and short-lived way (Majoronomics, Haguonomics) and Americans may remember Dolenomics from 1996.

LOL

A lecture about English

Linguistics professor was lecturing to his English class one day. "In English," he said, "A double negative forms a positive. In some languages, though, such as Russian, a double negative is still a



negative. However, there is no language wherein a double positive can form a negative." A voice from the back of the room piped up, "Yeah, right."

IN JEST THIS

Everything is relative, even your relatives



Melvin Durai

WE ARE CREATURES OF COMPARISON, CONSTANTLY COMPARING OURSELVES WITH OTHER PEOPLE - AND ALSO COMPARING OTHER PEOPLE WITH STILL OTHERS

My kids sometimes ask me if our family is rich or poor. "It depends," I say. "Compared to many people living in the street, we are rich. Compared to Mukesh Ambani, we are poor." My kids ask me how rich Ambani is. "It depends," I say. "Compared to us and 99.99 per cent of the people around the world, he is extremely rich. Compared to Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, he is ... still quite rich."

Ambani, chairman of Reliance Industries, has a net worth of more than ₹5 lakh crore. I hope he considers himself lucky to be one of the ten richest individuals in the world, but perhaps he goes to bed at night unhappy that he isn't yet among the top five. Everything is relative, of course, even your relatives. Just ask the reporter who went to Chennai to interview close relatives of Kamala Harris, the Democratic nominee for vice president of the United States. Thousands of people showed up claiming to be close relatives.

Reporter: "How are you related to Kamala Harris?"

Excited man: "We are very closely related. Her mother was the second cousin of a man named



I hope Ambani considers himself lucky to be one of the 10 richest in the world, but perhaps he goes to bed at night unhappy that he isn't yet among the top five

Balachandran, who was the brother-in-law of my mother's eighth cousin."

Reporter: "That doesn't sound very close."

Man: "Whether you call it close or not is all relative. I am more closely related to Kamala than 99 per cent of Indians."

Reporter: "Does she even know you exist?"

Man: "If you interview me, she will. I am hoping to receive an invitation to her inauguration."

Reporter: "How happy will that make you?"

Man: "Relatively happy. Happier than all my relatives."

So much of what we concern ourselves in life is relative or comparative. We are creatures of comparison, constantly comparing ourselves with other people - and

also comparing other people with still others.

That's why we love to make lists on the Internet and elsewhere, lists such as "100 richest people in the world," "100 most influential people in the world," and "100 closest relatives of Kamala Harris."

In some fields, it's absolutely necessary to compare yourselves with others. You are in direct competition with them. If you want to win Wimbledon, you had better compare yourself to Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer and players of that caliber. You can't be satisfied saying to yourself, "I am a relatively great tennis player, better than at least five billion people in the world who have never picked up a racquet."

The same is true if you want to win an Olympic medal in track.

You can't be satisfied being faster than the middle-aged woman who runs every morning in your neighbourhood, chasing the bus while balancing a pot on her head. You need to be faster than the bus itself, when it's going downhill at top speed. If you want to be selected for a top medical or engineering college, you had better be one of the top students. It's not enough to be the most intelligent person in your extended family, especially if none of your relatives has ever heard of the theory of relativity.

But there are so many other areas of our lives where we don't need to be the best. We can either be relatively good or relatively bad, depending on whom we compare ourselves with. If I want to feel relatively ugly, I can compare myself to models and actors. If I want to feel relatively attractive, I can visit the zoo and compare myself to the chimpanzees.

Of course, I know that the chimps are looking at me and making comparisons of their own.

First chimp: "Look at him. He's going bald. I have more hair on my feet than he has on his head."

Second chimp: "And look how thin his arms are! Poor guy - don't they put enough food in his cage?"

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
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Plight of chit fund victims

Sir, The Odisha chit fund inquiry commission imbroglio has put lakhs of investors in deep trouble. After seven years, spending of around ₹7 crore from public funds, and seven reports, the depositors' interests are still lost in files. Matters have now reached a dead end. The state government's tall claims of creating a corpus of ₹300 crore were for whose benefit, when the large number of victims who lost their money are yet to get justice? Sadly, the beneficiaries of the governmental steps in this case are only officials, politicians, and errant chit fund companies. If the government was serious about helping the victims of this scam, it could have disbursed money from its corpus and avoided unnecessary spending on investigations for seven years. Now, rather, the government is sitting silent over the use of the ₹300 crore corpus and there is no word on mitigating the grievances of the affected. The Commission simply did clerical sorting and there were more than seven lakh claims that it had not opened. Now, after a fifth extension of its period, there is no further extension. The practical methods to redress such grievances are to be taken at district level by asking the offices of the ADMs to monitor and supervise disbursement of money to the small depositors first, meaning those who did upto ₹10,000 deposits. This will speedily dispense justice to the affected people, instead of centralising the process with the Commission based in Cuttack.

Janaki Ballav Dash, MAYURBHANJ

Yes to euthanasia

Sir, It's high time the government revisits the issue of euthanasia. The present law needs change. One of my media friends is suffering from serious health problems. He is leading a painful life at his old age. The daily medical care is both expensive and unaffordable. The patient as also the doctor who attends to him are convinced that the disease is not curable and that death is the only way forward. So he is seeking euthanasia. Thousands of patients are living a painful life this way. Many calls have been made from medical and other quarters that euthanasia be legalised so as to limit human misery. This will be helpful to patients in deep distress and pain. Necessary amendment may be made in law to facilitate this.

Sudhanshu Sekhar Dhada, BHUBANESWAR

Amid pandemic, luxury resort turns pool into fish farm

The makeshift farm would not cover the losses from the pandemic, which has driven many hotels to bankruptcy

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Kochi, August 25: A luxury resort in southern India has turned its swimming pool into a fish farm to stop the business sinking amid the economic crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Normally the 150-metre (500-foot) pool at the Aveda Resort in Kerala state is packed with European tourists. Now thousands of pearl spot fish are causing the splash.

The complex was forced to shut in March when a nationwide coronavirus lockdown was ordered.

Few hotels have been allowed to reopen since.

Of those which are still shuttered, not many boast a pool with 7.5 million litres of water, which can be put to alternative use.

"We have had zero revenues, so in June, we put around 16,000 two-month-old pearl spot fish in the pool," Aveda's general manager Jyotish Surendran told AFP.

The fish, which takes about eight months to reach full size, is a popular ingredient in dishes in south-



We have had zero revenues, so in June, we put around 16,000 two-month-old pearl spot fish in the pool
JYOTISH SURENDRAN | AVEDA'S GM

ern India and the Middle East. "We plan to harvest by November and will export to the Middle East," Surendran said, predicting about

four tonnes of pearl spots growing in the swimming pool could be worth \$40,000 on the market. The makeshift farm would not

cover the losses from the pandemic, which has driven many hotels to bankruptcy, said the hotel boss.

But Surendran was hopeful that the money would help cover basic bills so the business can keep running until tourists return.

And the Aveda plans to keep faith with the pearl spot even when business resumes.

"We can't continue with this farm in the pool, but we are trying to find alternative land where we can build up this knowledge for bigger projects," he said.

VECTOR CONTROL



SDMC workers fumigate a locality during the launch of a campaign against dengue, malaria and chikungunya, in New Delhi, Tuesday. Power spray tankers, fogging machines and 3-wheelers mounted with PA system were also launched.

Minors most exposed to virus: Sero survey

THE SURVEY SHOWED THAT 29.1 PER CENT OF THE POPULATION IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL HAS NOW DEVELOPED ANTIBODIES AGAINST SARS COV-2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 25: Minors aged between 5 and 17 are most exposed to the novel coronavirus in Delhi, according to a serological survey conducted in the city this month.

Conducted between August 1 and August 7, the survey, second in the city, showed that 29.1 per cent of the population in the national capital has now developed antibodies against SARS CoV-2.

As many as 15,000 people from four age groups participated in the survey - around 25 per cent of them below 18, 50 per cent between 18 and 50, and the rest aged above 50.

A prevalence rate of 34.7 per cent was found among the participants aged between 5 and 17, the survey results show.

As many as 31.2 per cent of the people aged above 50 have recovered from COVID-19, it shows.



Among those in the 18-50 age group, 28.5 per cent people have developed antibodies against the virus.

Indian Council of Medical Research data suggests that people aged between 21 and 50 account for 61.31 per cent of the COVID-19 cases recorded in India till August 21.

Experts say children could be contracting the infection from adults in their family and domestic helps.

Dr Mahesh Verma, the head of a Delhi government committee tasked with strengthening the preparedness of hospitals to battle coronavirus, said, "It is difficult to keep children and youngsters home-bound.

Even if they are not going to school, they might be going out to play... or they might have contracted it through an indirect route. But it's just a prediction and needs to be studied."

"It's still very complex how people are getting infected. I know a couple of families that are not stepping out but their members have still contracted COVID-19," he added.

Dr Gauri Aggarwal, the founder of Seeds of Innocence and Genestrings Lab, New Friends Colony, said, "Children might have contracted the virus from someone in their house who was regularly stepping out. The schools are closed and there are very few people who are organising gatherings where children are also present."

It is possible that they got infected while going to parks or through domestic helps. There are lots of cases where domestic helps have spread the infection, she said.

Varsity teachers, students concerned over online classes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 25: A section of students and teachers of various universities in the national capital Tuesday voiced their concern over holding online classes, fee hike and lack of infrastructural support in the varsities amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Delhi University is conducting online open book exams for final semester students of postgraduate and undergraduate courses.

The move was opposed by students and teachers who were demanding that the exams be scrapped. The varsity has also commenced online classes for third and fifth semester students from August 10. During an online briefing, Abha Dev Habib, a Delhi University professor, said teachers and students have been left out from the decision-making process to hold online classes.

"The decision of online open book exams was taken without thinking about students. What will happen to students in Kashmir and those stuck in floods. The students do not have gadgets for online classes. The decision was taken without consulting the statutory bodies - the Academic and Executive Council," she alleged.

Unni Maya, a student of Lady Shri Ram College in Delhi University, said the varsity has gone ahead with the decision to hold online classes without thinking about the mental health and well-being of students.

Taking online classes means that students have to spend a high screen time in front of their mobiles or laptops which impacts their health. She demanded that the var-

sity should think about funding and providing gadgets to students and it should also release department-wise data on how many students have availed online classes.

Students and teachers of other universities also raised similar issues. Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union president Aish Ghosh said the varsity administration is not concerned about teaching-learning process or about students in Kashmir who still do not have access to a proper internet connectivity, or about flood-affected students or those who contracted COVID-19. "Students are being pressurised to register for the next semester at a time when the UGC has also said that the varsities must finish the current semester by September 30.

There is no meaning of registration. The varsity administration is continuously creating issues," she said. She also alleged students of MBA and Engineering are being charged lakhs of rupees despite not having access to labs and having part-time faculty. "I would call it daylight robbery. Even the representatives from these departments have been pressurised to not raise their voice," she said. She also urged the varsity to ensure phased return of students to the campus by following proper medical protocols and establishing quarantine centres inside the premises.

Voices were also raised from Delhi government-run Ambedkar University against online classes and how the administration and even the state government has not heard their pleas.

Shubhojeet Dey of Ambedkar University said they had conducted a survey among students and found that 48 per cent of students had access to smartphones while two per cent did not have access to any gadget for accessing online classes.

Political row over fire in secretariat

Kerala Opposition parties allege the incident is part of a larger conspiracy at the behest of the CM to destroy crucial evidence related to the gold smuggling case

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, August 25: The Leader of Opposition in the Kerala Assembly, Ramesh Chennithala, has alleged that the fire that broke out in the state Secretariat Tuesday is part of a larger conspiracy at the behest of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to destroy crucial evidence related to the gold smuggling case.

The fire broke out at around 4.30 p.m. at the general administration department (political) of the state Secretariat.

"The fire broke out in the GAD Political section and it's under this department that all the files pertaining to foreign travel and political clearance are kept. None should forget that the NIA has asked for all the CCTV footages. This is a conspiracy with the knowledge of Vijayan to destroy all the evidences," said Chennithala.

Meanwhile, state BJP President K. Surendran said that this is a grave issue, alleging that the fire was

created to destroy crucial evidences in the gold smuggling case.

"The fire broke out in the protocol office and we are told that this office was closed after a few people there turned Covid positive. This is a story being scripted. The Central agencies probing the gold smuggling case should look into this issue. Not long ago, the Chief Minister himself was speaking of a lightning that took place and destroyed the CCTVs. All possible evidences in the case are being destroyed, at a time when the probe has reached Vijayan," said Surendran.

As soon as the news of the fire broke out, Chief Secretary Vishwas Metha rushed to the spot and asked all mediapersons to leave the place, which was objected to by some political leaders. "As soon as I came to know of the fire, I came and saw a huge crowd. As Chief Secretary, I will tell you that there is nothing to hide. Only after probe the matter will I know the extent of damage. What hap-

pened was that everybody rushed to the place, including political leaders, and seeing this I came down and asked them to move out," said Metha, adding, "We do not have any political agenda."

The gold smuggling case was unearthed when PS Saritha, a former employee of the UAE Consulate here, was arrested by the Customs July 5 when he was facilitating smuggling of 30 kg gold in diplomatic baggage to Thiruvananthapuram from Dubai.

Things turned murkier when the name of Swapna Suresh, a former employee of the Consulate, and employed with the IT Department, surfaced and more so, when her links with M. Sivasankar, the state's most powerful official by virtue of the dual posts he held - Principal secretary to Vijayan and also the IT Secretary - came to light.

The IAS officer was subsequently removed from both the posts before being suspended by Vijayan.



First time in 700 yrs, no 'tazia' processions in Delhi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 25: The carrying of 'tazias' at Muharram in Delhi has been undertaken since medieval times but this will be the first time for 700 years that processions will not be carried out, said Syed Kashif Nizami, the custodian of the revered Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya shrine.

"Even during the Partition in 1947, there was no ban on 'tazia' processions in the dargah, but this time due to the corona pandemic, Delhi and the Central government have not allowed processions to be held in a mass religious pro-



gramme." "For more than 700 years, the largest 'tazia', decorated with

flowers, is kept in the Imambara, which is at a small distance from

the dargah. More than four 'tazias' decorated with flowers are kept here." On the 10th day of Muharram, which marks the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain, the grandson of the Prophet at Iraq's Karbala in 681 A.D, a procession with mourners carrying daggers and knives is carried out from the dargah and the blood oozing out of their self-inflicted wounds is reminiscent of the tragedy. However, this time around, all such activities have been banned due to the pandemic. So this time only 'tazias' decorated with flowers will be sent to Karbala in the capital.

Hindu-Muslim unity is also at display every year on Muharram.

Mohammad Zuhair Nizami, who is associated with Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya Dargah, said: "Many Hindu families in the vicinity have been part of the 'tazia' processions for many years owing to their faith. A Hindu family in Mehrauli has been doing so for many decades."

The coronavirus has also affected the life of people involved in the business of 'tazia'. 'Tazias' are made in thousands in Delhi, but this time due to corona, people are not buying 'tazias' for 'aqidat' (goodbye prayers).

HC rejects plea against CBI probe into political murders



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, August 25: The Kerala High Court Tuesday dismissed a state government plea challenging a single bench order directing a CBI probe into the killing of two Youth Congress workers in Kasaragod last year.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S Manikumar, however, accepted an interim probe report of the state crime branch, which investigated the case initially and directed the CBI to conduct further inquiry.

Observing serious lapses in the police investigation, the High Court last September handed over the case to the Central agency after dismissing the chargesheet filed by the crime branch.

The single bench ordered the CBI probe into the case while allowing a petition filed by the parents of the slain Youth Congress workers. Sarath Lal and Kripesh were hacked to death February 17, 2019 in Kasaragod allegedly by CPI(M) workers. In its appeal against the single bench order, the government had alleged that the entire findings of the bench were based on surmises and conjectures, and not supported by any material and it had not considered the material on record including the case diary.

The CBI, which re-registered the case October 23, 2019 following the court order, had accused the

state police of not handing over the necessary documents needed for the investigation.

The CBI had mentioned the alleged non-cooperation by the crime branch wing of the Kerala police in the status report of the probe submitted by its investigation officer before the Chief Judicial Magistrate Court here.

The Congress Tuesday welcomed the Kerala High Court judgement.

Hailing the court order dismissing a state government plea against the CBI inquiry, Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) chief Mullappally Ramachandran said the Left "spent lakhs of rupees to save the culprits" but the High Court has decided to handover the case to the central investigating agency.

"The Kerala government spent lakhs and brought in senior advocates to stop the probe into the matter. This was the situation in all other political cases. But this time the High Court has decided to bring in the CBI. We welcome it," Ramachandran told the media here.

"Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan tried all tricks in the book to save the culprits. But the High Court dismissed the state government's stand which was a setback for them in the Periya case. What happened to the expensive lawyers brought from Delhi?" Leader of Opposition Ramesh Chennithala asked.

of the day quote

It (dissent in Congress) is the internal matter of the Congress and I would not like to comment on it. I am a BJP worker and commenting on internal affairs of any other political party would not be appropriate



JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA | BJP MP

The face of Madhya Pradesh will change in two years from now as far as world-class highways network is concerned



NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

Soon a hackathon will be organised for students of higher education institutions through innovation in toy technology and design, including online games



RAMESH POKHRIYAL | 'NISHANK', UNION EDUCATION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

AFSPA extended in Assam again

Guwahati: The Assam government Tuesday said it has extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) in the state for six more months with effect from August 28. The state has been declared a "disturbed area" on account of recent insurgent attacks on security forces in the Northeast and recovery of illegal arms and ammunition from different areas of Assam, an official statement said. Many civil society groups and activists have been demanding the withdrawal of the draconian law from the state.

80-yr-old woman beaten to death

Kota (Rajasthan): An 80-year-old woman was beaten to death by her 20-year-old grandson allegedly after she demanded Rs 20,000 he had borrowed from her, police said. Jhamoribai Meena, a resident of Umerthuna village under Bundi Sadar police station, was beaten black and blue with a stick by Deepak Meena late Sunday night, Bundi Sadar Police Station Circle Inspector Shauqat Ali said. She was rushed to the Bundi district government hospital Monday morning where she succumbed to her injuries, he added.

Cop arrested for 'raping' colleague

Ramgarh: A police constable was arrested in Jharkhand's Ramgarh district Tuesday for allegedly raping his colleague, officials said. The woman police officer of sub-inspector rank alleged that she was raped repeatedly by the 28-year-old constable who promised her marriage, they said. Both of them were posted at the Mandu police station, Superintendent of Police Prabhakar Kumar said. The constable later declined to marry the woman officer and got married somewhere else, he said.

No change in Pranab's health

New Delhi: There was no change in the health condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee Tuesday and he continues to be on ventilator support, the hospital treating him said. Doctors attending to the 84-year-old former President said his vital parameters were stable. Mukherjee was admitted to the Army's Research and Referral hospital in Delhi cantonment August 10.



Sonia ji is like a mother to the party. We revere her even now. There is no question of any intention to hurt her feelings. If we have hurt her feelings, we are sorry for it

VEERAPPA MOILY | FORMER UNION MINISTER

NFDC FILM BAZAAR TO BE HELD ONLINE AMID PANDEMIC

Film Bazaar, organised by the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), announced Tuesday that this year's edition, to be held from November 20-24, will be a virtual event



NIA names Masood Azhar, brothers in chargesheet



PULWAMA TERROR ATTACK
WRAPPING UP THE PROBE INTO A FATAL TERROR ATTACK THAT LEFT 40 CRPF PERSONNEL DEAD IN SOUTH KASHMIR LAST YEAR, THE NIA TUESDAY FILED A CHARGESHEET IN A SPECIAL COURT HERE AGAINST 19 PEOPLE

THE 13,500-PAGE CHARGESHEET NAMES MASOOD AZHAR, HIS BROTHERS - ABDUL RAUF AND AMMAR ALVI - AND HIS NEPHEW MOHAMMED UMER FAROOQ, WHO HAD INFILTRATED INTO INDIA IN 2018

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, August 25: Wrapping up the probe into a fatal terror attack that left 40 CRPF personnel dead in South Kashmir last year, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Tuesday filed a chargesheet in a special court here against 19 people including Masood Azhar, the chief of banned terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed, for planning the suicide operation. Leading the investigation into the "blind case", as seven accused wanted in it were killed during different encounters in 2019, a team led by joint director of the NIA Anil Shukla gathered evidences and statements of terrorists and their sympathisers arrested in different cases in order to expose the conspiracy hatched for executing the audacious attack on the para-military convoy, officials said. The 13,500-page chargesheet names Masood Azhar, his brothers - Abdul Rauf and Ammar Alvi

-and his nephew Mohammed Umer Farooq, who had infiltrated into India in 2018 and was subsequently killed in one of the encounters in South Kashmir. According to security forces, Farooq had entered India in late 2018 using the natural caves at the Sambha sector in Jammu region along the international border. The chargesheet says suicide bomber Adil Ahmed Dar was driving the car laden with 200 kgs of explosives and had prepared his last video at Shakhir Bashir's residence in Pulwama on a high-tech phone brought by Bilal Ahmed Kuchey. While Dar is now dead, both Bashir and Kuchey have been arrested. The explosive laden car, which was driven by Bashir initially before he handed it over to Dar, was rammed into a bus carrying CRPF personnel from Jammu to Srinagar at Lethpora in Pulwama district of South Kashmir February 14, 2019. From virtually a case that reached a

"dead end" as the five people known to the agency earlier this year either as conspirators or executors of the attack were eliminated in various encounters, the case threw unique challenges for the NIA as there was no solid information about the perpetrators or the mastermind behind the attack. "It was a blind case for us. There were a lot of murmurs but everything needs to be established beyond doubt in the court of law," a senior official, who is part of the probe, said here. The first challenge was to establish the ownership of the car used by Dar, the suicide bomber. There was nothing available from the vehicle which carried a cocktail of explosives like Ammonium Nitrate, Nitro Glycerine and RDX, the official said. But with the help of forensic methods and painstaking investigations, the serial number of the car that was blown into pieces beyond recognition was extracted and within no time the ownership of the vehicle was established - from the first to the last owner. However, the last owner of the car - Sajjad Bhat (named in the chargesheet) of Bijbehara in Anantnag district - had disappeared hours before the February 14 attack and joined Jaish-e-Mohammed. He was subsequently killed in an encounter in June last year. "While it was clear that the suicide attacker was Adil Ahmed Dar but the same had to be established with evidence. After picking up human remains from various spots, they were sent for DNA profiling," the official, who requested anonymity, said. "The suicide attacker was identified and confirmed by matching the DNA extracted from the meagre car fragments with that of the DNA of his father," he said. The role of other conspirators came to light but all of them were killed in different encounters with security forces.

END OF FESTIVITY



People carry an idol of the Lord Ganesha, the deity of prosperity, to immerse it off the coast of the Arabian Sea during the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Mumbai

REUTERS PHOTO

CONTEMPT CASE

Bhushan seeks recall of his conviction



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SC RESERVES SENTENCE

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has reserved its judgment on the contempt of court case against activist-lawyer Prashant Bhushan who was convicted in the case earlier this month. The bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra on Tuesday heard arguments of Attorney General KK Venugopal, who sought forgiveness for Bhushan. However, the bench said, "But this is not a way we expect a senior lawyer to behave." advocate Dhavan reminded the bench, "When Justice Mishra was in Kolkata HC and Mamata Banerjee said the court is corrupt, Justice Bagchi wrote the judgment but Justice Mishra said as her position is that of a politician, we will not punish."

New Delhi, August 25: Activist-lawyer Prashant Bhushan Tuesday urged the Supreme Court to give a "statesman like message" by recalling the verdict convicting him for the contempt of the court for his two tweets against the judiciary. Attorney General KK Venugopal also asked the bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra to forgive Bhushan, who has been refusing to tender unconditional apology for the tweets. He said Bhushan should "withdraw all statements and express regret". The bench, which August 20 had granted time till Monday to Bhushan to reconsider his "defiant state-

ment" and tender "unconditional apology" for the contemptuous tweets, concluded hearing on the quantum of punishment to be awarded to the activist lawyer. "Though Attorney General suggested reprimand but that will be extreme. Don't make Prashant Bhushan a martyr. Don't do it. He has not committed murder or theft," senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan, appearing for Bhushan, submitted before the bench, also comprising Justices BR Gavai and Krishna Murari. Referring to the supplementary statement tendered by Bhushan,

his lawyer said that not only this case be closed but even the controversy has come to an end and "there should be a statesman like message" from the top court. "I make two suggestions. The convicting judgement should be recalled and no sentence should be imposed. I am making a statement on my client's behalf," Dhavan said. Referring to Bhushan's statements and his refusal to apologise, the bench asked Venugopal that mistakes were committed by all but they needed to be accepted and said that here Bhushan was not willing to accept that

Maha bldg collapse toll reaches 10, many missing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 25: Rescuers sifting through the rubble of a five-storey building in Maharashtra's Raigad district Tuesday found a four-year-old boy alive and his mother dead beneath the debris, police said. Death toll in the collapse reached 10 with recovery of nine bodies from the rubble Tuesday, police said. A man died of cardiac arrest on Monday night after he was hit by a stone from the falling building, police said. The dead - five men and five women - include two teenagers, police said. So far eight persons have been rescued, while around 10 persons are still missing after the Tareq Garden building in Mahad town, around 170 km from Mumbai, came down like a pack of cards Monday evening, an official said. Police Tuesday registered an offence against five persons, including the builder and architect of Tareq Garden in connection with collapse, the official said. The offence was registered



The combo image shows NDRF personnel rescuing a 4-year old boy who was trapped under the debris at the building collapse site in Malad, Raigad

against builder Farooq Kazi, RCC consultant Bahubali Dhamne, and architect Gaurav Shah under sections 304, 304A and 338 of the IPC, the official said. Thane guardian minister Eknath Shinde reached Mahad Tuesday following instructions from Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, to oversee rescue and relief work, sources close to him said.

Congress 'dissenters' miffed as content of letter not discussed

The Congress is likely to appoint a panel of senior leaders to assist interim chief Sonia Gandhi till she is at the helm of affairs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 25: A day after the tumultuous Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, the dissenters are miffed because in the din the contents of the letter were not discussed at all. As tables "turned" on the dissenters over the so called "letter bomb" Monday during the CWC, the majority of the members focussed on the timing of the letter connecting it with the loyalty factor. And, in all this, the contents of the letter were not discussed in the seven-hour long meeting as the four signatories, who were part of the CWC meeting, were cornered by the loyalists. In the dramatic events which unfolded Monday the dissenters thought that the contents of the letter would be discussed in detail. This did not happen as the deliberation went on the timing and purpose of such a letter.

During the CWC, some leaders asked the letter signatories why the questions were not raised in the internal party meetings; the signatories replied that there were no meetings held. On this reply, the general secretary (Organisation) gave a detailed list of meetings which took place during the year. The content of the letter was not discussed in the meeting except the paras referred by Sonia Gandhi in her statement which was read by KC Venugopal at the onset of the Monday meeting. While the signatories maintained that the matter ended after it was taken up by the Congress working committee meeting, but after the meeting Monday the signatories assembled at Ghulam Nabi Azad's residence to discuss future strategy. This has not been disclosed, but sources say that discontent is not yet over and they are waiting for a moment and timing again. Former Union ministers Manish

Tewari, Shashi Tharoor, Mukul Wasnik, Anand Sharma and Kapil Sibal reached Azad's residence Monday evening and met for more than an hour, but it was not clear what transpired there. In the Congress Working Committee meeting, Sharma, Azad and Wasnik were cornered by Gandhi loyalists, with even former Union minister Ambika Soni targeting Azad, and demanded action, saying "that he has not been without power for decades, so what problem does he have now", sources said. The dissenters, meanwhile, maintained that the letter was not against the Gandhis but for reforms within party, and it was not to question the leadership of Gandhis. But some of the signatories are saying that the letter should not have been leaked to media. They say that there was only one copy of the letter, thus casting aspersions on the other side for leaking the letter.

Monsoon session likely from Sept 14 to Oct 1; 18 sittings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 25: The Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs has recommended that the Monsoon Session of Parliament be held from September 14 to October 1, sources said Tuesday. According to them, there will be 18 sittings and the dates will be notified later in the day. Hectic preparations are underway for the Monsoon Session with several first-time measures such as staggered sitting of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and use of both chambers and galleries to accommodate members while following physical distancing norms, officials had said. According to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, members of the Upper House will be seated in both chambers and galleries during the session. This is the first time in the history of Indian Parliament that such an arrangement will be in place, with 60 members seated in the chamber and 51 in the galleries of Rajya Sabha and the remaining 132 in the chamber.

Kashmir group calls India's Internet ban 'digital apartheid'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Srinagar, August 25: A prominent rights group in Indian-administered Kashmir Tuesday described a communications blackout imposed by India following its scrapping of the disputed region's semi-autonomy last year "collective punishment" and urged the international community to question New Delhi over what it called "digital apartheid." In a report, the Jammu-Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society described "harms, costs and consequences of the digital siege in Jammu-Kashmir from August 2019," when New Delhi stripped the region of its statehood and the semi-autonomy that gave its natives special rights in land ownership and jobs.

The move, which set off widespread anger, was accompanied by a security clampdown and communications blackout in the region that left hundreds of thousands jobless, impaired the already feeble healthcare system and paused the school and college education of millions. "The multi-faceted and targeted denial of digital rights is a systemic form of discrimination, digital repression and collective punishment of the region's residents, particularly in light of India's long history of political repression and atrocities," said the report, titled "Kashmir's Internet Siege." Several officials, including the region's home secretary, Shaleen Kabra, who issues Internet regulatory orders, did not respond to



Digital and printed reports released by the Jammu-Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society are seen inside their office in Srinagar

requests for comment. Indian officials have said the Internet ban was aimed at heading off anti-India protests and attacks by rebels who have fought for decades for the region's independence or uni-

fication with Pakistan, which administrators another portion of Kashmir. Officials have also argued that such security measures were necessary to better integrate the region

with India, foster greater economic development and stop threats from "anti-national elements" and Pakistan. Many Kashmiris, however, view the move as the beginning of settler colonialism aimed at engineering a demographic change in India's only Muslim-majority region, a development that could increase the possibility of heightened conflict. Although some of the communications restrictions have been removed and the internet has been restored over fixed lines, mobile internet speeds in most of the region remain painfully slow. Digital rights activists have consistently denounced the internet restrictions and some have called them "far worse censorship than anywhere in the world." The report

said India leads the world in ordering Internet shutdowns and Kashmir "accounts for more than two-thirds of shutdowns ordered in the country." The Jammu-Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society said its report was based on field work, government documents, court files and media reports. It describes the consequences of the longest ever lockdown in the region's turbulent history and its severe impact on livelihoods, education, health and media freedoms. It said the digital siege led to "chilling effects of online surveillance, profiling and criminal sanctions, with police complaints registered" against some working journalists and over 200 social media users.



The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister's government talks of speed and the crime meter running at twice the speed

SATELLITE DETECTS UV LIGHT FROM GALAXY 9 BILLION LIGHT YEARS AWAY

India's first multi-wavelength satellite, which has five unique X-ray and ultraviolet telescopes working in tandem, AstroSat, has detected extreme-UV light from a galaxy, called AUDF01, 9.3 billion light-years away from Earth



of the day quote

In Tamil Nadu, the DMK has been a sheltering ground for people not working in the interest of the nation. You should see to it that we give a befitting reply to the people who are working against the interest of the nation

J P NADDA | BJP PRESIDENT

The CM has called me a 'namuna' (sample). Does asking questions regarding the law and order and continuous atrocities (against people) make me a 'namuna'

SANJAY SINGH | AAM ADAMI PARTY MP

There is no clemency for (former Akali minister) Sucha Singh Langah and people of Sikh community would continue social boycott with him

GIANI HARPREET SINGH | AKAL TAKHT JATHEDAR

More than 60K COVID cases for 7th straight day

THERE ARE 7,04,348 ACTIVE nCoV CASES IN THE COUNTRY COMPRISING 22.24 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL CASELOAD

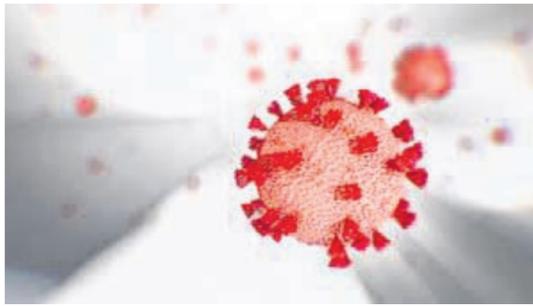
AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 25: With 60,975 people testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day, India's COVID-19 tally rose to 31,67,323, while recoveries surged to 24,04,585 pushing the recovery rate to 75.92 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The death toll climbed to 58,390 with 848 fatalities being reported in a span of 24-hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate has declined to 1.84 per cent. There are 7,04,348 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprises 22.24 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark August 7. According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 3,68,27,520 samples have been tested up to August 24 with 9,25,383



samples being tested on Monday.

Of the 848 fresh deaths, 212 are from Maharashtra, 127 from Karnataka, 97 from Tamil Nadu, 86 from Andhra Pradesh, 61 from Uttar Pradesh, 57 from West Bengal, 43 from Punjab, 18 from Jharkhand, 17 from Madhya Pradesh, 13 each from Delhi and Gujarat, 12 from

Rajasthan and 11 from Kerala.

Ten fatalities have been reported each from Assam, Haryana and Odisha, nine each from Chhattisgarh and Telangana, seven each from Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhnad, five from Puducherry and Tripura, four from Goa, three from Bihar, while Andaman and

Nicobar Islands have registered two fatalities each.

Of the total 58,390 deaths, Maharashtra has reported the maximum at 22,465 followed by 6,614 in Tamil Nadu, 4,810 in Karnataka, 4,313 in Delhi, 3,368 in Andhra Pradesh, 2,987 in Uttar Pradesh, 2,908 in Gujarat, 2,851 in West Bengal and 1,246 in Madhya Pradesh.

So far, 1,129 people have died of COVID-19 in Punjab, 967 in Rajasthan, 770 in Telangana, 624 in Jammu and Kashmir, 613 in Haryana, 514 in Bihar, 419 in Odisha, 330 in Jharkhand, 252 in Assam, 234 in Kerala and 207 in Uttarakhnad.

Chhattisgarh has registered 206 deaths, Puducherry 164, Goa 148, Tripura 78, Chandigarh 37, Andaman and Nicobar Islands 35, Himachal Pradesh 29, Ladakh 23, Manipur 22, Nagaland nine, Meghalaya eight, Arunachal Pradesh five, Sikkim three and

Death toll over 58K

NEW DELHI: The death toll due to COVID-19 climbed to 58,390 with 848 more fatalities, said the Health Ministry. In India though with fatality rate, which is the proportion of people who die from the disease among individuals diagnosed, has dropped to 1.84 per cent, the ministry said. It is still around 57,000 less deaths than Brazil and 1,19,000 less than in the US.

Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu two. The Health Ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

UP SCRIBE'S MURDER POLICE OFFICER SUSPENDED, SIX ARRESTED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ballia (UP), August 25: A police officer was suspended in connection with the murder of a journalist working with a Hindi news channel here while six accused have been arrested so far in the case, police said Tuesday.

On the complaint lodged by the father of journalist Ratan Singh (45) against 10 people, six accused - Sushil Singh, Dinesh Singh, Arvind Singh, Suneel Singh, Vir Bahadur Singh and Vinay Singh have been arrested so far, Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Sanjay Yadav said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced an ex-gratia of ₹10 lakh to the family of the deceased and offered condolences.

An official spokesperson in Lucknow said the Chief Minister has directed officials to ensure strict action against the accused.

Ratan Singh was shot dead Monday night in Phephna Police Station area. The police station in-charge of Phephna, Shashi Mauli Pandey, has been suspended and efforts are on to nab the remaining accused, the ASP said.

The ASP said that the journalist's father, Vinod Singh, alleged that Sonu Singh of the same village had called his son at around 8 pm and invited him to his house where the accused were waiting with lathis and a revolver and they killed Ratan Singh.

Meanwhile, the Ballia Working Journalist Union has demanded an ex-gratia of ₹1 crore and a government job for the wife of the deceased.

Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar had stated Monday night that Ratan Singh had a property dispute with his neighbour and after a fight between the two, he was shot at.

"Accused Dinesh Singh is parcerer (pattidar) of Ratan Singh. The reason of the fight, which led to murder of the journalist, is old enmity and property dispute with the neighbour," the senior police officer said.

PNB FRAUD CASE

Global arrest warrant against Ami Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 25: An Interpol global arrest warrant has been issued against Ami Modi, wife of Nirav Modi, prime accused in the over \$2 billion PNB bank fraud case, on charges of money laundering, officials said Tuesday.

They said the 'red notice' has been issued by the global police body on the request of the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

Once such a notice is issued against a fugitive, the Interpol asks its 192-member countries to arrest or detain the person if spotted in their countries after which extradition or deportation proceedings can begin. Ami Modi is stated to have left country soon after the alleged bank fraud case came into light in 2018.

The ED has charged Ami Modi for conspiring and money laundering with her husband and jeweller Nirav Modi apart from his



uncle Mehul Choksi and others under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Nirav Modi (49), is currently lodged in a UK jail after being arrested in London in March, 2019 and is currently fighting extradition to India. He has been declared a fugitive economic offender by a Mumbai court early this year and the court had also ordered confiscation of his assets.

The ED has already confiscated about ₹329 crore of his linked properties.

SWOLLEN RIVER



A view of flooded Ganga ghats following heavy rainfall in Varanasi, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

Kanpur financier hacked to death

Kanpur: The owner of a finance company in Uttar Pradesh was hacked to death in his Kanpur office. The incident was reported from Govind Nagar area late Monday. The deceased was identified as Jai Gopal Puri. SP South, Deepak Bhukar, said that Puri and a female staff were sitting inside his office, when a group of unidentified men, armed with sharp-edged weapons barged in and attacked him till he fell unconscious and slumped on the floor. The female staff, thereafter, raised alarm and alerted people nearby, who informed the police.

Two boys found hanging from tree

Etawah: Bodies of two boys were found hanging from a tree in a village under Usrahar police circle in Uttar Pradesh's Etawah district, police said Tuesday. According to police, the boys had gone out to purchase 'samosa' on a bicycle on Sunday evening and did not return home. They were identified as Akash, 16, and Ankul, 15, of Mahua Patiyat village. While Akash was a student of intermediate, Ankul was a high school student.

Paswan admitted in hosp, stable

New Delhi: Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan, who is hospitalised due to heart and kidney problems, is said to be stable. Sources said that he may be discharged from the hospital on Tuesday after routine check-up. Paswan has been admitted to Fortis Escort Hospital in Delhi since Sunday. Sources said that Paswan went to the hospital for routine checkup, is interacting with his personal staff over phone.

Four killed in J&K landslide

Jammu: Three members of a family were among four killed in separate incidents of landslides following heavy rains in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said Tuesday. Khalil Ahmad (30), his wife Raksana Begum (25) and their relative Mohammad Aslam were killed after a landslide in upper reaches of Khour in Mahore area on Monday night, a police official said. He said the three had gone to the area for cattle grazing and had set up their shelter near the mouth of a natural cave. Several of their animals were also killed in the incident.

Intel alert over outlawed SFJ's call for 'Punjab bandh'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 25: Intelligence agencies have issued an alert after information was received that secessionist group Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) has given a call for a 'Punjab bandh' at the end of this month.

The pro-Khalistan group, which was declared an "unlawful association" by the Ministry of Home Affairs in July last year, in a recent message called for a "Punjab Bandh" August 31 to commemorate the 25th death anniversary of Dilawar Singh - the assassin of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh.

Congress leader Beant Singh, who was the Chief Minister of Punjab from 1992 to 1995, and 16 others were killed in a car bombing outside the Civil Secretariat in Chandigarh on August 31, 1995. Dilawar Singh, a Punjab Police officer, had acted as a suicide bomber



to assassinate Beant Singh. In its bandh call, the SFJ has offered reimbursement of travel expenses for return trip to Amritsar to Sikhs who will attend Ardas at Akal Takht August 31.

A high alert has been issued and Punjab Police has been asked to make foolproof arrangements to avoid any untoward incident in the state, as SFJ's main promoter Gurpatwant Pannun, a New York-based attorney who practices as a lawyer for asylum seekers in the US, called for the 'bandh'.

Pannun, in the call, mentioned that Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak

Committee (SGPC) appointed Jathedar of Akal Takht, Giani Gurbachan Singh in 2012 had declared Beant Singh's assassin Dilawar Singh as a "Qaumi Shaheed".

"SFJ is humbled to offer this seva to Sikhs in Punjab who wish to attend Ardas at Akal Takht August 31," said the call.

Citing an Amnesty International report on the situation in Punjab during 1992-95, Pannun stated that "Bhai Shaheed Dilawar Singh indeed put a halt to the genocide of Sikhs under Beant's rule. We urge people of Punjab to shut down all businesses except essential services such as clinics and pharmacies August 31 in respect of Quami Shaheed Dilawar Singh," added Pannun.

Citing the 1985 report by Amnesty International on the situation in Punjab, Pannun said "grave human rights violations have been perpetrated in Punjab by the police."

Only first wife of man entitled to lay claim on his money: HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 25: The Bombay High Court Tuesday said as per law, if a man has two wives and both lay claim to his money, only the first wife would be entitled for it but his children from both marriages would get the money.

A bench of Justices SJ Kathawalla and Madhav Jamdar made the above observation orally after the state government submitted that there existed a previous full bench judgement of the high court's Aurangabad bench that gave a similar direction. The bench led by Justice Kathawalla was hearing a petition filed by the second wife of Suresh Hatankar, an assistant sub-inspector in the Maharashtra Railway Police Force who died of COVID-19 May 30.



As the state government's resolution promises a compensation of ₹65 lakh to police personnel who die of COVID-19 while on duty, two women, both claiming to be Hatankar's wives, had laid a claim to the compensation amount.

Later, Shraddha, Hatankar's daughter from his second wife, approached the Bombay High Court, seeking that she be given a proportionate share of the compensation amount to save her and her mother from "starvation" and homelessness.

On Tuesday, state's counsel

Jyoti Chavan told the bench that the state would deposit the compensation amount in the court for the time that HC takes to decide who is entitled to the amount.

Chavan also informed the court about the judgement of the Aurangabad bench.

The court then said, "The law says that the second wife might not get anything. But the daughter from the second wife, and the first wife and the daughter from the first marriage will be entitled to the money"

Hatankar's first wife Shubhada and the couple's daughter Surbhi, who were present before the court through video-conferencing, claimed they were not aware that Hatankar had "another family".

However, Shraddha's counsel Prerak Sharma told the court that Surbhi and Shubhada knew about Hatankar's two marriages.

How Dalai Lama traced teacher Khunu Lama in India!

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 25: Soon after the Dalai Lama escaped to India in 1959, he made several efforts to locate his teacher Khunu Lama, who was rumoured to be in the country at that time, and finally managed to find him living incognito in a Shiva temple in Varanasi, says a new book.

The Dalai Lama found it difficult to locate Khunu Lama as the latter kept a low profile and shunned attention and had a habit of disappearing whenever his reputation caught up with him.

"When people came to pay their respects, he would have an assistant place a huge padlock on the outside of his door as a deterrent, and slide the key under the door

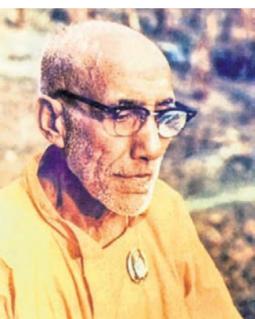
to him. Hours later he would slide the key back out again and knock quietly to be let out," the book, published by Penguin Random House, said.

The Dalai Lama sent emissaries to all the Buddhist pilgrimage sites, to all the places where Khunu Lama was known to have taught, and found no trace of him.

Finally, he was accidentally discovered, living incognito in a Shiva temple in the middle of Varanasi.

"When the emissary knocked on the door of his small closet of a room and asked if he would meet with the Dalai Lama, he said no, he wasn't feeling well.

"His Holiness was actually waiting downstairs and would not be put off, so then Khunu Lama demurred again because he didn't



Khunu Lama Tenzin Gyaltzen Rinpoche, India, circa 1977

PHOTO COURTESY OF LAMA YESHE WISDOM ARCHIVE

have a chair to offer his guest - an old blanket was his only furnishing," the book says.

But the Dalai Lama insisted and they met standing up in the tiny room. The Dalai Lama asked Khunu Lama to teach the younger 'tulkus' (reincarnated Tibetan Buddhist masters) who had accompanied him into exile, and to teach him personally as well.

Khunu Lama was not recognised as a tulku himself. Nor was he ever initiated into a monastic community, in spite of the fact that he spent many years studying and teaching at several different monasteries.

He was born in the late 1800s. He came from Kinnaur, in the foothills of the Himalayas, from a prosperous farming and trading family who were devout Buddhists but opposed his desire to travel

for study. He left home around the age of 18 so suddenly that he didn't stop to put on his shoes, and he never really stopped travelling from that point on.

He made a point of learning the languages deeply - both Tibetan and Sanskrit - as a prerequisite to the study of the religious texts, and gained a reputation for extraordinary scholarship. His expertise in Tibetan grammar and poetics was famous, to the point of inciting dangerous jealousies among native Tibetans.

When the Dalai Lama asked Khunu Lama to teach him personally, one theme among others that he specially requested was Khunu Lama's dearest, most constant preoccupation.

'Bodhicitta' was the subject he

taught most eagerly and on which he wrote a poem of praise every day. He embodied 'bodhicitta' with all his being. It didn't matter how great a scholar he was, how his knowledge of Sanskrit could unlock nuances of Shantideva's and Nagarjuna's writing that few others could fathom, the teaching was never just theoretical, the book says.

"When the Dalai Lama once asked Khunu Lama to pray for the people of Tibet, Khunu Lama was reluctant. He couldn't possibly do that, he said, as it was His Holiness who was their leader and should pray for them. He could, however, pray for Mao Zedong to experience 'bodhicitta' and be moved to change his policies toward Tibet," it says.

international



The humanitarian situation in Libya could turn into a disaster if hostilities erupt over the coastal city of Sirte
STEPHANE DUJARRIC | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL SPOKESPERSON

MATTER OF CONCERN

Scientists have identified mechanisms behind the deterioration of the immune system in response to severe viral infections, an advance that may lead to the development of novel therapeutics for diseases like COVID-19



of the day quote

Chinese business houses should establish their regional offices in Pakistan



IMRAN KHAN | PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER

Mexico could receive a record \$40 billion in remittances in 2020, which will help drive domestic economic recovery



ANDRES MANUEL LOPEZ OBRADOR | PRESIDENT OF MEXICO

My gap year from school is over, and it feels so great to finally be back in school again



GRETA THUNBERG | SWEDISH ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVIST

SHORT TAKES

17 killed in Afghan blasts

Kabul: A wave of attacks across Afghanistan on Tuesday left at least 17 people dead and scores more wounded, officials said, including a Taliban truck bombing in the country's north that targeted a commando base for Afghan forces. The violence comes as expectations had been rising that negotiations could soon get underway between the Afghan government and the insurgents as part of a February agreement between the US and the Taliban.

Israel strikes Hamas tunnels

Jerusalem: Israeli aircraft Tuesday struck Hamas tunnels in Gaza, saying it was in response to the launch of explosive balloons from the besieged Palestinian enclave. In the overnight attack, tanks, warplanes and others targeted military posts and an underground infrastructure belonging to Hamas, Xinhua news agency quoted a military spokesperson as saying.

S'pore warns of further nCoV waves

Singapore: Further waves of the deadly COVID-19 are possible as long as a vaccine remains out of reach, Singapore's Health Minister Gan Kim Yong warned on Tuesday, as the city-state recorded 31 new coronavirus cases, its lowest single-day figure since March. He, however, assured that the Ministry of Health (MOH) will make sure Singapore has the resources to care for all COVID-19 patients and support all healthcare institutions involved in the fight.

Pompeo in Sudan

Cairo: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo arrived in Sudan Tuesday, the most senior US official to visit the African country since last year's ouster of its autocratic leader, Omar al-Bashir. Pompeo is the first US secretary of state to visit the African country since 2005, when Condoleezza Rice visited. The visit was meant to show US support for the country's fragile transition to democracy.

Gaza locks down

Gaza City: Gaza's militant Hamas rulers imposed a territory-wide curfew Tuesday after authorities detected the first local cases of the coronavirus, raising fears of a wider outbreak in the blockaded territory that is home to some 2 million Palestinians.

AMERICA IS NOT RACIST, SAYS NIKKI HALEY

Top Republicans urge Americans to re-elect Trump

AGENCIES

Washington, August 25: Top Republicans, including Indian-American Nikki Haley have warned Americans that Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his running mate Kamala Harris' victory in the elections will convert the US into a "socialist utopia" and a "fundamentally different" country.

Urging the voters to re-elect Donald Trump for another term, senior party leaders in their prime-time address Monday at the Republican National Convention presented the President as a statesman, a friend to Black Americans and a shield against an assault on American values.

They said that the future of America was in danger if the November 3 polls resulted in the defeat of incumbent President Trump. The four-day mostly-virtual RNC the party jamboree will formally nominate 74-year-old Trump as the party's candidate for the US presidential election. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence will be challenged by former vice president Biden and his Indian-American running mate Senator Harris.

Former US ambassador to the UN, Haley in her address said, "their vision for America is socialism. And we know that socialism has failed everywhere." "Joe Biden and the socialist left would be a disaster for our economy

But President Trump is leading a new era of opportunity," Haley the two-time governor of South Carolina, said.

Haley also sought to demonstrate President Trump's leadership around the world, saying he has been tough against North Korea, Iran and China. She praised Trump for passing sanctions on North



Korea and said she "ripped up the Iran nuclear deal."

"Joe Biden and the Democrats are still blaming America first. Donald Trump has always put America first," she said.

Haley also criticised the Democratic Party for "turning a blind eye toward riots and rage." "The American people know we can do better, and of course we value and respect every Black life. The Black cops who have been shot in the line of duty, they matter. The Black small business owners who have watched their lives work go up in flames, they matter. The Black kids who have been gunned down on the playground, their lives matter too. And their lives are being ruined and stolen by the violence on our streets. It doesn't have to be like this," Haley said.

She said that with Trump as president, "we will build on the progress of our past and unlock the promise of our future." The Biden-Harris duo was also criticised by top Senator Tim Scott. Last week, the Democrats, led by Biden, had accused Trump of the same.

STORM'S RAGE



Waves splash during the passage of tropical storm Laura in Havana, Cuba

REUTERS

Navalny 'probably' poisoned: Docs

THE OPPN LEADER IS IN INTENSIVE CARE AND IS STILL IN AN ARTIFICIAL COMA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Moscow, August 25: The Berlin hospital treating the seriously ill Russian opposition leader, Alexei Navalny, said he appears to have been poisoned.

The Charite hospital released a statement Monday saying "clinical evidence suggests an intoxication through a substance belonging to the group of cholinesterase inhibitors", the BBC reported.

But doctors who treated him in Russia say the substance was not present. Navalny fell ill on an internal flight in Russia Thursday. Video appeared to show Navalny, a dogged critic of the Kremlin, writhing in agony on the flight from Tomsk in Siberia to Moscow.

His supporters suspect poison was placed in a cup of tea he drank



at the airport in Tomsk.

Navalny's flight made an emergency landing in Omsk where he was first treated.

In their latest statement released after that of the German medical team, the Omsk doctors say tests showed no sign of cholinesterase inhibitors in his body. Speaking last week, the same team suggested his illness was caused by a metabolic

disorder triggered by low blood sugar. On Friday, they at first said he was too ill to be moved but then allowed him to board a medical evacuation flight, which landed in Berlin Saturday morning.

His condition was "serious but not life-threatening" the statement said. "The exact substance is not yet known," the hospital said. "Widespread analysis has begun. The effect of the poison - i.e. the inhibition of cholinesterase in the organism - has been proven several times and in independent laboratories." The clinical outcome remained unclear, the statement said, and the medical team warned of possible effects on the nervous system.

The opposition leader is in intensive care and is still in an artificial coma.

Africa now free of wild poliovirus, but polio threat remains



REUTERS

Johannesburg, August 25: Health authorities Tuesday are expected to declare the African continent free of the wild poliovirus after decades of effort, though cases of vaccine-derived polio are still sparking outbreaks in more than a dozen countries.

The declaration would leave Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan as the only countries thought to still have the wild poliovirus, with vaccination efforts against the highly infectious, water-borne disease complicated by insecurity and attacks on health workers.

The announcement by the African Regional Certification Commission for Polio Eradication comes after no cases have been reported for four years. Polio once paralysed some 75,000 children a year across Africa.

Health authorities see the declaration as a rare glint of good news in Africa amid the coronavirus pandemic, an Ebola outbreak in western Congo, the world's worst measles outbreak in Congo and the persistent deadly challenges of malaria, HIV and tuberculosis.

The World Health Organisation says it is just the second time a virus has been eradicated in Africa, after the elimination of smallpox four decades ago. But sometimes patchy surveillance across the vast continent of 1.3 billion people raises the possibility that scattered cases of the wild poliovirus still remain, undetected.

The final push to combat the wild poliovirus focused largely on northern Nigeria, where the Boko Haram Islamic extremist group has carried out a deadly insurgency for more than a decade.

Can mosquitoes spread nCoV?

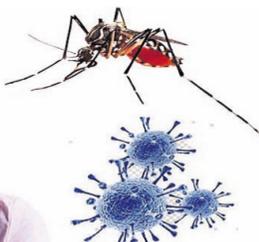
The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention says it has no data to suggest the coronavirus is spread by either mosquitoes or ticks

AGENCIES

Washington, August 25: Can mosquitoes spread the coronavirus? No. While mosquitoes can spread some diseases, most notably malaria, experts say COVID-19 is not among them.

The US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention says it has no data to suggest the coronavirus is spread by either mosquitoes or ticks.

COVID-19 is mainly spread from person to person through droplets people spray when they talk, cough or sneeze. And the World Health Organisation says a mosquito bite won't give you the virus. But why not, if mosquitoes can transmit other diseases? A recent study offers an explanation. Researchers say the virus would have to infect the mosquito and multiply inside of it in order for the mosquito to pass it on to people. That failed to hap-



pen when researchers injected three species of mosquitoes with the virus. For months, the World Health Organisation has listed the claim that mosquitoes can spread coronavirus as a rumor on their Mythbusters Page.

To ensure that the mosquitoes became infected with SARS-CoV-2, the researchers used an intrathoracic inoculation, meaning they injected the virus directly into the cavity containing circulatory fluid. For a virus to be trans-

missible by a mosquito, it must be able to travel through the circulatory system and replicate. This allows the viruses to find and infect the salivary gland, which is the final step in the process before the infection is passed to the host.

Researchers observed that there were no traces of COVID-19 virus within the insects after 24 hours. This means the virus was unable to replicate within the mosquitoes and was eventually eliminated by natural defenses.

Covid pace slows worldwide except for SEA, MEDEAST: WHO

REUTERS

Geneva, August 25: The COVID-19 pandemic is still expanding, but the rise in cases and deaths has slowed globally, except for southeast Asia and the eastern Mediterranean regions, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said.

In its latest epidemiological update, issued Monday night, it said that the Americas remains the hardest-hit region, accounting for half of newly reported cases and 62% of the 39,240 deaths worldwide in the past week.

More than 23.65 million people have been reported to be infected by the coronavirus globally and 811,895 have died, according to a Reuters tally on Tuesday. "Over 1.7 million new COVID-19 cases and 39,000 new deaths were reported to WHO for the week ending 23 August, a 4% decrease in the number of cases and (a 12% decrease) in the number of deaths compared to the previous

week," the WHO said. Southeast Asia, the second most affected region, reported a jump accounting for 28% of new cases and 15% of deaths, it said. India continues to report the majority of cases, but the virus is also spreading rapidly in Nepal. In WHO's eastern Mediterranean region, the number of reported deaths has consistently dropped over the last six weeks, the WHO said. Lebanon, Tunisia and Jordan reported the highest increase in cases compared to the previous week. The number of cases and deaths reported across Africa decreased by 8% and 11% respectively in

the past week, "primarily due to a decrease in cases reported in Algeria, Kenya, Ghana, Senegal and South Africa", it said. "In the European region, the number of cases reported has consistently increased over the last three weeks," it said.

The Americas remains the hardest-hit region, accounting for half of newly reported cases and 62% of deaths worldwide in the past week

KENOSHA SHOOTING

Black man shot multiple times, protests grip US

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Kenosha, United States, August 25: Police fired tear gas Monday when a protest demanding racial justice in the city of Kenosha in Wisconsin turned violent, as rage builds once more in the US at the shooting of a black man by a white officer.

Clashes erupted for a second night after video circulated showing 29-year-old Jacob Blake being shot and wounded in the back multiple times by police Sunday with his three children watching. Shortly after a curfew imposed on Kenosha County began at 8:00 pm (0100 GMT Tuesday), local police dressed in crowd control gear began pushing protesters back from outside a county courthouse using tear gas, an AFP reporter said.

They fired after the demonstrators began throwing water bottles at the Kenosha County Sheriff's officers. Some protesters then launched fireworks and more bottles at officers.

Later, some protesters smashed streetlights and set fire to a nearby building. The clashes came hours after some two dozen police faced off against hundreds of demonstrators chanting "No justice, no peace" and "Say his name -- Jacob Blake." Blake, 29, was airlifted to hospital in Milwaukee in serious condition, but local media reported Monday afternoon that his family said he was out of surgery and improving. Kenosha County, on the shores of Lake Michigan, has declared a curfew from 8:00 pm until 7:00 am Tuesday, after protesters set alight several city vehicles and damaged the county



Flames engulf the Community Corrections Division building during the protests

courthouse late Sunday. "The public needs to be off the streets for their safety," the county sheriff said in a statement.

Wisconsin governor Tony Evers said he was sending 125 members of the national guard to the city

to maintain order Monday night. The footage and the lack of any immediate explanation provoked painful memories of the police killing of African American George Floyd three months ago in Minneapolis, which sparked mas-

sive nationwide protests. Fresh demonstrations were held in the Minnesota city Monday night also to join the calls for justice for Jacob Blake. Some demonstrators were seen burning an American flag. Hundreds of protesters also marched on Monday in New York City against Blake's shooting.

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden called for a transparent probe into the shooting. "Yesterday, Jacob Blake was shot seven times in the back by police. His kids watched from the car. Today, we woke to grieve yet again. We need a full and transparent investigation," he said. Wisconsin's Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes said the shooting of Blake reflected a pattern of police violence nationwide against African Americans.

business



The approval is timely as **Albuterol MDI is a key rescue inhalation product for asthma patients who are at an increased risk of COVID-related complications**
VINITA GUPTA | CEO, LUPIN

RBI'S ₹20K CR SPL OMO IN 2 TRANCHES

The RBI will conduct simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMO) for an aggregate amount of ₹20,000 crore in two tranches August 27 and September 3



of the day quote

We are pleased to foray into the hospital nutrition segment in India. With Celeveda Maxx, we look forward to strengthening our presence in the nutrition segment and continue making a positive impact on patients' lives



MV RAMANA | CEO, BRANDED MARKETS (INDIA AND EMERGING MARKETS), DR REDDY'S LABORATORIES

The rise in profit is mainly attributed to provisioning which was lower in the quarter as compared to the last time (Q1 FY20). However, we have fully provided for whatever is required



SIDDHARTHA MOHANTY | MD & CEO, LIC HSG FIN

Our text-to-speech services have played a key role in democratising information reach and empowering people and organizations



SUNDAR SRINIVASAN | GM, MICROSOFT INDIA (R&D) PVT LTD

SHORT TAKES

Facebook News to pay Indian publishers

New Delhi: Facing political heat in India, the social networking giant Tuesday said it will pay news publishers in the country soon via its Facebook News to ensure their content is available in the new product. Facebook News will soon arrive in the UK, Germany, France, India and Brazil within the next six months to a year, the company announced. Campbell Brown, VP, Global News Partnerships at Facebook, said that consumer habits and news inventory vary by country.

AI's Eol submission deadline extended

New Delhi: The Centre Tuesday extended the deadline for submitting the bids to buy 100 per cent stake in national carrier Air India to October 30 from August 31. The extension was made via the eighth corrigendum to the global invitation for Expression of Interest (Eol) for the proposed divestment of Air India, which was issued by the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM). The changes have been made as per the requests received from the interested bidders, a statement said.

Karna woos toy makers to Koppal

Bangalore: Giving a fillip to the domestic toy making call by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Karnataka government is wooing global toy makers by creating a manufacturing cluster in Koppal, an official said Tuesday. "We have also identified Koppal as the first toy manufacturing cluster in India," said Karnataka Commerce and Industries Department Principal Secretary Gaurav Gupta.

GDP might shrink by 25%, says ICRA

New Delhi: India's Q1FY21 GDP is expected to contract by 25 per cent, ratings agency ICRA said Tuesday. ICRA pegged the contraction in Indian GDP and the GVA at basic prices in YoY terms in Q1 FY2021 at around 25 per cent each. "The economic performance was primarily weighed down by the considerable drag imposed by three key production sub-sectors, namely manufacturing, construction, and trade, hotels, transport, communication and services related to broadcasting," ICRA said.

Banks need 18 months to revive credit growth

NEAR-TERM UNCERTAINTY ON ASSET QUALITY REMAINS, BROKERAGES SAY

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 25: Even though the unlock phases have kickstarted economic activities in various sectors, most banks believe that meaningful credit growth recovery is likely only after 18 months. They feel the near-term uncertainty on asset quality will remain, brokerages tracking the development said.

According to a report by Emkay Global Financial Services, banks believe that credit growth will see a meaningful revival only from H2FY22, while margins could face dual pressure from lower loan-deposit ratio/interest reversals once NPA formation accelerates.

"Moratorium rates have inched up in select retail segments a bit post June, while bankers await clarity on corporate restructuring," the brokerage report said.

It added that though the activity levels seem to be back to pre-Covid-19 levels in agro-chem, pharma, FMCG staples, paints, steel, gas and lubricants segments and almost all companies agreed the worst is behind on economic activity, the views on the pace of recovery differed over a mix of timeframes.

The auto sector is more opti-



Auto sector is more optimistic of an earlier recovery (as early as the current quarter)

IT services companies are looking at strong deal pipelines but conversion timeline is uncertain

Pharma and agro-chem companies have shrugged off any Covid-related hits

mistic of an earlier recovery (as early as the current quarter), based on healthy rural demand, new product launches and some help from exports. IT services companies, on the other hand, are looking at strong deal pipelines but the conversion

timeline is uncertain.

Cement and building material companies have seen some recovery over the last couple of months already with healthy pricing trends expected to continue, while OMCs/gas/petchem business levels appear to be reaching normalcy quite quickly, the brokerage report said.

Pharma and agro-chem companies have shrugged off any hints of Covid-19 disruption, with the latter expecting growth north of 15 per cent YoY in FY21.

Insurance companies are affected by the overall drop in demand for their savings proxies and weak credit growth (for credit protection products).

RBI seeks setting up of independent regulator

AGENCIES

Mumbai, August 25: The Reserve Bank of India has called for setting up an independent regulator for targeted public investment to revive private investments.

In its Annual Report 2019-20, it said that targeted public investment funded by monetisation of assets in steel, coal, power, land, railways and privatisation of major ports by Central and state governments under an independent regulator can be the way forward to revive and crowd in private investment.

"In fact, goods and services tax (GST) Council type of apex authorities can be set up in respect of land, labour and power to drive structural reforms," the report said.

"They could include speedier implementation of the national infrastructure pipeline, a north-south and east-west road corridor together with a high-speed rail project that build on the successes of the golden quadrilateral, alongside steps to improve business sentiment and the environment for investment."

According to the RBI, states can be encouraged to publicise the availability of litigation-free land in their jurisdictions with access to modern infrastructure.

"In the power sector, the opportunity has arrived to leapfrog India into becoming the world leader in renewable energy by incentivising the domestic production of solar panels and connecting dis-

persed transmission links with remote areas. For the sector as a whole, elimination of cross-subsidisation through the tariff structure and provision of subsidy, if any, through direct benefit transfer (DBT) should be a priority, along with due consideration to the privatisation of electricity distribution companies (discoms)," the report said.

"With regard to railways, there is a strong case for manufacturing units to be corporatised. The growth potential of land banks can be exploited, particularly in metropolitan areas, by long-term leasing to the private sector, including for development of commercial real estate. FDI into railways can be encouraged by removing bottlenecks in the access to infrastructure - land; procurement rules; project risk-sharing mechanisms."

As per the report, a comprehensive policy is needed with regard to building adequate reserves of strategic materials, including the initiatives undertaken for crude oil.

It cited the need for diversifying financing options.

"Alternatives to bank finance have to be assiduously cultivated - capital markets and FDI offer opportunities to bring in investors with a relatively longer-term view that is conducive to attracting durable capital as well as embedded technology. The setting up of the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) in 2015 is a major strategic policy response in this direction," RBI said in the report.

SC asks SBI CAP to fund six Amrapali Group housing projects

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Tuesday asked SBI Capital (SBI CAP) to begin funding for six housing projects of the Amrapali Group, after it informed the top court that so far, it has found only these six to be viable. A bench of Justices Arun Mishra and U.U. Lalit directed SBI CAP to begin funding for six projects, after the financial institution, which manages the stressed asset fund for stuck realty projects, informed the top court that it cannot fund all the projects. Senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for SBI CAP, contended before the bench that SBI CAP had a detailed meeting with the court-appointed receiver and his committee, and they agreed, in principle, to finance the Amrapali projects. However, as 100 per cent risk is being taken by SBI Cap, as a result, they required 12 per cent as internal rate of return.

Tesco announces 16K 'new' permanent jobs

AGENCIES

London, August 25: British supermarket chain Tesco announced that it will create 16,000 new permanent roles in a bid to support the development of online businesses which have surged during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 16,000 jobs are in addition to the 4,000 permanent jobs which have already created since the start of the pandemic, said the company Monday, Xinhua news agency reported.

"The roles will include 10,000 pickers to assemble customer orders and 3,000 drivers to deliver them, plus a variety of other roles in stores and distribution centers," said the company.

Currently, the retail giant serves nearly 1.5 million customers a week online, up from around 600,000 at the start of the pandemic.

As its online business continues to grow, "the number of new roles may increase further in the coming months," said the company.

Meanwhile, before the pandemic,



The retail giant serves nearly 1.5 mn customers a week online, up from around 600,000 at the start of the pandemic

The 16,000 jobs are in addition to the 4,000 permanent jobs which have already created since the start of the pandemic

around 9 per cent of Tesco's sales were online. The figure is now more than 16 per cent of sales, with Tesco expecting online sales of over 5.5 billion pounds (US \$7.2 billion) this year; up from 3.3 billion pounds (US \$4.3 billion) last year.

Listed on the London Stock Exchange as a constituent of the FTSE 100 Index, the British retailer employs over 400,000 staff worldwide.

'Irrational' weekend restrictions are killing retail industry

Retailers Association of India is unhappy with the weekend lockdowns across 10 states



AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 25: The Retailers Association of India (RAI) Tuesday said that weekend restrictions and lockdowns across several states are adding to the woes of retail businesses which have already been severely hit by the pandemic and the nationwide lockdown.

In a statement Tuesday, RAI said that over 10 states, including Punjab, Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Nagaland, continue to impose "irrational" weekend lockdowns.

"The Indian retail industry continues to struggle to get back to its feet with constant roadblocks being faced at the state and local levels with weekend curfews and partial lockdowns, which continue to hurt retail business and dampen consumer sentiment," it said.

For retailers, over 45 per cent of the week's entire business happens over the weekends - Saturday and Sunday, it said, adding that after facing losses for over four months due to lockdown, retailers are depending on the weekend business to help recover from the financial stress they have been facing.

"However, local authorities in

THEY SAY

OVER 45 PC OF THE WEEK'S ENTIRE BUSINESS HAPPENS OVER THE WEEKENDS - SATURDAY AND SUNDAY

BUSINESSES ARE ALREADY FACING LOSSES FOR OVER FOUR MONTHS DUE TO LOCKDOWN

some states continue to impose strict lockdowns on weekends, which are becoming a huge setback in their path to recovery," the industry body said in its statement.

Partial closures and keeping shops closed during weekends are detrimental to social distancing as customers have no choice but to throng stores during restricted hours, according to RAI.

RAI CEO Kumar Rajagopalan said: "These are knee-jerk reactions that are crippling the sector and gravely affecting the economy. We have urged the Centre and the state governments to collaboratively work towards supporting the revival of the retail industry."

"If the weekend business is lost, then the hopeful recovery from the festive season will become a distant dream," he said.

Qantas cuts another 2,500 jobs

The airline has already flagged 6,000 job losses in June in a bid to cut costs amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic

CANBERRA: Australian flag carrier Qantas Tuesday announced another 2,500 job cuts as it plans to outsource ground handling services at major airports.

Qantas said it is proposing to outsource various ground operations roles, including baggage handlers, aircraft cleaners and bus drivers, impacting nearly 2,500 roles in total, reports Xinhua news agency. The airline has already flagged 6,000 job losses in June in a bid to cut costs amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

It said the latest announcement followed a statutory loss of A\$2.7 billion (\$1.94 billion) for the Group in FY20, and a revenue drop of A\$4 billion in the second half due to the health crisis and border restrictions.

"We've already taken drastic ac-



tion, with more than 220 aircraft grounded, the vast majority of our workforce stood down and assets mortgaged to raise cash," Qantas Domestic CEO Andrew David said.

"Right now, our domestic capacity is at 20 per cent of pre-coronavirus levels and international travel is expected to take years to recover." He said outsourcing the work to specialist ground handlers would save around A\$100 million each year.

The airline will speak to its employees and unions on the plan.

WHY US FED IS SEEKING MORE FIREPOWER

EVERYTHING IS UP IN THE AIR NOW, INCLUDING HOW FAST THE CORONAVIRUS WILL SPREAD, HOW MANY MORE PEOPLE WILL DIE FROM COVID-19 AND WHETHER US LAWMAKERS WILL DELIVER A NEW ECONOMIC RESCUE PACKAGE

AGENCIES

New York, August 25: A year ago, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell warned fellow central bankers of the significant risks posed by trade policy uncertainty, and the lack of precedents for monetary policy in the face of those unknowns.

As Powell this week prepares to address the Fed's annual central bankers' conference - usually held in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, but being conducted virtually this year because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic - uncertainty and the threat it poses to economic growth looms larger than ever.

Everything is up in the air now, including how fast the coronavirus will spread, how many more people will die from COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus, and whether US lawmakers will deliver a new eco-

nomic rescue package, and how big it will be if they do.

Added to that are political storm clouds gathering ahead of the November 3 presidential election, with President Donald Trump already stoking doubts over the fairness of the process and its outcome.

Against that background, Powell is expected to open the Kansas City Fed's annual economic policy conference Thursday with an update on the U.S. central bank's plans to reify its monetary policy approach to a world where persistently low inflation and low interest rates numb the effects of the Fed's recession-fighting stimulus measures.

Rising uncertainty about the economic outlook, which economists say stunts household spending, business investment and factory output, may add to pressure on the Fed to bolster its policy arsenal.

"When you have high degrees of



uncertainty, it tends to mean policy is less effective," says Nicholas Bloom, an economics professor at Stanford University. "For a given bang you need many more bucks."

A gauge of economic uncertainty that Bloom developed with col-

leagues has skyrocketed this year.

And new research published last week by the Fed suggests that "uncertainty shocks" compound over time, so that several in a row deliver a much bigger blow to the economic

outlook than each one might have in isolation.

As much as economists recognize that uncertainty threatens growth, in other words, "the existing paradigm is understating the true effects of uncertainty," the researchers wrote.

After a record-setting contraction last quarter, the U.S. economy has shown some signs of returning to growth, with existing home sales surging in July, and a widely followed survey showing business activity snapping back.

High-frequency data on retail store visits and employment across industries moved higher in recent weeks after plateauing amid a spike

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NICHOLAS BLOOM | ECONOMICS PROFESSOR, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

in COVID-19 cases earlier in the summer. Credit card spending also rose, data from JP Morgan shows, although that may not capture the activity of the roughly 28 million Americans who are collecting jobless benefits, which shrank this month as extra federal payments lapsed.

Still, the recent upturn in economic data, along with a slowdown in new infections since mid-July, has some economists wondering whether the recovery will be more rapid than many think.

"We focus a lot on the downside risks; don't forget about the other side of the distribution," Tim Duy, an economics professor at the University of Oregon, wrote in his blog Monday.

Still, Fed policymakers are concerned the plethora of unknowns is exacerbating downward pressure on growth.

Uruguayan furious for the way he has been treated as Koeman's brutal phone call to end the striker's career 'lasted just 60 seconds'

ADIOS SUAREZ!



REUTERS

Barcelona, August 25: After six years sprinkled with goals that have brought Barcelona 13 trophies, Luis Suarez may be heading for an unceremonious exit from the Camp Nou.

The Uruguayan was Barca's second-highest scorer last season behind captain Lionel Messi. But speculation about his future has grown since he was absent from a list of players Barca president Josep Maria Bartomeu declared were not for sale as he promised big changes after the side's seismic 2-8 defeat to Bayern Munich in the Champions League.

Catalan radio station 'Rac1' reported Monday that the striker had been told by new Barca coach Ronald Koeman that he was not in his plans for next season.

According to Barcelona news outlet 'SPORT', Suarez has been left furious after Koeman bluntly informed the striker of his desire to sell him in a conversation which lasted sixty seconds. The report also says Suarez is angry with Bartomeu who has not even talked to him about his role at the Catalan club.

Spain's sports papers followed suit Tuesday: "Adios Suarez" read the front cover of Barcelona-based 'SPORT', while the 33-year-old also appeared on the front of the other three national sports dailies.

"Koeman doesn't want them", said 'Mundo Deportivo', picturing Suarez, midfielders Ivan Rakitic and Arturo Vidal and defender Samuel

Umtiti. "The clear out begins", said newspaper 'AS', while Marca showed Suarez walking out of a door below the headline 'Clean up at Barca'.

Barcelona and Suarez's representative did not wish to comment on the reports, although the Uruguayan made his discontent known in a Sunday interview with newspaper 'El Pais'.

"People are talking about the names the president gave, of the changes that could happen, but no one has told me they want to get rid of me," he said. "I've spent six years at Barca — enough time for them to tell me what they think."

"If this is the desire of the club, it would be good if the person in charge who chooses speaks directly to me."

Laszlo Kubala as the club's third-highest scorer of all time last July, only trailing the late Cesar and runaway leading scorer Messi.

Better so than filter if I am one of those who want them to leave. It remains to be seen.

"I also want the best for the club and my idea today is to continue, but if the club decides that I am expendable, I have no problem talking to those who decide," he added.

Suarez has scored 198 goals in 283 games for Barca and overtook

Laszlo Kubala as the club's third-highest scorer of all time last July, only trailing the late Cesar and runaway leading scorer Messi.

"Look at when Real Madrid were beaten by Ajax last year and they said Toni Kroos was finished, they wanted to retire Luka Modric, they said Sergio Ramos was a disaster and no-one was worth anything."

"Then the next year they did better, and everyone was saying they were all superstars. Everyone knows when there is a defeat people take shots at everyone. I honestly believe there is a lack of coherence, patience and above all memory."

Suarez recognised that he was among those blamed for the humiliating loss to Bayern, the club's heaviest defeat ever in European competition, but said the answer was not to get rid of every player who had spent a long time at the club.

"Everyone looks at those who have spent the most time at the club. That's normal, but it's also foolish," added Suarez, who joined Barca from Liverpool in 2014 for a then club record fee of 82 million euros.

"We will have to assess the situation when we finally get the vaccine and things get normal because, for now, you don't know what will happen ... and when the situation will become normal," Ceferin said.

"The biggest problem in all that is predictability." The coronavirus is already causing problems for the early stages of the Champions League and Europa League. Teams from Kosovo have had games forfeited or postponed this month due to players contracting COVID-19.

"This is one of the most challenging things about the qualifying for now," Ceferin said. "But if the governments will react in a way that they don't allow teams to play, then we will have to think that the teams from those countries will have to play on a neutral ground." The immediate priority is ensuring the 55 national teams criss-crossing Europe can play their Nations League games in two weeks. Then there is the start of the group stage of the Champions League and Europa League in October.



of the IPL starting September 19 in the UAE.

Ashwin ran out England batsman Jos Buttler at the non-striker's end last season when he backed up too far, drawing criticism for his act as many called it against the 'spirit of the game'.

While Ashwin has reached Dubai, Ponting is set to arrive next week and the two will talk in person before the Indian reveals what transpired between them.

"Ricky Ponting hasn't yet reached (Dubai). After he comes, we will sit for a chat with him. He said he wants to have a conversation. We have al-

ready talked over the phone. It was a very interesting chat," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel.

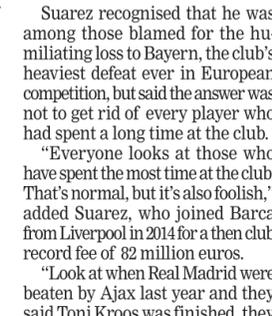
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"What happens sometimes is Australians' messages in English get lost in translation and reach us with a different meaning. Even some of their jokes become news. That's what it is and next week I will reveal a bit more about my conversation with Ricky."

Ashwin Monday suggested the introduction of a 'free ball' for bowlers if non-strikers back up too far, sticking to his stand that there was nothing wrong with running such batsmen out.

London, August 25: Formula One (F1) added four more races to this year's calendar Tuesday and said 'a limited number of fans' will be able to attend some of the remaining events in the pandemic-disrupted season.

Races in Turkey, Abu Dhabi and two in Bahrain will take place in November and December, completing the heavily reshaped calendar. It takes the number of races in the season to 17.

After the Turkish Grand Prix November 15, Bahrain will stage back-to-back races November 29 and December 6. The season will finish with the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix December 13.

"We can confirm that a number of races in the revised 2020 season will be open to a limited number of fans, including hospitality," Formula One said in a statement, "and we are working with each promoter to finalize the details."

It did not specify which races would be open to spectators.

Wimbledon champ Petra Kvitova, the No.6 seed, lost. Each of the top two women's seeds, Karolina Pliskova and Sofia Kenin, were beaten Sunday.

Defending women's champion Madison Keys lost 4-6, 1-6 to Ons Jabeur in an hour Monday night. Williams, on the hand, was pushed to the brink in her longest match since 2012 before pulling away with a perfect tie-breaker and edging Arantxa Rus 7-6 (7-6), 3-6, 7-6 (7-0). The match lasted two hours and 48 minutes.

UEFA 'ready to adapt' Euros

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lisbon, August 25: Having only just handed out the European Cup — three months later than planned — UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin is watching anxiously as the new season is already being disrupted by coronavirus cases.

The season should end with the European Championship being played in June and July 2021. But that is also how last season should have been completed before the pandemic forced UEFA in March to postpone its quadrennial event.

The lack of a vaccine, and the unpredictability of the pandemic, poses even more logistical complexities for a tournament that is already using 12 cities across Europe, with the semifinals and final at Wembley Stadium in London.

"For now, everyone confirmed and for now we stick to our plan to play 12 countries," Ceferin said in an interview with this agency.

"But in February, we didn't know that we would not play the Euro this year. So we are ready to adapt to any kind of situation. But, for now, it looks like we will play the same system in 12 countries and I'm confident that that we will do it next year."

Postponing Euro 2020 has already cost UEFA 100 million euro, Ceferin estimates. The financial impact could be greater on UEFA and European football nations if there is further disruption to the staging of the tournament.

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ALEXANDER CEFERIN

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The immediate priority is ensuring the 55 national teams criss-crossing Europe can play their Nations League games in two weeks. Then there is the start of the group stage of the Champions League and Europa League in October.

"Countries are on the green list today and red list tomorrow," Ceferin said. "We had some cases in football, quite a few. So the thing is, it's very challenging and very difficult. But on top of it, absolutely unpredictable. And you never know what will happen tomorrow."

Ceferin is hopeful, though, that fans can return to stadiums for European games by October. When Bayern Munich beat Paris Saint-Germain Sunday night, it was the first Champions League final to be played without fans.

CHAMPIONS' HOMECOMING



The members of UEFA Champions League winners Bayern Munich wait for their ride to base after landing in Munich airport; (inset left to right) Bayern captain Manuel Neuer steps out of their flight with the trophy; members of the team celebrate wearing t-shirts with writing of 'Triple 2020', which indicates the three titles (Bundesliga, German Cup & Champions League) in 2019-20 season, at the Allianz Arena

Phil takes lead on debut at PGA Tour Champions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ridgedale (US), August 25: Just about the only poor shot Phil Mickelson hit in his PGA Tour Champions debut was a wayward iron off the tee. He still turned it into a birdie.

It was one of five straight on the back nine Monday for the five-time major champion, who decided to make his over-50 debut this week after missing the cut at The Northern Trust and getting eliminated from the PGA Tour's FedEx Cup playoffs.



Mickelson finished with 11 birdies and shot a 10-under 61 to take a one-shot lead over David McKenzie.

KJ Choi, making his second start on the PGA Tour Champions, was joined in a group at seven under by Rocco Mediate, Rod Pampling and Tim Petrovic. Ernie Els, Bernhard Langer and Vijay Singh were among those another shot back.

Mickelson, who turned 50 in June, was optimistic that his game was rounding into shape for the US Open, the only Major championship he hasn't won. But that missed cut on the PGA Tour left him with the possibility of not playing the next two weeks heading into the Safeway Open, which would be his final tune-up for Winged Foot.

Ashwin 'had interesting chat with Ponting'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, August 25: India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin says he has spoken to his IPL coach Ricky Ponting on the contentious issue of running out batsmen who back up too far at the non-striker's end but will reveal the contents of the telephonic conversation only next week.

The issue became a talking point when Ponting, head coach of Ashwin's team Delhi Capitals, said he would have a discussion with Ashwin on the controversial manner of getting a batsman out ahead

Kashyap questions his omission

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 25: Former Commonwealth Games champion Parupalli Kashyap Tuesday questioned his omission from the ongoing national badminton camp in Hyderabad, saying that restricting it to just eight Olympic hopefuls is 'illogical'.

The 33-year-old, a former World No.6, insisted that he has an outside chance of qualifying for the Tokyo Games but he has no way to pursue it as he can't train at the camp.

"I have a couple of questions regarding the camp. I find it illogical to allow only eight people to train. Also, how are these eight, Olympic hopefuls because I think only three have almost confirmed their slot and rest have an outside chance including Srikanth and the women's doubles pair," Kashyap told this agency.

"I am ranked 23rd in the world ranking after Sai (B Sai Praneeth) and (Kidambi) Srikanth, then why haven't I been considered," he asked.

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) had allowed resumption of training at the SAI-Pullela



Gopichand Academy from August 7 following the Telangana government's approval August 1.

Kashyap, who along with wife and fellow shuttler Saina Nehwal, has been training at a separate facility near the academy, said he shared his thoughts with SAI but didn't get a satisfactory response.

"Gopi bhैया (Pullela Gopichand) advised me to speak to SAI as they made the list. So I spoke to SAI DG and asked him what is the logic behind it? Why am I not in the camp? Who decided that we don't have a chance to qualify when 7-8

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4 races added to F1's season

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In-pain Djoko wins post-hiatus debut

ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York, August 25: Bothered by a bad neck that a trainer massaged twice, Novak Djokovic double-faulted seven times and trailed by a break in each set before avoiding the rash of upsets at the Western & Southern Open by taking the last four games for a 7-6 (7-2), 6-4 victory over Ricardas Berankis.

The top-ranked Djokovic was playing his first ATP match in six months because of the coronavirus pandemic. He pulled out of the doubles event Sunday because of his neck.

Djokovic got by, even though he was wincing and stretching his neck between points, then wound up laying on his back — a medical mask and protective glasses on his face — while having his neck manipulated after the first set.

Earlier, No.2 seed Dominic Thiem, a three-time major finalist, wasn't much more competitive in a 2-6, 1-6 loss to Filip Krjajinovic, and No.5 Alexander Zverev lost to Andy Murray 3-6, 6-3, 5-7.

Like Djokovic, Serena Williams and Naomi Osaka emerged with difficult wins, while two-time

