



## GREEN AMBASSADOR

Actor and climate activist Bhumi Pednekar has been invited to speak at the Climate Week in New York

LEISURE P2



## TRUDEAU'S PARTY WINS

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party secured victory in elections but failed to get majority

INTERNATIONAL P10



## OZ OVERPOWER INDIA

Australia women extend their winning streak to 25 matches with a 9-wicket victory over India in 1st ODI

SPORTS P12

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## 2 pilots die after Army copter crash-lands

JAMMU: Two pilots were killed when an Army helicopter crash-landed in a dense forest near Patnitop in Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district on Tuesday, officials said. "Today, during a training sortie in Patnitop area, Indian Army's Cheetah helicopter crash-landed in Shiv Garh Dhar area in the district," a Jammu-based defence spokesman said. He said that two pilots - Major Rohit Kumar and Major Anuj Rajput - were injured in the incident and evacuated to the nearest medical facility but they succumbed later. Army Commander, Northern Command, Lt Gen Y K Joshi paid rich tributes to the slain officers. "Army Commander, Northern Command, and all other ranks salute the brave hearts who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty on 21 September 2021 at Patnitop and offer deepest condolences to their families," the Army's Northern Command said in a tweet.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Spending a year here, thanks to pandemic, was quite enlightening. I got a chance to learn about my people's problems!

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	59005.27 ↑ 514.34
NIFTY	17562.00 ↑ 165.10
DOLLAR	73.92 ↓ ₹0.01
EURO	86.47 ↑ ₹0.17
GOLD	₹46,640 ↑ ₹362
SILVER	₹60,241 ↑ ₹632

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
MAX	30.2°C 31.0°C
MIN	25.4°C 24.6°C
Humidity	97% 81%
Rainfall	Nil Nil
Forecast	Light rain very likely



Migrants wading back and forth across the Rio Grande from Ciudad Acuna, Mexico, to Del Rio, Texas. The US is flying Haitians camping in a Texas border town back to their homeland

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## HUBBY BATTERED TO DEATH IN CITY SLUM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** A woman allegedly battered her husband to death in a slum under Chandrasekharpur police limits here Sunday night. The deceased identified as Shyam Munduri is a resident of Kantabanji in Mayurbhanj. He along with his family has been staying at Munda Basti near Damana square here. Munduri worked as a sweeper in Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation while his wife Jhingi Munduri engaged in sell-

ing of liquor. The couple always fought over trivial issues.

Locals confirmed about hearing heated argument between the two in their house Sunday night. Locals alleged Jhingi might have thrashed him to death on the fateful night.

As family members were taking Shyam for cremation Tuesday, locals stopped them and informed police who seized the body and sent it to Capital hospital for autopsy.

Police picked up the accused and have detained her for interrogation.

## SC collegium names 13 CJs

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** The Supreme Court collegium, headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana, has recommended elevation of eight judges as Chief Justices of various High Courts (HCs) and transfer of five sitting Chief Justices, including justice AA Kureshi to other HCs.

The collegium's decisions were published on the top court's website Tuesday. The Supreme Court collegium, which also comprises Justices UU Lalit and AM Khanwilkar, in its meeting held September 16, recommended elevation of eight judges as Chief Justices of the HCs.

These are: Justice Rajesh Bindal for the Allahabad High Court, Prakash Srivastava for the Calcutta High Court, Prashant Kumar Mishra for the Andhra Pradesh High Court, Ritu Raj Awasthi for the Karnataka High Court, Satish Chandra Sharma for the Telangana High Court, Ranjit V More for the Meghalaya High Court, Aravind Kumar for the Gujarat High Court, and RV Malimath for the Madhya Pradesh High Court.

Justice Bindal was appointed as the acting Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court April 29 as the polling got over in West Bengal. In another statement, which was also published on top court's website Tuesday, the list of five Chief Justices who have been transferred to other High Courts was



## 3 JUDGES SHIFTED TO ORISSA HC

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court collegium recommended transfer of three judges from Calcutta and Punjab & Haryana High Courts to Orissa High Court. The collegium recommended transfer of Justice Jaswant Singh from Punjab and Haryana High Court to Orissa High Court and Justices Arindam Sinha and Soumen Sen from Calcutta High Court to Orissa High Court. The collegium also recommended transfer of Justice Sanjaya Kumar Mishra from Orissa High Court to Uttarakhand High Court.

also made public.

Justice AA Kureshi, who is currently Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court, is recommended to head the Rajasthan High Court while Rajasthan High Court Chief Justice Indrajit Mahanty will go to Tripura High Court in his place.

In what could snowball into a major diplomatic row between the two countries, India has warned of reciprocal measures if UK does not address concerns on travel rules related to COVID-19 vaccination

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** India will be within its rights to initiate reciprocal measures if the UK does not address concerns over the new travel rules relating to COVID-19 vaccine certification, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said on Tuesday describing the policy as "discriminatory".

His comments came hours after External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar strongly took up the issue of Covishield-vaccinated travellers being required to quarantine in the UK with newly-appointed British Foreign Secretary

Elizabeth Truss at a meeting in New York.

Official sources said India will take reciprocal measures against travellers from the UK if its concerns are not addressed by October 4 when the new rules will come into effect. According to new rules, Indian travellers who received both doses of the Covishield vaccine produced by the Serum Institute of India will be considered unvaccinated and will have to undergo self-isolation for 10 days.

At a media briefing, Shringla said he has been told that certain "assurances" were being given by the UK that the issue will be resolved. "We have also offered to some of the partner countries the option of mutual recognition of vaccination certificates. But these are reciprocal measures. We have



## VAX APARTHEID

to see how it goes. But if we do not get satisfaction from the UK, we would be within our rights to impose reciprocal measures," Shringla said. He was replying to a question on the matter.

"The basic issue is that here is a vaccine, Covishield, which is a licensed product of the UK company, manufactured in India of which we have supplied five million doses to the UK at the request of the government of the UK.

"We understand that this is being used under the national health sys-

## US RECOGNIZES COVISHIELD VAX

**NEW DELHI:** The United States will reopen in November to all air passengers who are fully vaccinated against coronavirus. India is among the 33 countries from where fully vaccinated travellers will be allowed to enter. Effectively, Covishield is the only India-made vaccine that is in the list of approved vaccines as of now. From November, the US will admit fully vaccinated air travelers from 26 countries including India.

tem, and, therefore, non-recognition of Covishield is a discriminatory policy and does impact those of our citizens travelling to the UK," Shringla said. The external affairs minister raised the issue strongly with his British counterpart and called for resolving it at the earliest to mutual satisfaction.

## Money came from Dubai

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Sept 21:** One of the five accused in the DRDO Chandipur espionage case received money from a bank account in Dubai, revealed the state Crime Branch (CB) Tuesday. The CB is interrogating the five accused as part of its investigation into the espionage case.

"We have seized the mobile phones of the accused and are examining their social media accounts. Our officials are also check-

ing the details of their bank accounts. Rs 38,000 in two installments has been transferred to the bank account of one of the accused from an account in Dubai," said a source in the CB.

## DRDO SPYING

According to CB sources, the accused were transferring secret information to a suspected Pakistani woman through their social media accounts. "We have found that the unknown woman op-

erative was introducing herself in different names and making friendship with several people on social media. She had contacted the accused through Facebook messenger and WhatsApp. During investigation, we came to know that the woman was using a UK SIM," said a senior official of the CB. The official revealed that a team from the Indian Air Force is now interrogating the accused. "We will send the seized mobile phones for forensic analysis," said the official.

## UP mulls law to curb population

AGENCIES

**Lucknow, Sept 21:** The state government will bring a law for population control "at the right time", Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said Tuesday.

The government had in July unveiled a policy aimed at stabilising the population in Uttar Pradesh and reducing maternal and infant deaths in a time-bound manner, with Adityanath terming rising population a "hurdle in development".

"Everything is done at an appropriate time. The media earlier used to question the BJP on when it would announce a date for the Ram temple's construction, but the prime minister (Narendra Modi), despite the COVID-19 pandemic, laid the foundation stone of the temple in Ayodhya August 5 last year; and all need to be happy now," Adityanath said at a conclave.

"Similarly, Article 370 was also scrapped by the prime minister and Union Home Minister Amit Shah," he said. On August 5, 2019, the Centre had abrogated Article 370, which gave special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, and bifurcated it into union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

At the 'News 24' conclave, when asked about his recent 'abba jaan' remark, the chief minister said, "They (opposition) want the vote of Muslims but are getting irritated with 'abba jaan'."

## Low water levels in dams may hit power generation

Most of the dams in the state have less water than their capacities. The situation, if not taken care of, may scuttle the govt's plan to add 700 MW more electricity to the state's power pool

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** Though several districts in Odisha have received heavy rains due to a low pressure over Bay of Bengal, major dams in the state are witnessing low water levels in comparison to their water storing capacity.

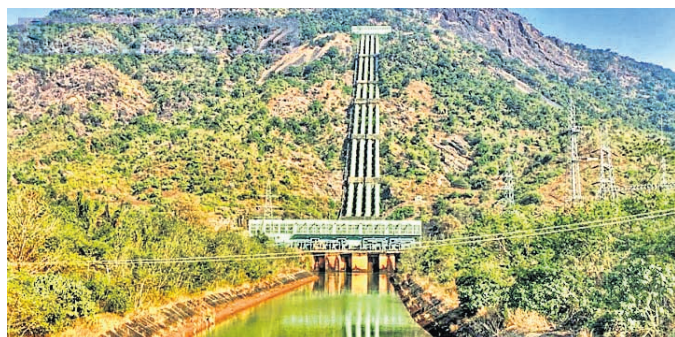
There is every possibility that the low water level in dams will affect the production of hydro-

electricity in the coming days, sources said.

It is learnt that all major dams in Odisha except Hirakud dam do not have adequate water to meet the hydroelectricity production requirements. The water level in Hirakud was 629.28 ft Tuesday against its maximum storage capacity of 630 ft.

The water level in Balimela dam was pegged at 1,476 ft against its storage capacity of 1,518 ft. Similarly, the water level in Rengali dam was measured at 122 metre against its maximum capacity of 124 metre.

According to sources, the depth of water in Upper Kolab dam was measured at 850 metre against its storing capacity of up to 858 metre.



At present, the Upper Indravati dam has 632 ft of water against its capacity of 643 ft. Similarly, the water level in Machhkund dam was measured at 2,726 ft Tuesday while the dam can hold water up

to 2,750 ft.

"Most of the dams in Odisha are now witnessing up to 25 per cent less water storage than their normal capacity. The south-west monsoon will leave the state within

a few days. There is very low possibility of improvement in the water level in these dams. So, the production of hydroelectricity may get affected in the coming days," said a source familiar with the issue.

According to sources, the average electricity demand in Odisha hovers around 4,500 MW while the state usually produces 2,063 MW of hydroelectricity from its dams. As per the available data, the state produces 275 MW electricity from Hirakud at Burla, 600 MW from Indravati, 510 from Balimela, 300 MW from Rengali, 320 from Upper Kolab and 36 MW from Machhkund.

"Many places in the state are witnessing outage during the monsoon. The shortage of electricity

may aggravate during summer," added the source.

There were reports that the state government was planning to construct six more hydroelectricity projects in Odisha and produce around 700 MW more power.

"The amount of monsoon rain is decreasing over the years due to change in the climate condition. In this context, the future of the proposed hydroelectricity projects has been pushed into uncertainty. The state government should take note of the situation and act accordingly to meet the power shortage in future," said All Odisha Electricity Workers' Association general secretary Akhaya Kumar Tripathy.



leisure

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Today you will go overboard trying to spruce up your looks. You attempt to imbibe new looks. A very desirable date will raise high expectations in you and will keep you on the edge of your seat. Ganesha advises you to take it easy as real relationships are not measured by outward expressions.

TAURUS

Your romantic relationship will be working on an over-drive today, says Ganesha. You will discover answers to the finer aspects of your love life. Overall, you will have a refreshingly creative outlook all through the day. It is a favourable day for those who cherish unrequited love, says Ganesha.

GEMINI

Today, you will do an amazing job in dividing your time between work and family. Despite your preoccupation with work, you will take time off for your family, and even plan out a small outing, leaving them pleasantly surprised. Also, your dreams are about to come true.

CANCER

Today, you are likely to be brimming with love and compassion. However, certain negative thoughts will spoil all your good work. But don't fret! Your efforts won't go wasted and you will get the desired results sooner or later, says Ganesha.

LEO

Do not be surprised if you find yourself today in a situation that somehow feels like a landmark moment in your life. Whether it is a personal matter or something related to work, that you must wait to find out, you will need all your grit and diplomacy to sail through. Stay balanced! One thing assured is that your social reputation shall receive a tremendous boost today!

VIRGO

The bulb of ideas will burn bright today. A possible see-saw between your contractual obligation and current duties may baffle you. New contacts will stand you in good stead. Blood will prove thicker, and family and friends will consolidate their place in your life.

LIBRA

Letting things build up inside you is never a good idea. Learn from this as there is every possibility that today might turn out to be an aggravating and exasperating day for you. You may feel that way due to all the amassed emotions and resentments, so let it all go. It would be a good idea to take a break from the routine and bring in some freshness.

SCORPIO

While not the Trot, you shall, however, trot on the lines of radicalism today, predicts Ganesha. Learn to think as you would, and always have, but act as others would have you to, advises Ganesha. Be the maverick that you are only with those who are closest and dearest, cautions Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Your friend base is slated to multiply today. At work, additional responsibilities will be thrust upon you, and you will also be given charge of new resources. Ganesha predicts you taking up the challenge and emerging triumphant in all spheres today.

CAPRICORN

Overcome with feelings, you may take decisions that may stand in the way of success. Don't let your sentiments ruin your future prospects because the damage done will be beyond repair, warns Ganesha. Today, there are also chances that your down-to-earth nature and amiable approach will win the hearts of many. A bit of caution and guidance from the elderly will help you move on the right path.

AQUARIUS

You will come out top in whatever you choose to do, and success will smell hon-suckkle sweet! Naturally, recognition and rewards await you. Take your friends to that trendy café; you needn't wait for a reason to party, says Ganesha.

PISCES

An important day today, you can expect to reach a much-awaited milestone either on the domestic front or at the workplace, says Ganesha. Expect your professional status and your social standing to receive a boost.



BRITNEY RETURNS TO INSTAGRAM AFTER 6 DAYS OF DEACTIVATION

Britney Spears re-activated her Instagram. Her short break from Instagram has officially come to an end Monday. She told her fans that she simply could not contain her excitement after going on a brief trip with Sam Asghari, her husband-to-be, to celebrate their engagement news and took the break.

LADY MARMALADE SINGER SARAH DASH PASSES AWAY

R&B singer and actress Sarah Dash passed away aged 76, according to Reed Gusciora, Mayor of Trenton. "Our resident legend and Trenton's very first music ambassador, Sarah Dash, has passed away," Gusciora wrote on Facebook, reports *deadline.com*.



Bhumi to speak at NY Climate Week

Mumbai: Actress and climate activist Bhumi Pednekar has been invited to speak at the Climate Week in New York.

Divya Sharma, India Executive Director, Climate Group, said: "We are pleased to host Bhumi Pednekar at Climate Week NYC 2021 which is a critical moment to influence climate action across the world."

Sharma added: "Along with being a talented artist, Bhumi has been a strong advocate for environment-friendly choices and green solutions. In line with this year's theme of 'Getting It Done', young voices like Bhumi's will truly inspire others to do more at Climate Week NYC."

Bhumi will be speaking September 23 during Climate Week NYC. She will speak about how India will play a vital role in the global response to the climate emergency, and how the Indian industry will play a critical role in this journey forward.

Run by Climate

Group in partnership with the UN, COP26 and the City of New York, Climate Week NYC is where the world gathers to showcase leading action and discuss how to do more.

Climate Group is an international non-profit organisation, publicly launched in 2004, with offices in London, New Delhi and New York with the mission to see a world of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.



IANS



Jackie's mantra to stay relevant

Mumbai: Actor Jackie Shroff says his mantra to stay relevant is very simple. It's just keeping an open mind and opportunities will follow, adds the *Hero* actor.

"My mantra to stay relevant is quite simple, it's just keep an open mind and opportunities will follow. While I have explored a variety of roles, this time I wanted to play a lighter one," Jackie said.

The actor added: "With Radhe, I got the space and character to do that. Having the opportunity to make people laugh has encouraged me to do more such roles."

The actor, who shared screen space with Salman Khan in *Radhe*, says he has known the Dabangg actor for years now.

"I have known Salman from his early days in the industry and it's always a delight to work with him," he said.

*Radhe* will premiere on &pic-tures September 26.

IANS



Top Pak actress Ayeza recreates hit Sridevi song

New Delhi: Leading Pakistani actress Ayeza Khan has mesmerised her millions of fans by recreating the dance moves of late Hindi film star Sridevi on the hit Lata Mangeshkar song, *Mere Haathon Mein*, from the 1989 film *Chandni*.

Taking to Instagram, the *Mehar Posh* actor shared her video in which she can be seen dancing on the song featuring Sridevi and Rishi Kapoor. *The News* reported.

Ayeza, who is the most followed Pakistani celebrity on Instagram with 10 million followers, recently, revealed that late Sridevi will always be on the top among her 'favourite' actresses.

Ayeza had said, "Among so many of my favourite actresses, Sridevi has and will always be on the top. It's a pity that she left us so soon."

IANS

JUNGLE CRUISE: A CROWD-PLEASING FANTASY THAT LACKS ORIGINALITY

Dwayne Johnson delivers a charming performance as the gimmicky, loveable trickster who offers cut-rate jungle cruises embellished with faked dangers and corny puns



Dwayne Johnson and Emily Blunt in a scene from the movie

Depending on your absorption power, the narrative of director Jaume Collet-Sera's *Jungle Cruise* is as simulated as the riverboat amusement ride in Disneyland.

The set-up is promising. It lures you in to take a back seat, to witness the adventure trip into the jungles of the Amazon. Staged in the early 1900s, in a typical *Indiana Jones* style, Dr Lily Houghton (Emily Blunt), an eccentric, adventurous, and honorable botanist steals an artefact that would lead her to the *Lagrimas de Cristal*

Director: Jaume Collet-Serra  
Cast: Dwayne Johnson, Emily Blunt, Jack Whitehall and Quim Gutierrez

tree, which is also known as 'Tears of the Moon. She does so with the hope of harnessing its power for modern medicine.

The legend says that one petal from the tree will heal anything. It can cure any illness or break any curse. Lily travels to Brazil along with her prissy brother MacGregor (Jack Whitehall), where she meets Frank Wolff (Dwayne Johnson),

the friendly tour guide-cum-captain of the barely sea-worthy steamboat who reluctantly ferries them on their quest.

The first half of the narrative coasts on the charms of the lead pair and their light-footed visual misadventures.

The screwball banter between the duo promises some exciting moments ahead. But alas, with the overtly complicated back story and poorly executed visuals, the plot crumbles like an over-battered cookie.

The narrative gets disappointing especially after Lily gets night-

mares of Prince Joachim, an ambitious German royal who is chasing them with the same motive.

After that, the film hits nadir with the convoluted storyline, histrionics, and overtly ambitious visual effects especially with digital snakes slithering, bees, and vines capturing the pursuing Spaniards, dragging them back into the jungle.

Dwayne Johnson

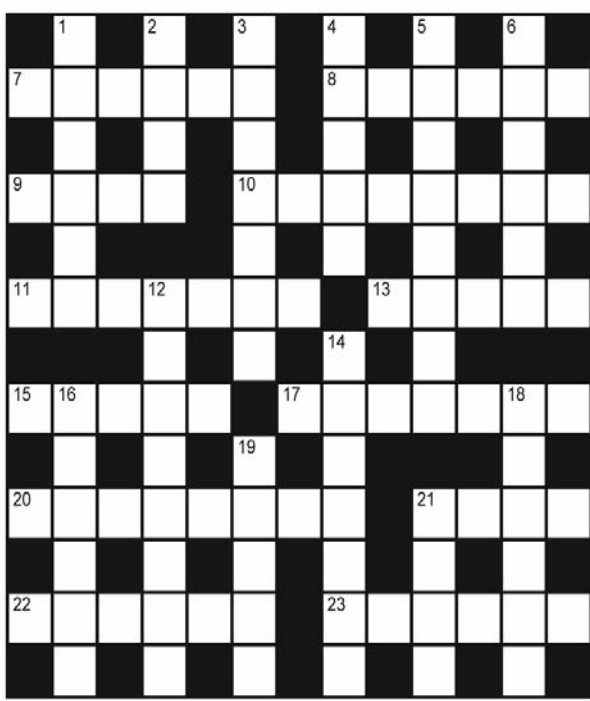
Film Review

delivers a charming performance as the gimmicky, loveable trickster who offers cut-rate jungle cruises embellished with faked dangers and corny puns. He is aptly paired with Emily Blunt as the agile-footed Dr Lily. Jack Whitehall delivers a strong performance as the pampered dandy MacGregor, who thinks it is not dinner unless you are wearing a dinner jacket. Overall, *Jungle Cruise* is a fun, crowd-pleasing, far-fetched fantasy that lacks originality.

AGENCIES

FUN post

CROSSWORD



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Across

- 7 Morals and such
- 8 \_\_\_ of Nations
- 9 Nobleman
- 10 Precisely (2,3,3)
- 11 Chorus
- 13 A small fruit
- 15 Black and white mammal
- 17 Sand traps

- 20 Off-white colour
- 21 Ill-mannered
- 22 Airplane storage unit
- 23 Refinement

Down

- 1 Caress
- 2 Current of air
- 3 Diffusion of molecules

- 4 After dental or photographic
- 5 Electronic equipment (4,4)
- 6 Hearsay
- 12 Change a plan
- 14 Game played on ice
- 16 Hound dog
- 18 Lose weight
- 19 Fatigued
- 21 Chew out

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

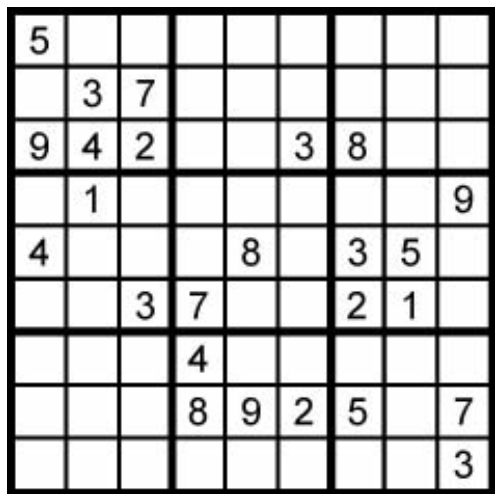


BREVITY



SUDOKU

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

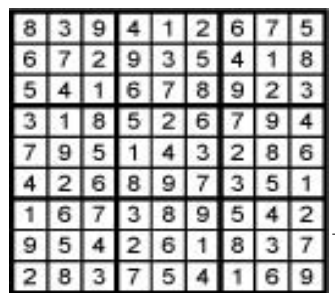


SOLUTIONS



CROSSWORD

SUDOKU





# downtown

## SMART CLASSROOM & SCIENCE LAB IN 889 SECONDARY SCHOOLS 7 dists get ₹640 crore OMBADC fund boost

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** The state government has approved developmental projects worth ₹640.65 crore for seven mining-affected districts under Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) funds.

The board of directors of OMBADC has approved the projects during its meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra here on virtual mode.

The projects have been approved in the sectors of education, environment and sports for the mineral bearing districts.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the OMBADC, Uma Nanduri, said projects to the tune of ₹533.40 crore have been approved for 889 secondary schools in Angul, Dhenkanal, Deogarh, Jajpur, Jharsuguda, Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh districts.

Mahapatra asked the officials to provide world-class education and exposure to the students under the secondary school development programme.

Since the smart classroom, e-library, science lab and ICT lab would be developed through the new project, the teachers must focus on providing the best education to the students with global exposure, he said.

### COMMEMORATING 75 YEARS' JOURNEY



A band performs at the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav organised by the CISF KRTC, Mundali, at Netaji Birthplace Museum in Cuttack Tuesday to commemorate the 75 years of India's independence

### DA CASE HC breather for Biranchi Sahoo

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, Sept 21:** In a respite to Odisha Staff Selection Commission (OSSC) member's former private secretary Biranchi Narayan Sahoo, the Orissa High Court Tuesday allowed him conditional bail in connection with a disproportionate assets case.

While allowing the bail, the court has asked Sahoo to cooperate with the investigating agency and to refrain from tampering with the evidence. The HC has also asked the former official to ensure his presence before the investigating officer as and when required.

The state Vigilance had arrested Sahoo July 31 this year a day after carrying out simultaneous raids at six places related to the former official, including his Bhubaneswar residence, on allegations of amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. The anti-corruption sleuths claimed to have found assets worth over ₹3.79 crore, including 1.5 kg gold, from the house of the Class III employee of OSSC. Sahoo was later given compulsory retirement.

Soon after his arrest, Sahoo had unsuccessfully approached the special Vigilance court in Bhubaneswar for bail. He later moved the HC seeking bail.

The Vigilance directorate has also claimed that Sahoo had pressurised many job applicants to subscribe life insurance policies from his wife.

### THRUST ON WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION

The board of directors of OMBADC has approved the projects during its meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra on virtual mode



The board has approved a proposal for development of multipurpose indoor stadiums at an expenditure of ₹104.15 crore for 11 ULBs in the mining-affected districts

THE PROJECTS HAVE BEEN APPROVED IN THE SECTORS OF EDUCATION, ENVIRONMENT AND SPORTS FOR THE MINERAL BEARING DISTRICTS

PROJECTS TO THE TUNE OF ₹533.40 CRORE HAVE BEEN APPROVED FOR 889 SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ANGUL, DHENKANAL, DEOGARH, JAJPUR, JHARSUGUDA, MAYURBHANJ AND SUNDARGARH

“Such facilities should enable our children to compete with others at national and global level,” Mahapatra added. He also emphasised on development of the playgrounds and joyful ambience in schools.

The board has approved the proposal for development of multipurpose indoor stadiums at an expenditure of ₹104.15 crore in 11 urban local bodies (ULBs) of the mining-affected districts.

The ULBs include Belpahar, Brajrajnagar, Anandapur, Barbil, Biramitrapur, Rajgangpur,

Rourkela, Vyasanagar, Champua and Joda.

The facilities would nurture and promote sports talent in these ULBs and their adjacent areas.

The Chief Secretary directed the officials concerned to make best use of the facilities for nurturing and promotion of sports talent in mining-hit districts.

This apart, projects worth around ₹3.10 crore on application of ICT and data science for development of environmental information system in the mining areas of Odisha were also sanctioned in the meeting.

## 29 black fungus deaths so far

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** Odisha has so far reported 212 cases of black fungus or mucormycosis and 29 of them have succumbed to the serious fungal infection, Health and Family Welfare department said Tuesday.

The Health and Family Welfare (H & FW) department further stated that 109 out of the black fungus patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals in the state while 68 patients have recovered from the disease.

The first black fungus case in the state was confirmed by the government May 10.

Till July first week, the state had 130 cases of mucormycosis and 20 deaths due to the fungal infections, said the department.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

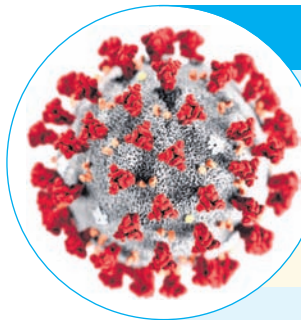
**New Delhi, Sept 21:** The Supreme Court Tuesday said the PIL, seeking direction for regulating the cost of treatment of Covid-19 patients at private hospitals across the country, would be listed for hearing before an appropriate bench.

A bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana was urged by lawyer Sachin Jain that the plea needed listing for the hearing.

The lawyer said the apex court had earlier directed the Centre to

### OFFERING TARPAN

People pay homage to their ancestors at Narendra pond in Puri during the Pitru Paksha, Tuesday



### COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	22,99,56,967	20,66,45,166	47,16,160
India	3,35,04,534	3,27,49,574	4,45,385
Odisha	10,21,216	10,08,226	8,146

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## SC to hear plea on Covid treatment at pvt hosps



The SC had earlier said that no one should be turned away from hospital due to higher cost of Covid-19 treatment

convene a meeting of health ministers and senior officials of states and Union Territories to consider an issue of treatment cost for marginalised sections of society in view of the pandemic.

“This will come up before the COVID bench,” said the bench, which also comprised justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli.

Earlier in August last year, the apex court had asked the Centre to

impress upon the states and UTs to come up with a plan, both legislative and executive, to address the concerns related to cost of treatment in private hospitals.

The apex court had also said that no one should be turned away from hospital due to higher cost of treatment. The “cost of the treatment should not be higher at the present time,” it had said, adding that the court is not equipped to either regulate cost of treatment or say what should be the best model of treatment for patients infected with coronavirus.

## Tearful adieu to Jyoti who lost life to open drain

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** Students and teachers of Saraswati Sishu Vidya Mandir at Unit VIII here Tuesday paid tearful tributes to Jyoti Prakash Behera, the Class X student who was found dead Monday after he fell in an open drain at Shatabdi Nagar Bank Colony near Siripur while he was on his way to tuition Sunday afternoon.

The school teachers and his friends paid floral tributes and lit diyas before his photo and also organised prayers for him in all the classrooms.

His friends recalled their fond memories with Jyoti Prakash and got emotional. One of his friends, Soumya, said, “We met for the last time Friday when we discussed about the exam preparations. He was an intelligent student and was very good in subjects like Geography and History. During



School students pay homage to Jyoti Prakash Behera who died after falling into an open drain in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

his absence, I used to collect his homework from school.

His English and Geography teacher Tapan Panda, with teary eyes, said that it was shocking news for every one of us. “It’s a big tragedy for us as well as his family that we lost him at such a young age. I will request the state government to take action on this so that we don’t lose another Jyoti.”

On September 19, Jyoti Prakash

of Baramunda area here went missing after he fell into the open drain while going to attend tuition classes on a bicycle. His bicycle and footwear were recovered from the spot.

A massive search operation was launched by Odisha Fire Services personnel to trace him. The body was found from a bush near a drain at Panchasakha Nagar here September 20 morning.

## Pact inked for climate-smart farming



The MoU signing in progress at Krushi Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** The Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment and Fisheries and Animal Resources Development departments Tuesday signed an MoU with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for sustainable and inclusive agricultural transformation in Odisha.

With this pact, both the departments envisage to strengthen their programmes by accessing expertise, technology and high-impact innovations. There will be endeavour to bring sustainable production, improvement in food quality and reduction in vulnerability to drought, pest and other climate-related risks through advanced soil and water resource management

There will be endeavour to bring sustainable production, improvement in food quality and reduction in vulnerability to drought, pest and other climate-related risks through advanced soil and water resource management

The Gates Foundation and its partners will provide technical support to the department in the design and implementation of programmes in which there will be emphasis on data systems, technology development and private sector partnerships

ment, sources said.

The departments also put emphasis on creation of marketing efficiency.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will also support acceleration in data use and policy im-

plementation to build a vibrant, climate-smart and integrated farming economy to serve marginal and landless farmers of the state, sources added.

The Fisheries and Animal Resources Development department is supporting comprehensive socio-economic development of small-scale producers in the fisheries and animal resources sectors through programmes to raise incomes and improve animal health.

The Gates Foundation and its partners will provide technical support to the department in the design and implementation of programmes in which there will be emphasis on data systems, technology development and private sector partnerships.

Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo said the state government has adopted an integrated approach to manage farmland, livestock, forests and fisheries that address the interlinked challenges of food security and climate change.

Reiterating the government's commitment to improve the quality of living of the farmers, especially landless labourers, small holders and women, Sahoo hoped the partnership with Gates Foundation will bring in best global practices, state-of-the-art technology and innovations for improvement in the field of agriculture.

Foundation director Alkesh Wadhvani said the organisation is honoured to continue with its strong collaboration with the Odisha government towards improving the livelihood of small farmers.

The foundation has been working closely with the state government in developing data-based decision systems for agriculture, fisheries and animal resources sectors.

This apart, the foundation will work for crop diversification, strengthening Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and shaping inclusive markets.

Moreover, the foundation will catalyse multi-stakeholder partnerships and innovations for nutritional security, environmental sustainability, climate adaptation and economic opportunity in an integrated and inclusive way for smallholder farmers.

## Lopar to trigger heavy rain in western Odisha



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) Tuesday said heavy rainfall would occur in some places of western Odisha during the next two days.

Under the influence of a low pressure area (Lopar) formed over southern parts of Gangetic West Bengal and neighbourhood, heavy rain is likely to occur at a few places in Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Angul, Bargarh, Nuapada, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Sonepur, Deogarh and Sundargarh districts Wednesday.

Similarly, some places of Nuapada, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi and Bolangir districts to witness heavy downpour on the next day (Thursday), the IMD said. Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) Pradeep Kumar Jena has advised the Collectors concerned to take necessary precautionary measures for the heavy rainfall warning of the IMD.

The southwest monsoon has

now been active over Odisha. Thunderstorms and lightning would also continue to occur in some places across the state during the next few days.

Another cyclonic circulation which is likely to form over east-central and adjoining northeast Bay of Bengal around September 25.

The system is likely to move west-north-westwards and reach Odisha coast during the subsequent 48 hours. Under its influence, a fresh spell of heavy rainfall is likely over Odisha from September 26, it said.



# Panels formed to study best practices on prison reforms

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** The Odisha Prisons Directorate has constituted several committees to study best practices on prison modernisation being followed by other states and countries and suggest measures for implementation of the same in state. The department recently issued a circular (No24/2021) to this effect.

As many as five committees have been created to prepare separate action plans for both short and long terms which will be implemented successfully in the jails across the state.

“It has been decided to undertake long term and short term measures towards transformation of prisons by adoption of best practices prevalent in various states and countries and extensive use of technology for transparent administration of prisons. Accordingly, following committees are constituted herewith to undertake studies of best practices/technology and formulate suggestions/guidelines for im-



plementation in jails of Odisha,” read the circular.

These committees will be headed by senior officials including two DIGs.

They will comprise five nodal officers and 21 jail officials as members.

The directorate also asked the nodal officers of the committees to take suggestions and opinions from other jail officials including jail guarding staffers who are not included in above committees.

The nodal officers have been asked to hold regular meetings

with members and senior officials heading committees on a virtual mode every week.

“Nodal officers of each committee shall take steps for holding regular meetings (online mode) on weekly basis involving respective heads of committees and other members of the committees. However, opinions from other officers of prisons/correctional services as well as guarding staff may be taken, if volunteered”

The 5T monitoring committee headed by Tapan Kumar Patra, accounts officer of the directorate will prepare an action plan to install low cost and effective technological tools in the jails over next five years.

Similarly, the R&D and e-governance committees will suggest installation of advanced technical gadgets in the jails by engaging various organizations having expertise in the field. Other committees include magazine and publication, welfare of women prisoners and transgenders and reforms, correctional services.



Buildings near Srimandir in Puri being razed for facilitating the heritage corridor work, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

# CM for partnership to promote women employability Bagchi thrust on digital skills



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik sought support from the UN Women, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, for improvement of employability of women in the state. The UN Women Representative for India Susan Jane Ferguson, who was on her first visit to Odisha, met Naveen at his residence here and discussed a range of issues concerning women empowerment in the state.

During the meeting, Naveen sought support of the Second Chance Education (SCE) Programme of UN Women, which, in collaboration with the state government, can help women complete their education. They can be helped with re-skilling, up-skilling support to make them employable

in the job market, said Naveen.

He also spoke about iconic projects like the World Skill Centre that promotes global standard skills. He wanted the UN Women to partner with such institutions to ensure gender parity and women participation in such projects.

Stating that the manufacturing industries in recent times are witnessing a revolution with looking for all-women factory floors, the CM said that UN Women can lead the efforts for ensuring facilities like quality accommodation and crèches.

During the discussion, Naveen said the state government has an objective to ensure that at least one third of the graduates from technical education would be girls.

He also said that participation of women in technical education and further employment in industries is a priority area of the

*UN Women will support the development of girls' football teams in Government ITI Balasore, Berhampur and Rourkela, basketball, volleyball courts in Gopabandhu ITI, Ambaguda, Koraput and Government ITI, Bolangir*

**BHUBANESWAR:** The UN Women country representative called on the Odisha Skill Development Authority (OSDA) Chairman Subroto Bagchi in her visit to the state, Tuesday.

In the meeting, Bagchi shared the state government's perspective and initiatives towards skill development from gender point of view. He said, “We need to break gender stereotypes for skill development. We need more young women to come into skills and professions which were considered to be male bastions.”

He gave the examples of many Odia women excelling in jobs like looper, automotive mechanic, welder, manufacturing plant operator. He shared his thoughts on digital skills while cautioning that it must be ac-

State government.

He cited the example of schemes like Sudakshya which has helped increase enrolment of girls in ITIs from 6 per cent five years ago



companied by high-quality teacher training, content, universal access to devices, and right to internet.

OSDA already has an MoU in place with UN Women for cooperation across a number of initiatives. As a part of the MoU, Women Self Help Groups (SHGs), under the department of Mission Shakti from 10 aspirational districts, will be trained in digital marketing and entrepreneurship to facilitate linkage to e-commerce platforms for online selling of their products.

UN Women will support the development of girls' football teams

in Government ITI Balasore, Berhampur and Rourkela, basketball, volleyball courts in Gopabandhu ITI, Ambaguda, Koraput and Government ITI, Bolangir.

It will also support the World Skill Centre, Bhubaneswar for mainstreaming gender in terms of policies, courses and placement of women.

UN Women's SCE programme has been implemented in Government ITIs and Polytechnics of Mayurbhanj, Rayagada and Dhenkanal districts. The team also visited the World Skill Centre, Bhubaneswar.

# Khurda accounts for 43% fresh Covid-19 infections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** Khurda district continued to report the highest number of new cases in Odisha, registering over 43 per cent of the total 462 fresh infections Tuesday, which pushed the state's caseload to 10,21,216, a Health department official said.

Odisha's coronavirus death toll surged to 8,146 as five fresh fatalities were reported. One casualty each were reported from Khurda, Puri, Cuttack, Angul and Balasore districts. A total of 268 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 194 infections were detected during contact tracing, the official informed. Seventy patients of the total new cases were children and adolescents. The rate of infection in the 0-18 age group slightly dipped to 15.15 per cent from 15.49 per cent Monday.

As many as 201 new patients, or 43.50 per cent of the total daily spike, were reported from Khurda alone, the district under which Bhubaneswar falls. Jagatsinghpur trailed distantly with 31 infections

followed by 30 in Cuttack.

Khurda currently has 2,351 of the 5,351 active cases in Odisha. It is the only district in state marked yellow zone as it has less than 2,500 active cases.

It has also registered 1,488 fatalities so far, including 1,015 in Bhubaneswar alone.

As many as 10,07,666 people have recovered from the disease so far, including 600 in the last 24 hours. Fifty-three patients have died due to comorbidities so far. The state has administered over 2,79,34,744 Covid-19 vaccines so far. Among the beneficiaries, 73.77 lakh have been fully vaccinated.

“#Odisha reached a new milestone in #Covid-19 by administering 4,16,454 doses in a single day! Many congratulations to Team Health Odisha for making it possible,” the Health Department tweeted.

Odisha has thus far tested over 1.93 crore samples for Covid-19, including 57,135 Monday.

The coastal state's cumulative positivity rate stood at 5.27 per cent while the daily test positivity rate was at 0.80 per cent.



# ELECTROCUTION INJURIES Bargarh woman gets aid at NHRC behest

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** A woman victim of electrocution has finally received financial compensation of Rs 2 lakh following the intervention of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The victim, identified as Janaki Pandey, is a resident of Ruchida village in Ambabdhona block of Bargarh district.

Recently, the Special Secretary of state Energy department informed the commission about the payment of the compensation amount to the victim through Union Bank of India's Bargarh branch, along with the proof.

Similarly, the Bargarh SP, in a separate report, apprised the commission about the registration of a case against erring officials.

Notably, Janaki came in contact with a low-lying 11kv live wire while carrying water in a metal pot on her head for her husband, who was working in his paddy field July 19, 2019.

She was later rushed to the nearest hospital where she underwent treatment for three days before being discharged.

The Energy Secretary confirmed negligence on part of the officials of WESCO Utility, Bargarh. He also revealed that the officials did not follow the guidelines under Measures Relating to Safety and Electric Supply Regulation, 2010, of the Central Electricity Authority.

A Bhawanipatna-based human rights activist Dillip Kumar Das had filed a petition before NHRC seeking compensation for the victim July 26, 2019.

# LoU inked to boost sanitation in rural areas

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** Housing and Urban Development (H&UD) and Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water (PR&DW) departments, Unicef and Centre for Policy Research (CPR) Tuesday signed a letter of understanding (LoU) for urban-rural convergence on faecal sludge and septage management (FSM) and plastic waste management (PWM).

The initiative aims to strengthen the efforts of both departments to ensure district-wise sanitation through urban-rural convergence for FSM and PWM services in seven districts in the first phase.

The initiative is being launched in Angul, Balasore, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Khurda, Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur which will be extended to all the districts in the state subsequently. H&UD Minister Pratap Jena said that the intervention is a step towards fulfilling Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's vision of building 'Swachh Odisha and



Sustha Odisha’.

The minister said that with this step, the rural population will also be able to avail of sanitation facilities located in nearby urban areas.

The gram panchayats will now be tagged to urban facilities like faecal sludge treatment plants (FSTPs) and material recovery facilities (MRFs) for effective faecal sludge and plastic waste management.

The initiative will strengthen both Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and ULBs to ensure prevention of river and groundwater pollution and environmental pro-

tection through a district-wise sanitation approach, the minister said.

Terming the initiative as a unique feat, Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said the convergence will help in providing better sanitation facilities to the rural population and result in optimum utilisation of urban infrastructure. The state government has already operationalised 58 FSTPs and by March 2022, all the 114 ULBs will be covered with 118 functional plants, Mahapatra added.

Wealth centres (WCs) have been established in each ULB comprising both micro compost centres

**The initiative aims to strengthen the efforts to ensure district-wise sanitation through urban-rural convergence for faecal sludge & septage management, and plastic waste management services in seven districts in the first phase**

The scheme is being introduced in Angul, Balasore, Dhenkanal, Ganjam, Khurda, Mayurbhanj and Sambalpur which will be extended to all the districts state subsequently

The state government has already operationalised 58 FSTPs and by March 2022, all the 114 ULBs will be covered with 118 functional plants

(MCCs) and MRFs for management of solid waste including plastic waste. At present, 167 MRFs are functioning in the state through Mission Shakti SHGs, he added.

H&UD Principal Secretary G Mathi Vathanan articulated the uniqueness of the urban-rural convergence model and said that it

will further strengthen Odisha's exemplary efforts in faecal sludge and plastic waste management. This approach will greatly help in promotion of public health by combating pollution of water bodies and land. This approach will greatly help in promotion of public health by combating pollution of water bodies and land. PR&DW Principal Secretary AK Meena said the urban-rural convergence will not only help in achieving ODF sustainability but also in the effective management of faecal and plastic waste in the entire state.

CPR president Yamini Aiyer and Unicef Odisha chief field officer Monika Nielsen said the partnership would strive to formalise urban-rural convergence on FSM and PWM besides aligning to the national (Swachh Bharat Mission) and international agenda (Sustainable Development Goal-6) on improved sanitation for all and hoped that this model would emerge as a best practice for the entire country to learn and emulate.

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# BENGAL RESUMES WALL CONSTRUCTION IN UDAIPUR

The Balasore administration has halted the wall construction, saying that the move is illegal and put up a red flag and clamped Section 144 around the place

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhograi, Sept 21:** Tension flared up on West Bengal-Odisha border Tuesday, as the neighbouring government resumed construction of a boundary wall near Udaipur beach under Bhograi block in Balasore. The people of the bordering villages on both sides are in a confrontational mood over the construction of the wall by West Bengal. The issue has become a bone of contention since local villagers in Balasore district protested the move September 7. The Balasore administration has halted the wall construction saying that the move is illegal and put up a red flag and clamped Section 144 around the place.



Throwing the prohibitory orders of the Odisha government to the winds, the Irrigation department of the neighbouring state has resumed

**The people of the bordering villages on both sides are in a confrontational mood over the construction of the wall by West Bengal**

the construction of the wall Tuesday. Locals have apprised the Bhograi tehsildar of the development. Police from Talsari marine police station rushed to the spot to bring the situation under control. Police officials directed the officials of West Bengal to stop the construction work. This led to a war of words between the two sides.

Given the hard stand taken by the Balasore administration, officials of West Bengal were forced to halt the work. The Bhograi tehsildar invited the officials of the Revenue and Irrigation departments of West Bengal to discuss the issue on the Bhograi tehsil premises. However, no official from the neighbouring state cooperated till the last report came in. Meanwhile, Marine police were mobilised at the place amid tension among people. It may be noted here that since 1978 the neighbouring state has intruded into Odisha seven times. Local villagers of Udaipur in Bhograi block have been strongly opposing the intrusion bids by the West Bengal government.

# Leopard skin seized; poacher arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, Sept 21:** Amid allegations of wildlife poaching in various forests of Mayurbhanj district, Forest officials Tuesday arrested a poacher and seized a leopard skin from his possession near Gandhi Park in Baripada town. The officials have also seized two guns, five bows, 17 arrow heads, snares and nets from him. The accused was identified as Laxman Murmu, a resident of Kendujhari village. Acting on a tip-off, Forest officials raided the area and nabbed the poacher. Wildlife activists wondered how the poacher could get guns and have sought to know who manufactures guns in the area. They have demanded an investigation into the matter. STF officials had earlier arrested two persons, identified as Bikash Bantakar of Badasahi, and engineering student Bikash Bijay Singh of Khanua panchayat and seized a leopard skin from their possession. The STF had handed over the skin



to the Forest department. Notably, a special team of the Forest officials had been on a strict vigil for the past six months to check poaching activities. In October 2020, the officials had arrested five people involved in poaching activities inside Similipal sanctuary.

# Woman tonsured for duping villagers; 10 detained

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kendrapara, Sept 21:** A 40-year-old woman was allegedly tonsured and paraded on the street with her face blackened in Kendrapara district by locals, most of them women, for allegedly duping them after promising to get their loans sanctioned from a cooperative bank, a police officer said Tuesday. The disturbing episode took place a couple of days ago at a village under Pattamundai block, the officer said. A video of the incident has gone viral on social media. Meanwhile, the victim pleaded with the angry mob to spare her and handed over her debit card to them. She even promised that her husband would repay the money taken from them. However, the irate women refused to listen and went on assaulting her. "We have initiated steps after the victim lodged a complaint. At least 10 women have been detained on the basis of the video-graphic evidence," Pattamundai model police station inspector Tapan Rout said.

# NHRC orders DM to pay ₹5 lakh to minor rape survivor

The survivor attempted suicide after a video of the incident went viral on social media platforms

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, Sept 21:** The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Tuesday directed the District Collector here to pay ₹5 lakh as compensation to a minor rape survivor who tried to commit suicide after a video of the crime went viral on social media. The compensation has to be paid by October 29, the NHRC has directed. The apex human rights body directed the district administration to pay the compensation as the survivor is not only a minor, but also belongs to Scheduled Caste, petitioner Sagar Kumar Jena said. The NHRC also directed the Kendrapara SP to submit a compliance report of the order before it by August 5, he said. The matter came up before the

NHRC after Jena, a social activist from Endar village in Kendrapara block, filed a petition before it, December 1, 2019. In his petition, Jena alleged that the survivor has not been paid any compensation. Jena said that the survivor, a resident of Pattamundai police limits in the district, was living alone as her father was residing outside the state. Taking advantage of her father's absence, the victim was raped for a period of over eight months by one of her kin. Later, the accused made a video of the crime and posted it on various social media platforms. Feeling humiliated, the girl jumped from the terrace of her house to end her life. However, she was rescued and later her family members lodged a complaint at the police station leading to the arrest of the accused.

# Three get lifer for gangrape of minor

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Sundargarh, Sept 21:** The court of additional district sessions judge Tuesday awarded life imprisonment to three people held guilty of gangraping a minor girl in Raiboga area of Sundargarh district. The court also imposed a fine of ₹10,000 each on the convicts. The convicts were identified as Mukti Bada (24), Birendra Majhi (24) and Ajay Kujur (25) of Khairabahal under Raiboga police limits in the district. According to the case diary when a 17-year-old girl along with her friend was on way to a church at Bartoli Goghar in 2016, five youths, including the three convicts, forcibly took the two girls to a nearby forest and gangraped one of them. The police later rescued the two girls from the forest. The court has also ordered the district administration to pay ₹10 lakh compensation to the victim.



Members of Paschim Odisha Yuva Manch stage a demonstration outside the District Collectorate demanding establishment of second AIIMS at Sundargarh, Tuesday

# Why Bhitarkanika was denied World Heritage status

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, Sept 21:** Bhitarkanika has been given the status of a national park and has been declared a RAM-SAR site by the UNESCO. However, it has been denied the prestigious World Heritage Site status. Sensitive zone monitoring committee member Srikanth Nayak, environmentalist Hemant Kumar Rout, social activists Sanjay Kumar Behura and Pradeep Kumar Tarai recently alleged that the status was denied to the Bhitarkanika National Park (BNP) due to several down-sides of the national park. They said that the meeting of International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) held at Krakow in Poland July 2017 turned down the request to confer the World Heritage Site status to BNP. Besides the negative aspects, the dossier submitted to the IUCN included certain misinformation regarding the park. They further alleged that no



assessment has been done so far as to why the prestigious status was denied to the national park. They said the mangrove trees are the life of the BNP. While these trees serve as a protective wall during natural disasters, they also help provide a safer environment to the wild animals, birds and marine creatures. According to them, a report was prepared by M Doak and Remko Van Merm, the

two members of the technical evaluation team of IUCN deputed by UNESCO in November, 2016. In the report, they stated that the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has already been implemented in the BNP and despite this, there are personal land holdings inside the park. Moreover, people are moving freely, farming activities are being carried out, cattle grazing and prawn gheries are active inside the park. Similarly, in their report,

Doak and Van Merm expressed their concern saying that the boundary line of the park lacks proper management. Over 400 villages inside the park along with its proximity to Dhamra port and missile testing range at Wheeler Island pose threats to the park. Similarly, fresh water is essential for the sustenance of mangrove trees and animals. However the fresh water flow is gradually decreasing. On the other

**A technical evaluation team observed that existence of villages inside the park along with its proximity to Dhamra port and missile testing range pose threats to BNP**

hand, lack of funds is hampering effective management and to initiating measures to check erosion. Most importantly, the guidelines related to eco-sensitive zone are not being implemented properly at the park, the report stated. The negativities mentioned in the report along with other similar issues were discussed at the IUCN meeting, and taking them into consideration, the meeting concluded that the BNP is not eligible for the World Heritage Status. The sensitive zone monitoring committee member

Nayak, environmentalist Rout, social activists Behura and Tarai demanded that all the negative aspects of the BNP should be analysed and necessary steps should be taken to solve the issues. When contacted, Rajnagar DFO Jagyandatt Pati said that the issues working against BNP in achieving the World Heritage Site status are being studied and efforts are being made to get it enlisted again as one of the World Heritage Sites.

# Andhra bus plying from Gajapati district without route permit

*Incidentally, Chitri Simadri, president of Gajapati District Bus Owners' Association, expressed his ignorance about the development*

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kashinagar, Sept 21:** The bitter dispute between Odisha and Andhra Pradesh over the territorial jurisdiction rights on Kotia panchayat of Koraput district as well as Gangabada and Kerandi panchayats of Gajapati district seems to be worsening with the passing of each day, a report said. In the latest development, it has been found that a private passenger bus has been plying from Kashinagar in Gajapati district to Vizianagaram (Vijaynagar) in the neighbouring state without necessary route permit. The bus, named as Sri Srinivasa of Andhra Pradesh (AP30TC3627),

has been plying since the last few days. The matter came to the fore after the regional transport officer (RTO) in Gajapati directed officials to undertake a physical verification of the vehicle. Sources said that the bus does not have a route permit allowing it to ply from Odisha to Andhra Pradesh. This has resulted in revenue losses for the Transport department, while the revenue generated is being accrued by Andhra Pradesh. The bus leaves Kashinagar at 4.45 am and reaches Vizianagaram at 8.30pm every day. The bus makes night halt at Vizianagaram and leaves for Kashinagar in the wee hours of the following day. To everyone's surprise, Chitri Simadri, president of Gajapati District Bus Owners' Association, expressed his ignorance about this development. He said that the association is not aware of any bus plying on the route. Meanwhile, locals have questioned as to how a bus could ply between Kashinagar and Vizianagaram without a route permit and the knowledge of the Gajapati district Bus Owners' Association.

**Government of Odisha** No. O-720  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**RURAL WORKS DIVISION - II, DHENKANAL, KAMAKHYANAGAR**  
E-mail: [rw.kamakhyanagar@yahoo.co.in](mailto:rw.kamakhyanagar@yahoo.co.in)  
**e-Procurement Notice No. 04/Road Signage/2021-22**

1. Name of the Work	: Procurement and fixation of signboards & road furniture
2. Total No. of Works	: 4
3. Tender Cost	: Rs. 8.96 to 14.29 lakh (Approx.)
4. Class of Contractor	: 'D & C' Class
5. Period of Completion	: 2 Calendar Months
6. Availability of tender online for bidding	: 23.09.2021 at 11.00 A.M. to 01.10.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.
7. Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	: 30.09.2021 upto 4.00 P.M.
8. Date & time of Opening of Bid	: 04.10.2021 at 11.00 A.M.

Other details can be seen from the website <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>.  
Executive Engineer  
R.W. Division - II, Dhenkanal, Kamakhyanagar  
OIPR-25094/11/0003/2122

**ZILLA SWASTHYA SAMITI, BARGARH**  
Dept. of Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of Odisha  
District Head Quarter Hospital, Bargarh - 768028  
Phone/Fax: 06646-231763

Advt. No. 33/NHM, BARGARH/2021-22 Date: 21/09/2021

**TENDER CALL NOTICE FOR HIRING OF VEHICLES**

No. E-459:- Sealed tenders are invited from individuals/ Tour Operators/Travel Agency/ Society/ Firm for hiring of commercial light diesel vehicles on a monthly & daily basis for DPMU/ BPMU/RBSK & Mobile Mental Health Programme. Details regarding eligibility criteria, terms & conditions and the formats for submission of tender (Technical & Price bid) are mentioned in the tender document which may be downloaded from the website: [www.bargarh.nic.in](http://www.bargarh.nic.in). Interested agencies has to submit their tenders in a sealed envelope super-scribing on the top of the sealed envelope as "Tender for Hiring of Vehicles on Monthly & Daily Basis for \_\_\_\_\_ in reference to Advertisement No.-33 dtd.21/09/2021". The tenders should reach to the office of the undersigned by Dt.25/10/2021 (till 4 P.M.) through Speed Post/ Regd. Post Courier only. Sealed Tenders will be opened at 11.00 A.M. on Dt.26/10/2021. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

**Sd./- Chief District Medical & Public Health Officer,**  
OIPR-10124/11/0012/2122 Bargarh

No. B-407

**WORKS DEPARTMENT**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**BHADRAK (R&B) DIVISION**  
e-mail - [bhadrakrmbdivision@gmail.com](mailto:bhadrakrmbdivision@gmail.com)

**Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice**

Bid Identification No. EE (R&B) BDK - 18/2021-22  
No.-3910/dt. 15.09.2021

1. Nature of work:-	Road Works
2. Number of works:-	3 (Three) Nos. of Road Works
3. Amount put to Tender:-	Rs.10,71,478/-, 8,92,913/-, 8,03,661/-
4. Class of Contractor:-	'D', 'C'
5. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal:-	Dt. 30.09.2021 at 10.00 AM
6. Last Date/Time of receipt of bid in the portal:-	Dt.07.10.2021 up to 05.00 P.M.
7. Date of opening of bid:-	Dt.08.10.2021 at 11.30 AM
8. Name & address of the Office inviting bid:-	Executive Engineer, Bhadrak (R&B) Division
9. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "http://tendersodisha.gov.in". All future corrigendum will be available on ONLINE mode only.	

**Sd./- Executive Engineer, Bhadrak (R&B) Division**  
OIPR-34079/11/0008/2122

**Government of Odisha**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION, DHENKANAL**  
Email ID: [eerwdivisiondhenkanal@yahoo.co.in](mailto:eerwdivisiondhenkanal@yahoo.co.in); Contact No.- 06762 286706, Mobile No.- 9437255309  
No. 4487//Dtd.20.09.21  
**1st Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. Online-Dkl-08/2021-22**

No. O-739:- In the unavoidable circumstances, the tender can not be uploaded in the scheduled date and time. Hence Availability of Tender on-line for bidding and opening of the tender invited vide T.O.TCN No. Dkl-08/2021-22 has been rescheduled as follows by the Procurement Officer, Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Dhenkanal.

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding	Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of Technical bid
1	2	From 3 To 4	5	6
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division, Dhenkanal	Online Dkl-08	27.09.2021 at 11.00 A.M. upto 5.00 PM	25.10.2021 upto 4.00 PM	26.10.2021 at 11.00 A.M.

All other terms and conditions are available in website [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in).  
Corrigendum if any shall only be published in the website  
Authority reserves the right of reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.


OIPR-25101/11/0005/2122  
**Sd./- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Dhenkanal**



“

Delight is the secret. Learn of pure delight and thou shalt learn of God.

SRI AUROBINDO



# Wise abstention

The Supreme Court dismissed a petition outright September 20 filed by a class XII student seeking direction to the Centre and states to physically reopen schools in a time-bound programme and conduct offline teaching. The refusal to entertain the plea has certainly absolved the judiciary of appropriating a task reserved for the executive, but it hardly offers any remedy to a serious socio-economic problem caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. A Bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud said it can't direct states to reopen schools for physical teaching. It has pertinently observed the apex court can't take over governance and left it to the governments to take a call on the burning issue.

The apex court's ruling cannot be faulted as it lacks the scientific data or knowledge of the magnitude of the pandemic afflicting the country as a whole and states individually. The Court has logically presented its difficulty to consider the plea as it is in the dark about where the COVID-19 spike is happening or in which district the incidence is high. Justice Chandrachud did admit the need for children going back to school. At the same time, without elaborating, the court pointed out the experience in some countries which reopened schools and the consequences of which were not pleasant.

However, it is also undeniable that because of the prolonged closure of schools, both mental and physical health of school-going children are getting seriously affected. More so for millions of poor children who depended for at least one square meal a day on mid-day meals for which physical attendance in schools is required. The indecision and hesitancy on the part of the Centre and several state governments and Union Territories in the matter of reopening of schools and resumption of physical classes with adequate safeguards are being perceived by many as an abdication of responsibilities. On the other hand, the ground realities are complex. No government, Central or state, should take a decision to open schools without 100 per cent vaccination of students, faculty and other staff. The rollout of vaccination for school-going children needs to be worked out and put in place. There is yet no timeline on this from the government.

Those who advance the argument that schools should reopen also plead that to begin with a hybrid mode of schooling in the states which have decided to reopen educational institutions with the option of online and offline education should be tried. This would enable students whose parents don't want to expose them to any risks not to attend school physically.

The pandemic has played havoc with children's education in every aspect. Schools have been shut due to the lockdown from March 25, 2020 and formal education has stopped. Since then, schools have either never opened for some age groups, or opened intermittently. According to a UNICEF report, in India school closures impacted 247 million children in elementary and secondary education and 28 million children in pre-schools and Anganwadi centres.

The Supreme Court in a case (Avinash Mehrotra v. Union of India) held that the right to education includes the right to education in a safe environment. The State cannot renege on its commitment to education. It is legally obligated to find ways to deliver education safely ensuring the health of children. However, such rules may apply under normal circumstances but these are abnormal times. Most private schools, accessible mostly to well-to-do families, have been able to continue education online, but others have been left behind. Many budget private schools are on the verge of closure over financial constraints due to the pandemic. In some states, including Punjab and Haryana, government schools have been regularly admitting students from budget private schools assuring that they won't have to pay for education. This has been possible because parents of these children cannot afford any longer to pay tuition fees in private schools as the pandemic has put financial stress on families.

Lockdown and school closures have their justification, which is to ensure public health. A temporary closure of educational institutions is also desirable, but a prolonged failure to provide schooling will definitely damage the future of millions of children. But this situation is not limited to India alone. The apex court has correctly abstained from passing an all-encompassing judgement that could have impacted health and lives of children across the country.

## WISDOM CORNER

- “

Our virtues and our failings are inseparable, like force and matter. When they separate, man is no more.

NIKOLA TESLA
- “

The world is a dangerous place to live; not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it.

ALBERT EINSTEIN
- “

I have noticed even people who claim everything is predestined, and that we can do nothing to change it, look before they cross the road.

STEPHEN HAWKING

## WORDSWORTH

### ■ Percontation

A question is just a question, right? Not according to one idea dating from ancient times, according to which there were two sorts of questions — those intended to obtain information, and those designed to elicit confirmation or denial. A nineteenth century writer explained it like this: Between a percontation and interrogation, the ancients made this distinction — that the former admitted a variety of answers, while the latter must be replied to by “yes” or “no” (The Dark Ages, by Rev Samuel Maitland, 1844). The two types continue to be recognised today, but by terms such as open-ended questions or wh-questions (who, what, why, when, which, where, whose, plus how) for the percontation sort and closed questions or yes-no questions for the other. Though the term percontation might be useful to linguists and psychologists today, it was never popular and shortly after Maitland's time vanished from the active language. Its source is the Latin noun percontatio, the action of questioning. Curiously, its root is contus, a long pole, either a boat-pole or a spear, lance or pike, prefixed with per-, meaning “through” in this case. It appears that percontatio was so vigorous or uncivil that it was like being pierced with a pole. In the late sixteenth century, the printer Henry Denham (some say his client, the translator Anthoine Gilbie) invented a punctuation mark to differentiate the open-ended question from the yes-no sort, called the punctus percontativus or percontation mark. In shape it was a reversed question mark. (Henry Denham was a pioneer in typography: he also advocated the semi-colon, an Italian invention.) Since a percontation question could admit of many answers, it might also mark a rhetorical question, one that didn't require an answer at all. There seems to be no evidence that Denham employed it in this way but the playwright Thomas Middleton did so early in the following century. Nobody else has since bothered with it, mainly because the character has never been available in standard type fonts. As rhetorical questions are often sarcastic or ironic in tone (“What was the use of sending you to school?”), it has been suggested that the mark would be useful to express such emotions in online forums. Its advocates have given it new names, such as snark and irony mark. The old name is never used — it would seem percontation mark is too long, unfamiliar or hard to spell to be acceptable.

## LOL

### Knitting & driving

A policeman spots a woman driving and knitting at the same time. Driving up beside her, he shouts out the window... “Pull over!” “No,” she shouts back, “a pair of socks!”



FOCUS

AGRICULTURE

# CORPORATE CAPTURE OF FOOD





Sofia Monsalve

**GROWING HUNGER IS CREATING VOLATILITY IN MANY COUNTRIES, COMPOUNDING THE DEVASTATING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE CLIMATE CRISIS**

When I visited my parents in Bogotá last month, I witnessed how people in their neighbourhood went up and down the streets begging for help to survive. Since the end of April, Colombia has experienced one of its biggest waves of social unrest in recent times – and hunger is at the core of the protests. South Africa experienced similar turmoil in July.

Growing hunger is creating volatility in many countries, compounding the devastating social and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis. According to recent United Nations figures, the pandemic has increased the number of hungry people by as many as 161 million, to 811 million. Nearly one in three people – almost 2.4 billion – lack access to adequate nutrition.

Given the lack of progress toward ending global hunger and malnutrition by 2030, the UN secretary-general, António Guterres, will convene a Food Systems Summit in New York September 23. The meeting has been billed as an opportunity to discuss bold new measures that will transform the way the world produces, consumes, and thinks about food.

But the summit has been marred by controversy from the outset, largely owing to the influence of corporate interests in framing the agenda in what critics have described as an attempt to privatise decision-making. The UN set the pre-summit agenda in partnership with the World Economic Forum, placing key corporate players in leading roles. For example, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), a Swiss-based foundation, leads the summit's work on eradicating hunger. One of GAIN's donors is the pesticide producer BASF, which seeks to portray itself as a ‘Food Systems Hero.’

UN human rights experts have been damning in their criticism of the process, which has sidelined the UN's Committee on World Food Security (CFS). Discussions at the CFS include hundreds of representatives of smallholder farmers, fisherfolk, indigenous people, and civil-society groups. Michael Fakhri, the UN special rapporteur on the right to food, has echoed the complaints of grassroots farming groups – more than 500 of which are boycotting the summit – likening corporations' excessive influence over the gathering to “inviting the fox right into the

The increasing corporate capture of food should concern us all. If left unchecked, we will face a grim future where a handful of large firms control what we eat and how it is produced. The increased consumption of ultra-processed edible products – a major contributor to the pandemic of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and related diseases – exemplifies the danger

henhouse.”

Smallholder farmers, peasants, fisherfolk, pastoralists, and indigenous people feed most of the world's population with little or no access to corporate supply chains. About 80 per cent of farms are smaller than two hectares, and cover about 12 per cent of the world's farmland, while the largest 1 per cent of agribusiness firms control more than 70 per cent of farmland.

Transnational corporations have a clear conflict of interest when it comes to preventing land grabbing, malnutrition, tax avoidance, and pesticide overuse. The same is true of addressing demands for a move away from intensive farming toward more socially equitable, resilient, and sustainable agroecology. Because these firms are accountable to their shareholders, profit is a more important interest than protection of the common good. But food is a common good, and access to it is a fundamental human right. That is where discussions should begin.

The increasing corporate capture of food should concern us all. If left unchecked, we will face a grim future where a handful of large firms control what we eat and how it is produced. The increased consumption of ultra-processed edible products – a major contributor to the pandemic of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and related diseases – exemplifies the danger.

This corporate takeover reflects the belief that large agribusinesses

are essential for providing food, have interests aligned with those of the public, and are better equipped than governments and civil society to set the rules and policies that shape our food systems. It allows corporations to expand their control of land, water, and fisheries, quasi-monopolise commercial seeds, and use pesticides and chemical fertilisers intensively, while failing to recognise, much less address, the attendant harms. Permitting this outlook to dominate major international forums like the UN Food Systems Summit will further undermine democracy and self-determination.

Consider pesticides. Despite the harm they cause – including the poisoning of agricultural workers and rural communities, increased pollution, and decreased soil biodiversity – their use has soared in recent decades. Manufacturers market these products aggressively and deny the extent of the damage they cause, insisting that they are safe if used properly. The industry also claims that pesticides are necessary to meet the food needs of a growing population, especially in the context of climate change.

Brazil is a case in point. Between March 2020 and May 2021, the government extended tax exemptions on commercial pesticides and approved 613 new products – even though the country was already a world leader in pesticide use. President Jair Bolsonaro wants to increase industrial production

of agricultural commodities for export, despite the lethal consequences this will have for Brazil's ecosystems and people.

Likewise, transnational corporations will not save Colombians protesting about hunger or malnutrition. These people need a government capable of taxing large firms properly in order to generate enough revenue to sustain a robust social safety net. And they need a government determined to reverse the extreme inequality in access to land that disadvantages peasants, Afro-descendants, and indigenous people.

Instead of looking to global corporations to solve the growing hunger and malnutrition crisis, the UN and national governments must end the corporate capture of food and promote a transition to agroecology. They should start by ensuring that multinational firms pay their fair share of taxes and are held accountable for the environmental and human-rights consequences of their activities.

In 1948, the UN recognised that food is a human right. Sadly, the UN summit is more likely to feed corporate profits than provide hope to hundreds of millions of hungry people.

*The writer, Secretary-General of FIAN International, is a member of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems.*  
©PROJECT SYNDICATE

## IN JEST THIS

# Decline in car sales sends Ford packing



Melvin Durai

**ASPIRE AND FREESTYLE COST TWICE AS MUCH AS MARUTI ALTO 800, BUT DIDN'T BRING OUT TWICE AS MUCH ENVY FROM THE NEIGHBOURS**

Ford Motor Company recently announced that it is leaving India, saying goodbye to all the drivers it had hoped to lure with cars such as the Aspire, Endeavour and Freestyle.

No more aspiring and endeavouring in the competitive waters of India – Ford is freestyling out of the country.

The company will close its plants in Sanand and Chennai, laying off about 4,000 employees. Hopefully each of them will receive an Aspire or Endeavour as a parting gift, but perhaps they would rather have a Maruti.

Horamzad Sorabjee, editor of Autocar India, believes that Ford did not understand the Indian psyche and spent money unwisely. The company reportedly invested about \$1 billion on the Sanand plant, which it opened in 2015.

“It is built like a Taj Mahal,” Sorabjee told CNN. “The western manufacturers just don't think frugal.”

It may be built like a Taj Mahal, but Ford unfortunately could not make any money from tourists. All it could do was churn out cars that were too pricey for most car buyers. The Aspire and Freestyle cost twice as much as the Maruti Alto 800, but didn't bring out twice as much envy from the neighbours.

After 25 years in India, Ford managed to capture only 2 per cent of auto sales in India, far behind the 45 per cent market share of Maruti Suzuki and the 17 per cent share of Hyundai.

“Despite investing significantly in India, Ford has accumulated more than \$2 billion of operating losses over the past 10 years and demand for new vehicles has been much weaker than forecast,” Ford CEO Jim Farley told CNN.

The car market in India is not growing as fast as auto manufacturers had hoped. Annual sales were once projected to be 5 million cars, but have remained at

about 3 million, and the growth rate has dropped from 12 per cent a decade ago to 3.6 per cent today, according to Reuters.

If you live in a big city and have to travel on roads that are already congested, you're probably happy that auto sales are increasing at a slow pace.

Driving in Mumbai, for example, is stressful enough without having more cars on the roads. According to a recent survey by UK car-sharing company Hiyacar, Mumbai is the most stressful city in the world for driving.

Paris is second, Jakarta third, Delhi fourth and New York City fifth. Among those five cities, the only one I've driven in is New York City. That was quite stressful for me, partly because of all the drivers trying to get past me on both sides of the road, some of them signaling their intentions with their middle fingers.

As for Mumbai, I've watched videos of people driving in the city.

If I ever need to travel by car in Mumbai, I would hire not just a driver, but also a doctor. The doctor would monitor my vital signs, make sure I don't suffer a heart attack. Considering the congestion on city roads, it makes sense that many Indians prefer small cars. Not only do they occupy less space, they use less fuel and produce less pollution. And most importantly, they cost far less than the cars Ford is trying to sell.

While a car is often seen as a symbol of success, I see it mostly as a mode of transportation. It's nice to have luxurious features in your car, but you have to pay extra for them, and it's not always a wise investment, considering that cars don't usually appreciate in value – they depreciate.

If you can afford to buy a luxury car, good for you. But don't expect to get to your destination any faster than your friend driving a Maruti Alto 800.

# 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](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

## Illogical travel advisory

Sir, A new travel advisory by the UK that says that people from India and a few other countries will be considered ‘unvaccinated’ even after two doses of AstraZeneca's Covishield has sparked off a controversy over freedom of international travel during the pandemic. Asking fully vaccinated Indians to quarantine is offensive to them. Given that Covishield was originally developed in the UK and the Serum Institute of India has supplied it to that country too, this suggests racism. India has not yet been included in the ‘green’ list - countries whose vaccines are recognised by the UK. As per the new directive, passengers not vaccinated as per the rules in the UK, Europe, or the US will have to self-quarantine for 10 days and pay for two COVID tests. It is ironic that these rules exclude a few countries where the AstraZeneca vaccine is used. Covishield is widely used in India. What is the logic of its non-recognition by the UK when the UK government is using the same vaccine under a different name? The new advisory is a cause of concern for India as it will hinder the travel plans of a large number of people in India. It should be recalled that in July there was a controversy over Covishield's recognition by the European Union as well. The governments of such countries must understand that only recognised vaccines are used by countries. People from other countries who are properly vaccinated must not be treated in an unfair way and they must not be discriminated against.

Venu GS, KOLLAM

## Sr. citizen discount

Sir, Passenger trains did not run last year during the nationwide COVID-induced lockdown. Now, these trains are being run as special trains, and senior citizen discounts – 40 per cent for men and 50 per cent for women given earlier – are not given. These discounts should be offered by the Indian Railways for special trains as well.

Gopal Mittal, BHUBANESWAR

## Channi takes charge

Sir, New Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi has begun his innings by playing to the gallery. Projecting himself as a representative of the ordinary people, Channi promised free water supply to small households, reduction in electricity tariff and transparent governance. Channi also asked the Centre to withdraw the three contentious farm laws, saying that the farmers had his party's backing against the ‘black laws’. However, the Punjab Congress being a divided house, one wonders whether these tactics can pay dividends in the Assembly polls.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE



COMMUNITY EFFORT



Despite repeated pleas, the administration allegedly failed to repair the Sabaranga-Kodagambhira-Asura road in bad shape in Bhadrak. Local youths finally took up the repair of the road, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

Eight-foot-long crocodile rescued from village pond

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kendrapara, Sept 21:** An eight-foot-long estuarine crocodile that had strayed into a community pond, was caught alive by Forest department personnel in Kendrapara district Monday and later released into the Baunsagadi rivulet, a Forest department official said.

The crocodile had sneaked into the pond at Vektakola village under Rajnagar tehsil to eat fish and other aquatic species when a fisherman sighted it and raised an alarm, he said.

The scared villagers informed the Forest personnel who rescued it in a swift operation, the official said.

We are relieved as the crocodile has been taken away from the pond. We were frightened to see it in the water, said Manmath Ray, a local villager.

**Lethal attacks by such reptiles and consequent retaliation by humans have become a regular feature in this area**

The Forest department said that crocodiles stray into the villages in the area in search of food. However, they often leave for their original habitat within a few days as per their natural instinct.

Lethal attacks by such reptiles and consequent retaliatory attacks by humans has become a regular feature in this area of the state. Most often mishaps occur when people intrude into the reptile's habitat for illegal fishing, poaching or to collect fuel wood and honey.

The conflict and consequent loss of human lives are frequent during the monsoon and winter months –the nesting season of the estuarine crocodiles.

The salt water crocodile population at Bhitarkanika in the northern part of Kendrapara district has increased manifold from 96 in 1975 to 1768 so far, the Forest department official said.

Subarnarekha renovation in cold storage

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhograi, Sept 21:** Every monsoon, the Subarnarekha river plays havoc in north Balasore, causing massive floods in its basin. Recurrent floodings batter the agrarian economy of downstream areas such as Bhograi, Baliapal, Jaleswar Basta and six panchayats of Mayurbhanj district.

Despite this, an ambitious renovation project for the river could not be taken up due to the bureaucracy for years. If the project is executed, it would help in containing floods in the downstream areas to a great extent. Given the havoc caused by floods havoc every year, the renovation project should be taken up for consideration, locals demanded.

The Subarnarekha river emerges from the Chhotanagpur Plateau in Jharkhand and flows through a



FILE PHOTO

360-km course before entering Balasore.

Every year, frequent floods have been damaging crops in the above said blocks of Balasore and parts

of Mayurbhanj district. Locals pointed out that Jharkhand has been making use of Subarnarekha water for agriculture by setting up Chandil dam,



FILE PHOTO

- The Subarnarekha river emerges from the Chhotanagpur Plateau in Jharkhand and flows through a 360-km course before entering Balasore
- Every year, frequent floods have been damaging crops in the above said blocks of Balasore and parts of Mayurbhanj district
- Jharkhand has been making use of Subarnarekha water for agriculture by setting up Chandil, Galudihi dams, Khadkhai and Bankbal barrages which help it in containing floods

Malkangiri women script success in vegetable farming

THE ODISHA LIVELIHOOD MISSION HELPED THESE WOMEN TO GET LOANS, WHICH THEY USED TO TAKE UP THIS CULTIVATION

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, Sept 21:** The state government has taken a host of measures to empower women financially as well as socially. The efforts of the government seem to be bearing fruits for many women farmers in Malkangiri district.

These women have not only scripted success in vegetable farming at MV-10 village, but also set an example for others to emulate. Their earnings from vegetable

farming are supplementing their family incomes.

The Odisha Livelihood Mission helped these women to get loans, which they used to take up vegetable farming. Today, it has become a source of livelihood for them.

According to reports, prolonged pandemic situation has broken the economic backbone of people minimising the scope of earning a livelihood in various sectors, especially in tribal-dominated dis-



₹37 crore allocated for road repair in Deogarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Deogarh, Sept 21:** The KDR (Kantapali-Dantaribahal-Rambhei) Regional Development Committee has expressed its gratitude to officials of the district administration, Works department and the Odisha government for allocating ₹37 crore for road repair in Deogarh.

The panel had been demanding repair of the potholed RD road which runs along the National Highway-49 at Balam under Barkote block in Deogarh district to Laimura in Tileibani block. Finally the budget to repair the road has been finalised at a little over ₹37 crore.

The RD road from Balam to Loimura village passes through Rambhei, Dantaribahal and Kantapali gram panchayats. The condition of the road with full of



FILE PHOTO

potholes and uneven bumps makes it a nightmare for commuters to travel on it. They informed that accidents regularly occur on this dilapidated stretch.

The KDR Regional Development Committee formed with representatives from the three panchayats of Kantapali, Dantaribahal and Rambhei has long been demanding that the road be repaired. The mem-

bers had staged roadblocks and fast-unto-death protests in past.

Their efforts finally paid off as the committee got the support from other social organisations and some political leaders. The road was handed over to the Works department and the tender process for repair was also completed. However, due to one reason or the other repair work was not carried out in the last two years. It left the locals fuming and angry. However, they are happy now as the Odisha government has made a fresh allocation for the work.

"If outfits resort to any such activities and if those have adverse effect on the project, the parties and organisations involved will be held responsible," said secretary of KDR Regional Development committee, Janmejay Pradhan.

People lose sleep over jumbo menace in Angul villages

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Boinda, Sept 21:** Farmers living in Handapa and Bamur ranges in Angul district have lost their sleep over persistent elephants menace. Over last two months, the animals have wreaked havoc on paddy and vegetables in hectares of land, causing resentment among the locals.

According to reports, 15 panchayats under Handapa range are affected by elephant menace. "In last one month, elephants have damaged crops in 50 acres, 7000 cauliflower, 3000 maize plants, and brinjals in five acres," locals asserted.

They accused the forest department of doing little to contain the menace.

The forest department has not taken any step to drive away the animals while locals have been driving them out with crackers and fire brands.

Meanwhile, two outfits including Jeeban Jibika Krushi Jami Surakhya Committee have called for agitation against the forest department September 22. The af-



ected farmers alleged that they have applied online for compensation, but the department is conducting no survey on the damage.

The animals have damaged crops in 20 acres of land at Kadalimunda, Badibahal, Banapur, Bhojidihi, Bhandarimunda and Tusar under Bamur range.

Members of Jeeban Jibika Krushi Jami Surakhya Committee alleged that the forest department has allegedly failed to curb the jumbo mayhem that has been going on for a long time.

Though the members of the

committees had apprised the Bamur range officials about the ongoing elephant mayhem in the region, the latter has not taken any effective step in scaring away the animals from the region.

Contacted, Athamallik DFO S Anand said that officials concerned have been asked to drive away the animals while affected farmers are told to apply online for compensation for their damage.

"The affected farmers will be identified through field survey and compensation will be provided to them," he added.

108 ambulance service lets down patient

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhendipada, Sept 21:** A female patient traveling in a 108 ambulance received the shock of her life Monday night when the vehicle suffered mechanical problems and came to a halt near Bagadia in Angul district's Chhendipada police limits.

According to sources, Pinki Mahar of Bagadia Mahar Sahi suddenly fell ill Monday night. Her family members called 108 for an ambulance to take her to the Chendiapada government hospital.

However, the ambulance conked out in front of Bagadia

Primary School on its way to the hospital. Even though the patient was writhing in pain, the ambulance staff remained mute spectators instead of arranging another vehicle to take her to the hospital.

After around half-an-hour, the patient's family members managed to hire an auto-rickshaw from the nearby market and rushed her to the hospital.

As the news spread, local residents expressed their dissatisfaction over how the emergency service often fails to provide proper ambulances to carry critical patients to hospitals.

Skeletal remains of missing youth found

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Polsara, Sept 21:** Nearly a month after a youth went missing; his skeletal remains were recovered from Ratnei hill beside the Mandara-Kendubadi road under Polsara police limits in Ganjam district, Monday.

The deceased has been identified as Kanha (25), son of Kokali Mallik of Mandara village.

Kanha had gone missing since August 26. Failing to trace his whereabouts, his family members had lodged a missing report with Polsara police station.

Soon the police registered a case in this connection and

launched a probe.

Sources said, an elderly man had gone towards the Ratnei hill while grazing cattle Sunday evening. He first spotted the skeleton and immediately informed the villagers. Kanha's family members reached the spot as they came to know about it and identified the skeletal remains as those of Kanha from the clothes on it.

A team led by Polsara IIC Jitendra Kumar Mallik, sub-inspector Suman Behera along with a scientific team reached the spot Monday and recovered the skeletal remains and the same were sent for test.

COLLEGE UNREST



Students of Adivasi College at Baliguda in Kandhamal district stage protests over their multiple demands, Tuesday

OP PHOTO



# ‘Letter-war’ flares up between CM, Guv

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, Sept 21:** A fresh ‘letter-war’ has erupted between the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government and the state Raj Bhavan, this time a fallout of the recent Sakinaka brutal rape-cum-murder incident.

Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari had recently written to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray expressing concerns over the tragic incident and urged the latter to call a special session of Maharashtra Legislature to discuss the specific (Sakinaka) issue and the safety of women in general.

Firing a missile Monday, Thackeray endorsed the Governor’s sentiments and pointed out that the question of women’s safety is not confined to Maharashtra alone but is a national issue.

He cited a string of incidents of atrocities on women in Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled states like Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, BJP-supported Bihar, Delhi where the police is controlled by the Centre and Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir under the Central administration.

In view of these, Thackeray urged Koshyari to request the BJP-led Central government to convene a 4-day special session of Parliament to deliberate on women’s security in which even the Sakinaka incident could be included. Taking a potshot, the CM said that women



Uddhav Thackeray



Bhagat Singh Koshyari

**Sakinaka rape-murder case: Maharashtra Governor BS Koshyari had recently written to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray asking him to convene a special session of the state legislature**

being ‘unsafe’ in the state appeared to be the Governor’s sole opinion and his agony was akin to that of a ‘political activist.’

“The minute people inimical to the state government talked about calling a special legislature session, the Governor joined their clamour for the same, which is detrimental to the system of parliamentary democracy. Your de-

mand could stoke a fresh controversy,” cautioned Thackeray. Harking to the home state of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Thackeray pointedly asked whether women are really safe there under the ‘Gujarat Model’.

“As per a Gujarat Police report, daily 14 women face rapes and exploitation, in recent past, 2,908 women went ‘missing’ in Ahmedabad, in two years 14,229 women have ‘disappeared’ in the state and since 2015 atrocities on women have peaked there,” Thackeray wrote, no-holds-barred.

Dwelling on Delhi where the law and order is the Centre’s jurisdiction, the CM said that in past few years, it has become infamous globally as the ‘rape capital’ and its needs special attention. “Last month, a 9-year-old Dalit girl was gangraped and murdered by a priest

and his three associates in a crematorium, they even attempted to destroy evidence by forcibly cremating her. This is the scenario in the city where the entire country’s Cabinet is based,” said Thackeray without mincing words.

He drew the Governor’s attention to the BJP-supported Bihar where a BJP MP allegedly raped a woman activist of the same party, the police refused to lodge her complaint owing to political pressures and only after a court order three months later that an FIR was lodged against the culprit.

Giving examples of Uttar Pradesh, where the Lord Ram Temple is coming up, Thackeray said that earlier this month, a kho-kho player was brutally raped and murdered and her body was found near Bijnor railway station.

“Such incidents have taken place in UP’s Hathras, Unnao, Badaun where two cousin sisters were raped and murdered. Even the NCRB has said that such atrocities are on the increase in UP, but nobody from the BJP seems to have made demands for a special legislature session there,” Thackeray hit out.

Pointing at the ‘dev-bhoomi’ of Uttarakhand, of which the Governor himself was a ‘Sputra’ (son), Thackeray said atrocities on women have shot up by 150 per cent in that state, and enquired “if there can be a special legislature session there too.”

# PAWAR CAN’T BE OUR GURU: SENA LEADER

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai/ New Delhi Sept 21:** Former Union minister and Shiv Sena leader Anant Geete has

kicked off a row saying NCP chief Sharad Pawar had “backstabbed” the Congress to form his party and he cannot be a “guru” for Shivsainiks.

He also said the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government of Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress is just an “adjustment”. In New Delhi, Sena spokesperson and senior party leader Sanjay Raut asserted that Pawar is a leader of the country. He said the MVA government and the arrangement of the Shiv Sena, the Congress and the NCP will continue for five years.

“I am not aware of this (Geete’s comments). The arrangement in Maharashtra is of three parties. Sharad Pawar is a leader of the country. “Be it Sharad Pawar, Uddhav Thackeray, the Congress... all have formed the (MVA) government. This arrangement will go on for five years and it has acceptance from entire Maharashtra,” Raut told reporters in response to a question. He said his party chief Uddhav Thackeray takes decisions for the Shiv Sena. “At this time we all are together,” he added.

Pawar is considered the architect and anchor of the MVA govern-



ment which came to power after the 2019 assembly elections following a fallout between the Sena and the BJP, who had shared power from 2014 to 2019.

Addressing a public rally in his home turf Raigad on Monday, Geete said, “Sharad Pawar cannot ever be our leader as this government (MVA) is merely an adjustment. Let people use as many accolades for Pawar but our ‘guru’ is only (late) Balasaheb Thackeray.”

Pawar was in the news recently when he compared the Congress to an impoverished landlord who cannot look after his house anymore. He had also said that on the issue

of leadership, Congress leaders were very “sensitive” and not open to any suggestions.

The NCP was formed May 25, 1999, by Pawar, P A Sangma, and Tariq Anwar after they were expelled from the Indian National Congress (INC) for disputing the right of Italy-born Sonia Gandhi to lead the party.

The NCP later became part of the Congress-led UPA governments at the Centre in which Pawar served as agriculture minister. In Maharashtra also, the Congress and the NCP shared power till 2014 when the Congress-NCP government was defeated by the BJP.

## ISRO SPY CASE

# CBI to travel to SL and Maldives

**THE ISRO SPY CASE SURFACED IN 1994 WHEN S.NAMBI NARAYANAN, THEN A TOP SCIENTIST AT THE ISRO UNIT, WAS ARRESTED ON CHARGES OF ESPIONAGE**

AGENCIES

**Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 21:** The recently reopened famed ISRO spy case probe appears to have gone into a fast track mode as the Delhi unit of the CBI flies into Sri Lanka and Maldives to take statements from the two women, who were among the then arrested in the espionage case.

The ISRO spy case surfaced in 1994 when S.Nambi Narayanan, then a top scientist at the ISRO unit here was arrested on charges of espionage along with another senior ISRO official, two Maldivian women (Fousia Hassan and Mariam Rasheeda) and a businessman.

Hassan is presently settled in Colombo, while Rasheeda is in Maldives.

Hassan told the media that a team of CBI officials had informed her that first they will meet Rasheeda and then come to take a statement from her.

“But following lockdown norms in Colombo, their visit which was planned for last month did not take place and they cancelled the Maldives trip also,” said Hassan.

According to sources in the know of things, the team of Delhi CBI officials is shortly expected to meet the two women. Since Fousia’s health is bad, she expressed her

inability to travel to India and hence the CBI decided to meet her at her place, said sources.

It was last month that the CBI registered an FIR at the Thiruvananthapuram Chief Judicial Magistrate’s Court against 18 people, all of whom had probed the case and included top former Kerala Police and IB officials, who have been charged with conspiracy and fabrication of documents.

Things changed for Narayanan when the Supreme Court in 2020 appointed a three-member committee headed by retired judge Justice D.K. Jain to probe if there was a conspiracy among the then police officials to falsely implicate Narayanan.

The new CBI team arrived in August and to work on the orders of the apex court. The CBI freed Narayanan in 1995 and since then he has been fighting a legal battle against Mathews, S.Vijayan and Joshua who probed the case and falsely implicated him. Narayanan has now received a compensation of ₹1.9 crore from various agencies, including the Kerala government which in 2020 paid him ₹1.3 crore and later awarded ₹50 lakh as directed by the Supreme Court in 2018 and another ₹10 lakh ordered by the National Human Rights Commission.



Traffic jam on Mumbai-Nashik Bypass Highway due to potholes in Thane

PTI PHOTO

# Acid and Jhanvi ‘tie knot’ at plush resort

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Thiruvananthapuram, Sept 21:** It was a grand gala wedding for bridegroom Acid and bride Jhanvi, in perhaps a first of its kind event in Kerala but held in line with Covid protocols limiting the number of guests to the number prescribed

Where the wedding at a plush resort in Kerala’s Thrissur - much favoured by couples looking for a destination wedding - was unique was that both the bride and the

## PAWSOME WEDDING



bridegroom were Beagle dogs owned by resort owner Akash Shelly. “Acid is 2.5 years old and has



been with us since he was born and we felt he should get a company, so we brought Jhanvi who is now

1.5 years old. We had brought a special cake meant for dogs and garlands were also exchanged between the bride and bridegroom,” Shelly said.

Steaming hot chicken biryani and chicken fry were served to the guests and asked why biryani was on the menu, pat came the reply from Shelly: “Acid and Jahnvi love it too.”

Photographers who were specially invited to click the intimate moments of the bride and bridegroom, fully dressed up to the occasion.

# Berthing of MV Empress to mark revival of domestic tourism

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kochi, Sept 21:** In a boost to the tourism sector in Kerala which is limping back to normalcy from the pandemic, a luxury cruise from Mumbai with 1,200 travellers will dock at the Cochin port Wednesday.

The luxury liner ‘MV Empress,’ owned by Cordelia Cruises, will anchor at Cochin Port, near Willingdon Island, at 5 am.

“Around 800 guests on the ship, hailing from various states, will disembark at Kochi to explore a slice of the rich culture and history of the port city, in an on-shore tour adhering to COVID-19 protocols,” the Tourism department said in a release.

The tourists will be taken to Mattancherry and Fort Kochi regions of the city. They will also be taken on a boat ride on the backwaters which will unfold the mesmerising beauty of the ‘Queen of Arabian Sea’.

Kerala Tourism Minister P A Mohamed Riyas said the arrival of domestic tourists marks a promising start to the full-scale resumption of Kerala Tourism, overcoming the pandemic-induced crisis.

“This trend is set to gain pace in the coming days. Kerala is a safe and secure place for the lockdown weary vacationers to come as we have put in place an efficient and meticulous bio-bubble model to create protective layers of inoculated service providers to receive and host tourists,” Minister said.

Tourism Secretary Venu V said all destinations across the state are getting ready to receive guests and the tourism sector in Kerala is fast reconfiguring itself from the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.



been closed for over one and half years since the outbreak of the Covid-19 in the southern state. The film industry recently expressed concern over the continuing closure of the cinema halls as it affected the livelihood of several persons and their families. After remaining shut since March last year, the Pinarayi Vijayan government had decided to reopen schools in the state from November 1. A decision in this regard was taken at the Covid-19 evaluation meeting that was chaired by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan last week.

## FARMERS PROTEST

# Non-BJP groups gear for Sep 27 ‘Bharat Bandh’

**THE MEETING CALLED UPON ALL ORGANISATIONS IN THE STATE AND ELSEWHERE TO MOBILISE SUPPORTERS AND MAKE ALL EFFORTS TO ENSURE THE ‘BHARAT BANDH’ IS A SUCCESS IN MAHARASHTRA**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, Sept 21:** Nearly a 100 groups comprising national political parties, farmers’ organisations, trade unions, teachers, women, youth, labourers and others will join the September 27 ‘Bharat Bandh’ called by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), top organisers said here on Tuesday.

The decision was taken at a state-level meeting of all the groups chaired by AITUC National Working Committee Member Dr. Bhalchandra Kango, held here Monday with the participation of over 200 leaders of around 100 organisations, said All India Kisan Sabha President Dr. Ashok Dhawale. The speakers dwelt on the on-



Representational image

going farmers’ struggle, the workers’ issues and the importance of

the ‘Bharat Bandh’ against “the bankrupt policies” of the BJP-RSS

regime at the Centre led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he added.

The meeting called upon all organisations in the state and elsewhere to mobilise supporters and make all efforts to ensure the Bharat Bandh is a success in Maharashtra.

A delegation called on Congress State President Nana Patole, NCP State President and Minister Jayant Patil, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and senior NCP Minister Dr. Jitendra Awhad who assured support of the Maha Vikas Aghadi parties to the nationwide action of next Monday.

The prominent participants included Vidya Chavan (NCP), Raju Korde (PWP), Meraj Siddiqui (SP), Dhananjay Shinde (AAP), Prabhakar Narkar (JD-S), Dr S.K.

Rege (CPI-M), Prakash Reddy (CPI), Ulka Mahajan (Sarvahara Jan Andolan), Teesta Setalvad (Sabrang India), Feroz Mithiborwala (HBKL), Anil Tyagi (SUCD), Kishor Dhamale (SCP), Subhash Kakuste (LNP), Dr Vivek Monteiro (CITU), Prof Tapati Mukhopadhyay (MFUCTO), Milind Ranade (NTUI), Yuvraj Ghatkal (NAPM), Prachi Hatiwlekar (AIDWA) and leaders of several other organisations.

Other major groups included Jan Andolanananchi Sangharsh Samiti, Samyukta Shetkari Kamgar Morcha, All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, Trade Unions Joint Action Committee, Unorganized Workers Struggle Committee, Hum Bharat ke Log / Nation for Farmers, etc.



of the day quote

The new airport terminal at Leh may become operational by December 2022

**JYOTIRADITYA SCINDIA** | CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER

Pharmaceutical industry in Goa produces 12 per cent of the total medicine manufactured in India. Around 70 per cent of the product is exported to the most developed countries in the world

**PRAMOD SAWANT** | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

(Chief Minister Pramod) Sawant said that water will be free in Goa. I was very happy. We did it four years ago in Delhi. I have heard that they have started doorstep delivery of services. We started it in Delhi three years ago

**ARVIND KEJRIWAL** | CHIEF MINISTER OF DELHI

SHORT TAKES

Over 500 illegal land brokers held

**Guwahati:** Over 500 people allegedly involved in illegal land broking activities have been arrested in Assam since Monday night as police cracked the whip on such middlemen. While over 450 were arrested in overnight operations, the rest 70 were apprehended during the day, an Assam Police spokesperson said. Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had informed on Twitter on Tuesday morning about the arrest of 453 illegal land brokers.

SIT to probe Mahant's death

**Lucknow:** The Yogi Adityanath government has set up an 18-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the mysterious death of Mahant Narendra Giri, the chief of the Akhil Bhartiya Akhara Parishad (ABAP). The SIT will be headed by Ajit Singh Chauhan, circle officer. It also includes four inspectors, three sub inspectors and other police personnel.

K'taka min's Twitter hacked

**Bangalore:** Miscreants Tuesday hacked the Twitter handle of Karnataka Minister for Large and Medium Industries, Murugesh R Nirani. "My Twitter handle @NiraniMurugesh has been hacked from an unknown foreign location today. We do not know the exact origin and identity of the culprit," Nirani said. "I urge everyone not to fall prey to any fraudulent messages posted by hackers and ignore any derogatory and unpatriamitary messages on my account," he said.

Rainwater enters Kolkata hosps

**Kolkata:** Treatment of patients at a few hospitals in Kolkata including the state-run SSKM Medical College and Hospital were badly affected while life-saving drugs at the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine were damaged as rainwater flooded portions of the medical establishments, officials said. The Outpatient department (OPD) of gynaecology section as well as the ticket counter on the ground floor of the SSKM Medical College and Hospital building were inundated as doctors and nurses were seen attending patients with ankle-deep water accumulating on the floor.

Sharmila detained

**Hyderabad:** YSR Telangana Party (YSRTP) leader YS Sharmila was detained by police when she was sitting on a fast at Boduppal near here Tuesday, demanding jobs for the unemployed.



**We are facing a new war paradigm on our borders. Ignoring it won't work**

**RAHUL GANDHI** | CONGRESS LEADER

TWO MORE BEACHES GET 'BLUE FLAG' TAG

Two more beaches in India have been accorded the coveted international eco-label 'Blue Flag' - Kovalam in Tamil Nadu and Eden in Puducherry - taking the total to ten, an official statement said Tuesday



FLOCKING TOGETHER



Rosy Pelicans fly over a pond at Delhi Zoo in New Delhi

PTI PHOTO

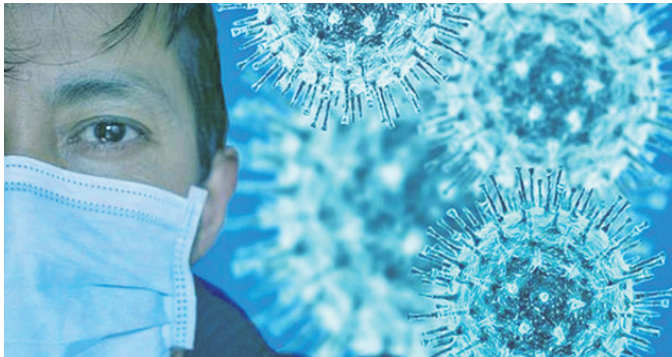
Covid R-value drops below 1 in mid-Sept

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** The R-value, or reproductive number, for Covid-19 in India dropped from 1.17 in August end to 0.92 in mid September, indicating that the spread of the infection across the country has slowed down, according to researchers.

However, the R-values of some major cities, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, are over 1. The R-value of Delhi and Pune are below 1.

The R-values of Maharashtra and Kerala are below 1, giving a much needed relief to these two states with the highest number of active cases. The R-value was 1.17 at the end of August. It declined to 1.11 between September 4-7 and



since then it has remained under 1. "The good news is that India's R has continued to be less than 1, as is that of Kerala and Maharashtra, the two states having the highest number of active cases," said Sitabhra Sinha of the Institute of

Mathematical Sciences, Chennai.

Sinha is leading a team of researchers who calculate the R-value. According to the data, the R-value of Mumbai stands at 1.09, Chennai 1.11, Kolkata 1.04, Bengaluru 1.06.

AUKUS ROW

India, France vow to 'act jointly'

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** India and France have agreed to "act jointly" in the Indo-Pacific to keep the region stable, rules-based and free of any hegemony, the French president's office said Tuesday after Emmanuel Macron held a telephonic conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi amidst Paris' strong criticism of AUKUS (Australia-UK-US) partnership.

According to a statement released by the Prime Minister's Office here, Modi and Macron reviewed the increasing bilateral collaboration in the Indo-Pacific region and the important role that the India-France partnership plays in promoting stability and security in the region.

After his conversation with Macron, Modi tweeted, "Spoke with my friend President @EmmanuelMacron on the situation in Afghanistan. We also discussed closer collaboration between India and France in the Indo-Pacific." "We place great value on our strategic partnership with France, including in the UNSC," Modi said. The French president's office also issued a statement over the Modi-Macron talks which was tweeted by

France's Ambassador to India Emmanuel Lenain. "They reaffirmed their shared commitment to act jointly in an open and inclusive Indo-Pacific, including in the framework of the Europe-India relationship and European initiatives in the Indo-Pacific. This approach aims to promote regional stability and the rule of law while precluding any form of hegemony," the French president's office said.

Meanwhile, replying to a query, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said the AUKUS is neither relevant to the Quad nor will have any impact on its functioning, and they are not groupings of a similar nature, in the first reaction from India on the contentious alliance. Shringla said while the AUKUS is a security alliance among the three countries, the Quad is a plurilateral grouping with a vision for a free, open, transparent and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

The telephonic conversation between Modi and Macron comes days after the launch of a historic security partnership called 'AUKUS' that aims to provide for deeper cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and ensure greater sharing of defence capabilities within the trilateral alliance.



₹21K cr worth Afghan-origin heroin seized at Mundra port

AGENCIES

**Bhuj/New Delhi/Amaravati, Sept 21:** In the single largest heroin haul in India, authorities seized around 3,000 kg of the drug, believed to be from Afghanistan and likely worth ₹21,000 crore in the global market, from two containers at the Mundra port in Gujarat's Kutch district, an official sai Tuesday.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) initiated a money-laundering probe into the haul, among the biggest across the globe, while the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), which seized the 2,988.21 kg heroin, arrested a couple that runs an import firm from Chennai, officials said.

Reacting to the massive drug seizure, the Congress wondered as to why Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, who hail from Gujarat, were unable to break the drug syndicate. The value of the seized heroin per kilogram was about ₹5-7 crore



in the international market, an official said.

The ED is studying the details of the case and proceeding forward under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), he said. The agency has also sought details from DRI on the seizure which took place around September 15. ED sources said the agency will investigate the people or syndicate behind this heroin smuggling, identify proceeds of crime, and may also attach assets of the accused if required. Official sources said the consignment was imported by a trading company registered in

Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, as semi-processed talc stones.

The narcotic is stated to be of Afghanistan origin and was shipped from Bandar Abbas Port in Iran to the Mundra Port. "A total of 2988.21 kg of heroin - 1999.57 kg heroin from one container and 988.64 kg heroin from the second container - was seized under the provisions of the NDPS (Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances) Act," another source said. DRI conducted searches in Ahmedabad, Delhi, Chennai, Gandhidham, and Mandvi in Gujarat, following which two persons were arrested.

The involvement of some Afghan nationals is also under the scanner of the DRI, the sources said. The importer firm, identified by official sources as Aashi Trading Company, is alleged to be run by M Sudhakar and his wife G Durga Purna Vaishali. The DRI arrested them from Chennai recently. They were brought to Bhuj town and produced before a special court for NDPS cases.

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari will be the next Indian Air Force chief, the government announced Tuesday. "Government has decided to appoint Air Marshal VR. Chaudhari, PVSM, AVSM, VM, presently Vice Chief of Air Staff, as the next Chief of Air Staff," a Defence Ministry statement said.

He will succeed Air Chief Marshal R.K.S Bhadauria who retires from service September 30. Commissioned into the IAF's fighter stream December 29, 1982, he has held various command, staff, and instructional appointments at various levels.

Air Marshal Chaudhari, who took over as the vice chief July 1, has flying experience of more than 3,800 hrs on a wide variety of fighter and trainer aircraft, including missions flown during Operation Meghdoot and Operation Safed Sagar. He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy and



Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, he has commanded a frontline fighter squadron and a fighter base.

As an Air Vice Marshal, he has been Deputy Commandant, Air Force Academy, Assistant Chief of Air Staff Operations (Air Defence) and Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Personnel/ Officers). He has also held the coveted appointments of Deputy Chief of the Air Staff at Air HQ, Senior Air Staff Officer at the Eastern Air Command, and the Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the Western Air Command.

5 Hindu Sena members held for vandalising Owaisi's residence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** The Delhi Police arrested five members of the Hindu Sena Tuesday for allegedly vandalising the official residence of AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi at Ashoka Road here.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Deepak Yadav said five people were arrested for their alleged involvement in the incident. Police said they received information regarding the incident at around 5 pm and rushed to the spot. A senior police officer said a case has been registered against the accused under sections 427 (mischief causing damage to the amount of fifty rupees) and 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the Indian Penal Code, and section 3 of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act at the Parliament Street police station.

Police said although nobody was attacked or injured in the incident, public property was damaged, which is an offence.

HOW INDIA FLIPPED ITS VACCINE FORTUNES

VACCINATION IN INDIA: THE HEALTH MINISTER, ONLY MONTHS AGO, HAD TO CONSTANTLY BATTLE OPPOSITION CRITICISM ON SOCIAL MEDIA

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** Only months ago, India ran so short of Covid-19 vaccines that computer experts wrote software code to help people snag scarce immunisation slots and the then health minister had to constantly battle opposition criticism on social media.

The minister later quit and in came a little-known but hands-on politician, Mansukh Mandaviya, who, according to a person close to him, communicates with vaccine producers on a near-daily basis and tries to resolve their problems promptly.

**Vaccine supplies have surged.**

Government officials say they are confident of fully immunizing nearly all adults by December, giving it the confidence to announce

a gradual restart of vaccine exports in the October quarter, for the first time since April when a second surge in infections overwhelmed hospitals.

That will help the sputtering global COVAX vaccine-sharing programme, which is far behind its pledge to deliver 2 billion doses this year following supply problems and India's export curbs.

The GAVI vaccine alliance, which sponsors the programme along with the World Health Organization, UNICEF and the CEPI, this month cut COVAX's supply target by nearly 30% to 1.425 billion doses.

"This could have an immense positive impact on both health security within India as well as globally," a GAVI spokesperson said.

"Our priority right now is to engage with the government of India



and Serum Institute of India (SII) to understand the impact this will have on our supply schedule."

The turnaround is chiefly thanks to the SII, which is cranking up more doses of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 shot than the government's most

optimistic projection.

SII would supply 200 million doses of the vaccine, branded Covishield, to the government this month, compared with about 150 million the previous month, said a government source who declined

to be identified.

**New production lines**

The government said in May that Covishield output could reach 750 million doses between August and December, but the actual output could be more than 900 million, said two other sources with direct knowledge of the matter.

It now has five production lines making Covishield, up from just two in April, according to the source. The person said Serum Institute of India's monthly output could go as high as 215 million doses.

Bharat Biotech, the producer of India's first domestically developed shot, Covaxin, told Reuters its monthly output would nearly treble to 100 million doses by the end of the year. India is the world's biggest vaccine maker and its companies including Serum Institute of India,

Over 80 cr vax doses provided

The cumulative number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country crossed 82 crore Tuesday, the Union health ministry said. More than 68 lakh (68,26,132) vaccine doses were administered till 7 pm, it said. The daily vaccination tally is expected to increase with the compilation of the final reports for the day by late night.

Bharat Biotech and Biological E, which does bottling work for Johnson & Johnson's Covid-19 shot, have trebled their capacity to make nearly 3 billion doses a year, much of which could be available for overseas sale from next year.



# international

## of the day quote

**Pleased to meet new UK Foreign Secretary @trusslizz.** Discussed the progress of Roadmap 2030. Appreciated her contribution on the trade side. Exchanged views on developments in Afghanistan and the Indo-Pacific

**S JAISHANKAR** | MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OF INDIA

**The US believes in the United Nations and its value**

**JOE BIDEN** | US PRESIDENT

**In my opinion, unfreezing the frozen assets of Afghanistan for (the) Afghans may serve as a major step for confidence-building that could also incentivise positive behaviour**

**SHAH MAHMOOD QURESHI** | PAKISTAN FOREIGN MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### German arrested

**Berlin:** Police in Germany say a 49-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of murder in connection with the shooting dead of a gas station clerk following a dispute over face masks. Authorities in the western city of Trier said late Monday that the suspect told officers he acted "out of anger" after he went to a gas station in Idar-Oberstein on Saturday to buy beer and the 20-year-old clerk asked him to put on a mask before being served. "He further stated during interrogation that he rejected the measures against the coronavirus," police said in a statement. A requirement to wear masks is among the measures in place in Germany to stop the spread of the virus.

### Survivors airlifted

**Moscow:** Seven survivors of a shooting at a university in central Russia that left six people dead and 28 more wounded are to be airlifted to Moscow for medical treatment Tuesday, according to a top education official. Minister of Science and Higher Education Valery Falkov said Tuesday that the shooting at the Perm State University on Monday was a "grave tragedy" and offered condolences to the families of the victims.

### US court jails Pakistani

**New Delhi:** A US court has sentenced a Pakistani to 12 years in prison for illegally unlocking mobile phones, which caused AT&T, the American telecommunications giant, to lose \$200 million, Dawn news reported. According to the US Attorney's Office in Seattle, Mohammad Fahd, 35, of Karachi played a "leadership role in a seven-year scheme to unlawfully unlock phones to defraud AT&T", reports Xinhua news agency. AT&T's forensic analysis, quoted in the official statement, shows that Fahd and his co-conspirator unlocked as many as 1,900,033 phones. This caused the company to lose \$201,497,430 and 94 cents in seven years.

### Argentine Prez reshuffles Cabinet

**Buenos Aires:** Argentine President Alberto Fernandez has reshuffled his cabinet and swore in new Ministers during a ceremony at the Bicentennial Museum at Government House. Fernandez thanked the outgoing ministers for their service, saying the renewal of the cabinet aims to respond to a part of the Argentine electorate that has evidently been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and has not recovered, Xinhua news agency reported on Tuesday.

## CIA officer reports Havana syndrome symptoms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, Sept 21:** A CIA officer, who travelled to India with CIA Director William Burns this month, reported symptoms consistent with Havana syndrome, a mysterious affliction that has struck US diplomats, spies and other government workers at home and abroad, US media reports said Tuesday.

The official, who was not identified, had to receive medical attention, CNN reported, citing three unnamed sources. The incident set off alarm bells within the US government and left Burns "fuming" with anger, one source explained. Some officials at the CIA viewed the chilling episode as a direct message to Burns that no one is safe, including those working directly for the nation's top spy, the report quoted two other sources as saying.

The circumstances of the incident are still being investigated, and officials have not yet determined whether the CIA officer was targeted because the officer was travelling with the director, William Burns, or for other reasons. If the incident was caused by an adversarial intelligence service, it may not have known the officer was travelling with Burns, The New York Times reported.

A CIA spokeswoman declined to confirm the case in India but said the US government and the agency are taking every incident seriously. "Director Burns has made it a top priority to ensure officers get the care they need and that we get to the bottom of this," the NBC News quoted a spokeswoman as saying.

"We've strengthened efforts to determine the origins of the incidents, including assembling a team of our very best experts — bringing an intensity and expertise to this issue akin to our efforts to find [Osama] bin Laden," she said.

## Trudeau's party wins Canada vote but fails to get majority

*Hours after the results came in, Trudeau greeted commuters and posed for pictures at a subway stop in his district in Montreal Tuesday morning — a post-election tradition for the Prime Minister*



Prime Minister Justin Trudeau greets commuters at a Montreal Metro station on Tuesday

AP/PTI PHOTO

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Toronto, Sept 21:** Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party secured victory in parliamentary elections but failed to get the majority he wanted in a vote that focused on the coronavirus pandemic but that many Canadians saw as unnecessary.

Trudeau entered Monday's election leading a stable minority government that wasn't under threat of being toppled — but he was hoping Canadians would reward him with a majority for navigating the pandemic better than many other leaders.

Still, Trudeau struggled to justify why he called the election early given the virus, and the opposition was relentless in accusing him of holding the vote two years

before the deadline for his own personal ambition.

In the end, the gamble did not pay off, and the results nearly mirrored those of two years ago. The Liberal Party was leading or elected in 158 seats — one more than they won 2019, and 12 short of the 170 needed for a majority in the House of Commons.

The Conservatives were leading or elected in 119 seats, two less than they won in 2019. The leftist New Democrats were leading or elected in 25, while the Bloc Québécois were leading or elected in 34 and the Greens were down to two.

"You are sending us back to work with a clear mandate to get Canada through this pandemic," Trudeau said. "I hear you when you say you just want to get back



**I will engage with the Tamil diaspora for reconciliation talks to resolve the country's internal problems and will not hesitate to grant presidential pardon to Tamil youths languishing in jails for their association with the banned LTTE**

**GOTABAYA RAJAPAKSA** | PRESIDENT OF SRI LANKA

## EVIDENCE SHOWS COVID VAX IS EFFECTIVE FOR CANCER PATIENTS

Vaccination against Covid-19 is effective in patients with cancer, whose immune systems get weakened by various anti-cancer medicines, according to studies presented at the annual congress of the European Society for Medical Oncology



## Taliban name remaining ministers



Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid speaks at a press conference in Kabul, Afghanistan, Tuesday. The Taliban have expanded their interim Cabinet by naming more ministers and deputies, but failed to appoint any women

AP/PTI PHOTO

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kabul, Sept 21:** The newly-established Taliban caretaker government in Afghanistan has named the remaining ministers and members, the group's spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said Tuesday.

"The newly introduced members of the cabinet are professional personalities including doctors and highly educated persons, also from minorities," Mujahid told reporters at a press conference. The newly introduced cabinet members have been appointed in line with the decree of Taliban supreme leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada, Mujahid said.

The spokesman said that a veteran businessman, Hajji Nurudin Azizi, has been appointed as acting minister for commerce, and Qalandar Ebad as the acting minister for public health. Mujahid also expressed hope that the international community would give recognition to the Islamic Emirate. At the press conference, he re-

jected the presence of the Islamic State, Al Qaeda or any other terrorist groups in Afghanistan, saying the Islamic Emirate is capable enough to smash any extremist organisation and won't allow any Afghanistan soil to be used against any country.

The spokesman also announced that the inauguration ceremony for the new government has been cancelled due to their focus on providing service to the people at this point. TOLO News reported. Regarding the country's economic situation, he said that the domestic revenues might be enough for basic needs.

"We are using all diplomatic channels to unfreeze the Afghan assets." When asked about the women's affairs ministry and girls' education, Mujahid said the caretaker cabinet is working to address women's demands for work and education. "We are working to complete the procedures so that girls can resume their education," he said.

## France rallies EU as trust in US, UK and Australia wanes

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Brussels, Sept 21:** France Tuesday urged its European Union partners to consider whether to delay negotiations on the bloc's future trade agreement with Australia over what Paris says is a lack of trust sparked by a major defense deal between the U.S., Australia and Britain.

French European Affairs Minister Clement Beaune said he would raise the trade pact and the security implications of the deal, known as AUKUS, at a meeting with his counterparts in Brussels, and that France would ensure that it is discussed at EU summits and ministerial meetings next month.

The Indo-Pacific security pact will see Australia cancel a multi-billion-dollar contract to buy diesel-electric French submarines and acquire U.S. Nuclear-powered vessels instead. The French government is suggesting it was betrayed by the deal, which comes in the run-up to elections in France in April.

"It's a matter of trust," Beaune told reporters. "When you have your word, it has some value between allies, between democracies, between partners and in this case

**The Indo-Pacific security pact will see Australia cancel a multi-billion-dollar contract to buy diesel-electric French submarines and acquire U.S. Nuclear-powered vessels instead**

this word was not respected... So of course it creates a breach of trust."

"We have to be firm, not as French but as Europeans, because it's a matter of the way we work together as allies," he said.

Asked whether France would call a halt to the trade talks with Australia, which have been underway since 2018, Beaune said "that is among the points that we must discuss together."

The EU's executive branch, the European Commission, conducts trade talks based on a mandate it receives from the 27 member countries. The commission routinely informs the countries about progress, but they are not directly involved even though they can delay progress.

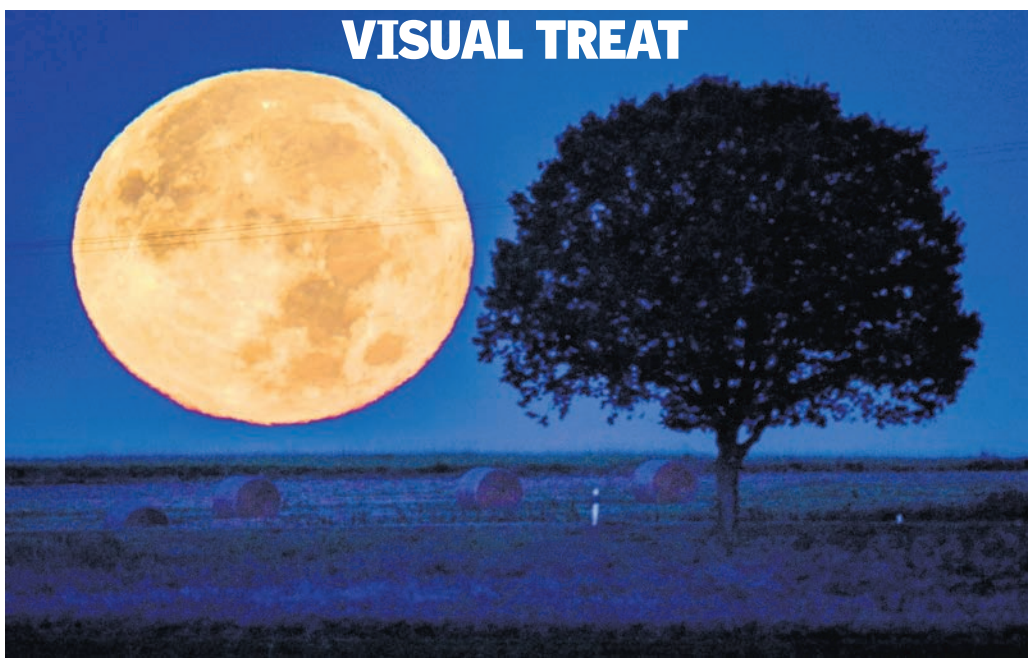
However, any trade pact must be endorsed unanimously, so in-

dividual countries have a veto.

The Europeans see the previously unannounced security deal as the second time in weeks that President Joe Biden has focused on an "America First" policy, similar in substance if not in tone to his predecessor Donald Trump, following the chaotic U.S. Exit from Afghanistan late last month.

It's raised questions about Europe's ability to provide for its own security outside of the U.S.-led NATO and resulted in appeals for the EU to develop a "strategic autonomy" from the military alliance that breaks with the dependence on American military and logistical muscle.

Germany's European Affairs Minister, Michael Roth, said he has "great understanding for the disappointment felt by our French partners." "It's once more a wake-up call for all of us in the European Union to ask how we can strengthen our sovereignty, how can we stand as one even in question related to foreign and security policy, and how can we use our economic and political clout in such a way that we can contribute to security and multilateralism so that our values are firmly anchored at the global level," Roth said.



The full moon sets behind the hills of the Taunus region near Wehrheim, Germany, early Tuesday

AP/PTI PHOTO

## UK police charge 3rd Russian in 2018 poisoning of ex-spy

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, Sept 21:** British police said Tuesday they are charging a third Russian suspect in the 2018 nerve agent attack on a former Russian agent in England.

Scotland Yard said prosecutors believe there is sufficient evidence to charge Denis Sergeyev, who went by the alias "Sergey Fedotov," with conspiracy to murder, attempted

murder, possessing and using a chemical weapon, and causing grievous bodily harm.

Former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, were targeted in a nerve agent attack in March 2018 in the English city of Salisbury that British authorities said had almost certainly approved been "at a senior level of the Russian state."

Moscow has vehemently denied

the allegations.

The Skripals survived, but the attack later claimed the life of a British woman and left a man and a police officer seriously ill.

Police previously charged two other Russian military intelligence agents, known by their aliases Alexander Petrov and Ruslan Boshirov, saying they traveled to the UK for the poisoning operation then flew back to Moscow.

## First Biden-Modi bilateral meet will strengthen ties: White House official

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, Sept 21:** The maiden bilateral meeting between President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday will further strengthen the US-India strategic ties and allow the leaders to discuss the situation in Afghanistan and how the two countries can work together to fight terrorism, a senior White House official has said.

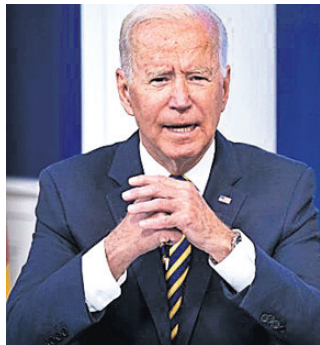
The first in-person meeting at the White House will also provide added momentum to the Quad grouping, the official said. Biden will host Modi at the White House for their first bilateral meeting on September 24. Later on that day, Biden will host the first-ever in-person Quad Leaders' Summit with

Modi, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

Both Biden and Prime Minister Modi have spoken virtually on multiple occasions after the former, a Democrat, became US president in January. The last telephone conversation between them took place on April 26.

"The leaders will be focused on strengthening the deep ties between their people and shared democratic values that have underpinned the special bond between the United States and India for more than seven decades," the White House official said.

"The Biden-Harris administration has enhanced our partnership with India by working to-



gether to uphold a free and open Indo-Pacific, leading efforts to end the COVID-19 pandemic, and taking concerted action to address the climate crisis," the official told PTI.

The official said that US Vice



President Kamala Harris will meet Prime Minister Modi on September 23. This will be the first meeting between the two leaders. Harris had earlier spoken with Modi over the phone in June during the COVID-19 crisis.

Harris is the first woman, the first Black American, and the first South Asian American to be elected Vice President.

Addressing a press conference earlier, a senior official of the Biden administration said the Biden-Modi meeting would be an opportunity to go from strength to strength, from the point of view of the strategic partnership with India.

This can be done by working together to uphold a free and open Indo-Pacific, by taking steps to contribute to a global solution to the COVID-19 pandemic and by taking concerted action to address the climate crisis, the official said.

"So, the bilateral discussion between the US and India will help re-

inforce and give momentum to the Quad discussion because many of the topics are very much interrelated," the official said. The evolving situation in the strategically vital Indo-Pacific region amidst China's aggressive muscle-flexing has become a major talking point among leading global powers.

"Additionally, in the bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Modi, the two leaders will have the opportunity to talk about counterterrorism, the Afghanistan situation and how we can work together to fight terrorism, our common enemy, as well as about a range of regional issues and developments where we'll have the opportunity to compare notes," said the senior Biden administration official.



of the day quote

Perhaps we could have done some things better and, of course, every life lost is a tragedy. But the sheer size of our population arguably makes the challenge posed by COVID in India greater than in any other major nation

GAUTAM ADANI | ADANI GROUP CHAIRMAN

Our internal studies have shown that fuel efficiency has been high in buying criteria even when fuel prices were down. Now with so much increase in fuel prices, it has become an even more important factor

SHASHANK SRIVASTAVA | MSI SENIOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Housing is much more affordable today than it ever was. In the last couple of years, property prices have more or less remained the same in major pockets across the country while income levels have gone up

RENU SUD KARNAD | MANAGING DIRECTOR, HDFC LTD

SHORT TAKES

Flipkart Big Billion Days from Oct 7-12

**New Delhi:** Walmart-owned Flipkart Tuesday said it will host the eighth edition of its flagship event, The Big Billion Days (TBBB), from October 7-12 this year. The six-day event will see millions of consumers, sellers, small businesses, artisans, Kiranas, brands and e-commerce ecosystem partners participating, a statement said. This year, The Big Billion Days will bring forth several new opportunities for homegrown brands and sellers to celebrate with consumers across the country, from metros to tier II cities and beyond, it added. "Over the past year and a half, Flipkart's focus has largely been to build and aid a collaborative and democratic retail ecosystem for MSMEs to revive and revitalise their businesses. This year will see a host of new launches, games, interactive videos, live streams and rewards throughout TBBB," it said.

EVRE ties up with Park+

**New Delhi:** Leading EV charging infrastructure player EVRE Tuesday said it has joined hands with smart parking solutions brand Park+ to set up 10,000 charging stations across the country over the next two years. The long-term partnership will include collaboration in acquiring spaces for setting up smart charging and parking hubs for logistics and people mobility segments. As part of the tie-up, EVRE would conceptualise design, manufacture, establish, operate and maintain the EV charging infrastructure, while Park+ will arrange and manage the real estate aspect of the hub. Park+ is already live in 1,000 plus apartments, 250 plus corporate setups and over 30 malls.

Wow Momo Foods raises \$15 million

**New Delhi:** Wow Momo Foods Tuesday said it has raised over USD 15 million (around ₹110.49 crore) in series C funding round led by Tree Line Investment Management. The funding round has made Wow Momo Foods the most valued home-grown QSR brand, with a valuation of over ₹1,225 crore, said Tiger Global backed firm in a statement. Wow Momo Foods operates QSR chains - Wow Momo and Wow China. "This is a formidable leap from its last valuation of 860 crore in September 2019, when it raised money from Tiger Global," the statement said.



Have directed officers to work on a policy to include on-board sleep detection sensors in commercial vehicles, at par with European standards

NITIN GADKARI | UNION MINISTER

Plan for tighter e-commerce rules faces internal govt dissent

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** India's plan to tighten rules on its fast-growing e-commerce market has run into internal government dissent, memos reviewed by Reuters show, with the Ministry of Finance describing some proposals as 'excessive' and 'without economic rationale.'

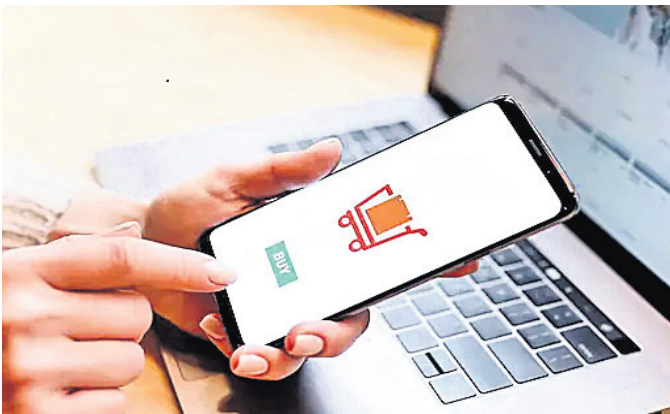
The memos offer a rare glimpse of high-stakes policy-making governing a market already featuring global retail heavyweights from Amazon to Walmart, plus domestic players like Reliance Industries and Tata Group. The sector is forecast by Grant Thornton to be worth \$188 billion by 2025.

It's not clear how the objections from the finance ministry - a dozen in total - will ultimately be reflected in the proposed rule changes, first floated in June. But watchers of the influential government arm say its complaints won't fall on deaf ears in the upper echelons of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration.

"The ministry of finance raising such concerns would likely spur a rethink of the policy," said Suhaan Mukerji, managing partner at India's PLR Chambers, a law firm that specialises in public policy issues.

India in June shocked the e-commerce world with proposals from its consumer affairs ministry that sought to limit 'flash sales', rein in a push to promote private-label brands push and raise scrutiny of relationships between online marketplace operators and their vendors. There is not yet a formal implementation timeline for the new rules.

Though the rules were announced after complaints from brick-and-mortar retailers about alleged un-



fair practices of foreign companies, they also drew protest from Tata Group, with more than \$100 billion in revenue, which is planning an e-commerce expansion.

But the finance ministry, the ministry of corporate affairs and the federal think-tank NITI Aayog - an active player in policy-making - have all raised objections in memos reviewed by Reuters, saying the proposals go far beyond their stated aim of protecting consumers and also lack regulatory clarity.

An August 31 memo from the Finance Ministry's Department of Economic Affairs said the rules appeared 'excessive' and would hit a sector that could boost job creation as well as tax revenue.

"The proposed amendments are likely to have significant implications/restrictions on a sunrise sector and 'ease of doing business'," said the three-page memo. "Care needs to be taken to ensure that the proposed measures remain 'light-touch regulations'."

The finance ministry did not respond to Reuters' requests for comment.

A spokesman for India's con-

sumer affairs ministry said in a statement that "internal discussions among various stakeholders including government agencies is (a) sign of mature and healthy decision making process in a democracy."

Voicing its own objections July 6, NITI Aayog's vice chairman, Rajiv Kumar, wrote to Piyush Goyal, who is minister for commerce as well as consumer affairs minister, saying the rules could hit small businesses.

"Moreover, they send the message of unpredictability and inconsistency in our policy-making," Kumar wrote in the letter, a copy of which was reviewed by Reuters.

Minister Goyal and NITI Aayog's Kumar did not respond to Reuters requests for comment.

The arguments put forth by the finance ministry and NITI Aayog are in line with concerns raised by sector operators, and even the US government. They say New Delhi has in recent years changed e-commerce policies too often and taken a hard-line regulatory approach that especially hurts American players.

Stainless-steel sector sees 177 per cent jump in imports



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** The first four months of this financial year 2021-22 (April-July of FY 22), witnessed a staggering 177 per cent rise in stainless steel imports into the country as compared to last year's (FY 21) average, and a 159 per cent increase from the 2016-17 average, the base year prior to imposition of CVD on China. The surge has been powered by non-WTO compliant subsidies of 20 to 30 per cent provided to their stainless-steel manufacturers by China and Indonesia, which has been proved by the Directorate General of Trade Remedies in India as well as their global counterparts.

The subsidies have created an imbalance in the Indian and international markets, and reduced the competitiveness of Indian products in the domestic industry, causing material injury and persistent financial stress for home-grown businesses. It has also forced the domestic industry to seek redres-

sal from the concerned authorities of the government for the revocation of suspension of CVD on China and imposition of fresh CVD on Indonesia.

"Suspension of anti-subsidy duty with respect to China and interim anti-subsidy with respect to Indonesia, announced in Budget FY22, has had an adverse impact on Indian stainless-steel industry. This opening up of the market for stainless-steel-flat-products imports at dumped/subsidised prices from China, and Chinese investments in Indonesia provided rich opportunities to Chinese/Chinese-backed by exporters. Investigation recommended continuing with the duty protection. However, a sudden change was effected through the budget, and the adverse impacts of these decisions have become apparent from the sudden surge in imports. As a result, Indian companies, particularly the MSMEs, have been languishing," Dr. Aruna Sharma, former secretary, Ministry of Steel said.

Amazon pays \$1.2 bn as legal fees in India to remain operational

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** Amazon India has spent a staggering over \$1.2 billion in legal expenses in the last two years to maintain its presence and relevance in one of the largest markets globally.

As per the official data from the public account filings made by the company in India, all of Amazon's India focused companies together have spent ₹8,546 crore as legal fees in the financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20. This is almost a fifth or 20 per cent of its two-year revenue of ₹42,085 crore.

"Despite India moving high on ease of doing business, it continues to be a highly regulated market and compliance to regulations has its own costs. But Amazon is not the only one having high legal expenses, it's competitors Flipkart may be having similar level of expenses and so are several large corporations," said an industry expert asking not to be named due to his association with e-commerce companies.

A legal expert also pointed out that most of the expenses shown as legal fees may not actually be going towards compliance and lit-



igations but also towards facilitating operations in the country.

An Amazon India spokesperson did not offer any comments on the

SWISS GOLD EXPORTS TO INDIA SURGE

Swiss exports of gold to India jumped to a five-month high in August while shipments to China fell, Swiss customs data showed Tuesday. Switzerland is the world's largest bullion refining centre and transit hub, while China and India are the largest consumers of gold.



'State set to achieve ₹1L cr exports by 2025'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** Foreign trade is very important when India targets to achieve 400 billion dollar merchandise export in this current fiscal, said Asit Kumar Tripathy, chairman of the Western Odisha Development Council (WODC) while participating in the Vanijya Utsav in City, Tuesday.

"Odisha has set a target of achieving ₹1 lakh crore exports by 2025, but the state is confident to achieve the feat in this year itself. Odisha is the steel capital of India. Two aluminum parks are coming up. The state is set to become a top exporter in the country," he said.

The Department of Commerce (DoC) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India and DGFT in association with the state MSME and Industries Departments Tuesday organised the Vanijya Utsav, an exporter's conclave as part of the Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav to showcase India as a rising economic force.

Meanwhile, MSME Principal Secretary Satyabrata Sahu said

that the state has posted two-time higher exports during current financial year compared to the previous year.

Sahu said, "The state has rich mines, minerals, marine, agricultural and other valuable resources and is contributing to the economic growth nationally. In the first quarter of this year alone, ₹41,000 crore worth of exports have already been achieved."

Hemant Sharma, Principal Secretary, Industries Department, said that an initiative like Vanijya Utsav coinciding with Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav is the need of the hour: "We need to focus on our future export policies. We need to start thinking about plans for next 25 years so that when we celebrate India's 100th year of Independence, we will be able to make it memorable," Sharma said.

The conclave was attended by exporters of different fields from different regions of the state. Besides, representatives from nine districts including Angul, Sundargarh, Sambalpur and Jagatsinghpur attended the conclave through virtual mode.



LatAm, US shares in India's oil imports up; MidEast, Africa down

REUTERS

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** India's crude oil imports rose to a four-month high in August, recovering from the near one-year low in July, with refiners buying incremental barrels mainly from Latin America and the United States, tanker data from trade sources showed.

The world's third-biggest oil importer and consumer bought 4.2 million barrels per day (bpd) last month, as some refiners plan to boost runs in anticipation of pent-up demand around the festival season.

The two regions, the US and Latin America, accounted for about a fifth of India's August imports as refiners booked long-haul crudes in end-May and June to gain from arbitrage. That led to a decline in the share of Middle East and Africa oil, the data showed.

India's imports from Latin America, led by a boost in Mexican supplies, increased to 414,450 bpd oil in August, the highest since December, while shipments from the US rose to a five-month high of 419,100 bpd, the data showed.

The sources declined to be identified as they are not authorised to speak to the media.

"Long haul WTI-linked oil from Americas was economical to Indians as arbitrage economics were favourable. In the end of May, WTI-linked crudes were trading at a discount of about \$3/barrel to Brent," said Ehsan Ul Haq, an an-



The US and Latin America accounted for about a fifth of India's August imports as refiners booked long-haul crudes in end-May and June to gain from arbitrage

alyst with Refinitiv.

Latin American heavy oil is available at a deep discount to WTI, making it even more attractive, he said. India's August imports were 23% higher than the previous month, when refiners had shut units for maintenance.

Indian refiners curbed crude processing in August as they had high inventory of diesel and exports were not profitable.

Domestic refiners have resumed exports of diesel as prices in overseas markets improved due to

higher demand from the West. This would free up diesel storage and help in raising crude runs and imports in the coming months, said a source at one of the state-run refiners.

The share of Middle Eastern grades in India's August oil imports declined to 61.8% from 64.7% in the previous month, while that of African oil dropped to 14.1% from 16.7%.

That dragged down the share of OPEC's oil in India's overall imports to 67.7% from 77.6%. For April-August, the first five months of this fiscal year, the group's share declined to the lowest.

Last month, Iraq stayed as the top oil supplier to India, followed by Saudi Arabia. The United States climbed four notches to emerge as the third-biggest supplier while Kuwait rose to No.5 from No.6 in July. The United Arab Emirates stayed at the fourth position while Nigeria tumbled by three notches to No.6.

Now get mobile SIM at doorstep by using Aadhaar, Digilocker

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, Sept 21:** The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) Tuesday issued an order that enables customers to apply for a new mobile connection online and get the SIM delivered at their doorsteps after verifying themselves by using Aadhaar or any other eligible document stored in Digilocker.

The move from the DoT is part of the telecom reforms approved by the Cabinet September 15.

Customers will have to pay Re 1 for the process of authentication through Aadhaar-based e-KYC services of UIDAI for getting new mobile connections, according to the new rules.

The government already amended the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, in July 2019, for the re-introduction of Aadhaar-based e-KYC process for issuing new mobile connections.

"The telecom service providers shall implement a process...For issuing of new mobile connections using Aadhaar-based e-KYC," the DoT said.

The government has issued an order allowing conversion of prepaid to postpaid and vice-versa using a one-time password (OTP)-based process.

"The issuing of mobile connection to the customers is done through an app/portal-based online process wherein a customer can apply for mobile connection sitting at home/office and gets the SIM delivered at his doorstep using documents electronically verified by UIDAI (Aadhaar) or Digilocker," the DoT's order said.

Currently, to obtain a new mobile connection or conversion of mobile connection from prepaid to postpaid or vice-versa, a subscriber has to undergo the KYC process that entails a visit to the retail shop along with the original documents of identity and address proof.

PLCP likely to reach ₹1.34L cr in next fiscal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Sept 21:** The Odisha government has now given priority to boost the credit flow in the state. The government is likely to reach ₹1.34 lakh crore for the financial year 2022-23 under Potential Linked Credit Plan (PLCP).

According to sources, while NABARD prepares the PLCP, the finance department has been holding discussions with senior NABARD officials in this regard. With this boost, the projection will be hiked by 22 per cent over PLCP projection during 2021-22 fiscal.

While PLCP is the base level exercise undertaken by NABARD, which forms the basis for Annual Credit Plan (ACP) of all districts and the state, with raise in PLCP, naturally ACP will be hiked next financial year.

Department of Finance had brought to the attention of NABARD authorities that in view of Low Credit Deposit (CD) Ratio and Low Credit to Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) Ratio of the state, the ACP has to be hiked for 2021-22.

NABARD had allocated ₹1.10 lakh crore ACP for the current financial year with an increase of 22.5 per cent over last fiscal.

Low CD Ratio continues in 24 districts and 6 districts are credit starved, for which the state government is stressing upon more credit inflow to these low CD and credit-starved districts.

makes as legal fees.

Amongst the highest legal fees reported are two entities of e-commerce player's Indian companies - Amazon India Ltd (holding company) and Amazon Seller Services Pvt Ltd. - the two together spent close to ₹8,000 crore as legal fees in the past two financial years (FY19 and FY20).

The other entities of Amazon in India - Amazon Retail India, Amazon Transportation Services, Amazon Wholesale and Amazon Internet Services - also have high levels of legal charges commensurate with their size.



# TYAGI DOES A ROYAL TRICK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dubai, Sept 21:** Kartik Tyagi (2/29) bowled a mesmerising final over – five dot balls and two wickets – to help Rajasthan Royals register a two-run victory against Punjab Kings in a thrilling IPL contest here, Tuesday.

Needing only four runs off the final over while chasing 186-run target, Aiden Markram (26 n o, 20b, 2x4, 1x6) scored the only run of the over in the second delivery. However, a poor execution cost well-set Nicolas Pooran (32, 22b, 1x4, 2x6) his wicket the very next ball. Deepak Hooda then edged one to keeper Sanju Samson after playing a dot ball. With three required off the final ball, Chris Jordan missed the delivery completely.

It was after openers Mayank Agarwal (67, 43b, 7x4, 2x6) and skipper KL Rahul (49, 33b, 4x4, 2x6) provided PBKS a flying start, adding 120 inside 12 overs. However, Royals got back in the game dismissing both the openers in successive overs to 126/2 in 13 overs. Markram and Pooran then added 57 runs for the third wicket, before Tyagi pulled off a miraculous final over.

Earlier, opener Yashasvi Jaiswal (49, 36b, 6x4, 2x6) and Mahipal Lomror (43, 17b, 2x4, 4x6) started with the bat but PBKS pulled things back in the rear end to bowl out Royals for 185.

Arshdeep Singh (5/32) returned with a five-wicket haul after Mohammed Shami (3/21) claimed three as the duo restricted Rajasthan inside the 200-mark after they were going hammer and tongs at one stage.

Put into bat, Jaiswal was part of in two vital partnerships, adding 54 with his new opening partner Evin Lewis (36, 21b, 7x4, 1x6) and then sharing another 48 off 28 balls with Liam Livingstone (25).

Lomror played a splendid knock. However, Punjab pulled things back in the end with Shami claiming two wickets to restrict RR inside 200.

Left-arm pacer Arshdeep pro-



Kartik Tyagi reacts after dismissing Deepak Hooda in the final over of their match against Rajasthan Royals

duced the first breakthrough, deceiving Lewis with a slower ball as Mayank took a fine low catch. After the powerplay, RR were at 57/1.

RR skipper Sanju Samson failed to make any impact as a terrific one-handed catch by Rahul ended his stay and gave Ishan Porel his maiden wicket. Livingstone then joined Jaiswal, who raised the team hundred with another four off Harpreet Brar in the 11th over.

A sensational catch at deep mid-

wicket by Fabian Allen sent Livingstone back to the hut with RR slipping to 116/3. Jaiswal couldn't complete his fifty as his leading edge was held on to by Mayank at short cover.

New man Lomror then went on a six-hitting spree, blasting two maximums off Adil Rashid before sending Hooda for a couple more in the 16th over as RR crossed the 150-mark. Lomror also smashed two fours as Hooda conceded 24

runs off his second over. However, Shami and Arshdeep restricted their opponent to a competitive score in the end.

#### BRIEF SCORES

RR 185 (Yashasvi Jaiswal 49, Mahipal Lomror 43, Evin Lewis 36; Arshdeep Singh 5/32, Mohammed Shami 3/21) beat PBKS 183/4 (Mayank Agarwal 67, KL Rahul 49, Nicolas Pooran 32, Aiden Markram 26 n o; Kartik Tyagi 2/29) by 2 runs.

# Ronald saves namesake's face

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Barcelona, Sept 21:** Less than a week after a demoralising loss to Bayern Munich in the Champions League, Barcelona faltered at Camp Nou again, being held by winless Granada 1-1 in the Spanish league.

Barcelona needed a 90th-minute equaliser by defender Ronald Araujo, sparking jeers by many in the crowd of nearly 27,000 Monday.

The setback followed the 3-0 rout by Bayern in the team's first defeat since losing Lionel Messi to PSG, and added pressure on coach Ronald Koeman and club president Joan Laporta.

Granada came to Barcelona winless in four matches and coming off two consecutive losses, including at home against Real Betis in the Andalusia derby last week. It defeated Barcelona at Camp Nou the last time they met in April.

The draw left Barcelona in seventh place, five points from leader Real Madrid with a game in hand.

## COMMENTS ON KKR-RCB MATCH



**VIRAT KOHLI:** We were 42 odd for one and then lost about five wickets within 20 runs, which is a very difficult situation to come back from. Bit of a collapse there for us, bit of a wake-up call and might as well have this at the start of the second leg so that we know exactly what we need to work on. You can't afford to lose four or five wickets within 20 runs. You can make the argument that we were rusty but as professional cricketers, you are expected to turn up and adjust to the formats, that's the dynamic of world cricket today.

**EOIN MORGAN:** Today's the right start, need that run of confidence. We haven't turned up for the majority of the tournament. There is no doubt that it (qualify for play-offs) is going to be a challenge, but our main aim is turn up and try and play cricket like we have done today. I think if we do that, we give ourselves the best chance of progressing.

**MIKE HESSON:** No, I (don't) think so (loss is an impact of Kohli's decision to quit captaincy). It was actually important to get any form of distraction out of the way early. So, we sort of talked about making that announcement as soon as possible really, so all the players were aware of it. We weren't certainly sharp as we needed to be with the bat, we didn't adapt to conditions, we lost wickets in clubs, everything we can't do as a batting group. But I'm still confident of this group, we will turn around pretty quickly.



**TIMELY HEADER:** Ronald Araujo (R) celebrates Barcelona's equaliser with teammate Eric Garcia, Monday

# Judge gives UEFA 5 days to abide by court's ruling

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Madrid, Sept 21:** A Spanish judge gave UEFA five days to confirm it will abide by the court's ruling and not punish Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus for their involvement in the Super League.

The three clubs are facing a ban from the Champions League for refusing to renounce the Super League project that was launched by 12 clubs in April then collapsed within 48 hours.

UEFA put a hold on its disciplinary case against the rebel clubs after the Spanish court ruled in

April that they could not be punished by Switzerland-based UEFA and FIFA. Their case was also notified by the judge in Madrid to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg. A deadline for submissions to the court is next month.

Spanish media said the judge wants UEFA to acknowledge on its website that it recognizes the ruling and that it will abide to it. The judge said putting the disciplinary case on hold is not enough.

It was not immediately clear what jurisdiction the judge had to issue the order to UEFA and how enforceable it was.

# DC RESUME CAMPAIGN vs SRH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Dubai, Sept 21:** Bolstered by Shreyas Iyer's return, Delhi Capitals (DC) will look to maintain the form they showed in the first half of the season as they resume their IPL campaign against a struggling Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) here Wednesday.

Delhi are currently sitting on the second spot, with 12 points from eight games. On the other hand, Sunrisers are placed at the last spot, with just a solitary win from seven games and six losses.

The Rishabh Pant-led side ended the first half of the IPL with a win and would be keen to start on a winning note. And to do that, the Capitals have enough power-hitters in their line-up, who can take any good attack to cleansers and Sunrisers won't be an exception.



Opener Shikhar Dhawan (380 runs), would be keen to prove the selectors wrong after being axed from India's World T20 squad, while his partner young Prithvi Shaw (308 runs), would also like to get some runs under his belt.



DC boast of a strong middle-order comprising Shreyas Iyer, skipper Rishabh Pant (213 runs), Australians Steve Smith (104 runs) and Marcus Stoinis (71 runs) and Shimron Hetmyer (84 runs). They will have to play their roles

TODAY'S MATCH

DC  
v  
SRH  
Time: 07:30 pm

TELECAST  
Star Sports channels & Hotstar

well if the Capitals need to keep winning and in case the openers fail, the middle order will need to take responsibility.

Iyer, who is making a comeback after recovering from shoulder injury that he sustained in March, would also be keen to start the tournament well.

Delhi also have a settled bowling attack and they could go in with Avesh Khan (14 wickets) and Kasigo Rabada (8 wickets), who have been lethal at the start and at the death. Delhi have array of spinners to

choose from – be it wily old-fox Ravichandran Ashwin, experienced campaigner Amit Mishra, Axar Patel, Lalit Yadav or Pravin Dubey.

For Sunrisers, a win would boost their confidence and help them stay afloat in the tournament.

However, their season's leading run-getter Johnny Bairstow, has decided to pull out and hence the marauding Australian opener David Warner (193 runs) will have to shoulder more responsibility.

The likes of Kane Williamson, Manish Pandey, Wriddhiman Saha, Kedar Jadhav, Abdul Samad and Vijay Shankar, will also need to chip in and contribute.

Their bowlers, led by spin sensation Rashid Khan, also will have to put up a disciplined show to contain the Delhi batters at the Dubai International Stadium.

# Aussies too good for eves



**FIGHTING KNOCK:** Mithali Raj goes areal during her 63-run innings against Australia Women, Tuesday

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mackay, Sept 21:** India's frailties in the batting and bowling department were laid bare as the mighty Australia gave the visitors a nine-wicket hiding in the first women's ODI to extend their record winning streak to 25 matches.

India, who are aiming to post 250 plus regularly to challenge the likes of Australia, could only manage 225/8 in an innings that never got the momentum it needed.

Skipper Mithali Raj (61, 107b, 3x4) recorded her fifth consecu-

tive fifty, which was also her 59th overall, while the other contributions came from debutants Yastika Bhatia (35, 51b, 2x4), Richa Ghosh (32 n o, 29b, 3x4, 1x6) and veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami (20, 24b, 1x4, 1x6).

Australia gunned down the target in 41 overs as India bowling lacked the teeth to trouble them. The four-time World Cup winners last lost an ODI in October 2017.

After a sedate start of 30 runs in eight overs, Australian openers Alyssa Healy (77, 77b, 8x4, 2x6) and Rachael Haynes (93 n o, 100b, 7x4)

changed gears to run away with the game. They added 126 runs for the opening wicket before leggie Poonam Yadav got rid of Healy.

Haynes and skipper Meg Lanning (53 n o, 69b, 7x4) then shared a 101-run stand and took Australia home for a resounding win.

India, who fielded three debutants in the game including Ghosh, Yastika and pacer Mansi Singh, have a lot of thinking and planning to do for the second ODI of the three-match series.

The decision to pack the eleven with three all-rounders in Sneha Rana, Deepti Sharma and Pooja Vastrakar, leaving out a specialist left-arm spinner, did not work for India.

On the batting front, the visitors would not have crossed the 220-run mark if it wasn't for the eight-wicket stand of 45 runs between Jhulan and Ghosh, who was picked ahead of Taniya Bhatia to add the much needed firepower.

Brown (4/33) was the stand out bowler for Australia while debutant Hannah Darlington (2/29) and Sophie Molineux (2/39) took a couple each.

#### BRIEF SCORES

**India Women 225/8** (Mithali Raj 63, Yastika Bhatia 35, Richa Ghosh 32 n o; Darcie Brown 4/33) lost to **Australia Women 227/1** (Rachael Haynes 93 n o, Alyssa Healy 77, Meg Lanning 53 n o; Poonam Yadav 1/58) by 9 wickets.

# Delhi FC, BFC sail into last 8 of Durand Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, Sept 21:** Delhi FC and Bengaluru FC (BFC) Tuesday entered the quarterfinals of the 130th Durand Cup football tournament after notching up contrasting wins over Kerala Blasters and Indian Navy here respectively.

At the Kalyani Municipality Stadium, Willis Plaza scored the winner in the 53rd minute as Delhi beat Kerala 1-0, while Bengaluru recovered from a 0-2 deficit at the half-way stage to outwit Indian Navy 5-3 at the Yuba Bharati Krirangan (YBK).

It turned out to be a thrilling contest as Indian Navy led 2-0 against heavyweights Bengaluru FC at the end of the first half.

The Blues looked totally off colour in the first 45 minutes. They missed quite a number of chances to convert and the Indian Navy dominated the game for almost the entire half. However, they made amends in the second half and sealed a spot in the last eight stage.

Bengaluru ended at the top in Group C, while Delhi FC went through to the quarterfinals as runners-up from the group. The quarter-final matches will get underway Thursday with defending champions Gokulam Kerala FC up against local favourites Mohammedan Sporting at the VYBK.

# England too call off Pak tour



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**London, Sept 21:** England Monday called off next month's men's and women's tours of Pakistan, three days after New Zealand abandoned their white-ball series in the South Asian country over security concerns.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) arrived at the decision to withdraw after deliberating over the weekend, pulling out of what would have been the country's first tour of Pakistan since 2005.

"The ECB Board convened this weekend to discuss these extra England Women's and Men's games in Pakistan and we can confirm that the Board has reluctantly decided



to withdraw both teams from the October trip," the ECB said in a statement.

It added, "The mental and physical well-being of our players and support staff remains our highest priority and this is even more critical given the times we are currently living in."

"We know there are increasing concerns about travelling to the region and believe that going ahead will add further pressure to a playing group who have already coped with a long period of operating in restricted Covid environments."

Minutes before their first match in Rawalpindi Friday, New Zealand pulled out of their limited-overs tour of Pakistan because of a "secu-

rity alert" from their government – a decision that came as a setback to the host nation, which has not seen much international cricket since the terrorist attack on the Sri Lankan team bus in 2009.

The development was bound to have an impact on England's scheduled tour of the country. "The ECB has a longstanding commitment to tour Pakistan as part of the Men's Future Tours Programme in 2022."

"Earlier this year, we agreed to play two additional T20 World Cup warm-up games in Pakistan in October, adding a short women's tour with double headers alongside the men's games," the ECB said.

"There is the added complexity for our Men's T20 squad. We believe that touring under these conditions will not be ideal preparation for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, where performing well remains a top priority for 2021."

Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) new chief Ramiz Raja was left disappointed with the ECB's decision. "Disappointed with England, pulling out of their commitment & failing a member of their Cricket fraternity when it needed it most. Survive we will inshallah. A wake up call for Pak team to become the best team in the world for teams to line up to play them without making excuses," Raja tweeted.