



BIRTHDAY WISH

Actor Sushmita Sen pens a birthday wish for her younger daughter Alisah, who turned 11 Friday

LEISURE P2



COVID-19 NO EXCUSE

The SC dismissed a PIL seeking to defer the Bihar Assembly polls till the pandemic ends

TWO STATES P7



TRUMP ACCEPTS NOMINATION

Accepting the presidential nomination, Donald Trump castigates his Democratic rival Joe Biden

INTERNATIONAL P10

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Thanks to this new habit of wearing masks, in last two months, I lost 5 kgs.

SHORT TAKES

Petrol price goes up, diesel on hold

New Delhi: Petrol price has maintained its rise with the fuel price increasing again Friday, while diesel is holding on to its price line that it has maintained since July 30. In the international market, crude price has also remained firm with benchmark Brent crude hovering close to \$46 a barrel. State-owned oil marketing companies Friday increased the price of petrol by 11 paise per litre in Delhi while 10 paise per litre in Mumbai and Kolkata and by nine paise per litre in Chennai. Petrol price in the city Friday was ₹82.49/L.

BMC conducts 2nd sero survey in City

Bhubaneswar: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Friday launched the second round of serological survey to assess prevalence of COVID-19 among people in the City as the state capital is witnessing a rise in coronavirus cases this month. Five teams will collect 1,500 samples from various locations in the City, an official said. "The current exercise will provide an indication of the community exposure level which was found to be very low during the first round of the serological survey," said the official. The RMRC is providing technical support to the BMC.

TN Congress MP dies of COVID-19

Chennai: Congress MP from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu H Vasanthakumar died of COVID-19 at a hospital here on Friday, the party said. The 70-year old first time MP, who was admitted to the Apollo Hospitals August 10 after he tested positive for coronavirus, succumbed to the illness, a party spokesperson told PTI. Earlier, in a statement, Apollo Hospitals said the MP was in critical condition and treated by a team of doctors for severe COVID pneumonia. Vasanthakumar was a two-time MLA and elected to the Lok Sabha in the 2019 elections. He is survived by his wife, who is also undergoing treatment.

Fear of flood in Mahanadi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 28: Fear of flood looms large in the Mahanadi river system following heavy rainfall in its upper catchment areas in Chhatisgarh and a rise in the water level of Hirakud Dam, a senior official said.

Five more persons lost their lives in rain-related incidents in the state Friday, raising the death toll to twelve, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC), P K Jena said. Of them, four were from Mayurbhanj district, two from Keonjhar and one each from Sundergarh, Bargarh, Jajpur, Nuapada, Balasore and Bhadrak districts.

About 4.15 lakh people in 1276 villages in 54 Blocks of 10 districts have been affected due to heavy rainfall and subsequent flood in the state. The affected districts are—Angul, Bolangir, Balasore, Boudh, Cuttack, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Nuapada, Deogarh and Sonepur. Over 3.83 lakh people in 552 low lying villages are still marooned.

As per the preliminary damage assessment report of the state government, 2757 houses were damaged in the flood, of which 278 houses have been either fully or majorly damaged while over 1 lakh livestock animals were affected. The government has evacuated 18,534 people from low lying areas to 106 shelters. Besides, five urban areas were also affected due to the flood, the report said.

Forty of the 64 sluice gates of the Hirakud Dam, built across the Mahanadi near Sambalpur in Odisha, were opened by the authorities Friday to discharge excess water.

The flood in the Mahanadi river system is likely to affect coastal districts like Puri, Khurda, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur and Nayagarh districts, another official said.

Many other rivers are in spate submerging low-lying areas and snapping road connectivity.



BACK-TO-BACK LOW PRESSURE SYSTEMS

- Formation of a low pressure area over the Bay of Bengal had triggered heavy downpour in Odisha since Monday
- This was the fifth low-pressure area formed over the Bay of Bengal this month causing heavy rainfall in the state

After heavy rainfall in the upper catchment areas of the Mahanadi in neighbouring Chhattisgarh, over 6.9 lakh cusec water is now entering the Hirakud reservoir while 4.11 lakh cusec is being discharged through 40 sluice gates of the dam, the SRC said.

The water level at Hirakud Dam stands at 625.29 feet as against the full reservoir level of 630 feet, he said.

Excess water is being discharged from the reservoir due to the huge inflow, Jena said.

As the inflow at Hirakud Dam is likely to increase up to 8 lakh cusec shortly, the authorities are expected to raise the volume of discharge to over 6 lakh cusec from the reservoir, Jena said.

As a result 10 to 10.5 lakh cusec of water is likely to flow through Munduli near Cuttack Saturday where 7.2 lakh cusec of water is now flowing.

It may lead to a medium level flood in the Mahanadi delta region, he said.

The government is fully prepared to deal with the flood situation in the Mahanadi river system, the SRC said.

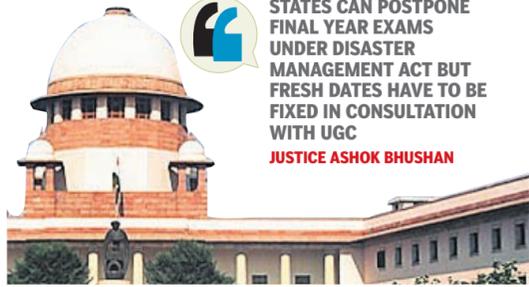
NO DEGREE WITHOUT EXAM: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: The Supreme Court Friday said that states and universities cannot promote students without holding final year exams by September 30.

Upholding the UGC decision to hold final year exams, a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said if any state feels they can't conduct exams by that date amid the coronavirus pandemic, they must approach the UGC for new dates to hold the exam.

The bench also comprising justices R S Reddy and M R Shah, said states are required to hold final year exams as per UGC guidelines and for any exemption they will have to seek permission.



STATES CAN POSTPONE FINAL YEAR EXAMS UNDER DISASTER MANAGEMENT ACT BUT FRESH DATES HAVE TO BE FIXED IN CONSULTATION WITH UGC

JUSTICE ASHOK BHUSHAN

"States can postpone final year exams under Disaster Management Act but fresh dates have to be fixed in consultation with UGC," it said. Yuva Sena, the youth wing of

the Shiv Sena, is one of the petitioners in the apex court and has questioned the UGC's directive to hold examinations amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The UGC had earlier said that the July 6 guidelines are based on recommendations of experts and have been made after due deliberation and it is wrong to claim that it will not be possible to conduct the final examinations in terms of the guidelines.

Assailing the decisions of some states like Maharashtra and Delhi to cancel final year examinations, the UGC had said that such decisions directly affect standards of higher education and will be an encroachment on the legislative field of coordinating and determining the standards of higher education that is exclusively reserved for Parliament under Schedule VII of the Constitution.

Govt to arrange lodging, transport for aspirants

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: In a major relief for JEE (Main) and National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) aspirants, the state government announced Friday to provide transportation and accommodation for needy students.

Addressing a presser here, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy said, "JEE (Main) and NEET are two important examinations for many students. The National Testing Agency (NTA) has decided to conduct the exams in 26 centres in seven towns of Odisha. About 37,000 students of the state are likely to appear for the test in the centres from September 1 to 6."

"Many students make advance planning for the crucial JEE Main examination. Despite the prevailing situation, the examination is being conducted. Therefore, the students might be facing difficulty in arrangements of their transportation and accommodations. Keeping this in mind and as per Chief Minister's instructions, I would like to inform that the state government will ensure transportation and accommodation of all needy students appearing for the exam," Tripathy said.

NEET-JEE

6 STATES MOVE SC

NEW DELHI: Ministers of six opposition-ruled states moved the Supreme Court Friday seeking review of its order permitting the Centre to conduct NEET and JEE entrance exams this year amid the persisting COVID-19 pandemic. The review plea has been filed by ministers from West Bengal (Moloy Ghatak), Jharkhand (Rameshwar Oraon), Rajasthan (Raghu Sharma), Chhattisgarh (Amarjeet Bhagat), Punjab (B S Sidhu) and Maharashtra (Uday Ravindra Sawant).

The free transportation facility will be provided from the district headquarters to the exam centres along with the return journey, he said.

The state government will also facilitate hassle free movement of students who have arranged their transportation and accommodation, he assured. The government has decided to relax the lockdown order to implement the decision.

The chief secretary said that all district administrations and police departments have been instructed to ensure free movement of the candidates and also the person accompanying them. Candidates can use their admit card to avail the facility.

JSW Neosteel Pure steel, Pure mazbooti. Consistent quality across the bar. Highest level of purity. Best bonding with cement.

OPSC Civil Services Mains rescheduled

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: Amid the pandemic, Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC) rescheduled the Odisha Civil Service Mains examination 2019 to November.

Notably, the exam was originally scheduled to be held in September.

An official notification in the OPSC site read, "Keeping in view the restrictions imposed by the State Government due to

ious notices in the leading local newspapers.

PG APPLICATION DATES EXTENDED

Odisha Higher Education Department Friday extended the last date of application for Common PG Entrance Test (CPET-2020) in view of interests of students amid COVID-19 outbreak.

Earlier, the department had declared that the students can apply for the common entrance examination online till August 31 (11:45pm).

However, the students can now apply for the test till September 10 on the official website. The applicants can also download their hall tickets till September 30.

According to the department, the common entrance test will be held between October 10 and 19.

The last date for candidates to update their graduation/ equivalent marks has been deferred to October 22, 2020 while the timeline for handing over the entrance marks to OAC by the entrance examination conducting universities is November 2.

The department will release the common entrance test results November 7.

Abe, Japan's longest-serving PM, resigns for health issues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tokyo, August 28: Japan's Shinzo Abe Friday said he was resigning because of poor health, ending a tenure as the country's longest-serving prime minister in which he sought to revive an economy stricken by deflation and push for a stronger military.

Abe has had ulcerative colitis since he was a teenager and has said the condition was controlled with treatment. Concerns about Abe's health began this summer and grew this month when he visited a Tokyo hospital two weeks in a row for unspecified health checkups. While there is some improvement, there is no guarantee that it will cure his condition and so he decided to step down after treatment Monday, he said.



MORE P10

Couple cheats bank of crores

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: A reputed private sector bank has sought the help of Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of state Crime Branch to nab an absconding couple who allegedly cheated the bank to the tune of ₹4.80 crore here.

EOW initiated probe into the issue after registering a case on the basis of the complaint lodged by the regional head of the bank, Asit Kumar Parhi.

Parhi stated that Narendra Kumar Sahu, the owner of R.K Timber, a proprietorship firm, requested the bank to grant a loan amounting ₹80 lakhs to purchase plant, machinery and other equipment to expand his business in 2009. The bank



agreed to sanction the loan and signed an agreement with Sahu and his wife. It disbursed the loan amount against six plots registered in the name of the couple at Kantabada Mauza under Chandaka police limits in June 2009.

However, Sahu showed no interest in repaying the loan amount. Subsequently, the bank declared the account as Non Performing Asset (NPA) within almost one year period. The bank later filed a case at the Debt

Recovery Tribunal (DRT) in Cuttack against the couple to recover its amount in 2012. The DRT allowed the bank to recover the loan by selling mortgaged properties.

The Recovery Officer found that four out of the six plots kept as security by the accused have been sub-merged in the canal of Jhunka Dam. The bank accused the couple of cheating the bank as they knew that the bank could not sell or use the plots. Similarly, the empanelled advocate of the bank found that the accused couple had sold the remaining two plots kept as security to different people while keeping the bank in the dark in 2011. Meanwhile, the couple was found absconding when the bank tried to make contact to recover the ₹4.80 crore including interest.

Japan's 'flying car' gets off ground, with a person aboard

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Tokyo, August 28: The decades-old dream of zipping around in the sky as simply as driving on highways may be becoming less illusory.

Japan's SkyDrive Inc., among the myriads of "flying car" projects around the world, has carried out a successful though modest test flight with one person aboard.

In a video shown to reporters Friday, a contraption that looked like a slick motorcycle with propellers lifted several feet (1-2 meters) off the ground, and hovered in a netted area for four minutes.

Tomohiro Fukuzawa, who heads the SkyDrive effort, said he hopes "the flying car" can be made into a real-life product by 2023, but he acknowledged that making it safe was critical. "Of the world's more than 100 flying car projects, only a handful has succeeded with a person on board," he told The Associated Press.

"I hope many people will want to ride it and feel safe. The machine so far can fly for just five to 10 minutes but if that can become 30 minutes, it will have more potential, including exports to places like China," Fukuzawa said. They could do away with the hassle of airports and traffic jams and the cost of hiring pilots, they could fly automatically.

"Many things have to happen," said Sanjiv Singh, professor at the Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, who co-founded Near Earth Autonomy, near Pittsburgh, which is also working on an eVTOL aircraft.

"If they cost \$10 million, no one is going to buy them. If they fly for 5 minutes, no one is going to buy them. If they fall out of the sky every so often, no one is going to buy them," Singh said in a telephone interview.

The SkyDrive project began humbly as a volunteer project called Cartivator in 2012, with funding by top Japanese companies in-

cluding automaker Toyota Motor Corp., electronics company Panasonic Corp. and video-game developer Bandai Namco.

A demonstration flight three years ago went poorly. But it has improved and the project recently received another round of funding, of 3.9 billion yen (\$37 million), including from the Development Bank of Japan. The Japanese government is bullish on "the Jetsons" vision, with a "road map" for business services by 2023, and expanded commercial use by the 2030s, stressing its potential for connecting remote areas and providing lifelines in disasters.



MARKET WATCH		
INDEX		VARIATION
SENSEX	39467.31	▲ 353.84
NIFTY	11647.60	▲ 88.30
DOLLAR	73.74	▼ ₹0.61
EURO	87.44	▼ ₹0.03
GOLD	₹51,300	▲ ₹398
SILVER	₹65,945	▲ ₹755

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	33.0°C	31.0°C
MIN	25.8°C	24.5°C
Humidity	83%	77%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Partly cloudy sky	

leisure



KARANVIR BOHRA, TEEJAY EXPECTING THIRD CHILD

Telly couple Karanvir Bohra and Teejay Sidhu are expecting their third child. The couple are parents to twin girls. The couple took to Instagram to announce the news Friday.

KANGANA-STARRER TEJAS TO GO ON FLOORS IN DECEMBER

Kangana Ranaut stars in the Air Force saga *Tejas*, and it was announced Friday that the film will go on floors in December. The actress plays a fighter pilot in the film.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today, you feel free and liberated! And in that spirit, you want to travel or do things you loved doing as a child. A good time for a family outing, says Ganesh. Keeping in mind your mood, you may even make plans for the future for your near and dear.

TAURUS
You are likely to stick to basics instead of letting your imagination run wild today, says Ganesh. At work, you may feel some pressure from your peers to do things differently. Think things out and be certain before you take any decision, advises Ganesh.

GEMINI
You have a certain degree of equanimity when it comes to reacting to praise and criticism. Today, however, you will be emotional, and it won't be too bad. You will get appreciated at work and your liberal show of emotions will only make others like you more. Your colleagues will say three cheers for you.

CANCER
Today, Cupid will send its arrow right through your heart. You will be trembling with pain – the sweet pain of lust and love. But the overzealous Cupid may not stop at just that. Just to be completely sure, it will virtually do shooting practice at you.

LEO
It is good to be impulsive sometimes; but if one were to ask you today, you would be all for a meticulously planned approach to life. So much so that from now on, planning will become almost a part and parcel of your life, predicts Ganesh.

VIRGO
Today, find yourself rummaging through the vast recesses of your inner self. You will make fabulous money to spend on your loved ones. Face up to work pressures by indulging in corporeal pleasures. You may warrant the company of someone special to think out loud all that is inside you, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
Today might be a good day to invest in that body armour you saw on the telly last night. At least find one that will shield you from being at the receiving end of your seniors and the daily grind of life. If you happen to be a job aspirant, be prepared to slog it out for your success. Put off auction bids and sealed tenders for a luckier day.

SCORPIO
You shall also work like a donkey and yet be smart as hell in what you do today. It is favourable if you engage in household activities – gardening, cooking, cleaning and the likes. Work pressure will be displaced by family pleasure, predicts Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Today is a curiously interesting day for you. While you are always well-groomed, today, you may take that extra bit of care to look best and attract a lot of praise for that too, especially from those glam hounds around you. That immaculate charm you are carrying today will enhance your business fortunes.

CAPRICORN
It's difficult to keep calm and have a control over your temper in times of distress, but today, you will prove all who surrendered to the whims of adversity wrong, foresees Ganesh. You will be unfaltering in dealing with problems, and will overcome them with ease.

AQUARIUS
Planning to buy a house or vehicle? Then today's the day to make the booking. However, don't buy anything in haste. Deliberate, says Ganesh, especially when it involves a huge sum of money. You may even shift residence, or change a job, and it's very likely you will enjoy the whole process.

PISCES
A good day for those looking for romantic liaisons, says Ganesh. You will seek the company of your sweetheart to fight feelings of solitude and boredom today. Those who are single ought to strike gold, considering how Lady Luck will be grinning at the efforts you make to win over your love.

'Wasn't sure if I could become a full-time author'

It started with a friend request...and...That's the way we met...but...A few things left unsaid...still...You are trending in my dreams...as...Ur the password to my life...so...All rights reserved for you. These lines are not part of love conversation between a dating couple, they are titles of books authored by Sudeep Nagarkar, arguably one of the highest selling novel and fiction writers of India at the moment. In fact, his book *It Started With A Friend Request*, according to Amazon India, was the most popular novel of 2013 which helped him win Youth Achievers' Award of the year. While it often takes years for many to write a book, this 32-year-old Mumbaikar has written 12 popular fictions on the trot between 2011 and 2019. His 13th novel has been unveiled a couple of weeks ago and needless to say it is receiving rave reviews. In a breezy conversation, the prolific novelist tells Orissa POST about his journey as a best selling author.



Sudeep with his wife

LOPITA, OP

Orissa POST: From *A Few Things Left Unsaid* to *A Second Chance*, how was the journey so far?

Sudeep Nagarkar: It wasn't an easy one, for sure. Writing was my passion but when I decided to make it a profession, I faced stiff resistance from my family and friends. It makes no sense to quit a secure job and make a career in writing, they said. They were right but I wasn't happy in IT sector: I used to enjoy writing, therefore, I took the decision to take a

chance. It happened while I was writing my third fiction *It Started With A Friend Request* which went on to become the most popular novel of 2013.

From an engineer to a successful author, tell us the secret behind this turnaround?

My days as an engineer played a crucial role in effecting a career change. They were so torturous, I was extremely frustrated. To begin with, I never wanted to do engineering. Management was my first choice. But again, had I not been into engi-

neering, I wouldn't have written books. My first few books were based on my life as an engineer.

One of your books was on how you met the love of your life and it received good reviews. How your love (now wife) reacted to that books?

In fact, she has edited some portion of the book. She had her reservations about some incidents mentioned in the book as we were about to marry at that time and all eyes were on my novel. She didn't expect me to write a book about our relationship. But when I gifted her a copy as wedding gift just five days ahead of our marriage, she was surprised and very happy.

What was the first reaction when you got Youth Achievers' Award in 2013?

To be honest, I was confused. I was not sure whether I should commit myself to become a full-time author. Then I was still working with an IT company.

But it certainly gave me the confidence and proved to be the turning point in my career. There was no looking back after that.

Any message to the budding writers and fans?

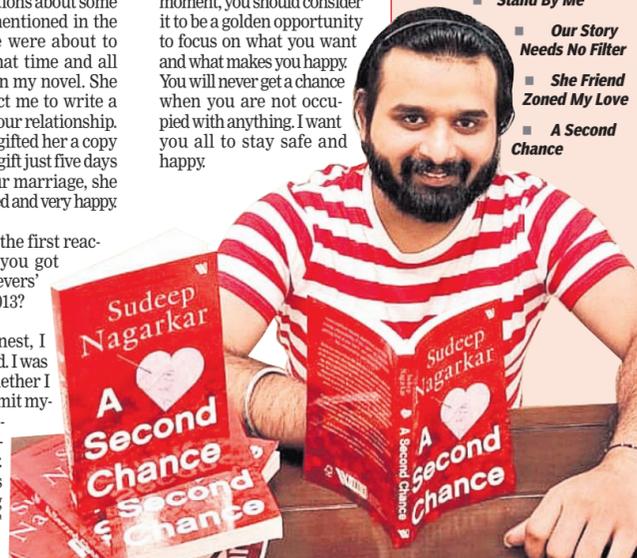
Everyone is going through a difficult time. But there is a need to overcome the frustration and irritation. At the moment, you should consider it to be a golden opportunity to focus on what you want and what makes you happy. You will never get a chance when you are not occupied with anything. I want you all to stay safe and happy.

Sudeep's body of literary works

- A Few Things Left Unsaid
- That's The Way We Met
- It Started With A Friend Request
- Sorry You Are Not My Type
- U R The Password To My Life
- You R Trending In My Dreams
- She Swiped Right Into My Heart
- All Rights Reserved For U
- The Secrets We Kept

Stand By Me

- Our Story Needs No Filter
- She Friend Zoned My Love
- A Second Chance



INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST NUCLEAR TESTS Kazakhstan's pioneering role in stopping N-explosions

About seventy years ago, the Soviet Union began to use a site at Semipalatinsk to test nuclear weapons. Over the next four decades Soviet authorities conducted 456 nuclear tests at this test site in Kazakhstan. Nearly a quarter of all nuclear explosions were triggered under and above the ground. The tests were carried out in the context of a Cold War, and the Soviet authorities believed that these tests were in the national interest. Yet few considered the devastating impact they would have on Kazakhstan and its citizens, including future generations.

More than 1 million people in Kazakhstan were exposed to radioactive fallout during these atmospheric and underground tests, and vast tracts of land are now contaminated in Semipalatinsk and surrounding areas. To this day Kazakhstan is still struggling with

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the environmental and health fall-out of these explosions. For example, as very few precautions were taken during the tests, there is a very high incidence of health problems such as birth defects and cancers which sadly continue to be passed down through generations.

Having experienced first-hand the gruesome and shattering impact

of nuclear testing, Kazakhstan, under the leadership of its First President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, made a brave decision to become a staunch advocate to ban nuclear testing, as well as to ensure nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Kazakhstan did not have to go down this path. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991,

Kazakhstan was left with the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world. Perhaps some countries, believing that such an arsenal will provide firm security for decades to come, would have decided to keep these weapons. Yet Kazakhstan made the right decision to renounce and decommission its nuclear arsenal and shut down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site.

In 2009, at an event dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the cessation of nuclear tests at the Semipalatinsk test site, First President Nursultan Nazarbayev took the initiative to declare August 29 the International Day against Nuclear Tests. At the initiative of Kazakhstan, the day was officially established December 2, 2009 at the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly by the resolution 64/35, which was adopted unanimously.

Sushmita pens a birthday wish for daughter Alisah

Mumbai: Actress Sushmita Sen has penned a birthday wish for her younger daughter Alisah, who turned 11 Friday.

"Happy Birthday love of my life!! We are 11 years old today! From the moment our eyes met...we could speak...a language of our own! You are magical my little Angel! Every moment of these 11 years, I have thanked God for the privilege of being your mother! I love you infinity Alisah Shona," Sushmita wrote on Instagram along with string of pictures of Alisah.

She tagged the post with #partytime #gods-favouritechild #birthdaygirl #blessed. The pictures Sushmita shared capture Alisah's

life from when she was an infant and also give glimpses of her moments spent with elder sister Renee. Sushmita's beau Rohman Shawl too praised Alisah on her birthday. "How this little #munchkin changed my way of being forever!! Thank you @sushmitasen47 for giving me the gift of LIFE. I love you my Gabdu. Happy Birthday My Angel. @sushmitasen47 what an incredible child you have raised my love, Happy Birthday #11yearsold #bestmom #amazing-daughter," he added.



PEANUTS



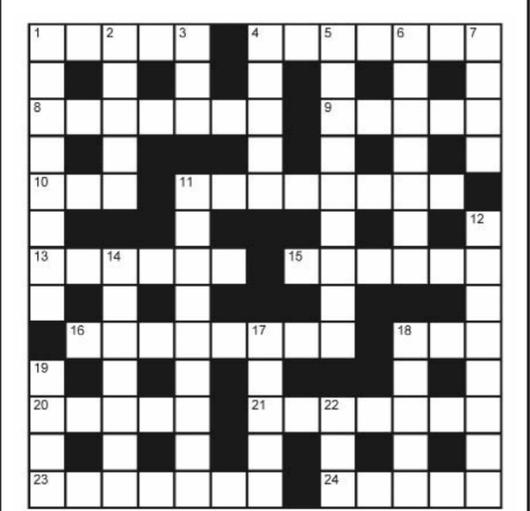
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



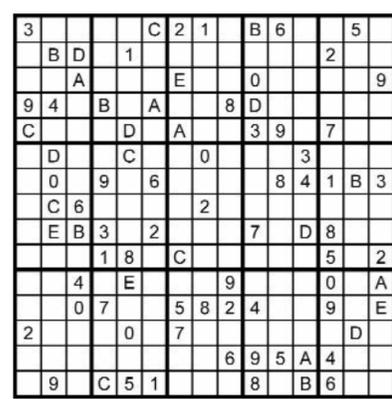
FUN post CROSSWORD



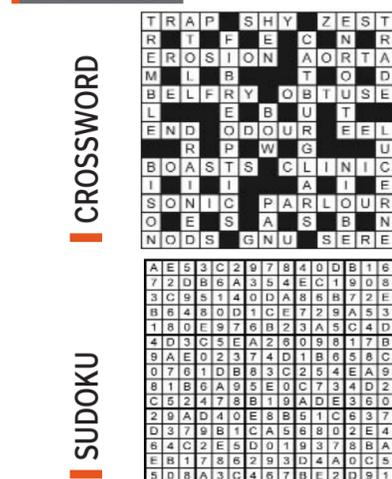
- Across**
- 1 Practical joke
 - 4 Caribbean destination
 - 8 Place on a pedestal
 - 9 Hospital figure
 - 10 Literary olio
 - 11 Honshu port
 - 13 Hot coals
 - 15 Appetiser
 - 16 Billiards item (3,5)
 - 18 Needlefish
 - 20 Cover story?
- Down**
- 1 Simians
 - 2 Maui greeting
 - 3 Colorful ornamental carp
 - 4 Smash
 - 5 Victor Hugo character
 - 6 Instrument played with small mallets
 - 7 Tallow source
 - 11 Kind of pudding or terrier
 - 12 Brings back, as a movie role
 - 14 Clay-like mineral
 - 17 Bullion unit
 - 18 Avarice
 - 19 Cloak
 - 22 Auction action

SUDOKU

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

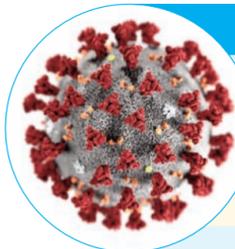


SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

Dignitaries unveil the newsletter of Utkal Sammilani at the Classical Odia Language Excellence Study Centre in Bhubaneswar, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	2,47,53,545	1,71,86,320	8,38,095
India	33,87,500	25,83,948	61,529
Odisha	94,668	67,826	456

MEGA EDU HUBS IN 3 DISTRICTS SOON

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: With a view to providing quality education to tribal students, the state government has estimated to invest around Rs 1,012 crore for setting up of state-of-the-art mega education complexes in three tribal dominated districts—Sundargarh, Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar.

The complexes will be built by state public sector undertaking (PSU) – Odisha Bridge and Construction Corporation Ltd (OBCCL) - while a private player will be engaged to run the institutions on public-private partnership (PPP) mode, official sources said here, Friday.

The OBCCL has estimated that Rs 338.35 crore will be required for development of mega education complex in Mayurbhanj district while the complexes in Sundargarh and Keonjhar districts would need Rs 337.25 crore each. The SC, ST Development department will establish the mega educational institutions to impart education to



FACELIFT FOR TRIBAL AREAS

■ ₹338.35 crore will be required for development of mega education complex in Mayurbhanj district while the complexes in Sundargarh and Keonjhar districts would need ₹337.25 crore each

■ SC, ST Development dept will establish the mega educational institutions to impart education to tribal students from Class I to XII

Due to remoteness and scattered nature of the institutions it often becomes a challenge to get quality teaching staff to such locations

tribal students from Class I to XII. Funds for these institutions will be provided under Odisha Mineral Bearing Area Development Corporation (OMBADC).

At present, more than 1,760 schools including Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS), Kalinga Model Residential Schools (KMRS),

Anwasha and Akanksha are functioning under the administrative control of SC, ST Development department in all the 30 districts.

Due to the remoteness and scattered nature of the institutions it often becomes a challenge to get quality teaching staff to such locations. Therefore, the government

has decided to set up these institutions at the three district headquarters, the source said.

Each of the mega educational complexes will be a hub of quality education along with state-of-the-art sports facilities and access and availability of infrastructure to give exposure to art and cultural facilities for all-round development of the tribal students.

These complexes will have residential schooling facilities for both boys and girls, and each complex will house 3,000 students.

The educational complexes will also have smart libraries with more than 5,000 books, encyclopaedia, scientific journals, periodicals, which would rejuvenate and develop thinking skills of students and keep them updated on all current affairs and latest scientific inventions. The administrative and academic management of these complexes will be entrusted with reputed educational institutions to be selected from across the country through competitive selection process, they said.

BK DAS NEW IRDE DIRECTOR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: Renowned scientist Dr Binay Kumar Das was Friday appointed as the director of Instruments Research and Development Establishment (IRDE) Dehradun.

Binay is the first Odia to head IRDE, a laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Das took over the charge as the Director of IRDE Friday. Following his transfer, DK Joshi who was earlier working as the Director of Proof and Experimental Establishment (PXE) has now been appointed as director in-charge of ITR Chandipur.

Das had started his career in ITR at Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur. Since then, he has been involved in the performance evaluation of missiles, rockets and various other air-borne weapon systems. In November 2015, he was appointed as the Director of ITR. Notably, IRDE is devoted to research, design, development and technology transfer in optical and electro-optical instrumentation primarily for defence services.

Bhub IITians get plum job offers

The IIT's placement season will begin Oct 31 in online mode owing to Covid-19 restrictions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 28: Amidst doubts over effective placements for engineering students during 2020-21 due to the pandemic situation, the first flush of pre-placement offers (PPOs) are being received by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bhubaneswar.

An official note issued by the institute said the placement season ahead is very encouraging as companies like Microsoft, DeShaw, Goldman Sachs, GEP Solutions and others use this route more as it helps them gauge candidates better over longer periods of time and in real work situations.

The companies make pre-placement offers based on performance of candidates who have interned with them. The premier institute has seen a surge in PPOs this year with the offers received equalling last year's and is sure to surpass, institute director RV Raja Kumar said.

Offers of as high as Rs 43 lakh per annum CTC (Cost to Company) have already been received, he said adding that majority of them are from core industries and are wide ranging, indicating a healthy trend.

AMIDST PANDEMIC



THE PREMIER INSTITUTE HAS SEEN A SURGE IN PRE-PLACEMENT ORDERS THIS YEAR WITH THE OFFERS RECEIVED EQUALLING LAST YEAR'S

JOB OFFERS OF AS HIGH AS RS 43 LAKH PER ANNUM CTC HAVE ALREADY BEEN RECEIVED

COMPANIES LIKE MICROSOFT, DESHAW, GOLDMAN SACHS, GEP SOLUTIONS AND OTHERS USE THIS ROUTE MORE AS IT HELPS THEM GAUGE CANDIDATES BETTER

PPOs indicate a positive placement scenario in spite of the pandemic situation which has affected global economy, he said.

Kumar said the IIT-Bhubaneswar though new has found placements even better than some of the old IITs and none of the offers were cancelled, which is a testimony to the standard of its education.

The placement season of the institute will begin October 31, 2020 in online mode owing to the Covid-19 restrictions.

The shift of campus placements to the virtual mode will be the trend making it more safe and convenient and is sure to be promising despite the ecosystem facing economic crisis due to the pandemic, he added.

Stop contractual postings: BJP to govt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: Taking a dig at the state government's contractual appointment system, the state unit of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Friday said it has turned out to be exploitative and asked the government to either stop the system or extend the due benefits to employees.

Speaking to the media here, BJP leader Umakanta Pattanayak said, "The government has money to waste on Biju Yuva Vahini but you are harassing the qualified youths who are looking for employment and are well qualified. We demand that the contractual employment system should be stopped, and if continued the



The party criticised the decision of the Finance department to hire retired government servants at fat salaries

government needs to give the workers their due benefits," he said.

The leader also criticised the decision of Finance department to hire retired government servants at fat salaries and not em-

ploying the qualified youths. "Such decisions are anti-youth and anti-people," he added.

The leader also accused the state government of not extending the benefits of the 7th Pay Commission to many employees working with the government.

Pattanayak urged the government to make the contractual jobs and temporary jobs permanent akin to other states. "This is mere harassment at the hands of the government. Unlike private jobs, the probation period has also been kept high. While the Delhi government is making contractual jobs permanent in one year, the Himachal government is doing it in three years. However, this is not the case in Odisha."

Aditya's family moves HC for probe by independent agency

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 28: Alleging a tardy probe by the state Crime Branch, the parents and widow of social activist Aditya Dash Friday approached the Orissa High Court (HC) seeking an investigation into the motivational speaker's mysterious death by an independent agency like the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

State Home Secretary, Cuttack Government Railway Police (GRP) superintendent of police (SP), Bhubaneswar CBI regional director and SP as well as Crime Branch-CID SP were made parties to the case. In their petition, Aditya's father Nandi Kishore, mother Padmalaya and widow Bidyashree informed the HC that the late social activist had won laurels from several quarters for his praiseworthy role in many



Bikash and Papu being taken for a lie detection test, Friday

anti-liquor movements in the state. "Hence, he had been eliminated. Initially, the GRP and now the Crime Branch have been investigating the sensational case. The investigation is, however, progressing in a snail's pace as the agency [Crime Branch] is yet to make any arrest or arrive at any conclusion," the petition said. Claiming that an independent investigating agency like CBI can help unearth the truth, the petitioners said, "The court should ask any independent investigating agency like CBI, which is not

under the Odisha government, to probe the matter."

Meanwhile, the CB Friday conducted polygraph tests on Papu, Bikash and Deepu - three members of 'People for Seva', an NGO founded by Aditya. The hours-long lie detection test at State Forensic Science Laboratory (SFSL) at Rasulgarh here on the trio ended around 3pm. The sleuths reportedly asked Aditya's friends about various issues related to the functioning of the NGO. They also enquired if there was any dispute between Aditya and Bidyashree.

The CB had also conducted polygraph test on Bidyashree Thursday. During the five-hour-long 'grilling', Aditya's widow had to answer 70 questions. Notably, Aditya was found dead on the railway tracks near Lingaraj Temple Road station July 7. More than 50 days have passed since his death but mystery still shrouds the case.

Restaurant sealed for hosting birthday party

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: In yet another case of COVID violation, Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Friday sealed a restaurant at Puri Bypass road for serving liquor and arranging a party on its premises.

As per reports, following a tip-off, BMC officials raided the restaurant and found that a birthday party was being organised at the restaurant which was attended by over 60 guests. Furthermore, it was also alleged that liquor was also being served at the restaurant without any trade licence.

"We rushed to the place and found a gathering of more than 60 people. This is clear violation of COVID norms issued by BMC and state government. Thus, we decided to seal off the place until further notice," stated Prashant Kumar Panda, Enforcement Inspector at BMC.

Meanwhile, this is second incident of violation by restaurants in the city within a span of 10 days. Earlier, August 17, the BMC had sealed bar-cum-hotel, Utkal Inn near Garage square here. The hotel too was reportedly selling liquor.

These violations have come when city is witnessing massive surge in COVID cases.

Yellow anaconda at NZP dies

Barang: A yellow anaconda died at Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) here Friday, zoo sources said. Though the zoo authorities are yet to ascertain the exact cause of the death, sources claimed that the reptile was suffering from diarrhoea for the last one month. Besides, the anaconda was diagnosed with haematochezia a couple of days ago, NZP sources said. "The yellow anaconda was found dead at its enclosure Friday morning. Some of our employees spotted the carcass and informed the authorities concerned," said a zoo official. The NZP authorities had brought eight anacondas from a zoo in Chennai October 22 last year. The giant snakes were kept at enclosure no. 45 of the reptile park at NZP. Two anacondas had died due to certain infections within one and a half months of their arrival at the zoo.

Cyber crooks ruling the roost

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: Cyber crooks have duped two persons including the Principal of Dr Abhin Chandra Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital at Unit-III here of several lakhs.

Two separate complaints have been lodged at Kharavela Nagar and Airfield Police stations.

According to sources, the homoeopathic medical college Principal Prof Sudhir Kumar Dash, 59, came to know about some suspicious transactions in his account while withdrawing Rs 7,000 from an

ATM kiosk recently.

Later, he took out a bank statement of his savings account at Government Treasury Branch of SBI, here. He was shocked to see that Rs 5, 22,730 had been withdrawn from his account between August 15 and 23. He had a balance of over Rs 7 lakh in the savings account.

Later, he informed the SBI about the unauthorised withdrawal from his account through email and sought the details of the fraudulent transactions August 25.

The records sent by the bank revealed that cyber criminals deposited the money withdrawn from

his account in accounts with public and private sector banks in 41 installations through PhonePe and Paytm.

He said that he does not have Net banking facility or the digital payment apps like Google pay or PhonePe. He also claimed that he had not received any OTP on his phone in connection with the transactions.

Similarly, a retired schoolteacher, Surendra Kumar Satapathy, 68, has alleged that cyber crooks have withdrawn Rs 50,000 from his pension account with the Surada SBI Main Branch in Ganjam.

FRESH COVID GUIDELINES

Don't detain bodies over bills, hosps told



COVID CARE The patients or the bodies shall not be detained citing non-payment of fees. The institution shall develop a mechanism for collection of bills on a day to day basis so that a lump sum amount never remains pending

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: The state health and family welfare department Friday issued a new set of guidelines for the hosting and treatment of COVID patients in private hospitals. The new norms have instructed private hospitals not to charge exorbitantly for the treatment of patients and said hospitals cannot detain the bodies of COVID patients in case of non-payment of hospital bills. "The discharge policy of the state shall be strictly followed. The patients or the bodies shall not be detained citing non-payment of fees. The institution shall develop a mechanism for collection of bills on a day to day basis so that a lump sum amount never remains pending," it said. The government has asked hospitals to regularly inform the government regarding availability of facility, patient information, line of treatment, availability of beds, prices and others. The new norms have also ordered the hospitals to provide COVID positive reports to patients. "The hospital shall allow one willing attendant of the patient to remain in the earmarked place on the hospital premises while ensuring prevention of cross infection. The hospital shall create a help desk accessible physically and telephonically for counselling for relatives of patients and share information on the status of health to attendants of the patient regularly," the norms said. "It is observed that private hospitals are treating non-Covid cases, but when they find such patients to be Covid positive they immediately request the government machinery to shift the case to a Covid facility, set up by the government. It eventually caused a large surge of patients in Covid facilities," the notification said. The norms claimed that all asymptomatic and mild cases, when detected, could be sent to quarantine/home isolation or COVID care centres run by the private hospitals. All private hospitals having more than 30 beds or more have now been asked to designate a minimum of 10 per cent of their beds for COVID patients in an isolation ward. "Such reserved beds must include appropriate number of ICU beds with ventilators dedicated to Covid patients," the norms said.

2nd round of sero survey begins in City

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 28: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Friday launched the second round of serological survey to assess prevalence of COVID-19 among people in the City as the state capital is witnessing a rise in coronavirus cases this month. Five teams will collect 1,500 samples from various locations in the City, an official said. "The current exercise will provide an indication of the community exposure level which was found to be very low during the first round of the serological survey," said the official. The Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) is providing technical support to the BMC to carry out the two-day survey in the City. A serological survey is conducted to assess the prevalence of a disease in a society or population to see if people have developed antibodies against a virus.



It shows how many or what percentage of population had contracted a particular disease and have acquired immunity against it. "In the first round of the survey, 900 samples were collected. Though the immunity level is relatively low across communities in the Temple City, the large scale transmission has probably not occurred in the state capital," Dr Jayasingh Kshatri, a scientist working at the RMRC, said. RMRC Director Sanghamitra Pati and BMC Commissioner PC Chaudhury are leading the exercise, the official said. The new survey will also be helpful to determine whether there is any change in the immunity level of a group of people who were covered in the first serological surveillance, conducted about four weeks ago. Additional District Urban Public Health Officer CVSN Rao said the community exposure to COVID-19 was relatively low in the city due to a slew of measures taken by the BMC authorities and the city police. Bhubaneswar has reported 8,647 COVID-19 cases till Thursday. There are 3,478 active cases in the city while 36 patients have died so far.

FIVE TEAMS WILL COLLECT 1,500 SAMPLES FROM VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN THE CITY. IN THE FIRST ROUND OF THE SURVEY, 900 SAMPLES WERE COLLECTED. THE REGIONAL MEDICAL RESEARCH CENTRE IS PROVIDING TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO THE BMC TO CARRY OUT THE TWO-DAY SURVEY IN THE CITY. A SEROLOGICAL SURVEY IS CONDUCTED TO ASSESS THE PREVALENCE OF A DISEASE IN A SOCIETY OR POPULATION TO SEE IF PEOPLE HAVE DEVELOPED ANTIBODIES AGAINST A VIRUS.

'Revenue collection may dip ₹11,200Cr'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: A projection by Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD), a Bhubaneswar-based think tank, claimed that the state's revenue collection may plummet by Rs 11,200 crore this fiscal year (FY) due to COVID-19 impact. A team of researchers working under Odisha Budget and Accountability Centre (OBAC) of CYSD had made the estimation of the fiscal health of the year based on the collection of taxes and other revenues in the month of April and other trends. "We assume that state's own revenue collection will be 60 per cent of the budgeted revenue in the first quarter, and 80 per cent in the second quarter. From the third quarter onwards, revenue collection will be normal," Basanta Nayak, Associate Director (Programme), CYSD told Orissa POST.

State sees biggest single-day jump of 3,682 nCoV cases

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 28: The state's COVID-19 tally Friday rose to 94,668 with the highest single-day spike of 3,682 fresh cases. The death toll mounted to 456 as eight more patients succumbed to the disease, an official of the health & family welfare (H&FW) department said. New cases were detected in all 30 districts of the state, the fatalities were reported from six. "Regret to inform the demise of eight COVID-19 positive patients while under treatment in hospitals," the H&FW department said on Twitter. Of the fresh fatalities, two each were reported from Khurda and Ganjam districts and one patient each from Bargarh, Bhadrak, Bolangir and Rayagada districts. Ganjam district had reported highest number of 185 COVID deaths followed by Khurda (59), Sundargarh (33), Cuttack (28), Rayagada (22), Gajapati (18) and Sambalpur (14). Of the fresh cases, 2,241 were detected in quarantine centres, while 1,441 people tested positive for the infection during contact tracing exercise, said the official. Khurda district reported highest number of 775 cases followed by Rayagada (495), Cuttack (369), Mayurbhanj (272), Ganjam (174), Bargarh (152) and Koraput (140). The state had registered its previous highest-single day spike of 3,384 new cases Thursday.

fare (H&FW) department said. New cases were detected in all 30 districts of the state, the fatalities were reported from six. "Regret to inform the demise of eight COVID-19 positive patients while under treatment in hospitals," the H&FW department said on Twitter. Of the fresh fatalities, two each were reported from Khurda and Ganjam districts and one patient each from Bargarh, Bhadrak, Bolangir and Rayagada districts. Ganjam district had reported highest number of 185 COVID deaths followed by Khurda (59), Sundargarh (33), Cuttack (28), Rayagada (22), Gajapati (18) and Sambalpur (14). Of the fresh cases, 2,241 were detected in quarantine centres, while 1,441 people tested positive for the infection during contact tracing exercise, said the official. Khurda district reported highest number of 775 cases followed by Rayagada (495), Cuttack (369), Mayurbhanj (272), Ganjam (174), Bargarh (152) and Koraput (140). The state had registered its previous highest-single day spike of 3,384 new cases Thursday.



Jaydev Vihar-Nandankanan Road in Bhubaneswar witnesses a heavy rush ahead of the weekend shutdown to break the virus chain

FOR A CATCH



Men gear up for a catch as floodwater inundates several localities on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, Friday. The state government, meanwhile, deployed NDRF and ODRAF teams and alerted District Collectors apprehending a medium scale flood in the Mahandi river system in the wake of heavy rains in both the upper and lower catchment areas of the river

Stir continues for NEET, JEE postponement

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: Members of the state unit of the National Students' Union of India organised sit-in protests at different college and university premises Friday demanding postponement of JEE and NEET 2020 exams. They protested near Utkal University and BJB College premises Friday. They held protests near Raj Bhawan amidst the Covid 19 pandemic. This is part of the nationwide protest by the NSUI demanding postponement of the national level examinations. Members of the Congress-affiliated outfit began an indefinite hunger strike demanding fee waiver for six months for students during the pandemic. They burnt the posters of Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal and burnt tyres near the university gate.

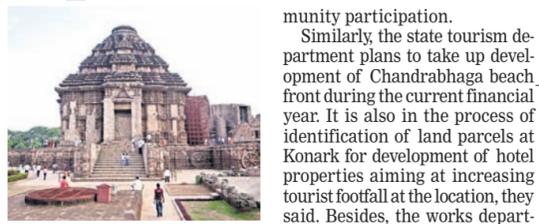
inations will be held on the dates announced earlier - September 1-6 and September 13. Meanwhile, Pokhriyal said the conduct of NEET and JEE exams in September will help students save one academic year. Not only students, even parents took part in the protests against holding of NEET and JEE exams. Parents also sat in protest near Sookhana Bhawan Thursday demanding cancellation of both exams. They alleged that there are only seven exam centres in the state which puts the students and their parents in great danger. This apart, many districts such as Khurda are hotspots of the virus. The flood situation in the state has also made it difficult for travel.

As Covid-19 cases are rising, students cannot travel long distances for the tests, the students said, adding it is unfair to conduct exams. Earlier, CM Naveen Patnaik wrote to Pokhriyal and the PM requesting to postpone the exams. Even as the chorus of dissent grew louder, the National Testing Agency (NTA), in its latest statement, made it clear that the exam-

Massive development work at Sun Temple on the anvil

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: The state government and the Centre have planned to take up projects to make Sun Temple town Konark a world-class tourist destination. The Union tourism ministry has included the Sun Temple in the list of iconic tourist destinations in India and planned to take up projects to make it a world-class tourist site. The ministry is in the process of engaging an agency for creating a master plan for development of Konark, sources said. The ministry will go for holistic development of the site including development of sustainable tourism infrastructure, robust operations & management plan, publicity & promotion and employment generation through community participation. Similarly, the state tourism department plans to take up development of Chandrabhaga beach front during the current financial year. It is also in the process of identification of land parcels at Konark for development of hotel properties aiming at increasing tourist footfall at the location, they said. Besides, the works department has lined up infrastructure projects in the town. To avoid duplication of the project, the tourism department has urged the works department to share its planned projects in the town.



Development of the site including development of sustainable tourism infrastructure, robust operations & management plan, publicity & promotion and employment generation through community participation.

BAGALA ROW



Left party leaders demonstrate near Bagala Dharmasala in Puri, Friday, condemning the alleged sale of the hospice's land

INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, MUMBAI

'Ravaiyaa' wins 'Best Thought-Provoking Concept Award'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Pune, August 28: Social short film 'Ravaiyaa', after getting accolades from five International Film Festivals, has won its very first award- 'Best Thought-Provoking Concept' - award at 'Cinema of the World, Mumbai'; an International Film Festival which was conducted virtually (on a virtual platform) August 16, 2020. "Films from 23 countries participated in the festival. 'Ravaiyaa' was one among 80 participating films in 'Best Thought-Provoking Concept' category. In this category, the idea of 'Ravaiyaa' won our hearts and became the winner. Its perspective is what we all need right now and the idea of this film says it beautifully. The film was thoroughly appreciated by the jury and the audience," said the festival authorities. Prior to this award, the film had its World Festival Premiere at 'Lift-Off Sessions, UK' in July 2020. Recently, the film also received 'Official Selection' at 'Asian International Film Festival, Japan' and 'Essex DocFest, UK' to be held in September and October 2020 respectively. 'Ravaiyaa', a social drama, is BnR Films' first crowd-funded short film. It is based on a true story and a few real incidents which happened across India during national lockdown. 'Ravaiyaa' means attitude. According to its makers,



the film makes an attempt at showing the brighter/extraordinary side of India's migrant labourers during this unprecedented time of Corona pandemic. The film, which was produced in May 2020 has been entirely shot on phone and from respective homes of actors. Award-winning filmmaker Biswanath has written and directed (virtually) the short film which is produced by BnR Films (Founded by Biswanath and Archana Rath). Subhasmita Sethy is the co-producer, Pritish R

Dash is the executive producer and IJ Kakehashi Services Pvt Ltd is the associate producer of the film. It features Ashish Kumar, and Rohit Kakde and the theme song titled 'India Jeetega' has been written by Biswanath and composed/performed by music director Bankim Patel. The song has got tremendous response from netizens for its inspirational as well as patriotic theme. It has also received 'Official Selection' at 'Lift-Off Sessions, UK' and 'Essex DocFest, UK'. Editing, color grading, sound design have been carried out by Vinayak Dasgupta, who has previously worked with Biswanath in his award-winning documentary 'Kotpad Weaving'. "I dedicate this award to the never-say-die spirit of Indian migrant labourers. After all, it's their true story of courage, honesty and self-esteem which inspired me to make this film," writer-director Biswanath said.

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BENGAL RAISES POTATO HEAT, ODISHA BOILS

Traders of the neighbouring state resorted to short supply of the tuber, causing its price to soar in Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

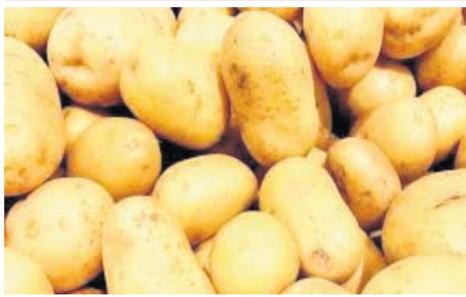
Bhograi, August 28: The price of potatoes is gradually soaring in the state as traders in West Bengal have reportedly resorted to hoarding, a report said.

Odisha is dependent on Bengal potatoes. The hoarding in Bengal has impacted Odisha market where potatoes are sold for Rs 30 a kg during Covid times. Its price may go up further. The growing price of the tubers has left the people crying.

According to reports, Bengal traders have squeezed the supply of potatoes and stocked the vegetable in cold storages. Bengal traders are trying to create an artificial shortage of the tuber to rake in the moolah.

It may be noted here that in 2014, the state had witnessed an unprecedented rise in potato price. As Bengal traders control the po-

POTATO MISSION FLOPS



■ Odisha is dependent on Bengal for potatoes. The hoarding in Bengal has impacted the Odisha market where potatoes are sold for ₹30 a kg during Covid times. Its price may go up further

■ The horticulture department claimed that 35 cold stores have been made functional while 19 of them being executed Balasore have not been completed

■ Now, only two cold stores are functioning at Phula and Soro while another at Balasore ITI area has allegedly been grabbed by Bengal traders who are preserving fruits and other items there

tatoes market of Odisha, the short supply of the tuber has led to a steep rise in its price.

In 2015-16, the state government had formed the Potato Mission which has apparently failed to make the state self-sufficient.

Farmers in Baliapal observed that potato farmers here face distress sale of the produce during harvest time as there is no cold storage to sale the produce later. However, the horticulture department claimed that 35 cold stores have been made func-

tional while 19 of them being executed in Balasore have not been completed.

Now only two cold stores are functioning at Phula and Soro while another at Balasore ITI has allegedly been grabbed by Bengal traders

who are preserving fruits and other items there.

Another cold store is being set up at Idak under Baliapal block, but its construction work is moving at a snail's pace. Another cold store at Jalasahari in Bhograi has remained defunct. Farmers alleged that as sufficient cold stores are not in the district, farmers are reluctant to take up potato farming only to face distress sale later.

Given the potato price rise, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has directed the traders not to sell potatoes beyond Rs 25 a kg.

Some Bengal traders said if West Bengal faces a crisis in potatoes, they are expected to shrink supply of potatoes to other states.

In such a situation, people of Odisha are likely to face the heat when prices of potatoes hit the roof in case of curbs on supply from the neighbouring state.

Kendrapara sisters to get Biju Bravery Award

POST NEWS NETWORK



Kendrapara, August 28: Sisters Sabita Giri and Purnima Giri of Nipania village of Batighara panchayat under Mahakalpada block in Kendrapara district were Thursday selected for the prestigious 'Biju Patnaik Bravery Award 2019'.

This was announced by sports and youth affairs department Thursday evening. The sisters will be awarded by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik at Lok Seva Bhawan Bhubaneswar August 29, Kendrapara district sports officer Loknath Panigrahy informed.

About 55 visitors of Hasina village in Jagatsinghpur district had come to Hukitola tourist centre at Nipania village of Batighara panchayat in 2019.

A fishing boat ferrying visitors overturned on their way back home in the evening. However, Sabita and Purnima immediately jumped into the river and rescued 12 oc-

cupants from the drowning boat. The boat was anchored in a creek of the river Mahanadi a few kilometres from Hukitola picnic spot. The boat had overturned when three of the occupants tried to embark it from one side. However, ten children and women had died in the incident.

Notably, Hukitola is situated on Jambu Island in the Bay of Bengal under Mahakalpada block. A building on the island sprawling over 7,000 sq/ft was constructed by the British. Hukitola attracts tourists and researchers round the year for its scenic beauty.

RDC reviews floods in north Odisha



An NDRF team searching for a missing youth in Bhadrak

26, 179 HA OF FARMLANDS INUNDATED IN BALASORE

were reported at 12 places causing extensive damage. Jajpur, Binjharpur, Dasarathpur, Bari, Rasulpur, Korei, and Dharmashala blocks are the most affected of the lot.

"Due to the rise in water level in Baitarani river, Dasarathpur, Jajpur and Korei were affected. Water level in the Baitarani river receded after midnight Friday. Three breaches had occurred in the Baitarani river system. Free kitchens have been opened and relief is being provided in these places," the Collector said.

The Collector cautioned

Bhadrak district Thursday night.

After a three-hour-long operation, they rescued them all. The brother duo was in their house Thursday. As their house is located near Balabhi Ghat, they had been apprehending floods but never thought of facing it the same night. After having their dinner, they were trying to go to bed when they saw floodwaters entering their house.

They contacted Bhandaripokhari BDO over his mobile phone for help. Taking the call seriously, the BDO immediately passed the information to the NDRF team stationed in the block. The team swung into action and rescued a pregnant



A flooded road in Jajpur

that water level is still rising and is likely to increase by Friday evening. He said that one person has died in Panasa panchayat under Jajpur block due to a wall collapse.

The district administration had requested people residing in low-lying areas and along riverbanks to shift to safer places. They are being evacuated with the help of local police.

By now, over 2,500 people have been evacuated and sent to safer places. Two teams each from the NDRF, ODRAF and Fire Service have been deployed in rescue and relief operations.

NDRF RESCUES PREGNANT WOMAN, SIBLINGS

Bhadrak: National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel turned out to be godsend for a pregnant woman and two brothers stuck in houses with floodwaters inundating their village Sholampur under Bhandaripokhari block in

woman from Jalahari village. She was immediately rushed to a nearby government hospital.

JODA-KEONJHAR LINK SNAPS

Joda: Hit by floodwaters of the river Baitarani, the land near its run-down bridge slid on national highway (NH-520) at Basudevpur area under Joda block in Keonjhar district Thursday afternoon.

Following the land slide, Joda-Keonjhar road connectivity was completely snapped and vehicular movement halted for long hours. Hundreds of mineral-laden trucks from Joda, Barbil and Koida areas move through this bridge every day.

Local commuters from Champua and Keonjhar also use the bridge to go to Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. After large parts of the land near this bridge slid, movement of vehicles has become risky. Road connectivity to Champua subdivision headquarters and Keonjhar town has been disrupted.

Visits to govt offices in Ganjam from Sept 1

POST NEWS NETWORK

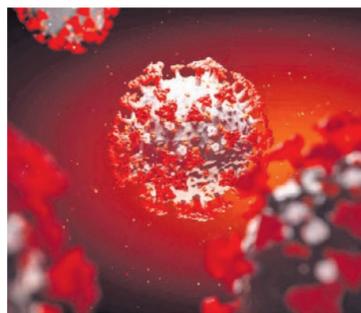
Chhatrapur, August 28: People can have access to all government offices across Ganjam district from September 1. This information was given by Parul Patwari, special ADM (Chhatrapur) during an interaction with the media here Friday.

Government offices have been inaccessible to public for some time now after Ganjam district became a COVID-19 hotspot. However, due to effective management of the COVID-19 crisis, the district is on the path of recovery.

Patwari also said that there are 15 mini-containment zones in the urban area and 30 in rural areas. It means Chhatrapur sub-division has 45 mini-containment zones.

Out of 951 villages under this sub-division, 771 are in green zone. Similarly, 96 wards out of 136 are in green zone. With regard to plasma collection, the special ADM said that 114 recovered pa-

tients have agreed to donate plasma. Ganjam district reported Friday 174 fresh COVID-19 cases taking the total tally to 17,287. So far 15,462 patients have recovered



from the disease and 1,632 are still undergoing treatment.

With fresh two deaths reported from the district Friday, the toll has gone up to 185. Eight patients have died due to reason other than coronavirus.

Staff Covid +ve, Bargarh DM's office shut for 3 days

BARGARH: An employee in Bargarh District Collector's office tested positive for COVID-19 Thursday District Collector Jyoti Ranjan Pradhan Friday ordered a three-day shutdown of the office. The shutdown will be in effect from August 28 to August 30, informed district information and public relation officer (PRO) Kalyani Dash.

Sources said a staff of the office developed COVID-19 symptoms. The employee's swab samples had been sent to SCB Medical College and Hospital for COVID-19 test Tuesday. The test report came out positive Thursday night. Following this, the decision to close down the office for 72 hours was taken.

During the three-day shutdown, a fire brigade team will disinfect the office premises. Employees who had come in contact with the COVID-19 infected person have been asked to undergo home quarantine for 14 days. During their home quarantine they will be tested for the infection.

With 152 fresh COVID-19 cases detected in Bargarh in last 24 hours, the district's total tally reached 1,797 Friday.

The number of active cases stands at 850. These patients are being treated at different COVID-19 hospitals in the district. So far 939 persons have recovered while the toll in the district stands at eight.

7-day shutdown in Jharsuguda from tomorrow

JHARSUGUDA: The Jharsuguda district administration has announced a seven-day shutdown in Jharsuguda town starting from August 30. The move was taken keeping in view the steep rise in COVID-19 positive cases. Only essential and medical services will be allowed to function from 6 am to 11 am during the shutdown period. The restrictions will remain in force till September 5, official sources informed.

All shops and markets will remain closed during the period except for those selling essential commodities like milk, grocery, medicines

and vegetables. Those who flout the restrictions will be dealt with severely, the sources added.

So far Jharsuguda district has reported 1,033 positive cases among which 415 are active now. A total of 617 patients have recovered while one has succumbed to the disease.

The administration has appealed to local residents to abide by COVID-19 guidelines and maintain social distancing in order to prevent the spread of the pandemic.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore, August 28: With many pockets of Balasore and Bhadrak reeling from floods, revenue divisional commissioner (RDC- central) Anil Kumar Samal reviewed the situation here Thursday evening.

It was learnt that floods had massively affected the farm sector as 26, 179 hectares of farmland were inundated in Balasore.

Collector K Sudarshan Chakraborty apprised the RDC about the flood situation at the meeting attended by ADM Sambit Kumar Nayak, sub collectors Ashis Patil and Harishchandra Jena and other senior officials.

Budhabalanga and Jalaka rivers were flowing above the danger mark while water level in Subarnarekha is rising.

As water is being released from Galudih dam in Jharkhand, the water level is likely to rise dangerously in Subarnarekha. Most parts of Jaleswar, Baliapal, Basta and Bhograi are likely to reel under massive floods.

The RDC has directed the district administration to be alert. Meanwhile, 500 people in Basta, Remuna and sadar block were evacuated.

Two NDRF teams were deployed in Basta and sadar blocks while an ODRAF team was mobilized in Remuna.

The RDC has directed the administration to send relief material to flood-hit areas. Free cooked food will be served to people at cyclone shelters and schools. The water resources department has been asked to stock sand bags in weak embankments. The RDC also asked the agriculture department to carry out a survey to assess the flood damage.

Flood from Baritrani river has affected most of the areas under Dhamnagar and Bhandaripokhari blocks in Bhadrak.

The RDC has directed the Bhadrak administration to report about the damage of houses and farmlands.

10 BLOCKS IN JAJPUR BADLY HIT

Jajpur: All ten blocks in Jajpur district have been badly affected as water level in the Brahmani and Kharashrota rivers gradually rose, Collector Ranjan Kumar Das said Friday. On the other hand, water level in river Baitarani has been receding since Thursday evening. Breaches in river embankments

SHORT TAKES

Odia girl bags PhD seat in Oxford

Bolangir: Sheetal Jain, a girl from Bongomunda in Bolangir district of Odisha, has bagged a PhD seat in the prestigious University of Oxford among 54 aspirants from across the world. Sheetal is the only student from India to get a PhD seat at Oxford for the forthcoming academic session. Excited after seeing the result, Sheetal said her father is her inspiration as he guided and supported her in every field of her life. "It is his disciplined nature which inspired me to do hard labour which helped me bag a seat at Oxford university," Sheetal said. She pursued her graduation in History from Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College of University of Delhi (DU) and Post Graduation from JNU in Delhi.

Police crack double murder in Nuapada

Nuapada: Nuapada police cracked the double murder case that had occurred August 15 and arrested three people for their involvement in the crime. SDPO Prashant Kumar Pattanayak said the copper coin deal was the reason behind the double murder. The arrested are Achyut Majhi (34) and Niranjana Majhi (25) of Kerameli village and Tularam Majhi (32) of Sialti village. The trio was accused of beating Pintu Sahu (25) and Padman Majhi (45) of Rengabahal to death, August 15.

Koraput: Facebook helps bring father, son together

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, August 28: A lot is being said about the ill effects of social media. However, there is a good side of social media also. Facebook has helped a Koraput youth reunite with his father. The youth's father had gone missing six months back.

Trinath Sahoo from Koraput town went missing in February. His son

While surfing his Facebook page August 15, he chanced to find a post. He found a mentally challenged man walking in a locality of Kandhamal district wearing a PPE kit.

The video was posted by an NGO. It had rescued Trinath and posted the video with the hope that some of his relatives can recognise him. The video was shot in Raikia block of Kandhamal district.



Trinath from Koraput town went missing in February. His son Kartik desperately searched for him for six months, but failed to trace him

Kartik Sahoo searched desperately for him for six months. As Trinath was mentally challenged, his family was all the more worried for his safety.

Kartik tried to glean information regarding his father from every possible source, but to no avail. He lost all hopes.

Kartik identified the man as his father. He then contacted the NGO. The number had been posted along with the video. After getting the address, he visited the NGO office and brought back his father. Kartik has thanked both Facebook and the NGO for helping him get back his father.

Government of Odisha
Rural Development Department
Office of the Engineer-in-Chief, Rural Works,
Unit-IV, Madhusudan Nagar, Bhubaneswar, Odisha-751001
NOTICE INVITING REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
No.O-281-- Bid Identification No. 01-Bid-2020-21 Date: - 26.08.2020

Sl. No.	Name of the work	No. of work	Bid security	Cost of bid document
1	Architectural Consultancy for Preparation of Master Plan, Architectural drawing and Detailed Project Report (DPR) including soil exploration work, structural design, detailed estimate (Civil+EI+PH), BOQ, Bid documents location wise for tender of construction works for the work-"Infrastructure Development of Colleges under World Bank Assistance Programme (OHEPEE)", Phase-II".	1 No. (30 Nos. Colleges)	Rs. 3,00,000/-	Rs. 10,000/-

2. The RFP document must be accompanied with Refundable Bid Security in form of Kissan Vikash Patra / National Savings Certificate / Post Office Time Deposit Account / Term Deposit from any Nationalized or Scheduled Bank / Bank Guarantee from any Nationalized / Scheduled Bank in India counter guaranteed by its local branch at Bhubaneswar pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Bhubaneswar & Non-Refundable cost of bid document mentioned in the table in form of Demand draft in favour of the Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Bhubaneswar drawn in any Nationalized / Scheduled Bank payable at Bhubaneswar. 3. The bidders have to participate in Offline bidding only. 4. Bid documents will be available in Govt. website i.e www.tendersodisha.gov.in during the period from Dt. 07.09.2020 to Dt. 07.10.2020 upto 17.30 hours. 5. The last date of receipt of RFP in the following address is Dt.07.10.2020 upto 17.30 Hours through Speed Post / Registered Post / Courier only. Submission of proposal through any other mode is not allowed. The bids received after due date and time will not be considered. 6. Date of opening of Technical bid is Dt.08.10.2020 at 11.30 Hours. 7. For further details the RFP document is to be referred from the website. 8. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender (RFP) can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason therefor.

Address for Submission of R.F.P.
Chief Engineer (Buildings), Office of the Engineer-in-Chief, Rural Works, Odisha, Unit-IV, Madhusudan Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751001, Contact No.0674-2392916, E-mail ID: cerwbuilding_bbsr@yahoo.com
Sd/- (Er. S.C. Mishra), Chief Engineer, Building, R.W., Odisha, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-25123/11/0003/2021

EAST COAST RAILWAY ENGINEERING WORKS

File No: DRM/Engg/KUR/20-21/
E-Tender/23 Dt.: 24.08.2020
(1) Tender No: e-Tender-SOUTH-KUR-153-2020 Dt.: 19.08.2020
Description: ALL REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE OF P.WAY ZONAL WORKS FOR A PERIOD UPTO 30.09.2021 FROM KM. 457.200 TO 515.00 BETWEEN KHURDA ROAD TO BALUGAON UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (P.WAY)/KALUPURAGHAT OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 125.06 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 2,12,500/-
(2) Tender No: e-Tender-SOUTH-KUR-154-2020 Dt.: 19.08.2020
Description: ALL REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE OF P.WAY ZONAL WORKS FOR A PERIOD UPTO 30.09.2021 FROM KM. 515.00 TO 572.13 BETWEEN GANGADHARPUR-GANJAM STATION UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (P.WAY)/ RAMBHA OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 119.85 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 2,09,900/-
(3) Tender No: e-Tender-SOUTH-KUR-155-2020 Dt.: 19.08.2020
Description: ALL REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE OF P.WAY ZONAL WORKS FOR A PERIOD UPTO 30.09.2021 FROM KM. 631.20 TO 678.33 BETWEEN ICHHAPURAM-PALASA STATION UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (P.WAY)/SOMPETA OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 114.05 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 2,07,000/-
(4) Tender No: e-Tender-SOUTH-KUR-156-2020 Dt.: 19.08.2020
Description: ALL REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE OF P.WAY ZONAL WORKS FOR A PERIOD UPTO 30.09.2021 FROM KM. 572.13 TO 631.20 BETWEEN GANJAM-JHADUPUDI UNDER SENIOR SECTION ENGINEER (P.WAY)/BRAHMAPUR OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 119.63 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 2,09,000/-
(5) Tender No: e-Tender-SOUTH-KUR-157-2020 Dt.: 19.08.2020
Description: PROPOSED CONVERSION AND REBUILDING OF 23 NOS. STONE SLAB BRIDGES IN TO RCC BOX BRIDGES ON KHURDA ROAD-PALASA SECTION OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.
Approx cost of the work: ₹ 793.24 Lakhs, EMD: ₹ 5,46,600/-
Completion period: 30.09.2021 (for Sl. No. 1 to 4) 18 months (for Sl. No. 5).
Tender closing date & time: at 1500 hrs. of 09.09.2020 (for all tenders).
No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such e-tenders.
Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website: http://www.tregs.gov.in
Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigenda issued for this tender.
Divisional Railway Manager(Engg), PR-230/L/20-21, Khurda Road

FOCUS NATION

SMALL TOWNS, NEW HOPE



The way to revive the both the small towns and villages is to undertake research on niche agricultural products like pepper in Kerala and apples in Kullu. The town of Chhutmalpur in UP is a huge supplier of vegetables from the nearby villages. Such small towns supplying gladiolus and rose flowers can certainly be developed

itly state in the Bombay Plan made in the 1940s that the investment in industry will come mainly from the surplus extracted from agriculture. We have then two choices – we either have to 'exploit' our villages while we invest our surplus in industry so that we break free of the dependence on foreign capital; or we can take up village development and surrender our economic sovereignty to the global capital.

Instead of trying to revive our villages, we must focus on humanising our cities. A half-way possibility is to revive the small towns instead of focusing only on the large cities. The cost of provision of services such as electricity, piped water and bus routes will perhaps be only marginally more than the cost of supplying these services in the cities; while it will be substantially less than supplying these services in the villages.

The small towns can become suppliers of services such as translations, online tutorials, music and call centres. Living conditions such as a pollution-free environment can also be more easily provided here. There is greater interpersonal interaction as well. Town-dweller often knows his vegetable vendor by name, for example. There is a huge movement from the city centres to the suburbs in the developed countries for these reasons. We can move in that direction.

Agriculture basically is a sunset area. However, Netherlands is producing tulips, France is producing grapes and Italy is producing olives of good quality with international markets. The way to revive the both the small towns and villages is to undertake research on niche agricultural products like pepper in Kerala and apples in Kullu. The town of Chhutmalpur in UP is a huge supplier of vegetables from the nearby villages. Such small towns supplying gladiolus and rose flowers can certainly be developed.

The writer is a former professor of IIT, Bangalore.

Many thinkers – Gandhians and others – favoured a village-centric growth strategy. The argument is that we cannot bear the economic load of urbanization; that urban living is impersonal and disrupts human relationships; and that urbanization is synonymous with centralised governance in which people are disempowered.

It is contended that local production for local needs is the ideal that we should aim at. The problem, however, is that recent advances in technology have reduced transport costs to such a degree that the meaning of 'local' has been transformed. In the new technological scenario, instead of trying to revive our villages, we must focus on humanising our cities.

The hard fact is transport technology determines whether a particular item will be produced in village or city. This can be shown by an example. Rice earmarked for village consumption is milled in the mini-rice-mill in village. But rice meant for consumption in city is milled in large ricemills generally located near a city. Paddy has to be transported from village to the city for consumption. It can be milled in village and rice can be transported to city. Alternatively, paddy can be transported to city milled in city and rice supplied to city. Now, if rice has to be milled in village, then only a small rice mill is sufficient for milling the rice grown in village. The cost of milling in a small rice mill is more and the quality of rice produced is relatively poor. There is also a loss of rice bran. Thus, milling paddy in village is costly and businessmen prefer to transport paddy from village to large rice mills in the city.

In contrast, a sugar mill is almost always established in a rural area. Reason is that 10kg of cane is required to produce 1kg of sugar. Thus, it costs less to transport 10kg of cane a short distance to a rural sugar mill and then transport 1kg of sugar long distance to the city. It would cost much more to transport 10kg of cane long dis-

tance to an urban sugar mill and then transport 1kg of sugar short distance to the nearby city. The total cost of transportation of cane and sugar combined is much less if a sugar factory is located in a rural area. Thus, we see that rice mills are established in cities and sugar mills in rural areas. For this reason, we simply cannot establish industries that are not dependent on high-weight agricultural products in villages. In this way the development of transport technology that has killed villages.

Roads have now been constructed in tribal areas; electricity has reached those in the desert; and villages of Haryana get water from Himachal. The number of items that can be produced in a village has competitively shrunk. At one time, the village had its own potter and smith. Nowadays, they buy plastic pitchers and machine-made implements. Now, the village cannot also manage its agriculture in a standalone manner because diesel, water and electricity are now obtained from city. It is uneconomical for village to maintain these 'local' trades now because it is more economical to pay ₹20 to a roadways bus conductor and get the same product

from the city. The village trades have but to die as also the myth of an autonomous village.

The same holds for self-governance. Once the life of the citizen is integrated with the city – TV, electricity, and motorcycle – the area of autonomy of the 'local' community stands reduced. Needless to say, the cities are also not able to practice self-governance. The supply of petrol is from other countries, the electricity grid has become national, and drinking water is brought often from other states. Self-governance is not practicable today in the village or the city.

It is necessary to make large investments in the centralised industries to protect our economic sovereignty. Canal irrigation, electricity and television require heavy investment in centralized industry. The nation has to make a difficult choice. We can use our output to first build our power stations; or to build our villages. The problem is that if we take up village development first, then we will perpetually condemn ourselves to the backwardness of the clay pots and wooden ploughs.

This compulsion had forced our pre-Independence leaders explic-



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

INSTEAD OF TRYING TO REVIVE OUR VILLAGES, WE MUST FOCUS ON HUMANISING OUR CITIES. A HALF-WAY POSSIBILITY IS TO REVIVE THE SMALL TOWNS INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ONLY ON THE LARGE CITIES

A God who cannot smile, could not have created this humorous universe.

SRI AUROBINDO



In sight of CEC's kursi

Former Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar has been named the new Election Commissioner. He replaces Ashok Lavasa, who is leaving to join the Asian Development Bank as vice-president. While Sunil Arora is the Chief Election Commissioner, the other Election Commissioner is Sushil Chandra. The importance of this announcement lies in the fact that Rajiv Kumar will likely be CEC during the next general elections in 2024! The current CEC Sunil Arora's tenure will end in April next year, following which Sushil Chandra will replace him as the next CEC. Chandra's term will end in May 2022, paving the way for Rajiv Kumar.

Rajiv Kumar has more than 30 years' experience in public policy and administration in several sectors. He was appointed Finance Secretary July last year and his stint ended earlier this year in February. He is known to have worked on many key aspects of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's plan of financial inclusion through such flagship policies as Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and Mudra loan scheme, among others.

Lateral entry to CAT in soup

It's hard to keep a whistleblower and internationally lauded babu down. The Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) has issued notices to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the Uttarakhand government alleging that the scheme for lateral entry into bureaucracy is flawed and biased.

The notices follow an application by Indian Forest Service officer Sanjiv Chaturvedi seeking quashing of the 360-degree appraisal system and restraining the Centre from filling up joint secretary-level posts through the "contract system".

Sources say that the case dates to 2017 when the Modi *sarkar* initiated the process for lateral entry into bureaucracy on a contract basis. Following this, the Centre appointed nine professionals, including actor Manoj Bajpai's brother Sujit Kumar Bajpai, from the private sector as joint secretaries in the Central government in 2019.

Stating that the present system of recruitment of Joint Secretary level post through contract system is completely arbitrary and irrational, Chaturvedi said that the documents obtained under RTI Act, prima facie reveal certain serious irregularities, which needs to be investigated objectively by an appropriate agency.

Some babus do retire but not for long

Retired senior babus rarely fade away into the sunset; they line up for other plum jobs in the government. In Himachal Pradesh, according to sources, several retired bureaucrats are among those who have applied for the post of Chairman and Member in the HP Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority. They include ex-IAS, IPS and IFS officers. These posts have fallen vacant following the completion of the tenure of KK Katoch as Chairman and SP Katyal as Member.

Further, now that the state government is setting up the State Food Commission, which will be notified soon, several retired bureaucrats are reportedly already lined up to get a posting here.

Similarly, many senior IAS and IPS officers, including retired Chief Secretaries and DGP-rank officers have applied for the post of Member in the Information Commission. Intense lobbying is reportedly underway, which underlines how the *babu-neta* nexus works in the country, whether at the Centre or in the states. Watch this space for updates.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

WISDOM CORNER

A woman has to live her life, or live to repent not having lived it. DH LAWRENCE

Music is ... A higher revelation than all wisdom & philosophy. LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Even if a snake is not poisonous, it should pretend to be venomous. ARTHASASTRA

WORDSWORTH

The Miller's Tale

During a holiday in California, one came across an historic preserved grist mill. On a broiling afternoon, the comparative coolness of the interior of the old buildings was very welcome, as was the guided tour and demonstration by the volunteer miller. As well as explaining the machinery, he talked about the social history of milling. The miller often had high social status in his local community because he controlled one of its most important services and because he regularly met almost everyone in the neighbourhood. He illustrated the central place of the mill in local life through some of the many proverbs and idioms which he suggested had their roots in the miller's trade. For example, to have a millstone around one's neck is a graphic reference to the heaviest, most intractable object that anyone in a village would ever encounter. To be put, or to go through the mill means to be exposed to hardship or rough treatment, just like corn being ground (the first citation in OED2 is from 1818, but it surely must be older in the spoken language). The proverb all is grist for the mill, meaning "everything can be made useful, or be a source of profit" illustrates the word grist, "a quantity of corn to be ground" (it derives from an Old English word from which we also get "grind"). The miller ground whatever was brought to him, and charged for the grinding, so all corn arriving at the mill represented income for him, regardless of its quality. Again, this is first attested in the 16th century, but is probably much older. The term grist mill was once common in the USA as it was in Britain to describe a mill open to all comers, who brought their batches of grain, or "grists", to be ground. OED2 quotes the West Somerset Word-book of 1886: The small mills for grinding people's own corn, all over the country side are always called grist-mills. A guide then gave an explanation of the proverb keeping your nose to the grindstone. The most important possessions of the miller were his pairs of grindstones, which were incredibly expensive. They had to be made of just the right kind of stone, which was not usually to be found in the neighbourhood, and the cost of transporting such weighty and unwieldy objects was the largest part of the expense of setting up a mill. The lower stone was fixed and the upper one turned by the machinery (driven by a waterwheel in this case).

LOL

EMPTY BOWL

An English teacher told his students that when pronouncing a word beginning with the letter "H" they should ignore the "H" as in hour, honour, and honest. That day when leaving for class, he left a note for his assistant, "Please heat my rice for



me." When the teacher returned to his office, he met an empty bowl. He asked the assistant, "What is my food?" The assistant replied, "You said I should heat the rice for you, but you also instructed us to ignore the 'H'."

SPECTRUM WORLD

India in US elections as Kamala steps in

Dr. D. K. Giri

THE REPUBLICAN PARTY HAS BEEN MORE PRO-INDIA THAN THE DEMOCRATS. THE CIVIL NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WAS SIGNED BY GEORGE BUSH JR, AND A DISTANCING FROM PAKISTAN WAS DONE BY TRUMP

The presidential elections in the United States generate a good deal of interest across the world. The election in November next is drawing more attention than usual because of the re-run of mercurial incumbent Donald Trump. In India, the nomination of Kamala Harris as the vice presidential candidate of the Democrats has won considerable publicity due to her Indian ethnicity, from her mother's side.

Indian observers have commented extensively on the possible impact of Kamala Harris, should she win, on Indian Diaspora, American policy towards India and American politics at home. Alternatively, if Trump who has been so far behind his opponent Joe Biden in the opinion polls wins, what will it mean for the Indian Americans and India?

Indian Americans are now 4 million strong, and in terms of overall percentage of Americans, they constitute 1.3 per cent, but are sizeable in swing states and thus are able to be a deciding factor in the elections. In 16 out of 50 states, Indian Americans are more than 1 per cent - New Jersey 4.1per cent, Rhode Island 3.36, New York 1.88, Illinois

1.81, California 1.8, and Delaware 1.61. Since the President is elected by an electoral college consisting of states, not the popular vote, it is quite likely that concentration of Indian Americans could clinch either way.

Both Trump and Biden-Harris have been wooing the Indian American electorate. Trump has issued the images of him with Modi jointly addressing rallies in Houston and Ahmedabad. He has claimed that he has more Indians than Harris. Kamala Harris has invoked her Indian origin, her mother hailing from Tamil Nadu. Many observers contend that Harris is decidedly a black American in her ethnic features and her association with Black ethos, community and culture. She studied in a college set up for mainly for the black community. Even in her policy posturing she has been often critical of India.

Indian Americans are not a ghetto voting population, they are varied in their political preferences; they will be concerned with policies that affect them, like H-1B visa, taxations policies, racial harmony etc. Indian Americans will vote for the party supporting India



than US domestic policies. The ethnic population anywhere feels nostalgic, more so the Indians for their reluctance to give up their own culture. In America, the country of immigrants, there is no definite host culture to absorb the Indians. That brings us to the second point of concern, the India policy of the candidates that is influenced by the Indian American voters as well as nudging them to vote for either of the two parties.

Many are uncomfortable with Trump for his unpredictable utterances. He has an inimitable style of lulling the opponent into complacency by seductive words, drawing them in and then squeezing them into compliance etc. At any rate, the Republican Party has been more pro-India than the Democrats.

The civil nuclear agreement was signed by George Bush Jr. and a distancing from Pakistan was done by Trump. Both Bill Clinton and Obama kept Pakistan and China in good humour.

The current Biden-Harris leadership has been critical of India on Jammu and Kashmir, Article 370 and other so-called human rights issues. There has been no attempt from the Democrats to build bridges with the Indian government. Trump, on the other hand, has gone full distance with Modi in publicly declaring his support. Democrats have made amends to their Indian policy and have said "they will invest intensively consolidating the bilateral relations with India". It seems too late and little as the Trump Administration has been vocal in support of India in our border stand-off with China.

America is a melting pot, occasional racial tensions notwithstanding. They have elected and re-elected a Black American, Obama as the President. If they elect Harris, she will be first one with complete immigrant origin.

The writer is professor of International Politics, JMI.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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Love jihad

Sir, In a crisis like neglect, torture, frustration, subjugation, or deprivation one becomes vulnerable to any promise of redemption. This crisis theory is an explanation to Hindu girls in India falling victim to *love jihad*. The crisis is a push factor; and attempt to lure girls is a pull factor. Push factor arises where a girl feels subordinated, insecure and stands alienated. A girl falling victim to *love jihad* suggests that she does not have strong bonding to values held by family and community. We are to blame. How much time we devote to our children so that they develop a sense of belonging to our values? How much time do we spend with them? What values do we inculcate in them? Children grow up with the values of housemaids or of the life in residential schools. The result is *love jihad* or drug addiction. For, in them, the sense of alienation and feeling of isolation guide their action. We are only responsible for the emotional crisis in children. It is time to rethink our role and responsibility as parents and realise that our children need our presence around them; not presents.

Prof Maguni Charan Behera, ITANAGAR

Entrance exams

Sir, Some political parties are opposing the holding of the entrance test to medical colleges and prestigious technical institutes. This opposition is only for the sake of opposing the Central government that came up with a plan to hold the exams. Their opposition is to divert public attention from mismanagement at the level of their respective state governments. There already is a five-month delay in admission process for hundreds of colleges due to the lockdown. This is time to catch up with last time.

Gopal Mittal, BHUBANESWAR

TV, TRP ratings

Sir, This refers to the much-talked-about 100-minutes TV-interview of Rhea Chakravarty, a suspect in the death-case of film actor Sushant Singh Rajput, telecast at 7 p.m. on August 27 on AajTak, followed by comments of an advocate representing Sushant's father on the interview. Controversies apart, it was against all ethics of the media that, soon after, another TV channel in its prime-time show at 9 p.m. put a big question-mark on the wisdom of those who have watched the said interview. This channel is obviously worried over the other getting top TRP rating. TV anchors are usually playing the role of judges by over-reaction and loud voice. This is unacceptable.

Subhash Chandra Agarwal, DELHI

SC clears path for Bihar polls

COVID CANNOT BE A VALID GROUND FOR POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS, SAYS APEX COURT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: Stating that the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be a ground for postponing elections, the Supreme Court Friday dismissed a PIL seeking to defer the Bihar Assembly polls till the state is free of the novel coronavirus.

The Election Commission of India will consider everything, a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said.

The bench, also comprising Justices R S Reddy and M R Shah, said it is a premature petition as no notification for the Assembly polls has been issued till now.

The petitioner, Avinash Thakur, had sought a direction to the Chief Election Commissioner to postpone the polls due to the COVID-19 pandemic on the ground that the Representation of the People Act provides for the deferment of polls in extraordinary situations.

"How can we ask the Election



THE BENCH, ALSO COMPRISING JUSTICES R S REDDY AND M R SHAH, SAID NO WRIT CAN BE APPLIED LIKE THIS AND DISMISSED THE PIL

Commission of India (ECI) to not hold elections? COVID cannot be a valid ground for postponement of elections," the bench stated.

The petitioner's counsel said the Representation of the People Act provides for the deferment of polls in extraordinary situations.

"How can we ask the Election

To this the bench said it is for the ECI to decide and the court cannot direct the poll panel to not hold elections.

The petitioner's counsel also argued that elections are not paramount but human life is, and even MLAs and common people are suf-

PIL QUASHED

The petitioner, Avinash Thakur, had sought a direction to the Chief Election Commissioner to postpone the polls due to the COVID-19 pandemic on the ground that the Representation of the People Act provides for the deferment of polls in extraordinary situations

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said Covid-19 cannot be a ground for postponement of elections, and the court cannot tell the Election Commission of India what should be done on this issue

fering due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The bench said it cannot pass orders for the deferment of polls and the ECI will take into account every situation.

It said no writ can be applied like this and dismissed the PIL.

Amnesty accuses Delhi cops of 'grave abuses' during riots

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New Delhi, August 28: The Delhi police are guilty of "grave human rights violations" during the communal riots in the national capital earlier this year, and were even "active participants" in the violence, the Amnesty International alleged Friday.

The worst unrest in years between India's majority Hindus and minority Muslims killed around 50 people, most of them Muslims, over several days of running battles in the city's northeast in February. A field investigation by Amnesty "has documented a disturbing pattern of grave human rights violations committed by the Delhi police during the riots," the rights group said in a statement.

"These violations include police officers indulging in violence with the rioters; torturing in custody; using excessive force on protesters; dismantling sites of peaceful protests and; being mute bystanders

as rioters wreaked havoc," Amnesty said. The group said it spoke to 50 rioters survivors, eyewitnesses, lawyers, doctors, human rights activists and retired police officers.

It also analysed several user-generated videos.

One such video showed officers "kicking and hitting a group of five wounded men... poking them with rifles and asking them to sing the Indian National Anthem," Amnesty said. Six months on, there has been no investigation into the role of the police in the unrest, it added.



This ongoing state-sponsored impunity sends the message that the law enforcement officials can commit grave human rights violations and evade accountability

AVINASH KUMAR | AMNESTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"This ongoing state-sponsored impunity sends the message that the law enforcement officials can commit grave human rights violations and evade accountability," said Amnesty executive director Avinash Kumar.

Contacted by AFP Friday, neither the Delhi police nor the Home Ministry officials were immediately available for comment on the allegations.

Hazare's scathing letter leaves Delhi BJP unit red-faced



AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 28: Veteran anti-corruption crusader Kisan Baburao Hazare, more popular as Anna Hazare, Friday spurned Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta's recent invitation to join him in a protest against the Aam Aadmi Party government.

Given the current circumstances, the senior leader from Maharashtra candidly admitted that no party in the country can give a bright future to the people or resolve their problems and hence, "my coming to Delhi will not make any difference." In a stinging letter to Gupta, Hazare said that he was pained to read the BJP chief's invite asking him to launch an agitation against the AAP regime in the capital, on the lines of a similar crusade for Lokpal in 2011.

"The BJP has been in power since six years... You represent the youth which is the power of the nation... What could be more unfortunate than the fact that a party which claims to be the one with

the biggest membership in the world has to call an 83-year-old man like me who lives in a 10x12 feet room, with no money, property or power," Hazare wrote.

He pointed out that now the BJP government at the Centre controls everything in Delhi (state) like the CBI, ED, and state police and the Prime Minister even claims that he has taken strong steps to uproot corruption.

"If that is so, then why can't your government take steps against the Delhi regime if it has indulged in corrupt activities? Or, are you just making tall claims," Hazare asked pointedly. "In 2011, when I undertook the agitation, people were fed up of corruption and took to the streets all over the country in support... In 2014, your party showed dreams of a 'corruption-free' India and came to power, but people's life has not improved," penned Hazare in a no-holds barred tone.

Expressing disappointment at how all parties are involved in the same vicious circle of 'chasing money-for-power and power-for-money', Anna said there will be no change in the country and people will not get any succour from their sufferings till the system changes.

Hazare advised that it is very easy for any party to target the other party which is in power, but there is a need now for all parties to make a "self-introspection and admit their own shortcomings".

Delhi's qawwals in dire straits amid pandemic

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 28: The coronavirus has impacted the qawwals and artistes associated with them in a big way given the challenging circumstances posed by the pandemic.

The qawwals say the Central and state governments should think about the plight of the artistes and help them to tide over the situation. Due to corona, all the qawwals and the artistes working with them have nothing to do except sit at home for the last six months. The qawwals say that some artistes have been forced to work as labourers and if the government does not help them, then the legacy of the qawwals would come to an end.

Delhi's famous qawwal Yusuf Khan Nizami told IANS, "We have been performing qawwali since

the age of 7. I have also done programmes in many countries. There are 10 persons in our group. Due to corona, the situation is grim, not only qawwals but all other artistes have been affected."

"In any state of India you will find qawwals and they get to do only four programmes in a month and sometimes not even one."

"We did our last programme February 29 and have been sitting at home since then. There are many qawwals in Delhi. However, there are some artistes who also work with other groups to earn a living," Nizami added.

The Sabri Sufi Brothers group from Ajmer Sharif, Rajasthan told IANS, "We have been performing qawwali for the last 800 years. At present, it is the 24th generation and generation after generation has been performing qawwali."



SWOLLEN YAMUNA



A man pulls his boat to anchor at the bank of swollen river Yamuna in New Delhi, Friday. The water level of the river is rising owing to heavy rainfall.

PTI PHOTO

'Outstation patients behind uptick in Delhi Covid cases'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 28: The national capital has been witnessing a sudden surge in the number of Covid-19 cases for the last one week, with health experts conjecturing that it could be due to the complacent behaviour of the people after re-opening of the economy, return of migrant labourers and increase in outstation patients seeking treatment in city hospitals.

Wednesday, Delhi had witnessed highest single-day spike in August with 1,693 fresh cases, forcing Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to hold a press conference to acknowledge the spike and urge people to follow the safety protocols.

June 23, the national capital had registered the highest single-day spike of 3,947, pursuant to which the cases plummeted and remained low in the month of July.

Even though health experts have denied the possibility of a second wave of Covid-19 in Delhi, many asserted that a resurgence



of cases in the near future cannot be ruled out.

The reason for the spike is being attributed to outstation coronavirus patients who are coming to the city hospitals for treatment.

"These are mostly patients from the adjoining states, but the data is not clear yet," said Suresh Kumar, Medical Director at the LNJP Hospital.

Kejriwal had also asserted that 21.6 per cent or 800 of the total number of beds in Delhi are occupied by patients from other states.

"The spike can be attributed to the opening up of economic activ-

ities in the unorganised sectors, where people-to-people contact is more. The second reason could be that people have become complacent and are not wearing masks or maintaining social distancing protocols," said infectious disease expert Mahesh Kumar Lakhe.

As per the data provided by the Delhi Police, as many as 1,88,578 people have been fined for not wearing masks till August 26.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Chief Balram Bhargava had recently said that irresponsible and less cautious people, who do not wear masks, are driving the pandemic.

Delhi-based health expert Shuchin Bajaj said, "People are also getting tired of the lockdown and social distancing measures, so they are becoming more careless. But I think the more important factor is that the migrant population has started to come back now with the increase in economic activity."

Farmer woos back labourers with flight tickets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: Twenty migrant workers returned to Delhi Thursday after a city-based mushroom farmer, who had sent some of them to their home state Bihar by plane in May during the coronavirus-induced lockdown, booked air tickets again so that they can join back work here.

In May this year, Pappan Singh had spent around Rs 68,000 on flight tickets of 10 migrant workers to send them to Bihar. This time however, he booked tickets for 20 of them to return.

Singh booked tickets worth over Rs 1 lakh so that the workers, who have toiled for him, some for over 20 years, can join him in farming mushrooms during the August to April season. Of the 20 workers, 10 of them flew for the first time, and arrived at the IGI Airport in Delhi



Picture used for representation

in the evening. They will start working in the new mushroom farming

season along with Singh in Delhi's Tigipur village.

Job loss threat looms over 'unfit' Bihar cops

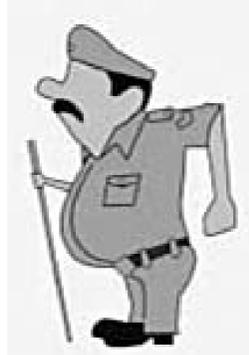
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, August 28: The Bihar Home Department has directed the state police headquarters to assess the work and physical fitness of all police personnel aged above 50. It has also directed Superintendents of Police (SPs) to submit status reports of such police personnel for analysis to the police headquarters.

The SP-rank officers have also given the assignment to test the physical fitness and efficiency of the personnel on the ninth of every month, and the future of these personnel will depend on the performance reports.

The police headquarters will analyse the reports of every individual police personnel, to recommend whether they should be retained in service or not.

The move has evoked protests, with Mritunjay Kumar Singh, the president of the Bihar Policemen's Association, expressing his opposition to the decision.



"It is a conspiracy to throw senior police personnel out. Police personnel aged above 50 years will get victimised during the preparation of the reports," he alleged.

"We have demanded that the state government rollback the decision. The option to go on agitation is open if the government refuses," Singh added.

Bihar's Covid recovery rate sees steady rise

AGENCIES

Patna, August 28: Bihar's COVID-19 recovery rate Friday remained over 85 per cent, while the coronavirus caseload rose to 1.30 lakh with 1998 fresh positive cases, a health department bulletin said.

A total of 12 fatalities was reported in the past 24 hours, taking the death tally in the state to 374, the bulletin said.

The number of people getting cured from the disease has increased to 1,12,445, putting the recovery rate at 85.94 per cent, it said.

The recovery rate has been witnessing a steady rise since August 17. It was 85.13 Thursday.

At present, there are 17,728 active cases in the state. The state has tested 1,05,766 samples in the past 24 hours, while a total of 28.82 lakh samples have been examined across Bihar so far, it said.

Of the 1,998 fresh cases, Patna district accounted for the highest number of 296 cases, followed by Bhagalpur (121), East Champaran (94), Kisan ganj (88) and Purnea (87).

Patna has the maximum positive cases of 20,317 and also the fatalities at 154 so far in the state. All the 38 districts have reported positive cases of coronavirus and deaths from the deadly infection.

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There was no work in the village. For how long one can carry on without money. It is good to be back to work

RAJA RAM

While speaking, one of the workers, Raja Ram, said it was the first time he travelled on a plane, and was excited to join work. "There was no work in the village. For how long one can carry on without money. It is good to be back to work."

He said seven more workers will fly into Delhi September 1. Singh had also made travel arrangements for all 20 migrant workers to reach Patna airport from their native places. In Delhi, he sent five cars to pick them up from the airport. Singh said every year, he does mushroom farming on over three acres of land, but this time he is doing it on only one acre of land as old stock of mush-

rooms is still with suppliers due to the closure of markets in view of COVID-19 restrictions in recent days.

"I treat my workers as part of my family as they have been working for me for 15 to 25 years. I could have arranged workers from here (Delhi) because I am doing mushroom farming on a small piece of land this year. But, I have an emotional attachment with my workers and that is why I have booked their air tickets so that they can earn their livelihood while working here," he said.



States that have turned the production of terrorists into a primary export have attempted to paint themselves as victims of terror
S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

BANGALORE TO HOST AERO-INDIA

The defence ministry has taken an in-principle decision to host the next edition of Aero India - considered Asia's largest aerospace exhibition in its traditional venue of Bangalore from February 3-5 next year notwithstanding the coronavirus pandemic, official sources said



of the day quote

I have told our education minister to look into the possibility of conducting the final-year exams in universities and colleges before Durga puja in October. The options of both online and offline exams should be looked into. We are not against any exam; we are just saying that a pandemic is on, and it could put lives of students at risk

A mix of cronyism, incompetence and callousness has failed our people and destroyed their livelihoods and lives well before the pandemic. Blaming the heavens now

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana was launched with an ambitious aim of banking the unbanked. This initiative has been a game-changer, serving as the foundation for many poverty alleviation initiatives, benefitting crores of people

SHORT TAKES

Priests duped

Sitapur (UP): A woman in Sitapur district in Uttar Pradesh organised an elaborate 'puja' with around 40 priests that lasted for 11 days and then duped them by paying them with coupon notes, also known as amusement currency. The incident took place in Terwa Manikpur village and the priests have now lodged an FIR of fraud and criminal breach of trust against the woman, identified as Geeta Pathak, wife of G.R. Pathak, at the Rampur Mathura police station. Laxmi Singh, Inspector General of Police (IGP), Lucknow range, said the woman has been taken into custody and is being quizzed about the incident.

Body found

Srinagar: A body was recovered by the police from an orchard in South Kashmir's Shopian district that has been identified as that of a missing panchayat member Nisar Ahmad Bhat. The body buried in the orchard was spotted by the locals who informed the police. A senior police official confirmed that the body recovered is of missing Panch Nisar Ahmad Bhat. Bhat reportedly left for Shopian from Srinagar on August 19 and has been missing since.

Man opens fire

Hyderabad: Angry over a late night party in an apartment building, a retired army jawan opened fire at a man following a heated argument. The incident occurred late on Thursday at Hydershahkote in Narsingi on the outskirts of Hyderabad. Retired army jawan Nagamalleswar Rao raised an objection to the party organised by employees of a company in the building as part of the Ganesh festival. There was a heated argument between Rao and those partying. In a fit of rage, Rao took out his revolver and opened fire aiming at a man. The bullet brushed past the man's arm. He allegedly fired two rounds, including one in the air.

Two arrested

Palghar: Two persons have been arrested on charges of killing a man and dumping his body in bushes here in Maharashtra, police said Friday. The accused, aged 19 and 20, were arrested on Thursday night from Boisar in Palghar district, senior inspector Pradeep Kasbe said.

6 states move SC over NEET, JEE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: Ministers of six opposition-ruled states moved the Supreme Court Friday seeking review of its order permitting the Centre to conduct NEET and JEE entrance exams this year amid the persisting COVID-19 pandemic.

The review plea has been filed by ministers from West Bengal (Moloy Ghatak), Jharkhand (Rameshwar Oraon), Rajasthan (Raghu Sharma), Chhattisgarh (Amarjeet Bhagat), Punjab (B S Sidhu) and Maharashtra (Uday Ravindra Sawant).

The plea, filed through advocate Sunil Fernandes, said the apex court order fails to satisfy safety and security concerns of students appearing for the exams. On Aug 17, the top court had refused to interfere with the conduct of medical and engineering entrance exams - NEET and JEE - scheduled to take place in September saying that life must go on and students can't lose a precious year due to the pandemic.

The apex court had dismissed a plea by one Sayantan Biswas and others seeking direction to National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts both the NEET and JEE exams, to postpone them after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta assured that all safeguards would be taken.

Termining the decision to conduct the exams as irrational, the plea said the top court failed to appreciate that the Union Government had adequate time to establish at least one centre for every district for NEET (UG) and JEE (Mains) rather than having several centres in one district.



The plea, filed through advocate Sunil Fernandes, said the Apex court order fails to satisfy safety and security concerns of students appearing for the exams

The mere fact that lakhs of students have registered for the exam is not indicative of their consent or their willingness or their desire to attend physical exams, the plea said

The mere fact that lakhs of students have registered for the exam is not indicative of their consent or their willingness or their desire to attend physical exams, the plea said. The August 17 order is "cryptic, non-speaking" and does not discuss the various aspects and complexities involved in a matter of this magnitude and complex nature, it said.

The plea further said that only two reasons given by the court - life must go on and students should not lose an academic year - do not constitute an authoritative and comprehensive judicial scrutiny of the issue.

It said that apex court's observation that "Life Must Go On" may have very sound philosophical underpinnings but cannot be a substitute for valid legal reasoning and logical analysis of the various aspects involved in the conduct of the NEET UG and JEE exams.

"It is submitted that if the impugned order dated August 17, 2020 is not reviewed then grave and irreparable harm and injury would befall on the student community of our country and not only will the health, welfare and safety of the students/candidates appearing for the NEET/JEE examinations would stand imperiled but also the public health at large would be in severe jeopardy in these COVID-19 pandemic times," the plea said.

The petition said that as per the NTA press release, approximately 9.53 lakhs and 15.97 lakhs students have been registered for JEE (Main) and NEET (UG) 2020 respectively.

The plea said that JEE Mains is slated to be conducted over 660 exam centres, roughly 1,443 students per centre. Similarly for NEET UG, 15.97 lakhs students will appear in 3,843 centres across the country, nearly 415 students per exam centre.

Will request MPs to get tested for corona: LS Speaker

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: MPs will be requested to get themselves tested for COVID-19 at least 72 hours before the start of the Monsoon Session of Parliament, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said Friday.

The Monsoon Session is likely to start from September 14 and conclude on October 1.

Besides MPs, all those who are expected to enter the Parliament premises, including officials from ministries, representatives from the media and staff of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha secretariats, will get tested for the coronavirus before the start of the session, Birla said.

The Lok Sabha speaker Friday held a long meeting with officials from the health ministry, ICMR, AIIMS, DRDO and Delhi government to finalise the arrangements for the session in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. Birla said arrangements have also been made for zero-touch security checks during the session. If required random tests for COVID-19 can be conducted during the session, he said.

Sources said the Monsoon Session is likely to be held in two shifts - morning and evening. Due to the pandemic, this will be in a way a first-of-its-kind session with various modifications.

CENTRE ISSUES RULES FOR J&K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: The Centre has issued rules for a smooth functioning of the Jammu and Kashmir administration, specifying that the police, the all-India services and the anti-corruption bureau will be under the direct control of the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of the Union Territory.

The rules, notified by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, also made it clear that in case of a difference of opinion between the LG and the council of ministers (when it is formed) with regard to any matter, the former shall refer it to the Centre for the decision of the president and shall act according to that decision.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) notification said there will be 39 departments in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, including agriculture, school education, higher education, horticulture, floriculture, election, general administration, home, mining, power, PWD, transport and tribal affairs.

Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, was abrogated on August 5, 2019 and subsequently, the state was bifurcated into Union territories - Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The Union territories came into existence on October 31



last year.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by section 55 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, read with the Proclamation dated 31st October, 2019 issued under section 73 of the said Act, the President hereby makes the following rules..." the notification said.

It said the LG shall, in respect of matters connected with "public order", "police", "All India Services" and "Anti Corruption Bureau", exercise his executive functions in his discretion under the Act. The LG, on the advice of the chief minister (when elected), shall allot the business of the government among the ministers by assigning one or more departments to a minister.

The council (of ministers) shall be collectively responsible for all the executive orders issued by any department in the name of the LG and contracts made in the name of the president in connection with the administration of the Union Territory, whether such orders or contracts are authorised by a minister with respect to a matter pertaining to a department under his charge or as a result of discussions at a meeting of the council.

MATTER OF LIVELIHOOD



A vegetable vendor waits for customers on a city pavement, during Unlock 3.0 in Kolkata, Friday

PTI PHOTO

Tharoor a 'guest artist', says Congress leader

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, August 28: Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who was among the "group of 23" that wrote to Sonia Gandhi seeking urgent organisational overhaul, has come under attack from some leaders in Kerala, with a senior MP calling him a "guest artist" and asking him to follow party policies.

Hitting out at Tharoor, KPCC working president and the party's chief whip in the Lok Sabha, Kodikkunnil Suresh Friday said everybody in the party should work according to its policies and programmes. Suresh's statement created ripples in the state party unit, with many senior leaders voicing concern over the "bid to weaken Tharoor." "Shashi Tharoor is certainly not a politician. He came to the Congress party as a guest artist. He is still continuing in the party like a guest artist," said Suresh, who represents Mavelikara constituency in the Lok Sabha.

The former union minister also said "Tharoor may be a global citizen", but he should not think that he can take any decision or say anything according to his will. "Ultimately, he should follow the party (policies and programmes)," Suresh said here in response to a query. Reacting to Suresh's statement, senior party MLA P T Thomas said the KPCC has clearly stated that the Congress leadership in Kerala stood with the position taken by A K Antony in national politics. "However, the move to weaken Tharoor under the guise of this is unfortunate. A universal personality like Tharoor should be assessed on the basis of his high renown," Thomas said.

Your chance to be the British High Commissioner

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: Indian, woman and between the ages of 18 and 23? Well, then you could become Britain's high commissioner to India for a day, get an inside view of the dynamic between the two countries and also launch a gender charter for the mission.

The British High Commission has invited applications from Indian women who fit the 18-23 age bracket for the initiative aimed at empowerment and to highlight the challenges faced by women.

The winner will experience a wide range of UK-India work, meet with senior stakeholders and partners to discuss the collective response to COVID-19, and launch a new BHC Gender Charter reaffirming the high commission's "commitment to gender equality", the British High Commission here said. In order to participate in the pan-India competition, applicants must record and upload a one-minute video on the topic, "What global challenges and opportunities do you see for gender equality in the age of COVID-19? The video

must be shared on either Twitter, Facebook or Instagram by tagging 'UKinIndia' and using the hashtag '#DayoftheGirl!', the mission said. The deadline to apply is September 13, 2020. "I am delighted to launch our fourth High Commissioner for a Day competition. Empowering women and girls globally is one of the UK's top priorities and we continue to work with governments and partners around the world as a force for good, including in India, to make that a reality," said Jan Thompson, Britain's acting high commissioner to India.

Assam tackles cattle disease amid Covid

LSD is an infectious viral disease in cattle transmitted by arthropod vectors such as mosquitoes and ticks caused by the Poxviridae family virus characterised by fever, multiple nodules on the skin and enlarged superficial lymph nodes with mortality ranging from one to three per cent

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Guwahati/Kohima, August 28: Amid Covid-19 and after African Swine Fever, Assam is now dealing with the Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) in cattle, officials said Friday.

In view of the reported emergence of LSD in neighbouring Assam, the Nagaland government has sounded a high alert and asked the Chief Veterinary Officers (CVOs) of all districts to strictly monitor the occurrence of the disease.

LSD is an infectious viral disease in cattle transmitted by arthropod vectors such as mosquitoes and ticks caused by the Poxviridae family virus characterised by fever, multiple nodules on the skin and enlarged superficial lymph nodes with mortality ranging from one to three per cent.

The disease, however, causes huge economic losses in the form of a drop in milk production, reduced skin quality and restriction of trade and movement. The LSD cannot

transmit from cattle to humans. An Assam Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department official said the incidence of LSD was first reported in June.

At present, cattle in four Assam districts - Cachar, Karimganj, Hailakandi in the Barak Valley (in southern Assam) and Kamrup in the Brahmaputra Valley are affected. Deputy Director (in-charge) of the Animal Health Centre of the Guwahati-based Regional Disease Diagnostics Laboratory Prodeep Gogoi said though the infected cattle often recover within two to three weeks, there is a reduction in milk production in cattle for several weeks.

Gogoi requested Assam's Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services Department to do clinical surveillance of the susceptible cattle population for nodular skin lesions along with the recording of morbidity and mortality data in the LSD-suspected areas.



Everest summit success rates doubled over last 30 yrs: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: The success rate of summiting Mount Everest, the world's tallest peak, has doubled in the last three decades, while the death rate for climbers has hovered unchanged at around 1 per cent since 1990, according to a study.

Researchers at the University of Washington and the University of California, Davis, in the US also found that the number of climbers on Mount Everest has greatly increased, crowding the narrow route through the dangerous "death zone" near the summit. The findings, published Wednesday in the journal PLOS ONE, analysed the success and death rates for all first-time climbers

who had a permit to summit Everest during the period of 2006 to 2019.

The study shows that the summit success rates from the 1990 to 2019 have essentially doubled; two-thirds of climbers now reach the summit, versus one-third previously. The researchers found that the overall death rate of around one per cent hasn't changed.

They also found that a contemporary 60-year-old climber has the same success rate - about 40 per cent - as a 40-year-old climber in the prior period, suggesting "60 is the new 40" when it comes to summiting the Everest. A contemporary 60-year-old climber has the about the same death rate - about 2 per cent as a 48.5-year-old in the earlier pe-



riod, according to the researchers.

They also found that more women are attempting the climb in recent years (14.6 per cent) versus the previous period (9.1 per cent), with

women and men having very similar odds of success or death in both periods. The doubling of the summit success rate is likely due to a number of factors.

Weather forecasting has dramatically improved since the "Into Thin Air" storm of 1996, giving climbers more information on the best window to push for the summit, according to the researchers. Some climbers are using elevated flow rates of supplemental oxygen - and doing so lower on the mountain, they said.

The most popular routes have fixed lines, meaning climbers can clip into ropes tethered to the mountain for their ascent and descent, making it safer if they fall, the researchers noted. Increased experience of expedition leaders and high-altitude porters may also have helped boost success rates, according to the researchers.

Interestingly while more climbers are making it to the top in recent years, today's climbers are actually less experienced in climbing tall peaks in Nepal than climbers who attempted Everest in the 1990s and early 2000s, they said. Mount Everest draws over 500 climbers each spring to attempt the summit during a small window of favourable conditions on the rugged Himalayan mountain that tops out at just over 29,000 feet.

The study identified patterns in the characteristics of mountaineers - such as age, sex and prior experience - that might influence their likelihood of summiting or dying during the spring climbing season.



The state government supports holding of NEET and JEE
YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CHIEF MINISTER

INDIA, S'PORE TO BOOST TIES

India and Singapore Friday resolved to further boost their defence and security partnership with a focus on the maritime sphere, officials said



of the day quote

Electoral alliances would be decided only during the polls
K PALANISWAMI | TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER

The Jan Dhan Yojana is a scheme of financial inclusion that has revolutionised the lives of poor people across the country
TRIVENDRA SINGH | UTTARAKHAND CHIEF MINISTER

No leader from the BJP has taken the name of Aadiya Thackeray directly or indirectly (in Rajput case). The kind of revelations that are coming up in the case, I think they are surprising
DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | FORMER MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

China builds 5G infra along LAC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 28: As India and China continues to be in a border dispute deadlock, Beijing has started laying fibre optics cables and installing other equipments for Fifth-generation wireless technology - commonly known as 5G - along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

The Chinese People's Liberation Army troops were also found constructing barracks and other structures near the Pangong Lake.

The intelligence agencies flagged that construction for 5G was noticed near Demchok area, one of the disputed sites at LAC, in the first week of August.

The agencies noticed installation of equipment for new spectrum bandwidths, laying of fibre optics cables and the development of cellular transmission technology. The agencies also alerted that fresh construction works were seen along the Pangong Lake despite China having stated they will move back.

New huts and sheds have come up at Pangong Lake. This is happening even when both the countries are in dialogue for disengagement.

The India-China standoff is nearing four months after tensions broke out in early May. While initial disengagement took place in Galwan Valley and Patrol Point 15; Pangong Lake and Gogra-Hot Springs area also known as patrol point 17A remains volatile.

At Pangong Lake, China has strengthened their positions between Finger-5 and 8 and India is to take up this move very strongly.



BORDER ROW

- Beijing has started laying fibre optics cables and installing other equipments for Fifth-generation wireless technology along the Line of Actual Control
- The Chinese People's Liberation Army troops were also found constructing barracks and other structures near the Pangong Lake
- The India-China standoff is nearing four months after tensions broke out in early May

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has refused to pull back eastwards from the 8-km stretch it has occupied from Finger-4 to Finger-8 by building scores of new fortifications there since early May. The mountain spurs jutting into the lake are referred to as Fingers in military parlance.

As China is not moving back, several rounds of deliberations took place in Delhi to decide the future strategy. Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat has also said if talks fail India will think of military options.

Frequent meetings have been taking place in the security establishment to review the situation along LAC in Eastern Ladakh.

China has made an attempt to change the status quo by putting up shelters and setting up a camp in areas that were under Indian control so far.

India has found that the Chinese side has started troop, artillery and armour build-up in three sectors of the LAC - western (Ladakh), middle (Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh) and eastern (Sikkim, Arunachal).

CBI quizzes Rhea for first time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 28: Actress Rhea Chakraborty, accused of abetting the suicide of filmstar Sushant Singh Rajput, reached the DRDO guest house here Friday for questioning by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), an official said.

This is for the first time that Rhea Chakraborty (28) is being questioned by the CBI in the Sushant death case. She was summoned by the central agency to appear before its probe team on Friday around 10.30 am, the official said.

Rhea Chakraborty, Rajput's girlfriend, left her residence around 10 am to reach the DRDO guest house in suburban Santacruz, where the probe team is stationed, he said. Before Rhea Chakraborty's arrival, Rajput's friend and flatmate



Siddharth Pithani and manager Samual Miranda had reached the DRDO guest house to join the investigation, the official said.

The CBI team, which is in the city since the last eight days to investigate the Sushant death case, on Thursday recorded the statement of her brother Showik Chakraborty.

The recording of statement lasted for more than eight hours. The CBI has so far questioned the late actor's flatmate Pithani, cook Neeraj Singh and domestic help Deepesh Sawant, among others, as part of its probe in the high-profile case.

SUSHANT DEATH CASE

Earlier, before the CBI took over the probe, the Mumbai police had recorded the statement of Rhea Chakraborty in connection with Rajput's death. The Supreme Court last week upheld the transfer of an FIR, lodged by Rajput's father in Patna against Rhea Chakraborty and others for allegedly abetting his son's suicide and misappropriating his money, to the CBI. The 34-year-old actor was found hanging on June 14 in his flat in suburban Bandra.

SHORT TAKES

nCoV fatality case drops to 1.82%

New Delhi: The effectiveness of the Centre's 'test, track and treat' approach is reflected in the progress on the COVID-19 recovery front and the reduction in fatality rate, the government said Friday, highlighting that recoveries exceed active cases by over 18 lakh as on date. The Union health ministry pointed out that in the past five months, more than three-fourth of COVID-19 cases have recovered and less than one-fourth are active now. "Effective treatment of positive cases has resulted in a progressively dipping COVID case fatality rate, which is pegged at 1.82 per cent as on date," the ministry said.

Yamuna water level swells

New Delhi: The water level of the Yamuna in Delhi rose to 204.41 metres Friday, precariously close to the warning mark of 204.50 metres following heavy rains, officials said. The water level rose because of rains in Delhi and neighbouring areas, he said. "The water level was recorded at 204.41 metres at the Old Railway Bridge at 5 pm. It was 204.30 metres at 9 am Friday morning and 203.77 metres at 10 am Thursday," an official of the Irrigation and Flood Control department said. Besides, more water was released from the Hathnikund barrage Tuesday. The flow rate was 36,557 cusec at 5 pm Tuesday, the highest in the last three days, he said.

Hubby murdered in front of wife

New Delhi: A 40-year-old man was repeatedly hit with an iron rod by two Gramin Sewa drivers after the man along with his pregnant wife asked for their missing seven-year-old son in Delhi's Okhla Industrial area. The profusely bleeding man was rushed to the hospital by the police but was declared brought dead. The incident took place Thursday night. The two accused, who are brothers and were drunk, were later nabbed by South East Delhi police.

Flood situation improves in UP

Lucknow: The flood situation in Uttar Pradesh improved further Friday as the number of flood affected villages came down, though one more district was declared flood-hit. "There are 18 districts affected by flood. In these districts 830 villages are flood affected and 477 are marooned," Relief Commissioner, Sanjay Goel told reporters. Till Thursday, there were 17 flood-hit districts, where 893 villages were affected, of which 562 were marooned.

French defence min likely to visit India next month

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 28: French Defence Minister Florence Parly is likely to visit India next month to attend the formal induction ceremony of five Rafale fighter jets into the Indian Air Force (IAF) and hold talks with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh on further boosting strategic ties, people familiar with the developments said Friday.

The induction ceremony of the Rafale jets will be held September 10 in Ambala air force station in presence of Singh, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat and the entire top military brass of the country, they said.

The Indian and French sides are in touch with each other on the proposed visit by Parly, they added. They said a preliminary discussion on a possible procurement of another batch of 36 Rafale jets by India from France may figure in the talks between the two sides during Parly's visit here.

There has been a view among some officials in the military establishment that the IAF should at least have four squadrons of Rafale jets considering its operational aspects.



Children run along a road during rain in New Delhi, Friday

PTI PHOTO

FUN IN RAIN

Rambo Circus unveils first digital show 'Life is a Circus'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, August 28: Rambo Circus, one of the biggest and oldest circuses in the country, is going online with its show 'Life is a Circus'.

The entertainment group made the announcement in a statement Friday, calling the show an "ode to the greatest showmanship". The show promises to be a complete family entertainment, featuring activities ranging from trapeze acts to acrobatic stunts. Rambo Circus owner Sujit Dilip said with their



digital show, they plan to reinvent the experience of circus at a time when the whole industry is witnessing an unprecedented crisis due to the coronavirus pandemic. "The circus was one of the most preferred outings for kids and the entire family few decades back. Every kid born in the '80s and '90s will have some nostalgic memories attached to it. The show will be a ticketed event hosted on a virtual platform and the funds raised from this initiative will be donated directly to the crew for their welfare and well-being."

4 ultras killed in encounter



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, August 28: Four militants were killed Friday in an encounter with security forces, while another surrendered in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

The district commander of Al-Badr outfit and another militant involved in the abduction and killing of a panch from Khanmoh area of the city whose body was recovered from Shopian Friday were among the slain militants. Security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Killoora area of Shopian district in south Kashmir following specific information about the presence of militants, a police official said.

He said the search operation turned into an encounter after the militants fired upon a search party of the forces, which retaliated. In the ensuing exchange of fire, four militants were killed, the official said.

Srinagar-based Defence Spokesman Col Rajesh Kalia said one militant surrendered during the encounter. "One terrorist (has) surrendered. Two AKs and three pistols (were) recovered (from the encounter site)," he said. Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said one of the killed militants was Shakoor Parray, the district commander of Al-Badr outfit.

"Terrorist Shakoor Parray and another terrorist Suhail Bhat who abducted and killed Khanmoh's Panch were neutralised in Friday's encounter," the IGP said. Police Friday recovered the body of the panch, who was reported missing 10 days ago from Khonmoh area of the city, from Shopian district. Local residents of village Dangan in Shopian informed the police that a body seemed to be buried inside an orchard of the village, police said.

COVID-19 EFFECT

Pandemic management now part of MBBS course

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: Medical students will now learn about pandemic management along with its social, legal and other aspects in the MBBS course with India's apex medical education regulator introducing a new module to better prepare doctors for challenges posed by pandemics like COVID-19.

It is expected that the pandemic management module extending from foundation course to the final year undergraduate programme will help in ensuring the creation of an Indian medical graduate "who will serve humanity as doctor, leader and healer in bleak times such as occurrence of a pandemic", the board of governors (BoG) in su-

- The move has been triggered by the pandemic and aims to prepare doctors for challenges posed by emerging diseases
- The document containing details of the module to be adopted by colleges has been put together by a team of experts and the academic cell of the Medical Council of India (MCI)

persession of the Medical Council of India (MCI) said. "This pandemic management module is designed to ensure that MBBS students acquires competencies in handling not only the illness but also the social, legal and other issues arising from such disease outbreaks. "The emergence of COVID-19 and its rapid spread across the globe has further underlined the need to develop these skills in our graduates," Dr V K Paul, the chairman of the BoG said in the foreword. The Medical Council of India has prepared revised regula-

tions on Graduate Medical Education and Competency based undergraduate curriculum, accompanied by detailed guidance for its implementation. One of the desirable outcomes of the competency derived education programme is to enable the Indian medical graduate to be prepared for the unknown - to be able to understand, investigate, treat and prevent new and emerging diseases as clinician, community leader and scholar, stated the foreword.

According to the foreword, "pandemic or disease outbreak calls in

to play all the five roles envisages for the Indian medical graduate viz. clinician, communicator, leader and member of the healthcare team, professional, life-long learner and committed to excellence, is ethical, responsive and accountable to patients". The competency-based undergraduate curriculum was designed to enable the Indian medical graduate to be prepared to meet new challenges - to be able to recognise, diagnose, investigate and treat newly emerging diseases as a clinician and community health leader.

The module is arranged in a phase-based manner and it is expected that the modules would be covered by an interdisciplinary team under supervision by the college level Curriculum Committee, the document stated.





The Republican convention is designed for one purpose - to soothe Donald Trump's ego. To make him feel good
KAMALA HARRIS | DEMOCRAT VICE PRESIDENT NOMINEE

HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE MAPS GIANT HALO AROUND ANDROMEDA GALAXY

Using NASA's Hubble Space Telescope, scientists have mapped the immense envelope of gas, called a halo, surrounding the Andromeda galaxy, our nearest large galactic neighbour



of the day quote

We want to intervene in Belarus situation from the assumption that all the existing problems that are taking place there today will be resolved peacefully
VLADIMIR PUTIN | RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

Now we feel embarrassed. Now he (Nawaz Sharif) has started doing politics (from) there as well and, when you see him, it seems like there is nothing (wrong) with him
IMRAN KHAN | PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER

For many people, the lack of social interaction caused by the pandemic has had a profound effect on their mental health
TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE WHO

Ailing Abe steps down as Japan PM

REUTERS

Tokyo, August 28: Japan's Shinzo Abe Friday said he was resigning because of poor health, ending tenure as the country's longest-serving prime minister in which he sought to revive an economy stricken by deflation and push for a stronger military.

His abrupt departure triggers a leadership battle in his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) over the next few weeks. The winner will likely stick to Abe's reflationary "Abenomics" policies that had mixed results in resuscitating the world's third-largest economy.

Abe has battled ulcerative colitis for years, and two recent hospital visits within a week had raised questions about whether he could stay on in until his term ends in September next year.

Despite the deepening concerns about his health, news of Abe's resignation sent tremors through



Tokyo financial markets, Japan's main stock market, which has more than doubled under Abe, fell some 2% before recovering, while the yen rose on concerns of a return to deflation. "I cannot continue being prime minister if I do not have the confidence that I can carry out the job entrusted to me by the people," Abe, 65, told a news conference as

Abe's abrupt departure triggers a leadership battle in his Liberal Democratic Party over the next few weeks.

Former Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba and former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida quickly expressed interest in the top job, media reported

he announced his decision.

He said he wanted to avoid a political vacuum as Japan copes with the novel coronavirus. It was the second time Abe has resigned as prime minister because of poor health, the first more than a decade ago.

"I apologise from the bottom of my heart that despite all of the support from the Japanese people, I am leaving the post with one full year left in my term," he said.

At times during his news conference he choked up and blinked back tears. Apart from inheriting an

economy in the throes of its worst downturn since World War Two, Abe's successor will be left to try and ensure next year's Olympics - already delayed for a year by the COVID-19 pandemic - will go ahead.

Former Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba and former Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida quickly expressed interest in the top job, media reported. Among others whose names have been floated is Abe's close aide, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga.

"The broad picture remains intact. In terms of economic and fiscal policy, the focus remains very much on reflation," said Jesper Koll, senior adviser to asset manager WisdomTree Investments. "Longevity will be a struggle."

The resignation comes just days after Abe surpassed a record for longest consecutive tenure as premier set by his great-uncle Eisaku Sato half a century ago.

Trump formally accepts Republican nomination



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, August 28: US President Donald Trump castigated his Democratic rival Joe Biden as "the destroyer of American greatness" and assured voters that he will end the raging coronavirus pandemic that has ravaged the economy and quell the civil unrest, as he accepted the Republican nomination for a second term in office.

"This election will decide whether we save the American dream" or whether "we allow a socialist agenda to demolish our cherished destiny," Trump, 74, said Thursday amidst cheers from some 1,500 ardent supporters who were mostly maskless.

"My fellow Americans, tonight, with a heart full of gratitude and boundless optimism, I proudly accept this nomination for President of the United States," he said in his 70-minute address from the South Lawn of the White House as hundreds of protesters staged a noisy demonstration outside against his policies.

"I stand before you tonight honoured by your support. Proud of the extraordinary progress we have made together over the last four incredible years and brimming with confidence in the bright future, we will build for America over the next four years," Trump said.

"In a new term as President, we will again build the greatest economy in history - quickly returning to full employment, soaring

US ELECTION 2020

- Trump castigated his Democratic rival Joe Biden as "the destroyer of American greatness" and assured voters that he will end the raging COVID-19 pandemic and quell the civil unrest
- Trump slammed Biden's record as a "shameful roll call of the most catastrophic betrayals" and said his victory will endanger the nation and destroy the American greatness

ing incomes, and record prosperity!" he said.

"We will defeat the virus, end the pandemic, and emerge stronger than ever before," he told the Americans as the country has witnessed over 180,000 deaths and over five million COVID-19 infections, making the US the worst-hit nation.

Party's delegates from across the country at Republican National Convention, which has been drastically scaled down at its original venue of Charlotte in North Carolina, on Monday re-nominated Trump and Vice President Mike Pence as its presidential and vice-presidential candidates respectively.

This is for the first time in recent memory that a presidential candidate has delivered his acceptance speech from the White House.

1ST BLACK WOMAN TO BE NJ SC JUDGE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Trenton (US), August 28: The nomination of the first Black woman to sit on New Jersey's Supreme Court was confirmed Thursday by the state Senate.

Fabiana Pierre-Louis, a 39-year-old attorney in private practice and a former federal prosecutor, was nominated by Democratic Governor Phil Murphy in June to succeed Justice Walter Timpone. He was nominated to the court by former Republican Governor Chris Christie in 2016 and will reach the mandatory retirement age of 70 later this year.

"Ms Pierre-Louis is a New Jersey success story who will bring more diversity to the highest court of the most diverse state in the country," said Senate President Steve Sweeney, also a Democrat. She is Murphy's first pick for the high court.

The daughter of Haitian immigrants, Pierre-Louis was the first person to go to law school in her family. At the event in Trenton in June with Murphy, she seemed to get choked up talking about the role they played in her life.

Hurricane Laura slams Louisiana, kills six

REUTERS

Lake Charles, La., August 28: Hurricane Laura tore through Louisiana Thursday, killing six people and flattening buildings across a wide swath of the state before moving into Arkansas with heavy rains.

Laura's powerful gusts uprooted trees - and four people were crushed to death in separate incidents of trees falling on homes. The state's department of health said late Thursday that there were two more fatalities attributed to the hurricane - a man who drowned while aboard a sinking boat and a man who had carbon monoxide poisoning caused by a generator in his home. In Westlake, a chemical plant caught fire when hit by Laura, and the flames continued to send a chlorine-infused plume s.

SHORT TAKES

19 dead in Karachi rains

Karachi: At least 19 people were killed in various rain-related incidents in Karachi, as the Pakistani city recorded its highest downpour in a day since 1967, officials said. The Met department said Karachi received 223.5 mm of rain in just 12 hours Thursday alone, the highest amount of rain ever recorded in a single day in the city, reports Dawn news. The previous 24-hour record was July 26, 1967, when 211.3 mm was recorded at Masroor base.

China to unveil statue of Dr Kotnis

Beijing: A bronze statue of Indian doctor Dwarkanath Kotnis, who is revered in China for his contributions during the Chinese revolution headed by its founder Mao Zedong and the World War II, would be unveiled outside a medical school in North China next month. Kotnis, who hailed from Sholapur in Maharashtra, came to China in 1938 as part of a five-member team of doctors sent by the Indian National Congress to help the Chinese during World War II. He joined the Communist Party of China in 1942 and died the same year at the age of 32.

13 civilians killed in Afghan blast

Kabul: Thirteen civilians, including six children, were killed in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in Afghanistan's Kandahar province Friday, an official said. "The victims - six children, two women, five men - were admitted at the Spin Boldak district hospital following the explosion," Ahmad Jawid Afghan, director of the hospital, told Xinhua news agency. Local residents said the blast occurred when a mini bus came in contact with the IED in the Loya Kariz locality.

Wild windstorm kills 3 in Melbourne

Melbourne: A wild storm that hit Australia's second-largest city knocked out power to 56,000 homes, contaminated the water supply and felled trees that killed three people, authorities said Friday. A 4-year-old boy was struck by a tree Thursday evening and died later in hospital, police said, as Melbourne was lashed by wind speeds up to 158 kph. A 59-year-old man was killed when a falling tree crushed the car he was driving. And another tree fell on a pickup truck on a highway, killing a 36-year-old woman passenger.

MATTER OF WEIGHT



Zoo keeper Tony Cholerton uses an electronic identification chip reader on a squirrel monkey as it stands on weighing scales at the ZSL London Zoo 2020 weigh-in

WHO eases terms to join COVAX vaccine facility

REUTERS

Geneva, August 28: Wealthier countries that join the World Health Organization's COVID-19 vaccine plan are being offered a new option to pick and choose which shots they get while reserving a right to receive their "full share" of doses, documents seen by Reuters show.

The change appears aimed at convincing governments which have negotiated their own bilateral deals securing experimental vaccines to also sign up for the global COVAX facility by Monday's deadline for submitting expressions of interest.

"They are trying to be more flexible for self-financing countries to make it more interesting... There are some advantages to incentivise

you to pay upfront," said a Western diplomat familiar with the terms.

The United States, Japan, Britain and the European Union have struck their own deals to secure millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses for their citizens, ignoring the WHO's warnings that "vaccine nationalism" will squeeze supplies.

The WHO did not respond to a request for comment. Reuters could not determine if the documents were the final offer. The document with the new terms and conditions was dated August 5.

The offer is the latest sign of concern in the UN agency about its effort to unite the world behind its vaccine as it struggles to get wealthier countries on board beyond pledges of funding and warm words about donating surplus vaccines.



Russia releases footage of 'Tsar Bomba' hydrogen blast

REUTERS

Moscow, August 28: Russia has released previously classified footage of the world's largest nuclear explosion, caused when the Soviet Union detonated the so-called Tsar Bomba almost 60 years ago.

The hydrogen bomb, which carried the force of 50 million tons of conventional explosives, was detonated in a test in October 1961, 4,000 metres over the remote Novaya Zemlya archipelago above the Arctic Circle.

The footage shows an immense fireball and a 60-km high mushroom cloud rising after the explosion lit up the sky. The views were captured from several angles by cameras installed on the ground and on board two Soviet aircraft.

"The testing of an exceptionally powerful hydrogen load ... confirmed that the Soviet Union is in possession of a thermo-nuclear weapon with power of 50 megatons, 100 megatons and more," a narrator tells the audience.



A fireball was seen after the Tsar Bomba was detonated in a test over the remote Novaya Zemlya archipelago in USSR in October 1961

The documentary was published online for the first time by Russian state nuclear agency Rosatom last week as part of events to mark 75th anniversary of Russia's atomic industry. Developed between 1956 and 1961 as the Soviet Union engaged in a nuclear arms race with the United States, the Tsar Bomba - the King of Bombs - was the largest hydro-

gen bomb ever and was claimed to be 3,300 times as destructive as the weapon that levelled Hiroshima.

The 30-minute film, which opens with a "Top secret" title, features all the test stages - from transportation of a 26-ton weapon in an aviation bomb casing by railway, to post-explosion measurements of the radioactive fallout.

As Arctic ice melts, polluting ships stream into polar waters

REUTERS

London, August 28: As melting sea ice opens the Arctic to navigation, more ships are plying the loosely regulated polar waters, bringing increasing amounts of climate-warming pollution, an analysis of new shipping and fuel-consumption data shows.

Traffic through the icy region's busiest lane along the Siberian coast increased 58% between 2016 and 2019. Last year, ships made 2,694 voyages on the Northern Sea Route, according to data collected by researchers from the Centre for High North Logistics at Norway's Nord University.

The trade is driven by commodities producers - mainly in Russia, China and Canada - sending iron ore, oil, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other fuels through Arctic waters. Even the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly

slowed shipping worldwide as supply chains have been disrupted, has not prevented traffic increasing on the Arctic artery. Ships made 935 voyages in the first half of 2020, up to the end of June, compared with 855 in the same period last year, the data shows.

The increase in shipping is a worry for the environment. As those heavy ships burn fuel, they release climate-warming carbon dioxide as well as black soot. That soot blankets nearby ice and snow, absorbing solar radiation rather than reflecting it back out of the atmosphere, which exacerbates warming in the region.

The Arctic has already warmed at least twice as fast as the rest of the world over the last three decades. With the region's warming rate increasing in recent years, governments are gearing up for a future of open Arctic waters.



Chunks of ice float inside of melt water pools on top of the Helheim glacier near Tasiliqaq, Greenland, June 19, 2018

"The driving concern is the reduction of Arctic sea ice and the potential for more shipping," said

Sian Prior, lead adviser with the Clean Arctic Alliance. "We are already seeing that happen."

LNG tankers make up the largest proportion of traffic on the Northern Sea Route. They alone burned 239,000 tonnes of fuel in 2019, versus only 6,000 tonnes in 2017, according to previously unpublished data collected by the non-profit International Council on Clean Transportation and shared with Reuters.

EARLIEST THAW ON RECORD

The Northern Sea Route, which traces the coasts of Siberia and Norway, is the region's busiest artery. It allows cargo ships to save at least 10 days sailing between Europe and Asia, shipping specialists estimate. The route is about 6,000 nautical miles shorter than sailing via Africa, and 2,700 nautical miles shorter than sailing through the Suez Canal.

That shortcut drew ships to make the 2,694 voyages in 2019, up from 2,022 in 2018, 1,908 in 2017 and 1,705

in 2016, according to Nord University's Centre for High North Logistics. Those trips are made each year by just 200-300 ships.

This year, unusually warm weather over northern Russia caused an early retreat of sea ice from Siberia. That heatwave, which scientists have linked to climate change, had opened up the Northern Sea Route by the second half of July, marking the earliest complete thaw of that area yet recorded, scientists at the University of Colorado Boulder's National Snow and Ice Data Center say. As summertime heat shrinks the sea ice further, traffic is expected to become even heavier. Last year, September was the region's busiest month in terms of the number of ships navigating the route, with 34 vessels passing though compared with 29 in August, according to data from shipping intelligence platform MarineTraffic.

business



The Govt had already embarked upon significant monetary and fiscal stimuli from March 2020. Now with the right policies, regulation, collaboration and investment, we can clear the obstacles to economic advancement

SUDHIR KAPADIA | NATIONAL TAX LEADER, EY

KHARA RECOMMENDED AS NEXT SBI CHAIRMAN

The Banks Board Bureau has recommended Dinesh Kumar Khara as the next Chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI). It has also recommended Challa Sreenivasulu Setty as the candidate on the reserve list for the post. Both Khara and Setty are MDs of SBI



of the day quote

Cybersecurity is a key focus for HCL, as it plays a vital role in enabling organisations to transform in a rapidly evolving world where new-age applications, cloud and IoT are defining the future digital enterprise

MANINDER SINGH | CORPORATE VP, CYBERSECURITY SERVICES, HCL TECHNOLOGIES

An important risk to that outlook (double-dip recession) is thinking about what happens as we come into the fall, whether we see any resurgence in the virus that would cause an additional pullback in the economy

ESTHER GEORGE | PRESIDENT, FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF KANSAS CITY

While the bulk of e-commerce volumes come from top-30 cities, over 60% of e-commerce volumes are likely to come from tier-II and tier-III cities in the next 5 years. It is an imperative for e-commerce businesses to build their seller base and delivery reach in smaller towns

MANISH SAIGAL | INDIA MD, A&M

SHORT TAKES

YONO Krishi, govt portal linked

New Delhi: The country's largest lender SBI Friday said it has integrated YONO Krishi platform with government's first online horticulture seed portal to facilitate delivery of high quality seeds at farmers' doorsteps. YONO Krishi integrates with ICAR IIHR seed portal to reach out to 2.7 crore customers registered on YONO, SBI said in a release.

Arun becomes SICCI President

Chennai: Valingro Group Chairman Arun has been elected as the president of the Southern India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SICCI), one of the oldest trade bodies in the city. He was elected unanimously at the 110th Annual General Meeting of the chamber held here recently, a press release said. Arun is also the Honorary consul of the Czech Republic in Chennai.

SBI gets global recognition

New Delhi: State Bank of India (SBI) Friday said it has got global recognition for its HR initiative 'Nayi Disha' which over the course of 1.5 years has touched more than 2.40 lakh employees. The bank has won three Academy Awards of Learning & Development, SBI claimed in a statement. Through Nayi Disha, SBI appreciated the workforce for its commitment towards customer service excellence while serving with the same rigour in even the remotest corners of the country, SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar said.

Wonderchef expects ₹400 cr rev

Mumbai: Wonderchef, kitchenware brand co-founded by renowned chefs Sanjeev Kapoor and Ravi Saxena, is looking at adding ₹100 crore to the revenues this fiscal over the ₹300 crore it clocked last fiscal, a senior company official said. Started off in 2009 as a direct selling company by entrepreneurial women who now number over 75,000, the firm nets 40% of its volume from modern and general trade sales now, and online accounts for an equal share, co-founder and MD of Wonderchef Home Appliance, Ravi Saxena said.

Chinese buyers snap up Indian steel amid row

REUTERS

New Delhi/Beijing, August 28: India's steel exports more than doubled between April and July to hit their highest level in at least six years, boosted by a surge of Chinese buying in defiance of tensions between Beijing and New Delhi.

Traders said reduced prices had driven the purchases as Indian sellers sought to get rid of a surplus generated by the impact of COVID-19 on domestic demand and generate much-needed income.

It was unclear whether the sales broke any trade rules, but the China Iron and Steel Association said in a statement it was monitoring them.

Leading Indian steel companies Tata Steel Ltd and JSW Steel Ltd were among Indian companies that sold a total of 4.64 million tonnes of finished and semi-finished steel products on the world market between April and July.

That compared with 1.93 million tonnes shipped in the same period a year earlier, government data analysed by Reuters showed.

Of the 4.64 million tonnes, Vietnam and China bought 1.37 and 1.3 million tonnes of steel respectively. The Chinese purchases are by far the largest since data was first collated in the current form beginning with the fiscal year April 2015-March 2016.

Neither Tata, JSW nor India's ministries of steel and commerce



DEFYING TRADE TENSIONS

TRADERS SAID REDUCED PRICES HAD DRIVEN THE PURCHASES AS INDIAN SELLERS SOUGHT TO GET RID OF A SURPLUS GENERATED BY THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DOMESTIC DEMAND

During the first four months of the 2020-21 fiscal year, China and Vietnam together bought close to 80% of India's total hot-rolled coils exports

responded to emails seeking comment.

Vietnam has been a regular buyer of Indian steel, but China's emergence as a leading buyer, replacing New Delhi's traditional markets, such as Italy and Belgium, is more surprising.

An already uneasy relationship between New Delhi and Beijing, became severely strained after violent border clashes in June, when 20 Indian soldiers were killed at the disputed Himalayan border.

New Delhi afterwards tightened rules to restrict Chinese investment in India and initiated measures to curb its trade with Beijing.

RHETORIC VERSUS MARKET REALITY

The politics is at odds with market realities. Although China, the world's leading steelmaker produces vast quantities, it needs imports as it ramps up infrastructure

'India ranks 72nd globally on average wage per month'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: India has been placed a lowly 72nd among 106 countries in terms of the average wage per month, while Switzerland topped the chart, according to a global ranking of average wages prepared by Picodi.com.

With an average monthly wage of ₹32,800 (\$437), India has been ranked a lowly 72nd among 106 countries surveyed by Picodi.com, an international e-commerce platform which provides discount coupons.



Switzerland, where the average wage converted into rupees amounts to ₹4,49,000 (\$5,989), topped the ranking, while in Cuba the average wage is the lowest at ₹2,700 (\$36), it said.

Switzerland was followed by Luxembourg and the United States, whose citizens on an average earn ₹3,00,900 (\$4,014) and ₹2,64,900 (\$3,534), respectively.

Others in the top ten list include Denmark (\$3,515), Singapore (\$3,414), Australia (\$3,333), Qatar (\$3,232), Norway (\$3,174), Hong Kong (\$3,024) and Iceland (\$2,844).

India outranked countries like Kazakhstan (₹32,700), Brazil (₹26,000), and Egypt (₹16,400).

Walmart joins Microsoft in bid to buy TikTok

AGENCIES

Washington, August 28: Walmart is the latest company to want a piece of TikTok, the popular Chinese-owned video app that has come under fire from the Trump administration.

The world's largest retailer made a joint bid with tech giant Microsoft to buy TikTok's US business, according to a person close to the deal who isn't authorised to discuss the terms publicly.

It may seem like an unlikely combination, but Microsoft and Walmart are already business partners. Microsoft provides cloud computing services that help run the retailer's stores and online shopping. The two companies signed a 5-year partnership in 2018, enabling them to join forces against a shared rival: online shopping giant Amazon.

Walmart said in a statement Thursday that a deal with Microsoft and TikTok could help it expand its advertising business and reach more shoppers.

TikTok, through its fun, goofy videos, has gained 100 million US users. But the White House is pushing TikTok's Chinese owner ByteDance to sell its US business if it wants to keep operating in the country, citing security risks.

Microsoft has confirmed discussions with TikTok; other tech companies such as Oracle are also reportedly interested in a possible acquisition. While ByteDance hasn't disclosed its asking price for TikTok, the Wall Street Journal



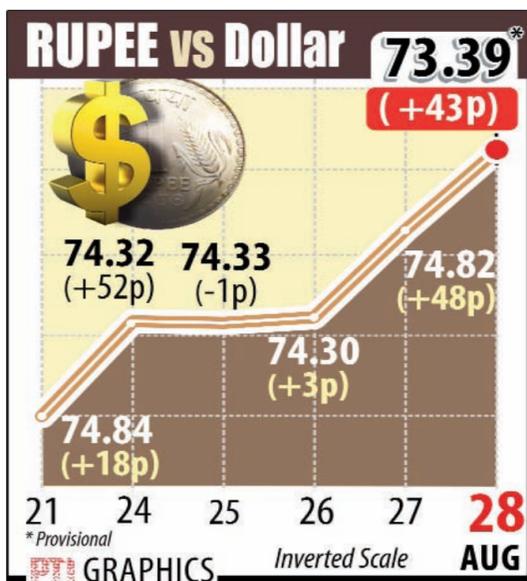
According to Walmart, a deal with Microsoft and TikTok could help it expand its advertising business and reach more shoppers

reported on Thursday that it is seeking roughly USD 30 billion for TikTok's US operations.

The Journal reported that bidders so far haven't been willing to meet that price. TikTok didn't immediately reply to an emailed request for comment.

Over the past year, TikTok has tried to put distance between its app and its Chinese ownership. It installed former top Disney executive Kevin Mayer as its American CEO, but he resigned Thursday after just a few months on the job.

In a letter to employees, Mayer said that his decision to leave comes after the "political environment has sharply changed." ByteDance launched TikTok in 2017, then bought Musical.ly, a video service popular with teens in the US and Europe, and combined the two. A twin service, Douyin, is available for Chinese users.



Task Force grants ₹1.23 cr to 15 startups, incubators

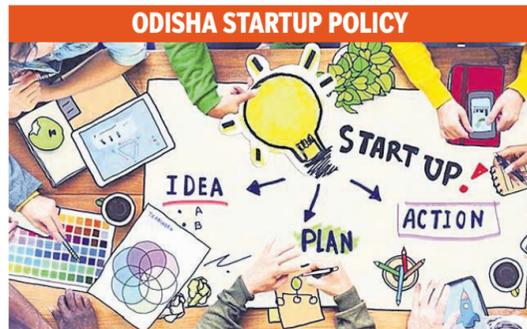
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: Startup Odisha Task Force approved grants of ₹1.23 crore to 15 startups and one incubator under Odisha Startup Policy. The announcement was made during 16th meeting on virtual platform under the Chairmanship of MSME Principal Secretary Satyabrata Sahu.

The Task Force went through proposals of startups and incubators for recognition and financial assistance under Odisha Startup Policy.

The Task Force members were highly appreciative of technology innovations developed by state-based startups especially a unique blood clotting powder developed by Miraqules Med solutions that claims to clot the blood of an injured person within 40 seconds.

The startups have been inter-



nationally awarded and are aiming approval of USFDA by end of this year before launching the product in market.

Among others were technology solutions for posture correction of people working on computers for long hours, solar powered sanitary

Burla, CIPET-Bhubaneswar, AIC-Nalanda & AIC-CV Raman both from Bhubaneswar. With addition of the new incubators, the state now has 17 incubators registered under the Startup Odisha initiative, working to strengthen the startup ecosystem.

The state government under the MSME's Startup Odisha initiative has so far registered 684 startups and 17 incubators in the state. For its startup-friendly ecosystem and robust policy framework, Odisha was awarded 'Top Performer' by the Government of India in the first-ever States' Startup Rankings in 2018.

The meeting was attended by Secretary SD&IT Sanjay Kumar Singh, Director Industries Reghu G, CEO, Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC), STPI Director and TIE President, Bhubaneswar (zone) among others.

ODISHA AMONG TOP FIVE EXPORT-FRIENDLY STATES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 28: In the first-ever Export Preparedness Index (EPI) prepared by NITI Aayog for Indian states, Odisha secured the 5th position among 36 states and Union Territories owing to its strong export ecosystem: trade support and export infrastructure.

The Index, which has been prepared to examine export ecosystem of Indian states and study export preparedness, places Odisha at 5th position with an EPI score of 58.23 and has categorised it as an over-performing state with the scope



EXPORT PREPAREDNESS INDEX

of improvement in certain areas like transport connectivity and export finance. Gujarat topped the EPI score followed by Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan. These four states were ranked above

Odisha by the NITI Aayog. Chief Secretary Asit Tripathi said, "The report released by NITI Aayog on export preparedness of Odisha is encouraging. We aim to be among top three in all key pa-

'HOPES OF REVIVAL DASHED FOR RECESSION-HIT INDIA'

New Delhi has already set aside \$266 bn of economic rescue spending and the RBI has slashed interest rates by 115 bps since March

REUTERS

Bangalore, August 28: India's deepest recession on record will linger through the rest of this year and begin to lift only in early 2021 as a rapid surge in the coronavirus spread squelches a nascent rebound in consumption and business activity, a Reuters poll showed.

New Delhi has already set aside \$266 billion of economic rescue spending and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has slashed interest rates by 115 basis points since March, suggesting more is required to shield the economy from the pandemic-induced disruptions to businesses and livelihoods.

The coronavirus is spreading faster in India than anywhere else

in the world, with more than 3.3 million people already infected and related deaths at over 60,000. COVID-19 has kept tens of millions of people shut indoors and made many millions jobless in the world's second most populous country.

"Although this might be the low point in the ongoing crisis, the rapid increase in infections this quarter provides no hope of a near-term recovery," said Prakash Sakpal, senior Asia economist at ING.

"The macro policy has hit a snag amid stretched public finances and rising inflation. This means pretty much nothing can save the economy from continued deep declines for the rest of the year."

With business activity completely stalled for the most part in the pre-



vious quarter owing to a nationwide lockdown to contain the virus' spread, the Indian economy likely shrank 18.3% during that period, according to the August 18-27 poll of

official reporting for quarterly data began in the mid-1990s.

The economy is forecast to contract 8.1% in the current quarter and 1.0% in the next - a downgrade from 6.0% and 0.3% contraction, respectively, predicted in a July 29 poll, dashing hopes of a recovery this year. Asia's third-largest economy is expected to grow again in the first three months of 2021, by 3.0%.

But that will still leave it down 6.0% for the fiscal year that ends in March, which would be the worst 12-month performance on record, blowing out -5.2% for calendar year 1979, during the second Iran oil crisis. That latest forecast was revised down from a median forecast of -5.1% last month.

Under a worst-case scenario, the

contraction for each of those periods was expected to be much deeper than predictions from last month as well as the latest base-case consensus.

While there have been some signs of recovery, with an increase in agricultural produce on good monsoon rains and targeted government spending, a majority of other businesses continue to show weak performance. The RBI unexpectedly paused last month on rising inflation concerns.

While the consensus showed the central bank was expected to ease once more next quarter by 25 basis points, taking its repo rate to 3.75%, a significant minority of economists, or 20 of 51, predicted the RBI to stay on the sidelines this year.

MEXIT A DISASTER FOR LA LIGA

Spanish league forced to deal with another star departing as Messi's departure may create a loophole for the league which would very much be unlikely to fill in

HOMETOWN DREAMS OF ICON'S RETURN



Neymar (L) joined PSG from Barcelona in 2017 and the following year Cristiano Ronaldo moved to Juventus from Real Madrid



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, August 28: A couple of days ago after Lionel Messi made his intentions clear to leave Barcelona, one of the Spain's leading dailies - 'MARCA' - has coined the whole saga 'Mexit'.

First it was Neymar, then Cristiano Ronaldo, and now, very likely, it will be Messi. The Spanish league is about to see another top player leave one of its clubs, all within a four-year span.

Messi's departure would be another unwanted setback for the league, though it hopes to withstand the hit just like it did after Neymar and Ronaldo moved on.

The league wasn't hugely affected financially after Neymar left Barcelona or Ronaldo left Real Madrid. It continued to grow and still got good money from television rights deals.

But losing Messi could be a bigger problem, because for the first time in years the league wouldn't have one of the two players who combined for 11 world player of the year awards recently.

It would still have Luka Modric at Real Madrid, who ended a run by Ronaldo and Messi in 2018, but the Croatian is not nearly as popular.

The league still benefited from Messi's presence after Ronaldo left, but now it wouldn't have that same star power anymore.

Despite concerns when Ronaldo joined Juventus in 2018, the league was

quick to boast the fact that his departure had little effect on its finances. It didn't see any reduction in income from television rights nor had any petitions for discounts from broadcasters. The league actually continued to see a steady rise in audiences.

League president Javier Tebas wasn't so secure regarding Messi's departure, though. "Although they weren't happy in Madrid when Ronaldo left, his departure had almost no effect because for years we have been working to make sure that the brand 'La Liga' transcends its players," Tebas told Catalan radio stadium RAC1 in June.

"But it's different in Messi's case. Messi is the best player in the history of football. We have been lucky to have always had him in our league. I think that Messi's departure would be noticeable," Tebas said.

"He is an icon of Spanish football, of La Liga, and I would ask him to 'please end his career in our league', where we have given him so much affection."

Tebas said Messi adds an important value to the league but his absence wouldn't be 'a catastrophe'. "We have television contracts signed with or without Messi," he said.

Tebas has always worked to try to make the league more attractive to top players. He has been lobbying for the Spanish government to change some of its current tax rules that may have been scaring some players away. Local

tax authorities have been going after soccer stars in recent years, accusing several of them of fraud over how they have interpreted the local laws, especially regarding image rights.

Ronaldo and Messi have been among the many players targeted, with Messi actually being convicted in 2017. Tax rules in Italy and France are considered less strict on players than in Spain.

Tebas also supports the return of the 'Beckham Law', which used to give tax breaks to foreign players in Spain but was altered some years ago to keep them from benefiting.

Since Neymar left Barcelona for PSG in 2017, Spain gained few top-notch players. Last year, Antoine Griezmann switched from Atletico Madrid to Barcelona. Eden Hazard signed with Real Madrid and Portugal youngster Joao Felix was added by Atletico Madrid.

Real Madrid still has Toni Kroos, Vinicius Junior, Gareth Bale, Karim Benzema and Sergio Ramos, while Barcelona has Gerard Pique and Sergio Busquets, but could also be losing Luis Suarez.

None of them come close to Ronaldo or Messi, though. And if the Argentina forward does leave, only time will tell if the Spanish league can indeed say that it has become bigger than any club or player.

CITY TO OFFER 100MN EURO PLUS 3 1ST-TEAM PLAYERS FOR TALISMAN

BARCELONA: Manchester City are preparing to offer Barcelona three first-team players alongside a 100 million euro fee to sign Lionel Messi, report 'Diario Sport'. It is claimed that such is the English side intention to land the Argentine, they are willing to offer striker Gabriel Jesus, Portugal international Bernardo Silva and central defender Eric Garcia - who came through Barca's La Masia youth academy - to the Catalan club. It follows directly from a report in 'MARCA' that Man City's offer to Messi was a three-year contract with informal negotiations already opened between the parties. City are said to be optimistic about completing a deal for Messi this summer.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Buenos Aires, August 28: A mural of a young Lionel Messi in a Newell's Old Boys jersey, tiny and barefoot with a football ball in front of him, inspires hundreds of young people at the Argentine club's youth school to dream of succeeding like their hometown hero.

Messi's surprise decision to leave European club Barcelona earlier this week has sparked unlikely dreams in residents of Rosario, the city 300 kilometers (186 miles) north of Buenos Aires where he was born, that he would return to play with the local team, Newell's Old Boys.

Hundreds of Newell's fans formed a noisy and colorful caravan of vehicles Thursday that went from Rosario's 'Marcelo Bielsa' stadium to its Flag Monument, the symbol of this city on the banks of the Parana River. Many participants donned red-and-black Newell's jerseys and waved club flags, honking horns and setting off flares.

"All of Argentina wants to see you smile," read a poster on the window of one car. Newell's fans know they don't have

the millions to offer the 33-year-old superstar that the owners of European clubs Manchester City, PSG or Inter Milan do. Those clubs are seen as Messi's most likely destinations.

Their strategy is to touch the heart of one of world soccer's top stars and help him settle a pending issue in his career: playing professional football in Argentina, something he hasn't done because he went to Europe at the young age of 13.

"Our competition with the other clubs is not economic or sporting, what we offer Messi is a chance to reconnect with the amateur roots of his training and let him do it in his home city," said fan Roberto Mensi, speaking to this agency at the Malvinas complex, Newell's youth football school.

The now famous footage of a tiny Messi eluding much-bigger opponents in 7-on-7 matches in Argentina's so-called 'baby football' category was filmed on grounds here surrounded by red-and-black painted walls. The Argentine team didn't want to pay for growth hormone treatment for Messi so his father took Messi to Barcelona as a young teen.

Although he has spent more than half his life in Catalonia, Messi returns every year to Rosario for Christmas and in the past he has publicly said he would like to play for Newell's.

This has led residents to ask: Why not now? "The news (of Messi's decision to leave Barcelona) generated illusions in us," Mensi acknowledged.

"We know this may not be the moment for this to happen, but we want to show that the door is open for Leo to come back whenever he wants. People have a lot of affection for him."

ARGENTINE TO CONFIRM HIS DEPARTURE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

BARCELONA: Lionel Messi has no doubts about his decision to leave Barcelona and will confirm the news on his social media accounts over the coming days. It confirms the multiple reports across Spanish and Argentinean media which claimed that Messi is leaving Barcelona and will attempt to activate a clause in his deal which allows him to break his contract. That is according to journalist Miguel Blazquez, who claims that the news that Messi is leaving Barcelona this summer will be made official with the announcement. There had still been hope among fans of the Blaugrana that their Argentine superstar may yet have a change of heart and ultimately decide to remain at the Camp Nou. Indeed, it follows on from suggestions that Barcelona president Josep Maria Bartomeu will resign from his position immediately if Messi confirms that he is the reason for his demands to leave.

Hockey stars to engage fans in skill challenge

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, August 28: The Indian men's and women's hockey teams will engage with fans through skill challenges to celebrate the National Sports Day Saturday which marks the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand.

Hockey India said that it will be posting videos of various players challenging the fans to perform hockey skills on its social media pages. Midfielder Rajkumar Pal said that he is looking forward to motivating

NAT'L SPORTS DAY



fans to showcase what they can do with a hockey stick.

"The National Sports Day is a very important day for us and we are extremely excited to be celebrating the day with hockey fans. Sport is an integral part of anyone's life and everyone should play any sport as a profession or as a hobby," said Rajkumar.

"We learn the importance of determination, dedication, discipline and teamwork through sports and it'll surely help anyone lead an active and healthy life. I am looking forward to throwing a skills challenge to the fans and hopefully,

they'll have a lot of fun carrying out the challenge."

Forward Navjot Kaur said that it is good to give back to the fans who have supported the teams during their matches.

"It's going to be very interesting to take part in the skills challenge. I am really looking forward to sharing an interesting skill to engage with our fans to celebrate National Sports Day," she said.

"We have received a lot of support from our fans whenever we play any match and therefore it'll be really nice to engage with them through the skill challenge."

NAT'L SPORTS AWARDS

Athletes praise govt's idea of virtual ceremony

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: Receiving an award directly from the President of India is more satisfying but a few athletes are still cheerful that at least the government is conducting the National Sports Awards virtually to honour their achievements amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

For the first time, the selected athletes, coaches and representatives of the sports development organisations will receive their awards in a virtual ceremony on the National Sports Day.

A total of 65 awardees are expected to attend the ceremony Saturday. The awards will be conferred by President Ram Nath Kovind virtually and the awardees will attend the ceremony from various SAI centres across the country.

Paddler Manika Batra, one of the five Khel Ratna awardees this year, said, "We have to accept the fact that the pandemic has brought life to a standstill but I am no less excited about this ceremony."

Para-athlete Sandeep Chaudhary, one of the Arjuna awardees said, "I am very happy that the awards ceremony is taking place during the National Sports Day in spite of the Covid situation. The Sports Authority of India has taken a very positive decision to host the ceremony virtually despite all odds."

Kuldeep Handoo, National Wushu team coach and a recipient of the Dronacharya award, praised the organisers in a ministry release.

CSK hit by COVID-19; delay in camp likely

Quarantine period extended after India pacer, multiple staff members test positive



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: A current India cricketer is among multiple members of the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) contingent who have tested positive for COVID-19, forcing the IPL franchise to extend its quarantine period in Dubai and causing upheaval ahead of the event starting September 19.

The development has forced the MS Dhoni-led side to extend the quarantine period till September 1. While there is panic in the BCCI's rank and file after this but it is understood that for the time being, there is no imminent threat to the league, shifted out of India this year due to the pandemic.

The source revealed that all COVID-19 positive results came during day one, three and six of testing after the contingent's arrival in Dubai.

"As far as we know one of the senior-most officials of the CSK management, an official's wife, and at least two members of their social media team are also COVID-19 positive," he said.

According to the BCCI's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), all those who test positive are mandated to go through an additional seven-day quarantine.

They can enter the bio-secure bubble only after returning negative in tests to be conducted after the extended isolation. It is understood that all the members of the jumbo contingent, who tested positive, are 'largely asymptomatic'.

The biggest challenge will be tracing those who came in contact with these contingent members as it is understood that most of them contracted the virus in Chennai, where the team had a short training camp before heading to Dubai. "If you see, they all had tested negative for COVID during the two RT-PCR tests conducted in Chennai ahead of their departure. Had they been positive, they wouldn't have been able to board the flight in the first place," the league source stated.

It is understood those who have tested negative will be allowed to enter the bio-bubble. However, the IPL source believes that the likelihood of the team's camp starting September 1 is slim.

It remains to be seen what protocols will be followed for all those players who will be arriving late after the conclusion of the Caribbean Premier League and the England vs Australia limited-over series.

Vinesh tests COVID-19 +ve

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 28: India's top woman wrestler Vinesh Phogat Friday said she has tested positive for COVID-19. Selected for this year's Khel Ratna award, the Asian and Commonwealth Games gold-medallist, had been training at her village in Sonapat with coach Om Prakash.

"Yes, I have tested positive for COVID-19 when my sample was taken in Sonapat before the dress rehearsal for the awards ceremony," Vinesh told this agency. "I will recover soon, God willing. I am in isolation at home," she added.

The 26-year-old will skip Saturday's virtual ceremony for the National Sports Awards distribution. She is one among five athletes chosen for the country's highest sporting honour this year.

USE OF SWEAT FOR ENGLAND TOUR CA imposes further restriction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Southampton, August 28: Cricket Australia (CA) has restricted its players from using sweat from the head, face and neck to shine the ball during the upcoming limited overs tour of England in a bid to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

The ICC has banned the use of saliva on the ball as an interim health safety measure in the wake of the pandemic. However, a player is still permitted to use sweat from anywhere on the body and rub it on the ball.

But CA is taking a cautious approach to reduce any risk of transmission of the virus. Based on medical advice the board has asked its players not to use sweat from near the mouth or nose, according to 'Cricket.com.au'.

This leaves players with option of using sweat from either their stomach or back, during the white-



ball series against England, starting September 4 in Southampton.

The team's premier pacer Mitchell Starc feels the regulation will not have much effect in the limited overs formats.

"It's probably not something that's too relevant in white-ball cricket. Once that new ball starts to go, you're trying to keep it dry anyway. It's more of a question for red-

ball cricket," Starc said. "No doubt we'll find out what it's like in these practice games and if we need to revisit some planning around it, I'm sure we'll have a chat before the series gets underway," he added.

England players were seen using sweat from their backs or forehead during the series against West Indies and Pakistan.