



## KRITI'S DESIRE

Actor Kriti Kharbanda says that she would like to star in a female-centric action film

LEISURE P2



## BSP WOOS BRAHMINS

BSP holds 'Brahmin Samvads', a move designed to woo Brahmins, who are reportedly disgruntled with the BJP

TWO STATES P7



## NO RELIEF FOR PAK

FTAF, a global watchdog for terror-funding decided to keep Pak on its 'grey list'

INTERNATIONAL P10



## IRREGULAR by MANJUL

See, people listen to you. You asked them not to gather in crowd.

## SHORT TAKES

### Kapil Dev stable after angioplasty

New Delhi: Cricket great Kapil Dev, who captained India to their 1983 World Cup triumph, is stable after undergoing an emergency coronary angioplasty having suffered chest pain, according to a hospital statement Friday. The 61-year-old former India captain was admitted after midnight at the Delhi hospital and underwent the procedure in the early hours Friday. "Currently, he is admitted in ICU and under close supervision..." the hospital said. "Kapil Dev is stable now and he is expected to get discharged in couple of days." P12

### 'Poacher' allegedly beaten to death

Baripada: Locals of Nachhipur village under Kaptipada police limits in Mayurbhanj district staged protest in front of the forest office Friday after death of a villager under mysterious circumstances. The family members of deceased alleged that he was beaten to death by forest employees on suspicion of being a poacher. Keeping the body in front of the forest office, the villagers organized a sit-in at the office seeking justice to the deceased's family.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	40685.50 ↑ 127.01
NIFTY	11930.40 ↑ 33.90
DOLLAR	73.84 ↓ ₹0.02
EURO	87.46 ↑ ₹0.14
GOLD	₹50,675 ↓ ₹91
SILVER	₹62,295 ↓ ₹320

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	29.6°C	31.5°C
TEMP MIN	22.7°C	21.5°C
Humidity	98%	82%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	

# Govt plans agenda for Covid vaccination

THE CENTRE WILL PROCURE THE VACCINE DIRECTLY TO MAKE IT AVAILABLE TO PRIORITY GROUPS FREE-OF-CHARGE THROUGH THE EXISTING NETWORK OF STATES AND DISTRICTS

POST NEWS SERVICE & AGENCIES

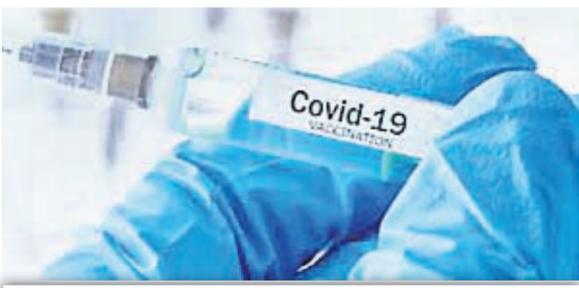
New Delhi, Oct 23: The coronavirus vaccine, once available, will be distributed under a special Covid-19 immunisation programme with the Centre procuring the doses directly and making it available for priority groups, official sources said.

According to them, the Centre will procure the vaccine directly to make it available to the priority groups free-of-charge through the existing network of states and districts. States have been asked not to chart separate pathways of procurement, they said.

The Centre, with the help of state and union territory governments, has started the process of identifying around 30 crore priority beneficiaries who would be given vaccine dose in the initial phase.

This special Covid-19 immunisation programme would run in parallel with the Universal Immunisation Programme, but will use its processes, technology and network of the existing vaccine distribution framework.

The government has demarcated four categories of people for vaccination in the initial phase - around one crore healthcare professionals including doctors, MBBS students, nurses and ASHA workers, etc.; around two crore frontline workers including municipal corporation workers, personnel of the police and armed forces; about 26 crore people aged above 50; and a special group of those below 50 years of age



## SPUTNIK V TO BE TESTED ON 100 INDIANS

MOSCOW: The Russian Sputnik V vaccine against COVID-19 will be tested in India on 100 volunteers, the Indian Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation's Drug Controller General (DCGI) told the Russian news agency Sputnik. DCGI has granted permission to pharmaceutical giant Dr Reddy's Laboratories for conducting the tests. However, the date and time of the test will be determined by the company. News agency Sputnik quoted the organisation as saying that the vaccine will be tested in the second phase of its clinical trials before moving on to Phase II. Last week, the expert committee of DCGI had recommended granting permission to Dr Reddy's Laboratories for conducting Phase 2 clinical trials of Russian Covid-19 vaccine candidate, Sputnik V, in India.

with co-morbidities and requiring specialised care. "States have been asked to enlist by mid-November the priority population groups... Each person in the immunisation list will be linked with their Aadhaar cards so as to track them," a source said. The existing digital platform and processes used for the Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP) are being enhanced to track Covid-19 vaccine administration and movement - from procurement to storage

to distribution to individual beneficiaries - as and when the vaccine becomes available, Health Ministry officials have said. Also, online training modules are being developed for vaccinators. The digital platform that is being enhanced is Electronic Vaccine Intelligence Network (eVIN), which provides real-time information on vaccine stocks and storage temperatures across all cold chain points in the country under UIP. Under UIP, children, adolescents and preg-

## State gears up for Covid-19 vaccination

BHUBANESWAR: Close on the heels of the Centre's initiative to draft a priority list for Covid-19 vaccination, the state government has started working on a data base of healthcare workers, who are likely to get the vaccine first. The state government has asked all concerned officials to enroll all healthcare and Anganwadi workers for vaccination. Additional Chief Secretary (Health & Family Welfare Department), Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra has written to the Indian Medical Association (Odisha State Branch), AYUSH Association, Nursing Association, Paramedic Workers' Association, and Private Hospital Owners' Association in this regard. Mohapatra asked the associations to contact the district Collectors /municipal commissioners/ chief district medical officer of their respective districts for enrolling all healthcare workers in the database by October 29. Meanwhile, former director of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar Dr Ashok Mohapatra Friday claimed that the vaccines against Covid-19 are likely to come by March, keeping in mind the current pace of researches and trials.

nant women are currently vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases free-of-cost by the state.

The National Expert Committee on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 has already mapped the existing cold chain being utilised under the government's immunisation programme.

1800 266 266 1 (tollfree)

## Look at India, it's filthy, it's air is filthy: Trump

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, Oct 23: US President Donald Trump has described India and its air as "filthy" during the last presidential debate with his Democratic challenger Joe Biden while discussing the environment and the Paris climate change agreement. "Look at India, it's filthy, it's air is filthy," Trump said Thursday night in Nashville, Tennessee, while comparing it to China and Russia to what he said was the condition of the US environment. "We have the best carbon emission numbers that we've had in 35 years under this administration, we are working so well with industry," he said before lunging at India and the other two countries.



North Korea's nuclear and missile programme came up with Trump pointing out that it had not conducted any nuclear tests during his time in office, unlike when Biden was the Vice President. He said that he had prevented a war with Pyongyang that for former President Barack Obama had expected. Trump asserted that he will make China pay for spreading the Covid-19 pandemic and that he was already making it pay for the trade problems and sending \$20 billion to US farmers, which Biden disputed.

## Misuse of potable water now punishable

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 23: In a landmark development in the history of groundwater preservation in the country, wastage and misuse of potable water or groundwater will, henceforth, be a punishable offence, with the Central Ground Water Authority issuing a notification directing civic bodies to evolve a compliance mechanism with coercive measures for violations.

The notification issued by the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act came in pursuance to the directions passed by the National Green Tribunal on October 15, 2019 in the Rajendra Tyagi vs Union of India case, in which the petitioner had sought to make water wastage and misuse a punishable offence in the country. The notification by the authority stated, "The civic bodies dealing with water supply in all states and UTs, whether it is the Jal Board, Jal Nigam, Water Works Department, Municipal Corporation, Municipal Council, Development Authority or Panchayat, shall be duty-bound to ensure that there is no waste or misuse of potable water tapped from underground and evolve a compliance mechanism with coercive measures for violations."

The notification, issued October 8, further stated that no person in the country shall waste or misuse potable water resources tapped from underground. Advocate Akash Vashishtha, who had represented Rajendra Tyagi in the green tribunal, said, "Wastage and misuse of potable water and groundwater will, henceforth, be a punishable offence in India." He added, "Failure to comply with the notification will be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to five years or with a fine which may extend to ₹1 lakh, or with both. In case the failure or contravention continues, an additional fine can be slapped, which may extend to ₹5,000 for every day during which such failure or contravention continues after the conviction for the first such failure or contravention, under Section 15 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986."

"Section 15 of the Environment (Protection) Act deals with the penalty in case of contravention or if anyone fails to comply with any orders or directions issued under the act. We had sought from the NGT to ask the government to issue directions under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act so that any violation of contravention or directions thereof is punishable under Section 15," Vashishtha added.

## Centre imposes stock limits on onion traders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: To boost domestic supply and provide relief to consumers from rising onion prices, the Centre Friday imposed stock limits on both retailers and wholesalers with immediate effect till December 31.

Now, retailers can stock onion only up to 2 tonnes, whereas wholesale traders are allowed to keep up to 25 tonnes. This will check hoarding and black-marketing, it said.

Onion prices have shot up sharply to over ₹75 per kg in the past few weeks in the wake of damage to the standing kharif crop in producing areas due to heavy rainfall as well as hoarding.

Addressing media, Consumer Affairs Secretary Leena Nandan said, "This is a decisive step. We have imposed stock limits on onion traders with an immediate effect till December 31 after concerns that traders were releasing their stored stocks slowly, creating artificial price rise situation."

She said the government had to invoke the recently passed Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020, which provides regulation of agri-commodities "only" in the times of extraordinary price rise situation.

## TEARJERKER

Onion price (per kg)

Bhubaneswar	₹80
Cuttack	₹70
Rayagada	₹80
Malkangiri	₹80
Koraput	₹80
Nabarangpur	₹60
Jajpur Road	₹80
Kendrapada	₹60
Nayagarh	₹70
Berhampur	₹80
Angul	₹75
Jharsuguda	₹80
Jagatsinghpur	₹80
Baripada	₹80
Puri	₹80
Sambalpur	₹80



"Under this law, normally, we would not be regulating agri-food stuff like cereals and onion. But, in times of extraordinary price rise, we can regulate if the retail price breaches the trigger levels specified in the law," she said.

In case of onion, the average all-India retail price of onion of ₹55.60 per kg that prevailed on October 21 breached the trigger level as per the formula specified under the EC Amendment Act, she said. The all-India average retail price of ₹55.60 per kg was higher by 22.12 per cent compared with last year's rates of ₹45.33 per kg and by 114.96 per cent

as against average rate that prevailed in past five years. So, the retail price had actually more than doubled and, therefore, decided to impose the stock limits on the commodity, she added.

Later, Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal tweeted that the Modi government has taken steps to curb hoarding and check prices. Stock limits have been imposed on retailers and wholesale traders of onion. The government said action under the Prevention of Blackmarketing and Maintenance of Supplies of Essential Commodities Act, 1980, would be taken to prevent any hoarding.

## Amazon refuses to meet Lok Sabha panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: Amazon has refused to appear before a joint Parliament committee looking into the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, and this amounts to "breach of privilege of Parliament", Parliament sources said.

If Amazon does not appear before the panel October 28, "coercive action will be initiated" against Amazon, sources said. The US e-commerce giant said their "subject matter experts are overseas" and cited travel risks due to which they cannot appear.

The committee, which is looking into the Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, following concerns expressed by the Congress, had called all stakeholders, including Facebook and Twitter, to get an overview.

"Amazon has refused to appear before the panel October 28 and if no one on behalf of the e-commerce company appears before the panel it amounts to breach of privilege," BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi, who heads the panel, told this news agency. The panel has decided to send a privilege notice if they do not turn up.



Meanwhile, top Facebook India officials appeared before the parliamentary panel today and were questioned for nearly two hours, parliament sources said. Facebook India was represented by its public policy director Ankhi Das.

The presentation of Twitter officials before the panel will take place October 28, according to a notice issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat. Google and PayTM have been asked to appear before the panel October 29. While introducing the draft Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019, in parliament last year, Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said it empowers the government to ask companies - Facebook, Google and others - for anonymous personal and non-personal data.

# Police create 'green corridor' to help critically ill patient

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: In a bid to save the life of a critically ill patient, the Commissionerate Police Friday created a 'green corridor' from a private hospital in the city to the Biju Patnaik International Airport.

The 'green corridor' was created to facilitate shifting of Abhay Kumar Jena, a critically ill patient from Puri district. Police personnel turned all the traffic signals green on the route from the hospital to the airport so that the ambulance could move unhindered and speedily enabling it to reach at the airport in less than eight minutes. Two police ve-



The patient being taken to Hyderabad in an air ambulance, Friday

hicles escorted the ambulance.

From the airport an air ambulance took the patient to Hyderabad in one-and-a-half hours. This was the fourth 'green corridor' created by the police in city to ensure unhindered passage to critically ill patients. Earlier 'green corridors' were created thrice to take patients from hospitals to the airport.

Abhay had undergone a lung surgery and also tested positive for Covid-19. He was recovering well, but complications set in and his condition became critical. Doctors attending to him here decided to shift him to Hyderabad. Notably, 'green corridor' is an escorted and traffic-free path which helps the

harvested body parts as well as critical patients to reach hospitals for further treatment in a short notice.

Commissioner of Police Sudhanshu Sarangi had earlier informed about providing 'green corridor' for ferrying critical patients and body organs on the request of the patient's relatives or the hospital authorities in the twin cities.

"We provide green corridor facility for ambulance movement, as a standard policy, for transplant or other critical medical procedures on request from hospitals/family members of patients," tweeted Sarangi, October 10. The Commissionerate Police started implementing 'green

corridor' facility for patients following widespread resentment over the death of a five-year-old, February 11. In that case, the ambulance carrying the ailing child to a private medical college and hospital at Patia got stuck in traffic jam which allegedly led to the child's death.

Speaking on the issue, DCP traffic Soumya Mishra told Orissa POST, "The state government has specially instructed us to provide traffic-free passage for all seriously ailing patients, especially people suffering from organ failure, and in emergency need for organ transplantations. The hospitals contact the DCP traffic who is the nodal officer for green corridor facility."

# leisure



## RYAN REYNOLDS ON CASTING HIS VOTE FOR FIRST TIME

Hollywood star Ryan Reynolds confessed on social media that he has cast his vote in the US for the first time. "This is my first time voting in America. I'd like to thank my wife Blake for making my first time so gentle and loving," Reynolds wrote.

## MILEY CYRUS TO RELEASE SEVENTH ALBUM NOVEMBER 27

Pop star Miley Cyrus will unveil her seventh album, *Plastic Hearts*, November 27. The singer made the announcement on Instagram. The album will feature 12 original tracks including her latest hit *Midnight sky*, and live covers of *Heart of glass* (Blondie) and *Zombie* (The Cranberries).



### FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com  
accuracy • reliability • trust  
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
You will be very logical and rational today, as creativity is put on the back-burner. The situation at your workplace will be full of challenges, but you will take them head-on. Later, all the stress will be mitigated by the soothing touch of your loved ones, says Ganesh.

**TAURUS**  
You will manage to achieve all short-term goals that you had set today and your focus will now shift to setting long-term ones. Work pressure will continue but you will make it a point to find some time to renew your leisure activities.

**GEMINI**  
You will meet all kinds of people in matters related to work. You will need to understand their demands and needs and will have to strive to fulfill them. Your courteous nature will endear you to people. You will receive praise for your intelligence as well, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
Chances are that your inquisitive nature will put in a difficulty. Others will be angry with you for keeping a secret a vital information. Ganesh advises you to strengthen ties with friends and give up present attitude.

**LEO**  
The complete family man that you are, it is your near and dear ones who have always laid the foundation of your success. So why should today be any different. The auspicious tides of the day begin from your home and follow you everywhere. Be it work or play, you have a tempo that is undiminished.

**VIRGO**  
The remarkable manner in which you function at work will earn you a lot of accolades and supporters. Your seniors will appreciate your dedication to work. There will be fun and entertainment in the evening, Ganesh says you can look forward to relaxing with some soft music.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says you will stay in accordance with your prestige or social status. Your innovative ideas will help you progress in your work field. Now is a good time to put into completion those ideas, which had taken a back seat.

**SCORPIO**  
It's business time and shock your competitors with the launch of the new product. However, stars are not aligned in a favourable way, which indicates that you may come across some hurdles. Take your time, sort out the troubles and go ahead with your launch with much fanfare and celebrations.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Zoom in on complicated problems and solve them with style, says Ganesh. Don't fret over problems; instead concentrate on ways to solve them. Your day will get even better when perhaps, news from an overseas friend reaches you.

**CAPRICORN**  
You are witty and wise. With your extraordinary vision and intelligence you will help many their career and later, thanks to you, they will be near to their goals. Whenever some dark clouds of reality hover above your head, you know how to find the silver lining and get out of a problem.

**AQUARIUS**  
The cupid may strike you today. You don't want make a wrong first impression, so wear something nice and be presentable all the time. Professionally, the day will be favourable for you to make some important decisions.

**PISCES**  
Organized and sorted as you are, you will still find yourself clouded with emotions today. Those you are thoughtful and calculative as a person, you will discover the joy of emotions and the warmth that accompanies them. You will take the time to feel things instead of thinking of them and this change in your behaviour will either be the cause of worry or amusement for those who are close to you, says Ganesh.

# KANGANA takes a jibe at Aamir Khan

**Mumbai:** Days after a complaint was filed against her for spreading hate, actress Kangana Ranaut Friday said she is ready to go to jail. She also revived the intolerance row, this time targeting actor Aamir Khan.

Earlier this week, the Mumbai Police issued summons to Kangana and her sister Rangoli Chandel following an FIR lodged against them with sedition charges included.

"I worship people like Savarkar, Neta Bose and Rani of Jhansi. Today the government, trying to put me in jail that makes me feel confident of my choices, waiting to be in jail soon n go through the same miseries my idols were subjected to, it will give a meaning to my life, Jai Hind," she tweeted.

She also tagged actor Aamir for his silence on the matter, in a separate

tweet she wrote in Hindi. She wrote: "The way Rani Lakshmbai's fort was broken, my house was also broken; the way Savarkarji was put in jail for rebellion, they are trying their best to send me to jail as well. Someone should go and ask the intolerance gang about how much pain they have gone through in this intolerant nation? @aamir\_khan." Back in 2015, Aamir had made headlines when he had said that he was 'alarmed' over rising intolerance in the country and that his wife Kiran Rao had even suggested they leave India because she feared for the safety of their child.

In the fresh complaint, Munawarali Sahil A. Sayyed has accused Kangana and her sister for spreading communal hatred and falsehoods.



## Radhika hits Shaktimaan mode

**Mumbai:** Actress Radhika Madan, who is known for the funny captions she gives to her social media posts, has made a hilarious revelation.

In a new Instagram picture, Radhika sits dressed in a sports bra and ripped pants.

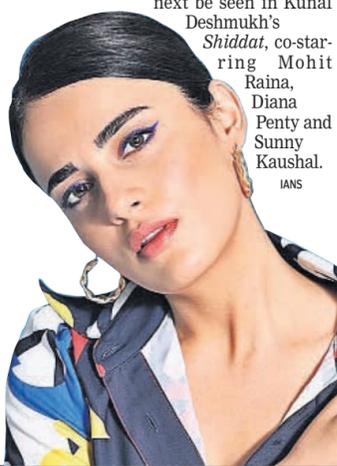
For the caption, she borrowed a dialogue from the popular nineties tele-series *Shaktimaan*.

"Gangadhar hi Shaktimaan hai," she wrote.

*Shaktimaan* narrates the adventures of the fictional superhero of the same name that Mukesh Khanna essayed in the blockbuster series that aired on Doordarshan from 1997 and 2005. On the acting front, Radhika was last seen in *Angrezi Medium* and will next be seen in Kunal

Deshmukh's *Shiddat*, co-starring Mohit Raina, Diana Penty and Sunny Kaushal.

IAN S



## Kriti would love to do a female-centric action film

**New Delhi:** Actress Kriti Kharbanda enjoys watching action sequences on screen, and says that she would like to star in a female-centric action film.

"I would love to do a female action film. Action sequences are something I not only like watching, but also taking part in. I have been an outdoors person for as long as I can remember. I have dabbled in many kinds of sports. I play tennis, basketball and I played kho-kho back in school," Kriti told IANS.

When she learnt pole dancing, and trained in sword fighting for *Housefull 4*, she realised these were things she enjoyed.

"Action is something I enjoy, strength is something I enjoy I think there is something about a petite little girl kicking some a\*\* and I can't wait to show that to the world," she added.

She got to perform some action in the upcoming revenge drama *Taish*.

"I have been lucky. I wasn't supposed to be a part of the action sequences in the first draft. It was after we reached London and we started shooting that (director) Bejoy Nambiar told me I would be in that part of the film as well. It felt really good. Go-karting is something I have enjoyed from a young age. It is one of my biggest stressbusters. I got a chance to drive in many sequences of this film. I have dabbled in the thrill part of the film," she said. IANS



# Prabhas turns 41: Wishes pour in from fans & friends

**Chennai:** Telugu superstar Prabhas turned 41 Friday, and wishes poured in from industry colleagues, friends and fans alike.

Maresh Babu tweeted: "Happy birthday, Prabhas! Wishing you infinite success, happiness and peace always."

"Wishing the sweetest #Prabhas brother a very happy birthday!! May this year be filled with lots of happiness and success...God bless! #HappyBirthdayDarling," wrote on Arun VijayTwitter.

Rakul Preet Singh wrote: "Wishing you a super duper year .. great health and lots of happiness ...may your stardom keep growing infinitely," she wrote.

Filmmaker Om Raut, who directs Prabhas in the upcoming biggie *Adipurush*, tweeted: "Dear Darling #Prabhas, wishing you a very happy birthday. Have a rocking day and a fabulous year ahead."

"Wishing #Prabhas sir a very happy birthday.#ennisoni will be forever special," tweeted Punjabi singer Guru Randhawa.

Rana Daggubati, who played Bhallaladeva opposite Prabhas in *Baahubali* shared a collage of their pictures on Instagram. Happy Happy brother @actorprabhas Wish you only the best," Rana captioned the post.

Prabhas started his acting career with the Telugu film *Eeshwar* in 2002, and went on to go to films like *Raghavendra*, *Barish*: *The Season Of Love*, *Varsham*, *Jeene Nahin Doonga*, *Chatrapathi*, *Yogi*, *Rebel* and *Pournami*.

His roles in the blockbuster *Baahubali* franchise made him popular across the globe.

He will be next seen in *Radhe Shyam* and *Adipurush*

IAN S



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

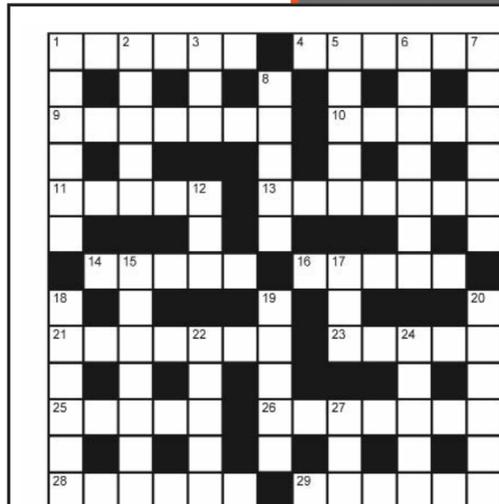


### BREVITY



### FUN post

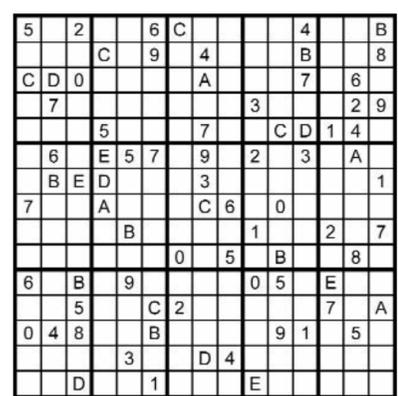
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Deadly snakes
  - 4 Sailing ship with 3 or more masts
  - 9 Old stone tool
  - 10 Small terrestrial lizard
  - 11 Drop-off spot?
  - 13 Liberate (3,4)
  - 14 Brainy
  - 16 Fancy home
  - 21 Small villages
  - 23 Bakery supply
  - 25 Dirigible
  - 26 Make a list
  - 28 Analyses
  - 29 Giant pigfish
- Down**
- 1 French Riviera stop
  - 2 New Zealand native
  - 3 French friend (4,3)
  - 5 Show flexibility
  - 6 Spat
  - 7 Nail polish
  - 8 Pursue
  - 12 Evergreen
  - 15 Ancient Egyptian cadavers
  - 17 Frigid
  - 18 Anxiety disorder
  - 19 Port of old Rome
  - 20 Flammable alkene
  - 22 Void
  - 24 Diva's deliveries
  - 27 Cup handle

### SUDOKU

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

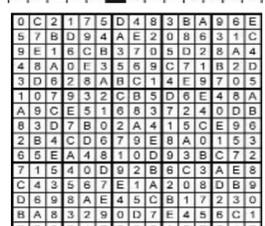


### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD



#### SUDOKU

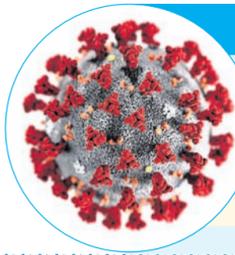


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**MOTHER WORSHIP**

Goddess Shyamakali in Singhabahini Besha as part of Dussehra celebrations at Balisahi in Puri, Friday



**COVID-19 TRACKER**

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	4,22,12,524	3,12,82,766	11,45,366
India	77,61,312	69,48,497	1,17,306
Odisha	2,77,887	2,59,418	1,214

# Digital IDs still elude 50% eligible differently-abled

MANISH KUMAR, OP

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 23:** More than half of the differently-abled population in the state is still out of the ambit of the digital Unique Disability Identity Card (UDID) despite the Ministry of Social Justice rolling out the cards around three year ago.

The UDID project was started by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities envisioning a holistic end-to-end integrated system for issuing such digital cards. It was said that these cards would pave way for an online national repository to facilitate easy application of different schemes and reduce chances of duplication of data.

The latest information accessed from the state Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) Department claim that out of around 6 lakh differently-abled who had applied for this, nearly 3 lakh have got it, leaving the remaining without the digital IDs.

However, most of the beneficiaries, as per the department's own

**REPORT CARD**



■ The UDID project was started by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities envisioning a holistic end-to-end integrated system for issuing such digital cards

■ Most of the beneficiaries, as per the department's admission, have not received their UDID cards as it is to be issued with State Identity cards to make them eligible for availing several government schemes

admission, have not received their UDID cards as it is to be issued with State Identity cards to make them eligible for availing several government schemes.

The department has now asked all the Collectors to work on the issue and expedite the entire process. In a formal communication to the Collectors, the department has asked them continue their work with a view to ensure disbursement of the UDID cards.

SSEPD secretary Bhaskar Sarma

told **Orissa POST**, "These certificates are given to the PwDs with more than 40 per cent disability. There is a Medical Board which certifies the disability levels. The cards are issued in phases. Recently, due to COVID outbreak, the medical board meeting also suffered a bit."

The department officials claim that checks and balances have been planned in the issue of disability certificates to weed out fake beneficiaries.

## GOAIR FLIGHTS TO CHENNAI FROM NOV 17

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 23:** In view of increasing passenger flow at Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here, domestic carrier GoAir has decided to resume direct flight services between Bhubaneswar and Chennai from November 17.

As per sources, GoAir flight G8-921 will take off from Chennai at 11:05am and reach Bhubaneswar at 12:50pm. The return flight G8-922 will depart from Bhubaneswar at 1:20pm and land in Chennai at 3:05pm. The booking for the flights began Thursday.

With this, the number of flights operating from BPIA has reached 25.

As opposed to normal functioning of about 45 flights, the BPIA authorities had decided to resume services to different cities in a phased manner. "This has been done observing increased passenger flow. Only 9,721 domestic passengers had arrived in May which reached around 80,000 in September," said a senior BPIA official.

## Monsoon to retreat in 4 days

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 23:** The weather condition has become conducive to withdrawal of southwest monsoon from entire Odisha within next four days. The monsoon had arrived in the state June 11 this year.

Conditions continue to be favourable for further withdrawal of southwest monsoon from some parts of the state during next two days and from remaining parts during subsequent two days, Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre said in a bulletin Friday.

"This year the state experienced normal rainfall so far. The state has recorded 5 per cent excess rainfall till today, which is normal," said Met Centre director HR Biswas.

Usually, the monsoon season extends from June to September, and the state had recorded 1 per cent ex-



cess rainfall during this period, he said.

Due to back-to-back low pressures triggering heavy rainfall, the average rainfall in the state increased in the month of October. Not a single district in the state has recorded deficit rain during this month, the director stated.

Meanwhile, the depression over northwest Bay of Bengal off Odisha

- The state has recorded 5 per cent excess rainfall till Friday
- Not a single district in the state has recorded deficit rain during Oct
- No rainfall warning has been issued for the state

coast has moved north-northeast wards with a speed of 22 kmph during past six hours and lay centered over northwest Bay of Bengal off West Bengal and Bangladesh coasts.

The intensity of depression would weaken in next 12 hours into a well-marked low pressure area over Bangladesh. No rainfall warning has been issued for the state.

## Oppn slams govt over development of Tirtol

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 23:** The opposition Congress and BJP, Friday, attacked the ruling BJD in the state for not developing Tirtol constituency despite holding the seat for long.

Congress Odisha in-charge A Chellakumar and BJP spokesperson Prithivraj Harichandan accused the BJD of failing to live upto the expectations of the people of Tirtol.

Harichandan said, "Tirtol is one of the underdeveloped areas of Odisha. The ruling BJD MLAs had been elected from the region often but the development work in the area is not very encouraging. The region had been lacking basic infrastructure like bridges, roads and others. Was the government unaware of the problem there earlier?"

He also said, "They are promising the very basic development work now. This indicates their per-



Congress leader A Chellakumar speaks at a meeting in Tirtol constituency, Friday

formance and care for the region. The BJP is standing with the people of the area to usher in development. We are confident that we will win from the region and bring development in the area."

Chellakumar said the development work in the state at large was undertaken mostly by the Congress government in the past. "Today is the 10th day of my visit to Odisha. Wherever I have gone, the works there were done by the Congress government. The Paradip port and a spinning mill at Jaisinghpur were developed by the Congress government," he added.

## CEO seeks report on postal ballot

**Bhubaneswar:** Expressing concern over the allegation in issuance of postal ballot in Balasore by poll, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) SK Lohani Friday asked the district Collectors to submit a detailed report by Saturday morning. Action will be taken as per law after receiving the report from the Collector, he said.

According to reports, a 40-year-old woman's vote was taken through postal ballot system for the bye-election to the Balasore Sadar Assembly constituency. Locals opposed her postal ballot alleging that the woman voter from Ward No.1 is neither a divyang, nor pregnant nor a Covid patient to qualify for inclusion in the list. It has been alleged that such goof-up is a deliberate attempt to favour a particularly party in the byelection.

## BMC forms team to monitor idol immersions

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 23:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Friday, discussed preventive measures to void water pollution during immersion of idols, apparently to comply with the guidelines issued by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

The meeting, chaired by BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary, took recommendations from members of State Pollution

Control Board, deputy commissioner of police, Zonal Deputy Commissioners, Puja committees and NGO representatives.

Chaudhury directed the members of the committee to scrupulously implement the order of the High Court and to take appropriate preventive measure for abatement of surface water pollution due to immersion of idols in different water bodies during the festivities in Bhubaneswar.

"All officers of the BMC

Engineering Division need to stay prepared with adequate number of temporary ponds having synthetic liner and earthen closings. Spot visit for the temporary ponds will be completed soon to ensure timely immersion," the BMC Commissioner maintained.

Furthermore, he also directed the committee to form a team of environmental scientists of SPCB, ZDCs, the member NGOs and the member of Puja committees responsible for monitoring water

quality parameter, toxic contents if any, and the colour used in Puja pandals. The committee has been asked to submit the information in this connection. List of violators of CPCB guidelines will also be informed by the committee for initiation of action.

Moreover, an order has been passed for intensive awareness and IEC (Information Education and Communication) activities have to be continued during the festivities and around the mandaps.

# FESTIVAL AMID PANDEMIC

THIS YEAR, PUJA COMMITTEES IN THE TWIN CITIES OF CUTTACK AND BHUBANESWAR ARE CELEBRATING DUSSEHRA WITH STRICT ADHERENCE TO COVID-19 GUIDELINES. AS PART OF THE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES AGAINST THE DEADLY VIRUS, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ADVISED NOT TO VISIT THE PUJA PANDALS



MANGALABAG

## Festivities go online on Maha Saptami

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 23:** Durga Puja in the capital this year has a different flavour to it as devotees seek blessings of the Goddess and prasad online. The unique celebration arose as puja mandaps remain out of bounds due to the ongoing pandemic.

On the occasion of Mahasaptami, Kola Bou Snan, the main ritual of the day, is conducted by priests early morning.

Many pandals and puja mandaps in the city including Sahid Nagar puja committee's made special arrangements for worship, arati and puspajali (ritualistic practices) through various social media platforms.

Secretary of Sahid Nagar puja committee Narayan Mohapatra said, "From shasthi to maha dashami,

we are providing online puja services at different times. We upload details about the same in our social media page. Devotees can avail these services from the comfort of their homes. We are also providing prasad within a two kilometer radius for which people have to apply online."

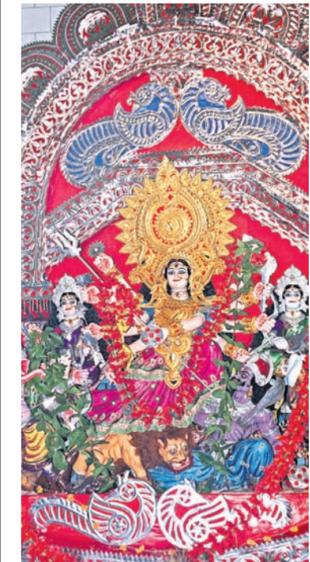
On similar lines, Old Station Durga puja committee also provided online puja services and doorstep delivery of Prasad in the capital city.

Secretary of the committee Deepak Jena said, "This year is tough for everybody but we have to understand the seriousness of this pandemic and thus request people to not come to pandals for darshan."

Sangeeta Sahoo, a resident of VSS Nagar, said, "Devotion can be shown from any place. It's not necessary to visit a pandal when they are providing darshan online."



RASULGARH



RANIHAAT



COLLEGE SQUARE



SAHID NAGAR



BARAMUNDA



NAYAPALLI

OP PHOTOS

# Covid-19 toll breaches 1,200

# Centre, state failed to regulate prices: Cong

# ARMY OFFICER FROM STATE GETS TOP ROLE

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, Oct 23: Odisha-born Lieutenant General Nanda Kishore Sahoo was appointed as Director General of Dental Services and Colonel Commandant of Army Dental Corps here Friday.

As per Ministry of Defense data, during his military career of 37 years, Sahoo held important roles including Commander of a unit in Kashmir Valley Command Advisor of Western, Central and Southern Commands.

Hailing from Jajpur district, the General Officer is an alumnus of King George's Medical University and a Post Graduate from Mumbai University in the Speciality of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery. He has the unique distinction of being the Professor and Head of the Dental Department at Armed Forces Medical College, Pune and at the Army Hospital (Research & Referral), Delhi.

Lt Gen NK Sahoo is an internationally acclaimed author, teacher and winner of K S Master silver medal. He is a recipient of five Commendations and the Presidential Award, Vishisht Seva Medal (VSM) for his exceptional services of a high order.

ODISHA'S CORONAVIRUS TALLY ROSE TO 2,77,887 WITH 1,793 PEOPLE TESTING POSITIVE FOR THE INFECTION

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: State's novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) tally rose to 2,77,887 Friday, with 1,793 people testing positive for the viral infection, while 18 more fatalities pushed the toll to 1,214, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

Of the 1,793 fresh cases, 1,031 were reported from various quarantine centres, and the rest were detected during contact tracing exercise, the official said.

Khurda district, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the maximum number of fresh cases at 208, followed by Cuttack at 160, Angul at 107 and Mayurbhanj at 104.

Taking to Twitter, the health department said, "Regret to inform the demise of eighteen #COVID19 positive patients while under treat-



FILE PHOTO

## IN NUMBERS

Khurda, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the maximum number of fresh cases at 208, followed by Cuttack at 160, Angul at 107 and Mayurbhanj at 104

Three fresh fatalities each were registered in Angul, Gajapati and Khurda, two each in Jajpur and Mayurbhanj, and one each in Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Malkangiri, Nayagarh and Puri

More than 42.40 lakh COVID-19 tests have been conducted in the coastal state thus far, including 40,733 Thursday

ment in hospitals."

Three fresh fatalities each were registered in Angul, Gajapati and Khurda, two each in Jajpur and Mayurbhanj, and one each in Bhadrak, Dhenkanal, Malkangiri, Nayagarh and Puri.

Ganjam district reported the maximum number of 225 deaths followed by Khurda (208), Cuttack (105), Puri (80), Balasore (63) and Sundargarh (56).

Khurda district has topped the list with 47,200 Covid cases fol-

lowed by Cuttack (25,001), Ganjam (20,959), Puri (12,101), Sundargarh (10,245) and Balasore (9,699).

As many as 53 Covid-19 patients have died to comorbidities, the official said.

Meanwhile, official sources said that 500 Odisha Police personnel have donated plasma so far.

Director general of police (DGP) Abhay said, "We note this milestone with humility and determination to serve Odisha people with renewed dedication."

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik tweeted, "Commend the gesture of 500 #CovidWarriors of @odisha\_police for coming forward to donate plasma to treat serious patients. In these trying times, such noble acts will encourage others to #donateplasma to save precious lives."

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, Oct 23: The city unit of Congress party Friday alleged that the Centre and state government have failed to regulate the prices of essential commodities like onion and potato.

The party claimed that the recent rise in vegetable prices has hit the consumers hard. "The outbreak of novel coronavirus and the subsequent lockdown have taken a heavy toll on the financial condition of common people. The recent spike in the prices of essential commodities has added to their woes. The Centre and state government have failed to regulate the prices," said Cuttack city Congress president Giribala Behera.

Behera claimed that the prices of onion and potato have reached ₹80 and ₹40 in Cuttack and other places in Odisha. "Now, one cannot get a bag full of vegetables even if he spends ₹500. The district administrations are yet to monitor the situation and take necessary action," Behera alleged.

The Congress leader further claimed that some unscrupulous traders are trying their best to garner maximum profits by hiking the prices of edible oil, pulses, potato, onion and garlic amid the festivities.

"The price rise has exposed the inefficiency and helplessness of the Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department of the state government," Behera alleged.



Behera claimed that the prices of onion and potato have reached ₹80 and ₹40 in Cuttack and other places in Odisha

## Stationary truck catches fire

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: A stationary truck caught fire at Mancheswar Industrial Estate area here Friday, triggering panic among passersby.

The fire fighters immediately rushed to the spot after receiving the report of fire from the locals. However, the blaze was brought under control by the Fire Services personnel.

Although the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, no major damages, apart from the vehicle, were reported in the incident.

## City institute gets distinct recognition

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: The Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (SOA) Deemed to be University here, was ranked as the 20th best university by the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) this year.

The university was also chosen as the only university from Eastern India to get the prestigious overall QS I-GAUGE Diamond Rating.

The ranking was decided through rigorous and independent data collection and analysis against performance metrics as set out in the methodology. Subhayou Nayak, Director (Client Relations), QS I-GAUGE, said, SOA was awarded

'Diamond Rating' in a virtual program in six parameters which included teaching and learning, employability, facilities, social responsibility, research and accreditation.

QS I-GAUGE is a custom designed rating system for universities and colleges in India which enables academic institutions to effectively benchmark their performance with reference to key indicators and lays down the developmental roadmap for upgrading their educational services.

SOA had also received the e-Learning Excellence for Academic Digitisation (e-LEAD) certificate recently at the QS I-GAUGE awards function for its excellence in e-learning and on-line teaching in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, SOA University sources here said.

## Uniform fire safety law for states likely

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: The Union government has proposed legislation of a uniform fire safety and fire prevention law for all the states in an attempt to reduce the compliance burden and promote ease of doing business.



In the matter of fire safety and prevention, it is proposed to frame a uniform law for the entire country

The Centre has written a letter to Odisha in this regard. In the matter of fire safety and fire prevention, it is proposed to frame a uniform law for the country instead of separate laws for the states, sources said here, Friday.

The Centre has proposed for re-

peal/subsume/amendment of the state Act. Accordingly, the state Law department has sought opinion of the Home department, which is dealing with fire services in the state.

The Odisha Fire Services Act, 1993 was enacted to provide fire safety, fire prevention and constitution of a state fire service department to carry out fire fighting measures, the sources said.

If the Parliament legislates a uniform law for all the states that will be applicable to the state after the same is adopted by the state under Article 252 of the Constitution. The existing state law will become redundant, they said.

## PAYING HOMAGE



People from various walks of life pay tributes to communist ideologue and revolutionary writer Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi on his death anniversary at OSSTA office in Cuttack, Friday

## EXTORTIONIST, KIN THRASH COPS IN CITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: Many policemen including a sub-inspector of Nayapalli police station sustained severe injuries following attacks by an alleged extortionist and his family members at Salia Sahi here.

The injured SI, Bijay Kumar Barik, has lodged a complaint with the Nayapalli police in this regard. According to sources, one Riyasat



Khan had filed a complaint with Nayapalli police accusing Sanjaya Sethi, an alleged anti-social, and his

associate Nitish, of snatching away his scooter when he denied giving him extortion amounting ₹30,000 October 20.

Khan along with his wife was passing through Janata Nagar when the duo intercepted their vehicle and demanded the money.

Later, Nayapalli police started investigation into the incident by registering a case (419/20).

SI Barik along with some constables and home guards Thursday

reached the residence of Sethi to enquire into the allegations. During interrogation, Sethi, his mother and sister suddenly started attacking Barik with sticks.

Other staffers were also injured when they rushed to help the SI. The cops immediately bolted away from the spot to save their lives.

The accused also threatened the cops of dire consequences if they again go there for investigation.

## Online services facing infra roadblocks: CSOs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: The recently launched online citizen services by the state government faces several infrastructural roadblocks which would affect its implementation, opined several city-based civil society organizations (CSOs).

Several CSOs, while welcoming the move, have called for an effective mechanism such as making Jana Seva available in those areas or make online service facilitation centre so that poor people can be benefited.

Social activist Naba Kishore Pujari said, "Offering online service is the need of the hour. But poor internet infrastructure and tele density pose a major challenge."

Arun Prasad Dihudi, a member of Odisha Shramajeebe Manch said, "We have already tested the online access of education of the children where the government has mostly failed. The online service of Food Department will also have similar consequences.

According to the report of Department of Telecommunications, out of

Odisha's total 32.8 million wireless internet subscribers, 21 million are in rural areas. As far as the internet through wireline or cable is concerned, of the total 0.23 million subscribers in Odisha, only 0.05 million are from rural areas. Rural Odisha's wireline density is just 0.13 pc. So, how can people access online services?" asked social activist Anjan Pradhan.

We have tweeted thousands of cases regarding denial of ration card under our "No hunger campaign" and had called on the Food Minister to address the issue. While many have been benefited from our efforts, universalisation of this service needs political will, said Manas Saurabh Behera, a twitter campaigner from Jeebika Suraksha Mancha.

This is a good thing that the Odisha government is doing it online which will benefit the people. However, we demand that no one should be left out due to lack of Aadhar card/ration card. And the government must include dal, edible oil and iodised salt in its food security scheme, which is a long-standing demand of the people," Pujari added.



Several CSOs have called for an effective mechanism such as making Jana Seva available in those areas or make online service facilitation centre so that poor people can be benefited

## LEFT RALLY



CPI(M) leader Janardan Pati addresses a rally of Cuttack Motor Staffers' Union at Palamandap bus stand in Cuttack, Friday

## Woman dies in road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 23: A woman died when a speeding truck hit her scooter at Khandagiri square here, Friday.

The deceased lady was identified as Priti Nayak, 38, of Raghunath Nagar under Khandagiri police limits. According to sources, Nayak, an LIC agent, was on her way to Barmunda by her scooter (OD 33 V 1450) when the speeding truck hit her scooter from the rear.

Locals revealed that Nayak fell off the vehicle and died on the spot due to head injury.

Upon receipt of information, police reached the spot and seized the truck.

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KALINGANAGAR INDUSTRIALIZATION

Downstream industries in the doldrums



As for Kalinganagar, the IDCO has only provided land to 36 small scale industries, but these SSIs are yet to receive land. Other basic infrastructure facilities like roads, drainage, electricity and water supply have not been put in place, leaving the importance of the downstream plan in a limbo.

Ancillary and downstream industries in metals such as steel and aluminum, is listed as one of the six focus sectors by the state government in its Industrial Policy Resolution (IPR), 2015

As for Kalinganagar, the IDCO has only provided land to 36 small scale industries, but these SSIs are yet to receive land

Other basic infrastructure facilities like roads, electricity, drainage and water supply have not been put in place, leaving the importance of the downstream plan in a limbo

scope of jobs as promised by Kalinganagar industries has shrunk. On the other hand, many old industrial units have allegedly got hundreds of acres of land without their proper use in Kalinganagar Industrial Complex. There are forest lands in the area, but there is a lot of problems in conversion of forest land for industrial use.

Four major industrial units are lying closed while the companies kept on downstream industries have been waiting for land over years. The IDCO has sought conversion of 2200 acres of forest land. Biju Patnaik National Institute has been shifted to Kalinganagar. IDCO has allotted only 10 acres of land at Jakhapura and Kacherigan under Danagadi tehsil May 29, 2020.

no dearth of raw material for the downstream metal sector in Kalinganagar. Opportunities for downstream and ancillary industry exist in areas like equipment manufacturing, foundries, flat and cold rolled products, fabrication, machining and precision equipment, appliances and white goods, auto components, fasteners and kitchenware.

Tirtol, Balasore bypolls: Campaigning hot up

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tirtol/Balasore, Oct 23: The bypoll fever is on the rise in Tirtol and Balasore Sadar Assembly constituencies with leaders of the BJD, BJP and the Congress trying their best to woo the voters. In spite of the rough climatic conditions, candidates of respective parties and other leaders are constantly building up the campaign trail.



Patnaik's image. As far as campaigning is considered, the Congress is a distant third. The party has fielded Himansu Bhusan Mallick as its candidate for Tirtol Assembly constituency while Mamata Kundu will contest from the Balasore Sadar constituency.

2 villages to boycott bypoll

BALASORE: Even though 72 years have passed since independence, people of Nanadachhak and Kayakada villages of Parikhi Panchayat in Balasore Sadar Assembly constituency have still been suffering from commuting woes. They have been crossing a river by using a bamboo bridge made by them, they fumed.

Section 144 imposed in Bhawanipatna town

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, Oct 23: In a bid to contain the spread of COVID-19 infection during 'Chhatar Yatra' which is celebrated at Bhawanipatna town in Kalahandi district on the occasion of Durga Puja, prohibitory orders under Section-144 was imposed in the town.

CHHATAR YATRA



This information was given by District Collector Gavali Parag. Entry of people from outside the town and gatherings has been banned from midnight October 23 to midnight October 25. He, however, said people with medical/emergency needs and media with Valid IDs will be allowed to enter the town during the two days.

partments carrying valid ID proofs/movement passes shall be exempted from the purview of this order. The Collector said any person contravening this order will be prosecuted under Section 188 of IPC. Parag also urged people to celebrate Durga Puja at their homes.

1,106 schools in Mayurbhanj to shut

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Oct 23: Even though the state government has introduced various schemes to motivate children of Odisha to continue school education, the district administration has failed to achieve desired results.



Primary schools with less than 20 and 25 students and 172 upper primary schools with low attendance will be shut down in the dist

Forced by poor enrolment, the school and mass education department of Odisha has ordered closure of 1,106 schools in the district. Sources said, there are a total of 4,025 primary, upper primary and high schools in the district. A total of 3,19,495 students study in these schools and as many as 15,496 teachers work there.

government is spending crores of rupees under mid-day meals, free uniform, free textbooks and other schemes to encourage students to join government-run or aided schools. However, rising cases of schools facing closure due to poor enrolment has raised questions on the effectiveness of the schemes and programmes.

Kin accuse forest staff of beating youth to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Udala, Oct 23: Accusing forest department officials of beating a youth to death on suspicion of being a poacher, the deceased's family members staged a sit-in along with the body at Sadiha range office here under Kaptipada police limits in Mayurbhanj district Thursday.

October 14 as his condition started deteriorating. He breathed his last October 22 while undergoing treatment. The family members demand a government job to one of them and financial assistance for the deceased's last rites.

EAST COAST RAILWAY Tender Notice No. ST-OT-TELE-ZONAL-BAM-193. Includes details about tendering for telecommunication work and contact information for the Divisional Railway Manager.

Turmeric farming adds glow to women of Swabhimani Anchal



Organic turmeric farming has widely spread in forested and hilly pockets like Jodamba, Panaspur, Andirapalli, Jantri and Gajulumamudi panchayats.

Alaka Sethi, a woman farmer of Panaspur area cultivates turmeric on an acre of her land. Turmeric is harvested once in two years. As part of the traditional practice, turmeric seeds are cleaned and then boiled before they are laid to dry.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Chittrakoda, Oct 23: Kandhamal is known for its organic turmeric cultivation as it has been a good cash crop for scores of people. Taking a leaf from Kandhamal farmers, many women farmers have replicated success in turmeric farming in Swabhimani Anchal under Chittrakonda block of Malkangiri district.

is harvested once in two years. As part of the traditional practice, turmeric seeds are cleaned and then boiled before they are laid to dry. I harvest about six to seven quintals of turmeric every year," she added.

throwaway price, it was said. Now, with Covid-19 sweeping across the region, some farmers face trading blues. They also asserted that if turmeric is promoted with government support and market linkage, the area would be able to export to other areas.

Notably Chittrakonda, once a cut-off area, was a backward region, but now development is gradually taking shape. The report said that organic turmeric farming has widely spread in forested and hilly pockets like Jodamba, Panaspur, Andirapalli, Jantri and Gajulumamudi panchayats.

Besides these two farmers, many other women have been successfully farming turmeric in five panchayats. Most of them said that lack of proper market linkages has been a major hurdle in promotion of this cultivation.

Locals put forth several demands like setting up of a turmeric procurement centre, processing and storage units in the area. Moreover, the horticulture department, the ITDA, Odisha Livelihood Mission and Mission Shakti should come out to promote this farming in the large interests of people, who have been suffering for lack of livelihood sources as development is gradually taking baby steps after Swabhimani bridge was commissioned.

FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS. A detailed table listing various train routes, frequencies, and special services. Includes a 'Dial 139' helpline and COVID-19 safety instructions for passengers.

FOCUS ECONOMY

# INCREASE IMPORT DUTY



Short-term fixes like disbursements of loans will not help...The only solution is to make a huge increase in import taxes and simultaneously implement policies that encourage businesses to adopt advanced technologies and make good quality goods at low cost

The government was obtaining revenue of ₹170 lakh crore from import duties a year till recently. Doubling of the import duties would lead to a reduction in imports, hence the revenue raised will be less than double. I reckon the additional revenue generated will be about ₹150 lakh crore. This money can be used to transfer ₹1,100 per year in the bank accounts of the 135 crore citizens or ₹5,500 per family per year. People can buy goods in the market from this money. Such a payment will not lead to additional burden of interest in the ensuing years. It will also not lead to increase in supply of printed notes and inflation.

Indeed, there will be price rise in the imported goods. But even this may be short-lived until domestic production picks up to supply cheaper-than-imported goods. The benefit of this approach will be that imported goods will become expensive, domestic goods will become cheaper in comparison, domestic industries will revive and employment will be generated. The income earned by workers will establish a fortuitous cycle of demand generation and income.

A caveat is necessary here. We had high rates of import duties before the economic reforms were unleashed in 1991. That had not led to increase in domestic production before 1991. One may ask how, then, will the imposition of high import duties lead to increase in domestic production now? The difference today is that our businesspersons have since been exposed to the international market and have acquired the capacity to produce goods of international standards.

The pandemic is here to stay for some time. Short-term fixes like disbursements of loans will not help. But the government's hands are tied. The only solution is to make a huge increase in import taxes and simultaneously implement policies that encourage businesspersons to adopt advanced technologies and make good quality goods at low cost.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore.

Many institutions had assessed in June that our economy will suffer a contraction of five per cent. Now the same institutions are saying that the contraction will be of ten per cent. This is likely to get worse in the coming months because the corona pandemic is showing no sign of abating. We may face a second wave in the winter months if the experience of resurgence of the pandemic in Europe is any guide.

In this gloomy scenario, the government is mighty pleased that a huge 75 per cent increase in sale of tractors, about 18 per cent increase in the sale of cars and 12 per cent increase in the sale of motorcycles has taken place in September 2020 as compared to the same month the previous year. Question is this: how come the purchase of tractors and cars is increasing when the GDP is contracting? My assessment is that farmers are making 'distress' purchases of tractors due to the shortage of labour caused by the failure of the government to encourage migrant workers back to their host states. Similarly, the unavailability of public transport like bus, metro and local trains have pushed commuters to make distress purchases of cars and motorcycles. Owning a vehicle helps in safe travel in Covid times. So, these purchases should not be misconstrued as indicators of a revival of the economy.

The government, however, is aware of the contraction of GDP. It has encouraged banks to give loans to consumers and businesspersons aggressively to generate demand in the market. There is a basic difference in the loans taken by businesspersons and consumers. Loans taken by investors are used for setting up factories, establishing shops or buying trucks. The businessperson and the nation generate additional income from these investments; and he could pay the interest and repay the principal amount from that additional income. Say, a businessperson took a loan of ₹10 lakh, earned an additional income of ₹3 lakh and used this to repay the interest of ₹1 lakh and principal

of ₹1 lakh; and he may still have with him ₹1 lakh for making new investment in the next year. His total expenditure will increase from ₹10 lakh this year to ₹11 lakh the next year. The situation of a consumer stands on an entirely different footing because he is not likely to obtain any additional income from buying, say, a fridge. Say, he took a loan of ₹10 lakh. He would have to pay an interest of ₹1 lakh and principal of ₹1 lakh and will be left with ₹2 lakh less for making new purchases in the next year. His expenditure will decrease from ₹10 lakh this year to ₹8 lakh next year. The income of the common man is already under stress. They should not invite further decrease in the same by take a consumption loan.

The economy may show some immediate benefits from disbursement of such loans just as steroids help increase the milk yield in cows immediately but this will only lead to problems later.

The second method of increasing demand in the market is for the government to borrow and transfer some amount directly to the bank accounts of the people who can use this windfall to buy goods from the market. However, the

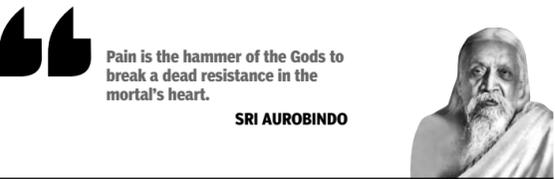
government will have to repay the loan and for this purpose it will have to impose additional taxes or print notes. The imposition of these additional taxes will lead to a reduction in income in hands of the people and lower demand the next year. Printing of notes will lead to an increase in the prices and again lead to reduced demand the next year. These are, therefore, band-aid type of temporary fixes that will only push the economy deeper into the pit.

The third method of raising money for making the direct transfers is for the government to increase import duties. The share of import taxes in the revenues of the government has declined from 18 per cent about six years ago to 12 per cent today. The government has actively promoted imports by reducing import duties. Note that we have committed in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) that we will not increase the average import duties beyond 48 per cent. The actual rate today is less than 20 per cent. Therefore, we face no roadblock from the WTO in doubling the import duties. The government can increase the import duties, say, from present average 20 to 40 per cent.



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

THE ECONOMY MAY SHOW SOME IMMEDIATE BENEFITS FROM DISBURSAL OF LOANS JUST AS STEROIDS HELP INCREASE THE MILK YIELD IN COWS IMMEDIATELY BUT THIS WILL ONLY LEAD TO PROBLEMS LATER



Pain is the hammer of the Gods to break a dead resistance in the mortal's heart.

SRI AUROBINDO

## Babus in good books

Politicians are loath to let a favourite babu go off into retirement. They find ways to bring them back into the administration. In 2017, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had appointed retired chief secretary Suresh Kumar as his chief principal secretary even though the state had a regular principal secretary, another IAS officer, because Kumar enjoyed his full trust.

Now taking a cue from the neighbouring state, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has sprung a similar surprise in his administration, and one that is likely to alter power equations in the Chief Minister's Office (CMO). He has appointed retired IAS officer DS Dhesi as chief principal secretary in the CMO.

According to sources, Dhesi was Haryana's chief secretary for four years and retired last year. He was then appointed chairman of the Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission (HERC), which he has now left to join his new assignment. Though his duties have not been spelt out, it is quite likely that Dhesi will become a power centre in the CMO, with all important files meant for Khattar being routed through him.

### SPECTRUM STORY

Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba will head a panel of secretaries to streamline the spectrum allocation process. The other members of the panel are Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar, Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash, I&B Secretary Amit Khare and Secretary, Department of Space, K. Sivan.

Those in the know say that the committee's ambit may eventually be widened to also include spectrum pricing issues, always contentious, as we have seen in the past.

According to sources, the high-powered panel will examine the possibility of drawing up an annual calendar for auction of the spectrum that will give telecom companies a clear road map of the quantum as well as the frequency of spectrum being offered for commercial use. It will also sort out the various spectrum-related issues between ministries - as seen in the composition of the panel.

This may meet a long-standing demand of telecom companies that have been asking the government to clear the air for auctioning spectrum, which will help them plan and allocate resources efficiently, optimise their networks and roll out new technologies.

### CLEANING THE AIR

It is that time of the year, Covid or not, when the air quality in north India deteriorates rapidly. Stubble burning by farmers in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi is a major contributor to this. Every year several steps are announced, media raises a big stink, but nothing much has happened.

This year, stubble burning has begun already and urgent steps would be required to prevent Delhi from turning into a gas chamber. The Supreme Court has now taken a serious note of the failure of these states to stop stubble burning which poses a serious threat to public health in the region. It directed the respective chief ministers of these states to remain present when the court takes up the matter of combating air pollution at the next hearing. Hopefully, some meaningful action will emerge from the apex court's intervention.

Meanwhile, the state administration in Punjab and Haryana are busy dealing with angry farmers agitating against the Centre's controversial farm bills. The chief secretaries have their hands full. This year could see a repeat of our previous trysts with polluted air at the onset of winter with babus issuing the usual warnings and threats to fine farmers who are burning stubble.

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

### WISDOM CORNER

- We are here to add what we can to life, not to get what we can from life. WILLIAM OSLER
- The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm. ALDOUS HUXLEY
- Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible. DALAI LAMA

### WORDSWORTH

#### Understrapper

The late British author and newspaper columnist Simon Hoggart used to be fond of this word, applying it particularly to a governmental minion sent to make a statement before the House of Commons, thereby taking abuse that should have been directed at his boss. Few people now would grasp the full import of the word, though its first element gives enough of a clue that it's an alternative to underling. It was a popular term of the 18th Century, its first user on record being Thomas Brown, a satirist now only remembered, if at all, for a verse translation of a Latin epigram he composed when under threat of being sent down by his Oxford tutor, Dr John Fell: "I do not love thee, Dr Fell, / The reason why I cannot tell; / But this I know, and know full well, / I do not love thee, Dr Fell." A strapper could be a labourer or a man who groomed horses, hence a menial employee. His subordinate would be the ultimate underling.

#### Unfriend

This is a verb, meaning to remove a person as a "friend" on a social networking site such as Facebook. It was chosen as Word of the Year 2009 by the New Oxford American Dictionary. Christine Lindberg, senior lexicographer for Oxford's US dictionary programme, was quoted as saying "Unfriend has real lex-appeal." She wrote in the Dictionary's blog: "It has both currency and potential longevity. In the online social networking context, its meaning is understood, so its adoption as a modern verb form makes this an interesting choice for Word of the Year." The New Oxford American Dictionary's editors have been criticised for selecting it and the word itself has gained few friends among writers. The main objection to it - apart from its inelegance - is that it ought to be defriend, which is also used, which would parallel the standard English befriend. However, the Dictionary's editors found unfriend was much more common. It is presumably modelled on terms such as unsubscribe.

### LOL

#### LOST IN A BALLOON

Two hobbyists get into their balloon for an excursion. After a while, the wind unexpectedly picks up, and the balloon goes out of control. The two balloonists, with great effort, manage to keep the balloon stable, upright, and away from power lines. But they are lost. With more effort, they get the balloon near the ground. While floating over a country road, they see a man walking below. One of the balloonists calls down to him: "We're lost! Can you tell us where we are?"



The man thinks for a while, looks down, looks up, looks down again, stares into space for a minute, and then cries out: "You're in a balloon!" The wind picks up, and the balloon floats off. After a moment, one balloonist says to the other: "That man must be a manager." "Why?" "Three reasons. First, he took a long time to answer. Second, he was perfectly correct. Third, his answer was perfectly useless!"

### SPECTRUM QUAD

# A bulwark against Chinese designs



Dr. DK Giri

NEW DELHI IS THE CRITICAL ANCHOR IN MAKING INDIA-PACIFIC A VIABLE STRATEGIC INSTRUMENT

Although reports of a trade deal with Taiwan have not been officially confirmed by India, Beijing has issued a veiled warning to New Delhi. Obviously, it is not just India-Taiwan. Beijing is reacting to the latest development in the Quad, and the ensuing defence pact between India and the US. As New Delhi decides to take on China, the latter makes a desperate attempt to bully India.

Recently, India participated symbolically in the National Day of Taiwan, drawing a sharp response from Beijing. The Chinese embassy in New Delhi issued an advisory to the Indian media against felicitating of Taiwan on its National Day. New Delhi reacted by saying that media in India is free and vibrant unlike in China. The cooperation between Taiwan and India is rising especially since a pro-independent Prime Minister took charge in Taiwan. Trade between the two countries is on the rise and Taiwan has a trade office in Mumbai.

On a serious note, observers interpret Beijing's diplomatic advisory to India as a military threat. The vibe emanating from China points to Chinese military taking action if New Delhi were to seal a deal of any sort with Taiwan. Since containing China consists of a multi-

pronged strategy, it is in order that we factor the development in the Quad. New Delhi has invited, for the first time, Australia to participate in the joint naval exercise along with Japan and the US. The partners in Quad have responded warmly to India inviting Australia to join the Malabar Naval exercise.

Arguably, the US views Quad as a countervailing body to China. But for long-term partnership between these four democracies, Quad should mean more than China. It should be a partnership based on shared values and interests including rule of law, freedom of navigation, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, peaceful resolution of disputes and free trade. India-Pacific region draws attention from other countries like Germany, UK and France. Germany, which is holding the EU presidency at present, is spearheading an India-Pacific strategy for the European Union. Germany has hinted that any engagement with India will always have the China angle in the equation. Out of all the four members in Quad it is India that shares a long border with China and is facing Chinese hostility for many years. So, the onus is on New Delhi to keep the Quad going for a secure and conflict-free India-Pacific region.

The third thorn in China's flesh is the India-US defence deals in the forthcoming 2+2 ministerial meeting. India and US are going to sign the Basic Exchange and Co-operation Agreement, which pertains to geospatial intelligence, and sharing information on maps and satellite images for defence. The BECA is sequel to LEMOA and COMCASA; these three defence pacts are considered to be the trioka of foundational pacts leading to deeper military co-operation.

On the pacts, the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) was signed in August 2016. It allows each other's military to replenish from others' bases access supplies, spare parts and services from other countries' land, air and ports, which then can be reimbursed. Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) signed in 2018 after the first 2+2 dialogue allows US to provide India with encrypted communications equipment and systems. In simpler terms, it is like WhatsApp or Telegram for the two militaries. While LEMOA lays the bases for mutual trust on exchange of valuable assets, COMCASA connects two militaries and BECA facilitates sharing classified information in real time with-

out any risk of being compromised. All these pacts put together mean both militaries coming closer and building trust in the face of an increasingly aggressive China.

There are those who might read a US strategy in these pacts to wean India away from its dependence on Russia. India was putting off US overtures because of deep-rooted links between Pakistan and Pentagon. The US could still rely on Rawalpindi for access to an exit from Afghanistan. Both these premises have changed. The US is successfully nudging India to engage in Afghanistan, partly to replace Pakistan and the Chinese aggression has pushed New Delhi into America's embrace.

Apparently New Delhi has blown the bugle although not so loud against China. The India-Pacific region manned by Quad is the real bulwark against Chinese aggression. New Delhi is the critical anchor in making India-Pacific a viable strategic instrument. Japan may have originated the idea and the US may have given it a push but it is India that has made Quad happen. Taiwan is a pinprick for China, but it should not become another Tibet.

The writer is Professor of International Relations, JMI.

#### Centre vs states

Sir, Following the Punjab government's footsteps, Rajasthan is set to pass a law against the provisions of farm laws passed recently by the central government. Previously, many non-BJP ruled states had passed laws against the provisions of CAA, NRC, terming them anti-people. In the case of the present farm laws, they oppose it by saying that the laws are against the interests of farmers. At this juncture, the Supreme Court is urged to come out and interpret the laws regarding states' Constitutional rights and obligations in relation to central laws, and clear the air so that peace reigns in the farm sector. Satya Behera, BOLANGIR

#### Superstition in TV shows

Sir, As per Article 51 A(h) of the Constitution, a fundamental duty of the citizens is to develop a scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry. But, some television channels are promoting superstition and blind belief in the guise of popular family serials. Scenes of witchcraft, appearance of ghosts, witches, human sacrifice, mysterious and obscure cults are being shown in these serials. The scenes are not only a contradiction of the Constitutional provisions but also creating an environment for psychological disorders among the weak-minded. These scenes are getting transported to the dreams of spectators. When scientists are researching for Mangalyaan, TV is being used to spread horror in society in the name of entertainment. Action should be taken against these serials. Sudhansu Sekhar Dhada, BHUBANESWAR

#### New gold rule

Sir, The central government's consumer welfare ministry has issued directions to some three lakh jewellery shops to abide by the compulsory hallmarking on every gold item they sell from mid-January 2021 and any violation shall invite stiff penalty. There are facilities only at 27 places to issue Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) hallmarking. So, how could the mammoth task of hallmarking be achieved for all these jewellery outlets? The new act is also silent about the huge gold or ornament deposits in temples. In the absence of hallmark, what would be its value? Indian households possess ornaments, gold and silver as inheritance over generations, which are bereft of any such hallmarking. Every family possesses some ornaments to carry on their sustenance in times of financial difficulties. The government is urged to clear the air on this. Janaki Ballav Dash, MAYURBHANJ

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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# In push for 2022, BSP woos Brahmins

## Maya makes a point by fielding candidate for RS



**CASTE FACTOR**  
The BSP has been holding 'Brahmin Samvads' that have been addressed by senior party members over the past weeks, a move designed to woo Brahmins, who are reportedly disgruntled with the BJP.

The party is now addressing Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as 'Thakur Ajay Singh Bisht, Uttarakhand wale'

The party also seeks to widen the Thakur-Brahmin divide and use it to its advantage

LUCKNOW: Despite having an effective strength of merely 19 MLAs in the 403-member Uttar Pradesh Assembly, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has decided to field its national coordinator Ramji Gautam for the tenth Rajya Sabha seat from the state. According to party sources, the candidature of Gautam is learnt to have been finalised in a meeting of party MLAs Thursday. Sources said Gautam's nomination is likely to be filed October 26. The election is scheduled for November 9. According to sources in the party, Gautam's selection is crucial as he belongs to the Dalit community, a vote bank which Mayawati needs to consolidate before the next Assembly elections in the state. However, the BSP which had won 19 seats in 2017, now has an effective strength of 15.



Three BSP MLAs -- Anil Singh, Ramvir Upadhyay and Mohammed Aslam Raini -- have rebelled against the party and are openly supporting the BJP while another legislator, Mukhtar Ansari, is in jail. A candidate needs 36 votes to win while the BSP has only 15. Party sources said the BSP game plan was to corner the other opposition parties.

The Samajwadi Party will be left with 10 surplus votes after getting its candidate Ram Gopal Yadav elected and the Congress has an effective strength of five legislators. Two of its MLAs -- Aditi Singh and Rakesh Singh -- have already revolted against the party. "By fielding a candidate, the party leadership will ask the opposition parties to support our Dalit candidate and if they refuse, their anti-Dalit mentality will stand exposed," said a party functionary. Ramji Gautam, was named the national coordinator in June 2019. He worked at a private firm as a chemical engineer before joining the party in 2015. Currently, he runs a business of pesticides and agriculture-related chemicals and belongs to Lakhimpur Kheri district.

Party leaders have been asked to ensure that at least 1,000 persons from each community in each district are enrolled as members. "The party wants to broaden its base and include all major communities. We will be launching an aggressive campaign for the Assembly elections and issues will be related to the common man instead of being caste-specific," said a party functionary. A major poll plank

for the party would be the law and order situation during Mayawati's regime and party leaders will compare the same with the current state of affairs. The party campaign will also focus on the manner in which the government is targeting Brahmins, Dalits, OBCs and even minorities. The BSP has been holding 'Brahmin Samvads' that have been addressed by senior party members over the past weeks.

The move is designed to woo Brahmins, who are reportedly disgruntled with the BJP. Interestingly, the BSP is now addressing Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as 'Thakur Ajay Singh Bisht, Uttarakhand wale'. The idea is to underline the fact that he does not belong to the state and is an 'outsider'. Besides, the BSP also wants to widen the Thakur-Brahmin divide and use it to its advantage.

# HC restrains ED, Customs from arresting Sivasankar till Oct 28

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Oct 23: The Kerala High Court Friday restrained the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Customs, probing the two separate cases in connection with the gold smuggling case, from arresting M Sivasankar, suspended IAS officer and former principal secretary to the Chief Minister, till Oct 28.



The Court gave the directive while considering together the anticipatory bail pleas filed by Sivasankar apprehending arrest by Customs probing the gold smuggling and ED investigating the money trail in the case.

Earlier, in a written statement the ED has submitted that Sivasankar appears to be connected with the serious economic offence allegedly committed by prime accused Swapna Suresh.

The court adjourned the case for October 28 for orders after completing the arguments in both the pleas. Earlier, the court had restrained the ED and Customs from arresting Sivasankar till Friday. Strongly opposing the anticipatory bail plea, the ED Friday submitted that the custodial interrogation of the officer was required as he was not cooperating with the investigation.

In its submission, the ED has alleged that the officer was "very close" to Suresh, a former UAE consulate employee, and would be sending WhatsApp messages to her throughout the day.

The agency said the role of Sivasankar in the gold smuggling case was still being probed and granting him anticipatory bail will adversely affect the investigation.

According to the ED, the chats show that Suresh discussed everything with him and as such, it is highly unlikely that he was not aware of the money she was making through gold smuggling and also by way of commission kickbacks in the consulate contracts. The Customs also opposed anticipatory bail, alleging that Sivasankar was not providing clear answers to important questions in connection with the case. Refuting the charges against him, Sivasankar submitted that he was being hounded by the agencies in the name of investigation in the case. He submitted he was not holding any influential position in the government at present and claimed that he even was not getting a hotel room due to the case. Seeking anticipatory bail, Sivasankar said he has complied with all the directions till now and there is no scope for him absconding also.

# Clerics object to action against UP cop for keeping a beard

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Saharanpur, Oct 23: The Darul Uloom Deoband clerics are up in arms against Baghpat Superintendent of Police, Abhishek Singh, for suspending a Sub-Inspector Intesar Ali for keeping a beard.



The sub-inspector, posted in Baghpat, had been asked to either shave off his beard or take requisite permission because the police manual does not allow any personnel, except Sikhs, to keep a beard.

Terminating the action against the sub-inspector as 'wrong', the clerics are seeking action against the SP. The Ittehad Ulema-e-Hind national president Maulana Qari Mustafa Delhvi, said the action has been taken on the basis of bias and should be condemned.

He demanded that the government take action against the SP. Some other clerics, who spoke on condition of anonymity, also said that the action was a result of 'religious vendetta'. The sub-inspector, posted in Baghpat, had been asked to either shave off his beard or take requisite permission because the police manual does not allow any per-

sonnel, except Sikhs, to keep a beard. Ali had been warned thrice to shave off or seek permission for the same. However, the policeman did not seek permission and continued to keep the beard. Earlier, SP Baghpat Abhishek Singh said that as per the police manual only Sikhs are allowed to keep a beard while all other policemen have to remain clean-shaven. "If any police personnel

# 'Gold smuggling syndicate uses women as carriers'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, Oct 23: Gold worth lakhs of rupees was seized by Customs Friday from a woman passenger at Kannur International Airport, with officers suspecting it to be the handiwork of a Gulf based smuggling syndicate using women as carriers.



**GULF-BASED RACKET**

Customs officials suspect that the woman was recruited by a Gulf-based Kerala gold smuggling syndicate, exploiting her family's poor financial condition

The woman would be summoned for interrogation after completing her mandatory quarantine to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus

The 32-year-old woman, who arrived from Sharjah, allegedly carried the gold concealed in her underwear, Customs sources said. They said officers of the Air Customs, Kannur, seized 883 grams of gold from her possession when she arrived along with her brother and three children in an Air India Express Flight.

GULF-BASED KERALA GOLD SMUGGLING SYNDICATES ARE VERY ACTIVE EVEN DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN ARE BEING USED AS CARRIERS, EXPLOITING THEIR SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS DUE TO JOB LOSSES AND FAILED BUSINESSES IN THE GULF

The woman, hailing from a north Kerala district, was arrested, but released on bail, the sources said. Customs officials suspect that the woman was recruited by a Gulf-based Kerala gold smuggling syndicate, exploiting her family's poor financial condition. They said preliminary investigations revealed that she returned from Sharjah due to the poor financial condition of her husband,

who is in a low-level job in a firm there. She came back with her brother and children using the tickets allegedly offered by the syndicate for smuggling gold. A senior officer said they suspected that the syndicate approached the woman offering free tickets when the family was in dire need of money for their return journey

to Kerala. He told PTI that the Gulf-based Kerala gold smuggling syndicates are very active even during the COVID-19 pandemic and women and children are being used as carriers, exploiting their socio-economic conditions due to job losses and failed businesses in the Gulf. The officer said the woman would be summoned for interro-

# Kerala's active cases nearing one lakh-mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 23: Active COVID-19 cases in Kerala inched toward the one lakh-mark as the daily positive count continued to soar with 8,511 fresh cases Friday while the toll rose to 1,281 with the addition of 26 deaths.

for over 1,000 fresh cases with Malappuram recording 1,375, the highest in the state, followed by Thrissur (1,020).

Thiruvananthapuram reported 890 cases, Ernakulam 874 and Kozhikode 751 cases. Twenty-six COVID-19 deaths in the past few days were confirmed, pushing the toll to 1,281. Two of the deceased were

As many as 95,657 people were presently undergoing treatment for the infection while the total infection count stood at 3,64,895, the government said.

over 90 years of age.

Of the positive cases Friday, a total of 148 had come from outside the state and 7,269 were infected through contact. At least 2,80,184 people are under observation in various districts, including 22,780 in hospitals. So far, 42,12,611 samples have been sent for testing.

While 12 new areas got into the list of hotspots, 14 were removed.

The fresh cases were detected after testing 64,789 samples and included 82 health workers, Health Minister KK Shailaja said.

A total of 6,118 people were cured of the disease, taking the cumulative recoveries in the state so far to 2,80,793, the minister said in a release. Two districts accounted



**The daily positive count continued to soar with 8,511 fresh cases Friday while the toll rose to 1,281 with the addition of 26 deaths in the southern state**

# Create separate room at every PS for women complainants: Yogi to officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, Oct 23: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath Friday directed officials to create a separate room in every police station of the state where women complainants can convey their problems to women personnel without any hesitation.



"The separate room equipped with all basic facilities should be made in all police stations so that an aggrieved woman is able to speak without any hesitation to the female police personnel. Not only this, all the helpline numbers (1090, 181, 112, 1076, 1098 and 102) on which a woman can call for help when needed should be written there. A warning will also be written there for those who misuse the numbers," a statement quoting the chief minister said. The chief minister was speaking after inaugurating a women's help desk from his official residence here Friday.

The woman's help desk will be set up at all the 1,535 police stations of the state under the 'Mission Shakti', a women's empowerment campaign launched by the state government

The campaign was launched last week with an aim to provide help to women and instill a sense of security in them

The woman's help desk will be set up at all the 1,535 police stations of the state under the 'Mission Shakti', a women's empowerment campaign launched by the state government.

The campaign was launched last week with an aim to provide help to women and instill a sense of security in them. In his address, the chief minister said the honour of women will have to be maintained. "For this, take this program of 'mission Shakti' to schools, colleges and other institutions as well. Make people aware about this (campaign) during morning prayers and any cultural event," the CM said.

Stating that a lot has changed during the week-long Mission Shakti program, Adityanath said in the past, those who made "a mountain

of mole hill are themselves in the dock."

"The police department has done a good job during this period. The activities of other departments related to the campaign and the future action plan should be reviewed by the Chief Secretary and the Chief Minister's Office," he said, adding that this is a campaign to change people's thinking towards women.

The chief minister also spoke to some women and public representatives at the women's help desks set up in Gautam Budh Nagar;

# Kerala will again become tourist paradise: Vijayan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 23: Kerala Chief Minister Pinayari Vijayan has launched 26 new tourism projects across the state in a bid to boost the crisis-hit tourism sector.



Vijayan Thursday said the tourism sector in the state has suffered an estimated loss of around Rs 25,000 crore due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said the epidemic arrived at a time when the tourism sector in the state was thriving after overcoming several crises.

"Once our state, the country and the world survive COVID-19, Kerala will once again become a tourist paradise," Vijayan said while inaugurating the projects in 14 districts through video conference. He said the state government is implementing adequate projects to boost the tourism sector. "The tourism sector was estimated to have lost Rs 25,000 crore due to the COVID-19 crisis, which had also resulted in huge job losses," he said.

poet Mooloor S Padmanabha Panicker, was also held. The Green Tourism Complex, modelled on the Louvre Museum in Paris, at Pala in Kottayam, Aruvikkuzhi Tourism Development Project in Idukki District; Elappara amenity centre, pathway to the finishing point of the Punnamadra Nehru Trophy boat race and two boat jetties, the tourism project as part of the Bhoothathankettu dam in Ernakulam district, the botanical garden and renovation of the tourist centre at Peechi dam in Thrissur are the few projects which were launched.

The gardens at Pothundi and Mangalam dams in Palakkad district have also been renovated to welcome tourists. The Chief Minister also inaugurated the Parassinikadavu Boat Terminal and the Pazhayangadi Boat Terminal, part of the Malnad Malabar River Cruise Tourism Project.

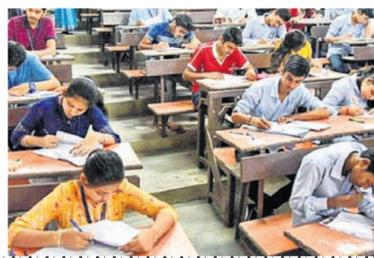
A release issued by the state tourism department said inauguration of a Rs 49 lakh beautification project of the Mooloor Memorial at Elavumthitta in Pathanamthitta district, home of the multi-talented



**The Maha Vikas Aghadi government is showing budgeted provisions as a special package and trying to portray a false picture of helping farmers**  
DEVENDRA FADNIS | MAHARASHTRA LEADER OF OPPOSITION

## KARNATAKA TO REOPEN DEGREE COLLEGES

The Karnataka government has decided to reopen diploma and degree colleges including engineering colleges after November 17 that were shut after Covid pandemic outbreak since March



## of the day quote

**Amarinder Singh played fraud with the farmers through misuse of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha. All the anti-farmer acts passed by the Centre have been endorsed by him**

**Under BJP rule, MP is identified with the mafia, adulteration etc, while industries in the state have got totally ruined**

**Congress party needs to first decide who is their leader. Is it a person or a family? In politics, you cannot understand the pain of poor and middle class citizens if you are blinded by the love for one family. Since Congress is a sinking ship, I wonder how it can help the people of Morbi?**

## SHORT TAKES

### Farmer ends life

**Aurangabad:** A 30-year-old farmer allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself in Marathwada region of Maharashtra on Friday, after his crop got washed away due to recent heavy rains, a police official said. The incident occurred at Kader village in Omerga tehsil in the morning, he said. "According to his relatives, Shivaji Jadhav hanged himself from a tree in the early hours," S K Shaikh of Omerga police station said.

### Two arrested

**Amravati:** Two persons have been arrested in Amravati district of Maharashtra for allegedly cheating 41 persons of Rs 40,000 each on the pretext of arranging trips for them to Thailand, police said Friday. Dr Nandkishor Arun Patil (30) and his brother Vinod were nabbed on Wednesday for allegedly taking money from the victims for arranging a trip to Thailand in June 2019 and not refunding the money after cancelling the tour, sub-inspector Rajesh Jaware of Anjangaon police said. The duo had floated attractive advertisements of trips to Thailand through Manav Sewa Vikas Foundation and 41 persons had responded to the ad and shelled out Rs 40,000 each for the trip, which was scheduled for June 16, 2019, he said.

### Silver seized

**Thane:** Silver and imitation jewellery worth Rs 6.17 crore were seized from a van in Navi Mumbai in Thane district, police said Friday. The van was moving in a suspicious manner near a toll plaza on Thursday night and a search yielded 929.414 kgs of silver and imitation jewellery being transported through courier services to Pune, Kolhapur and other parts of Maharashtra, Senior Inspector Sanjeev Dhumal of Vashi police station said.

### Debris removed

**Malapuram:** Part of the debris of the Air India Express plane that crashed at nearby Karipur airport on August 7, killing 21 people, was Friday shifted from the accident site for facilitating a thorough probe, airport authorities said. The airline's officials from Mumbai supervised the shifting of the cockpit portion of the aircraft to a nearby area, using a crane, they said. Twenty one people were killed when the AIE flight from Dubai with 190 people on board overshot the tabletop runway, fell into a 35-feet valley and broke into two portions.

## FIGHT AGAINST COVID

# Next 3 months decisive: Vardhan

"From just one lab, the country now has nearly 2,000 laboratories. The number of total COVID-19 tests conducted across the country have surpassed 10 crore. This is a positive indication that we are moving in the right direction," the minister said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 23:** Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan Friday said the next three months are going to be decisive in determining the coronavirus situation in the country as he urged people to follow COVID appropriate behaviour in the coming festival season and winter months.

He also highlighted that the number of active COVID-19 cases in the country are less than 7 lakh and the doubling rate has increased to 97.2 days.

Vardhan, who reviewed the COVID-19 preparedness with the health and medical education ministers and other senior officials of Uttar Pradesh, said in the last three months, the country has seen significant improvement in the COVID parameters, the health ministry said in a statement.

"From recording over 95,000 COVID-19 cases in a day, they have been substantially reduced to less than 55,000 per day. The recovery rate of India is nearing 90 per cent. The Case Fatality Rate (CFR) is also declining. CFR stands at 1.51 per cent and is moving towards the target of being less than 1 per cent," he was quoted as saying in the statement.



"The number of active cases is less than 7 lakh and the doubling rate has increased to 97.2 days, as of now," Vardhan said.

"From just one lab, the country now has nearly 2,000 laboratories. The number of total COVID-19 tests conducted across the country have surpassed 10 crore. This is a positive indication that we are moving in the right direction," the minister said.

He said appropriate measures are being taken to combat the infectious disease.

"But the next three months are going to be decisive in determining

the situation of COVID-19 in the country. If we take adequate precaution and follow COVID appropriate behaviour in the coming festival and winter season, we will be in a better position to fight coronavirus," Vardhan said.

"For a big state like Uttar Pradesh, it becomes important that maximum thrust is given to simple precautionary measures which are effective in preventing the spread of the disease to a large extent like wearing masks/face cover, especially in public spaces, and following hand and respiratory etiquettes," he added.

# One-fourth of Delhi air 'severely' polluted



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Oct 23:** Nine of the 36 pollution monitoring station in Delhi showed 'severe' air quality index on Friday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board's data.

According to the pollution monitoring agency, AQI in North Delhi's Alipur area was 447, which falls in the 'severe' category, followed by Shadipur, Wazirpur, Jahagirpuri, Mundka, Patparganj, Anand Vihar, Bawana, and Vivek Vihar.

Besides these, 26 pollution monitoring station showed 'very poor' reading and one logged moderate air quality index. The overall pollution levels continued to be in the lower end of the 'very poor' category at 372 at noon.

Vijay Kumar Sonu, Head of Environment Monitoring and Research Centre at IMD told IANS that "due to calm wind there is no dispersion of pollutants". "The wind speed will, however, pick up from October 26 and would likely result in improvement of AQI," he said.

The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and

Research, which comes under the aegis of Ministry of Earth Sciences, also stated that the most dominant factor for deterioration is extremely calm surface wind in Delhi, combined with low inversion height followed by moderate stubble related intrusion.

"Highly calm surface wind conditions prevail over the Delhi region and is forecast to continue for next two days. It will lead to low ventilation conditions and little dispersion for an extended period and hence accumulation of pollutants near the surface. Further deterioration of AQI is predicted for the next 2 days," the forecasting agency added.

SAFAR also stated that there was significant stubble fire count around Haryana, Punjab, and neighbouring regions with the counts at 1,213 on Thursday, slightly less than what was a day before.

"However, the boundary layer wind direction is not fully favourable for pollutant transport towards Delhi region, the SAFAR model estimate of stubble burning share in PM2.5 is 17 per cent for today," it added.

# PAR PANEL QUIZZES FACEBOOK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 23:** A parliamentary panel Friday quizzed social media giant Facebook about the quantum of their revenue, profit and tax payouts in India and asked what portion of their earnings were being used for data security in the country, sources said.

Facebook India's policy head Ankhil Das appeared before the Joint Committee of Parliament on Data Protection Bill, 2019 chaired by BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi.

She was questioned for two hours and asked some tough and searching questions by the panel members from across the political spectrum, sources said.

During the meeting, a member suggested that the social media platform should not draw inferences from the data of its users for commercial benefits of its advertisers or for electoral purposes, they said.

The MPs also sought to know the revenue Facebook generates from India and what percentage of the revenue is spent on safeguards for data protection, sources said. India is the biggest market for Facebook in terms of its users.

The panel also asked how much tax the social media giant pays in India, they said.

During the meeting, concerns were also raised about the allegations that majority of the employees of the social media giant in the United States were inclined towards one specific political party of the country.

# PDP, Gupkar alliance to take call: Mehbooba

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, Oct 23:** PDP president Mehbooba Mufti Friday said her party and the recently-floated People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration will take a final decision on whether to contest elections or not in the Union Territory. Jammu and Kashmir's mainstream political parties, including the National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party, formed the Gupkar alliance on October 15 for restoration of special status of the erstwhile state and also to initiate a dialogue between all the stakeholders on the issue.

In her first media interaction in over 14 months after the abrogation of provisions of Article 370 in August last year and her subsequent detention, Mufti said personally she was not interested in contesting polls till the erstwhile state's flag and constitution were restored.

"As far as the PDP is concerned, now we are not alone. If you remember, we, along with the NC, had taken a united stand before the commencement of panchayat polls (in 2018) that we will not participate in them. This time also, we will discuss it in the party, with our workers, and then discuss it in the People's Alliance (for Gupkar Declaration). Whatever decision we take there, will be bound on everyone," she told reporters at a



press conference at her Gupkar residence.

However, the former chief minister said on the personal front, she had no interest in contesting any elections till the erstwhile state's flag and its constitution was restored. "As far as I am concerned, I have no interest in elections. Till the time the constitution, under which I used to contest elections, is returned to us, Mehbooba Mufti has got nothing to do with elections, let me tell you that," she said.

Mufti said she was not for power even if the union territory was upgraded to a state. "I am no more for power be it a union territory or even a state. I was never for power. If I had any greed for power, we would not have left the Congress and created the PDP. We are not only for power. We could have made the government with the Congress (after 2014 polls), but we entered into an alliance with the BJP for a reason," she said, adding that "I am not ready to take any oath without my flag and my constitution".

# Khadse joins NCP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Oct 23:** Former Maharashtra BJP leader Eknath Khadse Friday joined the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) in the presence of the party's chief Sharad Pawar.

Sulking since his unceremonious exit from the Devendra Fadnis-led ministry in 2016 over land grab allegations, Khadse (68) on Wednesday quit the BJP. The same day, state NCP chief Jayant Patil announced he would be joining the Pawar-led party.

NCP is part of the ruling alliance in the state along with Shiv Sena and Congress, whose Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government assumed office 11 months ago. Khadse, former Maharashtra Revenue Minister and also an ex-Leader of Opposition in state Assembly, was inducted into the NCP at the party's head office here.

The leader, who flew in here on Thursday from his native Jalgaon district in north Maharashtra, was in political wilderness during the last four years, though he quit the BJP only two days ago. Khadse's formal entry into NCP, scheduled at 2 pm, was delayed by an hour as Pawar was in a meeting with party minister Jitendra Awhad. Jayant Patil welcomed Khadse in the party, by offering him a scarf. Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Khadse had blamed Fadnis for "trying to destroy his life" and political career; over three decades of it spent in strengthening the BJP in Maharashtra.

# Rahul takes a dig at Modi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Hisua/Bhagalpur (Bihar), Oct 23:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Friday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of having "insulted" the soldiers with his comment that nobody had intruded into Indian territory in Ladakh, and also alleged that his government did not help the migrant workers from Bihar during the lockdown.

Addressing his first poll rallies in the state, Rahul Gandhi said the BJP's election promise of providing 19 lakh jobs is akin to its pledge of depositing Rs 15 lakh in bank accounts of the people. Raising the China issues at his both rallies - the first at Hisua in Nawada district and another at Kahalgaon in Bhagalpur - he said the Chinese army had indeed intruded into the Indian territory, and the Prime Minister should tell the country when they



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi along with RJD leader Tejawshi Yadav during an election meeting, at Hisua in Nawada district, Friday

will "be thrown out". "They have seized 1,200 sq km of our land. But when the Chinese army intruded, why did our Prime Minister insult our soldiers by saying that nobody entered into the Indian side?" Rahul Gandhi said.

"You ask any Army jawan, he will tell you that today the Chinese army is standing in the area which

we use to patrol earlier. Our land has been snatched away from us," he claimed. "The question is, Modi ji, when will you throw out the Chinese soldiers sitting on our territory?" he asked. Upping the ante, Rahul said that the Prime Minister who calls himself a nationalist and a patriot has weakened the country over the last six years.

## FESTIVE TIME



Devotees take part in rituals as part of Durga Puja celebrations in Birbhum district of West Bengal, Friday

# New Parliament building to be ready by Oct 2022

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 23:** Construction of a new Parliament building will begin in December this year and is likely to be completed by October 2022, while necessary measures have been put in place to ensure that Parliament sessions can be held uninterrupted during this period in the existing buildings, Lok Sabha Secretariat said Friday.

Officials also said that sufficient steps have been taken to control air and noise pollution during the construction work for the new parliament building, which will have separate offices for all MPs and those will be equipped with the latest digital interfaces as a step towards creating 'paperless offices'.

The new building will also have a grand Constitution Hall to showcase India's democratic heritage, a lounge for members of Parliament, a library, multiple committee rooms, dining areas and ample parking space.

In the new building, the Lok Sabha chamber will have a seating capacity for 888 members, while Rajya Sabha will have 384 seats for the upper house members, sources said after a review meeting chaired by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. This has been done keeping in mind the future increase in the number of members for the two houses.

At present, Lok Sabha has a sanctioned strength of 543 members and Rajya Sabha of 245. The groundbreaking ceremony is expected to be held in December and may be at-



tended by President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, besides the presiding officers of the two houses among other dignitaries including political leaders.

The existing building is a British era building, designed by Edwin Lutyns and Herbert Baker who were responsible for planning and

construction of New Delhi. The Foundation Stone of the existing Parliament House was laid on February 12, 1921 and the construction took six years and cost Rs 83 lakh at that time. The opening ceremony was performed on January 18, 1927 by the then Governor-General of India, Lord Irwin.

At the meeting, Birla said there

should be no compromise in ensuring quality control and timely completion of the work relating to the new Parliament House. A monitoring committee will be constituted to oversee the construction work, which would include officers of Lok Sabha Secretariat, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, CPWD, NDMC and architect/designer of the project.

Last month, Tata Projects Limited won the bid to construct the new parliament building at a cost of Rs 861.90 crore. The new building will be constructed close to the existing one under the Central Vista redevelopment project.

In a statement, the Lok Sabha Secretariat said Birla chaired a review meeting regarding the con-

struction of the new Parliament House today. The meeting was also attended by Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Shri Hardeep Singh Puri.

During the meeting, Birla was briefed about the progress made in the shifting of facilities and other infrastructure from the area proposed for the construction of the new building. "The barricading plan and the various mitigating measures to control the air and noise pollution during the construction process were elaborated. The officers of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs further briefed Birla about the proposed movement plan of VIPs and staff during this period, including during Parliament sessions," the statement said.



“ Since the time Covid-19 vaccine trials started, there has been one discussion among the poor people -- whether we will be able to afford the vaccine? Today, I want to make it clear that every poor person in Madhya Pradesh will get the vaccine free of cost  
SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN | MADHYA PRADESH CM

## RLYS RECEIVES 2.4 CRORE APPLICATIONS FOR 1.4L POSTS

The Railways said that around 2.4 crore candidates have applied for 1.4 lakh vacancies in Indian Railways for various categories of staff to be hired by the Railway Recruitment Boards



## of the day quote

After mocking the RJD for promising to create 10 lakh jobs, the NDA has promised to create 19 lakh jobs in Bihar if elected. I did not know that 19 was a smaller number than 10. I think I should go back to primary school



P. CHIDAMBARAM | FORMER FINANCE MINISTER

Officials must use the best technology, including drones in conducting the comprehensive land survey in the state



Y.S. JAGAN MOHAN REDDY | ANDHRA CM

Districts Collectors in Goa have been directed to keep tabs on nightclubs and hotels, which do not follow social distancing norms and other government SOPs



VISHWAJI RANE | GOA HEALTH MINISTER

## VENTING ANGER



Women from the farming community raise slogans as they take part in the ongoing agitation against the central government's newly-introduced agri-bills, in Amritsar, Friday

PTI PHOTO

## CHOPPER SCAM

### Saxena granted interim bail

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, Oct 23: A Delhi court Friday granted interim bail to accused-turned-approver Rajiv Saxena in the ₹3,600-crore AgustaWestland VVIP chopper deal scam case being probed by the Central Bureau of Investigation.

Special Judge Arvind Kumar granted interim bail to him on the personal bond of ₹2 lakh and surety of like amount till the next date of hearing. His bail application was vehemently opposed by the probe agency and the matter will now come up on December 11 for arguments on it.

On September 19, the agency had filed the supplementary charge sheet against 15 accused, including alleged middleman Christian Michel and Saxena in connection with the case. The court had then taken its cognisance and summoned the accused on October 23. Saxena, along with few other accused appeared before the court today via video conferencing Friday. Those who appeared were let off on bail in the case, while others moved the exemption application.

### 5 killed in TN blast

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Madurai (TN), Oct 23: At least five women were killed in a blast at a private fireworks factory here on Friday, police said.

Citing initial probe, police said chemicals which were being mixed and stuffed caught fire due to friction leading to a series of explosions, severely damaging the structure located at Muruganeri village. Chief Minister K Palaniswami announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh each to the kin of the deceased. The victims were identified as Ayyammal, Suruliammal, Lakshmi, Veluthai and Kaleeswari. Several other workers managed to escape to safety, police said, adding fire service units from Virudhunagar and Srivilliputhur were used to put out the blaze.

## NAVY MISSILE SINKS SHIP WITH 'DEADLY ACCURACY'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: In a demonstration of its combat readiness in strategic sea lanes around India, the Indian Navy Friday released a video of an anti-ship missile destroying a sinking ship with "deadly accuracy" somewhere in the Arabian Sea.

The missile was fired by frontline corvette INS Prabal as part of a mega naval drill involving aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya and a number of warships, attack helicopters, aircraft and other assets of the Navy. An Indian Navy Spokesperson tweeted that the missile homed in on its target, an old ship, hitting with deadly accuracy at its maximum range.

"#ASHM launched by significantly increased its deployment in the Indian Ocean Region, in an attempt to send across a message to China in the wake of escalation in tension between the two countries.

## Cumulative COVID positivity rate continues to decline

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 23: India has crossed the 10 crore-mark in conducting tests for detection of COVID-19 with 14,42,722 tests being done in a span of 24 hours, even as the cumulative positivity rate continues to decline, the Union Health Ministry said Friday.

High level of comprehensive testing on a sustained basis has also resulted in bringing down the national positivity rate, it said. "This indicates that the rate of spread of the infection is being effectively contained. The cumulative positivity rate continues to decline as the total tests cross 10 crore," the ministry underlined.

#IndianNavy Missile Corvette #INSPrabal, homes on with deadly accuracy at max range, sinking target ship," he said. Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh on Thursday reviewed the operational preparedness of his force at various shore-based locations as well as at sea.

He also addressed a select group of combatants of the Navy's Carrier Battle Group over a broadcast from the INS Vikramaditya, India's only aircraft carrier, and reviewed the force's overall combat readiness, officials said.

In his remarks, Admiral Singh complimented his force for continuously maintaining "peak combat-readiness" and "high tempo" of operations over the past few months, they said. The Indian Navy has sig-

nificantly increased its deployment in the Indian Ocean Region, in an attempt to send across a message to China in the wake of escalation in tension between the two countries.

Giving an overview of the prevailing security situation, the Chief of Naval Staff stated that the Navy would continue to maintain a high-tempo of operations in coming months. "He also complimented the Carrier Battle Group and its combatants for accurate and effective weapon firings, which left no doubt about the Navy's readiness to meet any emergent contingencies," the Navy said in a statement on Thursday.

A carrier battle group is a mega naval fleet comprising an aircraft carrier, accompanied by large number destroyers, frigates and other ships. "Indian Navy continues to maintain a high tempo of operations and combat-readiness despite the COVID-19 pandemic by adhering to stringent protocols onboard warships, submarines and aircraft squadrons and bases, and is fully prepared to tackle challenges in the maritime domain," the Navy said.

# Modi kicks off Bihar election campaign

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dehri/Gaya/Bhagalpur, Oct 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday launched his campaign for the Bihar assembly elections with three back to back rallies where he castigated the opposition over its stand on repeal of Article 370 and reminded the people of the 15-year reign of "crime" and "loot" under the RJD.

Modi addressed rallies in Rohtas, Gaya and Bhagalpur districts, where he shared the stage with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and excoriated the Congress-led opposition for adopting a contrarian position on "any step taken in national interest".

The Prime Minister counted abrogation of Article 370, the law against triple talaq, commencement of construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya, and military operations at the borders among the steps taken in national interest which the opposition frowned upon.

Appealing to the nationalistic zeal of the electorate, Modi raked up the issue of annulment of Article 370 which bestowed special status on the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. "You tell me, was not the country waiting for Article 370 to be scrapped? When the NDA government did that, they are talking about restoring the provision if they are back in power. 'Still they have the audacity to come and seek votes in Bihar which sends its sons and daughters to protect the nation. Is it not an insult to the people of Bihar?'" he told an election rally at Dehri-on-Sone in Rohtas district.

Referring to the Galwan Valley clash with Chinese troops, Modi said the sons of Bihar laid down their lives for the tricolour but did not let "Mother India bow her head". The soldiers of Bihar were also martyred in the Pulwama attack, he said.

True to form, Modi commenced his speeches at Dehri, Gaya and Bhagalpur by greeting the people in the local dialects Bhojpur, Magahi and Angika respectively. The Prime Minister began his address at the first rally in Rohtas by paying tributes to late Ram Vilas Paswan, a member of his cabinet, and former Union minister Raghuvansh Prasad Singh who died a month ago shortly after burning bridges with Lalu Prasad's RJD.

Paswan's son Chirag, the LJP president who has pulled out of the NDA vowing to dislodge Kumar from power while proclaiming his loyalty to Modi, profusely thanked him for the gesture and tweeted: "As a son, it is natural for me to be moved by the respect and love shown by the Prime Minister for my deceased father".

Modi did not name Chirag but referred to the "confusion" being sought to be created by some people. "But there is a good trait among Biharis and that is clarity. They don't get confused," he said. Modi reminded the electorate rally after rally to vote for the candidates of JD(U), BJP, HAM and VIP that constitute the NDA in Bihar.

Modi addressed a gathering during an election rally, at Gandhi Maidan in Gaya, Friday

PTI PHOTO

## SHORT TAKES

### Andhra school head arrested

Penugonda (Andhra Pradesh): Andhra Pradesh's Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials have arrested a village school headmaster for demanding a bribe of ₹10,000 to issue duplicate certificates to an old student, ACB officials said Friday. Surya Prakash, 46, once a student of Penugonda's ZNVR High School, approached school's headmaster J Srinivas for issuing duplicate certificates as he had lost his certificates sometime ago. Srinivas allegedly demanded ₹10,000 from him to issue duplicate certificates.

### 4 Bangladeshis nabbed by BSF

Kolkata: Four Bangladeshis have been apprehended by Border Security Force personnel in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas for illegally entering India, a statement by the paramilitary force said Friday. All four of them were nabbed by border guards at Dobarpara outpost on Wednesday as soon as they crossed the Ichhamati river, which separates the two countries, and set foot in India, it said.

### Three killed

Jammu: Three persons were killed and eight injured on Friday in a road accident in Jammu and Kashmir's hilly Doda district. Police said the vehicle, carrying the passengers from Khiliani to Hambal, plunged into a deep gorge after the driver lost control. The accident took place in the Domali village. "Three persons died on the spot and eight were injured in this road accident. "The injured have been shifted to hospital", police said.

# Corona gives fragile Rohtang Pass recovery time

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Manali, Oct 23: The coronavirus-induced lockdowns have cleaned up the fragile Rohtang Pass with the piles of trash almost vanished and nature making a comeback in the cold, rugged and rocky mountains of the Pir Panjal range of the Himalayas - the origin of one of North India's major rivers, the Beas.

Also the vehicular pollution plummeting to levels unseen in the living memory. "What a pleasant surprise to see no littering of trash in hills en route to the Rohtang Pass," remarked Nikita Pandey, a tourist from Delhi.

"We should be thankful to Covid-induced lockdowns that gave nature a recovery time to regain its glory," she said, while pointing towards spots where non-biodegradable waste



PTI PHOTO

was normally dumped carelessly along the banks of the glacial-fed Beas river near Marhi, en route to the Rohtang Pass from Manali.

The Rohtang Pass is located at an altitude of 13,050 feet and 52 km from tourist resort Manali in Himachal Pradesh. Her friend Gauri Vaidya said in her past visits, the ninth this time in as many years, she

felt angry to see the stunning amount of waste like beer and liquor bottles and food sachets dumped haphazardly in the mountains.

"This visit is memorable to see nature blooming again amid pine forests and gurgling streams," she added. The picturesque Rohtang Pass, which remains under snow even during the onset of summer,

is a major attraction for both domestic and foreign tourists.

According to the state tourism department, more than 1,00,000 tourists visit the Rohtang Pass every year and tourism, including skiing, trekking and paragliding, is a key source of income for the local people. For more than five months from December, the pass remains cut off from the rest of the country due to heavy snowfall.

After nearly six months of sealing borders, the state government on September 15 threw open its borders for free movement of people and goods. "In the last one or two weeks, the trend of tourists is picking up in Manali and its nearby areas. Compared to thousands of tourists that normally descend here daily ahead of Diwali, now tourists, mainly from the northern states, are

thronging that too on weekends," an official of the state Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corp. said here.

Travel agent Naresh Thakur said the tourists from Manali now prefer to travel towards the Lahaul Valley via the newly opened Atal Tunnel, beneath the Rohtang Pass, rather than taking the long, treacherous route of the pass.

"Snow is the only attraction for the tourists and the mighty Rohtang Pass is the only destination near Manali that remains marooned in snow cover till end of May. In this season, Rohtang slopes are totally bereft of snow cover, so they are not on their preferred list," he added. Government officials said the Rohtang Pass normally closes for the traffic every year in December owing to snowfall.

## Artist creates Durga idol with expired medicines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhubri, Oct 23: With the COVID-19 pandemic having brought the world to its knees, a 37-year old Assam government employee, in solidarity with everyone fighting the global menace, has created a Durga idol here with strips of expired tablets, capsules and injection vials.

Sanjib Basak, an employee of Dhubri district administration, has, over the past few years, come up with various innovative and

eco-friendly ideas to design the idol, but this year, amid the COVID-19 crisis, he wanted to make a difference with his creation.

"During lockdown, I had observed that people were queuing up outside pharmaceutical shops to buy essential medicines in bulk. It was then the idea struck me that I could be making Maa Durga's idol with medicine strips to mark the pandemic," Basak, who had last year made the figurine with discarded electric

wires, said. It took the district official nearly five months and 40,000 strips of tablets, capsules and injection vials of different colours to give shape to his idea. "Initially, I was worried that I won't be able to make the idol this year due to work pressure and strict safety protocols. But I managed to create one with expired medicines. "Paper, thermocol and board, among other things, were used to fix the medicine strips to a frame and create the idol," Basak added.

## LYNCH MOB ATTACKS RAPIST, HIS GRANDPA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, Oct 23: A lynch mob went berserk Friday and assaulted an accused and his grandfather, who were in police custody on charges of raping and burning a six-year-old girl of a migrant labourer in Punjab's Tanda town.

The mob demanded the handover of the accused - Gurpreet Singh and his grandfather Surjit Singh - so they could punish them with their own hands and bring justice to the victim. The accused allegedly killed the child and then burnt her body after which the half-burnt body was found from their house, police said about the crime that took place on Thursday. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights has

taken suo-moto cognizance of the crime and sought a report from the state within three days. The girl's half-burnt body was found at the residence of the accused in Jalalpur village in Tanda in Hoshiarpur district on Thursday evening, the police said.

The accused have been arrested on charges of murder and rape under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The police took the accused to a hospital in Tanda on Friday for their medical examination when the mob attacked them. The police rescued them as the mob broke down windowpanes of the hospital. As per the first information report, accused Gurpreet took the girl to his home where he allegedly raped her.

# international



If the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty with the US expires, Moscow can ensure its security with modern weapons  
VLADIMIR PUTIN | RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

## LOCKDOWN WOES

The initial phase of the COVID-19 lockdown, which was imposed through March and April in several countries, may have dramatically altered people's personal eating and sleeping habits, according to a study



## of the day quote

This cabinet's main duty would be to implement the reforms listed by the French initiative. I will form a cabinet quickly as this is the only and last opportunity for our country



SAAD HARIRI | LEBANON'S PRIME MINISTER-DESIGNATE

A COVID-19 vaccine could be available to all Americans by early April 2021



ALEX AZAR | US HHS SECRETARY

In today's world, the pursuit of unilateralism, protectionism and extreme egoism leads nowhere



XI JINPING | CHINESE PRESIDENT

## SHORT TAKES

### 20th Amendment passed in SL Parl

Colombo: The 20th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, which will replace the 19th Amendment introduced in 2015 that curtailed the powers of the President, was passed in Parliament, the media reported Friday. It was passed Thursday night with 156 MPs voting for the Bill and 65 against, reports the Daily Financial Times newspaper.

### 20 Afghan army personnel killed

Kabul: At least 20 Afghan security personnel were killed in a Taliban attack in Nimroz province, an official said Friday. The attack took place in Khashrod district Thursday night, TOLO News reported. Khashrod Governor Jalil Ahmad Watandost said six other personnel were taken hostage by the Taliban, without giving any other details.

### Strict COVID-19 rules in Belgium

Brussels: Belgian Prime minister Alexander De Croo stopped short Friday of imposing another full lockdown, as the country did in March, but introduced a series of new restrictive measures as the number of COVID-19-related hospital admissions and deaths continues to soar.

### Israel strikes Gaza

Jerusalem: The Israeli military said Friday it launched overnight airstrikes in the Gaza Strip after Palestinian militants fired two rockets, with no reports of casualties or major damage on either side. The military said fighter jets and other aircraft struck a weapons manufacturing site and "underground infrastructure" belonging to the Islamic militant group Hamas, which rules Gaza.

### Unrest in Nigeria

Abuja: Gunfire has erupted and jailbreaks have been reported in Nigeria, as unrest over the shooting of protesters in the country's biggest city Lagos continues. Rights group Amnesty International has said security forces killed at least 12 people in Lagos Tuesday, the BBC reported.

### 15 detained

Warsaw: Poland's police said Friday they detained 15 people during protests in Warsaw against a court ruling that toughened the nation's strict abortion law and banned abortion of fetuses with congenital defects.

## FINAL PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

# TRUMP, BIDEN SPAR OVER nCoV, CLIMATE

AGENCIES

New York, Oct 23: US President Donald Trump and his challenger Joe Biden clashed over COVID-19, immigration, racism and climate change during their final debate, ahead of the November 3 presidential election, presenting Americans with sharply divergent views of where they would lead them over the next four years.

The two leaders traded barbs during the debate that lasted just over 90 minutes, attacking each other's positions on controlling the raging coronavirus pandemic and curbing the country's world-leading death toll of over 2,23,000. On climate change, Trump accused China, India and Russia of not taking care of their "filthy air" as he justified America's withdrawal from the landmark Paris climate agreement. The prime-time debate in Nashville, Tennessee, was a less acrimonious and more substantive affair than their previous showdown September 29, which devolved into insults and name-calling. This prompted the debate organisers to put in place muted microphones during the candidates' opening statements on each topic



President Donald Trump and Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden participate in the final presidential debate

to minimise disruption.

The debate, deftly moderated by NBC's Kristen Welker, saw plenty of personal attacks between 74-year-old Trump, a Republican, and his 77-year-old Democratic rival, Biden, whose mutual dislike was quite evident. Millions of Americans have already made up their minds about the election, with more than 47 million people having cast early ballots by mail or in person due to COVID-19 fears. The figure exceeds the early vote total in 2016. There are about 230 million eligible voters in total. The coronavirus dominated the opening minutes of the Trump-Biden face-off with President Trump

terming the contagion a "worldwide problem". "This has been a worldwide problem, but I've been congratulated by many countries on what we've been able to do," he said. Trump once again blamed China for the virus and said Beijing failed to prevent the disease from becoming a pandemic. He claimed that America was very close to developing a vaccine against the deadly disease that Biden said was claiming 1,000 lives daily in the US. "We have a vaccine that's coming, it's ready. It's going to be announced within weeks and it's going to be delivered," Trump said. The president said his generals have

lined up for the fast distribution of the vaccine, as he expects to have 100 million vials. Biden challenged Trump and alleged that his policies have resulted in a large number of deaths in the country. Biden and Trump clashed on race relations, a topic that has gained prominence after the horrific murder of an African American in police custody early this year in Minneapolis.

Biden termed Trump "one of the most racist presidents we've had in modern history", asserting that his Republican rival at his last debate did not condemn white supremacy and told an extremist group to "stand down and stand by." When the debate moved to the topic of immigration, Trump appeared callous about the toll that his policies have taken on over 500 children who were separated from their parents at the border. "They are so well taken care of. They are in facilities that are so clean," Trump said. Trump's cold response allowed Biden to attack the president, calling his family separation policy contrary to everything that America stands for. The two candidates accused each other of serious corruption charges.

# Row in Nepal over R&AW chief's meeting with Oli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, Oct 23: Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli has come under fire, including from the ruling Communist Party leaders, for breaching diplomatic norms over his meeting with Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) chief Samant Kumar Goel.

Goel called on Prime Minister Oli at his official residence at Baluwatar Wednesday evening.

However, the Indian intelligence chief's visit did not go down well with some political leaders of the country, including members of the ruling party Nepal Communist Party (NCP).

The meeting that took place between RAW chief Goel and Prime Minister Oli was against diplo-



matic norms and it doesn't serve Nepal's national interest, said senior ruling party leader Bhim Rawal. "As the meeting took place in a non-transparent manner without consulting with the concerned section of the Foreign Ministry, this may also contribute to weakening our state mechanism," he pointed out. Bishnu Rijal, deputy chief of the foreign

affairs department of the NCP, said politicians should not overstep in matters related to diplomacy.

"Diplomacy should be handled by diplomats—not politicians," he said. The ties between the two countries came under strain after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated an 80-km-long strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Dharchula in Uttarakhand May 8.

Nepal protested the inauguration of the road claiming that it passed through its territory. Days later, Nepal came out with the new map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as its territories.

India too had published a new map in November 2019 showing the areas as its territories.

## PANDEMIC CHAOS

# Millions in UK enter tougher lockdown



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, Oct 23: Millions of people across the UK enter tougher lockdown from Friday, including a complete "firebreak" shutdown in Wales, as the country battles to get a grip on a resurgence of COVID-19.

Greater Manchester's population of 2.8 million joined Liverpool City Region and Lancashire in England's highest tier of restrictions at midnight, which involves a near-complete business shutdown.

South Yorkshire will move into the same Tier 3 restrictions from midnight on Saturday, bringing the total number of people living under England's tightest rules to more than seven million.

Tier 3 of "very high" COVID-19 alert level means people cannot mix with other households and pubs and bars will be closed — unless they are serving substantial meals. Some areas in the top tier have also gone further, closing businesses such as bingo halls, casinos, betting shops and soft play centres.

Households are banned from mixing at all, even outdoors in private gardens or anywhere inside, and people are advised against travelling into or out of the area.

Under the tier system backed up by fines for serious breaches laid out by UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson last week, Tier 1 is set at a medium COVID-19 alert with some meeting between households permitted within the "rule of six" on gathering numbers and a high alert tier of stricter movement and gathering rules are set for Tier 2 — the category in which London was added to last weekend.

And from Friday evening, 3.1 million people in Wales will have to stay at home as the 17-day firebreak lockdown begins. Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford used his daily briefing to hit back at critics of his tough stance.

Meanwhile, Scotland First Minister Nicola Sturgeon unveiled her region's five-tier strategy, two more than those in force across England. It features five levels of measures — from level zero to four — to be applied in different areas of Scotland depending on the spread of the virus.

## FLYING HIGH



Birds fly over the water in Kuwait City

UNI PHOTO

# 'nCoV to push 150-175 mn more people into poverty'

MOST AFFECTED WILL BE PEOPLE WHOSE LIVELIHOODS DEPEND HEAVILY ON ECOSYSTEMS: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, FARMERS, HERDERS, PASTORALISTS AND FISHERFOLK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

United Nations, Oct 23: Between 150 million and 175 million more people will fall into extreme poverty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, an expert said at the UN.

Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights Olivier De Schutter said that between 150 million and 175 million more people will fall into extreme poverty, due to the epic fallout from COVID-19.

Schutter told the UN General Assembly Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) Wednesday as delegates raised concerns about the plight of the world's most vulnerable in a series of interactive dialogues.

"We must rethink our development model," De Schutter said, adding that most of those who will fall into extreme poverty will be workers in the informal sector or in precarious employment conditions — most of them women.

In order to emerge from the worst crisis since the 1929 Great Depression, "we cannot count, as we did in the 20th century, on economic growth as usual," he said. Environmental sustainability and social justice must be considered prerequisites for shaping the economic recovery that countries envision, he said.

De Schutter was one of five independent experts participating in virtual dialogues with delegates,



which covered topics ranging from extreme poverty and internal displacement, to the human rights to education, safe drinking water and adequate housing. Experts described the interplay between con-

flict and climate change, and recommended ways to ensure that students can access water and sanitation in school during the pandemic. Cecilia Jimenez-Damary, Special Rapporteur on the human

# Pakistan fails to get off FATF 'grey list'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Paris, Oct 23: In yet another major setback, Pakistan Friday failed to get off the 'grey list' of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global watchdog for terror-funding and money laundering.

The Imran Khan-led government lost Pakistan's bid at the FATF because of its failure to comply with the requirements of the Paris-based watchdog. Pakistan, already facing severe economic and financial crisis, has been in the grey list since 2018.

Being in the grey list makes it difficult for the already debt-ridden Islamic Republic to get financial aid from international agencies.

India has been persistently protesting against Pakistan's continued cross-border terrorism in Kashmir and its inaction against the mastermind and planners of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.

The banned terror outfits, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad and Hizbul Mujahideen, and their chiefs Hafiz Saeed, Masood Azhar and Syed Salahuddin, continue to get state patronage and protection in Pakistan.



A report of the United Nations Security Council released earlier this year said the three terror groups are collaborating with Al Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan.

India Thursday had strongly recommended that Pakistan, which continues to provide safe havens to the banned terror groups, should continue on the grey list.

On Friday, after concluding its three-day virtual plenary session, the FATF decided to keep Pakistan in its grey list. Sources said Pakistan had failed to comply with at least six of the 27 points in the FATF's action plan.

# China warns UK over HK citizenship plan

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Beijing, Oct 23: China Friday warned the UK against offering citizenship to Hong Kong residents and "immediately correct its mistakes" in order to avoid retaliatory measures.

In response to China imposing the national security law on Hong Kong, the UK in July reaffirmed its plan to offer citizenships only to those holding a British National Overseas (BNO) passport, reports the BBC. Around 300,000 people currently hold a BNO passport, while an estimated 2.9 million people are eligible for it, according to the British Consulate General in Hong Kong. Addressing the media here, Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian was asked if Beijing would take retaliatory measures or stop BNO passport holders from leaving Hong Kong, the South China Morning Post reported.

"The Chinese government has repeatedly made clear its strong stance on this issue, but the British side has insisted on interfering with Hong Kong affairs and China's domestic issues." As the British side broke its own promises, the Chinese government will consider not recognising the BNO passport as a valid travel document, and reserve the right to impose further measures. "Also in a statement issued Friday, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry's Hong Kong office also said he "strongly opposed and firmly objected" to the UK move.

# Sharif charged with fresh graft case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, Oct 23: Pakistan's anti-corruption body has slapped a fresh corruption case on deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, compounding the legal woes of the embattled Opposition leader who has frequently attacked the powerful military as well as the government.

Sharif, the 70-year-old supremo of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) who was ousted from power in 2017 by the Supreme Court on corruption charges, is currently in London for medical treatment. The National Accountability Bureau also approved cases against Sharif's ex-personal secretary Fawad Hasan Fawad, former federal minister Ahsan Iqbal, former foreign secretary Aizaz Chaudhry and former Intelligence Bureau (IB) chief Aftab Sultan, Dawn newspaper reported.

On Thursday, a total of 11 cases were approved at NAB's Executive Board Meeting (EBM) presided over by their chairman, retired Justice Javed Iqbal.

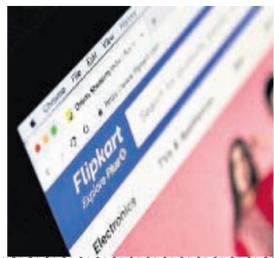
According to the NAB, a fresh case was approved against Sharif along with Chaudhry, Sultan and Fawad for "illegally" purchasing 73 high-security vehicles for the security of foreign dignitaries.



**The Indian Economy is still in the recovery mode. Tourism provides a big boost to the economy, but right now inbound travel from foreign countries has not been restored, preventively, to control the pandemic. Likewise, the job market has not started to look up just yet**  
**AMIT ADARKAR | CEO, IPSOS (INDIA)**

## FLIPKART TO BUY STAKE IN FASHION UNIT

Walmart Inc's Flipkart will buy a 7.8% stake in Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd for ₹15 bn, the fashion retail firm said. The investment comes at a time when Amazon, RIL and Flipkart are in a race to gain market share in India's online market



## of the day quote

The flexible workspace industry in India has displayed resilience and growth even during challenging times



**KARAN VIRWANI | CEO, WEWORK INDIA**

There have been remarkable changes in the industry in the last six months, following the lockdown in March end. In the face of crisis, the industry cohesively adopted wider technological innovations



**ANKIT KANSAL | FOUNDER AND MD, 360 REALTORS**

The 5 million mark is a testimony of our consumers' trust in our products. To the best of our knowledge, no other brand has ever achieved this before. We at Mi India aim to keep delivering the highest quality products at honest prices



**RAGHU REDDY | CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER, MI INDIA**

# Rate cut will depend upon moderation in inflation: Das

The RBI Governor said after the sharpest contraction in economic activity in Q1 FY 2020-21, a number of high frequency indicators of economic activity for Q2 suggest a sequential improvement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Oct 23:** Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that there is room for rate cut but monetary policy action would depend upon the evolving situation on the inflation front which is currently above the tolerance level of the central bank.

"I recognise that there exists space for future rate cuts if the inflation evolves in line with our expectations. This space needs to be used judiciously to support recovery in growth," opined the governor as per the minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The reconstituted MPC, which met from October 7 to 9, had decided to keep the benchmark lending rates unchanged in view of the hardening of retail inflation.

Das said after the sharpest contraction in economic activity in the first quarter of 2020-21, a number of high frequency indicators of economic activity for the second quarter suggest a sequential im-



provement.

"There are, however, downside uncertainties that could put sand in the wheels of this nascent recovery. Primary among them is the risk of a second wave of COVID-19. Private investment activity is likely to be subdued, even as domestic financial conditions have eased significantly," he said.

External demand is also expected to remain anaemic with sharp contraction in global economic activity and trade. As per RBI, the full year gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to contract by 9.5% with a strong rebound next year.

"On the outlook for inflation, food inflation should moderate

going forward on a combination of good kharif harvest and a favourable rabi season," the Governor said.

As per the RBI's assessment, headline inflation would moderate in H2 of the current year and further in Q1 of next fiscal year.

Inflation remained above the upper tolerance threshold of 6 per cent since June, with signs of aggravation of price pressures. The government has asked RBI to keep inflation at 4% (+, -2%).

Deputy Governor and MPC member Michael Debabrata Patra noted that India has entered a technical recession in the first half of the year for the first time in its history.

"GDP is an aggregative indicator of economic activity and hides the extent of human misery and the loss of social and human capital caused by the health crisis.

"Nonetheless, if the projections hold, the level of GDP would have fallen approximately 6% below its pre-COVID level by the end of 2020-21 and it may take years to regain this lost output," he said.

## Forex reserves touch life time high of \$555.12 bn



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, Oct 23:** The country's foreign exchange reserves touched a life time high of \$555.12 billion after it surged by \$3.615 billion in the week ended October 16, according to RBI data. In the previous week ended October 9, 2020, the reserves had increased by \$5.867 billion to reach \$551.505 billion.

During the latest reporting week, the rise in total reserves was due to a sharp rise in Foreign Currency Assets (FCAs), a major component of the overall reserves. FCA jumped by \$3.539 billion to \$512.322 billion, the data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, FCAs include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Gold reserves were up by \$36 billion in the reporting week to \$36.685 billion. The special drawing rights with the IMF remained unchanged at \$1.480 billion during the reporting week.

The country's reserve position with the IMF declined by \$11 million to \$4,634 billion during the reporting week, as per the data.

## GST SHORTFALL

# Centre borrows, transfers ₹6K cr to 16 states, 2 UTs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 23:** The Centre has borrowed and transferred ₹6,000 crore as the first tranche of GST compensation shortfall to 16 states and two union territories, including Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar, Assam, Delhi and J&K, the finance ministry said Friday.

Last week, the Centre gave in to the demands of opposition-ruled states to borrow and fund the GST compensation shortfall.

The finance ministry said that the Centre would borrow from the market to pay the GST compensation shortfall of ₹1.1 lakh crore to states, and then act as an intermediary to arrange back-to-back loans to state governments.

The ministry said the government of India has evolved a special borrowing window to address the shortfall in the GST collection during the year 2020-2021. Twenty-one states and two union territories opted for this special window involving back-to-back borrowing coordinated by the Ministry of Finance. Out of these, five states did not have any shortfall on account of GST compensation.

"Today, the central government borrowed and transferred ₹6,000 crore as first tranche to 16 states namely Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana,



**FM Nirmala Sitharaman said that the Centre would borrow from the market to pay the GST compensation shortfall of ₹1.1 lakh crore to states, and then act as an intermediary to arrange back-to-back loans to state governments**

Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and two union territories: UT of Delhi and UT of Jammu and Kashmir," it said

The borrowing is at an interest rate of 5.19 per cent and tenor of borrowing is expected to be broadly in the range of 3 to 5 years, the ministry said it intends to release ₹6,000 crore to the states every week.

## SHORT TAKES

### Energy demand rises again

**New Delhi:** Easing of lockdown curbs lifted India's energy demand in September after a decline of six months, said India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) Thursday. In a report on India's power sector, the ratings agency said that in September 2020, the all-India energy demand increased 4% Y-o-Y after declining for the six consecutive months to 112.6 billion units. "This was led by an improvement in the demand from the northern region and the western region due to the further lifting of lockdown for certain economic activities under Unlock 4," the report said.

### Huawei reports 9.9% rev growth

**Shenzhen:** Huawei Friday said that it generated a revenue of 671.3 billion yuan (\$98.57 billion) in the first three quarters of this year, an increase of 9.9% over the same period last year. The results showed that restrictions imposed by the US slowed down growth of the Chinese technology giant as during the same period last year, the company reported revenue growth of 24.4%. For the September quarter, Huawei reported revenue of 217.3 billion yuan (\$31.91 billion), an increase of just 3.7% over the same period last year, said the report.

### Bad loans surge amid pandemic

**Mumbai:** Amid financial stress among borrowers in view of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, SBI Cards and Payments reported a rise in its gross NPAs during the quarter ended September. The company's gross NPA, during the July-September quarter, was at 4.29%, against 2.33% from the same period of the last financial year. Further SBI Cards, in its quarterly earnings, also said that its gross NPA for the period under review would have stood at 7.46%.

### Tech M Q2 profit slips 5%

**Mumbai:** Tech Mahindra Friday reported 5.27% decline in September quarter net profit at ₹1,064.6 crore, even as profit margins widened sharply. Revenue of the Mahindra Group company grew 3.32% over last year and 2.32% over the preceding June quarter to ₹9,371 crore. The operating margin improved sequentially by over 4 percentage points to 14.2%.

## Renault India bolsters network presence



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 23:** Renault India has announced the addition of 34 new sales and service touch points across India in last two months. This marks a total of more than 90 new sales and service touchpoints that Renault has added across the country in less than a year. The aggressive network expansion is part of a strategic business focus to grow the brand across existing and emerging markets.

With this expansion Renault India has bolstered its network presence to more than 415 sales and 475+ service touchpoints, which include 200+ Workshop on Wheels locations across the country, with benchmark sales and service quality.

"We are not only attracting new dealers in these times, but also getting more investments and expansion requests by existing partners. An increasing network presence is making it possible for us to cater to more customers across

**The aggressive network expansion is part of a strategic business focus to grow the brand across existing and emerging markets**

the country, and thereby playing an important role in our consistent sales volumes," said Sudhir Malhotra, Head - Sales & Network, Renault India.

Renault India has announced exciting offers across the range and exclusive additional offers for public sector employees, central and state government employees that include both doctors and teachers.

These offers include special additional offers worth up to ₹22,000, which adds to the attractive festive offers already rolled out across the range with benefits of up to ₹70,000 on DUSTER, ₹40,000 on KWID and ₹30,000 on TRIBER.

## LINEN CLUB LAUNCHES 'LINEN UTSAV'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Oct 23:** Country's leading linen fabric and apparel brand Linen Club launched its Linen Utsav campaign in Odisha. With this campaign, Linen Club is offering its consumers an opportunity to try its newly launched product innovation(s) while also enjoy never seen before offers on both Linen Club fabrics and apparel.

Keeping in mind the current pandemic situation, the brand launched a special antiviral treated fabric range - Linen Club LinShield. Carefully crafted using anti-viral technology, LinShield is safe and stylish at the same time and shields the user against harmful viruses and microbes. It is anti-viral, skin-friendly, antibacterial and anti-odour.

Linen club has also introduced its thoughtfully crafted Linen mask range which is designed with special 3-layered shield. These antiviral and antibacterial masks are high on breathability, light and easy to wear, reusable and washable. Consumers can also select from Linen Club's wide festive range which includes finely crafted linen fabrics in various colours, designs and patterns.

Apart from fabrics, consumers can also pick from Linen Club's Ready-to-wear range which includes Kurta, Nehru Jacket and more.

The exclusive Linen Club showrooms are located at - Janpath Road, Vani Vihar Square, Bhubaneswar, near Gurudwara Singh Sabha, Janpath, Bhubaneswar and at Cantonment Road, in front of DCP Office, Cuttack.

## TCS, Wipro announce ₹27,558 cr of buybacks



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Oct 23:** Buybacks are seeing a strong trend with cash-rich companies, led by IT giants TCS and Wipro, announce buybacks worth ₹27,558 crore to reward shareholders by returning excess cash on the balance sheets.

In the period, April 1 to October 15, 15 companies have announced buybacks worth ₹27,558 crore, as per Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Hemang Jani, Head of Equity Strategy, Broking & Distribution, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said: "We have seen strong trend of buybacks both through tender offer and through stock exchanges as the markets have been strong. Companies having strong cash flow and no immediate capex are using this tool for the benefit of shareholders."

Among the companies announcing buybacks are Tata Consultancy Services (worth ₹16,000 crore), Wipro (₹9,000 crore), Majesco (₹631.3 crore), Indiabulls Real Estate (₹500 crore), Rites (₹257 crore), Kalpataru Power Transmission (₹200 crore), Eclerx Services (₹109.5 crore), JK Paper

(₹100 crore), Dhanuka Agritech (₹100 crore), HSIL (₹70 crore), OnMobile Global (₹54.1 crore), Cheviot, James Warren Tea, Rane Brake Lining, Magna Electro Castings among others.

Nirali Shah, Senior Research Analyst, Samco Securities, said almost all the major listed Indian IT companies have opted the route of returning the excess cash on their balance sheet via buybacks. "The technology pack has in fact set the tone for buybacks," she said.

Usually, buybacks occur when a company's shares are trading at a discount and the management decides to invest in itself. Buybacks reduce the number of outstanding shares, but don't actually change the valuation of the company.

"Going forward, as the economy picks up and as growth resumes to pre-Covid levels, the number of buybacks by companies should also decline," Shah added.

Some of the world's most successful investors, including multi-billionaire Warren Buffett and the legendary Peter Lynch, are enthusiastic advocates of owning buyback stocks.

## Nestle India clocks double-digit sales growth in Q2

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 23:** FMCG major Nestle India Friday announced its plans to invest ₹2,600 crore over the next three to four years to augment its manufacturing capacity in the country, terming the move as "vindication of confidence and trust" the company has in its India journey.

The company, which saw a robust 10.23% growth in its domestic sales in the July-September quarter, said its production units have returned to "normal output" post lockdown. As per Nestle's plan, the new investments are aimed at expansion activities of the existing units and towards the construction of its new upcoming unit in Sanand, Gujarat.



Meanwhile, the FMCG major - which follows January-December financial year - posted a marginal 1.37% drop in its net profit at ₹587.09 crore in the third quarter ended September 30, 2020.

Its net sales, however, were up 10.19% at ₹3,525.41 crore during the period under review, the company said. Domestic sales in July-September moved up 10.23% to ₹3,350.10 crore as against ₹3,039.09 crore in the year-ago period.

Nestle, which presently operates eight production units in India, said its factories have returned to normal output and witnessed growth driven by an improved supply situation.

# 'HOPEFUL OF QUICK REVIVAL OF INDIA'S AVIATION SECTOR'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Oct 23:** Strong local fundamentals will aid the revival of India's aviation sector, believes Airbus South Asia President, Remi Maillard. In a conversation with IANS, Remi Maillard, President and MD, Airbus India and South Asia, expressed confidence in the industry's potential along with its revival prospects on the back of strong fundamentals.

"I remain confident about the future of the Indian aviation industry because of the strong local fundamentals," Maillard said. "That is why, in parallel to our efforts of catalysing a safe traffic recovery, we need to work on further strengthening the foundations for India to become a world leader in the civil aviation industry. This implies further developing

the domestic market, turning India into an international hub, growing the MRO and training eco-systems as well as stimulating the helicopter business," he added.

Notably, the sector has been heavily battered by the coronavirus outbreak and its cascading impact on the overall travel industry.

Maillard termed the pandemic as the 'gravest crisis' that industry has ever faced.

"There is not one single player in the market that is immune to the crisis, be it an airline, a lessor, an MRO, a training center, an airport, an equipment supplier or an aircraft manufacturer. It is a long-term crisis," he elaborated.

"Given how deep the crisis is, a full recovery in aviation will take years specifically when it comes to international flights," he added. Nevertheless, Maillard pointed out



that with the economy opening up gradually, demand for air travel has started to pick-up.

"We have now started seeing a gradual increase in air travel as the domestic flights have increased in a phased manner," he said.

"We are hopeful passenger demand will further pick up during the festive season. Now the situation remains very fluid and uncertain and we predict that 2021

will remain a difficult year for the industry. This is why we need to continue adapting ourselves to navigate the crisis," he added.

According to him, the regional connectivity scheme, 'Udan', will play a major role in the growth of the domestic market.

Besides, the aerospace major is aiding its airline partners to fully utilise the potential of its cargo business.

"Indian carriers have started focusing on international markets in the recent past and the induction of wide-body aircraft will be a key strategy for consideration in their growth plans," he said.

"We are also supporting our customers to diversify in the cargo market for them to capture additional sources of revenue," he added.

Furthermore, Maillard sees immense potential in the chopper, MRO and aviation training segments of the industry.

As a case in point, he pointed out that India has only about 270 civil helicopters which is less than 1% of the worldwide helicopter fleet.

"India's civil helicopter market has a large runway for growth. The emergence of new segments like urban air connectivity as well as the launching of next generation helicopter platforms such as the re-



**Given how deep the crisis is, a full recovery in aviation will take years specifically when it comes to international flights**

**REMI MAILLARD | PRESIDENT AND MD, AIRBUS INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA**

cently certified H160 and the 5-bladed H145 will also further drive growth," he said.

# BOULT, OPENERS HELP MI MAUL CSK

AGENCIES

**Sharjah, Oct 23:** Trent Boult (4/18) and Jasprit Bumrah (2/25) produced a devastating pace-bowling spell in tandem before openers Ishan Kishan (68 n o, 37b, 6x4, 5x6) and Quinton de Kock (46 n o, 37b, 5x4, 2x6) overwhelmed Chennai Super Kings (CSK) bowling attack to help Mumbai Indians (MI) register a comprehensive 10-wicket victory here in their IPL game, Friday.

MI bowlers wreaked havoc to restrict CSK to 114/9. In reply, Kishan and De Kock forged together an unbeaten 116-run partnership to seal a dominating win in 12.2 overs.

Put in to bat, CSK were five wickets down inside powerplay and the MS Dhoni-led side could never recover from there. CSK went past 100 thanks largely to Sam Curran's (52, 47b, 4x4, 2x6) enterprising half century. The young Englishman mixed caution with aggression and some creativity to top the scoring chart.

Incidentally, Curran's 43-run partnership for the ninth wicket with Imran Tahir (13 n o) was the highest partnership of the CSK innings.

CSK had a horror start and slipped to 3/4 inside three overs, then 30/6 inside seven overs before being reduced to 43/7 in 8.5 overs. Boult got rid of Ruturaj Gaikwad, Faf du

Plessis and Ravindra Jadeja, while Bumrah dismissed Ambati Rayudu and N Jagadeesan off successive balls. Skipper Dhoni's (16) poor run continued as he fell to leggie Rahul Chahar (2/22) after having smacked a six of the previous ball.

**BRIEF SCORES:** CSK 114/9 (Sam Curran 52; Trent Boult 4/18, Rahul Chahar 2/22, Jasprit Bumrah 2/25) lost to MI 116/0 (Ishan Kishan 68 n o, Quinton de Kock 46 n o) by 10 wickets.

**TODAY'S MATCHES**

**KKR VS DC**  
AT 3:30 PM

**KXIP VS SRH**  
AT 7:30 PM

TELECAST: STAR SPORTS

**POINTS TABLE**

TEAM	M	W	L	N/R	NRR	PTS
MI	10	7	3	0	+1.448	14
DC	10	7	3	0	+0.774	14
RCB	10	7	3	0	+0.182	14
KKR	10	5	5	0	-0.828	10
SRH	10	4	6	0	+0.092	8
KXIP	10	4	6	0	-0.177	8
RR	11	4	7	0	-0.620	8
CSK	11	3	8	0	-0.733	6



TRENT BOULT



Ishan Kishan hits one down the ground

PHOTOS: IPL OFFICIAL WEBSITE

# Kapil Dev undergoes angioplasty following heart attack; now stable

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Oct 23:** India's first World Cup-winning cricket captain Kapil Dev suffered a heart attack and underwent an angioplasty here Friday but is expected to be discharged in the next couple of days, said the hospital where he is currently admitted.

The 61-year-old, who is based in Delhi's Sundar Nagar area, complained of chest pain Thursday following which he was taken to Fortis Escorts Heart Institute emergency department in Okhla.

"Kapil Dev suffered a heart attack. He was evaluated and an emergency coronary angioplasty was performed in the middle of night," the hospital said in an updated health bulletin after only mentioning chest pain in its initial statement.

"Currently, he is admitted in ICU and under close supervision of Dr Atul Mathur and his team. Kapil Dev is stable now and he is expected to get discharged in a couple of days."

The 1983 World Cup-winning legendary all-rounder was wished a speedy recovery by many on social media, including India's current captain Virat Kohli and Sachin



Tendulkar among others.

"Praying for your speedy recovery. Get well soon paaji," Kohli said. "Take care @therealkapildev! Praying for your quick recovery. Get well soon Paaji," wished Tendulkar

Also wishing him good health were India batsman Shikhar Dhawan and badminton player Saina Nehwal. Kapil's former teammate Madan Lal said he has conveyed some of the concern of his well-wishers to the Chandigarh-born legend's family.

The imposing former player, who also tried his hand at golf after retiring from cricket, is the only player to claim over 400 wickets (434) and accumulate more than 5000 runs in Tests.

# Asian Chess: India men, eves in semis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, Oct 23:** The top-seeded Indian women's team Friday stormed into the semifinals of the Asian Nations (Regions) Online Cup 2020 Championship, while their male counterparts eked out a fighting win over Mongolia to secure the last four berth.

The Indian women made short work of Kyrgyzstan in the last-eight round, winning the two match-ups easily - 4-0 and 3.5-0.5. The Indian women will face Mongolia in the semifinal Saturday.

The Indian men, on the other hand, were given a tough fight by Mongolia. Both the matches ended

with a similar 2.5-1.5 scoreline in favour of India. They will take on Iran in Saturday's semifinal.

Young WGM R Vaishali continued her good run, winning both her matches. She beat Alexandra Samaganova while Padmini Rout and PV Nandhidhaa too registered two victories. Bhakti Kulkarni dropped half a point to Begimai Zairbek Kyzy in the second match as the Indians underlined their superiority.

Vaishali was in impressive form in the preliminary round with a score of 6.5 from nine rounds to land the gold for the top board while captain Mary Ann Gomes claimed the gold for fifth board with five wins from as many games. Padmini

took silver for third board with 7.5 points from nine matches.

The men's quarterfinals saw the Indian men face a strong challenge from Mongolia. In the first match, Nihal Sarin went down to Ganzorig Amartuvshin while SP Sethuraman and Sasikiran posted wins over Tsegmed Batchuluun and Sugar Gan-Erdene respectively while captain Surya Sekhar Ganguly drew with Sumiya Bilguun.

In the second match, B Adhiban outclassed Ganzorig Amartuvshin while Sarin beat Sumiya Bilguun. Sasikiran played out a draw against Gan-Erdene to secure the win though Ganguly suffered a defeat against Batchuluun.

# Europa League: Arsenal, Spurs, AC Milan win

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, Oct 23:** Gareth Bale had a quiet first start for Tottenham since returning to the London club, while Carlos Vinicius made a more impressive debut by setting up two goals in a 3-0 win over LASK in the Europa League.

Their North London rival Arsenal Thursday opened their fourth straight Europa League campaign with a 2-1 come-from-behind win at Rapid Vienna in an opening round of games. On a good night for Premier League clubs, Leicester earned a comfortable 3-0 home win over Zorya Luhansk.

AC Milan earned a 3-1 away win at Celtic, while Roma came from a goal down to win 2-1 at Young Boys - as did Granada to upset PSV Eindhoven away.

Lucas Moura finished off another free-flowing move to open the scoring after being set up by Vinicius. Bale sent a low cross into the area from the right that defender Andres Andrade deflected into his own. Vinicius then teed up substitute Son Heungmin to wrap up the win six minutes from time.

Arsenal went behind when goalkeeper Bernd Leno played a poor pass that fell to Rapid forward Taxiarchis Fountas, who slotted in



Carlos Vinicius rejoice after setting up Lucas Moura's goal

a low shot from a tough angle in the 51st minute.

David Luiz headed in a free-kick from Nicolas Pepe to level the score before Mohamed Elneny freed Hector Bellerin down the right to cross for Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang to complete the comeback from close range for Arsenal.

Milan didn't need Zlatan Ibrahimovic to score this time, as Rade Krunic and Brahim Diaz netted in the first half at Celtic. Substitute Jens Petter Hauge added the third for Milan in injury time after Celtic pulled one back through Mohamed Elyounoussi.

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