



OPPORTUNITIES TO EXCEL

Actor Esha Gupta says she is now getting to play women she knows and has met in real life

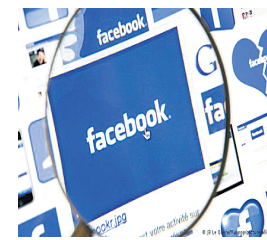
LEISURE P2



MORE REFUGEES IN MIZORAM

More refugees from Myanmar are entering Mizoram due to clashes between the military and rebels

TWO STATES P8



FRESH ALLEGATIONS

Facebook in India has been selective in curbing hate speech, misinformation

INTERNATIONAL P10



CHINA PLANS TO BLOCK PVT INVESTMENT IN MEDIA

BEIJING: In an attempt to tighten the grip on all sectors of the media, Chinese authorities have introduced a proposal to ban private investment in news outlets. As per the draft guidelines, privately owned firms would be prohibited from involvement in media companies, including setting up or running news operations or republishing news produced by foreign outlets, American broadcaster Voice of America (VOA) reported. Experts in the field say the proposals show Beijing's ongoing efforts to silence opposition voices. "The Communist Party is trying to put all news and commentary shows under its own control. All different voices have been eliminated," Wu Zuolai, a Chinese political commentator, told VOA. "Limiting the role of the media will distort public opinions, and local governments might enforce the rule with extremely strict measures," one poster on Zhihu said.



NEW PROPOSAL ON DRUG SEIZURE

NEW DELHI: The Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry has recommended decriminalising possession of small quantities of drugs for personal consumption in its review of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act submitted to the Revenue Department. Currently, there is no provision for relief or exemption under the NDPS Act and it only gives addicts immunity from prosecution and imprisonment if they volunteer for rehabilitation. In its recommendations shared with the Department of Revenue last week, the ministry suggested decriminalising possession of small quantities of drugs for personal consumption, officials said.

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Ransom for Aryan release by NCB

Witness alleges NCB official demanded ₹25cr from SRK to release his son; NCB denies claim. Sameer Wankhede seeks police protection

AGENCIES

Mumbai, Oct 24: Sparking off a major controversy, a witness in the cruise ship rave party raid case Sunday accused the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) of allegedly demanding bribes from Hindi film megastar Shah Rukh Khan to release his son Aryan Khan.

The witness, Prabhakar Sail, openly stated on various TV channels that he feared a threat to his life from none other than the NCB Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede.

The NCB has taken cognisance of the allegations of threats and bribes and a top official said that the matter will be probed.

Meanwhile Wankhede has sought police protection from the Mumbai Police Commissioner.

Sail, identified as the personal bodyguard of the so-called private detective Kiran P. Gosavi, has released a signed affidavit statement and videos pertaining to the arrest of Aryan Khan and others on October 3, a day after the ship raid



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The NCB has taken cognisance of the allegations of threats and bribes and a top official said that the matter will be probed

(October 2). One of the 9 witnesses listed by the NCB, among other things, Sail claimed that he was made to sign 10 blank papers by the agency and now feared for his life from Wankhede.

In the affidavit, Sail has contended that he "overheard" Gosavi and Sam D'Souza discuss a deal of

₹24 crore which they "settled" for ₹18 crore, of which ₹8 crore would go to Wankhede. He said that he saw SRK's manager, Pooja Dadlani arrive at the NCB office after Aryan Khan's arrest and also witnessed her talking with Gosavi and D'Souza inside her vehicle.

Sail alleged that Gosavi directed him to collect ₹50 lakh cash from a spot near the Indiana Hotel and asked him to give the bags to D'Souza near the Trident Hotel where he counted it to find ₹38 lakh cash.

Reacting to the allegations, NCB Deputy Director-General, South West Region Mutha Ashok Jain said that Wankhede has "categorically denied" the allegations.

"As some of the contents of the affidavit relate to vigilance matters, I am hereby forwarding the affidavit to the Director General, NCB and requesting him for further necessary action," Jain said.

Simultaneously, chiding Sail, Jain said that since he is a witness in the case which is now sub-judice, "he needs to submit his prayer to the honourable court rather than through social media if he has anything to say".

He also said that Sail has given details about his movements and activities on October 2 (on the day of the ship raid), and "vigilance related allegations against certain persons in the affidavit which are based on over-hearing" by the witness.

BMV revision may raise property value in state

The Inspector General of Registration Jyoti Prakash Dash has directed all DCs to revise the set of market value by re-visiting the earlier set of market values of immovable properties

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: With the Board of Revenue seeking permission for biennial revision of benchmark value (BMV) of immovable property of the Odisha government for 2022-24, it is expected that the value of land plots and houses in the state will witness

an upswing in near future.

The Inspector General of Registration Jyoti Prakash Dash has directed all district Collectors and district-level valuation committees to revise the set of market value by re-visiting the earlier set of market values of immovable properties in all villages.

In a letter, Dash wrote, "You were requested to take steps to revise the set of market value by revisiting the previously set of market values of immovable properties of all villages under your jurisdiction by following due procedure of rules and determination of the same after reconstitution of DLVC and SDLV Committees under Rule -37 of Odisha Stamp (Amendment) Rules, 2001 as amended till date."

He has also directed the officials to send the revised set of market values to the member, Board of Revenue, Odisha, for approval

According to the state government, the earlier revision was made for the year 2021-2022 and implemented w.e.f. April 1, 2021, to prevent any possible leakage of revenues in form of Stamp Duty and Registration fees.

In its letter dated October 20, 2020, the R&DM department instructed all concerned that in order to provide relief the registrant public during the economic crisis arising out of extraordinary situation of Covid-19 pandemic, the market values of immovable properties of all districts (barring Khurda and Bargarh) of the pre-

vious financial year (2019-2020) as on 31st March, 2020 shall remain in force till the end of current financial year. However, the market values of immovable properties in Khurda and Bargarh districts have already been hiked at the rate of 10% from April 1, 2020 and May 13, 2020 respectively.

As the issue is pending for further course of action at the District-level/Sub-District (Tehsil) level Valuation Committee up to the year ending by 31st March, 2022, the government has asked the officials to take immediate steps for constitution of DLVC / SDLVC for assessment / fixation of set of market values of immovable properties of all villages/townships under respective jurisdictions.

MANISH MURDER CASE

CONSTABLE DISMISSED FROM SERVICE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: Bhubaneswar DCP Umashankar Das Sunday dismissed constable Prasanna Kumar Behera from the service for his alleged involvement in the murder of Manish Anurag Das.

Sources in the Commissionerate Police said that DCP dismissed Behera from the service with immediate effect by exercising power under Article 311(2)(b) of Constitution of India.

They said that while Behera faces five criminal cases, eight departmental inquiries are on against him. Earlier, Behera was suspended on charges of running an illegal bar, where journalist Navin Das' son, Manish Anurag, had last visited before his murder. Behera, who was the president of Havildar and Constable Association, was arrested Saturday for allegedly operating a bar without valid license, violating COVID-19 protocol and hatching criminal conspiracy.

Hotel South City owner Pradyumna Jena and bar manager Souvik Jena were also held on charges of violating COVID rules.

Earlier, the Tamando police station IIC was transferred for the illegal operation of the bar. During the probe into the Manish Anurag murder case it was found that the bar's license had expired.



BREAKING THE JINX: Pakistan's cricket captain Babar Azam (left) and Mohammad Rizwan celebrate their victory in the Cricket Twenty20 World Cup match between India and Pakistan in Dubai, UAE, Sunday

Pak beat India by 10 wickets, first in WC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, Oct 24: Pakistan brought to an end India's near-three-decade domination of them in the world stage in the most convincing fashion, embarrassing their arch-rivals by 10 wickets in the Super 12 stage of the T20 World Cup here Sunday.

Intent on breaking their run of losses, Pakistan restricted India to 151 for seven after electing to field in the T20 showpiece's blockbuster game. Pakistan then made light work of the target of 152, completing the win with 13 balls to spare.

Skipper Babar Azam stroked his way to 68 while his opening partner, Mohammad Rizwan, smashed 79 as the Indian bowlers struggled to contain the two batters.

Earlier, captain Virat Kohli led from the front with a half-century as India recovered from a disastrous start to post a challenging total. Besides Kohli's 49-ball 57, Rishabh Pant slammed 39 in 30 deliveries. Sent into bat after the coin landed in favour of Pakistan skipper Babar Azam at the toss, India were off to the worst possible start as they lost both their prolific openers Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul within three overs with just six runs on the board. Doing most of the initial damage was the lanky left-arm pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi (3/31 in 4 overs). **(More P12)**

Fuel prices hiked for 5th straight day

AGENCIES

New Delhi, Oct 24: Petrol and diesel prices rallied to their highest ever levels across the country, as rates were hiked again for the fifth consecutive day Sunday.

CITY PRICES
Petrol: ₹108.54 (+0.35)
Diesel: ₹105.09 (+0.39)

Accordingly, the pump price of petrol in Delhi rose by 35 paise to its highest-ever level of ₹107.59 a litre while diesel prices also rose by the same margin to ₹96.32 a litre, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. In Mumbai, petrol prices have now risen to ₹113.47 per litre while diesel to ₹104.47 a litre, the highest among all metros. The fuel prices remained static Monday and Tuesday.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I neither have interest nor I understand cricket. I am watching it because I am a patriot.

WEATHER	
BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX 32.4°C	33.0°C
TEMP MIN 21.0°C	21.5°C
Humidity 72%	70%
Rainfall NIL	NIL
Forecast: Light rain very likely	

Gobinda's remand ends today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawaniapatna, Oct 24: The police remand period of Gobinda Sahu, prime accused in Mamita Meher murder case will end Monday evening following which he will be produced in the court. Now, it is to be seen whether he will be sent to jail or the police will again apply to take him on remand.

The police reportedly subjected Sahu to a marathon interrogation Sunday, but did not reveal as to what information they extracted from him. According to a source, Gobinda's medical test was done Saturday night at the Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital, where he was taken straight from the Bolangir SP's office amidst tight security.

Now the biggest challenge before the police is whether to believe the story narrated by Sahu hook, line and sinker or continue with their investigation and find out the involvement of others.



Notably, Sahu was arrested from a sugarcane field at Budhipadar village under Bangomunda block October 19 after the police tracked his two mobile phones. During interrogation, he confessed to have killed Mamita Meher, a resident of Jharni village under Turekela block in Bolangir district. Mamita worked as a teacher at Sunshine English Medium School in Mahalinga area of Kalahandi district. She went missing October 8 and was found dead subsequently.

China passes new land border law amid standoff with India

The country's national legislature has adopted a new law on the protection and exploitation of the land border areas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, Oct 24: Asserting that sovereignty and territorial integrity of China are "sacred and inviolable", the country's national legislature has adopted a new law on the protection and exploitation of the land border areas, which could have bearing on Beijing's border dispute with India.

Members of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) approved the law

at the closing meeting of a legislative session on Saturday, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

The law, which becomes operational from January 1 next year, stipulates that "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China are sacred and inviolable", it said.

The state shall take measures to safeguard territorial integrity and land boundaries and guard against and combat any act that undermines territorial sovereignty and land boundaries, the report said.

The law also stipulates that the state shall take measures to strengthen border defence, support economic and social development as well as opening-up in border areas, improve public services and infrastructure in such areas, encourage and support people's



life and work there, and promote coordination between border defence and social, economic development in border areas, it said.

The state shall, following the principle of equality, mutual trust

and friendly consultation, handle land border-related affairs with neighbouring countries through negotiations to properly resolve disputes and longstanding border issues, it said.

India and Bhutan are the two countries with which China is yet to finalise the border agreements, while Beijing resolved the boundary disputes with 12 other neighbours.

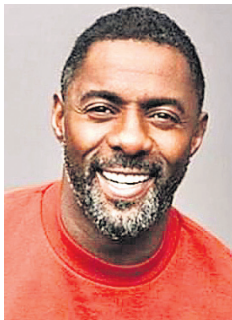
Last week, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said the developments along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh have "seriously disturbed" the peace and tranquillity in border areas, and this has obviously had an impact on the broader relationship too. The Foreign Secretary, in his remarks at a seminar on "Leveraging China's Economy" on October 21, also referred to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's remarks that the ability of India and China to work together will determine the Asian century. "For this to materialise, peace and

tranquillity in the border areas is a sine qua non. He (Jaishankar) has also clearly articulated that development of our ties can only be based on mutuality - mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interests should guide this process," Shringla said.

"We hope that the Chinese side will work with us to bring a satisfactory resolution to the current issues so as to make progress on our bilateral relations keeping in view each other's sensitivities, aspirations and interests," the foreign secretary said. While India-China border disputes cover 3,488-km along the Line of Actual Control, China-Bhutan dispute covers about 400 km.

The new land border law was adopted amid the continued standoff between Indian and Chinese militaries in eastern Ladakh.

leisure



ADELE WANTS IDRIS ELBA TO BE THE NEXT JAMES BOND

Grammy winning-singer Adele has revealed she actually would like to see *Loki* actor Jonathan Major replace Daniel Craig as James Bond, but because he's American, her second choice is the star Idris Elba, who has previously been tipped to take on the iconic role as the fictional suave spy in the franchise.

HILTON'S WEDDING REGISTRY TOTALS A WHOPPING \$60K

Socialite-entrepreneur Paris Hilton's wedding registry totals a staggering \$60,000, as she and her beau Carter Reum have added items including a \$4,885 Baccarat vase. The 40-year-old businesswoman is set to tie the knot with Reum November 11.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You are inclined to over-protect your private life, especially regarding relationships. And Ganesh says thrilling stuff is on the cards for you today! You will also make a last ditch effort to complete some pending work.

TAURUS
There are chances that it will be an enormously idealistic and unrealistic day for you, says Ganesh. It is an auspicious day to get your hair groomed. You will possibly begin some beauty treatment and make changes in the way you look today afternoon. Special attention awaits your beloved.

GEMINI
A busy day for you, predicts Ganesh, but it has little to do with work. Today, your mind is in a spiritual mode. You may want to make a few changes to the interiors of your house, mostly to get them in sync with the state of your mind. A romantic evening with your sweetheart in a sumptuous surrounding is likely, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You have a gift. You come across as a very approachable and dependable person. It's this attribute that makes people want to work with you and trust you, says Ganesh. But today is another day, and you may want a break from helping people fight their daily battles and spending some quality time with your family members.

LEO
It is fine to make hay while the sun shines, but do not forget to put aside some for a rainy day as well, says Ganesh. Today is one such day when you can do fantastically well by putting aside some money for your family's future. At work, pending tasks may have piled up, but today you shall do well to try and clear the backlog.

VIRGO
In all probability, you would want to quarantine yourself today - mentally and physically. It's all got to do with the way you can challenge yourself and pool your own resources together to make the best of unpleasant conditions. But you won't be able to push yourself beyond your limit, rues Ganesh.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will be assigned the responsibility to organize a meeting, which will give you the opportunity to prove your efficiency. Those of you in research and development fields will find success by putting your knowledge to use.

SCORPIO
You are like one butterfly today, literally flying from one place to another either for work or for socialising. New projects and business agendas form the crux of your day. There are chances that good business proposals may come your way and you may think of considering it, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Stormy weather predicted by Ganesh for you today. The day will be riddled with impracticalities. In the afternoon, you may change that hard to something new. Pay special attention to that long overdue work too. Don't drag your feet any more, advises Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
You're on the verge of losing hopes as you can't bear the weight of work and responsibilities any more. But, like the strong individual that you are, you are not going to put your arms down without fighting fiercely. Also, your mental strength and physical stamina will be acknowledged and appreciated by one and all, predicts Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
Metaphysics and philosophy have aroused your interest. Instead of spending a huge amount on books on these subjects, Ganesh suggests that you keep a balanced approach and practice spiritual discipline. It's also high time you changed your dietary habits.

PISCES
You are likely to be filled with overwhelming ambition today. You will be driven and prepare meticulously to tackle your projects. Evening should see you in the company of like-minded individuals, busy with intellectual activities, says Ganesh.

10 YEARS IN SHOWBIZ PARINEETI THINKS SHE HAD A DREAM LAUNCH

New Delhi: Parineeti Chopra made her debut in 2011 with *Ladies vs Ricky Bahl*. The actress has completed a decade in the Hindi film industry and says she did not want it to be any other way. "I think I had a dream launch. I have had an amazing career. It's the same as an amazing life. You have to have high highs and low lows. You have to have successes and failures. Joys and pain. You have to make a life and it is the same thing in your career," Parineeti said. "To have a full career, you should see all aspects of it. In front of the camera, behind the camera, you should see hit films, flop films, you should see failure...all sorts of experiences should be there," added the actress. Parineeti, who had three back-to-back hit releases such as *The Girl On The Train*, *Saina* and *Sandeep aur Pinky Faraar*, agrees that she has had her shares of hits and misses but that has what has made her the actress she is today. Now, She is looking forward to *Animal*, which stars Ranbir Kapoor and is busy shooting in Nepal for Sooraj Barjatya's *Uunchai*, which also features Amitabh Bachchan and Anupam Kher. **IANS**



Paresh Rawal talks about changed definition of comedy

New Delhi: Paresh Rawal has always upped his own game when it comes to the genre of comedy. But there is one thing he is not in support of and that is vulgar comedy or running down someone for making others chuckle. During an interview, the 66-year-old star also talked about the changed definition of comedy in Hindi cinema. "Yes, definitely (it has changed). The buffoonery which was there was also a variety but the kind of comedy which is coming in now is high and good comedy, which I enjoy doing," Paresh said. The actor, who is gearing up for the release of his next *Hum Do Humare Do*, added: "There has definitely been a change. I have anyway never been in support of vulgar comedy or run down someone and make fun of physical deformity. That is disgusting. I think the first high comedy I did was *Andaz Apna Apna*." The family entertainer *Hum Do Humare Do* tells the story of a man forced to 'arrange' a set of parents to impress the love of his life. It also stars Ratna Pathak Shah, Kriti Sanon and Aparshakti Khurana. **IANS**

I have spring in my step: ESHA

Mumbai: Esha Gupta is all set to star in web series *Invisible Woman* where she will be playing a woman of substance opposite Suniel Shetty, who is set to make his debut in the OTT segment. She now has springs in her step, says the actress. *Invisible Woman* is a noir action thriller produced by Yoodlee Films with Tamil filmmaker Rajesh M Selva at the helm. Talking about the same, Esha says, "Not long ago, the writing of our films was such that women were restricted to either goody-two-shoes or oomph vamps. I felt so constricted for a few years. With OTT giving movies a healthy competition, the general writing of stories has evolved. I am getting an array of parts, some of which makes me wonder if I can pull it off. That's really what actors should feel when they get a script." "I played a cop recently in *Nakaab* and my character in *Invisible Woman* can't be more different. I genuinely feel the joy of going to work every day. I have spring in my step because I am finally getting to play women I know, I have met. Their challenges, ordeals and dilemmas feel real to me. I am working more than I ever have because finally what's offered to me is resonating with me," the actress adds. **IANS**



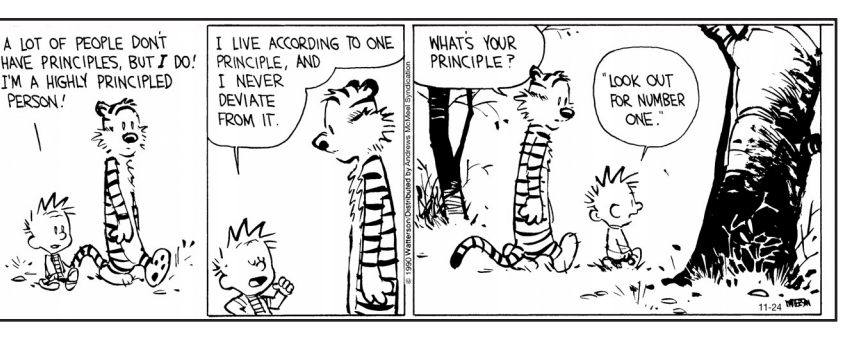
Mamata Kulkarni surfaces on Instagram

Mumbai: At a time when heroines of the 1990s -- from Juhi Chawla and Raveena Tandon to Pooja Bhatt -- are seeing a return to the limelight, thanks to OTT platforms, Mamata Kulkarni, who's still remembered for her role in Rakesh Roshan's 1995 reincarnation drama *Karan Arjun* opposite Salman Khan, and drug bust accused, has surprised her fans by staging a comeback on social media. Her present picture, where she comes across as matronly and not as the poster girl she was in the 1990s, was put up on her Instagram fan page and it caused quite a stir. Briefly, she courted notoriety by doing a topless shoot for a film magazine and then dropped out of the public eye in 2000. Only to be back in the news -- now for the wrong reasons. Kulkarni was reported to have married the Ahmedabad-born international drug lord Vicky Goswami, who had been first arrested on narcotics trafficking charges in Dubai in 1997 (only to be pardoned and let off in 2012), and then again in 2014 in Kenya, where he was freed on bail, pending his extradition to the United States to face charges brought against him by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Goswami and Kulkarni, in fact, had been arrested together in Kenya, but the former actress was let off. The DEA had charged Goswami with controlling the trade in mandrax, a narcotic substance, in sub-Saharan Africa. **IANS**

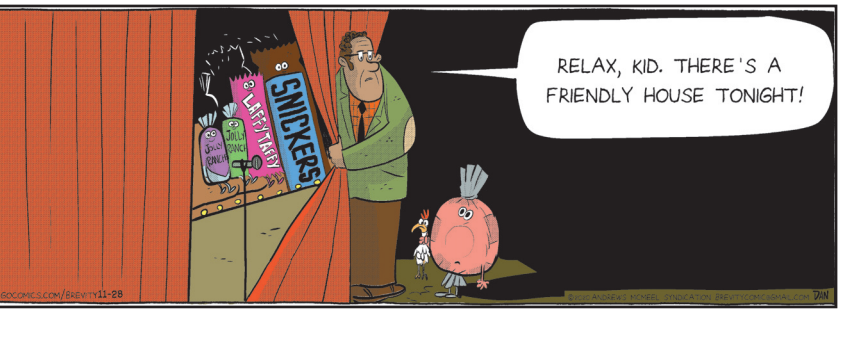
PEANUTS



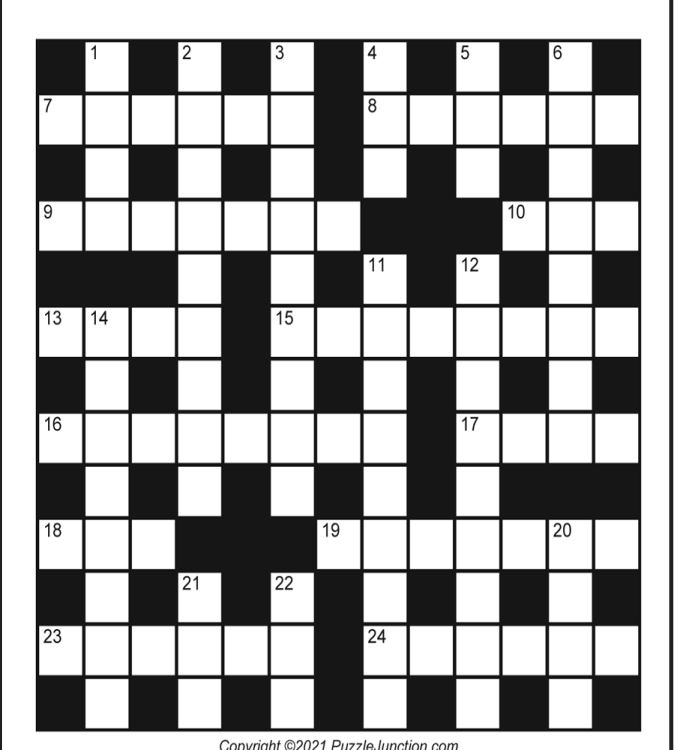
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



FUN post CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 It has its faults
 - 8 Beauty treatment
 - 9 Pugilist
 - 10 Conceit
 - 13 Resting place
 - 15 Kind of kit (5,3)
 - 16 Brave and dependable
 - 17 Leisure
 - 18 Stun
 - 19 Get stuck (3,4)
 - 23 "Romeo and Juliet" setting
 - 24 Large lizard
- Down**
- 1 Visored cap
 - 2 Mentally perceptive (2,3,4)
 - 3 Irish Sea crown dependency
 - 4 Back on board
 - 5 Do film work
 - 6 Shopper stoppers
 - 11 Italian restaurant
 - 12 Calipso instrument (5,4)
 - 14 Appalled
 - 20 Blink of an eye
 - 21 Constrictor
 - 22 Crow's call

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.

		1						4
6	3				9			
9			1	2				
		5					8	
			1					7
				2	4	9		
2	1	6				4		5
	8			7				2
4								

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

T	O	E	S	C	A	R	E	F	R	E	E
O	A	G	U	X	O	C					
D	E	R	R	I	C	K	E	L	D	E	R
D	L	V		R	E	E					
L	A	S	H	E	S		S	C	E	N	T
E		I	U	I	T	T					
R	A	M	T	A	S	K	S	S	I	R	
S	A	A	E	E							
C	R	O	W	N	O	B	T	A	I	N	
G	S	H		I	C	S					
O	K	A	P	T	A	K	E	O	F	F	
T	H	A	I	L	A	N	D	E	R	O	N
A											

SUDOKU

8	3	5	9	7	2	4	6	1
1	2	9	5	4	6	7	8	3
7	4	6	1	3	8	5	2	9
5	7	1	8	6	9	3	4	2
4	8	3	7	2	1	6	9	5
6	9	2	4	5	3	1	7	8
2	1	4	3	9	7	8	5	6
3	6	7	2	8	5	9	1	4
9	5	8	6	1	4	2	3	7

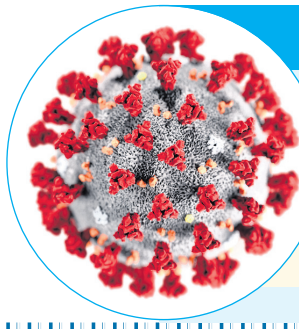
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



FIGHTING VIRUS

A volunteer during a street play to create awareness on Covid-19 at PMG Square in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	24,43,09,434	22,13,25,163	49,62,138
India	3,41,75,468	3,35,48,605	4,54,269
Odisha	10,38,411	10,25,917	8,309

Puri Khaja cluster a pipedream

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Oct 24: The state government is yet to set up a cluster for Khaja in the Holy City here even though it had granted industry status to the popular dry sweetmeat a few years ago.

In the absence of a designated cluster, many locals, social activists and visitors have raised questions regarding the quality of Khaja being sold by the vendors in the city here. They have alleged that the district administration has not taken any step to ensure quality and hygiene in the preparation and sale of the sweetmeat, which is also known as Feni, by the local confectioners.

Khaja is a part of the dry prasad that is offered to Lord Jagannath and involves a unique method of preparation. Refined flour, ghee, sugar and oil are used to prepare Khaja. First, oil or ghee is added to the flour and mixed well to prepare the dough. It is then divided into small balls and rolled. The balls are rolled back again in layers to give them the desired shape. They are then deep fried in oil or ghee on medium flame until they turn golden brown on both the sides. Once they cool down, they are dipped into sugar syrup and filtered.

There are different varieties of Khaja, depending on the taste and shape. The cost ranges from Rs 40



Vendors selling Khaja on the Grand Road in Puri

OP PHOTO

to Rs 500 per kilogram. The localities around Srimandir and Swargadwar have a number of Khaja shops always bustling with activity as customers throng to buy and taste the sweetmeat. More than 10,000 people are directly and indirectly involved in the business, sources said.

"Many devotees and tourists usually buy Khaja while returning home. They think that a visit to the Holy City is incomplete without packing home some amount of the

sweetmeat. However, the local confectioners are not maintaining proper quality and hygiene for the preparation of Khaja. We are regularly receiving complaints in this regard from the customers," said Santosh Swain, a Khaja vendor.

Echoing the sentiment, visitor Saroj Kumar Sahu said, "The Khaja available with vendors on the Grand Road is not fit for human consumption. The authorities concerned should take the issue seriously and do some-

thing in this regard."

Puri municipality health officer Ashok Kumar Seth said they regularly collect food samples and send them for laboratory tests. "We are taking action against the shopkeepers for selling poor quality food stuffs," he added.

It is learnt that the District Industry Centre (DIC) had made an attempt to set up a cluster for Khaja around six months ago. Then General Manager of the DIC had discussed the issue with

TALE OF A SWEETMEAT

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There are different varieties of Khaja, depending on the taste and shape. The cost ranges from ₹40 to ₹500 per kilogram

The localities around Srimandir and Swargadwar have a number of Khaja shops always bustling with activity. More than 10,000 people are directly and indirectly involved in the business

the vendors. However, the matter could not move forward, sources said.

"We will soon initiate process for setting up of a Khaja cluster in Puri city. The project would be taken up under the MSME scheme. The cluster will have a common facility centre for the preparation of the sweetmeat. This will reduce cost of production and ensure proper quality and hygiene," said DIC General Manager Amulya Ratna Panda.

All Odisha Beach Wrestling Championship begins today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, Oct 24: The district administration is all set to host the much-awaited All Odisha Beach Wrestling Championship at Niladri beach here Monday, an official said Sunday.

According to Puri municipality executive officer Saroj Kumar Swain, the two-day mega event is expected to witness participation of around 200 wrestlers from across the state.

As many as 30 officials and 20 volunteers will ensure a smooth conduct of the event that is being conducted by the Puri administration in association with Odisha Wrestling Association in Cuttack, District Athletic Association in Puri and the Akhadhas of the Holy City, Swain said.

There will be three categories for both boys and girls in the competition. While sub-juniors (12 to 15 years) will compete in (35-40, 40-45, 45-50) kg categories, juniors (16 to 18 years) will play in (50-55, 55-60, 60-65) kg categories. For seniors (19 years or above), men wrestlers will play in 50-60, 60-65, 65-75, 75-85 kg categories, while women wrestlers will compete in 50-55, 55-60, 60-65, 65-70 kg categories.

Champions will get a cash award of ₹5,000, while the runners-up will get ₹3,000. Both the champions and runners-up will get a tracksuit, a pair of shoes and a medal each.

IN A NUTSHELL

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Champions will get a cash award of ₹5,000, while the runners-up will get ₹3,000. Both the champions and runners-up will get a tracksuit, a pair of shoes and a medal each.

Participants have been asked to report at Puri Youth Hostel at 8am Monday.

While Aadhaar card is a must for senior category, birth certificate issued by competent authority is mandatory for junior and sub-junior categories at the time of reporting. A negative Covid antigen test report is also a mandatory, revealed the source.

The offline and online registrations for the event began September 22 and ended October 24.

Odisha dominates India Skills Eastern Region Competition



The winners at the India Skills 2021 Eastern Region Competition in Patna

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: The state government's Skilled-in-Odisha campaign received further boost as the state swept most of the skills in India Skills 2021 Eastern Region Competition held in Patna recently.

Odisha dominated the competition by winning 23 gold medals and 20 silver medals, sources said.

A strong contingent of 85 participants from Odisha competed in 39 skills. Altogether 43 youths of Odisha came with flying colours in the competition, the results of which were declared in Patna Saturday. Apart from this, walkover was given to Odisha's competitors in six skills. A total of 59 competitors from the state, including 13 girls, will now be competing at the India Skills Competition, scheduled to be held in Bangalore in December this year.

Notably, the girls from the state have also won medals in skills like welding and painting, which are traditionally dominated by the male competitors. The winners of the

SUCCESS STORY

A STRONG CONTINGENT OF 85 PARTICIPANTS FROM ODISHA COMPETED IN 39 SKILLS IN THE COMPETITION

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India Skills competition will participate in the World Skills Competition to be held in Shanghai in China. Altogether 245 youths from eight states/union territories from the east and the north-east participated in the Patna competition, including wild card / corporate entries. The event was organised by the NSDC of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

Bihar Governor Fagu Chauhan presided over the prize distribution ceremony and inspired the winners and participants of the skill competition.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik

expressed his happiness over the success of Odisha in the India Skills regional competition and exhorted the winners to continue their hard work and bring laurels to the state and the country at World Skills Competition.

Odisha Skill Development Authority Chairman Subroto Bagchi and Skill Development and Technical Education Minister Premanand Nayak also congratulated the winners and wished for their success in the World Skills Competition. The State has set a mission to win at least two golds, three silvers and four bronzes at the World Skills Competition.

Thrust on advanced technology to treat gastro diseases

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: Around 60 gastroenterologists and technicians working in the healthcare sector Sunday congregated at a hotel here to discuss the latest medical advancements for treatment of Gastrointestinal diseases.

The special training-cum-discussion session was organised by Manoj Sahu, head of the Gastroenterology department at SUM Hospital and Jimmy Narayan, another senior doctor. The programme was supported by Boston Scientific, USA. The participants deliberated on the health issues of the post-Covid era and challenges in the field of gastro health.

"There is an upward trend in the gastric, liver, pancreatic, biliary and intestinal diseases in the society. People are suffering a lot. We need to train ourselves with the most advanced technologies for providing world-class healthcare in Odisha," Sahu said.

Sahu led the workshop to train the doctors and technicians on the latest available medical intervention to cater to the needs of patients suffering from gastrointestinal diseases.

"The Gastro and Liver Care Foundation organised the workshop on endoscopy to train the technicians on the most advanced technologies. The technicians can use the expertise and knowledge for treating people," Sahu added.

Several technicians from different parts of Odisha participated in the training programme. Many senior and renowned gastroenterologists from the state shared their expertise at the workshop.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



©MANJUL

Museum's virtual tour showcases food habits of tribals in Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: The ST & SC Development Department, in a virtual tour to Odisha State Tribal Museum Sunday, showed the virtual visitors a film about the food collection and preparation methods followed by various state based tribes.

According to SCSTRTI Director AB Ota, Odisha is home to many tribal communities who practice subsistence farming using a combination of wetland and shifting cultivation alongside horticulture, forest produce collection, hunting and fishing

Tribal communities cultivate paddy, minor millets, pulses and vegetables which they consume along with a variety of seasonal fruits, leaves, edible flowers, insects, mushrooms, roots and tubers collected from the forest

The wild roots and tubers procured by these communities are highly nutritious. They may be roasted, boiled or prepared as a curry

The film showcasing the indigenous knowledge system of tribes was titled as 'Collection of Roots and Tubers by Tribal Communities of Odisha'.

SCSTRTI Director AB Ota said that Odisha is home to many tribal communities.

Living in scattered villages deep within the forests, these tribal communities rely on natural bounties of their environment to meet their daily needs.

They practice subsistence farming using a combination of wetland and shifting cultivation alongside horticulture, forest produce collection, hunting and fishing.



Tribal people collecting roots and tubers

Tribal communities cultivate paddy, minor millets, pulses and vegetables which they consume along with a variety of seasonal fruits, leaves, edible flowers, insects, mushrooms, roots and tubers collected from the forest.

The wild roots and tubers procured by these communities are highly nutritious.

They may be roasted, boiled or prepared as a curry.

There are several varieties of wild roots and tubers. Some grow just under the surface, while others may be dug out from deep within the soil. This film depicts the tuber collection and preparation process of various tribes for consumption.

TERRACOTTA EXPO



Women visit a terracotta exhibition organised by the Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts department at Ekamra Haat in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

State maintains streak of below 500 cases

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: Odisha's Covid-19 caseload Sunday surged to 10,38,411 after 447 more people, including 78 children, tested positive for the infection while four fresh fatalities pushed the coronavirus death toll to 8,309, a Health department official said. The state, for the third consecutive day, Sunday reported below 500 daily new cases. It had registered 441 new cases Saturday, 467 Friday, 524 Thursday, 559 Wednesday, and 556 Tuesday. With 78 cases, the rate of infection among the people in the age group of 0 to 18 years stands at 17.44 per cent. Of the 447 new cases, 260 are from quarantine centres and the remaining 187 local contact cases. Khurda district, of which Bhubaneswar is a part, reported 180 infections and accounted for almost 40 per cent of the daily count,



followed by Cuttack (62). The state currently has 4,542 active Covid-19 cases while as many as 10,25,507 patients including 482 Saturday, recovered from the highly infectious disease. Odisha has thus far conducted over 2.15 crore sample tests including 69,161 Saturday. The state's positivity rate now stands at 4.82 per cent. As many as 1,06,34,665 people have been fully inoculated with both doses of Covid-19 vaccines in the state till October 23, said the official.

COVID IN ODISHA

WITH 78 CASES, THE RATE OF INFECTION AMONG THE PEOPLE IN THE AGE GROUP OF 0 TO 18 YEARS STANDS AT 17.44 PER CENT. Of the 447 new cases, Khurda reported 180 infections and accounted for almost 40 per cent of the daily count, followed by Cuttack (62). The Health and Family Welfare department reported four more Covid-19 deaths, two from Keonjhar and one each from Khurda and Kalahandi districts.

As many as 1,06,34,665 people have been fully inoculated with both doses of Covid-19 vaccines in the state till October 23

WORLD POLIO DAY



Rotary Club of Bhubaneswar holds a roadshow at Saheed Nagar in Capital city on the occasion of World Polio Day, Sunday

Cuttack to witness low-key Kali Puja

Cuttack, Oct 24: The Covid-19 pandemic has taken the sheen off many festivities for the second year in a row. The Silver City will witness a muted Kali Puja November 4, said an official of the Commissionerate Police. A preparatory meeting for the festival was organised at the OCA Conference Hall here Sunday. As per the decision, the height of the idols will be capped at 4 ft. Besides, the rituals will be performed with participation of bare minimum people at the pandal. "A maximum of seven persons will be allowed to remain at the pandal during the rituals. The idols will be immersed at Devi Gada November 6. A maximum of 10 persons will be allowed to participate in the idol immersion procession. Usually, the idols are taken out on a procession across the Millennium City during the im-



Police Commissioner Saumendra Priyadarshi, DCP Prateek Singh and other dignitaries at a preparatory meeting for the upcoming Kali Puja in Cuttack, Sunday

mersion ceremony. However, this year, there would be no such procession," said an official. The Commissionerate Police has also restricted opening of fire-cracker stalls in the Silver City.

Student ends life in Bindusagar lake

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: The body of a youth who reportedly jumped into Bindusagar lake near Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar Saturday night was recovered Sunday morning. Fire Services personnel fished out the body. The deceased has been identified as Saishree Jyoti Prakash from Samantarapur area in the city. The police have seized the deceased's scooter and sandals and sent the body to Capital Hospital for postmortem, it was learnt. Saishree had left his home for tuition Saturday evening and did not return. Family sources said that he spoke to his mother over mobile phone for the last time at 9:45 pm. It is said that he was last seen near the Bindusagar lake around the same time. Saishree also posted a suicide note on his Instagram page. However, the police are yet to recover his mobile phone.

40TH FOUNDATION DAY OF OES

Experts: Future security depends on present environmental quality

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: The Odisha Environmental Society (OES) Sunday celebrated its 40th foundation day, in which, the 10th Prasanna Kumar Dash Memorial Lecture was given on the topic 'Environment Odisha: The Way Forward'. Veerendra Pratap Upadhyay, former Adviser at the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), attended the event as the chief speaker and said the natural environment of Odisha, even though very captivating, is being negatively impacted by industrialisation, mining and other developmental programmes.

"Sustainable and judicious use of resources, extracting usable materials from wastes and recycling them, conserving the top as well as sub-soil, and planting native species need to be given top priority," he added. The chief guest of the occasion was Sudhakar Panda, Director of NISER Bhubaneswar. OES secretary Jayakrushna Panigrahi opined that while the world is currently distressed with a series of environmental disasters, selfless contributions of organisations like the OES carry considerable significance. The chief guest bestowed with the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' on educationist and environmen-

talist Bharat Panda. This apart, 'BC Panda Award for Environment & Science Communication' was given to educationist and science-writer Murari Mohan Dash. Sudhakar Kar, Nimai Charan Mishra and Pradip Kumar Pattajoshi were honoured as the fellows of the Society. On the other hand, BM Faruque, Nirmal Chandra Dash, P Sasi Bhusan Rao, Jitasatru Mohanty and Swadesh Sundar Patnaik were felicitated as senior life members of OES. OES president Sundara Narayan Patro also highlighted the Society's past, present and future course of action, emphasising that it has been playing the role of a torch-bearer in the environment frontier.

WASSUP TODAY

- BHUBANESWAR
First anniversary of TV channel 'Bada Khabar', Hotel Swosti Premium, 9:30am
Press conference by Odisha Secondary School Teachers' Association, All Utikal Primary Teachers' Association Office, Kharavela Nagar, 3:30pm
Programmes/announcements for wassup today may be sent to opwassup@gmail.com for record, it must also carry the sender's mobile number for our verification, but not for publication.

IIT Bhub rolls out breast cancer awareness drive

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: IIT Bhubaneswar Sunday organised a breast cancer awareness programme at Argul High School for five adopted villages ranging from Argul, Khudupur, Padanpur, Podapada and Kansapada as part of its Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) Programme. The event was organised by Wisemnaire, IIT Bhubaneswar in collaboration with Umeedain, Carcinova Cancer Hospital, Cuttack. The event was inaugurated by PV Satyam, Dean of Student Affairs, IIT Bhubaneswar. Speaking on the occasion, Satyam said, "Breast cancer is the most frequent cause



of cancer-related deaths in women worldwide. As per WHO, it accounts for 2.09 million cases and 6,27,000 deaths globally." "This initiative will help educate the public about the basics of cancer, its common symptoms,

Institutions. We see this as a great opportunity for all of us to contribute towards a cancer free society. Lastly with this initiative, we intend to inculcate in our students the value of social service which has taken a back seat these days and reduced this best practice to become ritualistic," Satyam added. "We, at IIT Bhubaneswar, are committed towards building a healthy society and have achieved a fairly good success in this endeavor, and it will continue," he further said. As part of the drive, awareness lectures and basic sanitary kits were distributed. The drive saw an active participation of people from all the five villages.

Bhubaneswar Club celebrates Picasso

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: Sukrut, the cultural chapter of Bhubaneswar Club, in its art odyssey celebrated Pablo Picasso, probably the most influential artist of the 20th century world, at the Club premises Sunday. As a mark of tribute to the great painter, sculptor and designer, the Bhubaneswar event gallery showcased facsimiles of some of the maestro's best works at the gallery set up for the purpose. Scores of art-lovers and members visited the exhibition and shared the intellectual experience. Born Spanish, Picasso spent most of his adult life in Paris. Regarded as one of the most influential artists

of the 20th century, he is known for co-founding the Cubist movement. In Cubist artwork, objects are analysed, broken up and re-assembled in abstract form. Instead of depicting the object from a single viewpoint, the artist juxtaposes it from a multitude of perspectives, representing the subject in a large context through cube-like imagery. President of the Club Asit Tripathy said that, they have taken this initiative to foster interest in literature, art and other cultural events for the discernible of the city. The convener of Sukrut Pradosh Mohanty assured that it will continue its endeavor to enhance the world class cultural experiences of members through many similar events.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate, Cuttack on dated 17.03.2021. I, Minati Nayak, aged about 49 years, W/o - Chagala Nayak, At/PO.- Dalijoda Brahmapur, Via-Charbatia, Dist.- Cuttack do hereby declared that, Minati Nayak and Menaka Nayak are the names of one and same person. Hence this affidavit I shall be known as Minati Nayak for all purposes.

I Pragyan Paramita Dash, R/o Sadasivpur, Dhenkanal, Odisha have changed my minor child's name from Aneesha Rath to Aadriti Rath.

Birsa Munda an inspirational force: PM on Mann Ki Baat

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday recalled the contributions of Birsa Munda, noted tribal freedom fighter from eastern India, describing him as "an inspirational force". Addressing his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat', Modi said, "Munda's contributions to the freedom struggle will remain etched in public memory forever. During this period of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', a Government of India initiative to celebrate 75 years of a progressive India and its glorious history, the country is remembering its brave sons and daughters, those great and virtuous souls." The birth anniversary of brave warrior Bhagwan Birsa Munda falls November 15, he said. "Bhagwan Birsa Munda is also known as 'Dharti Aaba'. Do you know what this epithet means? It means the father of earth. The

way Bhagwan Birsa Munda fought to protect his culture, his forest and his land, it could have only been done by 'Dharti Aaba'," the PM said. Munda taught the countrymen to be proud of their culture and roots, he said, adding that the colonial rulers subjected him to countless threats and applied immense pressure, but he did not relinquish the tribal culture. "If we have to learn to love nature and environment, then for that too, Dharti Aaba Bhagwan Birsa Munda is one of our greatest inspirations. He strongly opposed every policy of foreign rulers which was detrimental to environment," he said. Noting that Birsa Munda was always at the forefront while helping the poor and the distressed, the PM said, "He also made the society aware about eliminating social evils. Who can forget his leadership during the Ulgulan movement? This movement shook



Birsa Munda united the tribals against the British and forced the colonial rulers to introduce laws protecting the land rights of the tribals. He spearheaded the tribal Millenarian movement that arose in the erstwhile Bengal Presidency comprising western districts of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha. India's largest hockey stadium, which is coming up at Rourkela in Odisha's Sundargarh district, has been named after the tribal hero

the British and, as an aftermath, the British had placed a huge bounty on Bhagwan Birsa Munda." Munda had launched the Ulgulan movement against the exploitation of the tribals. "The British government put him in jail and he was tortured to such an extent that he left us at the age of less than 25 year. He left us, but only in the body; in public psyche, Lord Birsa Munda resides forever. His life remains an inspirational force for people," Modi said. Even today, folk songs and stories, full of recollection of his courage and valour, are very popular in the central region of India, Modi said, adding that he bows to 'Dharti Aaba' Birsa Munda. He also urged the youth to read more about him. "The more you know about the unique contribution of our tribal populace to the freedom struggle of India, the more proud you will feel," he said. India's largest hockey sta-

dium, which is coming up at Rourkela in Odisha's Sundargarh district, has been named after the tribal hero. The stadium will host the 2023 Men's FIH Hockey World Cup. Birsa Munda united the tribals against the British and forced the colonial rulers to introduce laws protecting the land rights of the tribals. He spearheaded the tribal Millenarian movement that arose in the erstwhile Bengal Presidency comprising western districts of Bengal, Bihar and Odisha. He was born November 15, 1875, in Chhotanagpur plateau of present-day Jharkhand. Birsa Munda had organised his first protest march for remission of forest dues during the great famine of 1895. He was arrested March 3, 1900, while sleeping with his tribal guerrilla army at Jamkopai forest in Chakradharpur. He died in Ranchi jail June 9 that year aged 25.

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Pradeep Majhi to join BJD soon



Former MP Pradeep Majhi addressing a press meet at Nabarangpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nabarangpur, Oct 24: Bringing an end to all political speculations following his resignation from Congress, the former MP from Nabarangpur constituency segment announced at a presser held here Sunday morning that he will soon join the ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD).

“BJD led by the party supremo and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has been successful in giving a stable government to people of the state. I, along with my

BJD led by the party supremo and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has been successful in giving a stable government to people of the state. I, along with my close political associates and some other senior leaders of Congress will join BJD soon

PRADEEP MAJHI | FORMER CONGRESS MP

close political associates and some other senior leaders of Congress will join BJD soon,” Majhi said.

The former MP further said that carrying out development works in the undivided Koraput district was practically very difficult, so long as he remained with Congress. He tried hard to resolve local issues.

Giving his views on the future of Congress in Odisha, Majhi said that it is too difficult for the party to grab power under the present scenario.

“Leaders at the grassroots level in undivided Koraput district are keen to see development of the region. All of us will be joining BJD to strengthen the party. Our decision will help resolve basic issues like education, health and other basic amenities,” Majhi stated.

Besides, Majhi in his resignation letter wrote, “I have a great desire to serve my people at whatever position I am, which is now lacking in the Congress party. As such, I am painfully quitting the party for which I may kindly be excused.”

It is pertinent to mention here that Majhi had resigned from the primary membership of Congress October 22. He sent his resignation letter to the Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi.

LAMP MAKING CONTEST



Potters participating in a lamp making competition held at Andhari village under Jujumura block in Sambalpur, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Room no-20 at Sunshine school adds to puzzle

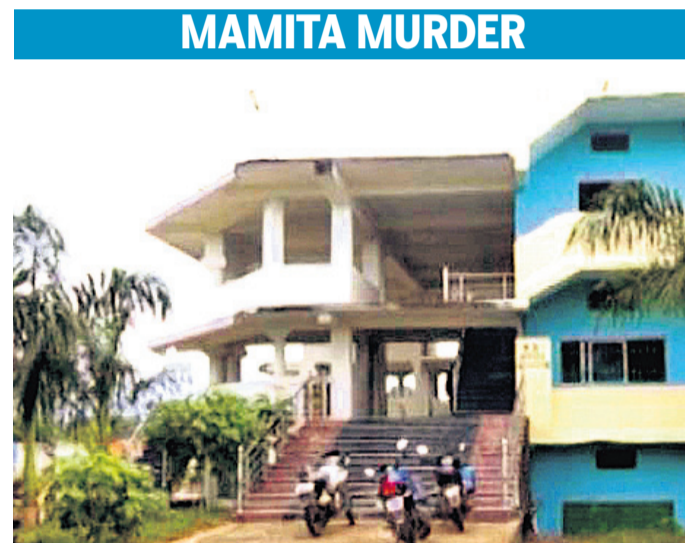
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, Oct 24: Room no-20 of the ladies' hostel in Sunshine English Medium School at Mahaling area of Kalahandi district added to the mystery of teacher Mamita Meher's murder after a team of Turekela police from Bolangir conducted a probe on its premises Saturday afternoon.

The probe came close on heels of prime accused Gobinda Sahu recreating the crime scene Friday. Police officials from Kegaon in Kalahandi and Turekela in Bolangir are probing the case and the key accused is now in Kegaon police custody.

A video of Sahu recreating the crime has gone viral on social media.

According to a source, the investigating team found that all the rooms of the ladies' hostel at Sunshine school have similar locks, except room no-20. Key to room no-20 could not be provided to the investigating team for scrutiny. During the probe, when Turekela



police officials sought a clarification from the hostel warden, no satisfactory answer regarding the key and the lock could be given, the source informed.

It might have been changed by somebody after Mamita's death, a local man alleged.

According to the source, prior to being arrested, prime accused Sahu visited the room between October 8 and October 13. Sahu could have destroyed evidence, the local man said. Meanwhile, the source informed that police have repeatedly quizzed inmates of 'the ladies'



hostel to extract information pertaining to the lock and key and Sahu's visit to the room.

Gobinda Sahu was arrested by Bolangir police October 19. Police traced out the prime accused from a sugarcane field at Budhipadar village under Bangomunda block

THE INVESTIGATING TEAM FOUND THAT ALL THE ROOMS OF THE LADIES' HOSTEL AT SUNSHINE SCHOOL HAVE SIMILAR LOCKS, EXCEPT ROOM NO-20

DURING THE PROBE, WHEN TUREKELA POLICE OFFICIALS SOUGHT A CLARIFICATION FROM THE HOSTEL WARDEN, NO SATISFACTORY ANSWER REGARDING THE KEY AND THE LOCK COULD BE GIVEN

ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, PRIOR TO BEING ARRESTED, PRIME ACCUSED SAHU VISITED THE ROOM BETWEEN OCTOBER 8 AND OCTOBER 13

of Bolangir district where he was hiding. A team of Bolangir police probing into the murder case Friday took accused Sahu to the crime site in the stadium at Mahaling where the crime scene was recreated.

Notably, taking cognisance of the murder of Mamita, the OSCW has sought a detailed report from Bolangir SP.

Congress women's wing chief demands Minister's dismissal



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, Oct 24: The demand for dismissal of Minister of State (Home) Dibyashankar Mishra gained further momentum in sensational Mamita Meher murder case as the All India Mahila Congress president Netta D'Souza visited Jharni village under Turekela block in this district Sunday and demanded the dismissal of Mishra from his post.

D'Souza said this while meeting the family members of deceased Mamita Meher at her residence in Jharni village. She condoled the death of Mamita while interacting with her family members at their residence, where she spent over an hour with them.

D'Souza said that the Minister of State (Home) should be removed first to carry out a fair probe into the murder case. She said this while speaking to mediapersons, Sunday. She said that the murder was pre-planned and a big racket was being operated in the educational institution.

She said that a big name has surfaced in the case and questioned why the minister was visiting the college very often. She said that if the Home Minister is involved in such act then how the people in

the state will feel safe. She said that Mamita was killed as she opposed the unethical activities being carried out in the college where she was teaching. The way the woman schoolteacher was murdered and her body was burnt suggested that the accused persons have crossed all limits of evilness, she said while stating whether people are living in a 'Jungle Raj'.

She demanded that the Home Minister should be taken into custody and grilled as to why he was visiting the college on a regular basis. She also demanded that an underground room in the college should also be taken under investigation and Gobinda Sahu, the prime accused, is not the only person involved in the case and the police should probe and find out the involvement of others.

She said, she came to learn that another girl was raped and crushed to death by a tractor.

It is worth mentioning that Captain Dibyashankar Mishra's name came to light following escape of prime accused Gobinda Sahu from police custody in Mamita Meher missing case. State Mahila Congress president Bandita Parida, state Congress secretary Samarendra Mishra accompanied D'Souza during her visit.

Ghrial stuck in fishing net rescued

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kendrapara, Oct 24: An endangered baby ghrial was rescued after the reptile was caught in fishing net in Cuttack district, a forest department official said Saturday.

A fisherman found the ghrial, a species of freshwater crocodile, stuck in his net placed in the Birupa rivulet near Chotti village Friday. Local fishermen panicked after finding the unexpected catch, but they did not cause any harm to the distressed animal.

Forest department officials were called and they rescued the trapped animal. However, the net could no longer be used for fishing.



The official said the department took possession of the ghrial which will be released later in the natural habitat at the Tikarpada Wildlife Sanctuary in Angul district.

Ghrials, with their long snouts, are prone to get entangled in fishing nets, due to which they get trapped underwater and drown, or have their rostrums chopped off or killed to disentangle the nets, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature.

The species is listed under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act and as critically endangered under the red list of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

It is claimed that Kendrapara is the only district in India where all the three crocodile species – salt-water, ghrial and mugger -- are found in its river systems.

Odisha is the only state in the country having all three species in the wild. The state government launched a conservation programme for these crocodiles in 1975.



MARTIAL ART

Children display their skills in Taekwondo at a colour belt examination for the martial art held at Paralakhemundi, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Once a protective wall, Raibania fort in ruins

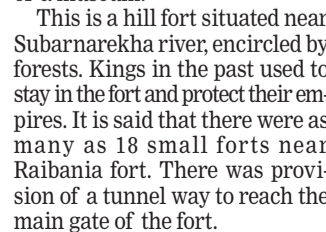
POST NEWS NETWORK

Jaleswar, Oct 24: Raibania fort in Jaleswar area of Balasore used to be a protective wall for Odisha against external aggressions from Afghans, Huns, Moghuls and Marhattas in the past. The fort, a testimony of the state's military prowess and architecture, has now reduced to debris. It was alleged that the government has not paid much attention to the revival and development of the ancient fort lying on the border of West Bengal.

While efforts are on to protect and preserve ancient forts in other parts of the state, Raibania has been given short shrift, locals alleged.

They observed that the tourist place can be well tapped if the government carries out archaeological excavations, preservation of its sculptures and construction of a museum.

This is a hill fort situated near Subarnarekha river, encircled by forests. Kings in the past used to stay in the fort and protect their empires. It is said that there were as many as 18 small forts near Raibania fort. There was provision of a tunnel way to reach the main gate of the fort.



The main feature of the fort was that there was underground ways for royal people to escape in case of external aggressions.

The fort was encircled by seven moats and an earthen wall. All these have crumbled to pieces over centuries.

As for the fort, Dr Ashok Kumar Mitra of the former head of the archaeology department of University of Calcutta had said, “Raibania was the largest fort in whole northeast India. The fort was built with use of soil, but it was

damaged by the British in different times. Some parts of four gates of the fort are still existent.”

According to some other archaeologists, the fort was not made at a time. Now, remains of the fort and scores of broken sculptures have been lying scattered on 10 square mile of land.

During excavation, some arms and ammunitions have been recovered in the area.

According to Balasore Gazetteer, a Mayurbhanj king had taken away the main deity of Raibania fort



and enshrined the deity at Khiching.

However, the presiding deity Dagachandi is still being worshiped at Raibania village. There is a Jagannath temple in the fort area. The temple has architectural similarity with Konark's Sun temple built by Langula Narasingha Dev.

Dr Mitra had first conducted a survey in the area and started excavation with some funds. But excavation work has stalled since his demise.

Another archaeologist has been carrying out research on the fort. It was claimed that King Langula Narasingha Dev had built this fort between 1238 and 1264.

There are 50 big and small ponds in the fort area. Many archaeological remains have been left neglected without preservation and protection.

Following media reports about the fort in the past, MLA Aswini Patra, former MP Rabindra Jena and MP Srikant Jena had raised the issue in the Assembly and the Parliament.

In 2014, the reconstruction work of the Jagannath temple was started and is still going on with an estimated fund of ₹45 lakh. There were observation towers



Raibania was the largest fort in whole northeast India. The fort was built with use of soil, but it was damaged by the British in different times. Some parts of four gates of the forts are still existent

DR ASHOK KUMAR MITRA | FORMER HEAD OF THE ARCHAEOLOGY DEPT, UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

and more than 50 water bodies. Two of the gates are in ruins due to lack of maintenance.

As per data available, around ₹1.31 crore has been sanctioned for the fort's development including ₹50 lakh under National Rural Mission (NRuM), ₹50 lakh from Panchayat fund, ₹16 lakh from Zilla Parishad fund and ₹15 lakh from Tourism and Culture departments.

The members of the Raibania Fort Development Committee (RDC) and Raibania Durga

Suraksha Committee (RDSC) said that major parts of the fort are covered in bushes and shrubs. There is a need for recovery of the valuable archaeological assets from the area, they said.

MLA Aswini Patra said that there is need for a master plan for development of Raibania fort.

Tourism and Culture department has sanctioned ₹25 lakh for an entry gate to the fort and another ₹25 lakh for other development activities.

FOCUS CONGRESS

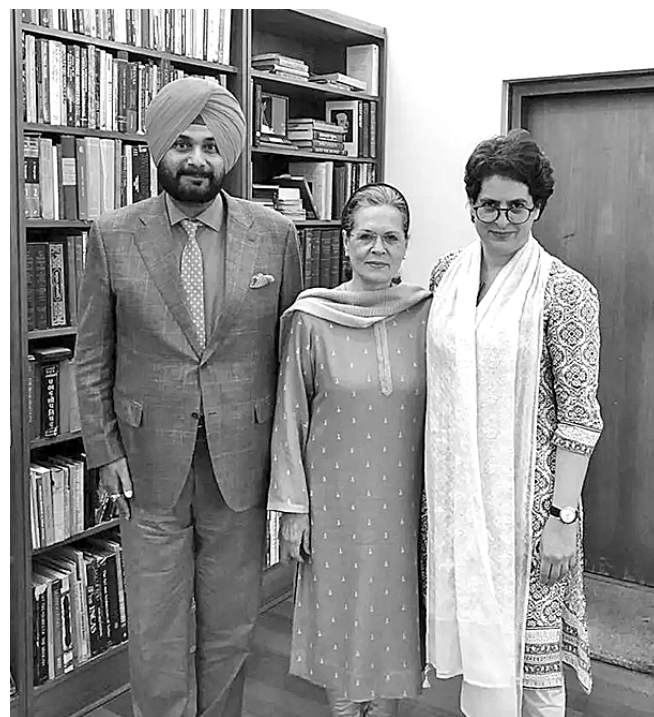
HOUSE IN DISORDER

The Congress is all set to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. Ever since the change of guard in Punjab, where the seasoned Capt Amarinder Singh was replaced by Charanjeet Singh Channi as Chief Minister, things have turned murkier for the party. It no longer has an edge over the Opposition in the state, which was run by them for two successive terms. In fact, after the announcement by Amarinder to form his own outfit and align with the BJP, it is advantage BJP. Ironically, it is not Amarinder who has played Brutus, but the siblings in the Congress, Rahul and Priyanka, who picked maverick Navjot Singh Sidhu over the skilful administrator.

The siblings had left no option for Amarinder, who could neither go to the BJP, nor to the Akali Dal, nor Aam Aadmi Party, as he is too big for their boots. Having refused their offer of joining BJP, Amarinder will float his own party, which can later align with the BJP, to form the government in Punjab.

What the BJP could not achieve in Punjab, the Gandhi siblings have done for them. They have rekindled the hopes of the BJP leadership of being part of the government in Punjab. The Akali Dal always played the role of a big brother and BJP always obliged them, knowing that they lacked their own base in the state. In fact, after the Akalis betrayed the BJP, in the post-farmers protest scenario, by withdrawing support to the Modi government, it became pretty evident that they would be doomed in the Assembly elections. Thanks to the Gandhi siblings, the BJP is back in the state, as never before and may, in all probability, prop-up Amrinder as CM. It's a deadly combination which has no match with Akali Dal losing its sheen gradually and the Congress still busy in its infighting.

Right from the very beginning, the Gandhis blundered by siding with undependable Sidhu, who is immature and lacks political acumen. The person, who openly



Instead of being surrounded by sycophants in the party and being highly egoistic, the Gandhis should realise that the Grand Old Party will perish, if they refuse to see the reality around them

snubs the CM of his own party and criticizes him for doing nothing for the state, is elevated to the post of PCC chief! His word carried so much weight with the Gandhis that he was encouraged in his rebellion against the popular CM, who was all set to score a successive Congress victory this time too.

Instead of keeping him in good books, the Gandhi siblings kept quiet when Sidhu was demeaning his own party CM in public. In fact, even Congress president Sonia Gandhi was so much swayed by the sycophancy of the cricketer-turned-politician that she denied Amarinder a graceful exit from the party. Instead of accepting his resignation when he offered, she kicked him out of the government, by being a party to the Legislature Meeting in Chandigarh. Anyone would argue that Capt Amarinder Singh, who served the party as

PCC chief and CM for two terms, deserved much better treatment from the high command.

As declared by Amarinder himself, he will leave no stone unturned to defeat the Congress and would go to any extent to ensure that Sidhu never realises his dream of becoming the CM. In fact, more than Amarinder, the future of Sidhu is doomed, as the former is all set to make things difficult for him in future. As far as the former CM is concerned, he still commands respect in his state and has a massive following in public. The sympathy factor and the support given by the BJP will contribute to his come-back as CM.

As regards the new Chief Minister Charanjeet Singh Channi, a period of three to four months is not enough to judge him. Only time will tell if being Dalit and belonging to a humble background will fetch him requisite number of

votes in the Assembly elections to retain power. Interestingly, the anti-incumbency vote will go against the Congress for all the failures committed by Amarinder, while the latter will garner the sympathy vote for being kicked out from the government and party.

Congress high command needs not only to set its own house in order, but to give a thought to its own attitude towards its partymen. Instead of being surrounded by sycophants in the party and being highly egoistic, the Gandhis should realise that the Grand Old Party will perish, if they refuse to see the reality around them. It's not only in Punjab that they have insulted their veteran leader, but in other states as well. Both the young and the old are getting restive in the party in the absence of adequate policies and programmes. It will have to be seen what course does the G-23 follows in future. All out efforts will be made by Amarinder Singh to garner support from them in the state.

Similarly, dissidence is simmering in the Congress-ruled states of Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, with disgruntled leaders like TS Singh Deo and Sachin Pilot sulking for a long time. Unless the party satisfies the rebel leaders, it will be a repeat of Madhya Pradesh, where Jyotiraditya Scindia ditched the Congress by helping the BJP to form the government in the state.

The Congress is in power in only three states -- Punjab, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan -- and if it does not set its own house in order, it will be wiped out from the entire country. The call given by BJP for a 'Congress Mukht Bharat' will no longer remain a distant dream. Going by the experience in Punjab, the Congress high command should act fast, before it is too late. In that case, it will be the Gandhis, who will have to take the blame, instead of the party leaders or the BJP, which is waiting to pounce on any misadventure by the Congress.

The writer is a Delhi-based senior journalist and columnist. Views are personal.

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



How 'FREE' If Taxed

With India achieving the milestone of administering 100 crore vaccines to contain the scourge of COVID-19, the government has gone on a propaganda blitzkrieg to 'celebrate' the event. The fact that the government's inept handling of the pandemic since it broke out over a year back led to colossal suffering of the people is being glossed over. The way the government's propaganda machinery has been deployed to project the event shows the ruling party's desperation to erase from the memory of the nation the loss of countless lives, grossly inadequate hospital infrastructure, shortage of oxygen cylinders, agonies of migrant workers stranded due to a thoughtless lockdown and job losses. Along with the show of bravado over the claimed vaccination milestone, the statement of Union Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri is noteworthy. Puri has been quoted by media as saying "I think the simplistic political narrative in India (that), prices have gone up, why don't you reduce your taxes? So every time prices go up due to something else, it says you axe your own feet in the process. I am not very sensitive to that kind of discussion." The last sentence was possible for Puri to utter as he is not an elected Lok Sabha member of Parliament but a retired bureaucrat inducted through the Rajya Sabha path. The minister went on to claim that the excise duty levied on petroleum products is funding 'free' Covid-19 vaccines and other welfare schemes. If what the minister claims is true, then it completely demolishes the Union government's assertion that it has administered one billion 'free' Covid vaccines since the vaccines were paid for by the people paying an ever increasing tax on essential items of survival.

WISDOM CORNER

- Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them. **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**
- There is a charm about the forbidden that makes it unspcakably desirable. **MARK TWAIN**
- The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place. **GEORGE BERNARD SHAW**

WORDSWORTH

Pilgarlic

It's been a while since anyone used this word, though you'll find it in many older works. It means a bald-headed man or a person looked on with humorous contempt or mock pity. Here's a typical reference, from an eighteenth-century English translation of Gargantua and Pantagruel, by Rabelais: After this, we e'en jogged to bed for that night; but the devil a bit poor pilgarlic could sleep one wink -- the everlasting jingle-jangle of the bells kept me awake whether I would or no. To speak of poor pilgarlic in terms of mock pity is typical of the word, whether you're speaking about yourself, as here, or about somebody else. Its origin is straightforward: it's a compound of pil, a word that later changed its spelling to the modern peel, plus garlic. So it compares a man with a bald head to a peeled head of garlic. But it wasn't just a simple case of a ludicrous comparison; there was a strong hint about the reason why the man had gone bald -- through an attack of the pox. So the contemptuous meaning arose, and was well established by the early seventeenth century. Later the link with venereal disease declined, but the adverse meaning survived.

Pinch of salt

There are two standard versions of this idiom, the much older one being grain of salt. Both suggest a need for scepticism or reserve in believing something you've been told: "Take everything she says with a pinch of salt -- she's unreliable". The expression has been used in English since the seventeenth century at least. It's puzzling to us now because it's based on a misunderstanding of a comment in a Latin document nearly 2,000 years old. Around 77 AD, Pliny the Elder wrote in his Natural History that the Roman general Pompey had discovered something odd a century before when he conquered Pontus, a country on the shores of the Black Sea, at the time a formidable rival to Rome. On searching the private apartments of the king, Mithridates VI, Pompey discovered that the king had built up his famous immunity to poisoning by first fasting and then taking doses of a mixture of poisons until he was able to tolerate lethal levels. (This is the origin of mithridate, an antidote to poison.) Pliny wrote that the king had taken his doses of poison with the addition of a grain of salt ("addito salis grano" in his Latin). He meant this as a simple report. But later readers thought he was saying that one shouldn't necessarily believe this story about a king who had been a notorious enemy of Rome. Modern scholars say there's no evidence in Latin literature of writers using salt as a figurative expression of scepticism. The Latin tag usually taken to be the original, "cum grano salis", is very likely to be medieval Latin. But there is a sort of rationale to the idiom even if you discount the Plinian link. Someone who says this to you could be taken to suggest that if you're really intent on believing what you've been told, then taking a figurative pinch of salt with it will help you to swallow it, just as taking a literal pinch with your meal makes it taste better.

Pinchbeck

The more common meaning of the word today, on the rare occasions on which it turns up in print at all, is of something that's cheap or tawdry. However, those versed in the fields of jewellery, clocks and other objets d'art will know that strictly it refers to an alloy of zinc and copper -- so a type of brass -- that looks remarkably like gold. Outside these specialist areas, the word's most common appearance is as a family name, which is only fit and proper, since we are in the area of eponyms here -- things named after people. The man who invented the alloy was one Christopher Pinchbeck, a clockmaker born in Clerkenwell in London, though his shop was at the "sign of the Astronomico-Musical Clock" in Fleet Street. He was also a well-known maker of musical automata such as singing birds. His name probably came from the place called Pinchbeck near Spalding in Lincolnshire; that name is from Old English words meaning either "minnow stream" or "finch ridge" (from which we may deduce the uncertain state of the study of English placenames). He seems to have invented his eponymous metal sometime in the early 1700s, though there's no contemporary reference and we have to rely on statements by his sons. He created it as a way to make ornaments that looked like gold but were less expensive. There was no attempt at deception here -- he clearly labelled the metal for what it was. To start with, it was a respected alternative to gold: jewellers in the eighteenth century used it legitimately to make nice-looking jewellery that could be worn in places in which theft was frequent, such as on stagecoach journeys, without fear of losing valuables. However, so many jewellers used it for inferior goods, passing off pinchbeck as gold, that the word took on the sense of something that was of poor quality or a cheap imitation.

LOL

Purchasing a brain

A client of a hospital where they made brain transplantations asked about the prices. The doctor said, "Well, this Ph.D. brain costs \$10,000. This brain belonged to a NASA top scientist and costs



\$15,000. Here we have a policeman's brain as well. It costs \$50,000." The client asked, "What? How's that possible?" The doctor replied, "You see, it's totally unused."

Anita Saluja

RIGHT FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, THE GANDHIS BLUNDERED BY SIDING WITH UNDEPENDABLE SIDHU, WHO IS IMMATURE AND LACKS POLITICAL ACUMEN

SPECTRUM RESEARCH

A greener way to build molecules



Sanjib Kumar Karmee

ORGANOCATALYSTS ARE EMPLOYED FOR DEVELOPING A WIDE RANGE OF INDUSTRIALLY RELEVANT CHEMICAL TRANSFORMATIONS

The 2021 Nobel Prize in Chemistry has been awarded to Benjamin List of the Max Planck Institute and David WC MacMillan of Princeton University for their pioneering work on asymmetric organocatalysis. Announcing the Nobel Prize, the award-giving body described organocatalysts as "a new and ingenious tool for molecule building." Peter Somfai, a member of the committee, emphasised the likely impact of the discovery on the world economy. "It has been estimated that catalysis is responsible for ~35% of the world's GDP, which is a pretty impressive figure," he said. "If we have a more environmentally friendly alternative, it's expected that that will make a difference."

Organocatalysis is a young and thriving research area. It is a form of catalysis wherein the rate of a chemical reaction is increased by an organic catalyst. A typical organocatalyst consists of small organic molecules; namely, carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, sulphur and non-metal elements. For several decades, chemists did not envisage the catalytic use of small organic molecules as a well-defined and independent field of research. Even though chemical re-

actions catalysed by small organic molecules were known, organocatalysis was not popular until 2000. Two independent publications from the research groups of List and MacMillan cemented a place for organocatalysis. The work by List group showed that proline (an amino acid) can catalyse chemical reactions like aldolase (an enzyme) by using similar mechanisms. The researchers suggested that proline functions as a micro-enzyme. MacMillan and co-workers coined the term 'organocatalysis' while publishing their seminal experimental findings on Diels-Alder reaction catalysed by a modified phenylalanine; which provided a framework to establish a new research area.

In an editorial of Chemical Reviews (2007, 107, 12, 5413-5415) List stated that "it is quite remarkable that organic chemists had long ignored the fact that the very first catalysts they used in ancient times were purely organic molecules such as acetaldehyde. As organic molecules readily react with each other, why did we disregard these compounds as catalysts and rather relied on the assistance of biologists and inorganic chemists to provide enzymes or explain the foreign world of d-orbitals to us?"

Why did we not expect catalytic competence from organic molecules - exactly those compounds we can truly design, make, and know most about?"

In a commentary (Nature, 455, 304-308, 2008), MacMillan pointed out that: "Advent of organocatalysis brought the prospect of a complementary mode of catalysis, with the potential for savings in cost, time and energy, an easier experimental procedure, and reductions in chemical waste. These benefits arise from three factors. First, organic molecules are generally insensitive to oxygen and moisture in the atmosphere, so there is no need for special reaction vessels, storage containers and experimental techniques, or for ultra-dry reagents and solvents. Second, a wide variety of organic reagents - such as amino acids, carbohydrates and hydroxy acids - are naturally available from biological sources as single enantiomers. Simple organocatalysts are therefore usually cheap to prepare and readily accessible in a range of quantities, suitable for small scale reactions to industrial scale reactions. Third, small organic molecules are typically non-toxic and environmentally friendly, increasing the safety of catalysis in both bio-

logical research and chemical research across all research settings, including industry and academic institutions."

Industrial applications of catalysis have traditionally relied on metal and enzyme catalysed methods. However, recently organocatalysis is expanding rapidly as a potential and complementary technique to both metal and biocatalysis. At present, researchers from academia and industries are intensely involved in this field with a focus on developing new organocatalysts. These catalysts are employed for developing a wide range of industrially relevant chemical transformations. For instance, researchers were able to use organocatalysis and a cascade reaction to prepare strychnine in just 12 steps, and the production process was 7,000 times more efficient. In addition, different pharmaceutical companies are using organocatalytic methods to streamline the current production of paroxetine (an antidepressant) and oseltamivir (an antiviral medication). It is believed that organocatalysis will provide many new reactions for years to come.

The writer is a scientist. Views are personal.

Odisha ignored

Sir, Odisha is a land of rich cultural heritage and is called the soul of India. It is one of India's most preferred tourist destinations. It is a pious land that preaches the age-old values of non-violence and forgiveness. It is an educational hub and an investor's paradise. Sadly, Odisha is not adequately represented in national electronic media. There is only discussion on Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Kashmir and Delhi in almost all electronic media. There are panel discussions on drug abuse, Taliban, terrorist activities in Kashmir and political developments of other states in most of the Hindi and English news channels. But, Odisha is overlooked and gets unnoticed in many panel discussions. Is Odisha outside India? It is only during elections and cyclones that Odisha gets national media coverage. This is astonishing. The interests of Odisha and its people are ignored by the national electronic media. This is against the ethics of professional journalism. Odisha always gets a raw deal by Hindi and English news channels. Such step-motherly attitude towards Odisha by the national news channels is disheartening, to say the least. This apathy and disinterest does not augur well for the fourth pillar of democracy. Odisha demands its rightful place and adequate coverage in the national mainstream electronic media.
Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

Shot in the arm

Sir, HAL Airport revival for domestic operations received a shot in the arm with Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi remarking that handing over the airport to Bengaluru International Airport Ltd (BIAL) is under consideration. Joshi said that he and Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai had discussed the matter with Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia. The state government has been pushing for the reopening of HAL Airport, which was shut in 2008, for civilian traffic through the BIAL for several years.
NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Proud moment

Sir, India has clinched the South Asian Football Federations Championship for the eighth time by defeating Nepal by 3-0 after goals from Sunil Chhetri, Suresh Singh and Sahal Abdul Samad. Efforts made by the team must be appreciated for they have enhanced the pride of the nation.
Anushka Jaiswal, UJJAIN

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Girl's body recovered, murder suspected

Keonjhar, Oct 24: Mystery shrouds the death of a 20-year-old girl whose body was recovered from a farmland near Badakhman Sahi of Basantpur village under Pandapada police limits in Keonjhar district, Sunday. The deceased was identified as Rina Dandapata, a native of the village. The matter came to the fore after locals noticed the body lying on the farmland and informed the police, who recovered the body and launched an investigation. It is suspected that the victim might have been raped before being murdered as her face bore scratch marks. Police said she was sleeping with her mother at home after dinner. However, her mother found her missing from bed when she woke up at around 11 pm. She searched for her but failed to trace her. It is suspected someone might have called her outside following

Police said she was sleeping with her mother at home after dinner. Hours later, her mother found her missing from bed when she woke up at around 11 pm

which she left her home never to return again. Her mobile phone was also found missing and this has given rise to suspicion.

When contacted, P J Toppo, Keonjhar Sadar SDPO said a probe has been launched after the recovery of the body.

The body will be sent for post-mortem and the actual reason behind her sudden death could be ascertained after completion of the probe.

The probe report will also unravel whether she was raped and murdered or not, he added.

Mystery fever claims life in Koraput village

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, Oct 24: A man died of a mysterious disease at Tukum village under Lamtaput block in Koraput district Saturday. Three other patients are undergoing treatment for the same disease.

The deceased has been identified as Damu Kishan. Sources said that he developed high fever and lost consciousness before breathing his last.

The sources said that in the recent past, some of the villagers had consumed beef. Some of them hadn't been keeping well after consumption of the beef. A few of them had also developed fever and Damu was one of them and he died. Some more persons are still having high temperatures.

Meanwhile, a five-member medical team has reached the village and collected the blood samples from the suspects. The three patients are undergoing treatment in isolation. Several sources suggested that these could be cases of anthrax, though it is yet to be medically confirmed.

IN PUBLIC INTEREST



A meeting of the Ethics Committee of Odisha Assembly underway at DRDA conference hall in Boudh, Sunday. The meeting underscored the need for decentralisation of power for timely delivery of benefits of welfare programmes

AHEAD OF PANCHAYAT POLLS IN NAYAGARH DISTRICT

Factionalism plagues three parties

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, Oct 24: Panchayat elections are round the corner in Odisha. Major political parties like the BJD, BJP and Congress have started preparations to broaden their bases in Nayagarh district. However, the issue of factionalism is rampant in all the three parties and is a cause of concern for the leaders, a report said. The proposed reservation of seats and some local issues have left grassroots cadres fuming in some pockets.

Factionalism exist the most both in the BJP and the Congress, but then the BJD also has different groups working within it. It remains to be seen how the political adversaries take advantage of the factionalism which exists among its rivals.

Frontline leaders of the three parties are drawing up strategies to select candidates in the backdrop of proposed reservation of seats for sarpanch, zilla parishad and wards. Some of the aspiring candidates have already started lobbying with their respective MLAs to cement their positions. All the three parties have been



LALA MANOJ RAY, PRESIDENT OF THE BJP'S DISTRICT UNIT, DISMISSED CLAIMS OF THE BJD AND CONGRESS ON GROWING SUPPORT OF PEOPLE IN THEIR FAVOUR. HE SAID THAT VOTERS HAVE LOST THEIR FAITH ON BJD AND A WIND OF CHANGE IS SWEEPING ACROSS THE DISTRICT IN FAVOUR OF THE BJP. VOTERS WILL GIVE A SHOCK TO THE BJD THIS TIME, HE ASSERTED

organising meetings and inducting disgruntled leaders and workers from the other parties. All are busy giving impression to people that their vote shares have been increasing with the induction of workers who were in the opposition even a short time back.

Political parleys and hectic activities by the ruling party BJD

are seen in Nayagarh, Dasapalla and Ranpur localities. Frontline leaders are trying to placate grassroots workers who have difference of opinion on candidates lobbying for various posts in the BJD. Ruling party leaders have been claiming that their base of supporters has been increasing and that the party is confident of winning.

FACTIONALISM EXIST THE MOST BOTH IN THE BJP AND THE CONGRESS, BUT THEN THE BJD ALSO HAS DIFFERENT GROUPS WORKING WITHIN IT. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW THE POLITICAL ADVERSARIES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE FACTIONALISM WHICH EXISTS AMONG ITS RIVALS

RANJIT DAS, PRESIDENT OF THE DISTRICT CONGRESS UNIT, SAID THAT VOTERS ARE BEING SENSITISED AGAINST THE RULING PARTY. VOTERS HAVE REALISED THEIR MISTAKE OF VOTING FOR THE BJD. THE PANCHAYAT ELECTIONS WILL GO IN FAVOUR OF THE CONGRESS, HE SAID

On the other hand, Congress leaders have started highlighting the alleged cases of corruption and under-development against the BJD and the BJP's central policies, spiraling prices of commodities and the contentious Farm Laws. BJD and Congress leaders are claiming before the electorate that the BJP is going to finish third in

the upcoming panchayat elections.

It is also said that support for Congress is growing faster than the BJP. Congress is hopeful of winning in some pockets of Nayagarh district.

Ranjit Das, president of the district Congress unit, said that voters are being sensitised against the ruling party. "Voters have realised their mistake of voting for the BJD. The panchayat elections will go in favour of the Congress," he said.

However, Lala Manoj Ray, president of the BJP's district unit, dismissed such claims of the BJD and Congress. He said that voters have lost their faith on BJD and a wind of change is sweeping across the district in favour of the BJP. Voters will give a shock to the BJD this time, he asserted.

A front line BJD leader in the district on the condition of anonymity asserted that the BJP and Congress have failed to match with the linear progress of the party in the district.

Political observers say that the results of these panchayat elections will go a long way in influencing the next general elections in Odisha.

BJP calls for 12-hr Mayurbhanj bandh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Baripada, Oct 24: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has called for a 12-hour Mayurbhanj bandh Monday, the saffron party informed Sunday through a press release issued by district BJP (East) president, Kandara Soren.

Pressing for the fulfillment of its 16-point charter of demands including the arrest of the main accused who attacked BJP workers Friday during Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's visit to Baripada, the saffron party has given the bandh call.

The other demands include proper treatment to patients at PRM Medical College and Hospital in Baripada, reopening of the Ayurvedic College, construction of embankment on Budhabalanga river to protect Baripada town from floods, setting up of Chhau Academy, resumption of factories that have been lying closed for a long time, handing over of proper land records to landless people, arrest of accused involved in Raruan gan-grape incident and suspension of Minister of State for Home captain Dibya Shankar Mishra over Mamita Meher murder case.



The saffron party has put forth multiple demands including proper treatment of patients at PRM Medical College and Hospital

Expressing his concern, Badasahi MLA Sanatana Bijuli said BJP workers were assaulted and journalists were treated disrespectfully during Patnaik's tour. He condemned the attack on BJP workers showing black flags in the presence of police. Bijuli demanded the immediate arrest of those who attacked the BJP workers and lamented that they are still roaming free.

2 tuskers go on rampage in Bonai

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, Oct 24: Residents of villages near the Bonai forest range in Sundargarh district are spending sleepless nights as two elephants have unleashed a reign of terror. Villagers said that the two animals are on a rampage since they got separated from their herd approximately five days back.

The two elephants are causing mayhem in Bonai, Tamara and other villages, forcing the villagers to remain inside even during the day when they need to go out for working. The two have destroyed crops over large tracts of lands, leaving the farmers a worried lot.

A range officer, an ACF and an elephant squad are working round



the clock to drive away the elephants into the forest.

So far their efforts have failed, but they are constantly monitoring the movements of the tuskers. According to a source, the elephants were last spotted near the inspection bungalow of the Forest department in Bonai town.

The irked villagers have demanded compensation for the damage to the crops caused by elephants. It was also reported that several

others areas in the district have been witnessing elephant menace for the last several weeks. Locals alleged that the forest department has failed to contain the menace as they have to face routine visits of the marauding animals. In many areas, houses have been damaged with people losing their sleep.

Kid, 2 others injured as gas stove explodes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, Oct 24: Three persons including a minor boy sustained grievous injuries Sunday after a gas stove exploded while it was being refilled at a shop near Sunanadi market of Joda block in Keonjhar district.

According to an eyewitness, the high-intensity explosion took place while two persons were working in the shop and the kid was standing close to it. The injured boy was identified as Budhadev Mahakud and the other two as Sanjay Maharana from Hudisahi and Sagar Khan from Joda market locality. The two men were illegally refilling the gas stove. This caused the explosion, leading to injuries.

Pests play spoilsport for paddy in Kendrapara dist



After floodwaters receded, farmers had hoped to get a good harvest, but pests have played spoilsport for the farmers. They are worried how to pay back loans and manage their families," said Mohapatra.

Jagdish Pati, a farmer of Depura under Sadar block said that he took ₹30,000 as loan from a nearby cooperative society for the crops this year. Such is the situation that he is apprehensive whether he will be able to return the loan amount.

The deputy director of the Agriculture department said that pest attacks have been reported from eight blocks in the district. Farmers are being sensitised about some preventive measures, he informed.

STIR FOR EMPLOYMENT



Demanding employment to local unemployed youths, members of Dasapalla Action Committee stage a sit-in at Rangamatia toll gate under Dasapalla block in Nayagarh district, Sunday

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, Oct 24: It seems that the woes of farmers in Kendrapara district will not end this year. After floods played havoc with the paddy, now it is the turn of the pests to attack the crop in many blocks of the district amid allegation of short supply of urea fertiliser, a report said.

According to reports, following heavy rainfall in August and September, many parts of the coastal district were flooded. The floods destroyed large quantities of paddy crops. However, now the quantity that survived are facing pest onslaught.

Farmers alleged that though they had applied pesticides, it was not effective in containing the disease.

"Pest attacks are now breaking our economic backbone at this time of pandemic," some farmers lamented.

Farmer leader Bidhubhusan Mohapatra said that post the flood situation, 30 to 40 per cent of the surviving paddy is damaged due to pest onslaught in the district.

Nuapada farmers worried

Nuapada, Oct 24: First, poor rainfall played spoilsport to paddy in many pockets of Nuapada district. Now, growing pest attack on the surviving paddy has added to worries of farmers in most parts, a report said.

Paddy in riparian pockets was saved by irrigation from rivers and other water bodies in some localities. However, now it has come under threat from pests. Paddy plants have started dying due to pest attacks, farmers alleged.

Farmers' leaders have started visiting many localities including Ranimuda.

They are asking farmers to launch an agitation against the current situation.

The farmers' leaders are trying to attract the attention of the officials of the Agriculture department to the current situation. They demanded that the

administration conduct a survey on the paddy damage and provide financial assistance.

Acres of land have been affected by pest, a report said.

Farmers lamented that first lack of rainfall, hit the crops hard. Whatever amount survived, is now being wiped out by the pests.

Most farmers voiced their frustration as the crops have been affected due to the pest attacks in spite of using pesticides. They said that in some cases the pesticides have led to the destruction of crops also.

They demanded that Agriculture department officials must come to their rescue in such situation to save their crops from pest. The affected farmers demanded that the department should assess the damages they have suffered and pay compensation.

NSCN(IM) reiterates demand for separate flag, constitution

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kohima, Oct 24: The NSCN(IM) has said talks with the new Central interlocutor had "failed to live up to the hype" created and been unable to resolve Naga demands for a separate flag and a Yehzabo (constitution or a chapter in the constitution).

The Naga rebel group's strongly worded statement comes within a month of a new interlocutor, AK Mishra, a former IPS officer who has specialised in northeast affairs in the Intelligence Bureau, being appointed replacing then Nagaland Governor RN Ravi as the government's negotiator.

The NSCN(IM), the main rebel group holding out on a peace deal, accused the government of indulging "in political escapism on the very issues that are holding up the road to the Naga solution."

The Indian government has till now been unwilling to accept the Naga demands for a separate constitution or a chapter on Nagaland in the Indian constitution or a separate flag. This is seen by observers as stemming from the fact that it had abrogated Article 370 which gave a separate status to Jammu and Kashmir and it was unwilling to concede similar demands from other states or groups.

As a via media, negotiators had indicated that the demand for a flag for Nagaland could be accommodated as a cultural symbol.



The NSCN (IM), however, made it clear that "the Naga issue is not a cultural issue" and treating the flag as a "cultural symbol" and not as "political identity as symbolised by the Naga flag" was not acceptable to it.

"Where is the need for the ceasefire if the Naga issue is a cultural problem and where is the need to drag on the talks for more than two decades if the issue is to solve cultural conflicts?" the statement questioned.

The rebel group pointed out that the Naga political talks had "ultimately led to the signing of the historic Framework Agreement on the 3rd August, 2015" and claimed that gave "due recognition to the sovereign identity of the Naga nation."

It went on to state that the Government of India is "still pre-emptively acting stubborn as the

crucial rounds of talks that focused on the Naga flag and the constitution is driven to hang in balance."

It termed the "stalemate created" as "unfortunate".

Officials said a final pact which would comprehensively deal with all issues was being worked out. The aim was to finalise it by the next year when the nation would be celebrating its 75th independence day.

However, the NSCN(IM) statement issued Saturday seems to indicate that the pact is far from ready.

Earlier, the last interlocutor Ravi and the NSCN(IM) had crossed swords over a ruling that the Naga rebel group could not collect "tax" from businessmen in Nagaland, which the Centre considered to be a form of extortionist appropriation which undermined the sovereign right of the state.

More refugees entering Mizoram

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Aizawl, Oct 24: More refugees from Myanmar's Chin state are entering the southern and eastern border districts of Mizoram due to continuing clashes between the neighbouring country's army and rebels, a senior police officer said Sunday.

At least 12,939 Myanmar, including women and children, are currently taking shelter in different parts of Mizoram, he said.

Of them, the detailed information of 1,518 Myanmar is yet to be recorded, the officer said.

The numbers keep changing as there are new entrants almost every day, while some who live near the international border enter and exit India on a regular basis, he said.

The police officer said that Myanmar nationals are being provided with shelter and food by locals, community leaders, NGOs and churches.

As per Mizoram Police data accessed by PTI, six border districts Champhai, Lawngtlai, Siaha, Serchhip, Hnahthial and Saitual to-



INFLUX CONTINUES

AT LEAST 12,939 MYANMARESE, INCLUDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN, ARE CURRENTLY TAKING SHELTER IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF MIZORAM

THE NORTHEASTERN STATE HAS BEEN FACING A STEADY INFLUX FROM MYANMAR SINCE THE MILITARY JUNTA SEIZED POWER THROUGH A COUP IN FEBRUARY

THE MYANMAR NATIONALS, WHO HAVE TAKEN REFUGE IN MIZORAM, ARE MOSTLY FROM THE CHIN COMMUNITIES, WHO SHARE ETHNIC TIES WITH THE MIZOS

gether housed 9,411 refugees.

The Myanmar nationals are taking shelter in all the 11 districts, with Champhai housing the highest number at 5,998, while there are 1,622 people in state capital Aizawl, as per the data.

Young Mizo Association's Tuipuiral unit president MC Lalramenga said that around 2,690 Myanmar nationals are currently taking shelter in Tuipuiral area comprising 21 villages in Champhai district.

He said that refugees from Myanmar's Chin state are continuously pouring in and more influx is expected after their harvest season.

Lalramenga said that relief camps and temporary shelters have been set up by locals in 14 villages in the area.

Besides several NGOs, Presbyterian, Baptist and Roman Catholic churches are proving food and clothing along with monetary assistance to the refugees.

Central Young Mizo Association vice president Lalhmachhuana said that the organisation has recently disbursed Rs 15 lakh, collected from people as donation, as assistance among the Myanmar refugees.

He said the outfit will send two truckloads of cloth to two southern districts next week.

Mizoram shares a 510-km-long international boundary with Myanmar. Among six border districts, Champhai, Siaha, Lawngtlai and Hnahthial have witnessed more influx from Myanmar since September 7, officials said.

LALU RETURNS TO HOME TURF AFTER 3 YEARS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Oct 24: Weathered by old age and ill-health, RJD president Lalu Prasad Sunday returned to his home turf of Bihar from where imprisonment in fodder scam cases had kept him away for three years.

Prasad, who was released from jail a few months ago, arrived here accompanied by wife Rabri Devi and eldest daughter Misa Bharti, at

whose Delhi residence he had been putting up for medical help he needs for the multiple ailments he suffers from. Chants in praise of the "messiah of the poor" rent the air as the haggard-looking septuagenarian walked out of the airport, with a shuffling gait, tiredly waving at the huge boisterous crowd.

Prasad was last seen here in September 2018, after which he returned to Ranchi to serve his sen-

tences upon expiry of the period of his bail, granted to attend elder son Tej Pratap's wedding and extended a number of times to help him avail medical treatment. At the airport, Tej Pratap and his younger brother Tejashwi appeared to have buried the hatchet while receiving their father, who wore a green cap and had a 'gamchha' (traditional towel) of the same colour wrapped around his neck.

Hectic politicking is expected in the days to come, as Prasad's return comes at a politically charged time. The former Union minister has made it clear that he intends to take part in the campaign for October 30 by-polls to Tarapur and Kusheshwar Ashan assembly seats. By-elections to the two seats have been necessitated by deaths of the respective MLAs, both belonging to JD(U) of CM Nitish Kumar, Prasad's arch-rival.

Cong-RJD fissures bring Grand Alliance to brink of collapse

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Patna, Oct 24: Less than a year after making waves with a better-than-expected performance in Bihar assembly polls, the opposition Grand Alliance finds itself on the brink of collapse.

The five-party opposition coalition had won just 10 seats short of majority, a major comeback since the Lok Sabha polls of 2019 when the NDA had made a clean sweep, winning all but one of 40 seats in Bihar.

However, Friday AICC in-charge of the state, Bhakt Charan Das, stated the Congress will contest 'all 40 seats' in the state, stunning Lalu Prasad's RJD which stands accused by the junior partner of having betrayed the coalition 'dharma'.

State RJD president Jagadanand Singh reacted with disbelief. "When the general elections are due in 2024, what is the point in talking about Lok Sabha polls now," he asked.

Das was also asked whether he was expressing a personal sentiment or echoing the views of the party 'high command', since Prasad is known to share excellent per-

sonal equations with the Gandhi family.

The flashpoint was reached over what seems to be a trifle. By-polls are due next week in two assembly segments - Tarapur and Kusheshwar Ashan. The RJD announced its candidates for both seats without taking into confidence the Congress.

After a few days of stunned silence, the Congress hit back, announcing its own candidates for the two seats. It was widely speculated that the fissures had much to do with the Congress roping in Kanhaiya Kumar and his perceived 'rivalry' with Tejashwi Yadav

sonal equations with the Gandhi family.

The flashpoint was reached over what seems to be a trifle. By-polls are due next week in two assembly segments - Tarapur and Kusheshwar Ashan. The RJD announced its candidates for both seats without taking into confidence the Congress.

Kanhaiya, who is currently in the



state to campaign for the two seats, however, brushed off the suggestion with the remark "there is no comparison. His (Tejashwi's) father and mother have been chief ministers. I am starting from scratch."

Earlier, addressing party workers at the Bihar Pradesh Congress

Committee (BPCC) headquarters, he had praised Rahul Gandhi for giving a platform to people like him, Hardik Patel and Jignesh Mevani, unlike "many others who are insecure about the legacy they have inherited from their fathers."

The comment was wildly cheered at and construed as an oblique ref-

erence to Tejashwi.

Origins of the narrative around the perceived rivalry between the two young leaders lay in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls when Kanhaiya made his Lok Sabha debut from his home town Begusarai against Union minister Giriraj Singh.

Despite a spirited campaign,

Kanhaiya, who was contesting on a CPI ticket, got hamstrung by the presence of RJD candidate Tanveer Hassan, and lost by a margin of more than four lakh votes.

However, former BPCC president Anil Sharma asserted 'Kanhaiya is not an issue' when it comes to the chequered relationship shared by the Congress and the RJD. "It has been Lalu Prasad's strategy to ensure that the Congress is not able to regain its support base among upper castes, Dalits and Muslims. A strong Congress would be seen as a secular alternative to the RJD. No wonder over the years he has ensured that our upper caste candidates do not get a chance to fight from seats where we have considerable chances of winning. He either wrests these for the RJD or gets these into the kitty of some other alliance partner," Sharma asserted.

Bhakt Charan Das echoed similar views when he said "the RJD mocks us for having won less than 20 seats despite contesting 70. Why does it not admit that it forced us to do away with many seats and failed to get its own votes transferred to candidates of Congress at some places."

Unvaccinated Gaya residents to face legal action

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Patna, Oct 24: The residents of Gaya who have not taken Covid vaccines will have to face legal action and they will not be entitled to receive food from government shops on subsidised rates, officials said.

Abhishek Singh, the district magistrate of Gaya, has directed all circle officers, block development officers, CDPOs, and others through video conferencing and asked them to implement the order.

"The officials have been asked to find people who have not taken corona vaccines and intimate them to take the vaccines at the earliest. In case of refusal, they have to face legal action. The district administration has the right to register FIR under Epidemic Diseases Act, 2005," Singh said. "The owners of the government shops have been directed to sell foods only to those who present certificates of Covid-19 vaccine after October 31," he said. The officer said the administration will start a mega vaccination campaign from October 28 to November 7.

WETLAND FISHING



Villagers fish in a wetland at Budha Mayong village in Morigaon district, Assam, Sunday

SC panel asks Assam to act against illegal construction in Kaziranga

The top court has banned all mining activities along the Kaziranga National Park and catchment area of rivers originating in Karbi Anglong Hills in Assam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 24: A Central Empowered Committee (CEC), constituted by the Supreme Court, has written to the Assam government to take action against illegal constructions along the animal corridors in the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve.

The CEC, in a letter to the Assam chief secretary, said an action taken report should be submitted to the panel within four weeks.

"I am forwarding herewith a copy of letter dated September 10, 2021 received from Dr. Hemen Hazarika, Scientist 'D' Head of office, IRO, Guwahati O/o the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Regional Office, Guwahati, Government of India on the above subject. It is requested that immediate action is taken to remove all constructions made in violation of the Supreme Court order dated April 12, 2019 and not to permit any new constructions along the nine identified animal corridors. An action taken report may please be sent to the CEC within the next four weeks," the letter by CEC Member-Secretary Amarnatha Shetty dated October 6 said.



Hazarika's letter was based on a report filed by Laetitia J. Syiemiong, Deputy Inspector-General of Forest (Central) after inspecting the wildlife corridor.

"Inspection was done and at field level after traversing the entire 8 (eight) stretch of animal corridors, where it was found that there has been illegal construction all along. Hence, there has been 'contempt of hon'ble Supreme Court order dated 12.04.2019' on I. A. No. 42944/2019 on WP(C) 202/1995 which had other than banning all types of mining, had also 'not permitted any new construction including on private lands which form part of the 9 identified

animal corridors,' the report filed by DIGF said. The report was submitted in response to a complaint by environment activist Rohit Choudhury who sought action against illegal constructions in the animal corridors in contempt of the top court order.

The apex court in its 2019 order had ordered that "no new construction shall be permitted on private lands which form part of the nine identified animal corridors."

The top court had also banned all mining activities along the Kaziranga National Park and catchment area of rivers originating in Karbi Anglong Hills in Assam.

of the day quote

Secularism is the constitutional and moral commitment for the BJP but the "pseudo secular syndicate" has misused it as a "vote catching tool"

The Aam Aadmi Party and the TMC will be "marginal players" in the Goa assembly polls and the Congress is best positioned to defeat the BJP and form the next government

Modi ji's government has made big records in giving trouble to the public. Highest unemployment: in Modi government. Government properties being sold: in Modi government. Petrol rates increased the most in a year: in Modi government

SHORT TAKES

Ashish hospitalised

Lakhimpur Kheri: Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra's son Ashish Mishra, arrested in connection with Lakhimpur Kheri violence, has contracted dengue and shifted to the district hospital, an official said Sunday.

Woman murdered

Patna: A married woman was gangraped and murdered in Bihar's West Champaran district, an official said Sunday. The police have arrested two suspects in the case.

Two die in UP

Farrukhabad (UP): Two persons died allegedly after consuming a dish made of potato and cauliflower in Uttar Pradesh's Farrukhabad district. The victims were identified as Irshad (45) and his son Lalla (six).

Two killed

Gautam Buddha Nagar: Two people were killed and four others injured in a road accident on the Delhi-Agra Yamuna expressway Sunday. A car enroute to Agra from Delhi rammed into a stationary mini-traveller at Naithana Ecotech area 1, killing two people on the spot and injuring four others.

Four held in UP

Moradabad: The Moradabad police have arrested four persons, who posed as 'relatives' of prisoners and helped them in getting bail. The gang was busted in a special joint operation of Moradabad police and crime branch.



The process to authorise new battalions for the ITBP, guarding the LAC between India and China, is in the last stage and the government is determined to provide transport and logistical support to all security forces

VIKRANT SAILS OUT FOR SECOND SEA TRIALS Indian Navy's indigenously developed aircraft carrier Vikrant sailed out on Sunday for its second sea trials, officials said. Its maiden sea trials were conducted in August this year



Nobody can disrupt J&K's peace: Shah

Jammu, Oct 24: Asserting that the government is aiming to wipe out terrorism from Jammu and Kashmir and put an end to civilian killings, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Sunday said nobody would be allowed to disrupt peace and development in the union territory, which has a place in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's heart.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a public rally in Jammu

Shah is on a three-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir, his first after the Centre revoked the erstwhile state's special status and bifurcated it into two union territories of J&K and Ladakh on August 5, 2019.

Addressing a public rally at Bhagwati Nagar here, Shah without naming the Congress, National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) said the three families are answerable to the people for their failure to develop Jammu and Kashmir over the past seven decades.

"The new phase of development under the leadership of Modi has started in J&K but attempts are being made by inimical elements to create a hurdle. I have come here to assure you that nobody will be able to create a hurdle and disrupt peace and development," Shah, who arrived at the well-attended rally amid thunderous applause and sloganeering by people, said.

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Addressing a public rally at Bhagwati Nagar here, Shah without naming the Congress, National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) said the three families are answerable to the people for their failure to develop Jammu and Kashmir over the past seven decades

In an apparent reference to the killing of 11 civilians by terrorists in targeted attacks across Kashmir this month, he said some people are raising questions about the prevailing security situation in the UT but "I want to answer them with facts and figures".

He said a new phase of development has started which cannot be stopped by anyone. "Jammu and Kashmir is placed in the heart of the prime minister and under his government, there will be no injustice, discrimination or appeasement," he said.

Shah said the time for sidelining the people of Jammu has come to an end and now both Kashmir and

Civilian killed in 'cross-firing' in J&K

The incident evoked strong reactions from mainstream political parties in the Valley, which demanded a probe into it



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, Oct 24: A civilian was killed in "cross-firing" after militants attacked CRPF personnel in Shopian district of Jammu and Kashmir Sunday, police said.

The incident evoked strong reactions from mainstream political parties in the Valley, which demanded a probe into it. The civilian killed has been identified as Shahid Ahmad.

"Around 10:30 hrs, unidentified terrorists attacked a naka party of 178 Bn CRPF at Babapora, Shopian," police said. They said the CRPF retaliated the fire and during "cross-firing" one person was killed.

Further details are being ascertained, they added. Taking to Twitter, National Conference vice president Omar Abdullah said the

policy of "shoot first" will further alienate people.

"He was shot dead & his bag has no weapons or explosives, he's carrying fruit & vegetables. This policy of "shoot first" will further alienate people. This is no way to make friends with the people or the youth of Kashmir," Omar said. He was referring to Union Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks on Saturday that he wanted to make friends with the youth of Kashmir.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said it was sad that the armed forces "operate with such impunity" in Kashmir. "Another innocent civilian killed allegedly by CRPF in Shopian today. It's sad that armed forces show little restraint & operate with such impunity. My heartfelt condolences to his family," she wrote on Twitter.

Modi to visit Italy, UK for G-20 Summit



AGENCIES

India moving ahead with new energy: PM

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday said the success of India's Covid vaccination drive shows its capability and noted that the country is moving ahead with new energy after crossing the 100 crore vaccine doses milestone. In the Mann Ki Baat radio broadcast, Modi said the Culture Ministry is geared up to conduct a competition on patriotic songs to mark 'Amrit Mahotsav', a celebration of 75 years of India's Independence, and urged the youth to pen creations that reflect the thought of new India, are inspired by the current success of the country, and fuel the country's resolve for the future.

New Delhi, Oct 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting Rome and Glasgow from October 29 to November 2, 2021 to attend the 16th G-20 Summit and the World Leaders' Summit of COP-26 respectively.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs officials, Modi will be participating in the 16th G-20 Summit from 30-31 October at the invitation of Prime Minister of Italy Mario Draghi in Rome. The Summit will also be attended by Heads of State/Government of G-20 Member Countries, the European Union, and other invited countries and International Organisations.

This will be the 8th G-20 Summit that Modi will be attending. The forthcoming summit under the Italian Presidency is focused on the theme of 'People, Planet, Prosperity', focusing on the areas of 'Recovery from the Pandemic and Strengthening of Global Health Governance', 'Economic Recovery

and Resilience', 'Climate Change and Energy Transition' and 'Sustainable Development and Food Security'.

ITBP RAISING DAY



ITBP jawans perform stunts during the 60th Raising Day of Indo Tibetan Border Police in Greater Noida

ARRESTED PAK TERRORIST KILLED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, Oct 24: An arrested Pakistani terrorist was killed, while three security personnel were injured Sunday when militants opened fire on a joint search party of the Army and police inside a forest in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

The operation, which saw nine Army personnel losing their lives in separate ambushes in

Surankote and Mendhar on October 11 and 14, entered the 14th day Sunday. A police spokesperson said two policemen and an Army jawan along with a prisoner Zia Mustafa, a Pakistani terrorist affiliated with the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) were injured in firing by terrorists in Bhatta Durrian forest Sunday morning.



The Dark Horse Uddhav

Until the other day, NCP supremo Sharad Pawar was the only name that always cropped up for the post of PM probable. But knowledgeable sources say Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray could be a new player in the Game-2024. He has changed the entire culture and ethos of Shiv Sena in the past two years.

manager, measured in his responses, doesn't mince words either and knows when to keep quiet. He is managing two very ambitious leaders, Sharad Pawar and Nana Patole with tremendous skill. Political pundits say if India gets a hung Parliament, Uddhav is the man to watch.

PMO wakes up to fill key posts, finally

The Modi administration is in the process of filling key positions in the next few weeks beginning with the new Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC), Director Enforcement (ED) and Director General (DG), National Investigation Agency (NIA). While the CVC is vacant for months, the key post in NIA is under a temporary charge and ED is waiting for a new director.

Education Policy. The PMO also has to pick a new ED, a very crucial post held by Sanjay Mishra whose extended tenure will end November 18. The Supreme Court came down heavily on the government recently saying that it cannot continue extending the tenure of the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) chief till the agency completes investigating all crucial cases.

Winter Session on track

Although the pandemic derailed the Winter Session last year, the government is gearing up to hold the full session this winter. With vaccination doses touching 100-crore mark and likely to cross 120-mark by mid-November, the government may hold the session from November 22. However, a final call on dates will be taken by month-end when the Cabinet Committee of Parliament meets.

barred for most of the categories. Neither the former MPs nor the dignitaries were allowed to enter the premises and the media faced stiff restrictions. But now the times have changed with normal activity being witnessed in government offices and departments. Metros, buses and cinema halls are allowed without any seating restrictions as virtually nil cases of Covid being witnessed in the past few days.

Mamata's game of 50

The Game-2024 for the Lok Sabha polls has already begun. While the Congress is desperately working hard to revive itself and putting its entire might to win a couple of states in the ensuing round of Assembly polls early next year, the BJP is trying hard to defend its citadel in four states; UP, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur. Punjab is being watched very closely as it's an open game with pollsters predicting a win for the dark horse AAP. These polls are also crucial for some of the regional players like SP, and BSP who have been facing BJP's onslaught for the past seven years

in UP. In West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is rather waiting for the Congress to suffer a setback. She knows she is not a player in North Indian politics and remains unaffiliated as her honeymoon with the Congress is virtually over. She is now on her own trip with poll strategist Prashant Kishor advising her actively. If grapevine has it, she is now targeting to secure 50 Lok Sabha seats during the 2024 parliamentary polls as she can be a player in any non-BJP government formulation.

Rising graph of Stalin

After two powerful southern leaders; K Kamraj and J Jayalalithaa, failed to grab power in Delhi, DMK's MK Stalin is contemplating trying his luck. But he is not in a hurry and is slowly consolidating his position. He is looking beyond 2024 even if there is a hung house three years down the line. Poll strategist Prashant Kishor is a common factor between Stalin and Mamata Banerjee. If Mamata is targeting a 50-seat game, he is not far behind either.

Currently, he is creating an identity raising issues like "federal structure" etc without talking politics directly. He is busy mobilising non-BJP Chief Ministers on key issues.

G-23 disheartened

The Group of 23 Congress dissidents are now a demoralized lot. The G-23 claimed they are not a "Ji Huzur" group. But for the time being, they have decided to lie-low. This was seen in the recently held CWC meeting. They now want to wait for the outcome of the upcoming Assembly polls. The party chief Sonia Gandhi has started accommodating leaders of G-23. According to the CWC members who do not want to be on record, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma and others made it clear that no such group exists. Sonia Gandhi's assertion in the opening remarks that she is a "full time and hands-on Congress president" is not being seen as a snub to the G-23 group though a section of the media interpreted it like this. Party insiders said this was necessary

international



I express my closeness to the thousands of migrants, refugees and others in need of protection in Libya
POPE FRANCIS

VAX SIDE-EFFECTS

A rare nerve disorder that affects the feet, hands and limbs has been added to the list of possible side-effects of the AstraZeneca Covid vaccine by UK regulators, the Daily Mail reported



of the day quote

This GBP 3 billion skills revolution builds on our Plan for Jobs and will spread opportunity across the UK by transforming post-16 education – giving people the skills they need to earn more and get on in life
RISHI SUNAK | UK CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

The Kampala blast seems to be a terrorist act but we shall get the perpetrators. The public should not fear, we shall defeat this criminality like we have defeated all the other criminality
YOWERI MUSEVENI | UGANDA PRESIDENT

Singapore cannot go into an indefinite lockdown and stand still, but also cannot simply let go and let things rip. We have to travel this road to get to living safely with COVID-19
LEE HSIEN LOONG | SINGAPORE PM

Facebook under the lens again

LEAKED DOCUMENTS SHOW FACEBOOK HAS BEEN SELECTIVE IN CURBING HATE SPEECH, MISINFORMATION AND INFLAMMATORY POSTS IN INDIA

AGENCIES

New York/New Delhi, Oct 24: Facebook in India has been selective in curbing hate speech, misinformation and inflammatory posts, particularly anti-Muslim content, according to leaked documents obtained by *The Associated Press*, even as the internet giant's own employees cast doubt over the its motivations and interests.

Internal documents at Facebook show "a struggle with misinformation, hate speech and celebrations of violence" in India, the company's biggest market, with researchers at the social media giant pointing out that there are groups and pages "replete with inflammatory and misleading anti-Muslim content" on its platform, US media reports have said.

In a report published Saturday, *The New York Times* said in

February 2019, a Facebook researcher created a new user account to look into what the social media website will look like for a person living in Kerala.

The report said the internal documents include reports on how bots and fake accounts tied to the "country's ruling party and opposition figures" were wreaking havoc on national elections.

The *NYT* said that in a separate report produced after the 2019 national elections, Facebook found that "over 40 per cent of top views, or impressions, in the Indian state of West Bengal were fake/in-authentic". One inauthentic account had amassed more than 30 million impressions. In an internal document titled 'Adversarial Harmful Networks: India Case Study', "Facebook researchers wrote that there were groups and pages 'replete with inflammatory and misleading

anti-Muslim content" on Facebook.

The internal documents also detail how a plan "championed" by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg to focus on "meaningful social interactions" was leading to more misinformation in India, particularly during the pandemic.

The *NYT* report added that another Facebook report detailed efforts by Bajrang Dal to publish posts containing anti-Muslim narratives on the platform. "Facebook is considering designating the group as a dangerous organisation because it is 'inciting religious violence' on the platform, the document showed. But it has not yet done so," the *NYT* report said. The documents show that Facebook did not have enough resources in India and was not able to grapple with the problems it had introduced there, including anti-Muslim posts. A Facebook spokesman, Andy



Stone, said Facebook has reduced the amount of hate speech that people see globally by half this year. "Hate speech against marginalised groups, including Muslims, is on the rise in India and globally," Stone said in the *NYT* report. "So we are improving enforcement and are committed to updating our policies as hate speech evolves online." In India, "there is definitely a question about resourcing" for Facebook, but the answer is not "just throwing more money at the

problem," said Katie Harbath, who spent 10 years at Facebook as a director of public policy, and worked directly on securing India's national elections. Citing the Facebook report, the *NYT* said that of India's 22 officially recognised languages, Facebook has trained its AI systems on five. But in Hindi and Bengali, it still did not have enough data to adequately police the content, and much of the content targeting Muslims "is never flagged or actioned."

China aims to cut fossil energy use to below 20% by 2060

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Beijing, Oct 24: China is targeting an ambitious clean energy goal of reducing fossil fuel use to under 20 percent by 2060, according to an official plan published by state media Sunday.

The document follows a pledge by President Xi Jinping to wean the world's biggest polluter off coal, with a target of peaking carbon emissions by 2030 and achieving carbon neutrality 30 years later.

But the country has been criticised for pushing ahead with opening dozens of new coal power plants. Authorities have also been looking to ramp up production with coal prices surging and supplies running low in recent days, both factors behind power outages.

But on Sunday, China's official Xinhua news agency laid out a host of targets in its path towards carbon neutrality.

Among them was the proportion of non-fossil fuel consumption reaching around 25 percent of total energy use by 2030 – when the nation targets peak emissions.

By then, carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP would have dropped by more than 65 percent from 2005 levels, while the total installed capacity of wind and solar power is targeted to reach more than 1.2 billion kilowatts, Xinhua said.

FOR BRIGHT FUTURE



A man casts his ballot at a polling station during the presidential election in Tashkent, Uzbekistan
PTI PHOTO

SHORT TAKES

Most-wanted drug trafficker captured

Bogota: The Colombian government said that the country's most-wanted drug trafficker "Otoniel" has been captured. According to the authorities, Dairo Antonio Usuga (50), who headed the country's largest drug trafficking gang known as the Gulf Clan, was captured in a rural area of the Department of Antioquia near the border with Panama, reports Xinhua news agency.

Taiwan shaken by earthquake

Taipei: An earthquake shook Taiwan's capital, Taipei, Sunday and caused falling rocks that injured a woman and damaged a car. No deaths were reported. The 6.5-magnitude quake struck at 1:11 pm and was centred near Yilan, a city about 35 km (22 miles) east of Taipei near the northeastern coast, according to the Central Weather Bureau. It was followed seconds later by a 5.4-magnitude quake. Buildings in Taipei swayed. The subway and some other mass transit services were suspended.

US urges NK to stop missile tests

Seoul: A senior US diplomat Sunday urged North Korea to refrain from additional missile tests and resume nuclear diplomacy between the countries, days after the North fired-off its first underwater-launched ballistic missile in two years. Sung Kim, the top US official on North Korea affairs, spoke after meeting with South Korean officials to discuss North Korea's recent missile tests that have come amid a long-running stalemate in nuclear diplomacy between Washington and Pyongyang.

Calif: Thousands of trees to be removed

Three rivers: In the wake of California wildfires, upwards of 10,000 trees weakened by fires, drought, disease or age must be removed, work that will keep a nearby highway closed to visitors who seek the world's two largest sequoia trees.

Security forces kill 15 militants

Quetta: Security forces killed 15 militants belonging to banned separatist organisations in two separate operations carried out in the restive Balochistan province Saturday. A spokesperson for the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) said that nine militants from different banned organisations were killed.

BANGLADESH VIOLENCE

Certain quarters with vested interests tarnishing country's image: Hasina

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dhaka, Oct 24: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said on Sunday that certain quarters with vested interests were disseminating propaganda to create communal divide and tarnish the image of Bangladesh, as the country recovers from a slew of violence against Hindus and mob attacks on temples during Durga Puja festivities, according to a media report.

Attacks on Hindu temples intensified in Bangladesh since October 13 after an alleged blasphemous post surfaced on social media during the Durga Puja celebrations. On the night of October 17, a mob damaged 66 houses and set on fire at least 20 homes of Hindus in Bangladesh.

"No one can make Bangladesh go backwards. Some of the incidents that we occasionally see are orchestrated. It is being done intentionally so that Bangladesh's image is damaged," Prime Minister Hasina was quoted as saying by bd-news24.Com.

Speaking during the inauguration of the Payra bridge in southern Bangladesh, Hasina said that "certain quarters with vested interests are disseminating propaganda aimed at creating a communal divide." She, however, did not name any one. "No matter how much good work we do, there is a quarter that is occupied with dis-



Attacks on Hindu temples intensified in Bangladesh since October 13 after an alleged blasphemous post surfaced on social media during the Durga Puja celebrations

crediting Bangladesh. What do they want? They don't want the normal democratic process to continue in this country," she said, urging people to be wary of the attempts to destabilise the country. Eight people died as communal

violence spread to several other districts amid the festivities, the report said. The Durga Puja celebrations, considered to be the biggest festival of the minority Hindu community in Bangladesh, concluded without the traditional Bijoya Dashami procession.

Bangladesh's security agencies Saturday arrested Shaikat Mandal, who is believed to be the second key suspect behind the recent violence. His arrest came a day after police had nabbed Iqbal Hossain, 35, the key suspect from Cox Bazar area.

So far, police have arrested nearly 600 people from various parts of the country for inciting violence against the Hindus during the Durga Puja festivities.

Burning cargo ship spews toxic gas off Canadian coast

THE AGENCY SAID IT WAS WORKING WITH ITS US COUNTERPART TO TRACK 40 CONTAINERS THAT HAD FALLEN OVERBOARD, SAYING THEY POSE A SIGNIFICANT RISK TO MARINERS

AGENCIES

Victoria, Oct 24: A container ship carrying mining chemicals caught fire on Saturday, expelling toxic gas off the coast of British Columbia. The Canadian Coast

Guard said it was working with the US Coast Guard to assess the situation, including environmental hazards.

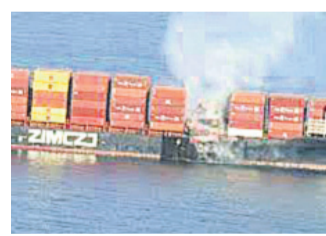
16 crew members were evacuated from the MV Zim Kingston, while five remained onboard to

fight the fire, the Canadian Coast Guard said in a statement late on Saturday.

Ten containers were burning, it said, adding that the fire continued to spread but the ship itself was not on fire.

The agency said it was working with its US counterpart to track 40 containers that had fallen overboard, saying they pose a significant risk to mariners.

"Mariners are advised to stay clear of the area. Currently there



is no safety risk to people on shore, however the situation will continue to be monitored," they said. A video obtained by Reuters showed fire cascading down from

the deck of the ship into the water.

The Zim Kingston reported on Friday that it had encountered rough weather west of the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

"This is extremely concerning. The ship and containers are very close to Victoria, BC, and a big storm is forecast to hit tonight. We...are worried this may be yet another environmental disaster," said David Boudinot, president of Surfrider Foundation Canada, an environmental organization.

Afghan girls learn tailoring after school ban

AGENCIES

Kabul/New Delhi, Oct 24: Dozens of female high school and university students in Afghanistan have joined vocational centers to learn tailoring and cosmetology as the women and girls have been banned from school and university since the Taliban took over the country, Tolo News reported.

According to these girls, sitting at home is very difficult for them, therefore they are willing to learn a profession.

"It has been a couple of months that we are at home since schools and universities were closed. We have to learn a profession or a job, because we can't sit like this at

home," said Samira Sharifi, a student.

"I want to learn a profession for my future to help my family, we want our schools to be opened so that we can carry on with our education," said Mahnaz Ghulami, a student.

Most of the trainees in the vocational centers are the students of high schools and universities.

After the closure of high schools and universities across Afghanistan, Herat female students have started gaining vocational training in the province.

"We have decided to learn tailoring along with our education," said Shaqaiq Ganji, a student.

"It's necessary for every woman to learn tailoring to help her fam-



Representational image

ily and her husband, especially in this bad economic situation," said Laili Sofizada, a teacher.

Due to the closure of schools and universities, the number of students in vocational centers

labour and social affairs. The Labour and Social Affairs department of Herat said the department is working to provide more opportunities for Herat girls and women to learn vocational training.

"The art and professional sector and the kindergarten departments have started their activities, we support them and supervise their activities," said Mulla Mohammad Sabit, head of the labour and social affairs of Herat.

During the past two months, most of the women and girls who worked in state and private institutions lost their jobs and are trying to learn handicrafts and vocational training.

doubled compared to recent years, the report added.

"Our classes had the capacity of 20 to 25 students but we increased it to 45 students, because most of the students have lost their spirit, and their schools and universities have closed," said Fatima Tokhi, director of technical and professional affairs at the Herat department of



India Cements is 75 years old. We are celebrating the Platinum Jubilee year. The remarkable victory by CSK in IPL 2021 is a fitting tribute to India Cements on the momentous occasion by our one and only captain M S Dhoni
N SRIVIVASAN | VICE-CHAIRMAN, INDIA CEMENTS

CSC, NCRB TIE UP FOR SALE OF USED VEHICLES

No Objection Certificate (NOC), mandatory for sale-purchase of second-hand vehicles, will now be available from over four lakh Common Services Centres (CSC) across India. CSC, an SPV under the Ministry of Electronics & IT, has partnered with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) to make this service available pan-India



of the day quote

The uptrend in the lead economic and business indicators in the recent months shows that the economic recovery is catching pace and strong economic growth is expected in the coming quarters

In terms of growth plans, besides extensively growing the count of our current outlets, there will also be a significant push towards developing and scaling our Ice Creamery brand that will operate as a sister brand for the parent company

We are interested in developing a separate business vertical for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) business. OSM is planning on making an investment of close to Rs 75 crore

SHORT TAKES

FPIs remain net sellers in October

New Delhi: Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have turned net sellers in Indian market by pulling out Rs 3,825 crore in October so far. In the past two months, huge buying was witnessed in the debt segment when FPIs had Rs 13,363 crore in September and Rs 14,376.2 crore in August. However, so far, in October, FPIs have pulled out Rs 1,494 crore, depositors' data showed. From equities, FPIs took out Rs 2,331 crore. The total net outflow stood at Rs 3,825 crore during October 1-22.

Govt to up Bharat Bond ETF by Dec

New Delhi: The government is likely to launch the next tranche of the Bharat Bond ETF by December and expects to raise over Rs 10,000 crore to fund growth plans of central public sector enterprises, according to a senior finance ministry official. The official added that the fund requirements of CPSEs are being worked out and the third tranche of the exchange-traded fund (ETF) will be launched by the end of the calendar year. "We are finalising on the amount to be raised but it would be over Rs 10,000 crore," the official said.

HZL witness coal impact on Ops

Mumbai: The prioritisation of domestic coal supply to the power sector has to "some extent" hit Hindustan Zinc but the company has cushioned itself by tying up imported dry fuel supply till March, a top official of the Vedanta group firm said. Coal India, which accounts for more than 80 per cent of domestic coal output, has been prioritising fuel supply temporarily to the power sector in view of the low stock position at thermal power plants.

Koo eyes expansion to Southeast Asia

New Delhi: Homegrown microblogging platform Koo's user base has touched about 15 million now, with five million users added in the last quarter, its co-founder Aprameya Radhakrishna has said. Koo will maintain its sharp focus on the Indian market, onboarding more and more users, even as it plans to venture into one new market in Southeast Asia after June 2022. The Indian microblogging platform, which has enjoyed a meteoric rise in usage, is currently also available in Nigeria, a market that "continues to grow".

UNDELIVERED CARGOES

Bargaining chip in Qatar LNG deal

Petronet LNG Ltd's 75 million tonne a year liquefied natural gas (LNG) import deal with Qatar gas is ending in 2028. Renewal, if any, has to be confirmed 5 years ahead of that



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 24: India will bargain for supply of undelivered gas quantities of past years when it negotiates renewal of its multi-billion dollar LNG import deal with Qatar, an official said. "Talks for renewal will start next year and will be conditioned on Qatar gas delivering in 2022 the 50 cargoes or shiploads of LNG that weren't taken in 2015," Petronet Director-Finance V K Mishra said. "We have requested Qatar to give us the pending 50 cargoes next year," Mishra said. "They haven't yet given a response to our request." He said the demand can be brought up when the renewal talks start. Spot LNG prices in Asia rose to a record \$56.33 per million British thermal units on October 6, valuing a standard cargo at about \$190 million. Petronet pays about \$11 per mmBtu under its oil-linked contract with Qatar. Last year, Petronet had sought 3 cargoes additional to the annual contracted volume, of which Qatar delivered two, an official aware of the matter said. Petronet is pro-

India in 2015 had not taken delivery of the cargoes as it renegotiated the pricing of the long-term supply contract after prices hit double-digit. Qatar had then agreed to revise the pricing formula subject to India buying an additional 1 million tonne per annum of LNG

As regards the cargoes that were not taken, it was decided that India can see the cargoes anytime during the remainder of the contract that ends in 2028. In case, Qatar is unable to meet the request, the deferred cargoes can be delivered in 2029

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moted by four state oil firms - Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL), GAIL (India) Ltd and Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC). Its chairman is Secretary to the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India. Sources said the government is backing Petronet's efforts to get

Gas price surge may upset CNG, PNG rates

New Delhi: After fuel price surge, prices of gas used for cooking and transportation are expected to soar this year putting consumers in India at the risk of inflated CNG and PNG rates. As per an assessment of gas market done by ICICI Securities, prices in gas futures market is estimated to rise by \$4.1mmBtu to \$7.35mmBtu in H1FY23 and by another \$3.6mmBtu (49 per cent) to \$10.95mmBtu in H2FY23. This would mean that three main players supplying CNG and PNG - Green Gas (GGL), Mahanagar Gas (MGL) and Indraprastha Gas (IGL) would need to hike CNG prices by 50-56 per cent in April-October, 2022 to fully pass on APM gas price rise to keep their margins at lofty levels.

the undelivered LNG at times when energy prices have climbed to record high. The 50 cargoes will come at \$11-12 per mmBtu against more than double the rate that is prevalent in the spot or current market presently.

The Oil Ministry, they said, has assured Petronet to take up on its behalf the demand for supply of undelivered cargoes.

RIL, HUL among cos with eroded valuation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 24: The combined market valuation of five of the top-10 most valued companies eroded by ₹1,42,880.11 crore last week, with Hindustan Unilever, Reliance Industries and Tata Consultancy Services emerging as major laggards. Last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex declined by 494.33 points or 0.79 per cent. Market benchmarks Sensex and Nifty declined for the fourth consecutive session Friday. The market valuation of Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) tumbled ₹45,523.33 crore to reach ₹5,76,836.40 crore. Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) valuation eroded by ₹45,126.6 crore to ₹16,66,427.95 crore and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) market worth tanked by ₹1,151.94 crore to ₹12,94,686.48 crore.



The market capitalisation (Mcap) of Bajaj Finance plunged ₹8,890.95 crore to ₹4,65,576.46 crore and that of HDFC Bank Ltd fell by ₹2,187.29 crore to ₹9,31,371.72 crore. In contrast, Kotak Mahindra Bank added ₹30,747.78 crore taking its valuation to ₹4,30,558.09 crore. ICICI Bank's market valuation zoomed by ₹22,248.14 crore to reach ₹5,26,497.27 crore. The valuation of HDFC jumped ₹17,015.22 crore to ₹5,24,877.06 crore and that of State Bank of India gained ₹11,111.14 crore to ₹4,48,863.34 crore.

WINTER SESSION

Two financial sector bills soon

The govt is likely to table amendments to the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Act, 2013 and Banking Regulation Act, 1949

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, Oct 24: The government may introduce two key financial sector bills, including the proposed law for facilitating privatisation of public sector banks as announced by the finance minister in the Budget. The government is also likely to table amendments to the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Act, 2013, to



enable separation of the National Pension System Trust (NPS) from the PFRDA for ensuring universal pension coverage. The government is likely to table amendments in the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, during the forthcoming Winter Session of Parliament, sources said. Apart from this, amendments would be needed in the Banking Companies (Acquisition and

Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970, and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980, for privatisation of banks, sources said. These Acts led to the nationalisation of banks in two phases and provisions of these laws have to be changed for the privatisation of banks, they said. A month-long winter session of Parliament is expected to start by the end of the next month. The second batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants, allowing the government to undertake additional expenditure other than the Finance Bill, would also be introduced for approval. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the Budget for 2021-22 had announced the privatisation of public sector banks (PSBs) as part of disinvestment drive to garner ₹1.75 lakh crore.

Samco MF targets 10% market share

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, Oct 24: Samco Mutual Fund is all set to expand its business in the state of Odisha. With the aim to partner with 300 distributors across the state, the company has a target to achieve 10% market share of Mutual Fund Distributors by the end of current year. Umesh Kumar Mehta, CEO of Samco Asset Management Pvt Ltd, said, "Bhubaneswar is emerging as the hotspot for fund houses and advisers. Awareness about mutual funds has increased in smaller towns that led to the growing interest in the state. Compared to the overall population in the state the numbers of active investors are low. We believe with the right product and distribution mix we can deliver a great investment for the people of Bhubaneswar in the form of our upcoming mutual fund." According to the company's statement, Odisha contributes 2.58% to India's GDP, however the contribution of the state to the Assets under management (AUM) of Mutual Fund industry is only 0.98% which means that investor community is highly under penetrated. The company is all set up to ramp up its distribution and assets under management in the state with the upcoming launch of the mutual fund. Shatadru Gupta, Zonal Head, East of Samco Group, said, "We are excited to expand our business in the City and will hire and depute the best teams for catering to the state. The distributors in Bhubaneswar will have an exciting product for their investors."

BIZ BUZZ

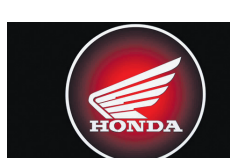
Apollo Tyres introduces European brand Vredestein

New Delhi: Strengthening its product offering further in the Indian market, Apollo Tyres has introduced its European tyre brand Vredestein in the country to cater to premium cars and superbike segments. The home-grown tyre major is eyeing around 30 per cent market share in the segment over the next two years with the Vredestein range which would be locally produced from the company's plants in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. "The performance segment in both cars and bikes is gaining a lot of prominence and we believe this is the right time for us to introduce the brand," said Apollo Tyres Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa President Satish Sharma.



HSMI all set to foray into EV segment next fiscal

New Delhi: Two-wheeler major Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) is gearing up to launch its first electric product in the country in the next financial year, a top company official has said. The company, which sells popular models like Activa and Shine in the country, aims to start feasibility run of the electric scooter with its dealer partners at the end of the festive season this year. In an interaction with PTI, HMSI President, Managing Director and CEO Atsushi Ogata said the company has decided to foray into the segment after having a detailed discussion with its parent firm -- Honda Motor Company in Japan.



B-town celebrities launch NFTs amid global craze

NFTS ARE A TYPE OF DIGITAL ASSET WHICH USE BLOCKCHAIN TO RECORD THE OWNERSHIP OF ITEMS SUCH AS IMAGES, VIDEOS AND OTHER COLLECTIBLES. THEIR ROARING POPULARITY HAS BAFFLED MANY BUT THE EXPLOSIVE GROWTH SHOWS NO SIGN OF ABATING

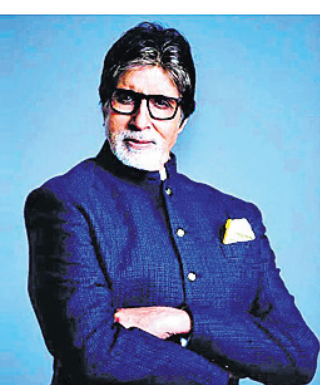
AGENCIES

Mumbai, Oct 24: Indian celebrities from the world of Bollywood and cricket are increasingly launching digital memorabilia through non-fungible tokens (NFT), hoping to rake in thousands of dollars by cashing in on growing interest in such assets. Bollywood superstars such as Amitabh Bachchan and Salman Khan are planning to launch NFTs soon. While Bachchan's NFTs will include autographed posters of his movies, Khan has been building excitement on his Twitter account by telling his 43 million followers about the planned NFT launch. "NFTs are right now alien to

Bollywood but I am sure they (film stars) will see this as another platform where they can use their existing content and generate revenue," said Ayaan Agnihotri of Bollycoin, an NFT marketplace for Bollywood assets. Agnihotri said that within days of launch this month, his platform sold 8 million of the 20 million available so-called BollyCoins, crypto tokens that can be used to buy NFTs when they are launched. One BollyCoin is worth 10 US cents. But it's still early days for celebrity NFTs in India. Indian cricketer Dinesh Karthik is auctioning a digital art reel from a cricket match where he hit a match-winning six on the last ball for around 5 ethereums, a digital



currency, worth around \$20,000. But he has yet to receive any bids. "NFT has picked up a lot in the West in the last one year with now iconic moments from basketball



being bought by fans digitally, which gave us the idea," Karthik told agencies. Others have had success. One of India's top fashion designers,

NFTs are right now alien to Bollywood but I am sure they (film stars) will see this as another platform where they can use their existing content and generate revenue

AYAAN AGNIHOTRI | BOLLYCOIN

Manish Malhotra, recently sold NFTs of digital sketches of some of his most famous creations for \$4,000 a piece. Malhotra's website shows one can purchase some of his bridal wear outfits at a lower price range of \$2,500-\$3,500.

The rise of NFTs has baffled many who say it makes little sense to spend large sums of money on items that don't physically exist and can simply be viewed online. Still, global sales volumes of NFTs have galloped to \$10.7 billion in the third quarter of 2021, making an eightfold increase from the previous quarter, data from market tracker DappRadar showed. Vishakha Singh, vice president for NFTs at Indian crypto exchange WazirX, said celebrity participation in the segment is set to create excitement in the space. This, she said, is great for the ecosystem. This will help us in garnering more awareness towards this new game changing world of digital assets, Singh said.

