



FIT MANUSHI

Manushi Chhillar says fitness is a personal experience because each individual has his/her own fitness goal

LEISURE P2



OWAISI'S ANTI-BJP FRONT

Hyd MP Asaduddin Owaisi-headed AIMIM ties up with former Union minister Devendra Yadav for Bihar polls

TWO STATES P7



CHINA PROTESTS US BAN

China warns US of countermeasures to protect interest of Chinese companies as Trump bans TikTok, WeChat

INTERNATIONAL P10

9 Al Qaeda 'operatives' held from Kerala & WB

Of the nine, three are from Kerala and six from West Bengal

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 19: Al Qaeda terrorists, who were nabbed early Saturday by NIA teams from Kerala and West Bengal, had plans to travel to Jammu and Kashmir for weapons delivery. They were to deliver with home-made explosives for their other associates even as they continued to take orders from their Pakistan-based handlers, NIA officials said Saturday.

The revelations came as the NIA busted the inter-state terror module after it carried out searches at multiple locations in Murshidabad and Ernakulam. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested nine Al Qaeda terrorists - three from Kerala and six from West Bengal.

The Qaeda men have been identified as Murshid Hassan, Yakoub Bishwas and Morshraf Hussien, all three residents of Ernakulam.



The seized items along with the suspects

They were picked up from Kochi. While Najmus Sakib, Abu Sufiyan, Mainul Mondal, Leu Yean Ahmed, Al Mamun Kamal and Atitur Rehman, were all residents of Murshidabad. These men were from diverse walks of life from second year graduate student to farmer, tailor, cook, electrician, computer science graduate.

Those arrested from Kerala were also originally from West Bengal. A man, who was staying in the same building as Hassan, said the men came to stay on rent during the pandemic-induced lockdown. P9

FARM BILLS IN RS TODAY

THE BJP HAS A SLIM LEAD OVER OPPOSITION IN NUMBERS GAME WITH OLD ALLIES LIKE AKALI DAL TURNING AGAINST IT

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 19: The Rajya Sabha is looking all set for a potentially explosive Sunday showdown over the Farm bills. With the ruling BJP and the Opposition trying to engineer enough support to either pass or defeat the three pieces of legislation, the Saffron may find itself in a fix.

All the three sailed through the Lok Sabha earlier this week but could face a stronger challenge in the Upper House, where the BJP does not have a majority on its own and will need help from allies - within and outside the NDA. There have been widespread protests over the 'anti-farmer' bills, particularly in Punjab and Haryana, despite PM Modi's assurances that farmers can still avail a Minimum Sale Price (MSP).

Now, let's break down the numbers and try to understand the odds. The current strength of the Upper

House is 243 with a majority mark of 122. In what is already a very tight race, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is expected to have around 105 votes, while the Opposition should have around 100.

Ten MPs have tested positive for Covid-19 and have been isolated at home. A further 15 MPs, including the Congress' P Chidambaram, who Saturday morning hit out at PM Modi over the farm bills, have expressed their inability to attend. Both these developments should help the Saffron party since it brings down the majority mark.

The BJP, on its own, has 86 members, and, with its NDA allies, it can count on 105 votes. It cannot, however, count on three Akali MPs, who have been given a three-line whip to vote against all the Farm bills. Despite this, the BJP remains confident of mustering the required numbers to see all three bills pass.



THE BJP ISSUES A THREE-LINE WHIP TO ALL ITS RAJYA SABHA MEMBERS TO BE PRESENT SUNDAY WHEN THE BILLS ARE INTRODUCED

THE OPPOSITION WILL NEED THE LIKES OF THE YSR CONGRESS, THE BJD AND THE TRS ON BOARD TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF A WIN

The Akali Dal, one of the BJP's oldest allies, pulled its sole representative - Harsimrat Kaur Badal - from the Union Cabinet Friday in protest against the bills. Things have come to such a pass that SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal said the Akalis would review ties with the NDA.

The BJP, which has issued a three-line whip of its own, is confident because it has, in the past, been able to call on 'friendly' regional parties - like BJD, YSR Congress and Telangana's TRS - to vote in its favour when needed. Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSR Congress has six seats and K Chandrasekhar Rao's TRS has seven. Naaveen Patnaik's BJD has nine seats.

BJD TIGHTLIPPED

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD), which has 10 members in the RS, has remained tightlipped on the issue. A senior BJD MP said the party has instructed all its members to remain present in the Upper House Sunday. "We will present our stand in the House which will be in the larger interest of the country and the state," said BJD RS member Sasmit Patra. However, the regional party may not oppose the Bill as the state government has already brought two ordinances in this regard. The ordinances are - Odisha Agricultural Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020 and Odisha Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020. The ordinances will be presented in the Assembly in the upcoming session.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Hope it won't inspire MPs say TATA to business!

SHORT TAKES

Diesel cheaper by 22paise in Capital



Diesel- ₹78.19 (- 22p)
Petrol- ₹81.74 (no change)

Bhubaneswar: For the second day in a row, diesel prices dropped by 22paise in the Capital city, Saturday, while petrol price remained the same. With the price drop, diesel costs ₹78.19 per litre and while petrol stands at ₹81.74 per litre. In the last three days, diesel has seen a reduction of around 81 paise. In July, petrol demand was down by 34 per cent in Bhubaneswar and it is lower by 13.66 per cent in August, showing some positive response in fuel sales.

No plan yet on jumbo corridor

Bhubaneswar: Taking up a petition regarding 14 proposed elephant corridors in the state, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has said that it is yet to receive an action plan from the Odisha government despite its earlier order. The tribunal during its June 23 hearing had asked the state government to submit an action plan within two months. On the recent hearing of the case, the NGT in its written order claimed that despite its order, Odisha government has not submitted the same. P3

From no data on migrant labourers' death to 97 'died' on Shramik trains



Out of these deaths, police sent the bodies for post-mortem in 87 cases. In all, 51 post-mortem reports have been obtained from the respective state police so far, in which the reasons for deaths have been shown as cardiac arrest, heart disease, brain haemorrhage, pre-existing chronic disease, chronic lung disease and chronic liver disease among others

PIYUSH GOYAL | RAILWAY MINISTER

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 19: Days after the government informed Parliament that it has no data on the death of migrant labourers, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal told the Rajya Sabha that 97 persons died while travelling on Shramik Special trains between May 1 and September 9.

The Minister said that the national transporter had not collected any fare from the migrants. "Shramik Specials were booked by the state governments or their representatives on payment of fare. Revenue of ₹433 crore was collected from them for running the Shramik Special trains till August 31. As many as 63.19 lakh shramiks/stranded passengers travelled in these trains," Goyal said Saturday.

He was responding to a question by Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien in the Rajya Sabha Friday regarding details



of total deaths on board the Shramik trains since they started operating.

Goyal said: "Based on the data provided by state police, 97 persons have been reported dead till September 9 while travelling on Shramik Special trains during the Covid-19 crisis." He said that police register FIRs under Section 174 of the CrPC in cases of unnatural deaths and follows the legal process.

NO RECORD OF MSMEs SHUT DOWN AMID THE PANDEMIC

The Centre Saturday said that it has no record of MSMEs that have faced closure in the wake of the pandemic.

Interestingly, in a written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Pratap Chandra Sarangi also said that there is no data on the number of MSMEs closed down from FY 2014-15 to FY 2019-20.

MONSOON SESSION MAY BE CUT SHORT

Meanwhile, the Parliament session that began this week is likely to be cut short after 30 lawmakers were found infected with the coronavirus, two senior parliament officials said. The Parliament met for the first time in six months September 14 and was to function until October 1, but the two officials said its duration could be reduced by a week.

Sarpanch, who had bulldozed PMAY-G houses, suspended

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Sept 19: The Panchayati Raj department placed Hemakanti Munda, the lady sarpanch of Salveta panchayat in Bolangir, under suspension Saturday, based on a report submitted by the district administration with regard to razing houses constructed under PMAY-G.

According to reports, Hemakanti Munda, her husband and few others razed several houses which were being constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) programme.

Worthy to note, five tribal families were sanctioned houses under PMAY-G. As they did not have their own land, the construction of houses was started on vacant government land at Salveta village, after it was allotted to them by local block administration.

About the issue, she said that she demolished the houses by exercising the district Collector's powers. She has been empowered by the state government for Covid-19 outbreak exigencies, official sources said. Explaining herself, Munda had said, "I along with my husband and some members of the village committee, demolished the houses as I have been granted the power of a district Collector."

Subsequently, Bolangir district administration swung into action. The families who were rendered homeless also lodged a complaint at Loisingha police station, following which the bulldozers used were seized and an investigation was initiated in this regard.



Finally, IPL gets underway

Piyush Chawla (C) is congratulated by his Chennai Super Kings teammates after getting rid of Mumbai Indians' skipper Rohit Sharma (not in pic) during the tournament opener at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi, Saturday

How Ginsburg's death may reshape US Prez polls

THE SENIOR LIBERAL JUSTICE'S DEATH GIVES TRUMP, WHO IS SEEKING RE-ELECTION NOVEMBER 3, A CHANCE TO EXPAND THE COURT'S CONSERVATIVE MAJORITY TO 6-3 AT A TIME OF A GAPING POLITICAL DIVIDE IN AMERICA

AGENCIES

Washington, Sept 19: A fierce political battle was shaping up Saturday over the selection of a successor to trailblazing liberal US Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, with top Democrats opposing any move by President Donald Trump to nominate her replacement before the November 3 presidential election.

Ginsburg, the senior liberal justice, died Friday night at age 87 of complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer after 27 years on the court. Her death gives Trump, who is seeking re-election November 3,



a chance to expand the court's conservative majority to 6-3 at a time of a gaping political divide in America.

Even as large crowds of mourners gathered outside the Supreme Court building well into the night to pay tribute to the iconic liberal jurist, battle lines were forming.



Supreme Court appointments require Senate confirmation, and Trump's fellow Republicans control the chamber, holding 53 seats

of the 100 seats. Democrats lack the votes to block any Trump nominee unless some Republican senators join them.

With the assistance of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who has made confirmation of Trump's federal judicial nominees a top priority, the President potentially could announce a nominee and move rapidly through the confirmation process, which usually takes at least two months.

Even before Ginsburg's death, Trump had made public a list of potential nominees.

Trump's Democratic opponent in the Presidential race, Joe Biden,

Friday night said the winner of the election should be the one to make the selection and that Trump should not move forward with a nominee. Chuck Schumer, the Senate's top Democrat, agreed.

McConnell pledged that the Senate would vote on any Trump nominee. If he wins, Biden would be sworn in to replace Trump January 20. Trump focused his initial remarks on praising Ginsburg, who he previously had derided, without specifying his next steps. For liberals who considered her a heroine, the grief they have expressed over her death was tinged with fear over what happens next. MORE P10

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Varsha seeks transfer of divorce petition, moves Supreme Court

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Sept 19: Varsha Priyadarshini, the wife of Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP Anubhav Mohanty, has moved the Supreme Court seeking transfer of divorce petition from Patiala House court here to Odisha.

The Odia film actor has filed a transfer petition in the Supreme Court seeking

transfer of the divorce petition to Cuttack family court. The appellant cited in the plea that it is difficult for her to travel a long distance to Delhi's Patiala House court and attend the scheduled hearing October 7. Significantly, Anubhav Mohanty has also filed a caveat in the Supreme Court urging the court to not pass any order in Varsha's transfer petition without hearing him.

Anubhav's counsel Ashwani Dubey said that they would challenge Varsha's plea in the Apex



court. He added that Varsha is an actor and has an independent source of income.

"If she can travel to Mumbai for an award ceremony then why can't she travel to Delhi for the hearing?" He said, "Varsha can avail bene-fits in air travel as a wife of Parliamentarian." He also said that Patiala House court is having adjudicatory jurisdiction.

Anubhav filed a divorce petition in the Patiala House court in July and submitted that since the date of wedding, the marriage between them has not been consummated due to the "selfish behaviour of Varsha."

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	36.3°C	35.6°C
MIN	26.2°C	24.5°C
Humidity	94%	85%
Rainfall	4.8mm	Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy sky



DWAYNE JOHNSON TEARS DOWN HIS GATE WITH BARE HANDS

Hollywood superstar and former wrestling champion Dwayne Johnson, aka The Rock, flaunted his physical strength off screen by ripping his own gate off with his bare hands because he did not want to be late to work. Taking to Instagram, Dwayne shared a photo of a gate that lay on the ground.

CARDI B SAYS SHE IS 'NOT HURT' AFTER FILING FOR DIVORCE

Rapper Cardi B says she has not shed tears since filing for divorce from rapper Offset. Cardi B had filed the suit at an Atlanta courthouse Tuesday, citing the marriage is 'irretrievably broken' and 'there are no prospects for reconciliation'.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
All eyes may be on you today – for your looks, skills, or even your funky bag! Make hay while the sun shines, and charge your batteries with all that attention. You can get some decent work done with that energy, says Ganesh.

TAURUS
Spontaneity yet sincerity will be the ruling emotions of the day. Keep your eyes and ears open, advises Ganesh, as trouble might be headed your way. Make it a point to read the print well before you sign any legal contract today.

GEMINI
Today, your enthusiasm for sports and outdoor activities is palpable. According to you, variety is the spice of life. You will keep on jumping from one venture to another. You will establish a good rapport with your bosses and colleagues. It's time to taste success in your immediate and interim objectives.

CANCER
It is likely that you will reach an important milestone in life today. Keep in mind that your success may be a cause of envy for a few people, some of whom may want to harm you. You are left with two choices: either try to help them out of their troubles and miseries, or prepare for a battle.

LEO
Forget the weather. Today, the only thing shining bright are your chances of spending some quality time with your near and dear ones. Going along these lines, Ganesh wonders how long has it been since you last did the same. So, make the most of this lucky day. Chances are that you shall make new friends, who might turn out to be very supportive in the future. Ganesh wishes you the very best on this eventful day.

VIRGO
Business acumen is natural to you. Your management skills are immaculate. Move with imagination, innovation and motivation to further your enterprise, advises Ganesh. Feel free to express and exercise your sense of judgement, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
The whole point of being a Libran is that you always have the tendency to be two separate things put together on a pair of scales that somehow balance. Ganesh feels that today, you'll bring to the scales the stability of being your own master and servant. It's a fine balance to maintain.

SCORPIO
Retail therapy with your loved ones is a perfect recipe to have a good time! You will be more than willing to buy things of their choice. Hagglng will be a trait you have closeted today as you go about being lavish in your expenses, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
You may have women swooning over you today; such is your charm and way with them, says Ganesh. But friends are highly valuable to you, and you shall spend much time with them cherishing their company and reliving amazing times spent together.

CAPRICORN
You love the people around you unconditionally and such emotions will be more visible now than ever. Today, you will want to keep yourself surrounded with your loved ones, make them happy and have a good time, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
God helps those who help themselves. You have experienced this plenty of times as your efforts have been paid off. While your colleagues at work may pass negative comments at your work, your boss will not have any complaints with you.

PISCES
You will be able to come up trumps against the competition today. You should be wary of hidden enemies, for they might be involved in slandering you. It is best to reach out to others and make friends before they take it upon themselves to hinder your progress.



Don't think size defines one's fitness: Manushi

Mumbai: Beauty queen-turned-actress Manushi Chhillar says fitness for her is all about finding a balance, and that is actually a personal experience

because each individual has their fitness goals. "For me, fitness is all about finding your balance. It's an extremely personal and individualistic experience because each individual has their own fitness goal. I love my cheesecake and I also like to train like a machine, so that I can

enjoy it," Manushi said. "I think I have always wanted to push myself because I do believe we all have a lot of room for growth and become the best version of ourselves," she added. Manushi says society should not hail skinny as a sign of being fit, because the idea sets unreal fitness goals.

"Perfection is also individualistic and I don't think your size defines your fitness. Each one of us wants to see ourselves in a certain way, has a certain body type and wants to feel great about it. That's what's important," she observed.

Manushi is all set to make her debut opposite Akshay Kumar in the upcoming film *Prithviraj*.

Sala Budha selected for Berlin film fest

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Award winning filmmaker Sabyasachi Mohapatra's *Sala Budha* has been officially selected for screening at the prestigious Indo-German Film week 2020 in Germany to be held from September 24 to 30 at the historic Babylon theatre, Berlin. The film will have multiple shows including one on the opening day of the week-long festival.

Reacting to the development, the *Bhukha* director said, "Indo-German film week has been a great platform for Indian films for many years and I am extremely happy that my film has been selected to be screened."

Stephan Ottenbruch, the festival director said, "We have been trying to promote the art, culture and tradition of India in our festival. We are proud to present a film from Odisha for the first time. We are thankful to

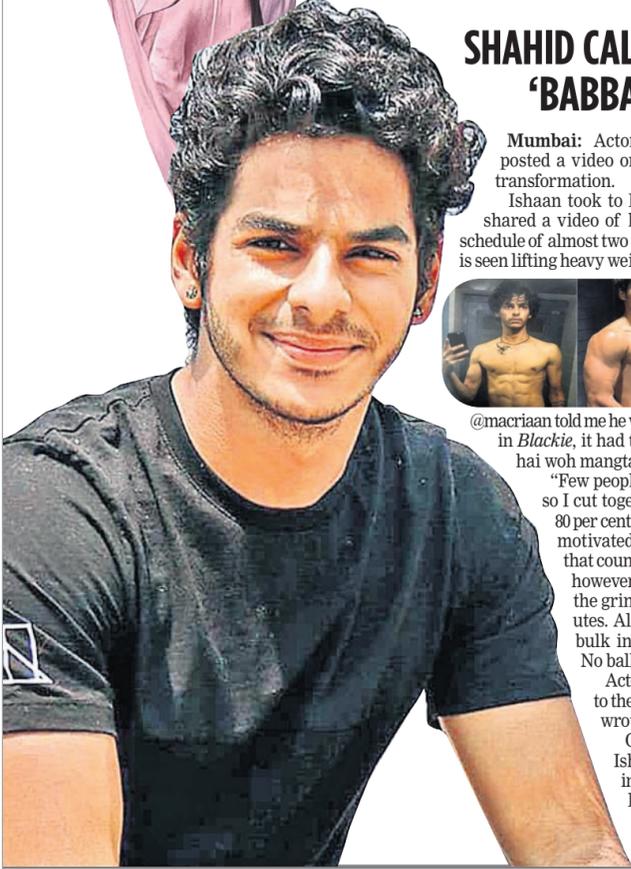


Jitendra Mishra for bringing such a beautiful film to this event."

Recently, Sabyasachi Mahapatra joined hands with internationally acclaimed film producer and promoter Jitendra Mishra for global exposure of his films.

"I am super excited for the fact that overseas viewers will get to know about our culture on big screen. I am grateful to festival director Stephan Ottenbruch for including this film" Jitendra said.

With more than 40 national and international awards under his belt, Sabyasachi Mohapatra is known as one of the finest filmmakers from Odisha. His films *Aadim Vichar* (The Ancient Justice) and *Pahadara Luha* (Tears Of The Mountain) received National Film award for Best feature films in Odia language for 2014 and 2015. Mohapatra's films are mostly based on the lifestyle of people those belonging to tribal community and living in western parts of the state.



SHAHID CALLS ISHAAN 'BABBAR SHER'

Mumbai: Actor Ishaan Khatter has posted a video on his beefed-up body transformation.

Ishaan took to Instagram, where he shared a video of his workout and diet schedule of almost two months. In the clip, he is seen lifting heavy weights and eating clean.

Alongside the clip, he wrote: "The real grind. A major part of the physical prep on... When @macriaan told me he wanted a 'sakht launda' in *Blackie*, it had to be done. Jo mangta hai woh mangtaich hai."

"Few people know what it takes, so I cut together a little montage. 80 per cent of the days, you aren't motivated. Those are the days that count. Where ever you are, however you are. 6 months of the grind in 2 and a half minutes. Almost 6 kgs of a clean bulk in 2 months. All work. No ball talk. Let's go."

Actor Shahid Kapoor took to the comment section and wrote: "Babbar Sherrrrr."

On the work front, Ishaan will next be seen in *Khaali Peeli*, set to release digitally October 2.

Jacqueline celebrates as Genda Phool garners over 550 mn views

Mumbai: *Genda Phool*, sung by Badshah and Payal Dev, has garnered over 550 million views on YouTube, and actress Jacqueline Fernandez, who stars in its music video, is happy.

The song ran into controversy upon release in March when charges of plagiarism rose. The song draws its hook line from a classic Bengali folk song, *Boro loker biti lo*, and social media was quick to notice that fact. Badshah later contacted Ratan Kahar, creator of the Bengali original, in an effort to sort things up.

The video features random shots of Durga Puja festivities, and Jacqueline is seen in a sari that is worn the traditional Bengali way in some scenes.

"I am extremely happy and grateful that people have showered so much love towards the song. We crossed 550 million views recently and it's insane. I had so much fun shooting this song. The whole process was super exciting, from wearing a Bengali attire that I had never donned to experiencing the touch of folk music and overall, the vibe with its beats," said Jacqueline.



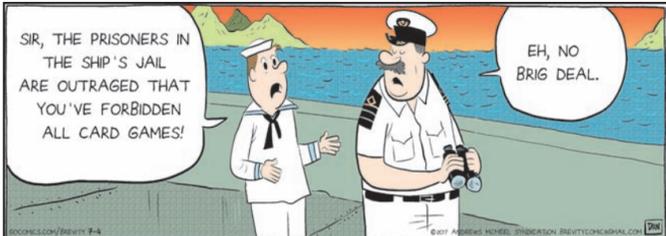
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

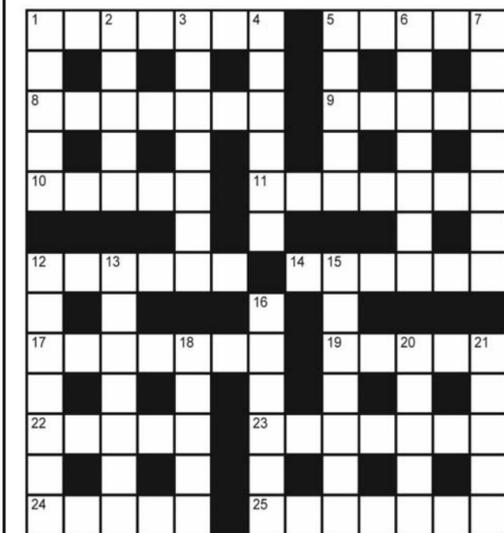


BREVITY



FUN post

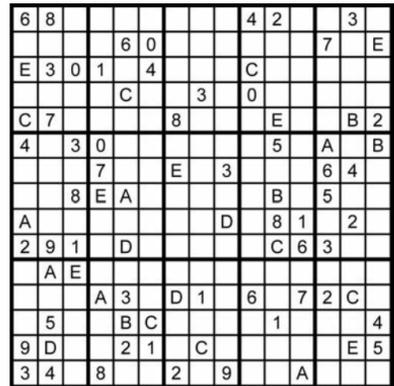
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Horrible
 - 5 Scrooge, for one
 - 8 Daydream
 - 9 Whimsical
 - 10 Latin dance
 - 11 Catch-22
 - 12 Ointments
 - 14 Blue blood
 - 17 Full
 - 19 Edge tools
 - 22 Zoo members
 - 23 Finger protector
 - 24 Rope fiber
 - 25 Beryl variety
 - Down**
 - 1 Masters
 - 2 Blacksmith's block
 - 3 Garden feature
 - 4 Knuckles under
 - 5 Award
 - 6 Winter yard decoration
 - 7 Set free
 - 12 Extra amount
 - 13 Some computers
 - 15 Understand
 - 16 Water heater
 - 18 Canvas support
 - 20 African grazer
 - 21 Knight's need

SUDOKU

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

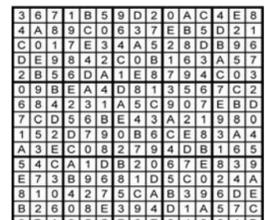


SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



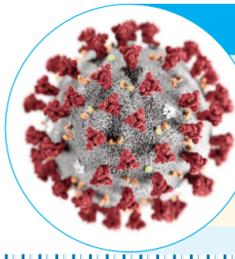
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



UP FOR SALE

A vendor displays curtains for sale alongside the Ring Road in Matamatha area of Cuttack, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	3,08,15,278	2,24,36,962	9,58,232
India	53,08,014	42,08,431	85,619
Odisha	1,75,550	1,41,657	691

ITIs to be upgraded as centres of excellence

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: In an aim to make youths employable as per industry needs, the state government has decided to transform ITIs and polytechnic institutions in mineral bearing areas into Centres of Excellence (CoEs).

This was revealed at a high-level meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy recently where Skill Development and Technical Education secretary Sanjay Kumar Singh presented the need and feasibility of such institutions.

It was decided at the meeting to develop ITI Jajpur as a CoE in automation technology, Jajpur polytechnic in advanced welding and Baripada ITI in thermal cutting & welding. A mini tool room will be set up at ITI Takatpur.

Similarly, proposals to upgrade ITIs at Karanja, Udala, Kaptipada, Anandpur, Barbil, Jharsuguda, Barkot and Rourkela and Mayurbhanj polytechnic, OSME Keonjhar, Jharsuguda Engineering School, Deogarh polytechnic and UGIE Rourkela to CoEs in different advanced technologies were also discussed and approved by



the government.

Modernisation work at ITI Barbil, Mining Engineering Keonjhar, ITI Rourkela, UGIE Rourkela with furnishing of IT labs, life skill classes, workshops, modern class rooms, residential facilities etc have been completed, Singh said.

The Union government has recognised ITI Barbil as a model ITI in the country. Considering the need for CoEs, the Chief Secretary directed officials to develop such institutions in districts coming under Odisha Mineral Bearing Area Development Corporation (OMBADC) for expanding employment avenues.

Tripathy further directed to start

the new-age trades like drone piloting, solar technology, smart agriculture, smart horticulture, robotics, mechatronics, additive manufacturing technology etc as per their demand in different ITIs and polytechnics.

He also advised the officials concerned to scale up internal resource generating activities with modern workshops and labs of these institutions so as to make the courses self-sustainable. It was decided to run the new skill classes in collaboration with industry partners as per their manpower requirement.

Presently, industry collaborative CoEs have been established at ITIs

PRIORITISING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Chief Secretary directed officials to start new-age trades in the centres with industry interface

It was decided at the meeting to develop ITI Jajpur as a CoE in automation technology, Jajpur polytechnic in advanced welding and Baripada ITI in thermal cutting and welding

The Union government has recognised ITI Barbil as a model ITI in the country

in Cuttack, Pattamundai and Balasore.

Review revealed that three mini tool rooms have been commissioned at ITI Cuttack, Berhampur and Hirakud in collaboration with Central Tool & Training Center (CTTC), Bhubaneswar. The components for Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) are being manufactured at ITI-Cuttack, sources said.

Eleven ITIs of Odisha (seven government-run and four private) have been ranked among top-100 ITIs of India in Phase-II ranking of the year 2019-20.

Cyber crooks dupe man of ₹10.50 lakh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Cyber crooks have duped a person of around ₹10.50 lakh on the pretext of awarding him 'Bank Mitra' franchise in Sakshigopal area of Puri district. The cyber cell of state Crime Branch has started an investigation into the matter after registering a case in this regard.

The victim has been identified as Pradeep Kumar Sahoo of Sryamachandrapur under Satyabadi police limits in Puri. The CB sleuths, during initial enquiry, found that the victim recently came to know about 'Bank Mitra' scheme from some of his friends.

Later, he searched online to get the details regarding the scheme and the process to apply for a franchise of the customer service point June 10, 2020.

While surfing in the internet, he came across a website, with registered head office in Bangalore, inviting people to register through the site to get a franchise for Bank Mitra of State Bank of India (SBI). Later, Sahoo submitted his de-

The bank accounts in which Sahoo deposited the money were found to be opened by different persons in four states

tails like bank account number, PAN card, email Id and phone number in the website. The fraudsters then contacted Sahoo over phone and asked him to deposit various amounts in different bank accounts under different heads like registration fee, GST, late fee, agreement fee and bank setup fee. In order to win Sahoo's trust, the crooks also sent fake registration and agreement applications to his mail address.

Accordingly, Sahoo deposited a whopping ₹10.50 lakh in the accounts of the accused persons. The miscreants dialed Sahoo on different phone numbers registered outside Odisha. The bank accounts in which Sahoo deposited the money were found to be opened in the name of different persons in four states outside Odisha.



Sasmit presides over Rajya Sabha



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Sept 19: After almost 20 years, an MP from Odisha, Sasmit Patra, Saturday conducted the proceedings of Rajya Sabha. The Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MP presided over the Upper house during the discussion on the Epidemic Disease (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

MPs from across the parties congratulated the young Odia MP for debuting as the Vice-Chairman. Patra was nominated to the panel of Vice-Chairmen of the Rajya Sabha along with five other MPs by Upper House Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu in July.

The panel of Vice-Chairmen presides over the council in the absence of Chairman and the Deputy Chairman when so requested by the Chairman, or in his absence, by the Deputy Chairman.

Award in memory of Sarada Prasanna

BHUBANESWAR: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday announced an award in the name "Sarada Prasanna Gitikabita Sammana" in memory of Odia filmmaker and director late Sarada Prasanna Nayak. Odisha Sangeet Natak Academy will confer the award every year with an amount of ₹2.5 lakh in recognition of Nayak's contribution to Odia film industry. On the Ekadashaha of late Nayak, special tribute was offered by the department of Odia Language, Literature & Culture to the departed soul.

FIGHTING COVID-19

'SWASNER' BY IIIT STUDENTS CAN BE A GAME-CHANGER

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Good news for COVID-19 patients who are struggling with breathing problems. A group of IIIT, Bhubaneswar students has developed a helmet-like ventilation device that will make a difference in treating patients with breathing problems.

According to the students-turned-developers, the device has been named as 'Swasner'. It functions on the principle of hyperbaric oxygen therapy. Wearing this device, a patient can inhale pure oxygen. Apart from COVID-19 patients, those who are suffering from respiratory diseases can also get benefits from this device. They further stated that they have used medicated plastic collected from Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering and Technology (CIPET) in developing 'Swasner'.

There is a bubble-like enclosure fitted to the base. Oxygen is pumped into the chamber of the enclosure. In hospitals, the device can be mounted on walls. 'Swasner' could be an affordable alternative to costly ventilators. The developers include Shovit Mitra, Sidharth Shankar Nayak, Ananya Aprameya, Tapaswin Padhi, Sai Sambit Nayak, Divyaji Dash, Vitthal Gupta of IIIT, Bhubaneswar and Jivitesh Debata of ITER and Nand Kishore Gupta of NSIT, Delhi.

State yet to submit jumbo corridor action plan: NGT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Taking up a petition regarding 14 proposed elephant corridors in the state, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has said that it is yet to receive an action plan from the Odisha government despite its earlier order.

The tribunal during its June 23 hearing had asked the state government to submit an action plan within two months. On the recent hearing of the case, the NGT in its written order claimed that despite its order, Odisha government has not submitted the same.

"Vide order dated 23.06.2020, the Tribunal after having noted that detailed works had been undertaken in respect of 14 elephant corridors identified by the state government in 2011, it was directed that an action plan with specific timelines may be filed within two months in accordance with the observations and recommendations made in the report of ANCF. The action plan still has not been filed as directed," the NGT order reads.

The government in 2017 had told

the NGT that works of assessing habitat viability and ground assessment of the already identified elephant corridors were handed over to the Asia Nature Conservation Foundation (ANCF) under an agreement. The ANCF submitted the report January 12, 2018.

Meanwhile, the petitioner in the case -Wildlife Society of Orissa - has also levelled fresh allegation of violations of the 2016 order of NGT on the matter.

The NGT, in its 2016 order, had barred some activities in eco-sensitive zones. The petitioner in the hearing submitted photographs of Telkoi-Pallahara Elephant Corridor, which bisects the Mumbai-Kolkata highway in Keonjhar district, and alleged that many trees were felled for highway expansion work in the eco-sensitive zone.

Taking cognisance of the issue, the NGT has issued show-cause notice to the state government. "In the light of the above statements, the State Respondents...shall respond to the affidavit and show cause as to why appropriate orders should not be issued for such violation on or before the next date."



PIC FOR REPRESENTATION

FOR A BUMPER YIELD



Labourers remove weeds from a paddy field at the OUAT in Bhubaneswar, Saturday

PIC: MANORANJAN MISHRA

WSHGs procure ₹1,010Cr paddy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Women self-help groups (WSHGs) have procured paddy worth ₹1010.14 crore during financial year 2019-20.

As many as 199 women SHGs in 11 districts have procured 23.07 lakh quintals of paddy amounting to ₹419 crore during Kharif 2019-20. They have earned commission worth ₹7.2 crore, official sources said.

Similarly, 113 WSHGs were engaged in paddy procurement in 112



gram panchayats of eight districts during Rabi 2019-20. They have procured 17.58 lakh quintal paddy amounting to ₹319 crore generating commission of ₹5.49 crore. So, cumulatively the WSHGs earned ₹12.69

core commission during the Kharif and Rabi seasons.

Currently, 223 WSHGs are undertaking online registration of farmers for paddy procurement for Kharif 2020-21. So far, 312 such groups from 11 districts have been involved in the procurement process. They procured 43.12 lakh quintals of paddy amounting to ₹781.26 crore and got ₹13.46 crore as their commission, the source said.

In May last year, the State Cabinet had decided to tie up women WSHGs

with different departments for provisioning of government services and procurement in a structured manner amounting to ₹5,000 crore over a period of five years.

In pilot phase, 17 WSHGs of Kalahandi district have been engaged in the practice during 2018-19 Rabi season and earned ₹77.25 lakh commission.

After that the Women and Child Development department is planning to engage more number of women in the business.

INTERNATIONAL COASTAL CLEANUP DAY-2020

MEGA DRIVE TO MAKE PURI COAST LITTER-FREE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Sept 19: The district administration along with various social outfits and volunteers Saturday carried out beach cleaning at around 50 places on the Puri coast to observe the International Coastal Cleanup Day-2020.

The cleaning exercise was carried out as part of the Mo Beach programme of the Puri district administration.

"The coastal cleaning exercise was carried out at 10 places on Puri beach and equal number of places each on Konark and Krushnaprasad beaches. At least five places each was cleaned at Brahmagiri, Astarang, Gop and Kakatpur during the drive," said an official of the district administration.

According to him, at least 10 volunteers and a nodal officer conducted the beach cleaning at each place on the coast. Officials of various departments, members of women self-help groups and volunteers from Nehru Yuva Kendra actively participated in the programme. "The volunteers followed social distancing norms and wore masks during the beach cleaning



Volunteers undertake cleanliness drive on Puri beach, Saturday

programme to keep the novel coronavirus at bay," said the official.

It is worth mentioning here that the Puri district administration had organized the world's biggest beach cleaning programme to observe last year's International Coastal Cleanup Day. Around 20,000 volunteers had participated in the programme covering over 100km coastline in the district.

Many celebrities including some movie actors like Bidyut Jamwal had participated in the programme and urged the locals and tourists to keep the shoreline garbage-free.

In a related development, Odisha Paryavaran Sangrakshan Abhiyan (OPSA) Trust along with Youth Environmentalist Programme Trust, Mumbai observed the day at Devi Turtle Nesting Zone in Astarang.

The cleaning exercise was carried out as part of the Mo Beach programme of the Puri district administration

Officials of various departments, members of women self-help groups and volunteers from Nehru Yuva Kendra actively participated in the programme

OPSA Trust along with Youth Environmentalist Programme Trust, Mumbai observed the day at Devi Turtle Nesting Zone in Astarang

Many youths and like-minded people from different places participated in the coastal cleanup exercise, sources said.

International coastal cleanup exercise is the largest effort by the volunteers for ocean health. The International Coastal Cleanup Day is observed on every third Saturday of September.

People from various walks of life gather at beaches, shores, rivers, waterways and underwater dive sites to extract trash and record information on the debris collected.

The coastal cleanup exercise at Astarang was carried out at Jahania beach, Daluakani beach and Kadua river mouth area to make the localities trash-free. The three localities were littered with garbage during the recent floods in Puri district, sources said.

OPSA Trust sources claimed that the Devi Turtle Nesting Zone has around 100 tonnes of wastes. "The OPSA will continue its efforts for

next few weeks to remove the garbage," said OPSA managing trustee Soumya Ranjan Biswal.

Wildlife Activist Akash Ranjan Rath along with local environmentalists Bipin Dash and Prasara Khuntia joined the event and encouraged the volunteers. The event was coordinated by Biju Patnaik wildlife Award winner conservationist Bichitranand Biswal, sources added.



Beach cleaning underway at Astarang coast

OP PHOTOS

Post-isolation symptoms normal: Docs

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Doctors authorised by Odisha government to talk about home isolation for COVID-19 cases Saturday said that many patients continue to see some symptoms post isolation period.

Jayant Kumar Panda, Head of the Medicine department of SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack, said that even after 17 days of home isolation and quarantine for COVID positive patients, some symptoms are prevalent and consultation with the doctors is needed before medications.

"It's normal. During the post COVID days, there could be some nasal congestion and breathing issues in some patients. If patients who have opted for home isolation see such symptoms they need to continue some medications and consult their doctor for better treatment if such symptoms persist even after 17 days," he said.

He also added, "Under home isolation, the patients need to use the drugs given by the government in the kit. They also need to measure their body temperature everyday and keep watch on any other symptoms. In case the health condition deteriorates they can contact the government and can get admitted to COVID hospitals."

Panda said that under home isolation, the state government is providing Azithromycin (antibiotic),



The state govt is providing Azithromycin, Paracetamol, Vitamin D and Vitamin C tablets and Levo-Cetirizine tablets for home isolation patients

Paracetamol (anti-pyretic), Vitamin D and Vitamin C tablets and Levo-Cetirizine tablets. "In addition to this the patients with other disease/diseases should continue their medicines as usual. The kit also comprises the norms and suggestions on best ways to manage home isolation," he said.

He also asked the caregiver/attendant to ensure isolation from the positive patients. "The caregiver/attendant needs to take special measures to prevent infection from the person who is under home isolation. They should not stay in the room where the patient is staying and not use their used products. They should use masks when

HOME ISOLATION CASES RISE EXPONENTIALLY: BMC

BHUBANESWAR: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Saturday said that home isolation rate has increased from 42 per cent to 73.50 per cent in the City. During the last five days ending September 18, home isolation rate for positives stood at 95.44 per cent. Moreover, 79 doctors have been deployed with Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) and four medical officers each at the three administrative zones respectively that are engaged in physical verification of the facilities for home Isolation. While the South West Zone has 26 doctors, the North and the South East Zones have 30 and 23 doctors respectively. "Moreover, we have 54 RRTs with

18 in each zone to monitor home isolation cases. The RRT that were only 13 for the entire city has been increased to shift more and more cases to home isolation. COVID Care Hospitals (CCHs) and COVID Care Centres (CCCs) are reserved for co-morbid, critical and symptomatic patients," stated BMC Commissioner, Prem Chandra Chaudhary. He mentioned that the hospital situation in the city is 'comfortable'. "Asymptomatic patients are being shifted home on a rotation basis. A total of 445 ICUs and 2,500 general beds are available in private hospitals. Squads have been formed to monitor treatment of COVID-19 patients in these hospitals," he added.

they enter the room."

The doctor also said that there is no need to go for another COVID test after 17 days of isolation and quarantine but asked for better care and rest for the last 7 days. "The seven days are important for recovery and patients should focus on good diet during this period. There is no need to go for COVID test again after 17 days," he said.

Pragyan Routray, a doctor from

CARE Hospital, spoke about who need to go for testing amid the pandemic. "All those who develop symptoms should go for COVID testing. Especially all those who have comorbidities must go for testing if they develop such symptoms. People who have mild symptoms and young with no comorbidities and in the age group of 15 years to 45 years, can shun the test and stay in home quarantine for 14 days."

Twin city police on toes to enforce norms

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Cuttack, Sept 19: Amid rising cases of COVID-19 in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, the Commissionerate Police (CP) has intensified enforcement of COVID-19 norms.

The Commissionerate Police prosecuted 7,882 persons and sealed 44 shops in the twin cities during the last 24 hours. "The efforts will be sustained and our request to everyone is to be both aware as well as to cooperate," Commissionerate Police said on Twitter. "During special enforcement drives for implementation of #COVID-19 guidelines at Cuttack, we have booked today 1,186 persons for gross violation of #SocialDistancing and 269 for not #FaceMasking in our fight to contain #COVID19. We urge people to follow COVID-19 guidelines and #staysafe," the Twitter handle of DCP Cuttack said.

The move by Commissionerate Police came after Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed his dissatisfaction over the enforcement of COVID-19 guidelines within the Commissionerate limits. Notably, Odisha Police had provided 50 more officers and five platoons more armed Police to twin city to enhance enforcement. The step was taken as COVID-19 cases continue to surge in the twin cities and especially in Bhubaneswar with Cuttack being a distant second. Bhubaneswar has been divided into three zones and each of the zones will have a DCP level officer.

CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

Swapna Rani Baliyarsingh, W/o. Bikram Kumar Baliyarsingh, At- Dohhian, P.O.- Adal, Dist.- Puri (Odisha) declare that in my husbands, service record my name has been wrongly recorded as Swapna Rani Chahataray, my correct name should be Swapna Rani Baliyarsingh vide affidavit at the Judicial Magistrate at Khurda. Hence Swapna Rani Chahataray & Swapna Rani Baliyarsingh is same & identical person.

By virtue of affidavit I Aarchiesman have changed my name to Archisman Pattanayak. Hence I will be known as Archisman Pattanayak.

State reports 4,209 fresh COVID-19 cases, 9 deaths

PNN/AGENCY

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: Odisha's COVID-19 tally rose to 1,75,550 Saturday as 4,209 more people tested positive for the infection, while nine fresh fatalities pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 691, a Health and Family Welfare department official said.

As many as 2,441 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 1,768 infections were detected during contact tracing, he said.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls, reported the highest number of new cases at 663, followed by Cuttack (491) and Puri (326), the official said.

The state had reported its highest single-day spike of 4,270 cases on September 16, he said.

Two fresh fatalities were reported in Bargarh district, and one each in Bhadrak, Bolangir, Cuttack, Gajapati, Puri, Rayagada and Sambalpur districts, the official said. Fifty-three COVID-19 patients have died due to other ailments so far, he said. The state has so far tested over 27.15 samples for COVID-19, including 48,075 Friday, he added.

As many as 342 new COVID-19

cases were detected under Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) limits in last 24 hours. While 104 of them are quarantine cases, remaining 238 are local contact ones. Meanwhile, 421 persons who had earlier tested positive for the disease have recovered, said BMC sources.

According to a notification issued by the civic body, as of Saturday, 18,267 persons have tested positive for COVID-19 in Bhubaneswar out of which 14,052 have recovered. While there are 4,133 active cases, 68 persons succumbed to the disease.

Odisha health department Saturday said that 4,090 persons who earlier tested positive for COVID-19 have recovered and are being discharged.

Out of 4,090 persons, 605 are from Khurda, 412 from Puri, 371 from Cuttack, 169 from Bargarh, 160 from Nabarangpur, 155 from Sundargarh, 145 from Kendrapara, 145 from Rayagada, 139 from Jajpur, 123 from Bolangir, 121 from Jagatsinghpur, 120 from Koraput, 115 from Mayurbhanj, 110 from Sonepur and 104 from Bhadrak, 99 from Sambalpur, 93 from Jharsuguda, 92 from Keonjhar, 91 from Balasore, 83 from Nayagarh, 78 from Nuapada, 66 from Angul, 56 from Ganjam, 50 from Dhenkanal, 44 from Kalahandi, 44 from Malkangiri, 38 from Kandhamal, 18 from Boudh, 18 from Gajapati, 14 from Deogarh and 212 from State Pool.

With this, total recoveries in the state now stand at 1,41,657.

BSCL launches internship prog for graduates

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: In a bid to impart hands-on training to technical graduates, Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) has launched an internship programme - TULIP - that will allow fresh graduates to work with BSCL projects.

The flagship internship programme under Housing and Urban Affairs and Human Resource Development ministries was

launched in June this year nationally and September 18 here.

'Aspirational India', as the theme goes, the program aims to provide short-term exposure to fresh technical graduates to real world projects and its implementation and planning for professional development.

Apart from experiential learning with urban local bodies (ULBs) and smart cities, the programme also aims at harnessing fresh energy and ideas towards ULBs and smart

cities from the young minds to help solve the critical challenges.

"The BSCL seeks interns under the categories: Administration, Engineering, Finance and Technology. Graduates should not have crossed more than 18 months between the date of declaration of final year results and the date from which the internship is sought. The TULIP interns would get experience certificate which would have great value in their

Man booked for raping daughter

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: A woman has lodged a complaint with Mahila Police here accusing her husband of sexually abusing their 12-year-old daughter in Khandagiri area a few days ago.

Mahila Police has started investigation into the incident after registering a case under various Sections of IPC and POCSO Act. Sources said the couple has been staying apart since long due to marital discord. The accused husband reportedly used to beat his wife under the influence of alcohol. The woman along with the minor victim resides in a rented house separately. The victim who had recently come to stay with her father at his house in Khandagiri area was sexually abused by the accused in inebriated state last week. He had also reportedly threatened the girl of dire consequences in case she revealed it before her mother. However, she divulged the episode before her mother. Her statement was recorded under 161 of CrPC.

Heavy rain to lash state for 2 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sept 19: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday said heavy rainfall is likely to lash several parts of the state during next two days under the impact of a low pressure area to be formed in next 24 hours.

"A low pressure area is likely to develop over northeast Bay of Bengal and neighbourhood areas by September 20. It is likely to become more marked over northwest Bay of Bengal & neighbourhood during subsequent 24 hours," the IMD said. Under its impact, a few places in Malkangiri, Koraput, Balasore, Mayurbhanj, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Puri, Khurda, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Angul, Deogarh and Kalahandi will witness heavy rainfall Sunday.

Similarly, heavy to very heavy rainfall would occur in the districts of Deogarh, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Angul, Nuapada, Bolangir and Sonepur

on the next day (September 21).

Some places in Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Dhenkanal, Boudh, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur, Cuttack, Malkangiri and Koraput districts would also experience heavy downpour Monday, the IMD said.

As per the predictions made by MeT department, heavy rainfall may trigger water-logging in low-lying areas in the above mentioned districts. There is possibility of damage to kutcha houses and roads, the weatherman said.

Meanwhile, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena issued an advisory to the Collectors of the districts concerned asking them to remain prepared to deal with flood-like situation and landslide in hilly areas.

Asking the district Collectors to closely monitor the situation, Jena said continuous vigil must be maintained on low-lying areas and steps for dewatering should be taken wherever required. The SRC also directed to ban movement of fishermen into deep sea area along and off Odisha coast.

Doctor orders wine online, duped

BHUBANESWAR: A doctor here has lost around ₹1.5 lakh to the cybercriminals while ordering wine online. The victim, who has been staying in the campus of a private medical college and hospital in the city, has lodged a complaint with Khandagiri police. As per his complaint, he came across an online ad about home delivery of alcohol by Kadambini Wine shop a few days back. He placed an order of ₹1,480 for a wine bottle through the phone number given in the ad. However, the victim contacted one of the accused persons when he did not receive the delivery many hours after placing the order. He once again called the miscreants who asked him to give a different account to get back his money. Accordingly, he sent the bank account details of his friend. The fraudsters withdrew money from the doctor as well as his friend's account to the tune of ₹1.50 lakh.

Khurda siblings' unique music takes social media by storm

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Sept 19: Sukant Bhoi and his brother Pabitra from a non-descript village under Jatni block in the district have become the toast of social media for their unique ability to make music.

In a Facebook post, Sukant can be seen singing a Hindi song while his younger brother Pabitra produces sounds of musical instruments from his mouth.

The post received likes from several thousands of netizens and the brothers have been flooded with good wishes.

Sukant owns a tailoring shop in



the village while Pabitra studies in Class X. Due to COVID-19, Pabitra's school has been closed,

but online classes are on. Despite not having a smartphone, Pabitra keeps pace with the syllabus on his own.

VOCAL FOR LOCAL!

In a Facebook post, Sukant can be seen singing a Hindi song while his younger brother Pabitra produces sounds of musical instruments from his mouth

The post received likes from several thousands of netizens and the brothers have been flooded with good wishes

Sukant owns a tailoring shop in the village while Pabitra studies in Class X

When asked how this all happened, Sukant said he had a penchant for learning singing since his childhood days. "I could not learn music institutionally owing to financial issues. However, whenever I get any leisure time, I go to our village riverbed or mango orchard and I sing to my heart's content," he says.

"One day, I noticed Pabitra making sounds of various musical instruments from his mouth. Then an idea struck us. We recorded a Hindi song and posted it on social media. To our surprise, people liked our post. This encouraged us to post more such videos," he added.

Asked about his extraordinary talent for producing sounds of various musical instruments from mouth, Pabitra said, "Unlike my brother, I have an inclination towards music. I still remember how I would play drums with earthen pots and metal utensils. Then I tried producing sounds with my mouth and by beating my chest with palms. And, it has become a habit," Pabitra said.

Local people have wished best for these two siblings. "Their talent should not get lost in the village itself. We wish their unique talent transcend the village boundary and entertain people globally," a local man said.

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The great are strongest when they stand alone, a God-given might of being is their force.

SRI AUROBINDO



Powerful state, powerless individual

It is not seen in that way, especially in our part of the world, but the criminal justice system is deliberately designed to protect the rights of the accused. And this is the correct way of seeing it. Why? Because in a criminal case there are two parties. The accused individual versus the state. The state controls the laws under which the system operates. It appoints, pays the salaries of and manages the police forces that arrest and investigate. The state appoints and pays the prosecutors who will represent it against the individual. The state pays and promotes the judges who determine innocence or guilt.

All the powers are with the state. There is no power with the individual. Most accused in India have no money even to get proper representation and therefore defence against the state. That is why we have the principle of innocent until proven guilty because the understanding is that the state has overwhelming and terrible power in a criminal case and there is a mismatch. Even though justice is represented as a blind woman with balanced scales, the scales are not balanced and the state can load as much weight as it wants to on one side. We have seen evidence of the state's mischief in the way that the Delhi riots are being prosecuted. The majoritarian ideology of a political party is finding expression in the criminal justice system because it is in control of a state with overwhelming power.

In India after independence, the state has not been satisfied with the amount of power it has and has needed more. This is not a problem because there is nobody stopping the state from giving more power to itself except the voters. And voters in India have little interest in the criminal justice system. Most middle class individuals do not think it concerns them. The state can give itself whatever power it wants. And what it wants is a reversal of innocent until proven guilty and make it guilty until proven innocent. And in India the state has been giving itself this power to reverse the fundamental principle of the criminal justice system.

Laws that Indians protested against when they were being written by the British in a colonial state can be written up and implemented today by a democratic state though their effect on the individual is the same. The Rowlatt Act for which the Jallianwala Bagh protesters had gathered allowed preventive detention. This is a power under which the state can arrest individuals without a crime, on the assumption that they may commit a crime in future. This is guilty until proven innocent. Today India has many laws that are similar that have been written by our democratic state which allow preventive detention. Every state has more than one such law and the Centre has them as well. This is why the protesters including women in the Delhi riots can get bail but still remain in jail because there are many options for the state to keep them locked up without conviction. But most of us do not seem to mind this. Many laws that the government has written for itself, including UAPA, on money laundering and even on cow slaughter have a reversal of burden of proof. Meaning that until the individuals can prove their innocence to the satisfaction of the state they can be kept locked up and prosecuted. Such laws do not exist elsewhere in the civilised world.

Even with more power against the individual than any other modern democratic nation, the Indian government seeks more. Uttar Pradesh has set up a police force that can arrest without a warrant and without the orders of a magistrate. This is a power that other states and even the Centre have. We have no civic or popular pushback against this sort of acquisition of power by the state. In the absence of this the state will continue to acquire more power against us. What we have in India today is autocracy and tyranny in practice under a democratic name. I do not make this accusation against any party because the government is controlled by different political parties at the level of the province. There is no difference between one part of India and another in this matter. It is also true that under a government at the Centre which wants to enthusiastically expand its power the real danger of this is being seen.

We may not like the individuals who are being tried by the criminal justice system today because we have made up our minds that they are bad people, even though we have never actually met them. But this dislike is not the reason why we should approve the state being given overwhelming power against the individual because this principle is wrong in law and unjust on the face of it.



Aakar Patel

The majoritarian ideology of a political party is finding expression in the criminal justice system because it is in control of a state with overwhelming power



Kaushik Basu

INDIA'S MISTAKE WAS TO IMPOSE A 'LOCKDOWN' - A MISNOMER, BECAUSE IT FORCED TENS OF MILLIONS OF MIGRANT WORKERS TO SPREAD OUT ACROSS THE COUNTRY, OFTEN ON FOOT, AFTER THEIR JOBS AND WAGES IN URBAN CENTRES VANISHED OVERNIGHT

Boundaries between academic disciplines are always artificial creations intended to facilitate analysis, given our limitations. But as the economist Albert Hirschman once argued, there are times when it is incumbent on us to trespass them. The ongoing battle against COVID-19 and its economic fallout is such a time.

The pandemic has cast a shadow over the global economy. So far, the two worst-performing economies in the second quarter of 2020 (April-June) were Peru and India, where GDP shrank by 30.2 per cent and 23.9 per cent, respectively, in year-on-year terms. These record declines were caused by the pandemic, but also by how we are dealing with it.

In Peru, for example, the crude mortality rate (CMR) - the number of COVID-19 deaths per million people - is 939. The plunge in its GDP is clearly related to this.

Several European countries with high CMRs, such as Spain (647) and the United Kingdom (613), also have reported some of the deepest economic slumps. But India's CMR is only 60, which, though one of the highest in Asia and Africa, makes its sharp second-quarter contraction (bigger than almost any country in the world) difficult to explain - especially given that the Indian economy was among the world's three or four fastest-growing until five years ago.

How can we understand such anomalies? To understand such matters, we need to recognise the interaction between medicine and human behaviour.

Consider the conventional wisdom that COVID-19 is more likely to be transmitted in closed spaces than in open areas. So, you are safer being close to someone in a park than in a restaurant.

We assume that this insight comes from medicine and physics, which tell us, respectively, that COVID-19 is highly infectious, and that aerosols carrying the SARS-

FOCUS PANDEMIC

RISE OF COVIDNOMICS



Governments need to intervene with intelligent, well-designed policies, which would enable us to keep the virus under control without bringing the economy to a halt

CoV-2 virus (which causes the disease) are likely to be blown away and miss your nostrils in outdoor parks. But that is not necessarily so, because aerosols are relatively heavy and tend to drop quickly in still air. Conversely, a breeze in an open space makes it likely that the aerosol will remain airborne for longer and thus pose a risk that does not exist indoors.

The claim that closed spaces are more dangerous may nonetheless be true - not because of what we know about the coronavirus and the aerodynamics of aerosols, but because of human behaviour.

Assume, for the sake of argument, that the probability of the virus being transmitted by an infected person nearby is 50 per cent in both a restaurant and a park. Assume further that half of the population is infected. So, if you are near a random person in a park or a restaurant, the probability that you will contract COVID-19 is 25 per cent.

Suppose, however, that a trusted authority announces that the risk of contracting COVID-19 is greater in a restaurant than in a park. If people believe this, it can turn out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Restaurants will be less attractive to risk-averse people (say, those who don't go to places where the infection risk is higher than 25

per cent). Thus, only more risk-tolerant people will go to restaurants.

It is reasonable to suppose that the restaurant patrons are therefore more likely to be infected, because they would have been taking more risk. Assume, for simplicity, that 75 per cent of risk-tolerant people are infected, while only 25 per cent of risk-averse people are. The probability that an infected person will transmit the virus is still 50 per cent, as before. Then, if people believe that restaurants are riskier (and only the risk-tolerant enter them), the probability of contracting the virus in a restaurant is 37.5 per cent, whereas the probability of contracting it in a park is less than 25 per cent.

These probabilities will be borne out by the epidemiological data, and most people will believe that the pattern has something to do with the nature of the virus, rather than being driven entirely by human behaviour. By this argument, if the authorities had announced that restaurants were safer than parks, then parks would in time have become the riskier place. Even if parks were safer than restaurants for reasons of epidemiology and the physics of aerosol movement, you could face a bigger risk in a park than in a restaurant if it were widely believed that parks were more risky

than restaurants.

Recognising these kinds of connections creates scope for policy interventions that can contain the virus without crushing the economy. India's mistake was to impose a 'lockdown' - a misnomer, because it forced tens of millions of migrant workers to spread out across the country, often on foot, after their jobs and wages in urban centres vanished overnight.

Once we pinpoint the links between medicine and economics, fascinating policy ideas begin to emerge, as the Georgia Institute of Technology's Joshua Weitz reported in a recent Stockholm School of Economics webinar.

Countries like India or Peru must design rules of behaviour that allow the economy to function, at least partly, while containing the virus. Here is an idea. As increased testing gives us a better sense of who has had COVID-19 and has SARS-CoV-2 antibodies, we can offer these people a very high wage to do COVID-19-risky jobs - including in hospitals, and in business sectors involving face-to-face interaction. By using them as links between vulnerable people, we can keep supply chains intact while disrupting virus transmission chains.

Under normal circumstances, the market would do this on its own: demand for people with antibodies would rise, and so would their wages. But markets do not function well during a pandemic, when many externalities are at work. Governments therefore need to intervene with intelligent, well-designed policies, which would enable us to keep the virus under control without bringing the economy to a halt.

The writer, a former Chief Economist of the World Bank and Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

SPECTRUM NATION

No delinking economics from politics



Anita Saluja

WHEN IT COMES TO REDRESSING PEOPLE'S GRIEVANCES, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT BE RIGID BY NOT ACTING UPON SUGGESTIONS GIVEN BY THE OPPOSITION

Remember the BJP's 2014 slogan of Ache Din! Even after six long years of the Modi government, good days for the majority of Indians are still a distant dream. Whether economic recovery is going to be V-shaped, U-shaped or K-shaped, or whether the disparity between the haves and the have-nots would further widen, only time would tell, depending upon the alacrity with which the government takes speedy action. Tall claims of making \$5 trillion economy by 2024-25 need a meaningful strategy.

With the economy contracting to minus 23.9 per cent in the first quarter of this fiscal, the scenario looks grim. Fitch Ratings has slashed India's FY21 growth projection to -10.5 per cent from -5 per cent estimated earlier, saying the continued spread of the virus and imposition of sporadic shutdowns have disrupted economic activity.

No matter if the Hindutva pitch becomes shriller, or the divisive politics is further unleashed, the Aam Aadmi, who is finding it difficult to fetch food for himself, will naturally get disenchanted with the Modi government.

Ironically, while the Congress is reinventing itself after its 135-year-old history, the BJP-led NDA should also learn basic lessons in economics, if it is keen to continue in office for a longer period. The absence of any policy to deal with the worst economic crisis is reminiscent of the policy paralysis of the UPA government. Similarly, while people still believe the Modi government's intensions cannot be faulted, they know for sure that there is paucity of talented persons at the top to handle the crisis.

Sadly for the NDA, the prevailing talent in the bureaucracy, when it took over reins from the UPA, was spurned away. Whether it was Raghuram Rajan, Urjit Patel, Arvind Panagariya or Arvind Subramanian, all were shown the door by the government for not following its diktats. Sadly, Arun Jaitley, a man for all seasons, is no more there to guide Modi, while other stalwarts like Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie have been pushed to the margins by BJP's political managers.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had referred to Covid-19 as an 'Act of God' responsible for the economic slump, though former Finance Minister P Chidambaram argued that had it been an 'Act of God', agriculture, forestry and fisheries would not have grown at 3.4 per cent. Is it only India that is worst-affected by the pandemic? Countries like the US and China are far ahead in coping with the economic situation. Moreover, India's GDP growth, even at pre-Covid times was 4.2 per cent, its slowest pace for nearly a decade. While Modi and Shah have taken

bold political steps in pursuing the Hindutva agenda, whether it is abrogation of Article 370, bringing the Triple Talaq Bill or Citizenship (Amendment) Act, when it comes to rescuing the country from the economic slump, they have failed miserably. They need to be told that unless the country comes out of the financial mess, no amount of political decisions at the helm would bring solace to the common man. It's only when the stomach of an ordinary man is full that he is able to concentrate on other sundry issues.

With the government clueless on reviving the economy, the best it can do is to induct some lateral entrants. After the death of Sushma Swaraj, Modi was quick to induct former Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar in his Cabinet. In fact, after Rajan's ouster as RBI Governor, Jaitley had expressed the need for lateral entrants in the government, but his suggestion was not heeded.

It's not that the government has floundered only in the aftermath of the pandemic, but even earlier when it had gone in for demonetisation and brought in GST, the economy had reacted negatively. The failure to make GST compensation payments to states has only aggravated the situation, with Chief Ministers, especially from Congress-ruled states, fuming for not getting their dues.

With the pandemic showing no signs of slowing down, economic

activities are expected to drag at a snail's pace.

When it comes to redressing people's grievances, the government should not be rigid by not acting upon suggestions given by the Opposition. Congress leaders have been shouting from the rooftops, demanding increased public spending and transfer of funds directly into bank accounts of people. Even after release of Rs 20 lakh crore in five tranches, the economy has shown no signs of revival. The patient requiring oxygen does not need long-term life insurance policy but a ventilator to revive. Similarly, the economy needs an inflow of money to scale-up demand rather than long-term reforms in PSUs, education and health sectors.

Unless there is a clear strategy to deal with the situation, contraction even in the next quarter cannot be ruled out. The remedy is in meticulous fiscal planning, which Modi and Shah are incapable of formulating, unless they have the backing of skilled economists. After all, even for proving your macho personality figures like a '56' inches chest are required. A nation's economy cannot be delinked from politics! The government should move fast, as elections in Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry are in the offing.

The writer is a senior journalist.

WISDOM CORNER

- The secret of getting ahead is getting started. MARK TWAIN
- A creative man is motivated by the desire to achieve, not by the desire to beat others. AYN RAND
- The dog that trots about finds a bone. GOLDA MEIR

WORDSWORTH

Tosticated

Like so many slang or dialect words of previous generations, this one is now very rarely encountered. It gained some publicity in 2011 through being listed by the publishers of Chambers Dictionary as a word with a pleasing sound. When it appeared in the language - in the middle of the seventeenth century - it was a sadly incompetent attempt to say intoxicated, perhaps under the influence of drink ("I'm not so tosticated as you think I am"). An influence may have been the even older tosspot, a person who habitually tossed back his pot of drink, hence a heavy drinker or drunkard. Rather later, the symptoms of that state became confused - under the influence of the first syllable of the word perhaps - with those of being tossed about, and took on the idea of being perplexed or distracted. Various spelled, as tosticated or in other forms, recorders of English dialect near the end of the nineteenth century found it to be widely distributed, from Cumberland and Yorkshire down to Somerset and Devon. But by then it had vanished from the printed word. Chambers is the only British dictionary that continues to include it (apart from the Oxford English Dictionary, which never deletes anything).

LOL

UPSET IS UNHEALTHY

The mother of a problem child was advised by a psychiatrist, "You are far too upset and worried about your son. I suggest you take tranquilizers regularly." On her next visit the psychiatrist



asked, "Have the tranquilizers calmed you down?" "Yes," the boy's mother answered. "And how is your son now?" the psychiatrist asked. "Who cares?" the mother replied.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

Need for proactive fiscal policy

Sir, The imposition of the nationwide lockdown to check the spread of the coronavirus has badly affected the economy of India. For India, The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has calculated a 4.5 per cent contraction of the GDP for the 2020-21 financial year. It is obvious as most of the economic activities were halted. However, the recently published quarterly GDP data (year on year basis), which shows a 23.9 per cent contraction, lowest since 1969, for the April-June quarter by the NSSO is worrisome. Despite some measures taken by the government, such GDP contraction indicates a serious financial crisis that the country is going through. The Indian economy is primarily based on consumption. Around 60 per cent of the economy depends upon private consumption. Another 40 per cent is contributed by private investment, government expenditure, and net-export. During the lockdown, as the income of the people declined or stopped and uncertainty prevailed in the market, the consumption expenditure declined by 27 per cent. Therefore, the government should come forward and take necessary steps to increase demand in the economy. The government should inject liquidity in the economy by providing a direct cash benefit to the people so that demand will increase. And further, it will lead to increase in investment. Monetary measures are helpful for the supply-side but without demand, supply has no meaning in the economy.

Manas Kumar Padi, GANDHINAGAR

Indo-China border standoff

Sir, The India and China border standoff is leading to tension in both countries, the first time since the 1962 war. The incursions by the Chinese army have gone unabated. With the winter only six to eight weeks away fresh positions having been occupied at the LAC by the PLA is a matter of grave concern. It is high time that PM Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping discuss the bilateral issues on the sidelines of the G-20 Summit which will be held in November. It is appalling that India and China have exchanged blames on the use of firearms at the LAC after India's Defense Minister and his Chinese counterpart held discussions on measures to scale down the tension at the border. The current events are similar to those in the run-up to 1962 war.

P. Shantarani Jena, BHERAMPUR



Kochi prepared to deal with terror threat: Cops

THE CITY HAS A STRATEGICALLY LOCATED SOUTH INDIAN PORT HOUSING VARIOUS VITAL INSTALLATIONS INCLUDING THE SOUTHERN NAVAL COMMAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Sept 19: The city of Kochi, a strategically located South Indian port housing various vital installations including the Southern Naval Command, is prepared to deal with any form of terror threat, top security officials said here Saturday, hours after the NIA arrested nine al-Qaeda cadres during raids here and in West Bengal.

After NIA revealed that the arrested terrorists intended to launch terror attacks on vital installations in the country with an aim to kill innocent people, Defence sources said here that the Kochi-based Southern Naval Command (SNC) has been in heightened security for quite some time.

"The SNC will continue to take all precautions against all possible threats," a Defence source told PTI. Highly placed sources in the Kochi city police said the city police have been effectively carrying out its job to identify the terror elements, and monitoring the activities



of the people visiting and camping in the city. "We are very well prepared to deal with any form of such terror threats," a senior officer said, reacting to the arrest of three West Bengal natives from Ernakulam district.

Acting on a tip-off by central intelligence agencies, the NIA, with the help of the state police forces, carried out raids in the intervening night of September 18 and 19 at

Ernakulam in Kerala and Murshidabad in West Bengal and arrested the nine men - Murshid Hasan, Yakub Biswas, Mosaraf Hossen from Ernakulam and Najmus Sakib, Abu Sufiyan, Mainul Mondal, Leu Yean Ahmed, Al Mamun Kamal and Atitir Rehman from Murshidabad.

Hasan is the leader of the gang and those arrested from Kerala are also originally residents of West

Bengal, the NIA said. A senior police officer said the state police are doing a lot of work for identifying the cadres of terror groups landing in Kerala and the al-Qaeda terrorists were arrested in a joint operation by the NIA and the state police.

"The people suspected to have terror links are put on surveillance. We are always on the lookout for such elements. This is an ongoing activity," the officer said when asked about the steps taken by the state police to identify the terror suspects in Kerala, which is home to a large population of migrant workers especially from West Bengal.

The police do not publicise the type of works being done on the ground to tackle terrorists, he said.

The three al-Qaeda terrorists who were arrested from three different locations in the district were working as migrant workers, police said.

They lived in rented houses in Perumbavoor in Ernakulam rural and Puthalam in Kochi city, they added.

'KERALA HAS FAILED IN COUNTER-TERRORISM'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 19: Successive governments in Kerala have failed in anti-terror activities said State BJP president K Surendran Saturday.

He was referring to the way the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Saturday busted an interstate module of Al Qaeda operatives as it conducted raids in West Bengal and Kerala.

Three of the nine Qaeda men in Kerala were arrested from Ernakulam district. The three were picked from two places in Kochi. Those arrested are Murshid Hasan, Yakub Bishwas and Morshraf Hussien. Kerala police have found out that Hussien was in Kerala for the past one decade and was working in a textile shop at Perumbavoor, near Aluva.

"The Anti-Terror squad in Kerala is in deep slumber and the successive governments have also failed to tackle this terror menace. We have seen a few cases where terrorists were arrested in the past from our state. What happened in



K Surendran

Ernakulam is the latest incident," said Surendran.

"It's now come to light that there was a WhatsApp group in the police helping those engaged in terror activities. Also a police official who was suspended for leaking e-mails from the police and this government was reinstated. This can happen only in Kerala," said the BJP state president.

Surendran alleged that Kerala is

today facing a scenario in which the state cabinet also has a 'terror' presence in State Minister KT Jaleel, a former member of the banned outfit SIMI and he is now facing the heat and has already been questioned by two national agencies.

"If one looks into some of the appointments that Jaleel has made in his department, there are undesirable people who have crept in. We will continue our protests till Jaleel is ousted," added Surendran.

Meanwhile, the Congress also attacked the state government over the issue, alleging the state has become a hub of terrorists under CPI(M)-led LDF rule.

KPC President Mullappally Ramachandran alleged the state police failed to trace the presence of al-Qaeda terrorists in the soil of Kerala.

"With the arrest of three al-Qaeda terrorists from the state, it is evident that that law and order machinery in the state has collapsed and the state has become a fertile soil for terror groups," Ramachandran told reporters in Thiruvananthapuram.

Can ignoring loyalists hurt BJP in Bihar polls?



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Sept 19: Ahead of Bihar polls, key officials with just two to five years' history in the BJP have been made team leaders in the state organisation. This may backfire for the party as old loyalists associated with it for 30 to 40 years have been asked to play second fiddle.

IANS managed to obtain the list of organisational structure of BJP in Bihar wherein majority of leaders holding top posts "have joined just two to five years ago."

Sources have said that such random appointment may hurt the morale of old loyalists, who being strongly connected with grassroots and actual voters of the party, have capacity to bring numbers to polling booths.

"Despite Bihar having come a long way on the development scale, votes here are actually cast on the basis of caste. If we entirely depend on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, I believe, it would not be the right approach. We have to include all sections of the people to succeed in election," a party leader said requesting anonymity.

"Ignoring old loyalists may have huge consequences like India Shining and Bharat Uday campaign of 2004 parliamentary election when NDA lost elections to the Congress. We have to learn our lessons from the past and avoid making such mistakes. It is in the interest of the party," he said.

IANS spoke to a few more old loyalists who, however, expressed slightly different views and said that it was up to party to decide the role of a particular official.

"The party's think tank is in better position to observe the working style of particular person. I was state media cell in-charge earlier and was shifted into the district executive committee and I am happy whatever assignment I have been given from the party," Rajiv Kuamr said.

Nikhil Anand, chief spokesperson of BJP Bihar unit said: "BJP has grown up over the years to get the status of largest party in the world. It has only been possible through organisational strength. We have a huge force of selfless workers and party knows how to place them for gaining maximum result. If that had not been the

Owaisi forms separate anti-BJP front in Bihar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Sept 19: Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi headed All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) Saturday tied up with the party of former union minister Devendra Prasad Yadav for fighting upcoming Bihar Assembly elections and attacked RJD for dubbing him 'spoiler' of secular votes.

Addressing a press conference with Yadav here, Owaisi said they have laid foundation of UDSA (United Democratic Secular Alliance) which would assess as on how many seats they should field candidates in the poll fray in the state.

Yadav is heading Samajwadi Janata Dal (D). Coming down heavily on the RJD for dubbing him 'vote katwa' (spoiler of votes) of the secular forces, Owaisi asked what happened to these so called 'thekedars' (feudal lords) of the anti-BJP votes in the 2019 general elections in Bihar.

In reply to a question that the parties of the opposition grand alliance coalition are blaming him for trying to help the BJP by planning to field candidates in the October-November polls, Owaisi said "they are playing old cassette."

"AIMIM contested only Kisanganj seat in the 2019 general election in Bihar and our candidate secured 3 lakh votes while that of the JD(U) bagged 3.25 lakh votes and the winning Congress nominee garnered 3.50 lakh. Can we be dismissed as an insignificant player after this and winning a seat in the assembly bypoll?" he asked.

"What happened in 2019 Parliamentary election in Bihar...did RJD claiming itself to be champions of the minorities and secular voters win any seat?" he said.

The NDA had won 39 out of total 40 Lok Sabha seats in Bihar in last general election while Congress



What happened in 2019 Parliamentary election in Bihar...did RJD claiming itself to be champions of the minorities and secular voters win any seat?
ASADUDDIN OWAISI | AIMIM CHIEF

managed to win one seat of Kisanganj. Asked that the Bihar AIMIM president recently met RJD leaders reportedly for an electoral tie-up but the Lalu Prasad headed party did not give it any weight, Owaisi said "the meetings were not as you are guessing."

"We will fight the election under the leadership of Devendra Prasad Yadav, the president of S.JDD. We welcome all those parties who want to fight against communalism and communal parties," the AIMIM chief said.

Rise in Covid cases makes Shailaja face reality

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 19: Gone are the days when Kerala State Health Minister KK Shailaja was omnipresent in the TV channels taking all accolades, when the Covid pandemic was gripping the country and Kerala was fighting it, but today she is hardly visible.

Saturday, Kerala reported the highest single day surge of COVID-19 cases - 4,644, taking the infection count to 1,31,025, while the toll mounted to 519 with 18 more deaths. In the past one month alone close to 50,000 new positive cases were recorded.

The minister has openly admitted that the state was more vulnerable compared to neighbouring states, as things are changing fast.

Shailaja, was at the centre stage ever since the first case in the country was registered in Thrissur January 30. What gave her the confidence was the way she led her team of medical professionals



With restrictions being eased, it remains to be seen what is in store for Kerala. And with Shailaja cautioning the people, it appears things are not rosy and the question now is -- will the bouquets that was received some time ago turn to brickbats

PM to lay foundation of 9 highway projects in Bihar

Modi has recently inaugurated or laid the foundation of a number of projects in the state which is set to go to the Assembly polls in October-November



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 19: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of nine highway projects in Bihar through video conference Monday and also inaugurate optical fibre internet services through which the state's all 45,945 villages will be connected, the PMO said Saturday.

These nine highway projects involve a road length of about 350 kilometres at a cost of Rs 14,258 crore.

Modi has recently inaugurated or laid the foundation of a number of development projects, including those related to railways, infrastructure, bridges, drinking water and sanitation, in the state which is set to go to the assembly polls in October-November.

The Prime Minister's Office said in a statement that the proposed highways will pave the way for the state's development as they will enhance better connectivity, convenience and economic growth in and around it. Movement of people and goods will also improve substantially, especially with the neighbouring states of Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, it added.

Modi had declared a special package for significant infrastructure development of Bihar in 2015. The package included 75 projects worth Rs 54,700 crore, of which 13 projects have been completed, and work is undergoing at 38 and others are in

the process to be launched, the PMO said.

With the completion of these projects, all rivers in Bihar will have bridges conforming to 21st century specifications and all major national highways will stand widened and strengthened.

Giving details of the optical fibre internet services programme, the PMO described it as a prestigious project covering all 45,945 villages of Bihar which will enable a 'digital revolution' to reach the state's remotest corner.

This project will be executed by the combined efforts of Department of Telecom, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology and Common Service Centres (CSC).

The PMO said the CSC has 34,821 centres throughout the length and breadth of Bihar and it will utilise this workforce to not only implement this project but also make it professionally run to provide optical fibre internet services for common citizens at every village.

The project would also entail implementation of one Wi-Fi and five free of cost connections to government institutions like primary schools and anganwadi centres among others, it said.

This will lead to digital services like e-education, e-agriculture, tele-medicine, tele-law and other social security schemes to be easily available to all citizens of Bihar at the click of the button, the PMO said.

in containing the Nipah virus in the state in 2018.

With the media also highlighting Shailaja in the way Covid was being tackled, even as the developed countries were fighting hard, she at one point of time was one of the most sought after politicians by the media, including the international media.

But the first strike against her came from Leader of Opposition Ramesh Chennithala, describing Shailaja as one having a 'media mania' and asked her to concentrate on fighting Covid only.

At that time, Chennithala was slammed and he went quiet for some time, but not for a long time. He struck back when the state's Covid figures started to rise at an increasing rate.

Shailaja's latest statement was an earnest call to the society at large that there should be a heightened vigil to check the spread of Covid-19 and appreciated the manner in which people

did quite well during the national lockdown. She warned that the state has the highest density of population besides a huge elderly population and not to mention that Kerala is the national capital of diabetes.

Incidentally all these health characteristics that she highlighted have always been there and there was nothing new.

Chennithala called Shailaja's statement about the 'flattening of the curve' as nothing but an imaginary thing and pointed out that it was like running a marathon and the Left government declared they have won the battle against Covid after running just 100 metres.

With more and more restrictions being eased, it remains to be seen what is in store for Kerala. And with Shailaja cautioning the people, it appears things are not rosy for the state and the question now is -- will the bouquets that was received some time ago turn to brickbats.



Financial frauds have seen exponential increase due to greater dependence on digital payment platforms
AJIT DOVAL | NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

INS VIRAT DECOMMISSIONED

INS Viraat, the aircraft carrier of the Indian Navy which was decommissioned Saturday, sailed from Naval Dockyard to Alang in Gujarat, where it will be dismantled in Mumbai



of the day quote

These bills are anti-farmer and a conspiracy against farmers. In these difficult times, farmers saved our economy but now big industrialists are eyeing farming which will render farmers like labourers



AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

Wearing a mask is important whenever you meet a person outside your house, including outsiders working in your house. This is very important



M VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE PRESIDENT

BJP should give account of its 15-year-long rule in the state before asking about the performance of the previous Congress-led government that was in power for 15 months



KAMAL NATH | CONGRESS LEADER

SHORT TAKES

4 of a family found dead

Jaipur: Bodies of four members of a family were found hanging at their house in Rajasthan's Jamdoli area Saturday, police said. Police suspect that it is a case of death by suicide. The deceased were identified as Yashwant Soni, Mamta Soni and their children Bharat and Ajit. The incident came to light when Yashwant Soni's brother went to their house. A preliminary investigation revealed that the family members were under stress for a long time because of a financial dispute, police said.

Christian named in chargesheet

New Delhi: The CBI has filed a supplementary chargesheet in the AgustaWestland case that names 15 individuals including middleman Christian Michel - a British national extradited to India from Dubai in December 2018 and currently lodged in Delhi's Tihar Jail. Former CAG Shashi Kant Sharma has not been named in this chargesheet as the CBI has not yet received sanction from the Defence Ministry to prosecute him.

Soldier ends life in camp

Jammu: The body of an Army personnel with a bullet injury on the head was found in a camp on the outskirts of Jammu with police suspecting that he ended his own life with his service rifle. Havaldar Harvinder Singh (36), a resident of Punjab, was found dead at Rakh Muthi camp in the Jourian area on Friday, a police official said. He said preliminary investigations suggest the soldier took his own life with his service rifle. The body was handed over to his unit after completion of legal formalities.

Cocaine worth ₹4cr seized

New Delhi: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Saturday said it has seized cocaine worth about ₹4 crore, arrested a person from Mumbai and is probing an illegal network of narcotics distribution in the western metropolis that has "possible linkages" with "high-profile" drug users. The federal agency seized a total of 670 gm of cocaine from a parcel that arrived in Delhi from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia early this month. The agency conducted a "controlled delivery" operation and later arrested the consignee of the parcel, S Ghangale, a resident of Vasai.

INDIA'S HEALTHCARE CREAKS UNDER MOUNTING CASE LOAD

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New Delhi, Sept 19: Coronavirus patients in India are dying because of a lack of beds in intensive care units and a shortage of oxygen cylinders as the healthcare system struggles to cope with a surge in cases. India's tally of confirmed cases passed 5.7 million this week, second only to the United States, after several weeks with an average of 92,000 new infections a day. More than four million patients have recovered, leaving the country with slightly more than 1 million active cases, while the death toll from Covid-19 has passed 84,000.

"The situation is critical," said Dr Devender Singh Rana, chairman of Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in the Indian capital New Delhi. "We are witnessing an unbelievable rise in the number of cases that we had not even seen in June when coronavirus was at its peak [in Delhi] ... there are no beds, we are all full." The healthcare infrastructure in the country of 1.3 billion was already less than ideal before the pandemic, with one doctor for 1,457 people instead of the World Health Organisation norm of 1,000, and one hospital bed for every 1,844 people, according to World Bank data. The government says it has provided 230,000 oxygen-supported isolation beds and 62,717 critical care beds with ventilators since India recorded its first case January 30. Doctors say this is not enough to deal with the pandemic's onslaught. New Delhi, a metropolis of 22 million people, has just 37 Covid-19 designated hospitals and 2,558 ICU beds to treat more than 30,000 active cases. In Mumbai, the financial capital, there was not a single ventilator bed available in any of the top hos-



Dr Rajan Sharma, national president of the IMA, called the situation a "double-whammy" for medical professionals

Covid-19 patients in India are dying because of a lack of beds in intensive care units and a shortage of oxygen cylinders

The govt says it has provided 230,000 oxygen-supported isolation beds and 62,717 critical care beds with ventilators, but doctors say this is not enough to deal with the pandemic's onslaught

Covid tally crosses 53L

New Delhi: India's coronavirus cases Saturday crossed the 53-lakh mark after the country detected a spike of 93,337 new cases in the past 24 hours. India's coronavirus tally, including the recovered cases, has now climbed to 53,08,015, according to the Union Health Ministry. A total of 1,247 coronavirus patients have succumbed to the infection in the past 24 hours, pushing the country's death toll due to Covid-19 to 85,619. The Covid-19 case fatality rate has further dropped at 1.61 per cent, the data showed. India's coronavirus caseload includes 10,13,964 active cases.

pitals in the first week of September. A record-breaking surge of one million cases in just 11 days has also triggered a sharp rise in the demand for oxygen cylinders. Nearly 6 per cent of Covid-19 cases experience moderate to severe symptoms and require oxygen support. The demand for oxygen has triggered

hoarding as well as theft of cylinders - a vehicle loaded with oxygen supplies for hospitals was robbed in the city of Pune last week. According to the All India Industrial Gases Manufacturers Association, hospitals and healthcare centres are using up to 2,700 tonnes of medical oxygen a day, compared to 750 tonnes a day at the beginning of the pandemic. Meanwhile, the country's medical personnel are struggling with the lack of equipment, long working hours, public anger and personal risk from exposure to the virus. At least 380 doctors have lost their lives in the last six months while treating coronavirus patients, according to the Indian Medical Association. In some states, nurses and doctors at government-run hospitals are threatening to strike over non-payment of wages since March. Some doctors have faced discrimination and violence from the general public over fears that they might transmit the virus. Dr Rajan Sharma, national president of the IMA, called the situation a "double-whammy" for medical professionals.

Political blame game in WB over arrest of terrorists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, Sept 19: The arrest of nine terrorists, including six from West Bengal, and busting of an al-Qaeda module Saturday has triggered a political blame game in the state with opposition BJP and Congress alleging that intelligence failure and appeasement politics of the Mamata Banerjee government have led to such a pass.

The ruling Trinamool Congress, on the other hand, said the arrests cannot be construed as failure on the part of the state administration which is committed to flush out terrorists.

The Opposition is politicising an issue involving national security, the TMC said.

Leader of Congress party in Lok Sabha, Adhir Choudhury said the arrest of six alleged al-Qaeda operatives from Murshidabad district shows "total intelligence failure on the part of state police who are only busy running errands for Trinamool Congress leaders."

"It throws up the question whether the state administration is competent enough to tackle the

The arrest of nine terrorists has triggered a political blame game in the state with opposition BJP and Congress alleging that intelligence failure and appeasement politics of the Mamata Banerjee government have led to such a pass

spurt in terrorist activities in state. Earlier, we had heard about numerous cases of Jamaat activists arrested. Now it is al-Qaeda, the most dreaded terror outfit in the world. "This brings bad name to Murshidabad district which has borders with Bangladesh, to entire West Bengal," Chowdhury, the WBPC President said.

He alleged that these incidents send out the message of "communalisation of politics which does not augur well for the state."

Playing the TMC government, senior BJP leader Rahul Sinha said

the state should shun "appeasement politics, dirty communal politics and take strong measures against terror modules setting up their bases in state."

"Remember the RDX blast at Bowbazar over two decades back. The entire state is now sitting on a powder keg. If the administration doesn't sit up and take note, Bengal will be in flames," Sinha said.

Countering the allegations, TMC MP Sougata Roy said the arrests should not lead to any question about the state government's resolve to flush out and crush terrorists. Roy said the terrorists cross over to this side of the border which is manned by central forces. "The border forces could have been more vigilant," he said adding there should be better coordination between the state and BSF.

He said there should be more vigil by the border guards so that infiltration can be thwarted and those coming to this side are tracked.

About the Opposition charges, the veteran TMC leader said, "They are doing politics over an issue of national security".

India digs deep to boost defences on crucial China frontier

A TUNNEL ALMOST COMPLETE IN THE INDIAN HIMALAYAS WILL SLASH BY HOURS THE TIME IT TAKES TROOPS TO REACH THE CHINESE BORDER

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Atal Rohtang tunnel, Sept 19: A tunnel almost complete in the Indian Himalayas will slash by hours the time it takes troops to reach the Chinese border, part of an infrastructure blitz by New Delhi that is gathering pace since a bloody border clash.

The nuclear-armed Asian giants blame each other for a brutal high-altitude battle in June that left 20 Indian soldiers dead and an unspecified number of Chinese casualties.

Both have sent massive troop reinforcements, but India has also stepped up its activities behind the frontlines - belatedly so, analysts say. Its stepped-up infrastructure programme includes roads and bridges as well as high-altitude helipads and airstrips for civilian and military aircraft.

The showpiece is a \$400-million tunnel in Himachal Pradesh state, providing an all-weather route for military convoys to avoid a 50-kilometre trudge through mountain passes that are snow-bound in winter and subject to frequent landslides.

From late this month, what used to be a four-hour, winding, high-altitude crossing will be cut to a 10-minute dash through the mountains in the state-of-the-art tunnel.

"There have been times on the pass route when vehicles have broken down, causing traffic jams of even six to eight hour," said Lieutenant-General Harpal Singh, head of India's Border Roads Organisation (BRO).

"This tunnel and the other infrastructure plans change a lot for the troops," he said.

Engineering feat
Labourers are working overtime



The Atal Rohtang tunnel will allow India to deploy troops to the frontier area in minutes compared with the current four-hour high-altitude crossing. PHOTO

to get the tunnel ready before Prime Minister Narendra Modi is due to open it later this month.

Currently, essential items such as arms, ammunition and food have to be transported up in bulk before winter starts in an area where temperatures can plunge to minus 40°C. Constructed at an altitude of more

Bill to punish people attacking healthcare workers passed in RS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 19: The Rajya Sabha Saturday passed a legislation that provides for up to seven years in jail for those attacking doctors and healthcare workers fighting the Covid-19 outbreak or during any situation akin to the current pandemic. The Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Bill, 2020, was introduced by Health Minister Harsh Vardhan in the Upper House Saturday.

The Bill was supported by the members across party lines; however, some suggested adding in its purview hospital sanitary staff, ASHA (accredited social health activist) workers and 'Corona warriors' in emergency services such as police and personnel from other departments.

Besides, members also pointed out overcharging by some private hospitals in the name of Covid-19 treatment, turning this crisis into an "opportunity" for them.

The Bill will replace an ordinance issued in April by the government. The government had brought the ordinance April 22 to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, to make incidents of violence on health workers treating Covid-19 patients a non-bailable offence with provisions of a penalty and a jail term of up to seven years.

The Bill intends to ensure that during any situation akin to the current pandemic, there is zero-tolerance to any form of violence.

Nagas harden stance, demand separate flag

The joint platform of other Naga armed groups Naga National Political Groups have said they are ready to sign the peace deal without the flag and constitution



AGENCIES

Guwahati, Sept 19: Nagaland's foremost armed rebel group involved in the peace talks, the NSCN-IM, said that without a separate flag and constitution, the peace deal with the Central government will not lead to an honourable solution.

A joint council meeting of the NSCN-IM Friday deliberated on the "historical and political rights of the Naga people" and how the "Indo-Naga political talks" reached this far.

The meeting was held at the central headquarters in Hebron near Dimapur in Nagaland. The hardened stand of the NSCN-IM comes at a time when the peace talks have been hit a deadlock because of differences between the group and the interlocutor RN Ravi, the Governor of Nagaland.

"The house had unanimously adopted the resolution to reiterate the stand of NSCN-IM that the 'Naga national flag and Yehzabo

(constitution) must form a part of the Indo-Naga political solution in order to qualify the Naga deal as honourable and acceptable," NSCN-IM said in a press statement.

They also added that the centre and the NSCN-IM must seek a "final agreement" based on the historic Framework Agreement signed August 3, 2015.

This comes at a time when a delegation of top leaders of NSCN-IM, including general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah, are camping in New Delhi for taking forward the talks with officials of the Home Ministry and the Intelligence Bureau, without Ravi.

The idea is to iron out differences and work towards a possible final deal for the talks that have been on since 1997, sources said.

Last month, in a radical departure from the government line on the subject, NSCN-IM had claimed that the Centre had recognised the sovereignty of the Naga people through the framework agreement signed in 2015 which agreed that the Nagas will co-exist but not merge with India. Meanwhile, according to government sources, the joint platform of other Naga armed groups Naga National Political Groups have said they are ready to sign the peace deal without the flag and constitution.

PREPAREDNESS



An Army convoy carrying military material on its way to Ladakh amid border tension with China at Manali-Leh highway, Saturday. PHOTO

Man held for cheating 600 people of ₹60cr

AGENCIES

Lucknow, Sept 19: The Uttar Pradesh police Saturday arrested a man for allegedly duping over 600 people of around ₹60 crore on the promise of a 60 per cent return on their investments.

The Special Task Force of the UP police said it arrested the racketeer's mastermind, Hari Om Yadav, from Chandpur village in Sultanpur Road in Lucknow under Gosaiganj

police station at around 5 am.

The police also confiscated three mobile phones, five cheque books, one passbook, an Aadhaar card, a laptop and ₹700 cash from the accused, the STF said in a statement.

The STF said it made the arrest following a probe into complaints by several people that they have been duped of their money on the promise of 60 per cent returns on their investments.

During the probe, it transpired

that the racket was being run through a multi-level marketing mechanism, with Hari Om Yadav, doubling as CMDs of Alaska Real Estate Pvt Ltd, Alaska Commodities and Alaska Enterprises and duping around 600 persons for ₹60 crore.

A case was registered in this connection at Gosaiganj police station under various sections of the IPC, and as many as nine members of the gang were arrested earlier September 15, the statement said.

Still, India's efforts only belatedly mirror those of China, experts say. "Earlier administrations wasted two decades," said Harsh Pant, from the Observer Research Foundation think-tank in New Delhi.

"China, and its infrastructure, is much stronger today."

Training the locals

Sanjay Kundu, the Himachal Pradesh police chief, has also proposed arming locals and training them to report possible Chinese spies and drone and helicopter sightings.

"Ultimately whether it is at the border or the hinterland, people need to be trained and they need to be trained in defending themselves," he said. The government hopes it will reassure worried villagers.

"In the last few weeks they've seen a lot more activity of fighter planes over the region," said Lobsang

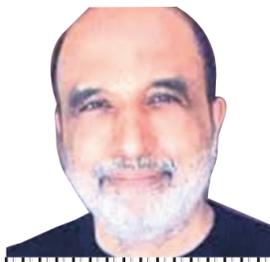
Gyaltsen, an elected representative from a village around 30 kilometres from the border.

"They often wonder if China is attacking," Gyaltsen said.

The BRO says it has built more strategic roads - most in the high-tension zone next to China - the last four years than in the previous decade and aims to complete 15 more key routes by the end of 2021.

Labourers are upgrading a recently-completed 250-kilometre stretch parallel to the Chinese frontier that cuts journey times from Ladakh's capital Leh from one week to less than a day.

Significantly, by next month all bridges along the route will be able to support the weight of a 70-tonne T-90 tank on a trailer, or a truck carrying a surface-to-air missile, according to press reports.



The Congress and the BJP are "on the same page" as far as the farm Bills are concerned
SANJAY JHA |
SUSPENDED CONGRESS LEADER

VETERAN COMMUNIST LEADER ROZA DESHPANDE PASSES AWAY

Veteran Communist leader, women's rights activist and ex-MP Roza Deshpande passed away in Mumbai due to old age related ailments, according to a family source



of the day quote

Presently, farmers in Punjab and Haryana are staging protests on the streets. Soon, farmers from all over the country will hold demonstrations on the streets



BHUPESH BAGHEL |
CHHATTISGARH CHIEF MINISTER

A rustic farmer gave an example to us... 'Jio came in, they gave free phones. When everyone bought those phones and got dependent on these phones, the competition was wiped out and Jio jacked up their rates. This is exactly what the corporates are going to do



HARSIMRAT KAUR BADAL |
AKALI DAL LEADER

Government will allow them to utilise those infrastructures of ISRO which are otherwise not available elsewhere in India and there will be reasonable charges for utilisation of government infrastructure which will be varying depending on the requirement



JITENDRA SINGH |
MINISTER OF ATOMIC ENERGY AND SPACE

SHORT TAKES

3 LeT terrorists arrested in J&K

Jammu: Three suspected Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists have been arrested by the security forces from Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir with a large cache of arms and ammunition they had received through drones, officials said Saturday. All three belong to South Kashmir's Pulwama district and have been identified as Rahil Bashir, Amir Jan and Hafiz Younis Wani. Police said they had gone to Rajouri to receive the weapons sent by drones from Pakistan.

Minor abducted, raped in UP

Muzaffarnagar: A 16-year-old girl was allegedly abducted and raped by a youth in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district, police said Saturday. The alleged incident took place Friday in the village under Bhopa police station limits, they said. The girl returned to her home later in the evening after which a case was registered under sections IPC Sections 363 (Kidnapping), 364 (kidnapping or abduction in order to murder) and 376 (rape) and provisions of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Farmer ends life over farm Bills

Chandigarh: A 70-year-old farmer has died after consuming some poisonous substance during a protest against the new farm Bills in Muktsar district of Punjab, police said Saturday. Pritam Singh, a resident of Akkanwali village of Mansa district, consumed the poisonous substance Friday morning and died at a hospital later in the day, they said. Singh had been participating in the protest since September 15.

15 booked for burning PM Modi's effigy

Muzaffarnagar: Fifteen people, including the national president of a little-known outfit, were booked on the charges of rioting after they burnt an effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his birthday while observing "Unemployment Day" in neighbouring Shamli district, police said Saturday. The case was registered against 11 unidentified people and four named accused Friday based on a complaint filed by Shamli district BJP president.

NIA arrests 9 al-Qaeda men from Bengal, Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Kolkata, Sept 19: Foiling an attempt by internationally banned terror group al-Qaeda to set up a base in India, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) swooped on its recruits in West Bengal and Kerala and arrested nine of them, an official spokesperson said Saturday.

Acting on a tip-off provided by central intelligence agencies, the NIA, with the help of the state police forces, carried out raids in the intervening night of September 18 and 19 at Ernakulam in Kerala and Murshidabad in West Bengal, and arrested the nine men - Murshid Hasan, Iyayak Biswas, Mosaraf Hossen from Ernakulam and Najmus Sakib, Abu Sufiyan, Mainul Mondal, Leu Yean Ahmed, Al Mamun Kamal and Atitir Rehman from Murshidabad.

Hasan was leading the gang and those arrested from Kerala are originally residents of West Bengal, the NIA spokesperson said.

According to the officials investigating the case, the arrested men are highly radicalised and were getting instructions from Pakistan-based al-Qaeda members via cyberspace.

The module was planning to target vital installations as well as targeted killings in India and was in the advanced stage of procuring arms, including automatic rifles and pistols, ammunition and explosives to carry out attacks.

Some of its members were trying



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According to the officials investigating the case, the arrested men are highly radicalised and were getting instructions from Pakistan-based al-Qaeda members via cyberspace

SOME OF ITS MEMBERS WERE TRYING TO DEVELOP EXPERTISE IN IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE-MAKING TOO AND WERE PLANNING TO CONVERT CRACKERS INTO AN IED

to develop expertise in Improvised Explosive Device (IED)-making too and were planning to convert crackers into an IED. The NIA recovered switches and batteries from Abu Sufiyan's house during the raids.

Besides, the module was trying to establish a well organised al-Qaeda network in different parts of the country, including the north-east and Jammu and Kashmir; on the instructions of their Pakistan-based handlers, the official said.

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar was quick enough to take a dig at the Mamata Banerjee

government in the state, saying West Bengal has become "home to illegal bomb-making" and the state administration cannot escape its accountability for the "alarming decline" in law and order.

The governor alleged that the state director general of police is distanced far from reality and his "ostrich stance" is "very disturbing". "How far distanced is DGP @WBPolice from reality is cause of worry. His 'Ostrich Stance' is very disturbing," he tweeted.

The Governor, who has had regular run-ins with the Mamata

Chinese woman, Nepalese man held for paying scribe for defence info



The development comes after the Special Cell arrested journalist Rajeev Sharma, a resident of Pitampura in New Delhi under the Official Secrets Act

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 19: Delhi Police Special Cell has arrested a Chinese woman and her Nepalese associate for paying freelance journalist Rajeev Sharma for the sensitive information passed on to the Chinese intelligence, police said Saturday.

"The Chinese intelligence had tasked the journalist to convey sensitive information in lieu of large sums of money routed through shell companies. A number of mobile phones, laptops, and other incriminating and sensitive material have also been seized," said Sajeev Yadav, DCP, Special Cell.

The development comes after the Special Cell arrested journalist Rajeev Sharma, a resident of Pitampura in New Delhi under the Official Secrets Act.

"He was found to be in possession of some defence-related classified documents," said the DCP.

Rajeev Sharma, who had worked

for various newspapers and news agencies, was arrested Monday and presented in a Delhi court the next day Sharma was sent in police custody for six days.

After his arrest, his Twitter account has also been restricted. The Twitter flashed a message that his account showed suspicious activity and hence was restricted.

In 2019, columnist Rajeev Sharma was supposed to be one of the many victims of the alleged Pegasus snooping. After his arrest, the Delhi Police seized his laptop and mobile phone, and scanned his CDR to know with whom he was in contact with.

Sources said that the Delhi Police had got secret information about his alleged involvement in procurement of classified documents.

The Special Cell is interrogating Sharma to know how he procured the defence-related classified documents and for how long he had been passing sensitive information to the Chinese intelligence.



A Kashmiri woman holds a girl as they watch a protest after a gun battle between suspected militants and Indian security forces in Srinagar

J&K announces ₹1,350cr economic relief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Sept 19: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha announced a ₹1,350-crore economic package for the Union Territory Saturday to give a much needed boost to tourism and other sectors hit by the economic slowdown caused due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the security scenario.

As a part of the package, the government has waived 50 per cent of the electricity and water bill amounts for a year across Jammu and Kashmir with an aim to bring a huge relief to farmers, families and businesses.

Sinha also hinted that the Centre is actively considering an "unprecedented and historic package" for assistance to business entities,

which will cover both the existing and new enterprises and will be a big boost to business and industry in Jammu and Kashmir.

Announcing this, the LG said, "You know that at the most, a two-per cent interest subvention is provided and that is what the people expect as well. However, keeping in mind the special situation here - businesses have been suffering for the last about 20 years - we have decided to give an interest subvention of five per cent without any discrimination to all businesses whether small, medium or heavy. This is an unprecedented decision."

He said the Union Territory administration will directly support this with ₹950 crore.

Sinha also announced that stamp duty has been exempted in case of

Govt withdraws three labour Bills from LS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 19: The Centre Saturday withdrew three Bills moved by the Labour Ministry in the Lok Sabha and reintroduced them with fresh labour code provisions as part of the labour reforms initiative.

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2019; Industrial Relations Code, 2019; and Code on Social Security, 2019 were withdrawn from the Lower House when it assembled for the day at 3 p.m.

Minister of State (independent charge) in the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Santosh Kumar Gangwar, moved the proposal for the withdrawal of these Bills and later reintroduced them with fresh provisions.

In his speech, Gangwar said various changes have been made in the provisions related to the labour Codes as well as their Preamble, necessitating their withdrawal and introduction of new ones. "Because of various changes in the Bills, it is necessary to withdraw earlier ones and introduce Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020; Industrial Relations Code, 2020; and Code on Social Security, 2020 in their place."

The original Codes were introduced in the Lok Sabha in 2019 but

later referred to the Parliament's Standing Committee on Labour, which discussed all the three.

"Standing Committee led by Chairman Bhartruhari Mahtab, a Biju Janata Dal MP from Cuttack, made 233 recommendations and we accepted 174 of them."

The minister said all these changes in the new Bills are part of the labour reforms initiative. "When the country got independence, there were 44 labour laws.

As some of them were later repealed, we are now working to change 29 labour laws into four Codes. This House passed the first Code with full support; we have come with three more Codes."

Later, the Minister said that his ministry held nine tripartite consultations, four sub-committee meetings, 10 regional conferences, discussed labour court provisions at various places in the country, 10 inter-ministerial consultations and also took suggestions from various departments and Ministries as well as the public.

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2019 aimed to consolidate and amend the laws regulating the occupational safety, health and working conditions of the persons employed in an establishment.

The minister reintroduced them with fresh labour code provisions as part of the labour reforms initiative

SW Monsoon withdrawal likely to begin next week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Sept 19: The Southwest Monsoon is likely to start withdrawing from west Rajasthan by the end of next week, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Conditions are likely to become favourable in the next two days for the withdrawal of monsoon. North Indians plains are also witnessing above normal temperatures, it said.

"These are one of the weather patterns we see when conditions are ripe for monsoon withdrawal. From September 20 onwards, we don't see the possibility of monsoon rains in west Rajasthan," IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said.

The IMD has revised the withdrawal dates for monsoon from this year. According to the new schedule, monsoon was expected to withdraw September 17. However, due to a low pressure area in the Bay of Bengal, the retreat has been delayed.

The withdrawal of the Southwest Monsoon from west Rajasthan also makes conditions conducive for onset of winter. Several parts of central and south India are likely to receive heavy rainfall in the next two days.

So far, the country has received 7 per cent more rainfall than normal. The northwest division of the IMD has an overall 15 per cent deficiency. It comprises Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab.

Trapped in Chinese debt, Maldives mends ties with India

AS TOURISM, THE MOST IMPORTANT SECTOR FOR MALDIVES, TOOK A HUGE BLOW WITH THE SPREAD OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, CONCERNS OVER DEBT REPAYMENT TO 'ALLY' CHINA ARE LOOMING LARGE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Sept 19: As tourism - the most important sector for Maldives, contributing the most of the nation's gross domestic product - took a huge blow with the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, concerns over debt repayment to 'ally' China are looming large.

The archipelago nation on the Indian Ocean owes about \$1.4 billion to China. It is a huge sum for a country which has a GDP of \$5.7 billion; this translates to almost one-fourth. What is worrisome is that, as many analysts said, the figure of \$1.4 billion may not be a true representation, the actual debt feared to be much higher.

With the pandemic hitting the

economy hard, amid the World Bank's projection of an 8.5 per cent contraction in its economy, the nation is in no position to make the repayment. Besides tourism, the country's construction activities have also come to a near halt.

"The shock to tourism adversely affects employment and household earnings, as one-third of adult males and a quarter of females are engaged in tourism-related jobs. Lower-income households that depend on fisheries are also affected as exports of raw fish have ceased due to weak demand," a World Bank report said. Tourism accounts for about 28 per cent of the country's GDP and generates over 60 per cent foreign exchange receipts.

In 2018, the Maldives government



had indicated that interest rates extended on concessional loans from the dragon nation constitute only about 1.5 per cent to 2 per cent, "while those on loans made under sovereign guarantee are around 6 per cent to 7 per cent". The Nikkei Asian Review had quoted Maldivian Finance Minister Ibrahim Ameer as

saying, "We are mostly looking into increasing the repayment period."

The Chinese debt trap
Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, soon after getting elected in 2018, said that the country's close tie-ups with China have brought about a financial crisis into the nation.

"Solih appeared to be in no doubt that the country's financial crisis was brought about by the previous administration's overly-close relationship with China. The implication is that China, as it has done in Sri Lanka, has used financial loans to manipulate the Maldives into a position of indebtedness to Beijing," FutureDirections.org.au said.

Just after Maldives celebrated its 55th Independence Day July 26, China issued a notice asking Male to repay \$10 million which was backed by sovereign guarantee. This means that failure to repay would amount to a sovereign default that has serious ramifications for the country's economy. Reports have suggested that the Xi Jinping government in August sought re-

payment of a larger amount, paid. In 2017, China gave a \$127 million loan to Sun Siyam Resorts Private Ltd but what is interesting is that the Maldivian government had extended sovereign guarantee for the same.

"At \$1.4 billion, of which \$857 million has been disbursed, most of the foreign debt is owed to China for financing former President Abdulla Yameen's infrastructure scale-up," Maldives Independent reported said.

According to Harvard Business Review, China with its debt diplomacy currently is a major global lender, with outstanding claims now exceeding more than 5 per cent of global GDP. The lending is done both directly by the government and the state-controlled entities.



Russia is ready to work with the winner of the forthcoming US presidential election
SERGEY LAVROV | RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER

POTENTIAL THREAT

Pakistan is facing another potential threat of a major damage to its exports as India has applied for an exclusive Geographical Indications tag to Basmati rice in the European Union



of the day quote

Pyongyang summit accord with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un should be implemented despite restraints at home and abroad
MOON JAE-IN | SOUTH KOREAN PRESIDENT

The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the need for massive upgrades of school technology around the country
ANGELA MERKEL | GERMAN CHANCELLOR

A second wave of Covid-19 in Britain is coming in, and the government may need to intensify things to help bring the rate of infections down
BORIS JOHNSON | BRITISH PM

SHORT TAKES

2 dead, 1 missing

Athens: Two people have died and one is reported missing in central Greece region of Thessaly after a storm pounded parts of the country overnight and caused flooding. Authorities identified the two victims as an elderly woman found dead in her flooded home and a 63-year-old shepherd who was swept by rising flood waters. They said a woman who ignored firefighter and police instructions not to drive into an area where a bridge spans a river is missing. The country's firefighting service said early Saturday that it had fielded almost 2,500 calls from trapped residents in central and western Greece or about removing fallen trees that were blocking roads or had caused property damage. The service reported rescuing more than 600 people.

Firefighter dies

Juniper Hills (US): The death of a firefighter on the lines of a wildfire east of Los Angeles was under investigation Friday as another blaze to the north burned homes in a small community on the edge of the Mojave Desert. The death occurred Thursday in San Bernardino National Forest as crews battled the El Dorado Fire about 75 miles (120 kilometers) east of LA, the U.S. Forest Service said in a statement. The fire erupted earlier this month from a smoke-generating pyrotechnic device used by a couple to reveal their baby's gender, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire, said. The name of the firefighter was being withheld until family members are notified.

Guard suspended

London: A bodyguard who was travelling with Britain's foreign secretary has been suspended from duties after he reportedly left a loaded gun on a plane. British media reported Saturday that the police protection officer travelling with Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab on a visit to the United States left the pistol on a plane at London's Heathrow Airport on Friday. A cleaner found the weapon, media reports said. London's Metropolitan Police said the force was aware of "the incident on a flight into the UK on Friday" and "taking this matter extremely seriously."

Quake rattles California

South el Monte (US): A magnitude 4.6 earthquake struck Southern California late Friday night, according to the US Geological Survey. The earthquake hit around 11:40 PM, about 3 kilometers outside of South El Monte, near Los Angeles, the agency reported.

China protests US ban on TikTok, WeChat

TIKTOK AND WECHAT WERE FIRST BANNED BY INDIA JUNE 29 ALONG WITH 59 CHINESE APPS, SAYING THEY WERE PREJUDICIAL TO SOVEREIGNTY, INTEGRITY AND SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Sept 19: China Saturday said it was resolutely opposed to the US' move of blocking downloads of WeChat and TikTok apps and warned counter measures to protect the interest of Chinese companies. The US Friday issued orders to ban popular Chinese social media apps TikTok and WeChat from Sunday to safeguard national security, weeks after India banned them, saying they were prejudicial to sovereignty, integrity and security of the country. Last month, US President Donald Trump signed an executive order to ban TikTok and WeChat by September 15 unless the ownership of the two Chinese companies changed to American. Reacting to orders issued by the Trump administration to ban TikTok and WeChat from Sunday, China's Ministry of Commerce (MOC) said it was resolutely opposed to the US' move to block downloads of these apps. In the absence of any evidence, the US has repeatedly used state



power to suppress the two enterprises for unwarranted reasons, which seriously disrupted their normal business activities, undermined the confidence of international investors in the US investment environment and damaged the normal global economic and trade order, the MOC said in a statement. It said Washington should immediately stop bullying and safeguard international rules and order. "If the US is bent on having its own way, China will take necessary measures to resolutely protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies," the ministry said, without giving details. Though the ministry did not specify any retaliatory action, it

issued rules for a widely anticipated unreliable entity list mechanism on Saturday that could severely punish foreign entities and individuals who undermine China's national interests. The move is believed to counter the US' relentless crackdown campaign against Chinese businesses, state-run Global Times said. The list would include foreign entities or individuals who undermine China's sovereignty, security and development interests and those who violate market principles by cutting off normal transactions with Chinese firms, organizations or individuals, the MOC said. The Ministry did not release specific foreign entities or individuals that will be put on the list. TikTok and WeChat were first banned by India June 29 along with 59 Chinese apps, saying they were prejudicial to sovereignty, integrity and security of the country. The ban was expanded to 224 Chinese apps later. The ban was imposed in the backdrop of a tense stand-off along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh with Chinese troops.

DISPLAY OF FORCE

China sends jets as Taiwan honours Lee

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Taipei, Sept 19: China sent more warplanes toward Taiwan for the second day Saturday as the island's leader, senior government officials and a high-level US envoy paid tribute to the man who led Taiwan's transition to democracy, former President Lee Teng-hui. Keith Krach, the US undersecretary for state, kept a low profile at the event and on the island has drawn a strong rebuke from China, which sent 18 warplanes across the midline of the Taiwan Strait Friday in an unusually large display of force. Saturday, Beijing dispatched 19 more warplanes, two of which were bombers, according to Taiwan's Defence Ministry. The island's air force scrambled their own and deployed an air defense missile system to monitor China's activities, according to a statement. The service was held at the Aletheia University in Taipei on a balmy Saturday morning, with President Tsai Ing-wen honouring Lee for bringing a peaceful politi-

cal transition to the island democracy. Lee had built a separate Taiwanese political identity, distinct from mainland China, which claims Taiwan as part of its own territory to be reunited by force if necessary. Lee's carving out of a non-Chinese identity and insistence that the island be treated as an equal country brought him into direct conflict with Beijing. He died July 30 at age 97. "We have a responsibility to continue his endeavours, allowing the will of the people to reshape Taiwan, further defining Taiwan's identity and deepening and bolstering democracy and freedom," Tsai said. Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the Dalai Lama also paid tribute from afar. "We Buddhists believe in life after life, so most probably he will be reborn in Taiwan," the Dalai Lama said in a video message. "His rebirth will carry his spirit continuously." The guests included another former Japanese prime minister, Yoshiro Mori. They wore masks and sat spaced out in pews.



2 killed, 14 hurt in NY shooting

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rochester, Sept 19: Two people died and 14 others were wounded at a backyard party in Rochester, New York, early Saturday, police said. The deaths included a male and a female, both between the ages of 18 and 22, Interim Police Chief Mark Simmons said. The 14 wounded people were taken to two different hospitals. Simmons said none of them were believed to have life-threatening injuries. "This is truly a tragedy of epic proportions," Simmons said near the crime scene, which appeared to stretch at least a block. The shooting comes as the city's police department has been rocked by the suffocation death of Daniel Prude. Video taken in March and made public by Prude's family September 4 shows Prude handcuffed and naked with a spit hood over his head as an officer pushes his face against the street while another officer presses a knee to his back. The officers held him down for about two minutes until he stopped breathing. He was taken off life support a week later. Monday, Mayor Lovely Warren fired Police Chief LaRon Singletary, who she said initially misled her about the circumstances of Prude's death. The fatal shooting early Saturday did not appear to be linked to the March death. Officers responded to calls of shots fired and found "approximately 100 people" running from the scene, Simmons said.

DEMOCRATIC REFORMS

Thai protesters hold ambitious rally

Organisers predicted that as many as 50,000 will march over two days in an area of the capital historically associated with political protests, after an estimated 10,000 people turned out for the last major rally August 16

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bangkok, Sept 19: Protesters gathered Saturday in Bangkok for the most ambitious rally so far in a pro-democracy campaign that has shaken up the government and Thailand's conservative establishment. Organisers predicted that as many as 50,000 will march over two days in an area of the capital historically associated with political protests, after an estimated 10,000 people turned out for the last major rally August 16. But the early turnout was modest Saturday as a steady light rain fell. Demonstrators wore face masks, but ignored a Thursday night plea from Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha to cancel the event, which he said risked spreading the coronavirus and derailing recovery of Thailand's battered economy. The core demands declared by the protesters in July were the dissolution of parliament with fresh elections, a new constitution and an end to intimidation of political activists. They believe that Prayuth, who as then-army commander led a 2014 coup top-



pling an elected government, was returned to power unfairly in last year's general election because the laws had been changed to favor a pro-military party. A constitution promulgated under military rule is likewise undemocratic, they charge. The mostly student activists raised the stakes dramatically at an August 10 rally by issuing a 10-point manifesto calling for reforming the monarchy. Their demands seek to limit the king's powers, establish tighter controls on palace finances and allow open discussion of the monarchy. Their boldness was virtually unprecedented, as the monarchy is considered sacrosanct in Thailand.

Nepal gets 2 modern trains from India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Sept 19: India has handed over two modern trains to Nepal that would run between Jaynagar in Bihar and Kurtha in Dhanusa district from mid-December, marking the beginning of the first broad-gauge railway service in the Himalayan nation, officials said Saturday. The Konkan Railway delivered two modern Diesel-Electric Multiple Unit (DMUC) trains to the Nepal Railway for Jaynagar-Kurtha broad gauge line on Friday. These trains are manufactured by Integrated Coach Factory, Chennai with modern amenities and latest AC-AC propulsion technology. The Indian technicians and the Nepal Railway staff were welcomed at various locations when the trains arrived in the country from India on Friday. Thousands of people gathered to see the new trains despite the coronavirus pandemic that has killed 390 people and infected over 60,000 others in Nepal. The train operations from Kurtha to Jaynagar, covering a distance of 35-km, will benefit citizens of both the countries, according to Indian Embassy sources. The trial run of the new trains started from Friday on the broad gauge tracks whose construction was completed last year, according to Nepal Railway Company Director General Guru Bhattarai. Since the border is unlikely to open soon due to the pandemic, the train services would not start now and the trains would be parked at the Nepal Railway Station in Jaynagar for maintenance and safety.

FUN TIME



Hossam Nasser plays with his camel in front of his house in the Nubian village of Gharb Soheil, on the west bank of the Nile river in Aswan, Egypt

Ocean's hidden heat measured with quake sound

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Los Angeles, Sept 19: Scientists have developed a novel method to determine how fast the Indian Ocean is warming by analysing the sound from seabed earthquakes, an advance that may lead to a relatively low-cost technique to monitor water temperatures in all of the oceans. According to the researchers, including those from the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in the US, as much as 95 per cent of the extra heat trapped on the Earth by greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide is held in the world's oceans, making it important to



monitor the temperature of ocean waters. In the current study, published in the journal Science, the scientists used existing seismic monitoring equipment, as well as historic data on earthquakes, to de-

termine how much the temperature of the ocean has altered, and continues changing, even at depths that are normally out of the reach of conventional tools. They assessed a 3,000-kilometer-long section in the equatorial East Indian Ocean, and found temperature fluctuations between 2005 and 2016, with a decadal warming trend that "substantially exceeds previous estimates." By one estimate, the scientists said the ocean could be warming by nearly 70 per cent greater than had been believed. However, they cautioned against drawing any immediate conclusions, as more data need to be collected and analysed.

Ginsburg, a feminist icon memorialised as the Notorious RBG

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, Sept 19: Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg moved slowly. When court was in session, she often had her head down, sometimes leading visitors to think she was asleep. She once acknowledged that she did occasionally nod off. She once confessed to dozing during a State of the Union. But it was a mistake to equate her gait and gaze with frailty, for Ginsburg showed over and over a steely resilience in the face of personal loss and serious health problems that made the diminutive New Yorker a towering women's rights champion and forceful presence at the court over 27 years. She made few concessions to age and recurrent health problems, working regularly with a personal

trainer. She never missed any time in court before the age of 85, and then only following surgery in December 2018 for lung cancer. Ginsburg died Friday of complications from metastatic pancreatic cancer at her home in Washington at 87, the court said. Late in her court tenure, she became a social media icon, the Notorious RBG, a name coined by a law student who admired Ginsburg's dissent in a case cutting back on a key civil rights law. The justice was at first taken aback. There was nothing "notorious" about this woman of rectitude who wore a variety of lace collars on the bench and often appeared in public in elegant gloves. But when her law clerks and grandchildren explained the connection to another Brooklynite, the



rapper The Notorious B.I.G., her skepticism turned to delight. "In the word the current generation uses, it's awesome," Ginsburg said in 2016, shortly before she turned 83. In 2018, Ginsburg was the subject of a documentary and a fea-

ture film "On the Basis of Sex," in which the actor Felicity Jones portrayed her. In her final years on the court, Ginsburg was the unquestioned leader of the liberal justices, as outspoken in dissent as she was cautious in earlier years. Criticizing the court's conservative majority for getting rid of a key part of the landmark Voting Rights Act in 2013, Ginsburg wrote that it was like "throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet." Her stature on the court and the death of her husband in 2010 probably contributed to Ginsburg's decision to remain on the bench beyond the goal she initially set for herself, to match Justice Louis Brandeis' 22 years on the court and his retirement at the age of 82.

Ginsburg had special affection for Brandeis, the first Jew named to the high court. She was the court's second woman and its sixth Jewish justice. In time she was joined by two other Jews, Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan, and two other women, Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor. Both developments were perhaps unthinkable when Ginsburg graduated from law school in 1959 and faced the triple bogey of looking for work as a woman, a mother and a Jew. Forty years later, she noted that religion had become irrelevant in the selection of high-court justices and that gender was heading in the same direction, though when asked how many women would be enough for the high court, Ginsburg replied without hesitation, "Nine." She could take some credit for equal-

ity of the sexes in the law. In the 1970s, she argued six key cases before the court when she was an architect of the women's rights movement. She won five. "Ruth Bader Ginsburg does not need a seat on the Supreme Court to earn her place in the American history books," President Bill Clinton said in 1993 when he announced her appointment. "She has already done that." Her time as a justice was marked by triumphs for equality for women, as in her opinion for the court ordering the Virginia Military Institute to accept women or give up its state funding. There were setbacks, too. She dissented forcefully from the court's decision in 2007 to uphold a nationwide ban on an abortion procedure that opponents call partial-birth abortion.



The corporate debtor often has guarantors. So for comprehensive corporate insolvency resolution and liquidation we felt it was necessary that the insolvency of the corporate debtor as well as its guarantors are considered together to whatever extent it is possible

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | UNION FINANCE MINISTER

CABINET NOTE READY FOR VEHICLE SCRAPPING: GOVT

The government Saturday said a Cabinet note has been formulated for the vehicle scrapping policy. MoRTH has formulated a note for Cabinet on creation of an ecosystem for voluntary and eco-friendly phasing out of unfit and old polluting vehicles



of the day quote

The govt envisages creation of National Database for Unorganised Workers. This database shall be seeded with Aadhaar and used for facilitating delivery of social security schemes implemented by the government

SANTOSH GANGWAR | LABOUR MINISTER

The commission has given violators the option of either stop selling products in the name of Khadi or legal action will be initiated for recovery of heavy damages

VINAI KUMAR SAXENA | CHAIRMAN, KVIC

The BMW R18 is BMW Motorrad's much-anticipated entry into the cruiser segment. Fans and motorcycling enthusiasts in India have been eagerly waiting for this day

VIKRAM PAWAH | GROUP PRESIDENT, BMW

'Fuel demand to shrink 11.5% in 2020'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 19: Fitch Solutions has revised downward its forecast for fuel demand contraction in India to 11.5 per cent in 2020 in line with further deterioration in the country's economic outlook.

Its economists forecast India's real GDP to contract by 8.6 per cent in the fiscal year 2020-21 (April 2020 to March 2021), down from -4.5 per cent previously.

"Demand weakness is spread across the board, with both consumer and industrial fuels set for the steep decline," Fitch Solutions said in a note. "We have made a further downward revision to our India refined fuels demand forecast for 2020, from -9.4 per cent to -11.5 per cent, in line with further deterioration in the country's economic outlook."

It forecast a 5 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y) growth in 2021 and 2022, as the outbreak is brought under control and the economic activity normalises. In the first quarter of 2020-21, the GDP shrank by 23.9 per cent, the steepest contraction on record. The domestic COVID-19 outbreak shows no signs of abating, with daily cases continuing to accelerate.

"While the nationwide lockdown (in place since March 25) was lifted on May 31, state-level restrictions remain in place and will likely drag on the economic recovery," it said.

High unemployment and the loss of income stemming from the coronavirus have severely depressed consumer spending, which in turn will weigh on the business invest-

GLOOMY FORECAST ON INDIA



IN THE Q1 OF 2020-21, THE GDP SHRANK BY 23.9 PC, THE STEEPEST CONTRACTION ON RECORD. THE DOMESTIC COVID-19 OUTBREAK SHOWS NO SIGNS OF ABATING

FITCH'S ECONOMISTS FORECAST INDIA'S REAL GDP TO CONTRACT BY 8.6 PER CENT IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 (APRIL 2020 TO MARCH 2021), DOWN FROM -4.5 PER CENT PREVIOUSLY

- HIGH JOB LOSS AND LOSS OF INCOME STEMMING FROM THE PANDEMIC HAVE SEVERELY DEPRESSED CONSUMER SPENDING, WHICH IN TURN WILL WEIGH ON BUSINESSES

ment, it said. In response to the pandemic, the government has introduced a number of stimulus measures which will likely continue to boost spending in the face of a persistent revenue shortfall.

"However, given the scale of the economic damage currently being wrought, the fiscal response is proving far from sufficient," Fitch said. Fitch Solutions said demand weakness is spread across the board, with both consumer and industrial fuels set for steep decline.

With a nationwide lockdown in place over March to May, domestic demand plummeted, reaching its nadir in April at 48.7 per cent year-

on-year contraction for total fuels consumption. As the lockdown was rolled back, demand began showing some signs of life, contracting by just 8.6 per cent in June. However, state-level restrictions, persistent disruption to economic activity and continued and aggressive spread of the virus dragged the demand lower once again, with 20.6 per cent contraction in August.

The transport sectors have suffered the heaviest losses, as social distancing measures cut off traffic and travel and curbed demand for road, air and shipping freight.

In percentage terms, jet fuel has seen the sharpest contraction, with

consumption falling on average by 46.6 per cent in the eight months to August, it said adding at its April low, the demand contracted by 91.4 per cent y-o-y, due to a total ban on flights, excluding those for essential cargo movement, such as medicines. Gasoline (petrol) demand fell by an average of 16.1 per cent in the YTD (with a low of 60.4 per cent) and diesel demand (which is widely used in the transport, industrial and power sectors) was down by 25 per cent, with a low of 55.5 per cent.

"Industrial demand as a whole has declined sharply, due to restrictions in place on business activities, labour and supply shortages and credit constraints," Fitch said. The one bright spot was LPG, demand for which rose by 4.3 per cent in the year to date. "Social distancing measures have increased residential demand as a whole, while the government's policy to offer free cylinder refills to low-income households offered an extra boost," it said.

Fitch said its 2021 and 2022 fuel demand forecast are skewed to the downside. "The economy was already under strain in advance of COVID-19. The virus has only served to exacerbate this strain and the path to recovery is far from clear. Both the manufacturing and services sectors will likely remain under pressure in the coming months, as demand remains weak and state-level restrictions constrain activity."

A rollback of these restrictions should help normalise output, but in light of the persistence of the outbreak, the return to normalcy will likely be slow, it said.

Govt introduces three labour Bills in Lok Sabha



AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 19: The government Saturday introduced three bills related to labour laws, including on industrial relations, in the Lok Sabha amid opposition from the Congress and few other parties. Labour Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar introduced the Occupational Safety, Health And Working Conditions Code, 2020, the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, and the Code On Social Security, 2020. He withdrew the three bills that were introduced last year and introduced the three new ones.

According to the minister, over 29 labour laws have been merged into four codes and that one of them has already been passed. The Code on Wages Bill, 2019 was passed by Parliament last year.

Gangwar noted that the government engaged in wider consultations over these bills with various stakeholders and that more than 6,000 comments were received online on the bills. These bills were later sent to a standing committee

and 174 of its 233 recommendations have been accepted, the minister said. Congress leaders -- Manish Tewari and Shashi Tharoor -- opposed the introduction of the three bills. Tewari noted these three bills are fundamentally changed versions of their earlier forms and urged the minister to withdraw them and hold wider consultations before introducing them. These bills are also a blow to the rights of workers, he added.

Regarding the bill on occupational safety, health and working conditions, Tharoor said it fails to have specific provisions to safeguard interests of unorganised sector workers and also that there was no exclusive chapter on interstate migrant workers. He also said that the bill is discriminatory since there is no specific provision on women's welfare. With respect to the industrial relations code, he said it severely restricts the right of workers to strike and also allows state or central governments to amend the threshold for applicability relating to layoffs.

SHORT TAKES

Blackstone sells stake in Essel

New Delhi: American buyout major Blackstone on Friday sold 23 per cent stake in Essel Propack, one of the largest manufacturers of laminated tubes used mostly by FMCG and pharma companies, for a little over ₹1,860 crore through open market transactions. The shares were picked by Axis Mutual Fund, Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund and DSP Mutual Fund, Morgan Stanley, Neuberger Berman and Nomura among others. According to block deal data available with the BSE, Blackstone through its entity Epsilon Bidco PTE LTD sold a total of 7,25,80,090 shares, translating into 23 per cent stake, of Essel Propack.

CAMS bags ₹666 cr

New Delhi: Warburg Pincus-backed CAMS has raised a little over ₹666 crore from anchor investors ahead of its initial share sale that opens for public subscription Monday. The company has finalised the allocation of 54,19,230 shares at ₹1,230 apiece to 35 anchor investors, CAMS, which acts as a registrar and transfer agent (RTA) for mutual funds, said in a filing to stock exchanges. At this price, the company garnered ₹666.56 crore.

Niti, ISPP join hands

New Delhi: Niti Aayog and the Indian School of Public Policy (ISPP) have joined hands for training, mentoring and capacity building of government officials as well as public policy scholars, a statement said. The Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) of the Aayog has signed a statement of intent with the ISPP to build a collaboration for faster intermediation of knowledge and use within the public system, the statement said.

Hyundai promotion

New Delhi: Hyundai Motor India on Saturday said it has launched exclusive services for new customers of its premium SUV Tucson and sedan Elantra through its premium assurance programme. As part of the premium assurance programme, the company has rolled out various initiatives like five-year warranty, three-year roadside assistance and connectivity features, among others for the two models.

PM-KISAN assists state's 44.4L farmers



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Sep 19: Under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) Yojana, many small and medium farmers (SMFs) received benefits in the state. According to Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, over 40.4 lakh SMFs benefited from the scheme.

The ministry said about 40,47,444 farmers were given assistance under the yojana since 2019 to till date.

PM-KISAN Yojana aims at identifying landholder farmer families eligible for benefits under the scheme and uploading the data of eligible beneficiaries on the PM-KISAN portal is the responsibility of states/UTs.

The total number of eligible beneficiaries enrolled/uploaded in the PM-KISAN portal as on 17-09-2020 is 11,07,62,287 across the country. Under the scheme, the states/UTs are required to set up Grievance Redressal Committees for looking into the grievances related to implementation of the scheme. No data of grievances received/dis-

posed of by them is, however, maintained centrally. The Centre targets to take various steps for doubling the farmers' income. The agriculture credit flow target was set at ₹13.50 lakh crore for the FY 2019-20 and ₹15 lakh crore for FY 2020-21.

With a view to providing income support to all farmers' families across the country and to enable them to take care of expenses related to agriculture and allied activities as well as domestic needs, the Centre had started PM-KISAN. The scheme aims to provide ₹6000 per year in three 4-monthly installments of ₹2,000 to every farmer family, subject to certain exclusions relating to higher income groups.

No decision to phase out ₹2000 notes

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 19: The Finance Ministry Saturday informed the Lok Sabha that no decision has been taken to discontinue the printing of ₹2,000 denomination currency notes.

In a written reply, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur said printing of bank notes of particular denomination is decided by the government in consultation with the RBI to maintain desired denomination mix for facilitating transactional demand of public.

During the year 2019-20 and 2020-21, no indent was placed with the presses for printing of ₹2,000 denomination notes. "However, there is no decision to discontinue the printing of ₹2,000 denomination bank notes by the government," the minister said.

Surcharge on dividend income for FPIs may be capped at 15 pc

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 19: In a major relief for foreign portfolio investors, the Union Government has proposed to cap the surcharge on dividend income from FPIs with a trust structure at 15 per cent.

Currently, FPIs that operate as trusts have to pay a surcharge as high as 37 per cent if their dividend income is over ₹5 crore and 25 per cent in case of a dividend income of ₹2 crore and ₹5 crore, following measures in the 2019-20 budget.

The government was at the receiving end of criticism from several quarters due to the existing the surcharge structure put in place in the FY20 budget.

"The Finance Act, 2020 is also proposed to be amended to clarify regarding capping of surcharge at 15 per cent on dividend income of



FPIs have to pay a surcharge as high as 37% if their dividend income is over ₹5 cr and 25% in case of a dividend income of ₹2 crore and ₹5 cr

the Foreign Portfolio Investor," said the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provisions) Bill, 2020 tabled in the Parliament.

The government has also proposed tax exemption on the income of category-III Alternate Investment Funds in the International Financial Services Centre from masala bonds, derivatives or overseas investments.

The Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provisions) Bill, 2020 provides for extension of various time limits for completion or compliance of actions under the specified Acts and reduction in interest, waiver of penalty and prosecution for delay in payment of certain taxes or levies during the specified period.

210 NH projects delayed due to land issues

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 19: The government Saturday said as many as 210 national highway projects are delayed due to various reasons such as poor performance by developers and problems in land acquisition besides regulatory hurdles.

It also said there are some hybrid annuity model (HAM) projects which are yet to secure financial closure. "210 nos. of National Highway projects are delayed under NHAI due to various reasons. The delays are due to multiple reasons, such as poor performance of Contractors/Concessionaires, delays in various ac-



tivities and clearances such as utility shifting, environment/forest clearance, land acquisition and law & order problems etc," Minister of State for Road Transport and Highways V

K Singh told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply.

Since land is a state subject, a number of steps have been taken to coordinate with the States and solve

the land acquisition issues for expediting availability of land, he said.

The steps include constitution of High Powered Committee under Chief Secretary to monitor the pre-construction activities, strengthening of Land Acquisition Units by way of providing manpower and resources and effective formal public consultations at the time of project preparation to address the concerns of public, he added.

The minister added that there are some HAM projects which are yet to secure financial closure. Most of the such projects are in Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

No buyers for Air India may mean divestment to be put off

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Sept 19: Air India is not finding any takers and the privatisation may be put off by three years, delivering a blow to the efforts to divest the national carrier.

It seems that due to the turbulence caused in the aviation sector by the Covid 19 pandemic, airlines are already struggling and in that scenario, there are no buyers for Air India. Tatas were supposedly frontrunners for the divestiture, but for some reason have backed out of the race for the moment after completing the due diligence process. The question is therefore whether the books revealed a bigger financial mess than what was anticipated.



The government has already postponed the last date for inviting bids

after having said that the date would not be advanced. Civil Aviation

Minister Hardeep Puri has remarked that the options on the table are ei-

ROUGH WEATHER

Due to the turbulence caused in the aviation sector by the Covid 19, airlines are already struggling, there are no buyers for Air India. Tatas were frontrunners for the divestiture, but for some reason have backed out of the race

Reports suggest that the huge debt of Air India is a major reason for buyers not being interested to participate. The government is examining how the debt exposure of the potential buyer can be reduced.

ther to sell the airlines or close it down. October 30th was the latest deadline for finalizing the sale of Air India, but Govt will be forced to extend that as well. The deadlines of Air India sale have been extended quite a few times in the last couple of years.

If the privatisation is put off by three years then the government will have to find a plan to keep the national carrier running for that period.

Reports suggest that the huge debt of Air India is a major reason for buyers not being extended. The government is examining how the debt exposure of the potential buyer can be reduced.

Out of Rs 60,074 crore debt of

Air India, the government had already announced a reduced debt exposure of Rs 23,286 crore for the buyer. This means, that instead of Rs 60,074 crore debt, the new buyer will be needed to repay only Rs 23,286 crore of debt. The rest of the debt will be transferred to a special purpose vehicle called Air India Assets Holding Ltd.

Discussions are on to evolve a formula where the buyers can put in a bid based on the enterprise value and bids will be evaluated based on that.

However, due to the stress in the aviation sector, buyers may not be interested even with reduced debt given that their core operations are pressure.

DU PLESSIS, RAYUDU GUIDE CSK TO A MORALE-BOOSTING VICTORY OVER MI IN TOURNAMENT OPENER

SUPER WIN FOR SUPER KINGS

AGENCIES

Abu Dhabi, Sept 19: Ambati Rayudu (71, 43b, 6x4, 3x6) and Faf du Plessis (58 n o, 44b, 6x4) played wonderful knocks to guide Chennai Super Kings (CSK) to a comprehensive five-wicket win over defending champions Mumbai Indians (MI) in the opening match of the IPL here Saturday.

Chasing 163 to win, CSK were left tottering at 6/2 in two overs, losing both the openers – Murali Vijay (1) and Shane Watson (4) – cheaply. However, Rayudu and Du Plessis held their nerves and forged together 115 runs in next 14 overs before the former got off a Rahul Chahar (1/36) delivery.

Everyone was expecting MS Dhoni to come in, instead it was Ravindra Jadeja (10) who walked in. The Indian all-rounder too got out shortly, leaving CSK in a spot of bother. Dhoni yet again stunned everyone when he sent Sam Curran ahead of himself and Kedar Jadhav and it paid off. The Englishman struck a quickfire six-ball-18 including two sixes and a four that made things easy for CSK.

After his dismissal, Dhoni finally walked in, although he faced only two balls without troubling the score. With five needed off the final over, bowled by Trent Boult, Du Plessis struck two consecutive boundaries to wrap up the things for CSK giving his side a morale-boosting win.

Earlier, Dhoni's astute captaincy was backed up by some brilliant



MATCH WINNERS: Faf du Plessis (L) reacts after reaching fifty; Ambati Rayudu sweeps as Quinton de Kock looks on



BCCI, Emirates board sign hosting agreement MoU

Dubai: The BCCI and Emirates Cricket Board Saturday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and hosting agreement to boost cricketing ties between the two countries, which could make UAE a second option for India's home series if the surge in COVID-19 cases continues. BCCI secretary Jay Shah tweeted about the same. "I along with Vice Chairman of Emirates Cricket Board, Khalid Al Zarooni signed an MoU & Hosting agreement between @BCCI and @EmiratesCricket to boost the cricketing ties between our countries," Shah wrote on his twitter handle. While there was no official confirmation, but the agreement could mean that the IPL 2021, which is supposed to be played in next six months, could be again hosted in the UAE if the situation doesn't improve in India. "There are two major events. England home series for which having it in India is still the first option. However, if the COVID case load during January remains same, I guess it's only fair that BCCI keeps an option B ready which could be UAE. Also the next big issue is IPL 2021 which starts late March, early April," a senior BCCI source told PTI on condition of anonymity.

bowling at the back end as CSK restricted MI to 162/9. CSK's new recruits – leg-spinner Piyush Chawla (1/21) and left-arm seamer Curran (1/28) – made a fantastic first impression while Lungi Ngidi (3/38) and Deepak Chahar (2/32) came back brilliantly at the death overs.

For MI, Quinton de Kock (33, 20b, 5x4) and Saurabh Tiwary (42, 31b, 3x4, 1x6) played well, but couldn't

convert their starts as the defending champions got only 76 runs in their back-10.

De Kock started in a blazing fashion and launched straight into Chahar and Ngidi as 45 came off the first four overs.

The shrewd Dhoni then introduced Chawla into the attack and he right away dismissed Rohit Sharma (12) who always have had a problem

with wrist spinners. It was a straight delivery that Rohit was trying to hit inside out but couldn't get past Curran at the mid-off circle.

The seamer was back in action as he got rid of De Kock with a well disguised off-cutter, which the batsman hit straight to Shane Watson at mid-wicket.

Suryakumar Yadav (17) and Tiwary added 44 to steady the ship

but some good outfielding in the back-10 from the likes of Curran and Du Plessis had MI struggling.

BRIEF SCORES
Mumbai Indians 162/9 (Saurabh Tiwary 42, Quinton de Kock 33; Lungi Ngidi 3/38, Deepak Chahar 2/32) **lost to Chennai Super Kings 166/5** (Ambati Rayudu 71, Faf du Plessis 58 n o; Trent Boult 1/23) **by 5 wickets.**

BATTLE OF POWER-HITTERS

Delhi Capitals take on Kings XI Punjab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Sept 19: Two greats will pit their wits against each other in the background as their captains, with an ability to achieve greatness, lead their power-hitters out for an IPL match between Delhi Capitals (DC) and Kings XI Punjab (KXIP) here Sunday.

Ricky Ponting and Anil Kumble are arguably two of the biggest names in cricket and the dazzling array of talent in both the teams would seek to draw inspiration from their respective heavyweight coaches in their tournament opener.

Man-to-man, DC seem to have a slight edge, more so in the spin department, with the trio of R Ashwin, Amit Mishra and Axar Patel streets ahead of their counterparts from the Mohali-based side. Spin is expected to play a big role on the UAE pitches.

The match will also be a face-off between skipper KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer, both seen as future India captaincy material.

On the batting front, the Capitals have one of the best assortments of India internationals, comprising Prithvi Shaw, Iyer, Rishabh Pant, Shikhar Dhawan, besides West Indian Shimron Hetmyer.

In this scenario, India Test vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane (strike-rate below 120), who was bought from Rajasthan Royals, may be left out.



The KXIP also boast of some of the finest clean hitters in the form of Chris Gayle, Glenn Maxwell and Rahul himself. Maxwell's confidence must be sky high after his ODI series-winning century (108) against England in Manchester.

The KXIP have a dangerous opening pairing in Gayle and Rahul with Mayank Agarwal to follow. But it remains to be seen whether the 40-year-old Gayle will continue to be a regular feature at the top of the order this time around.

The Capitals may come up with a surprise by picking Big Bash League's highest wicket-taker Daniel Sams along with Kagiso Rabada, leaving out senior India pacer Ishant Sharma, who has had an underwhelming IPL over the years.

For KXIP, India strike bowler Mohammad Shami will spearhead the pace department. It is in the slow-bowling department that the KXIP could face problems. They don't have any big names following the departure of Ashwin. Mujeeb Zadran is the sole established name.

Djokovic loses his cool again



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rome, Sept 19: Less than two weeks after getting defaulted from the US Open, Novak Djokovic lost his cool again midway through a 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 win over German qualifier Dominik Koepfer in the Italian Open quarterfinals Saturday.

When Djokovic was broken at love to even the second set at 3-3, he slammed his racket to the red clay in anger. With the frame broken and the strings all mangled, Djokovic was forced to get a new racket and received a warning from the chair umpire.

Djokovic had already appeared frustrated the previous game, when he glared toward the umpire fol-

lowing a couple of overrules and a point that was ordered to be replayed.

The 97th-ranked Koepfer, who screamed at himself in frustration throughout the match, was also warned for misbehavior early in the third set.

Aiming for his fifth title in Rome, Djokovic's semifinal opponent will be Casper Ruud, who eliminated local favorite Matteo Berrettini 4-6, 6-3, 7-6(7-5) in a match that lasted two hours and 57 minutes.

Ruud is the first Norwegian to reach the semifinals of a Masters 1000 tournament. His father, Christian Ruud, got as far as the quarterfinals of the Monte Carlo Masters in 1997.

In the women's tournament, top-seeded Simona Halep reached the last four when Kazakh opponent Yulia Putintseva retired midway through their match due to a lower back injury.

Halep, who lost two straight finals in Rome to Elena Svitolina in 2017 and 2018, will need to beat two-time Grand Slam winner Garbine Muguruza or US Open runner-up Victoria Azarenka to return to the championship match.

Halep was ahead 6-2, 2-0 when Putintseva decided she was in too much pain to continue – having already taken an off-court medical timeout between sets.

The 30th-ranked Putintseva was coming off two long three-set matches, having upset eighth-seeded Petra Martic and 10th-seeded Elena Rybakina. Entering the match, she had been on court for seven hours, 22 minutes – far more than Halep, who had a bye in the opening round and won her next two matches in straight sets.

Putintseva also reached the US Open quarterfinals in her previous tournament, while Halep decided to skip the event in New York due to coronavirus travel concerns.

Halep improved to 8-0 since the tennis restart and 12-0 overall stretching back to February.

FOOTBALL ROUND UP

THIAGO JOINS LIVERPOOL FROM BAYERN MUNICH

LONDON: Liverpool have confirmed the signing of Thiago Alcantara from Bayern Munich for 25million pound. It was announced Thursday that the Premier League champions had finalised negotiations with the German giants after a summer of speculation linking Thiago to Anfield and now they have sealed the deal. The Spain international told Liverpool's official website: "I think it's an amazing feeling. I was waiting for this moment for a long time and I am very, very happy to be here." He has now been announced as a Liverpool player by the club after completing a medical and agreeing personal terms. Thiago has put pen to paper on a four-year deal and will wear the vacant No.6 shirt for Jurgen Klopp's side.



NEYMAR'S PUMA DEAL HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SPONSERSHIP

PARIS: Neymar's shock switch to become the new face of Puma has reportedly come with a massive 23million pound-per-year deal – the largest individual sponsorship contract in sport. The 28-year-old ended his close partnership with Nike this month, quitting the American brand after they backed his rise from the age of 13. The PSG forward had two years left on an 11-year deal with Nike – but opted to break the contract to join Puma after being offered a staggering sum. Neymar's reported 23mn pound-a-year crushes Cristiano Ronaldo's 15mn pound Nike deal by a massive 8mn pound, while Lionel Messi's 18mn pound Adidas partnership is also dwarfed by the Brazilian's. The huge sums were revealed by 'Forbes', as per 'The Sun', but the length of the deal is unknown, as Neymar settles into life as the face of the German brand, wearing Puma boots, lifestyle wear and training gear. Puma's signing was announced with the slogan 'The King is back', referencing the company's iconic Puma KING boot.

AGUERO OUT FOR UP TO 2 MONTHS

Manchester: Manchester City striker Sergio Aguero could be out for up to two months as he recovers his fitness after surgery on his left knee injury, manager Pep Guardiola said. Aguero had an operation June 24, two days after getting hurt in an English Premier League match against Burnley. The Argentina international published a video on Twitter Thursday, showing himself running with a ball in an individual training session, but Guardiola said an imminent return to the team was unlikely. "He is doing the (work), in maybe one month or two months he will be ready," Guardiola said. Gabriel Jesus is likely to start the season up front in Aguero's absence. City's first game in the Premier League is at Wolverhampton Monday.



Leeds script 1st EPL win; scrape past Fulham 4-3

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Leeds, Sept 19: This time, Leeds were on the right end of a 4-3 thriller in the Premier League (EPL). A week after losing at champion Liverpool by the same score line on the opening day of the season, Leeds were involved in another wild contest in their first home game back in the division and came out on top against fellow promoted team Fulham.

Helder Costa scored in each half for Leeds. Aleksandar Mitrovic scored twice for Fulham at an empty Elland Road.

Costa gave Leeds a fifth-minute lead by slamming a shot in off the bar from an acute angle after Fulham midfielder Harrison Reed inadvertently flicked on a corner by the hosts.

Penalties have been a feature of the first two rounds of the league and there were two in six minutes here. In the 35th, Mitrovic converted a spot-kick. Mateusz Klisch replied with one of his own for Leeds in the 41st.

Bamford then scored for the second straight match, before providing the cross that Costa swept in the 57th for 4-1. Fulham fought back through goals by Bobby Reid in the 62nd and Mitrovic in the 67th but Leeds held on.



Robert Lewandowski gesticulates in celebration after scoring against Schalke; (inset) Jamal Musiala rejoices after becoming the youngest scorer for Bayern

Berlin, Sept 19: The new Bundesliga began in an empty stadium with eight-time defending champion Bayern Munich routing

Schalke 8-0 for a record in the league's opening match. And it should have been more. Germany winger Leroy Sane starred Friday and scored on his Bayern debut and Jamal Musiala be-

came Bayern's youngest ever goalscorer at 17 years, 205 days, but otherwise it was business as usual as they totally dominated and the visitors tried limiting the damage.

Schalke's winless run stretched to 17 games, while Bayern extended their winning run to 22.

Serge Gnabry scored a hat-trick and Sane set up two of the goals. It was 3-0 by halftime and Bayern missed a host of chances.

The game took place without fans despite plans for 7,500 spectators to attend. A spike in local coronavirus infections forced authorities to row back.

The team showed no ill effect from the supporters' absence, nor the short break of 26 days after winning the Champions League final against Paris Saint-Germain. It was the biggest opening night win since 2016 when Bayern routed Werder Bremen 6-0.

Gnabry got the side off to a flying start in the fourth minute, taking Joshua Kimmich's pass from midfield, switching direction to elude Schalke captain Benjamin Stambouli, then unleashing a fine strike with his left boot inside the left corner.

Robert Lewandowski almost made it 2-0 a minute later after being set up by Sane, but Sebastian Rudy managed

to deflect the Poland striker's shot with his outstretched leg.

Schalke managed to hold out until the 19th, when Leon Goretzka scored against his former side with Thomas Muller laying the ball back.

Sane brilliantly set up Lewandowski shortly afterward, but the Poland striker fired over. Lewandowski finally got off the mark from the penalty spot in the 31st, after he'd been fouled by Ozan Kabak.

Niklas Sule – a central defender – struck the post and Bayern missed other chances before the break, too. Sane set up Gnabry's second goal in the 47th – his first assist for the club – and repeated the trick to help his Germany teammate complete his hat-trick in the 59th.

Lewandowski set up Muller in the 69th by wrapping his right boot behind his left leg, a rabona move, two minutes before Kimmich set up Sane for his first goal.

Sane made way for Musiala to make his second Bundesliga appearance in the 72nd. The 17-year-old English midfielder grabbed his first goal in the 81st.

Bayern board member Oliver Kahn addressed club officials' lack of social distancing during the game. TV images showed at least 10 Bayern officials including Kahn,



YOU CAN SEE THAT THE TEAM WAS ALREADY STRONG LAST SEASON. THE TEAM IS STILL HUNGRY DESPITE WINNING THE TREBLE LAST SEASON AND TO HAVE SUCH A START IS OUTSTANDING (INDICATING THEIR WIN OVER SCHALKE) LEROY SANE