



## WATER BABY

Actor Shruti Haasan took to Instagram, where she shared a throwback picture of herself from an underwater photo-shoot

LEISURE P2



## SEROLOGICAL SURVEY

A serological survey for comprehensive analysis of the spread of Covid-19 in Delhi has commenced

TWO STATES P7



## EXTRADITION NOT EASY

Mumbai attack convict David Headley can't be extradited to India, a US attorney tells a federal court

INTERNATIONAL P10

# IN DELHI, 'KEEP DOORS, WINDOWS CLOSED'

**WINGED MENACE:** As crop-destroying desert locusts swarms are spotted in Delhi, the govt issues precautionary advisory. National capital's IGI Airport has also been kept on high alert

People have been directed to keep their doors and windows closed and cover outdoor plants with plastic sheets. The District Magistrates have also been asked to be on high alert.

"District Magistrates are advised to deploy the adequate staff to make all possible arrangements for guiding the residents to distract the locusts," the advisory by agriculture joint director AP Saini stated.

The government said that they can be distracted by way of making high decibel sound through beating of drum utensils, playing high volume music on music systems, firing crackers and burning of neem leaves.

Over the past few months, locust swarms have attacked and destroyed crops in various states, including Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh.

Three-kilometre-long swarm of



desert locusts reached the outskirts of Delhi after entering Gurgaon Saturday morning. Earlier, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai called an emergency meeting to discuss the situation pursuant to the locust attack in neighbouring Gurgaon.

According to a Union Agriculture ministry report, 84 districts of Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, spread over an area of 1,14,026 hectares, had been in the grip of locusts till June 21, 2020.

National capital's IGI Airport has been kept on high alert following swarm of locusts were spotted near to the key installation. The spotting took place near to NH 8's stretch which connects the national capital to Gurgaon around 11.00 a.m., sources said.

Accordingly, the airport was kept at high alert as operations could have been affected due to the incoming locust swarm. However, due to a change in wind direction the swarm has moved in a completely different direction altogether.

"As of now operations are completely normal, but we are maintaining a lookout and coordinating with different agencies," sources said. Last month, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had issued safety guidelines regarding flight operations in view of the threat posed by locust attack in certain parts of the country.



# For 21 days in a row, fuel prices move northward

The cumulative increase since the oil companies started the cycle June 7 now totals to ₹9.25 for petrol and ₹10.85 for diesel in Odisha



**FUEL PRICES IN BHUBANESWAR**  
PETROL ₹80.94 (+ ₹0.25)  
DIESEL ₹78.55 (+ ₹0.21)

PNN & AGENCIES

**New Delhi/ Bhubaneswar, June 27:** For the 21st consecutive day Saturday, diesel price was hiked by 21 paise a litre. Petrol price too has gone up by 25 paise a litre. In the current phase of rate hike, petrol has gone up by ₹9.12 a litre while that of diesel has gone by a higher margin of ₹11.01 a litre, nationally.

In Delhi, where the diesel costs more than petrol, both the fuels are now priced above ₹80. While petrol is selling at 19-month high level, diesel is at all-time high level. Rates have been

increased across the country but the final retail selling price differs from state to state depending on the incidence of local sales tax or VAT.

In Mumbai, petrol price went up from ₹86.91 per litre to ₹87.14, while diesel rate was hiked to ₹78.71 from ₹78.51.

While diesel rates have been hiked for the 21st straight day, petrol price has been raised on 20 occasions in three weeks.

The cumulative increase since the oil companies started the cycle June 7 now totals to ₹9.25 for petrol and ₹10.85 for diesel in Odisha.

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** After swarms of crop-destroying desert locusts reached the outskirts of Delhi Saturday, the city government directed the district magistrates to make all possible arrangements to distract them.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



I'm disappointed. We worked really hard to win the best entertainment channel award.

# State's Covid toll mounts to 18; cases reach 6,350

PNN & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** The state reported one more Covid-19 fatality Saturday, taking the toll to 18 as 170 more people, including an NDRF jawan, tested positive for the virus, pushing the tally to 6,350.

In a statement issued Saturday, the health department said a 68-year-old Covid-positive man died in Ganjam district. The victim was also suffering from co-morbid conditions of hypertension and diabetes, it said.



With this, the Covid deaths reported from Ganjam district increased to nine. Four deaths were reported from Khurda, three from Cuttack and one each from Bargarh and Puri. The state had reported its first Covid death in Bhubaneswar April 6, the official said.

Besides this, seven other Covid-positive persons have also died but the reason of their deaths was due to other diseases, the official said.

Of the 170 fresh cases, 143 were reported from quarantine centres where people returning from other states are lodged for preliminary observation, while 27 others were locals. Of the fresh cases, 169 were reported from 14 districts while one belonged to the NDRF.

As many as 58 cases were reported from Ganjam district, followed by 19 each in Khurda and Nabarangpur, 16 each from Gajapati and Rayagada, 14 from Cuttack, six each from Puri and Kendrapara, five from Malkangiri, three each from Jajpur and Nayagarh, two from Sambalpur and one each from Koraput and Bargarh districts, the I&PR department said.

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP MAX	37.2°C 35.8°C
TEMP MIN	26.4°C 24.0°C
Humidity	95% 79%
Rainfall	Nil Nil
Forecast	Partly cloudy sky

# Build-up continues along LAC

## INDIAN MILITARY AMASSES MORE MEN, MATERIAL AT BORDER WITH CHINA

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** The Indian military is amassing more men and material as a precautionary deployment along the 3,488-km-long border with China.

The deployment, perhaps one of the biggest in the recent years, comes at a time when India and China are locked in a hitherto unprecedented standoff – for eight weeks now – at multiple points along their border.

Sources said that Indian Army has deployed three more divisions in eastern Ladakh region to bolster its position on the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

Apart from tanks and artillery, the Army has deployed their advanced very quick-reaction surface-to-air missile defence systems, including Akash missiles which have the capacity to take down combat aircraft and drones.

It was stated that four weeks ago an important division had started acclimatising for high-altitude warfare and two weeks later, parts of it were deployed at the 18,000-foot-high Depsang plains, a plateau located north of the



Galwan valley. Similarly reserve forces have been moved to forward locations to match up the Chinese deployments.

Asked whether it is full deployment, a senior Indian Army officer said: "It is a mirror deployment."

Indian Army spokesperson, Colonel Aman Anand was, however, unavailable for comments. In a separate domain, the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force are also on full operational alert. The IAF has deployed a number of SAGW systems to Ladakh.

The movement of additional men

and material to the border comes when talks between military commanders at the Chushul-Moldo in Ladakh have ended in a stalemate.

The situation at the four flash points – Galwan Valley, Hot Springs, Depsang and Pangong Lake – in eastern Ladakh is tense. At Pangong Lake, Chinese troops have moved up to Finger 4 where they have brought over 120 vehicles and dozens of boats.

The Chinese Army has also opened up a new front in the area near the Depsang Bulge, north of Galwan. They

## MIRROR DEPLOYMENT

- Indian Army deploys 3 more divisions in eastern Ladakh region
- Advanced very quick-reaction surface-to-air missile defence systems, including Akash missiles, which can take down combat aircraft and drones, deployed

4 weeks ago an important division had started acclimatising for high-altitude warfare

2 weeks later, parts of it were deployed at the 18,000-foot-high Depsang plains, a plateau on the north of Galwan valley

have built camps and deployed vehicles and troops.

At Patrol Points 14 at Galwan, 15 at Kongka La and 17 at Hot Springs, the Chinese Army has been deployed to a large extent.

In response, the Indian Army has also upped the deployment in these positions.

Chinese People's Liberation Army troops have even returned to Patrolling Post 14 in Galwan Valley where the barbaric June 15 attack, in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed, occurred.

# Nine urban co-op banks in state may come under RBI

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** President Ram Nath Kovind promulgated the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020, Saturday. The amendment will bring all urban and multi-state co-operative banks under the supervision of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

In Odisha, there are 17 urban cooperative banks, of which nine are functioning and others are on liquidity stage. If the state government implements the decision, the nine urban cooperative banks will come under the su-

pervision of RBI, said a government official.

About 1.98 lakh depositors are there in the above nine banks. These banks are having ₹1,155 crore deposits and have provided loans to the tune of ₹686 crore.

Former state finance minister Panchanan Kanungo welcomed the move and said, "It has been a long-standing demand. It will bring transparency and strengthen the co-operative banking system. Otherwise, the cooperative banks easily escape after doing irregularities like what happened during chit fund scam."

MORE P11

# 2 held for couple's murder over sorcery

## THE DECEASED WERE IDENTIFIED AS SOMA MADHI (50) AND HIS WIFE SUKRI MADHI (45)

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, June 27:** A couple was allegedly murdered over suspected sorcery at Pednalguda village in Malkangiri district, Saturday. Police have detained two persons in this regard.

The deceased were identified as Soma Madhi (50) and his wife Sukri Madhi (45). Police have detained two persons for the crime. Reports said that the duo was found murdered Friday.

Some locals allegedly killed the couple on suspicion over committing sorcery, sources said.

Upon receiving information about



the double murder Malkangiri IIC Tam Prasad Nag and other police officials rushed in and seized the bodies.

Police started an investigation to the double murder and detained two persons of Pednalguda for interrogation.

It may be mentioned here that such cases, every now and then,

have been reported in tribal-dominated pockets of the district.

About a couple of days ago, a woman and her daughter were suspected of hexing at Binayakpur under Motu police limits. The two were attacked at night. While the woman died on the spot, her daughter was critically wounded and admitted to the Koraput district headquarters hospital.

June 15, a man beheaded his aunt on the suspicion of practicing witchcraft. The incident took place at Karakachia village under Khunta police limits Mayurbhanj district. The horrifying crime once more highlighted the deep-rooted su-

perstitions embedded in the minds of people living in rural areas. The accused was identified as 28-year-old Budhiram Singh and the deceased as 60-year-old Demphar Singh. Sources said, Budhiram's four-year-old daughter had fallen sick a week ago and died. Budhiram blamed his aunt for her death. He thought his daughter had fell victim to Demphar's sorcery.

Such gruesome cases still go unabated due to poor awareness and superstitious beliefs even if the state government has made stringent legal provisions under the Odisha Prevention of Witch Hunting Act, 2013.

## INDIA'S GEORGE FLOYDS

AGENCIES

**Chennai, June 27:** Outrage at the death of a father-son duo in the custody of Tamil Nadu police earlier this week mounted Saturday, with thousands on social media comparing the incident to the death of George Floyd in the United States.

J Jayaraj, 59, and Bennicks Immanuel, 31, were subjected to a brutal thrashing, which resulted in rectal bleeding and eventual death, according to a letter to government officials written by Jayaraj's wife J Selvarani. The letter, based on eyewitness testimony and reviewed by Reuters, seeks action against the police officers involved.

Police in Sathankulam, a town located 50 km (31 miles) south of the port city of Thoothukudi in southern Tamil Nadu state, said in a FIR reviewed by Reuters that Jayaraj and Bennicks were picked up Friday, June 19 for breaching coronavirus lockdown rules.

Bennicks died Monday after complaining of breathlessness and Jayaraj died Tuesday, Chief Minister Edappadi Palaniswami, who oversees the police in the state, said in a statement Wednesday. Two policemen involved in the incident had been suspended, he added.

"We will take action over this incident as per the law," Palaniswami said. Hundreds of thousands of



Jayaraj and Bennicks were subjected to a brutal thrashing, which resulted in rectal bleeding and eventual death, says Jayaraj's wife J Selvarani

tweets were sent out using the hashtag #JusticeforJayarajandBennix, that was among the top Twitter top-

ics trending in India Friday and among the top 30 trending globally, with celebrities and politicians con-

- Questions have been raised over the judicial magistrate D. Saravanan's role in granting custody without conducting the mandated medical check-up
- The Madurai bench of Madras High Court took suo motu cognizance of the matter and June 24, a bench ordered the SP, Thoothukudi, to inquire and submit a status report
- Two sub-inspectors have been suspended so far

demning police action. "The George Floyds of India are far too many," tweeted Gujarat MLA Jignesh Mevani.

"Will Indians march on streets in thousands, like America?" Mevani asked his nearly 7,50,000 Twitter followers, referring to events following the death in police custody May 25 of George Floyd, a Black man. Nearly 15 cases of custodial violence and torture were reported in daily on average, with nine people dying in judicial or police custody every 24 hours, according to the latest annual report by NHRC for the year 2017/18. The NHRC said in its report that some custodial deaths were reported after considerable delay or not reported at all, adding violence in custody was so rampant "that it has become almost routine."

MORE P2



## WHITE ACTORS DROPPED

The Indian origin character Apu Nahasapeemapetilon will no longer be voiced by actor Hank Azaria in the popular animated show, *The Simpsons*. "Moving forward, *The Simpsons* will no longer have white actors voice non-white characters," the makers said in a statement, reports *mirror.co.uk*.

## NO PRE-SHOOT RITUAL FOR MCAVOY

Actor James McAvoy says there was a pre-shoot ritual that he used to follow, but then he stopped because he found it 'just stupid'. McAvoy is known for his roles in movies like *The Last King Of Scotland* and the *X Men* franchise in which he played Charles Xavier aka Professor X.



## FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
Today ideas will flood your mind, but it is good that you will be able to carry them out efficiently. However, Ganesh warns you not to take rash decisions. Wise people will help you along the way. Pay heed to the advise of experienced people.

**TAURUS**  
The stars are very auspiciously disposed towards you, announces Ganesh. You have an exceptionally bright and enjoyable day ahead of you. All events and situations will work in your favour. If you are pursuing higher studies you will perform brilliantly.

**GEMINI**  
It is a day filled with joy and happiness on the home front. You will spend a lot of time with children. You will complete long pending household projects as well as take an interest in ironing out differences between family members, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
There is a chance today to benefit from women-folk. Though you are methodical and disciplined in your work, you will feel rulerless. Yet you will get relief from this monotony and feel jovial, says Ganesh.

**LEO**  
You will not be able to reap the rewards of your hard work fully today. You will take all matters very seriously today. You will feel a sense of responsibility and will try to find lasting solutions to problems today. It is a good day to put to rest some worries that have been haunting you for some time now, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
You will enchant people with your adaptability and your desire to get with your surroundings. For those who are in love, something unexpected may take place, but there is no need to panic as by and by things will turn out to be in your interest.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that today in your office you should be very careful in your work. It is likely that your superiors will not be happy about your work or your ability today. Those of you who are businessmen should try and delay sending off tenders today. Those who have given their job interviews may not get a favorable response to it.

**SCORPIO**  
There's always a first time, and today is the day when you would seal a profitable deal for your new business venture. However, close the deal only if it is beneficial for a long term. Be cautious and watch your steps carefully to avoid any unfortunate situation.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Your far-sightedness and brilliance will not only impress your peers, but also help you to rope in big clients and huge projects. Cheers to that! Thanks to your systematic and disciplined approach, you are entitled to be the 'most desirable' employee of the company.

**CAPRICORN**  
Print and electronic media will attract your attention, if you're just planning to begin your career. Your spiritual and philosophical approach give you inner peace, and also inspire you to visit a holy place. Overall, you will have a balanced day, today, says Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will feel deeply inclined towards development and research, today. Actions speak louder than words, and your efforts and overall growth will speak plenty about your character. Your romantic side will come to the fore today.

**PISCES**  
For those who are salaried, today should be a progressive day for you. Important meetings at the work-place will benefit from your presence and the suggestions you have to make. This should enhance your relationship with your superiors.

# B-Town condemns Tuticorin custodial deaths

**Mumbai:** Cineworld has condemned the alleged police brutality on a father-son duo and their eventual death in judicial custody, in Tamil Nadu's Tuticorin district.

The father-son duo of Jayaraj and Benicks, aka Fenix, died in judicial custody earlier this week after alleged police torture.

Condemning the incident, Priyanka Chopra shared: "Reeling from what I am hearing. Absolutely stunned, sad and angry. No human being deserves such brutality, whatever be the crime. The guilty must not be allowed to go unpunished."

"This might just be one case out of many but it takes only one case to begin the snowball effect. #JusticeforJayarajAndFenix," tweeted Taapsee Pannu. "Hope this is investigated thoroughly and justice prevails," shared Anushka Sharma in her Instagram story. "We go to the police when we are in danger. How can they BE the danger?"



#JusticeForJayarajAndFenix," shared Parineeti Chopra. Disha Patani shared a cartoon showing police beating up two people. It is captioned: "The unchained animals". "This has to stop. #policebrutality" wrote filmmaker Zoya Akhtar condemning the incident. Actors Rajkumar Rao, Kriti Kharbanda, Gauhar Khan and several others shared a video of a radio jockey from Chennai who describes how the father-son duo of Jayaraj and Benicks were booked for not closing their mobile shop in time June 19. They were lodged in the Kovilpatti jail June 21. Jayaraj died June 22 night and his son Benicks June 23 morning in judicial custody. The family alleged police assault led to their deaths. IANS

## Swara defends controversial scene

**Mumbai:** Actress Swara Bhasker has responded to an objection raised by Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) Chief Prasoon Joshi, over a scene in her latest web series *Rashbari*.

Prasoon Joshi had tweeted pointing out a scene in the web series as 'irresponsible content.'

Swara Bhasker took to Twitter to explain the purpose of the scene to the CBFC Chief and pointing out that maybe he misunderstood it.

"Respected sir, maybe you are misunderstanding the scene. The way you are describing the scene, it is just the opposite. The child is dancing at her own will. Her father feels embarrassed after seeing

this. The dance is not provocative. She is simply dancing and has no idea about how society will sexualise her too. This is what the scene shows. #Rashbari," tweeted Swara Bhasker in Hindi.

Swara's tweet comes as a response to Prasoon Joshi's tweet which reads: "Saddened by Web series #Rashbari's irresponsible content portraying a little girl child dancing provocatively in front of men drinking. Creators and audience need to seriously rethink Freedom of expression or freedom of exploitation? Let's spare children in the desperate need for entertainment." IANS



## Now painting challenge to beat lockdown blues

One of the works brings home a message that how windows have been opened for the nature to breathe after humans were compelled to stay home



A work of Dasaratha Mohanta

POST NEWS NETWORK

**BHUBANESWAR:** The coronavirus-induced lockdown has forced people to rely heavily on the Internet and social media to stay connected with their dear ones. Many people are coming up with online challenges to battle isolation blues. The latest addition to the list is 'online painting challenges' by the painters.

The challenge is simple and about exploring the painting skills of artists to explain the difficult times. It is being loved by the painters amid the lockdown.

Contemporary artists are nominating each other to express their feelings on canvasses during these dark hours. The names include Nibedita Mohanta, Rutuparna Maharana, Deepak Mohanta, Dibya Rout, Subhendu Jena, Sujit Mohanta, Sunil

Hembram and Dasaratha Mohanta. Speaking to *OrissaPOST*, sand artist and painter Dasaratha Mohanta of Mayurbhanja said, "An artist can speak a lot silently using his/her painting tools. Needless to say that art is a medium of expressing emotions, truth and positive and negative aspects of our society. During this pandemic I have challenged my co-artists to express themselves reflecting the present times." Dasaratha has conveyed his feelings through his painting of a child in her mother's womb during

the pandemic. Similarly Jajpur-based painter Rutuparna Maharana's *Tale of birds* is a depiction of the miseries of feathered animals.

"The virus has taken a toll on every aspect of life. Now we are realising how it feels to be confined to our homes for a long time. Therefore, I have made an attempt to highlight the plight of the winged creatures that are not meant to live in cages," said Rutuparna.

Painter Nibedita Mohanta from Baripada, in her creation, has tried to explain the impacts of the pandemic on human civilisation.

Her work also sends a message that how windows have been opened for the environment to breathe after humans were compelled to stay home following the imposition of the lockdown. The attempts made by the artists have earned appreciations from the critics, art lovers and their friends.

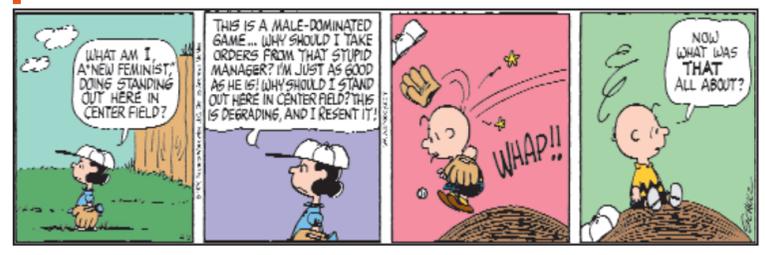
Art critic Rajiv Sahoo said, "Online art challenge is a good platform for the emerging artists. All of them look promising and deserve proper grooming to thrive in future."

### 'I am a water baby'

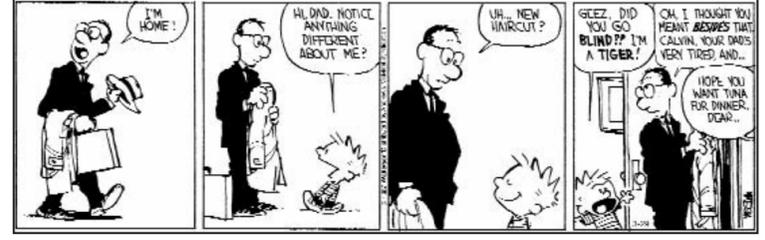
**Mumbai:** Actress Shruti Haasan calls herself a 'water baby'. Shruti, daughter of veteran stars Kamal Haasan and Sarika, took to Instagram, where she shared a throwback picture of herself from an underwater photo-shoot. "Water baby #throwback," she captioned the image. She also shared a photograph of her face, where she showed her two

birthmarks in her eye and urged everyone to celebrate all the things that make them what they are. "Yes, those are birthmarks in my eye - no it's not some weird reaction - no it's not a disease - yes they get lighter and darker just like freckles - yes it's very common - yes I have had them for years and years and I think they're super special ?? and YES you should celebrate all the things that make you YOU," Shruti wrote. Shruti made her Hindi film debut in 2000 with the film *Luck*. She was later seen in films like *Dil Toh Baccha Hai Ji*, *Ramaya Vasthavayya* and *Behen Hogi Teri*. IANS

## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS



## BREVITY



### FUN post

#### CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8								9				
		3	E	9				2		1		
7	3	6		1	4			C	9			
			A	0				D	6	2		
	7		3	C	A	6						
9			6			0	A	5				
C			5	2	4			3	0	8		
8			9	0				1	E	4	7	
E	8					D	2	7				
B	4			8	5							9
D			C		1		3					
			B			9	0	5	3	6		
5				C		9	4	8				

Across  
1 Ranch youngsters  
4 Musical intervals  
8 Bungalow  
9 Be of one mind  
10 Stressful (5-7)  
13 Harbour craft  
15 Squirrel's stash  
16 Gorilla  
17 French economic doctrine (7-5)

Down  
20 Barbaric  
21 Remedy for the ill (4,3)  
22 African pests  
23 Pub game  
1 Palm droppings  
2 Carafe size  
3 NASA projectiles (5,8)  
4 Lyric poem

5 Sports meet (5-3-5)  
6 Lanai, in Hawaii  
7 Put one's foot down  
11 Be wild about  
12 Top dogs, in the military  
14 Small particle  
18 Lay to rest  
19 Highlander  
21 Commuting option

## SUDOKU

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

0	8	7	2	9	B	A	0	1	D
	0			3	2	5	9	B	C
	3	E	9			2	1		
7	3	6		1	4		C	9	
			A	0			D	6	2
	7		3	C	A	6			
9			6			0	A	5	
C			5	2	4			3	0
8			9	0			1	E	4
E	8					D	2	7	
B	4			8	5				9
D			C		1		3		
			B			9	0	5	3
5				C		9	4	8	

## SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD

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

### SUDOKU

E	B	5	0	2	9	1	0	4	C	A	3	6	7	8
D	8	2	B	A	3	0	7	6	5	1	4	9		
0	3	7	1	0	6	8	A	4	E	2	5	8		
9	8	C	4	7	5	2	0	8	0	8	0	A	1	
1	4	C	8	5	9	6	7	0	2	0	1			
C	7	8	6	3	4	0	0	8	2	5	3	1	A	
5	1	6	8	7	B	4	C	9	0	D	A	3	2	
2	E	D	A	C	1	7	8	9	3	4	5	6	0	
8	0	9	D	E	2	3	5	1	6	C	B	4	7	
3	A	4	5	9	0	2	6	1	B	7	E	C	8	
A	D	8	4	B	C	0	1	3	5	9	7	E	2	
4	9	0	7	6	8	5	2	E	A	C	B	1	0	
7	5	3	2	0	D	9	C	E	1	6	B	A	4	
6	2	1	9	5	E	7	A	B	3	4	0	8	0	
0	C	3	1	A	6	4	0	2	8	0	7	9	5	

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**SANITISATION DRIVE**

Fire brigade personnel sanitise Krushi Bhawan in Bhubaneswar in the wake of novel coronavirus outbreak, Saturday

**STRICT VIGIL**

Police check vehicles at Kalpana Square in Bhubaneswar to enforce the shutdown over Covid-19, Saturday



# NOT CHINA, INDIA RESPONSIBLE: CHINESE ENVOY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** Striking a conciliatory tone after raising tensions in eastern Ladakh to a fever pitch, China Thursday said it was ready to work with India to properly deal with the border standoff while noting that "suspicion and friction" was a wrong path that goes against the fundamental aspirations of people of the two countries.

In an interview to PTI, Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong said India and China are able to properly manage their differences, and called upon New Delhi to avoid taking actions that may "complicate" the situation in eastern Ladakh. He went on to add that at present, the overall situation in the China-India border areas is "stable and controllable."

"We hope the Indian side meets the Chinese side halfway, avoids taking actions that may complicate the border situation and takes concrete actions to maintain stability in the border areas," he said.

The Indian and Chinese armies are locked in a bitter standoff in multiple locations in eastern Ladakh for the last six weeks, and the tension escalated manifold after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a violent clash in Galwan Valley June 15.

The Chinese ambassador said "mutual respect and support" is a sure way and meets the long-term

interests of both countries, but at the same time, largely put the onus on India to ease tension in the region.

"China and India are both large developing countries and emerging economies with more than one billion people, and both have the historic mission of realising our own development and revitalisation," he said.

He further said: "China and India are willing and able to properly manage differences. In the last few weeks, both sides have held a series of diplomatic and military talks to cool down temperature even as Chinese military has increased its presence in all sensitive areas along the 3,500 km Line of Actual Control (LAC), the de-facto border

At a weekly media briefing, External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava Thursday said Chinese side departed from previously agreed understanding in respect the Galwan Valley area and sought to erect structures just across the LAC.

"When this attempt was foiled, Chinese troops took violent actions on June 15 that directly resulted in casualties," the spokesperson asserted. He said the conduct of Chinese forces this year has been in complete disregard of all mutually agreed norms.

The ambassador said: "Mutual respect and support is a sure way



and meets the long-term interests of both countries; suspicion and friction is a wrong path and goes against the fundamental aspiration of the two peoples."

"Under the guidance of the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, we are ready to work with the Indian side to properly deal with the current situation, jointly uphold peace and stability in the border areas, and ensure a sound and steady development of bilateral relations," Sun said.

In their historic informal summit in Chinese city of Wuhan in 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and

Chinese President Xi Jinping underscored the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity in all areas of the India-China border region in the interest of the development of bilateral relations.

The summit had taken place months after a 73-day military face-off between the two armies in Doklam that raised fears of a war between the two Asian giants.

In the course of the interview, Sun repeated the Chinese government's stand - which has been rejected by India - that Indian troops are responsible for the Galwan Valley clashes, and indicated that the onus

**The onus is not on China. The Indian side crossed the LAC (Line of Actual Control) for provocation and attacked the Chinese border troops. The Indian forces seriously violated agreements on border issues between the two countries**



SUN WEIDONG | CHINESE AMBASSADOR

India has been maintaining that Galwan Valley belongs to it and has strongly rejected China's claim of sovereignty over it.

Sun said Chinese side lodged representations on multiple occasions to the Indian side through military and diplomatic channels following the incident and that India agreed to withdraw its personnel from the area.

The two sides held Lt General-level talks on June 6 during which they agreed on disengagement of troops from all the standoff areas.

The ambassador said the Indian side promised in the talks that they would not cross the estuary of the Galwan river to patrol and build facilities, adding the two sides agreed to build observation posts on either side of the Galwan river mouth.

"However, after the commander-level meeting, when the situation on the ground was already easing, the Indian border troops copped out on the consensus reached at the commander-level meeting, demanded that China dismantle its observation post," he said.

India has been consistently maintaining that Galwan Valley clashes had taken place on the Indian side of the LAC. The envoy said actions taken by the Indian side are not in consonance with the spirit of several agreements signed by the two countries.

## Miffed Prasar Bharati threatens to dump 'anti-national' PTI

After the news agency carried an interview with Chinese ambassador, Prasar Bharati has been mulling to end its "relationship" with the former

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** In what can be seen as the government putting its foot down, Prasar Bharati, India's public broadcaster, is sending a letter threatening to end its "relationship" over the alleged "anti-national" reportage by news agency Press Trust of India or PTI. This comes soon after the PTI carried an interview with Chinese ambassador Sun Weidong, where he blamed India for the India-China violent standoff that saw 20 Indian bravehearts getting martyred.

Sources say a "strong letter" was being to PTI just ahead of its Board meeting Saturday where the public broadcaster expressed "deep displeasure on anti national reporting by PTI." The public broadcaster has communicated that the PTI's editorial stance makes it untenable to "continue relationship."

Government sources claim that the broadcaster had been "supporting PTI with huge financial fees" which often ran into several crores. This arrangement has been



going on for decades, claimed the source. However, it insisted that PTI has been "rigid" on review of the same since 2016-17.

Meanwhile, government sources indicated that it was not a one off incident that sparked the outrage but the "totality of PTI's conduct."

In the controversial interview which was published June 25, the Chinese diplomat had put the onus to resolve the crisis on India. "The incident was completely instigated by the Indian side and the responsibility does not lie with the Chinese side," PTI had quoted him.

After the interview, Sun tweeted: "Gave interview to PTI on #GalwanValley Incident. Onus is not on #China. We are willing & able to properly manage differences.

### MANY RUN-INS

The PTI had its share of run-ins with the present government. A few years ago, Union Minister Smriti Irani had pointed out that the PTI used a wrong image of a flooded airport, which was being passed off as Ahmedabad airport in flood-ravaged Gujarat. It then apologised for its mistake. In another incident, the news agency showed a picture of the BJP and JDU cadres wearing Modi and Nitish Kumar masks to mark 'Friendship Day'. In August, 2017, Irani had tweeted: "@PTI\_News is this how elected heads will be projected? Is this your official stand?" (sic) Then again, the news agency had issued an apology.

Mutual respect & support is sure way. Suspicion & friction is wrong path. Will jointly uphold peace & stability in border areas, ensure sound & steady relations." (sic)

## Cops in the soup for visiting Puri fest

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** In brazen misuse of power, two senior police officials of Odisha had visited Puri town on the Rath Yatra day despite the state government's order prohibiting entry to the Pilgrim city till June 24 afternoon.

Although the officials in charge of law order in Puri remain tight-lipped over the issue, sources claimed that the senior cops visited the Holy town on the Rath Yatra day - June 23, flouting the government's order.

According to highly-placed sources, one of the errant officers is deployed at Khurda as Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) while the other officer works as an assistant commissioner of police (ACP) in Bhubaneswar Urban Police District of Commissionerate Police.

The state police immediately swung into action and ordered the Puri superintendent of police (SP)



and DIG Central Range to initiate an enquiry into the matter following the incident.

On June 24, the state police, in haste, released an advisory restricting the visit of cops who were not on Rath Yatra duty to not visit Puri apparently to avoid any further embarrassment.

### Curfew in Puri from June 30 to July 2

**Puri:** Curfew will be enforced in the entire Puri district from 10pm June 30 till 10pm July 2 for the Bahuda Yatra. All the roads leading to Puri would be sealed while Badadanda, the venue of the fete, would be under strict curfew. The buildings located on either side of Badadanda were notified not to allow outsiders to go to the rooftop during the Bahuda Yatra. However, only the owner family members of the buildings were permitted to witness the fete from their roof.

### IN A NUTSHELL

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On June 24, the state police, in haste, released an advisory restricting the visit of cops who were not on Rath Yatra duty to not visit Puri apparently to avoid any further embarrassment

shan cannot be totally ruled out," adds the advisory.

Notably, the two officers have also earlier embroiled in various controversies in the past. The ACP in question had also faced suspension on the charges of departmental misconduct.

## Five IAS officers transferred

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** In a reshuffle among young IAS officers of 2017 batch, the state government Saturday transferred five officers.

According to a notification issued by the General Administration (GA) department, Somesh Kumar Upadhyay has been appointed as Titlagarh sub-collector with additional charge of Titlagarh municipality executive officer.

Likewise, P Anvesha Reddy has been posted as Baripada sub-collector with additional charge of Baripada municipality executive officer; the notification said.

Moreover, Patil Ashish Ishwar, Divakara T S and Hema Kanta Say have been appointed as sub-collectors of Balasore, Dharmagarh and Jeypore respectively. These three officers will also remain in charge of urban local bodies (ULBs) of the places concerned, read the GA department notification.



## BAHUDA YATRA AHEAD

# Chariots to take south turn today



Experts examine the chariots at Sharadhabali ahead of the Bahuda Yatra of Srimandir deities, Saturday

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, June 27:** A group of engineers, carpenters and blacksmiths Saturday examined the status of the three chariots of Srimandir deities ahead of the Bahuda Yatra July 1.

According to sources, the expert team examined Nandighosa rath of Lord Jagannath, Taladhwaaja of Lord Balabhadra and Darpadalan of Devi Subhadra thoroughly at Sharadhabali near Srigundicha temple.

"The three chariots were found in good condition. Only some minor repair works were carried out on the chariots," said a source.

Srimandir chief caretaker

Sudarshan Mekap said experts used to examine the status of the chariots prior to the Bahuda Yatra of Srimandir deities. "The expert team today examined the three chariots at Sharadhabali. Subsequently, all minor repair works were carried out on the chariots. The chariots would take Dakshina Moda (south turn) Sunday Our experts will once again examine the chariots just before the Bahuda Yatra," Mekap said.

As per Srimandir tradition, Lord Jagannath and his siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra travel on their respective chariots to reach Srigundicha temple for a nine-day sojourn on the occasion of



OP PHOTOS

### With some minor repair works carried out on the chariots, the three raths were found in good condition

Rath Yatra. The deities return to the Lions' Gate of Srimandir on the occasion of Bahuda Yatra.

Lakhs of devotees from across the country as well as abroad congregate in the Holy City to witness the mega festival. This year, the annual event is being organised without congregation of devotees in the

wake of novel coronavirus outbreak.

The state government has conducted Covid-19 tests on several hundred Srimandir servitors and police personnel to hold the mega festival amid the pandemic.

Moreover, the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA), in association with the Boyanika, has distributed specially-designed face masks among the servitors.

Besides, the servitors have been told to stay in home quarantine till the culmination of the festival. Earlier, the temple administration had distributed immunity-boosting homeopathic medicines among the servitors, sources said.

## GODDESS LAXMI BREAKS NANDIGHOSA CHARIOT

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, June 27:** Herapanchami, a unique ritual of annual Car Festival, was performed at Srigundicha temple here Saturday.

Goddess Mahalaxmi, the consort of Lord Jagannath, was taken to the Srigundicha temple from Srimandir on a palanquin for the conduct of the Herapanchami ritual.

As per the tradition and belief, Mahalaxmi, the consort of Lord Jagannath, was peevish at Lord Jagannath as she was left out on the nine-day sojourn to Srigundicha temple. Angry Mahalaxmi reached Srigundicha temple and tried to persuade Lord Jagannath to return to Srimandir. The Goddess broke a small portion from

Nandighosa chariot at Sharadhabali after her master refused to accompany her.

"Herapanchami ritual displays the Manabiya Leela (humanly activities) of Lord Jagannath. Goddess Laxmi was brought to Srigundicha temple from Srimandir in a procession. She was taken to the Jay-Bijay gate of the shrine after due permission from Lord Jagannath. The Goddess was taken back to Srimandir after completion of the ritual," said a servitor.

Priests and servitors of Srimandir performed the ritual in accordance with the tradition and belief. However, the ritual was performed at Srigundicha temple without the congregation of devotees due to the Covid-19 restrictions.



Servitors carry Goddess Mahalaxmi from Srimandir to Srigundicha temple in Puri for performance of Herapanchami ritual, Saturday

# State to develop app to file RTI applications

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** As part of the 5T initiative, the state government has decided to develop a mobile application for filing and monitoring RTI applications. The information and public re-

problem for the users of the portal. By using the mobile application, people without depending upon cyber café and other internet sources can use the mobile application to upload their issues, the sources said. The mobile app will have login

like the Central RTI portal. Currently, the government is using manual reporting system. This reporting mechanism is dependent upon the mail and postal delivery systems. The postal department takes long time to deliver the report to concern person. Therefore, the

## Erratic rainfall till July first week



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** India Meteorological Department (IMD) Saturday said the prevailing weather condition would continue in the state till July first week.

“Rainfall activity has come down in the state. Very few places are receiving heavy rain due to thunderstorm while light to moderate rain is happening in many places. Such weather condition will continue till July first week,” said Bhubaneswar Met Centre director HR Biswas.

The rainfall activity is likely to intensify in the state from July second week, he added.

The MeT Centre said heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj, Sunday. Besides, thunderstorm with lightning will occur at a few places of the districts of coastal Odisha, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Dhenkanal during next 24 hours.

The IMD has issued yellow warning (thunderstorm) for north interior Odisha, Cuttack, Jajpur, Kendrapara Bhadrak and Balasore, Monday.

## CITY IN COVID TIMES



(From top) A mechanised sweeping machine cleans a stretch of road near Janpath during the coronavirus-induced shutdown; otherwise busy PMG area wears a deserted look and people face inconveniences near Master Canteen Square as public transport remains off the road due to the weekend shutdown in Bhubaneswar, Saturday  
OP PHOTOS



## FOCUS TRANSPARENCY

- The need for a mobile application is high as most of the places in Odisha do not have proper internet connectivity
- The application will be named as Biju Transparency App (BIJUTAPP) which will be in English and Odia languages
- The app will have login for common users and public authorities, online filling & receiving of RTI applications, uploading of necessary documents while filling the online applications, updating of RTI proactive disclosures & e-filing and SMSes & mail integrations.
- The government has also going to redevelop state RTI portal-<http://rtiodisha.gov.in> to make it more user friendly
- The portal will have e-filing tool like the Central RTI portal



lating (I&PR) department will engage a firm to develop the applications. According to sources, the application will be named as Biju Transparency App (BIJUTAPP) which will be in English and Odia languages. This application will be developed in sync with the respective web applications.

The need for a mobile application is high as most of the places in Odisha do not have proper internet connectivity. This became

for common users and public authorities, online filling & receiving of RTI applications, uploading of necessary documents while filling the online applications, updating of RTI proactive disclosures & e-filing and SMSes & mail integrations.

The government has also going to redevelop state RTI portal-<http://rtiodisha.gov.in> to make it more user friendly, the source said. The portal will have e-filing tool

e-filing too will be developed so that people will not need to post the application after online filing.

Moreover, the portal will have e-reporting model for the Public Information Officer (PIO) so that they can get any type of statistics and subjective data from top to bottom offices.

Over 12,000 government offices will be connected in this portal and all will submit data and report in a single format, the source added.

## Cong slams govt for Rath Yatra 'goof-up' in SC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** The Odisha Congress, Saturday, blamed the state government for the alleged mishandling of a case before the Supreme Court pertaining to conduct of Rath Yatra in Puri.

Odisha Congress Spokesperson Satya Prakash Nayak accused the state government of ignoring the views of Puri Gajapati King Dibyasingha Deb, who is the chief of the Temple Managing Committee.

“The Odisha government has goofed up massively in Rath Yatra episode. The explosive statements from Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb are evident of the irresponsible and anti-devotee mindset of the government. The apex committee of the temple has been empowered by law. Gajapati Maharaja is the legal head of the panel,” he said.

He also added, “Deb alleged that he believed that the state government has gone to SC to ensure conduct of the Rath Yatra but the stance taken by the government lawyers before the SC stunned him. He alleged that his views were not presented before the SC.”

Nayak said that the state allegedly supported the arguments of the rival party – Odisha Bikash Parisad. This hints that there was established conspiracy in the case, he said, adding that the state government has adopted a dual policy on Rath Yatra.

“Gajapati Maharaja’s statement hints that the state had a ‘match fixing’ with the NGO over the matter. The Gajapati King has written to the state government thrice over the issue but the latter didn’t respond,” Nayak alleged.

He also said, “Let the people know when there was a plan was to conduct the Lord’s Rath Yatra without devotees, who informed the SC that around 10 to 12 lakh people would congregate in Puri if the Car Festival is held. The counsel for the state government was misled by the State Advocate General. It seems misleading information was provided to the court. Who should be held responsible for this?”

The BJP also raised questions over the entire episode. Odisha BJP spokesperson Prithiviraj Harichandan said that the state failed to listen to the concerns of the temple administration.

## ‘Odisha to remain as edu hub’

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** All departments and higher education institutions should cooperate with the government in its war against the coronavirus, Higher Education (HE) Minister Arun Sahoo said.

Speaking at a webinar organised by FICCI Odisha State Council, Friday, Sahoo said, “COVID-19 situation in the state is under control, but the next one or two months could be challenging. The current

pandemic will be over in a few months. The state government can assure that Odisha would remain as the education hub of the eastern region.” Officials of HE department, academicians, research scholars and students attended the webinar. Chairperson of FICCI Odisha State Council Monica Nayyar Patnaik said that COVID-19 has affected higher education. Patnaik said that online education during current crisis has become the only option. In a special session, acade-

micians and Vice Chancellors (VCs) of several universities of Odisha expressed their views on higher education in post COVID-19 scenario.

KIIT University VC Hrusikesh Mohanty expressed his concern over the quality of education offered during current situation.

VC of Odisha Higher Education Council AK Das said that safety, employment and livelihood will be a challenge while putting students in home and providing them online learning.

## ₹3.9L collected for lockdown violations in Cuttack



The media briefing in progress

OP PHOTO

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Saturday claimed that Rs 3,99,300 had been collected from erring citizens of the city for violation of COVID 19 rules over last few months. CMC Commissioner Ananya Das, in a press conference, Saturday said the offences included not wearing masks or not maintaining social distancing during lockdown and COVID 19 outbreak.

“In the last few months we have collected around Rs 3 lakh as penalty from the erring citizens who defaulted on wearing masks in public or not maintaining social distancing,” she said.

Agriculture Department Principal Secretary Saurabh Garg said a review meeting for the preparedness of the city against COVID 19 was organized Saturday. He also appreciated the roles of ward committees and Puja committees for supporting the civic body in management of COVID 19 crisis.

According to Garg, 59 ward committee panels and 179 Puja and Sahi committees of the city have been roped in to volunteer for COVID 19 management and early warning and awareness.

“The CMC is taking their help in their fight towards COVID 19. Police are also in contact with them and they are being trained and informed through video conferencing. They are monitoring the health conditions of communities,” he said.

Garg also said that around 10,000 senior citizens have been identified in the city for whom volunteers are working to home-deliver their essentials to keep them safe and not expose them to vulnerable conditions.

“The CMC has constituted 10 Rapid Action Teams (RATs) to go and manage the COVID cases. This comprises MBBS and Ayush doctors. They have also planned work for the vulnerable community. Police have formed teams to manage 10,000 senior citizens. Their home-deliveries are taken care of to prevent them

## MORE TESTING KEY TO CHECK PANDEMIC, SAY EXPERTS

**BHUBANESWAR:** Experts working on the COVID 19 outbreak opine that the state government needs to change its strategy to tackle the crisis by escalating the number of tests in the light of development of more indigenously-built testing systems.

“The strategy in our country is test, track and treat. Identify the infection by testing, track the contacts and treat patients at early stages, by which we can control the transmission of infections and decrease the death rate. Now we have enormous indigenous testing capacity in our country,” said Dr Manoj Kumar Sahu, Head of Department, Gastroenterology, SUM Hospital.

Dr Sahu has been associated with the World Health Organization (WHO) on Eradication of Hepatitis, also on prevention of Corona infection. He added, “All states need to increase the number of tests. RT

PCR and rapid antigen tests for identification of active infections and antibody test for sero-prevalence of the disease. When we know the actual status of the disease, the strategy might change accordingly.”

The state, meanwhile, has already planned to increase the testing by making more test kits available for rapid antibody tests. The Indian Institute of Life Sciences has planned to escalate the testing through new kits given by the government, the institute had told the media recently.

This comes after the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) sought increasing testing across the country. ICMR approved kits are likely to reach Odisha within a week. The testing is likely to be used for door to door COVID screening.

from coming outside,” he said.

According to the civic body, the region has seen a return of 5101 people up till now from outside. “We are doing their tracking and allowing them to opt for home quarantine. 3,892 people are either under home quarantine or have finished

with it. There are 949 cases of institutional quarantine,” Das said.

The CMC commissioner said Cuttack currently has 18 quarantine centres with 1,290 beds. “This is to go up to 1500 beds too. Seven quarantine centres with 171 beds are operative,” she said.

## Covid fight to rope in peer leaders in slums

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, Jun 27:** In view of the rising COVID-19 cases in the capital city, the civic authorities here have decided to rope in peer leaders of Socially Smart Project of Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited (BSCL) as Covid Sachetakas, to increase awareness among people.

Peer leaders of the BSCL project are youths that are involved in community development, largely in slum areas. A collaborative initiative of BMC, BSCL and United Nations Population Fund and the peer leader development has been operational since 2017. A two-day training by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and doctors for these leaders at Saheed Nagar Kalyan Mandap concluded Saturday.

“The BMC has decided to involve these peer leaders in helping our fight against the pandemic. Their job will involve going door to door and educate people about social distancing, hand hygiene and symptoms of COVID. They will also work to identify people with probable symptoms of Covid and inform ZCO and other officials for further support,” informed BMC Commissioner, Prem Chandra

Chaudhary. Sources at the BMC said the civic authority’s move to rope in extra hands has come in the wake of the increasing spread of COVID-19 in the city. The total Covid cases in the city currently stand at 283. They included 148 recoveries and 131 active cases while three deaths were reported.

Moreover, a few of these cases have now started to come out of slums where potential outbreak is possible owing to poor social distancing. As many as four cases have been reported from Laxmi Bazaar slum in the city with two females, aged 31 and 38 years, testing positive for Coronavirus apart from two males aged 50 and 18. All of them are linked to an earlier-reported positive case.

With an aim to help the authorities efficiently battle against COVID-19, Deepanjali Swain, a trainee, of Jagannath Basti Press Colony, said, “It is a unique opportunity to contain the spread of virus at our community level. People in our slums are not very careful and can be seen playing cards in groups. Many of them also do not use masks. We will form a group and move from house to house and create awareness on the various aspects of the pandemic.”



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# Dhenkanal jumbos in grip of herpes infection

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, June 27:** The spread of herpes infection has gripped elephants in Dhenkanal reserve forest under Hindol range killing three and infecting many over the past one and a half years.

The infection is on the rise and with no preventive measures the forest department appears ill prepared.

As elephants are social animals, the probability of mass infections cannot be ruled out in coming days. If the infection spreads, it could wipe out the entire elephant population of Hindol forest range, locals apprehended.

Between January 2019 and June 2020, three pachyderms died in Hindol range due to herpes infection, of which one was a female and the two others were calves.

The calf who died at Kapilash elephant rescue centre a year back was suspected to have had been infected by herpes. The forest department officials did not clarify on the reasons of the calf's death and tried to suppress the matter, according to a source.

Further, a female jumbo that died a few days back was also infected by herpes, the post-mortem report confirmed. It has been al-



It is alleged that the forest department is reluctant to purchase antiviral injection due to its high prices

## WORRYING TREND

Between January 2019 and June 2020, three pachyderms died in Hindol range due to herpes infection, while many are infected by the virus

The infection is on the rise and with no preventive measures the forest department appears ill prepared

As elephants are social animals, the probability of mass infections cannot be ruled out in coming days

leged that forest officials despite having knowledge of the animal's serious infection did not provide it adequate treatment.

Similarly, another infected calf from the forest had infiltrated into Rasol region last

year. The animal died due to the alleged apathy of the forest department. Senior veterinary doctors from Satkosia had advised for immediate treatment of the sick calf. But the calf died a day after being rescued, owing

to gross neglect by forest officials.

A complete course of antiviral injection for herpes treatment costs around Rs 20,000 to Rs 25,000 in the open market. It is alleged that the department is reluctant to purchase antiviral injection due to its high prices which has given rise to more number of jumbo infections in Dhenkanal.

Reacting to this, senior veterinary doctor of Satkosia Dr Kishore Sahu said, "Generally, Asian elephants get infected by herpes-1 virus and their African counterparts by herpes-2 virus. Herpes-1 infection is fatal for calves and causes swelling of throat and mouth as well as wounds all over the body."

"The jumbos fail to intake food and gradually become weak, thereby leading to their untimely death. In the absence of adequate treatment, an adult elephant dies within 1 to 20 days of getting infected," Dr Sahu explained. Dhenkanal Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Bimal Prasanna Acharya said, "We have informed the department higher-ups about herpes infection found in a female elephant that died of late." Acharya did not comment further citing he has already been transferred to Bhubaneswar-based Nandankanan Zoological Park.

## COVID CONTROL

# Ganjam admin urges villagers to not enter urban areas for 15 days



Collector & District Magistrate, Ganjam

We request people in Rural area not to visit Urban area for next fifteen days if not any emergency. Avoid crowds. Use mask. Keep two metre distance from other person. Wash hands.

@CMO\_Odisha #HFWDodisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, June 27:** Concerned over the increasing COVID-19 infections in Ganjam district, Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange urged rural people in the district to not enter urban areas of the district for the next 15 days.

The decision has been taken as a preventive measure to contain the spread of coronavirus in the rural areas.

Kulange tweeted, "We request people in rural areas to not visit any urban area for the next 15 days if not an emergency."

The Collector advised the people to follow the three basic guidelines of COVID-19 -- social distancing, use of masks and regular hand wash for 20 seconds or use of sanitisers to stay safe and fight the deadly virus.

"We have to avoid crowd, use mask and constantly maintain social distancing to control coronavirus," Kulange said.

With 58 new COVID-19 cases reported in district Saturday, the total number of cases in Ganjam reached 1,195.

The number of active cases in the district has now reached 376. The district has also reported eight deaths due to the coronavirus disease so far. However, 811 patients have also recovered from the tentacles of the deadly virus.

Ganjam district tops the COVID-19 infection list in Odisha with 1,195 cases. Among those hit by the virus, 18 are Corona warriors. Two of them are from Shergad, seven are from Rangelunda, one each from Sanakeamundi, Kukudakhandi, Buguda and Bhanjanagar, two from Aska and one each from Purusotampur and Berhampur Municipal Corporation.

Among those who tested positive for the disease Saturday, 57 have travel histories and one is from local area who was tested positive for coronavirus after coming in contact with a Surat returnee.

The district administration is worried about the sharp rise in COVID-19 cases Berhampur Municipal Corporation for which it announced a four-day shutdown in the BeMC area starting from Saturday.

# Angul forest division takes up plantation drive on 895 acres

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Angul, June 27:** Taking up a massive plantation drive in the district during rainy season this year, Angul forest division has prepared over 18.5 lakh saplings for the purpose.

Out of the above number of saplings 3,14,000 will be planted on 895 acres of land, on along sides 68km long roads here and remaining 15,28,000 saplings will be distributed among different organisations, corporate houses and private individuals, forest officials informed.

The afforestation drive includes planting of 10,500 saplings in Bantala range, 46,500 saplings in Jarapada range, 84,500 saplings in Chhendipada range, 33,660 saplings in Angul range, 47,500 saplings in Talcher range including highest number of 91,500 saplings in Kaniha range. Gambhari, sishu, asan, karanja, arjun, amla, neem, jamun and bamboo saplings will be planted.

Plantation drive on 1,757 acres of land was taken up the previous



year and 4,39,208 different saplings were planted including 57km long roadsides and 8,71,490 saplings which were distributed among various organisations and private individuals. Despite planting of a huge number of saplings every year, the drive has gone for a toss without proper care and maintenance, local environmentalists, nature lovers and intelligentsia have opined.

Reacting to this, a senior official of Angul forest division said, "We are taking care of saplings after planting those. However, the saplings which are distributed to others are often not taken care of. Forest department officials have been instructed to see to it."

# Panchayat shutdown after 3 Covid deaths

**DHARAKOTE:** After the death of three persons including the vice-chairperson of Dharakote block due to Covid-19, the sarpanch of Jahada panchayat in Ganjam district announced a shutdown in the area for six days using the special power of District Magistrate, Saturday. The containment which came into effect at 1 PM Saturday will remain in force for six days till 1 PM July 2, said sarpanch Sulata Behera. The Dharakote panchayat samiti vice-chairman and two siblings have succumbed to the virus in last couple of days. The situation has become quite alarming following 800 migrants returning to their homes in the panchayat.

# ₹80K collected from COVID-19 norm violators

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, June 27:** An amount of Rs 80, 800 was collected from 404 COVID guideline violators in 24 hours here, Berhampur SP Pinak Mishra said in a tweet Saturday.

Even as coronavirus is fast spreading its tentacles in Berhampur, people here still seem to be not serious enough about the invisible enemy.

The administration has been creating awareness among people on how can the virus be kept at bay and asking people to wear masks and maintain social distancing at shops. In its attempt to discourage people from flouting norms, fines are being collected from violators. The police caught 404 violators between Friday 6am to Saturday 6am and collected Rs 80, 800 from them.

# 1,700 kg of ganja seized in Koraput

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Koraput, June 27:** In a major haul, Odisha police have seized 1,700 kilograms of ganja and arrested 26 people in this connection from Koraput district, an official said Friday.

Police said the banned drug was procured from Machkund area of the district, from where it was being smuggled to other states.

"Owing to the lockdown, ganja smugglers are supplying the contraband in vehicles meant for transporting essential commodities to give the police the slip. However, we have intensified our raid in the past few months and have enhanced our patrolling on suspected ganja corridors in the district," Koraput SP Mukesh Kumar Bharamo said.



# MGNREGS employment norms go for a toss in Jaipur district

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rasulpur, June 27:** Even as the government has laid stress on proper execution of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) during the COVID-induced lockdown, irregularities have scuttled its purpose in Rasulpur block of Jaipur district, a report said.

People of Atlapur in this block alleged that owing to an unholy nexus between officials and contractors, official guidelines were thrown to the winds in the execution of a project under MGNREGS.

"While job card holders in the locality have been sitting pretty, the contractor engaged cheap workers from outside," they pointed out.

It was learnt that Rs 2 lakh was allocated for restoration of an embankment in Atlapur panchayat. Surprisingly, the estimated cost mentioned in the information plaque is Rs 5 lakh. The scheme of



It was learnt that ₹2 lakh was allocated for restoration of an embankment in Atlapur panchayat. Surprisingly, the estimated cost in the information plaque is ₹5 lakh

the project was named as 'Brahmani river embankment road'.

Officially, it was stated that the work was started February 13, 2020 and completed June 5, 2020. The bill of the project has been cleared. However, there is no mention about use of tractors in the documents submitted for clearance of bill.

The villagers also alleged that the contractor has used sand instead of soil in the project.

Moreover, outside workers were

engaged in sand transport while local workers were sitting idle, the villagers said, demanding a probe into the illegalities. When asked about the illegalities, Anil Kumar Biswal, engineer of the department concerned, said Rs 5 lakh was wrongly mentioned as cost of the project. However, he could not reply about the irregularities in the work.

In other panchayats, fake muster rolls are prepared in MGNREGS projects, it was alleged.

## THE ART OF ANGLING



Children angling in a construction pit, which was flooded after floodwater was released from Hirakud dam in Sambalpur

OP PHOTO

# In absence of bridges, risky boat rides a normal here

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Kendrapara, June 27:** With the state government's 2004 boat rules being flouted and passengers being ferried to various destinations in boats with no safety gears in place, yet another major boat mishap is only a matter of time in Kendrapara district.

Past mishaps are still fresh in people's mind. A boat capsized in Mahanadi June 19 near Pitapat village under Mahakalapara block but the five labourers who were travelling in the boat cheated death as they managed to swim ashore.

In another mishap that took place at the same place March 1, 2013, 13 young cricketers of Jagatsinghpur district met watery graves as the boat capsized. As many as 10 women and children were killed after their

boat drowned at Nipania January 2, 2019.

The casualties could have been avoided had the boats had safety gears like life jackets and ring buoys.

Seventeen panchayats are encircled by rivers in this district. And these panchayats

are yet to be connected by bridges. Even today, people of these panchayats are commuting by boats putting their lives in harm's way.

Visitors going to tourist spots near the Bhitarkanika National Park like Hukitola, Habalikhathi, Batighar and Barunei also commute in boats putting their lives at risk. According to social activist Abhitabh Chand, all the boats engaged in ferrying passen-



gers should have been insured as per the 2004 boat rules. But this is not the case here. Let alone insurance, most boats are operating without even fitness certificates. "God forbid no mishap should take place. But if it happens and some people drown,

they will not get any compensation. More than 60 boats are operating in Bhitarkanika National Park area," Chand said.

Echoing the same, Narendra Sahu, a resident of Gupti in Rajnagar block, said there are more

## NORMS VIOLATION

SEVENTEEN PANCHAYATS IN KENDRAPARA DISTRICT ARE ENCIRCLED BY RIVERS AND ARE YET TO BE CONNECTED BY BRIDGES

EVEN TODAY, PEOPLE OF THESE PANCHAYATS COMMUTE BY BOATS PUTTING THEIR LIVES IN HARM'S WAY

IN MOST BOATS, THE BOATMEN ARE MINORS AND INEXPERIENCED AND THEY TAKE IN MORE PASSENGERS THAN THEIR CAPACITIES

THE LACK OF SAFETY GEARS LIKE LIFE JACKETS AND RING BUOYS MAKES THE BOAT RIDES ALL THE MORE RISKY

nors and inexperienced. Besides, they take in more passengers than their capacities. Expressing his concern, Bibhuti Rout, a resident of Mahakalapara, said people are forced to use boats as means of a communication in the absence of bridges. For people of Bahakud and Kharinasi, bridges have become a dream. Hundreds of families residing on the banks of Mahanadi, Brahmani and Baitarani are travelling in country boats. But the district administration has forgotten to conduct checks, Rout said.

DFO Bimal Prasanna Acharya, meanwhile, said direction has been issued for the insurance of both boatmen and boats.

Additional District Magistrate (ADM) Basant Kumar Rout said boatmen have been made aware of the rules and regulations. If any boat is found not following the rules, the administration will take action against them, the ADM said.



There is a thirst for Love which no human relation can quench. It is only the Divine's love that can satisfy that thirst.

THE MOTHER



## Pseudo nationalism

Even critics of the Prime Minister and his party have been taken aback by his position on China's intrusions. Of all the things that he has advertised himself, even the Modi haters had accepted that he was a nationalist, whether or not they agreed with nationalism or ultra nationalism of the sort he promotes.

But nobody, including them, expected him to run away from an invasion of Bharat Mata, as he has done.

Modi has made only one public statement on the matter of China and that was to say: "Na koi wahan hamari seema mein ghusha hai, na hi koi ghusha hua hai, na hi hamari koi post kisi dusre ke kabze mein hai." This was used by China to claim control over all of Galwan Valley, where it has intruded.

Modi's words have become such an embarrassment that they have been removed from the official PMO video.

Modi has not spoken on the issue after this, and appears to be pretending that there is no intrusion. Satellite imagery confirms that the tent our men died trying to remove has now become a series of Chinese structures on our side.

Reports, which have not been denied by the government, say China has made a fourth intrusion at Depsang where it is 18 km inside India. Our response is so muted as to be shocking. Everyone in the government seems to be worried, and there has been a long statement from the foreign ministry and an interview with the Indian ambassador in Beijing asking China to respect the Line of Actual Control. But at the same time nobody is saying China has intruded, because they fear contradicting Modi.

The defence ministry has said anonymously to reporters that the army has been given a free hand. But this doesn't mean anything. The army cannot decide whether or not we are at war with China. This is a political decision. It is Modi who must decide that India will use force to kick the Chinese out, like Nehru decided, and only after that does the military come into the picture.

Saying the forces have a free hand in this situation is abdication of duty and responsibility and passing off political accountability to the military.

The government is treating this as a localised policing issue though clearly the intent of the Chinese is strategic. India is facing danger but the government is not prepared or willing to acknowledge it.

Because we are speaking in so many different voices we have lost the opportunity to mobilise international support on China's aggression. If we had been transparent about the aggression we could have put Xi Jinping on the back foot. Instead what has happened is that China has publicly used Modi's statement about no intrusion and not only blamed India for the stand-off but expanded its claim over our land.

Modi's very vocal backers have gone silent over this because even they have been taken aback by the incompetence with which this is being handled. And, to go back to where we started, on an issue on which nobody thought Modi would be soft. After all the brave words from him when the UPA was in power with respect to China's temporary intrusions, to have him waffle and dissemble when they are making the intrusion permanent is unexpected.

What does that say about his nationalism? We can call it pseudo nationalism. It is fake. The dictionary defines nationalism as a patriotic feeling, and extreme devotion to one's nation. It is an ideology that promotes sovereignty and resists foreign influence.

What we are seeing unfolding in Ladakh is the opposite of that. It is pseudo nationalism of the sort that only talks big and attacks its own citizens while cowering in the presence of the foreign bully. It is surprising to me that being as political smart as he is, Modi does not grasp the value of resistance here.

It does not matter if we are a poorer, smaller and less powerful nation than China. We cannot be pushed around without resistance as is now happening. The bully wants the victim to not look him in the eye. It makes pushing them around easier.

Modi must realise the value of our unity at this time. Even those who do not like him ('Modi haters') will rally to his call if he says that the country's sovereignty is being threatened by China's aggressive intrusions. The other political fights in our democracy will be put aside and can wait till we see off this immediate and external threat.

Rallying and bringing us together is the responsibility of the government and of the Prime Minister. He has chosen instead to side with the opponent and agree that there is no aggression.

Whatever else we can call his behaviour at this crucial time it cannot be called nationalism.

### WISDOM CORNER

The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool. **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to reform (or pause and reflect). **MARK TWAIN**

When someone loves you, the way they talk about you is different. You feel safe and comfortable. **JESS C. SCOTT**

### LOL Researching this insect

A prominent Polish scientist conducted very important experiment. He trained a flea to jump upon giving her a verbal command ("Jump!"). In a first stage of experiment he removed flea's leg, told her to jump, and the flea jumped. So he wrote in his scientific notebook: "Upon removing one leg all flea organs function properly." So, he removed the second leg, asked the flea to jump, she obeyed, so he wrote again: "Upon removing the second leg all flea organs function



properly." Thereafter he removed all the legs but one, the flea jumped when ordered, so he wrote again: "Upon removing the next leg all flea organs function properly." Then he removed the last leg. Told flea to jump, and nothing happened. He did not want to take a chance, so he repeated the experiment several times, and the legless flea never jumped. So he wrote the conclusion: "Upon removing the last leg the flea loses sense of hearing."

# KIM GOES BACK ON SCRIPT

FOCUS WORLD

Like the leading character in a long-running television series, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has kicked off the latest crisis on the Korean Peninsula with familiar theatrics. After cutting off all communications with South Korea, the Kim regime bombed the building in which it had previously hosted South Korean diplomats. It has redeployed troops into demilitarized border areas and issued renewed threats of violence against the South. The latest displays of bombast follow Kim's scene-stealing performance in May, when he announced that North Korea would boost its investment in "nuclear war deterrence."

For its part, US President Donald Trump's administration has ignored the latest episode, and for good reason. After two years of playing along with Trump's made-for-TV summitry, Kim is convinced that the "bromance" storyline has run its course, and that an older narrative will keep his ratings up.

Having banked his political gains from Trump's fecklessness, Kim is now unambiguously asserting North Korea's status as a nuclear power. To drive that point home, he has promoted the general in charge of the nuclear programme to serve as vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, while also rewarding 69 other generals who have contributed to the country's strategic success in recent years.

Since the failed nuclear summit in Hanoi in February 2019, Kim has been consistent in both word and deed. Last April, he warned that Trump had until the end of 2019 to lift US sanctions on North Korea. Since then, the North has continued its short-range missile testing (chalking up noteworthy successes), expanded a missile production plant, and built new support facilities for its missile programme.

Clearly, Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign to choke off North Korea's clandestine sources of income and trade has utterly failed to alter the course of the regime's nuclear and missile programmes. American officials acknowledged last month when the



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US Department of Justice indicted 28 North Korean and five Chinese officials and bankers for (successfully) circumventing the sanctions regime. Since 2014, the indictment alleges, the North's global network of front companies has - with China's help - funneled \$2.5 billion into Kim's nuclear weapons, missile, and high-tech programs.

Kim has been no less consistent in expanding North Korea's massive conventional military capacity. While its military hardware remains far inferior to the US-furnished armor and aircraft across the border, the North has nonetheless managed to upgrade both the accuracy and reach of its weapons. It has also placed 70% of its 1.1 million-strong army within 60 miles of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), putting South Korea's capital well within its sights. By one estimate, the North could rain down 25,000 artillery rounds on the Seoul metropolitan area - including a major US military compound - in the space of just ten minutes.

To be sure, US and South Korean forces would have a major technological edge in an all-out war on the peninsula. But even a short-lived conflict would be devastating to Seoul, which, with some 25 million people, accounts for half of South Korea's popu-

lation and 70% of its GDP. Against this background, Trump's effort to extort South Korea to quadruple its financial support for US forces stationed there is astonishingly irresponsible. Although negotiations to renew the expired US-South Korean cost-sharing pact remain at an impasse, a new stopgap deal at least ends the furlough of 4,000 South Koreans who work at US facilities. But with South Korea temporarily assuming the cost of these salaries, the deal will hardly improve Trump's standing in the eyes of South Koreans.

Kim can take further comfort from the fact that Trump has also been browbeating Japan, demanding that it, too, boost its financial support for US forces within its borders. Though Japan is crucial to South Korea's defense, the two countries have a rocky relationship. Last year, South Korea threatened to pull out of a bilateral intelligence-sharing arrangement before reversing course under US pressure. As in South Korea, most Japanese have no confidence in Trump's handling of international affairs. Such factors inevitably will contribute to diplomatic disarray between the US, South Korea, and Japan, all of

which will benefit Kim.

In addition to undermining US alliances in the region, Trump is also doing Kim a favor by escalating tensions with China, which now will be less inclined to rein in its client state. With China accounting for over 90% of North Korea's trade, Kim has been cultivating a closer relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping, who visited Pyongyang last June. That meeting and others suggest that China is neither surprised nor particularly concerned about Kim's behavior.

This is not to suggest that Kim has clear sailing ahead. Owing to US sanctions, limited food production, and various reform failures, North Korea faces formidable challenges at home. Following a speech at the Workers' Party of Korea's annual plenum in December 2019, public remarks issued by Kim in February and April suggest that he may have spent the first half of this year focusing on domestic priorities. By forcing the closure of the Chinese border, the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly hurt the North's faltering economy. And the fact that Kim has imposed tougher oversight on implementation of his previous economic reforms suggests that more domestic trouble may be on the horizon.

With or without economic problems, Kim is unlikely to deviate from his family's well-rehearsed oeuvre. Like past performances by his late father and grandfather, his repertoire will continue to feature threats of violence, sensational provocations, and potentially even military incidents like the shelling of South Korean islands a decade ago. All signs indicate more brinkmanship on the part of the North. The leading character in the Korean Peninsula's long-running psychodrama may still be new, but the play remains the same.

The writer, a former senior CIA analyst, served as National Intelligence Officer for East Asia, Chief of Station in Asia, and the CIA's Director of Public Affairs.

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### SPECTRUM CONSUMER MARKET

## Premiumisation: Key play for India

As the Indian consumer market recovers from the coronavirus-induced lockdown and the ailing economy gradually heads back to normalcy, the spate of deal-making in the telecom sector has firmly brought the focus on the Indian consumer markets and the potential of the consumer market holds in the foreseeable future.

For investors with a long-term view and using other markets as a template, the Indian consumer theme hinges upon the idea of gradually rising incomes for a significant mass of people leading to higher demands creating opportunities in satisfying the consequent consumer needs.

As investors and businesses assess the dynamics of the Indian consumer markets, it would be prudent to be aware of a few important trends. In the context of the Indian consumer market, "premiumisation" of product, the importance of both experience and product quality and market intricacies will be vital in this context. "Premiumisation" of a product refers to the need of the consumer that can be satisfied by products that climb up the value chain in terms of both quality and the concomitant experience. For businesses across

the board, a significant opportunity will be to satisfy consumer needs that demand both higher quality and experience than what they are currently consuming. This would span industries from FMCG to apparel. While this trend isn't new, one would expect that as consumer wallets expand beyond the essentials for a significant part of the population, the trend of premiumisation will gather momentum.

The premiumisation trend implies that investors and businesses alike must focus even more on creating "premium" brands in the different consumer segments to fulfil future consumption needs. Also, as the premiumisation theme gathers momentum, it is reiterated, a focus on both product quality and experience will be vital. One can almost view the product experience as a subset of the entertainment business. Regarding the experience component of the package, entertainment helps understand that the consumers will be looking for something beyond just the product quality. The "entertainment" aspect of satisfying consumer needs is especially crucial for physical retail businesses that will compete in what will be an omnichannel world, as far as distribution is concerned.

Mainly, the ability to highly differentiate the consumer experience will be a significant driver of value creation for consumers and therefore businesses. Offering an exceptional premium product will be one part of the business, but the capacity to deliver the experience will help brands differentiate, gain market share and eventually emerge as winners in their categories.

The last decade has seen significant investments in the "pipelines" that reach the consumer. One can view e-commerce platforms, and telecom plays as the "carriage". While the carriage part of the businesses will continue to see significant interest, the coming decade will also see increasing interest in the "content" part. Primarily, increased innovation around the product and experience delivered to the consumer. The increased focus on consumer products and the experience associated with the product is where the premiumisation theme will play out in India.

While premiumisation will be essential, in India, one will have to bear in mind that product designs for India will have to factor in the definition of "premium" in India and Indian tastes. Furthermore, as in-

comes rise in India, the premium product need not necessarily be the one considered premium in more developed economies. The ability to pick the point on the demand curve with significant demand and yet create a premium offering will be a critical factor for brands that eventually emerge as winners. Additionally, Indian tastes in a lot of segments are very well defined. For instance, Indian breakfast habits didn't budge much as certain people had expected when breakfast cereals were introduced to India. Primarily, catering products that suit the Indian sensibilities will be essential going forward.

In summary, the trend of premiumisation is one that is bound to happen with gradually rising incomes. The opportunity to create consumer value and business success in India will be immense. A keen eye on the market intricacies in the Indian context will be a vital factor separating the winners from the losers.

The author heads Development Tracks, an advisory firm. You can contact him at taponeel.mukherjee@development-tracks.com.

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## 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, opinions and suggestions, preferably by email, to: [edit@orissapost.com](mailto:edit@orissapost.com)

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

### Isolating Pak

Sir, India 'taming the wild horse' Pakistan on more than one instance, via diplomacy and military, has brought the latter to its knees. Therefore, it has taken recourse to an indirect, lily-livered, strategy of torturing Indian soldiers or officials. After two Indian diplomatic officers in Pakistan were tormented by that country's ISI, India has downgraded diplomatic ties with it. Pakistan has been asked to cut its High Commission strength in India down to half. Earlier, in May, New Delhi, in a quick move, had rusticated two Pakistani High Commission officers for serious espionage activities. A smarting Pakistan, having lost face on several global platforms regarding its nefarious deals, including in the United Nations, appears flummoxed. It is the same country that expelled India's High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria on India's move on Kashmir. New Delhi's returning 'tit-for-tat' is befitting. It is unfortunate that many 'purists' have gone overboard advocating a 'dialogue' between the two neighbours. Well, people of both countries are yearning for peace. No ordinary citizen wants bilateral confrontation, let alone a war. Yet, Pakistani political 'leaders' and the military deserve nothing less than contempt. If at all talks have to take place, Islamabad should divorce its terror companions. Isolating Pakistan, a country on the brink of bankruptcy, is a deft move.

Ganapathi Bhat, EMAIL

### Absolutely unfair

Sir, I am very sorry to ventilate this episode to the countrymen regarding the allocation of RGF in the country's annual Budget during the period of our former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, one of the renowned economists in the world. As a homage to the late Rajiv Gandhi and in support of the laudable objectives of the foundation, government has decided to contribute ₹100 crore to the foundation at the rate of ₹20 crore per annum for a period of five years beginning from the current year, then the Finance Minister had said in his Budget speech. The Rajiv Gandhi foundation was established in the memory of the great leader and to promote the ideals and objectives for which he lived and laid down his life, Singh had said. This is a disclosure that came to light as RGF comes under scrutiny following exposes that the government of China and China Embassy were donors to the foundation. Though the amount could not be disbursed to RGF, it is very sad and unfair, especially because the tax payers' money cannot be squandered away.

Naresh Mandal, BHADRAK

# Hotels repurposed as Capital anticipates surge in virus cases

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**New Delhi, June 27:** Staff at the luxury Suryaa hotel used to wear bright saris as they welcomed guests. Now they must don medical suits and handle gurneys as New Delhi desperately prepares for a predicted surge in coronavirus cases in the coming weeks.

The pandemic is still raging in India with more than half a million cases. The capital, home to 25 million people, is the country's worst-hit city - its hospitals at breaking point and authorities reaching deep to confront the crisis.

"For doctors and nurses it is a part of their lives. For us this is a totally new experience and a very difficult one at that," said Ritu Yadav, operations manager at the five-star Suryaa, as staff in masks rush to deep clean the building.

"We have got training from the hospital on how to wear the PPE (personal protective equipment) and then take it off but this is something I never thought I would have to do when I chose hospitality as my career." Delhi, home to some of India's most crowded slums, has around 75,000 cases so far but the city government predicts this will soar

to half a million by the end of July. With newspapers full of reports about patients being turned away from overflowing hospitals, Delhi told the city's hotels earlier this month they would be roped in to provide hospital care. It is also converting wedding halls, and has several hundred repurposed railway coaches standing by - without air-conditioning despite outside temperatures over 40 degrees Celsius.

The Delhi authorities have even started converting a spiritual centre or ashram into a coronavirus isolation facility and hospital with 10,000 beds, many made of cardboard.

**'HOSPITALITY, NOT HOSPITAL'**

But for hotels, the move triggered outrage in an industry already reeling under losses because of travel restrictions. The owners of Suryaa and four others approached the court, arguing many staff were over 50 and therefore were high-risk themselves, with no experience of hospital care or handling bio-medical waste.

"It came as a shock because we were not spoken to about it, we got



**LACK OF TRUST**

Many in Delhi are worried and are taking matters into their own hands

Some resident welfare associations are buying oxygen cylinders and other equipment, while using vacant flats as isolation wards - exposing the lack of trust in authorities

People at housing societies say they don't want to be at the mercy of government and hospitals

**It's like you are sleeping in a hotel and the next morning when you wake up you are told your hotel has become a hospital. Your first reaction will be how is this possible. We are hospitality, not a hospital**

GREESH BINDRA | SENIOR EXECUTIVE, SURYAA HOTEL

to know through the press," Greesh Bindra, a top executive at the hotel, told AFP.

"It's like you are sleeping in a hotel and the next morning when you wake up you are told your hotel has become a hospital. Your first reaction will be how is this possible. We are hospitality, not a hospital."

The hotel won a reprieve from the court - of sorts. Instead of becoming

a hospital, it could act as a COVID-19 care centre, housing patients on their way to recovery with mild to moderate symptoms.

It and around 30 other hotels in Delhi are set to be attached to hospitals which will provide staff to deal with any emergency. The hotels can charge a maximum US\$66 a day, including meals. But they and their employees, used

just to changing bedsheets and providing room service, have had to improvise and innovate. From using disposable plates and drawing red lines to ensure social distancing, they have minimum contact with their special guests.

"You have to keep your staff safe as after all they are your people," said Bindra, whose hotel will be offering 200 beds.

But whether the efforts of the Delhi government - which is squabbling with the federal government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi - will be enough is unclear.

Delhi has just over 13,000 beds for coronavirus patients in state-run hospitals with another 10,000 in private ones. The city government forecasts it will need 80,000 beds by the end of July. The government has cancelled leave of all healthcare staff and plans to rope in volunteers to fight the crisis. It has refused to reimpose a lockdown, as the southern city of Chennai has done.

Many in Delhi are worried and are taking matters into their own hands. Some resident welfare associations are buying oxygen cylinders and other equipment, while using vacant flats as isolation wards - exposing the lack of trust in authorities. "One of our residents lost his life just because he couldn't get a bed in time. Then we thought we should do something at our level," said Lokesh Munjal, the head of a west Delhi housing society.

"We don't want to be at the mercy of government and hospitals."

# Serological survey commences in Delhi

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** A serological survey to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the spread of COVID-19 in Delhi commenced in some parts of the city on Saturday amid a rise in the number of coronavirus cases.

As part of the survey, blood samples of 20,000 people will be tested to ascertain the presence of antibodies, the Union health ministry has said. The exercise will be jointly carried out by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Delhi government till July 10.

"The serological survey has started from Saturday and will cover 20,000 people. The survey is being conducted door to door and will reveal the extent of coronavirus spread in Delhi," Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said in an online briefing.

His deputy Manish Sisodia also echoed similar views. "Sero Testing has been started from today in the fight against Corona in Delhi. Under this, 20 thousand blood sample will be taken from all over Delhi. This test will prove to be very effective



Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia visits Nabi Karim area, where samples are being collected for serological survey to analyse the spread of COVID-19 in New Delhi Saturday.

in the Delhi government's campaign against Corona," he wrote on Twitter. The survey began in Central district Saturday, officials said, adding that the response from the public was good and 450 blood samples were collected on the first day itself. The target was to collect

700 samples and some teams are still on the ground, the officials said. The district has deployed 30 teams comprising accredited social health activists (ASHA) and laboratory technicians for collecting samples.

The survey also began in the

Kewal Park area of north Delhi, a North district official said, adding that since it was the first day, the emphasis was on putting logistics to the ground. The response of the people will be known in the next two-three days. Nine teams have been formed to complete the survey, the official said.

In Southwest district, the collection of samples commenced in some areas but will start in full swing from Sunday, an official said.

According to an official from East district, the NCDC would train the laboratory technicians on how to collect samples on Saturday and they are likely to commence the exercise from Monday.

Similarly, in Southeast district, the survey did not start Saturday as logistics were being worked out.

An official from Northeast district said the survey will begin there from Monday. The serological survey is part of a new COVID-19 response plan prepared by the Delhi health department, in accordance with the recommendations of a committee headed by NITI Aayog member V K Paul. The committee comes under the Union health ministry.

# Despite pandemic, AP achieves record Rabi crop procurement

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati, June 27:** Despite the hurdles in transport due to COVID-19 lockdown and social distancing norms put in place, the Andhra Pradesh government managed to procure a record 7,83,246 tonnes of crops during the Rabi season.

Managed by the state cooperative marketing federation (MARKFED), the procurement worth Rs 2,571 crore has benefitted more than 2.35 lakh farmers of the state. To speed up the process, MARKFED set up around 1,000 procurement centres across the state. The approach also reduced the distance that farmers had to cover for disposing their produce.

Special Commissioner of Agricultural Marketing PS Pradyumna said, "MARKFED has done the highest quantity of procurement in its history in Rabi season despite the lockdown conditions. At a time when other states are facing various issues,



As part of the initiatives to support the procurement process, the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led state government has launched the CM App, a dedicated mobile app for undertaking all procurement operations by all nodal agencies

we at MARKFED, however, have successfully supplied fertilizers to farmers for Kharif as well as Rabi seasons." The crops that were procured include maize, Bengal gram, Jowar, red gram, turmeric, and onion. While maize crop to the tune of 3,97,123 MT was procured and topped the list, 1,78,013 MT of Bengal gram, 1,09,424 MT of Jowar, 60,020 MT of red gram, 24,842 MT of turmeric, and 957 MT of onion were also procured by MARK-

**RARE FEAT**

- To speed up the process, MARKFED set up around 1,000 procurement centres across the state
- The approach also reduced the distance that farmers had to cover for selling their produce

FED. As part of the initiatives to support the procurement process, the YS Jagan Mohan Reddy-led state government has launched CM App, a dedicated mobile app for undertaking all procurement operations by all the nodal agencies. An end-to-end solution for agricultural commodity price updates and for the necessary market intervention, the app provides comprehensive monitoring of agriculture commodity prices and procurement.

# Earthmover used to carry Covid victim's body for cremation

ANDHRA PRADESH CM ORDERS PROBE; TWO CIVIC OFFICIALS SUSPENDED



**Amaravati, June 27:** In a shocking incident, the body of a Covid-19 victim was carried on a JCB earthmover to the cremation ground by municipal staff in Andhra Pradesh's Srikakulam district Friday.

The incident took place in Udayapuram area of Palasa municipality after the 72-year-old died of Covid-19.

The PPE-clad municipal workers placed the dead body covered in a cloth on the front portion of the machine and drove to the cremation ground. Following the incident, District Collector J. Nivas suspended Palasa Municipal Commissioner C Nagender Kumar and the sanitary inspector. He also ordered a probe into the incident.

The man, himself a former employee in the municipality, died at home following illness. He had undergone Covid-19 test during door-to-door drive by the local authorities. The report of the test also came around the time of his death.

As neighbours put pressure on the family to remove the body, the deceased's granddaughter, a government volunteer in the town, called the municipal staff to shift the body for cremation.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy Saturday expressed his anguish over the inhuman act of transporting of the mortal remains of a COVID-19 victim. The chief minister took to Twitter to voice his anguish and ordered immediate suspension of the officials concerned of Palasa town in Srikakulam district.

"Shocked to hear the incident of transporting dead body of COVID patient by JCB excavator at Palasa in Srikakulam district. It is sad that some people are being inhuman at a time when they should show compassion. Serious action should be taken against those responsible so that such incidents do not recur," Palasa is already in the grip of Covid-19 fear and traders in this town and other parts of the district are voluntarily observing the lockdown.

Meanwhile, Telugu Desam Party (TDP) president and former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu tweeted that he was utterly shocked to see the bodies of coronavirus victims wrapped in plastic & transported on JCBs and tractors. "They deserve respect & dignity even in death. Shame on Y.S. Jagan government for this inhumane treatment of the mortal remains," he tweeted along with a video.



ITBP personnel and health workers sit beside beds at the Sardar Patel COVID Care Centre and Hospital in New Delhi, Saturday

# Andhra partners with ISB for post-pandemic economic revival

**With this collaboration, the government wants to come up with a long term roadmap for sustainable development in the state through data-driven policy making**

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, June 27:** The Andhra Pradesh government has partnered with the Indian School of Business (ISB) as a nodal agency to revive economic growth in the state post Covid-19 and to formulate a roadmap for sustainable development.

Minister for Industries, Information Technology and Skills, M. Goutham Reddy Wednesday visited the ISB Hyderabad and interacted with key professors to discuss strategies to revive economic growth in the state and come up with a long term roadmap for sustainable development in the state through data-driven policy making.

He expressed his keenness to see a seamless functioning of various departments towards development and urged ISB to come up with a governance model to create a synchronous functioning of departments of development. The



minister also expressed the desire to work together on creating jobs where the labour is, creating quality management structure in government, skill gaps among others.

He also mentioned that an advisory council on development of Andhra Pradesh will be formed with ISB as a nodal agency. Various key areas of engagement were identified to be taken up as project model including Andhra Pradesh Pulse, an advanced data analytics application using near real-time digital data on citizen interactions with government schemes and systems. The advisory council will also work to attract investments. It

will undertake a comparative analysis of incentives and investment patterns across states. "This will allow Andhra Pradesh to learn from experience across India and structure incentives to make the state more attractive for targeted investment," said an official release.

It will also try to use the skills of returning migrants. The returning migrants are often skilled workers who can be deployed productively in local jobs requiring similar or adjacent skills, which will also contribute to local economic recovery. ISB would like to contribute towards building a system to record the skill sets of returning migrants in order to assess the gap between skills and available jobs in post-pandemic times.

"ISB faculty and students are delighted to collaborate with the Government of Andhra Pradesh on the agenda of inclusive and sustainable development through the JumpStartIndia@ISB initiative. We applaud the spirit of openness and collaboration, and pledge to support the Government of Andhra Pradesh to the fullest extent possible," said Professor Ashwini Chhatre, Associate Professor of Public Policy, ISB.

# Delhi police crackdown on Khalistani sympathisers

**The arrested persons have disclosed their links with the Khalistan Liberation Force leaders settled abroad and revealed their plans to commit targeted killings on instructions from militants sponsored by ISI**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** The Delhi Police has arrested three suspected sympathisers of the Khalistan Movement who were planning to execute targeted killings in various northern states, officials said Saturday.

The accused have been identified as Mohinder Pal Singh (29), a resident of Delhi; Gurtej Singh (41), a resident of Punjab; and Lovepreet (21), a resident of Haryana, they said. Three pistols and seven live cartridges were recovered from their possession. Three phones with many "incriminating" videos and photographs related to the Khalistan Movement were also recovered from them, a senior police officer said.

"Police got a tip-off regarding the activities of Mohinder, a sympathiser of Khalistan Liberation Force. He was planning to commit a terrorist activity in the national capital. Thereafter, a trap was laid



near Hastsal on June 15 and...Mohinder was arrested," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said.

Following his interrogation, Lovepreet was arrested from Kaithal district in Haryana. Later, the duo led the police to Mansa in Punjab where Gurtej was arrested, Yadav said. The arrested persons have disclosed their links with the Khalistan Liberation Force leaders settled abroad and revealed their plans to commit targeted killings on instructions from Khalistani militant sponsored by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the police added.

## of the day quote

Intensive Care Units (ICU) beds are being ramped up across the national capital for serious patients, while those in the home isolation have been sent pulse oximeters to measure their oxygen levels

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

In an alarming threat to our national security and territorial integrity, China has now occupied our territory up to 18 km inside the LAC, in the Depsang plains, up to the Y-Junction or the bottleneck, as per multiple reports

PALLAM RAJU | CONGRESS LEADER

It seems Congress leaders are spokespersons for China. They only talk against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and never dare to question China

PRALHAD JOSHI | UNION MINISTER

## SHORT TAKES

### One killed

**Amaravati:** A company official was killed due to Ammonia gas leak from an industrial plant in Andhra Pradesh's Kurnool district on Saturday, police said. The incident occurred at SPY Agro Industries Limited in Nandyal town. Company general manager Srinivas Rao was killed in the mishap. Four others who were also present with him rushed out. All of them were reported safe. Kurnool District Collector G. Veerapandian said the fire services personnel were trying to plug the gas leak.

### DMK MLA tests corona positive

**Chennai:** The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) legislator R.T. Arasu has tested positive for coronavirus and has been admitted for treatment in a private hospital here. The DMK President M.K. Stalin in a tweet Saturday wished Arasu a quick recovery so that he can carry on with his public work. Arasu representing the Cheyyur assembly constituency is the second lawmaker from DMK party to be infected with the coronavirus. The first was DMK legislator J. Anbazhagan who lost his life recently.

### CBI to probe cop suicide case

**New Delhi:** Almost a month after an SHO (Station House Officer) posted at Rajgarh police station in Rajasthan's Churu district committed suicide, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) took over the probe. The CBI registered a case on June 26 on the request of the Rajasthan government. The state government had demanded for a CBI probe on June 6 to investigate the suicide by Vishnu Dutt Vishnoi. The CBI has booked a case against unknown persons to probe the reasons behind suicide of Vishnoi. The body of the SHO of Rajgarh Police station was found hanging at his government residence May 23.

### Jawan dies

**New Delhi:** A 43-year-old Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) official succumbed to the novel coronavirus Saturday taking the total number of deaths in the country's largest paramilitary force to eight, officials said. This is also the 24th death among the five Central Armed Police Forces -- CRPF, BSF, CISF, ITBP and SSB.



Today we stand at a transformative moment. A pandemic has devastated our globalised economic system. It has affected the way we live. While it is too early to say that the coronavirus has altered our way of life forever, it has reduced humanity's instinctive comfort in the presence of others

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

## GOOD NEWS

Kerala has registered over one lakh people becoming literate in the last three years, the Kerala State Literacy Mission claimed Saturday



# Huge surge in Covid cases

It took 110 days for coronavirus infections in the country to reach one lakh, while just 39 days more to go past the five lakh-mark. Medical experts have pointed to the ramped up Covid-19 testing, now available more extensively and at a reasonable price, as a big reason for the spike in cases recently

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** It took 110 days for coronavirus infections in the country to reach one lakh, while just 39 days more to go past the five lakh-mark. Medical experts have pointed to the ramped up COVID-19 testing, now available more extensively and at a reasonable price, as a big reason for the spike in cases recently.

Six days after recording four lakh infections, India's COVID-19 tally went past the five lakh-mark Saturday with the highest single-day surge of 18,552 cases, while the death toll climbed to 15,685, according to Union health ministry data.

The COVID-19 caseload increased to 5,08,953, while 384 fatalities were recorded in the last 24 hours, the updated figure at 8 am showed. This was the fourth consecutive day when coronavirus infection increased by more than 15,000, while there has been a surge of 3,18,418 infections from June 1 till 27. Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh are the top contributors to the rising tally.



It took 64 days for COVID-19 cases in India to touch the (May 19) one lakh-mark from 100 cases, and another fortnight to cross two lakh cases on June 3. It took 10 days for the tally to touch the three lakh-mark and another eight days for the cases to climb to four lakh. The nationwide lockdown was first imposed on March 25 for 21 days in a bid to contain the spread

of the novel coronavirus. The lockdown was first extended till May 3 and then again till May 17. It was further extended till May 31. The lockdown is now restricted only in containment zones across the country and will continue till June 30. A large number of social, economic, religious and sports activities are currently allowed to function under what the

Ministry of Home Affairs termed as 'Unlock 1'.

After the government initiated the unlock procedure to make-up for the economic cost of the lockdown, the COVID-19 cases started to gallop. Dr. Monica Mahajan, Director, Internal Medicine, Max Healthcare, said it is important to understand the reason for the exponential rise in cases.

The numbers are doubling at such a fast rate due to factors such as the high reproduction number of the virus (the number of cases, on average, an infected person will cause during their infectious period), she said. Also, with the lifting of lockdown norms people's behaviour has changed again as they are not acting as responsibly as before in terms of social distancing, and testing has become more liberal, Mahajan said.

She said the price of the test has come down and test kits are more easily available, so more cases are being detected. Noted city-based lung surgeon Dr Arvind Kumar said definitely a big reason for cases going up is increased testing.

## COOLING OFF



Children bathe on a hot day in Amritsar, Saturday

PTI PHOTO

## UNDER LENS

### ED GRILLS PATEL

The team members were seen carrying files and wearing masks and gloves as precautionary measures against coronavirus spread

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** An Enforcement Directorate (ED) team Saturday questioned senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel at his residence in Delhi in connection with the Sandesara brothers money laundering case, officials said.

They said a three-member team reached Patel's home at 23, Mother Teresa Crescent in the Lutyens zone of central Delhi around 11:30 am. The team members were seen carrying files and wearing masks and gloves as precautionary measures against coronavirus spread.

Patel's statement is being recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the politicians' purported links with the Sandesara brothers are under the scanner, they said.

The ED had summoned Patel, 70, twice for questioning in the case but the Congress Rajya Sabha MP from Gujarat later cited prevailing COVID-19 guidelines that advises senior citizens to stay indoors in order to remain safe from the pandemic.

The agency then assured the Congress party treasurer that all care will be taken while he is questioned at its office but it was pointed out by his legal team that there are media reports about coronavirus cases being found in the ED Headquarters too.

The agency then told him that they are willing to visit his home as taking the probe forward in the case was important. Subsequently, the time for home visit was fixed and the agency informed Patel that they will send the investigating officer of the case to him for questioning.



Patel has earlier been the political secretary to UPA chairperson and Congress president Sonia Gandhi and considered one of the most powerful persons in the grand old party.

This money laundering case pertains to the alleged ₹14,500 crore bank loan fraud that is said to have been perpetrated by the Vadodra-based pharma firm Sterling Biotech and its main promoters - Nitin Sandesara, Chetan Sandesara and Deepti Sandesara - all of whom are absconding. The agency has said that this is a bigger bank scam in volume than the PNB fraud involving diamondaires Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi. The total fraud amount pegged in the PNB case is about ₹13,400 crore.

The Sandesaras are also facing separate probes by the CBI and the Income Tax Department for their alleged nexus with some high-profile politicians and charges of corruption and tax evasion, respectively.

At present, they are stated to be based in Nigeria, from where India is trying to extradite them. The ED registered a criminal case in connection with the alleged bank loan fraud on the basis of an FIR and a charge sheet filed by the CBI.

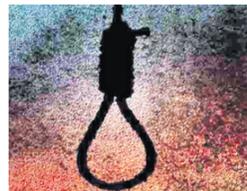
## Depression more dangerous than corona in Jharkhand

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ranchi, June 27:** The mental depression is proving to be more dangerous than coronavirus in Jharkhand these days. If data of suicides is taken into consideration during lockdown and Unlock 1.0, the average of people committing suicide everyday is 5.5.

According to data of the state government, 449 people have committed suicide in March, April and upto June 25. In June itself 134 people have committed suicide. One person is committing suicide every 4.50 hours. Psychiatrists say that the depression due to lockdown has made deep impact on minds of the people.

"During lockdown and Unlock 1.0 around 1,200 people suffering from



depression have approached our institute. During lockdown we were getting more than 150 phone calls every day from people suffering from depression. There were 20 per cent people who had given up hope to live and wanted to end their life," said a doctor at the Central Institute of Psychiatry here.

Dr Sanjay Kumar Mandal, a psychiatrist of CIP admitted a large number of people ap-

proached the institute during lockdown suffering from depression.

In state capital Ranchi, 55 people committed suicide from April 1 to June 25. Psychiatrists say that economic slowdown, fear of losing jobs, unemployment and other factors caused deep depression among people. The sense of insecurity prompted many people to commit suicide.

"People were locked inside homes during lockdown which led to rise in disputes among family members, and domestic violence witnessed spurt. These factors promoted many people to commit suicide as they were unable to control their emotions. The right counselling within family could have saved many lives" said psychiatrist Ajay Kumar.

## Monsoon showers happiness

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** Sowing of crops in the current kharif season has gained momentum due to good monsoon. The area under sowing of all kharif crops increased by 104 per cent over the previous year, while the area under oilseeds increased by 525 per cent from the previous year and the sowing of pulses increased by about 222 per cent. The planting and sowing of paddy, the main crop of the Kharif season, has been 35 per cent higher than the previous year.

According to the data released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on Friday, the kharif crops in the crop year 2020-



21 (July-June) have been sown in 315.63 lakh hectare, which is 161.11 lakh hectare or 104.25 per cent more as compared to the same period last year.

So far, paddy has been planted in 37.71 lakh hectare this year, which is 9.35 lakh hectare or around 35 per cent higher than the previous year.

So far, paddy has been planted in 37.71 lakh hectare this year, which is 9.35 lakh hectare or around 35 per cent higher than the previous year

The area under pulses increased by 13.37 lakh hectare, or 221.72 per cent, to 18.48 lakh hectare from last year. The acreage of tur in pulses has increased by 8.04 lakh hectare to 9.97 lakh hectare since last year. At the same time, area under urad and moong has increased to 2.75 lakh hectare and 5.30 lakh hectare respectively.

## TOUGH TIMES

# Students clueless as Covid hits placements

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, June 27:** The COVID-19 crisis is tough for everyone, especially the fresh pass-outs from the world's best known colleges who are clueless on how to pursue their dreams as the virus has turned everything topsy turvy leading to uncertainty about a bright future.

"I went to pursue BBA in Hospitality Management with Specialization in Finance & Hotel Development which was a three and a half year course and was completed this year in February.



Even after spending around ₹1.5 crore on my education, it seems I have nothing in my hand", he says.

Mormukut, however, is lucky to have a family business in hotels. "I am using this time as an opportunity to build a strong foundation at

each of our hotels, and prepare for accelerated recovery when the crisis subsides. On the education side, I have been doing a couple of online courses and learning more," he says.

"The pandemic has challenged the hospitality industry strongly and

some of my placement offers are on hold until further notice while others have been postponed to next year." Another student Pranaav Parth went to New York University to pursue his Bachelors in Public Policy and Economics. The duration of the course was 4 years.

Although he will complete his course in May 2021, he is worried as most firms have postponed recruitment for the time being. He says, "I am interning with a venture capital firm in Dubai. This is my final summer before graduation which is considered to be the most important professionally since industries like investment banking and consulting have set up recruiting pipelines that hire college students

based on their internship performance. All of those plans have gone awry as firms postponed or cancelled their internship programmes. Although I am happy where I am, there's no option on the horizon."

Student Karni Singh too faces an uncertain future after completing his four-year course in Bachelor of Technology in Automotive Engineering, SRM Institute of Science & Technology, India this June as he has no job in hand. He is now going for higher studies in the upcoming field of electric vehicles to acquire the necessary skills in this field. He has already spent ₹30-40 lakhs on his education but he understands the fact that times are tough.

## YASHWANT SLAMS FUEL PRICE HIKE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Patna, June 27:** Former Union finance minister Yashwant Sinha Saturday alleged that the Centre is resorting to "profiteering" by increasing fuel prices on a daily basis.

"On one hand, the Centre announced a ₹20-lakh crore package to uplift the economy, while on the other, it "robbed" people who travel by motorbikes, scooters and other vehicles," he said. While diesel rates were hiked for the 21st straight day on Saturday, petrol prices have been increased on 20 occasions in three weeks.

"There are occasions when the price hike in petrol and diesel (prices) becomes imperative. But I can tell you on the basis of my experience that it is nothing but sheer profiteering in today's circumstances," Sinha said at a press conference here.

"It is unfortunate and saddening to know that the government is resorting to profiteering," he said. Sinha said it is well known that "crude oil price is soft in the international market".

Saturday, the price of petrol was hiked by 25 paise per litre and diesel by 21 paise per litre, taking the cumulative increase in rates in three weeks to ₹9.12 and ₹11.01, respectively.

June 7, oil companies had restarted revising prices in line with costs after ending an 82-day hiatus during which they adjusted steep excise duty hikes by the government against the fall in benchmark international oil rates.

## WOMAN HELD FOR ELOPING WITH GIRL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guna (MP), June 27:** A 20-year-old woman was arrested for allegedly eloping with her minor partner and "marrying" her at Guna town in Madhya Pradesh, police said Saturday.

The matter came to light, when a resident of Budhe Balaji area approached the Kotwali police station on Monday with a complaint that his 17-year-old daughter had gone missing, additional superintendent of police T S Baghel said.

On investigation, it was found that a relative from a village Shivpuri district, who was living with the family, was also missing, he said. A team was sent to the village and the duo was caught on Friday, the official said, adding that the woman had married the minor, who claimed that she had eloped of her own volition.

# national

## of the day quote

Most of the categories of employment mentioned at the event are facing problems. Self-employed people are in tremendous crisis due to lack of direct financial support from the government. The condition of small and medium scale industries is so bad that it is estimated that 62 per cent of MSMEs will cut jobs and 78 per cent will cut wages

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

Punjab is moving towards "bankruptcy" and "lagging behind in development" under its regime and the ruling party has "failed" to fulfill its key promises of waiving complete farmers' loan and jobs for unemployed youths

NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR | UNION AGRICULTURE MINISTER

Suppose RGF returns the Rs 20 lakh, will PM Modi assure the country that China will vacate its transgression and restore status quo ante

P CHIDAMBARAM | CONGRESS LEADER

## SHORT TAKES

### Five ex-Cong MLAs join BJP

**Ahmedabad:** Five former Congress MLAs from Gujarat, out of the total eight who had resigned as legislators in March and June- ahead of the Rajya Sabha elections- joined the BJP Saturday. Former Congress MLAs Jitu Chaudhary, Pradyumnasinh Jadeja, J V Kakadiya, Akshay Patel and Brijesh Merja joined the BJP in the presence of party's state unit president Jitu Vaghani and other senior leaders. Of these five former MLAs, Patel, Merja and Chaudhary had resigned as legislators earlier this month, soon after the Election Commission announced June 19 as the new date for the Rajya Sabha election in the state.

### 2 cops suspended

**Palamu (Jharkhand):** Two policemen were suspended in Jharkhand's Palamu district Saturday on the charge of accepting bribes, a police officer said. The authorities took action against the two after they allegedly accepted Rs 2,000 as bribe from a motorcyclist who was riding without wearing a helmet, Superintendent of Police Ajay Linda said.

### Jawan injured

**Raipur:** A CISF personnel was injured after suspected Naxals attacked him with a stone and decamped with his walkie-talkie in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh Saturday, police said. The Naxals also took away his and his colleague's mobile phones, police said. The incident took place in the morning when two staffers of the CISF, which guards the mines area of the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) in Kirandul and Bachel areas of the district, were out on routine patrolling, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava said.

### Girl raped

**Ballia (UP):** A man has been arrested in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district for allegedly raping an eight-year-old girl by luring her with the offer of a toffee, police said Saturday. Station house officer of Revti police station Shailesh Singh said, "On June 22, the eight-year-old girl had gone to a shop to buy some items, where a person lured her by offering a toffee and later raped her."



**Covid-19 is spreading rapidly into new parts of the country. The Government Of India has no plan to defeat it**

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

## J'KHAND EXTENDS LOCKDOWN

The Jharkhand government has decided to extend the lockdown till July 31 to contain the spread of coronavirus in the state. All schools and religious places will remain closed during this period



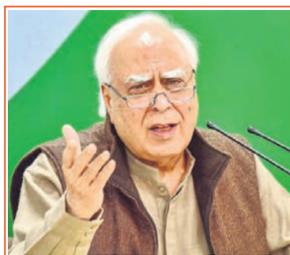
# LAC ISSUE: CONG TARGETS PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** The Congress Saturday asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to publicly condemn China for its "brazen incursions" into Indian territory and urged the government to take "strong and quick action" to resolve the Line of Actual Control (LAC) issue.

Senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal said at a virtual press conference that the prime minister should address the nation and promise that anyone capturing Indian territory would be pushed back. He said the entire nation and the entire opposition would stand behind him and his promise. Alleging that the last six years have seen the biggest diplomatic failure under the Modi government, the former Union minister said "some quick action" should be taken to resolve the LAC issue with China.

"Some quick action is required," he said seeking early resolution of the border dispute with China, while noting that diplomacy and economic blockade with China would not work. "Yes, the action should be strong (against China). The quality, nature and the timing of that action has to be decided by the gov-



### SIMMERING TENSION

The Congress leader alleged that China has erected tents and structures near PP-14 in Galwan Valley, the place where 20 Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives

Alleging that the last six years have seen the biggest diplomatic failure under the Modi government, the former Union minister said "some quick action" should be taken to resolve the LAC issue

ernment," he said when asked what "quick action" he was asking for. Sibal said it was for the government to decide and not the opposition.

The Congress leader alleged that China has erected tents and structures near PP-14 in Galwan Valley, the place where 20 Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives. He added that satellite imagery also reflects construction of new black top roads by Chinese forces on the Galwan riverbed, erection of large numbers of military tents and presence of bulldozers and other heavy equipment. "What is our government doing about it? The PM must clear the air and condemn these brazen Chinese incursions," he said. Asking why the prime minister does not openly and publicly condemn the "brazen acts of infiltrations, in-

ursions and occupation" of Indian territory by China, he said, "I want the PM to publicly condemn China. We will support the prime minister."

Sibal said the situation is such that the PM's statement that nobody intruded into India is being used by the Chinese globally. "We want the prime minister to address the nation and promise that if anyone has captured Indian territory, we will push them back. If you say so, the public and the entire opposition will stand behind you and your promise," he said.

There has been a standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in the eastern Ladakh area for over a month and a bloody clash took place between them on the night of June 15 in the Galwan Valley, resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers.

# India rejects Pakistan's plan

The Kartarpur Corridor was temporarily closed March 16 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that originated in China's Wuhan city

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, June 27:** The government Saturday rubbished Pakistan's "readiness" to reopen the Kartarpur Corridor for Indian Sikhs, by calling it an attempt to create "a mirage of goodwill".

Taking to Twitter, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Saturday, announced: "As places of worship open up across the world, Pakistan prepares to reopen the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor for all Sikh pilgrims, conveying to the Indian side our readiness to reopen the corridor on 29 June 2020, the occasion of the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjeet Singh." The corridor was temporarily closed March 16 in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic that originated in China's Wuhan city. Official sources in New Delhi said that Pakistan is trying to "create a mirage of goodwill" by proposing to reopen Kartarpur Corridor on June 29, at the short notice of two days, while bilateral agreement provides for information to be shared by India with Pakistan side at least



seven days before the date of travel. This would need India to open up the registration process well in advance, the sources said. Besides, Pakistan has not built the bridge on their side across the flood plains of the Ravi river despite having committed to it in the bilateral agreement. With the advent of monsoon, the sources said, it would need to be evaluated whether pilgrim movement is possible through the corridor in a safe and secure manner. Official sources said cross border travel has been temporarily suspended as part of measures to prevent and contain the spread of coronavirus.

"Further view would be taken in consultation with health authorities and other stakeholders concerned," an official said. The 4.2 km corridor links Dera Baba Nanak town in Gurdaspur district with Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in Shakargarh tehsil in Narowal district of Pakistan.

India and Pakistan in October 2019 signed an agreement to operationalise the Kartarpur Corridor to allow Indian pilgrims a visa-free visit to the holy gurdwara, believed to have been built on the site where Guru Nanak died in the 16th century, and located some 4 km inside Pakistan.

# Covid: Green signal to dexamethasone

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** Dexamethasone, an inexpensive and widely used steroid, was included in the treatment protocol for COVID-19 patients in moderate to severe stages of illness by the Union health ministry Saturday.

The updated 'Clinical Management Protocols for COVID-19' advises the use of dexamethasone, which is already used in a wide range of conditions for its anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressant effects, as an alternative choice to methylprednisolone for managing moderate to severe cases of COVID-19.

Keeping pace with the evolving knowledge about COVID-19, especially in terms of effective drugs, the change has been made after considering the latest available evidence and expert consultation, the health ministry said.

Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan has also forwarded the updated protocol to all states and Union Territories to make necessary arrangements for availability and use of the new protocols and the dexamethasone at the institutional level also, it said.

The health ministry had June 13 also allowed the use of antiviral drug remdesivir for restricted emergency use.

## CHALLENGES GALORE

# Few takers for virtual schooling in Goa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Panaji, June 27:** Days after Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant announced that online classes were not compulsory, teachers of higher secondary schools complained that several students were opting out from virtual lessons.

Earlier this week, Sawant had clarified that online classes were not compulsory, as many students did not have gadgets and proper internet facilities. In a release, the Higher Secondary Teachers' Association has questioned why the state government had asked schools to start online classes for Classes 11 and 12 in the first place.



"Earlier, the chief minister had said that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there will be a delay in reopening of schools. Accordingly, teachers were trained by the department of education for online classes," president of the association Anant Pissurlekar said. However, Sawant's latest announcement has led to a decline in the number of students attending online classes, with many

who were initially attending also opting out, he claimed. "If these online classes were not beneficial, then why did they ask us to conduct them in the first place?" he asked.

Meanwhile, a senior official of the education department said the decision to not make online classes compulsory was taken after several parents complained about lack of internet connectivity. "Some parents also found it difficult to buy gadgets such as laptops and mobile phones, which are required for virtual schooling," he said, adding that the chief minister had made these reasons amply clear in his announcement.

# CHINA WILL HAVE TO PAY HEAVY PRICE: EXPERTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** China will have to pay a "heavy price" for decades for resorting to aggressive military behaviour towards India in eastern Ladakh as it will isolate the country globally, strategic affairs experts said Saturday.

They said the economic cost of China's misadventure in the last couple of months in eastern Ladakh and South China will be "massive" as it has "exposed" Beijing's "real face" when the entire world is fighting coronavirus.

The experts have also referred to China's tariff war with the US,

growing bickering with Australia on trade-related issues and the fast deteriorating situation in Hong Kong. "China has made a huge mistake by resorting to aggressive military behaviour in eastern Ladakh. By triggering the standoff when the world is fighting the coronavirus pandemic, China has exposed itself globally," former Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Gurmit Singh said.

"The cost for China will be huge. It will be heavy. It will keep paying the cost for several decades for killing Indian soldiers in Galwan valley on June 15. China has lost its goodwill in India and elsewhere," he

## STRAINED TIES



added. Referring to brutal attacks on Indian soldiers in the Galwan valley, he said the action has reinforced the view that China's People's Liberation Army is "just a political

force and that it does not conform to military standards.

Former Deputy Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Subrata Saha too said China is getting itself isolated by its

unacceptable military aggression and the country will have to pay a heavy diplomatic and economic price for it. "China is isolating itself by its aggressive conduct both militarily and diplomatically. So there will be a price for it. It is putting itself into a corner," he said.

Lt Gen Saha said there will be a significant economic price that China will have to pay for its "misadventure". He also referred to growing international concerns about what is happening in Hong Kong, South China Sea as well as in East China Sea. Gen Saha also talked about trade war between China and the US calling it a kind

of "fight to finish" conflict. He also referred to China's deepening trade crisis with Australia.

The Indian and Chinese armies are locked in a bitter standoff in multiple locations in eastern Ladakh for the last six weeks, and the tension escalated manifold after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a violent clash in Galwan valley on June 15.

Following the Galwan valley clashes, the Army has sent thousands of additional troops to forward locations along the Line of Actual Control in various sectors including in Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim.

## UTTER SILENCE



Security personnel stand guard at a closed market in Dibrugarh, Saturday. Authorities have announced a complete lockdown

## CORONA CURE CLAIM

# Another jolt to Ramdev

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Jaipur, June 27:** In another jolt to yoga guru Ramdev, an FIR has been lodged here against him, Patanjali Ayurved CEO Acharya Balkrishna and three others for allegedly making misleading claims that the herbal medicine company has found a cure for COVID-19 called Coronil.

The complaint was filed at Jyoti Nagar police station in Jaipur Friday. Avnish Parashar, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP), south, Jaipur, said: "Ramdev, Acharya Balkrishna, Balbir Singh Tomar, Anurag Tomar and Anurag Varshney, were booked under Section 420 (cheating) of the Indian Penal Code and relevant sections of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954, as per the FIR lodged by an advocate Balbir Jakhar."

Two of the accused including Balbir Singh Tomar and Anurag Tomar, are the chairman and the director of the Jaipur-based NIMS University.

The fifth accused, Varshney, is a scientist at Patanjali Ayurved. Jakhar said the accused have endangered the common people's lives by making false claims of finding a COVID-19 vaccine as they neither informed the Rajasthan government nor the Centre about the clinical trials of Coronil.

Patanjali Ayurved, Tuesday launched Coronil tablet and Swasari vati medicine claiming that they can cure COVID-19 within seven days. However, the AYUSH ministry expressed unawareness



The complaint was filed at Jyoti Nagar police station in Jaipur Friday  
Patanjali Ayurved, Tuesday launched Coronil tablet and Swasari vati medicine claiming that they can cure COVID-19 within seven days

about the development and Patanjali was stopped from advertising the medicine within a few hours after its launch.

Patanjali earlier also claimed that the two Ayurveda-based medicines have shown 100 per cent favourable results during clinical trials on COVID-19 patients except those on a life support system. The clinical trials were reportedly held in NIMS Jaipur.

While Ramdev claimed making a thorough clinical case study on patients admitted at NIMS, its Chairman, B.S. Tomar on the other hand said, "No clinical trial in our hospital was made for the drug as there was no serious case of patients admitted. Only 100 asymptomatic patients in our hospital were given a few ayurvedic medicines under the Patanjali banner. We did not ask for medicine to cure coronavirus but had only these ayurvedic immunity boosters who helped recovery of asymptomatic cases faster by 35 per cent."

## NADDA HITS OUT AT SONIA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, June 27:** BJP President JP Nadda Saturday lashed out at Congress president Sonia Gandhi for the alleged fund gate involving the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF), labelling it as "sin".

"I want to ask Soniji not to try and avoid the original questions under the garb of Corona or the situation at China border," said Nadda. Asking 10 pointed questions to Gandhi, Nadda started with, "The nation of 130 crore people wants to know about the deeds done by the Gandhi family, what work you did while in governance and how you betrayed the people." Nadda alleged cast insinuation while he went on using, "What was the need to be a part of RCFP? How did India's trade deficit with China rise from \$1.1 billion to \$36.2 billion?"

In a no holds barred attack on the Congress Chief, the BJP President questioned, "What is the exact relationship between INC and the Communist Party of China? What is the tacit understanding? What is the signed and unsigned MOU? The country wants to know."

Raising the issue, Nadda asked, "The RGF worked in close association with China Association for Internationally Friendly Contact. This organization is a vehicle used by the Central Military Commission of China. The purpose of this Commission is to infiltrate and influence the voices of leaders of other countries." CAIFC was dubbed as a front for intelligence gathering in an August 2018 US report.

Nadda also raked up the issue of money being "diverted from PM National Relief Fund to RGF between 2005-2008". Turning the table against Rahul Gandhi who once coined the term "suit boot ki sarkar" to corner Modi government for its alleged pro-business outlook, the BJP Chief asked bluntly, "The RGF took hefty donations from major Indian corporates, but their rhetoric was for the poor people. Wasn't this quid pro quo of the purest form?"

Digging deeper into the PMNRF funding RGF, Nadda claimed, "Who is the auditor of the PM National Relief Fund? The auditor was Thakur Vaidyanathan and Aiyayr Co. This was founded by Mr Rameshwar Thakur, who happened to be Union MoS of Finance. He was Rajya Sabha MP for two terms and was governor of four states."



Obviously the African-American community has suffered from racism for a very, very long period of time ANTHONY FAUCI | WHITE HOUSE HEALTH ADVISOR

UN MARKS 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF CHARTER SIGNING

The UN Charter "brought rules and hope to a world in ruins" Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told a virtual ceremony, commemorating 75 years since the organization's foundational text was signed



of the day quote

We have been clear that anyone who assaults the police or any of our emergency service workers who keep us safe should feel the full force of the law BORIS JOHNSON | UK PRIME MINISTER

A global initiative to speed up the development and production of COVID-19 tests, vaccines and treatments will require more than \$30 billion over the next year TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO CHIEF

Balochistan is on the brink of a rupture and will be uncontrollable if another Baloch leader is assassinated ASIF ALI ZARDARI | FORMER PAKISTAN PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Israel strikes Hamas facilities

Jerusalem: Israeli warplanes carried out air strikes on Hamas targets in the Gaza Strip in response to a rocket attack, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said Saturday. Hours after two rockets were fired into southern Israel, IDF aircraft conducted an airstrike late Friday against a rocket manufacturing workshop and a weapons manufacturing facility, Xinhua news agency quoted the IDF as saying in a statement. There were no immediate reports from the Gaza Strip on the extent of damage or injuries.

Two killed in Illinois shooting

Chicago: Two people were killed and one critically injured after an employee of a coffee-dispenser manufacturer opened fire at the company's warehouse in Springfield, the capital of the US state of Illinois, police said. The shooting took place at the Bunn-O-Matic plant Friday morning. The suspect, Michael Collins (48), then fled the scene and was later found dead in his car of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, with two handguns besides his body.

3 dead in Mexico City attack

Mexico City: A group of gunmen opened fire on Mexico City Chief of Police Omar Garcia Harfuch and his bodyguards, injuring him and killing two officers and a civilian, according to authorities. The Mexican capital city's police said that Garcia Harfuch was admitted to the hospital for surgery after sustaining multiple injuries in the attack Friday, reports Xinhua news agency. The attack occurred at 6.35 local time a.m. as the police chief was travelling in a residential neighbourhood to the west of the city.

2.5mn Yemeni kids facing hunger

Sanaa: Around 2.4 million children below the age of 5 in Yemen were facing hunger and malnutrition due to a shortage of humanitarian aid funding amid the coronavirus pandemic, according to the UNICEF. In a statement Friday, the organization said that within the next six months around 30,000 Yemeni children younger than five years could suffer from severe and potentially "life-threatening" acute malnutrition, taking the number of overall malnourished children in this age category to 2.4 million.

'Headley cannot be extradited to India'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, June 27: Mumbai terrorist attack convict David Headley cannot be extradited to India, but Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman co-conspirator Tahawwur Rana faces extradition, a US attorney has told a federal court while opposing his bail plea. Rana, 59, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was recently rearrested June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed. He is a declared fugitive in India.

According to the federal prosecutors, between 2006 and November 2008, Rana conspired with Headley, also known as "Daoud Gilani", and others in Pakistan to assist Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Harakat ul-Jihad-e-Islami, both US-designated terrorist organisations, to plan and carry out the Mumbai terrorist attacks. Pakistani-American LeT terrorist Headley was involved in plotting the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. He was made an approver in the case, and is currently serving a 35-year prison term in the US for his role in the attack.

The US is yet to file India's request for Rana's extradition, but is expected to do it soon. It is evident that the offences for which Rana was tried in the Illinois court will differ from the Indian offences



HEADLEY WAS MADE AN APPROVER IN THE CASE, AND IS CURRENTLY SERVING A 35-YEAR PRISON TERM IN THE US FOR HIS ROLE IN THE ATTACK

mentioned in the complaint. Rana in his defence has argued that US decision not to extradite his co-conspirator, Headley, to India is inconsistent and bars his extradition. However, Assistant US Attorney John J Lulejian told a federal court in Los Angeles Friday that unlike Rana, Headley immediately accepted responsibility for his conduct and pleaded guilty to all of the charges in the Superseding Indictment.

"Because Headley fulfilled the required terms, the plea agreement established that Headley would not be extradited to India. Rana's situation is different because he neither pleaded guilty nor cooperated with the United States." "As a result, he is unable to avail himself of the benefits afforded to Headley

through his negotiated plea. Thus, he cannot complain that he faces extradition, while his co-defendant does not," the US attorney said. Rana's bail application is due for hearing next week. Early this week, his attorney told the court that the 26/11 convict is not a flight risk and has proposed a \$1.5 million bond for his release.

"Rana should be released on a robust bond: secured by approximately \$1.5 million in property pledged by family and friends and under the supervision of his daughter, Lemaan Rana, a matriculating medical student and Ph.D. candidate," Amy Karlin, the Interim Federal Public Defender, said in the court submission on behalf of Rana. India seeks his arrest on a number of offences, including the

MUMBAI ATTACK

Pakistani-American LeT terrorist David Headley was involved in plotting the 2008 Mumbai terror attack along with Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman co-conspirator Tahawwur Rana

Rana, 59, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was recently rearrested June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack

conspiracy to commit murder, conspiracy to commit forgery for the purpose of cheating, and murder under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). He is sought for his role in 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai.

The US attorney urged the court to continue his detention pending the extradition proceedings to India. Describing Rana as a flight risk, the attorney said that no matter what bond package he offers, Rana poses an unacceptable flight risk.

If the US extradites Rana to India and he is convicted of the charges, he may be eligible for the death penalty. Given what is at stake, Rana has an extreme incentive to flee and avoid facing these extradition proceedings, Lulejian said.

'Russia offered bounties to radicals to kill US soldiers'

A report said the US determined months ago that a Russian military intelligence unit linked to assassination attempts in Europe had offered rewards for successful attacks last year

REUTERS

Washington, June 27: US intelligence has concluded that the Russian military offered bounties to Taliban-linked terrorists in Afghanistan to kill American troops and other coalition forces, the New York Times reported.

Citing officials briefed on the matter, the Times said the United States determined months ago that a Russian military intelligence unit linked to assassination attempts in Europe had offered rewards for successful attacks last year: Islamist terrorists, or armed criminal elements closely associated with them, are believed to have collected some bounty money, the newspaper said.

The White House, the CIA and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence declined requests from Reuters for comment on the Times report.

US President Donald Trump has been briefed on the intelligence finding, the Times said. It said the White House has yet to authorize any steps against Russia in response to the bounties.

Of the 20 Americans killed in



combat in 2019, the Times said, it was not clear which deaths were under suspicion. After nearly 20 years of fighting the Taliban, the United States is looking for a way to extricate itself from Afghanistan and to achieve peace between the US-backed government and the terrorist group, which controls swathes of the country.

On February 29, the United States and the Taliban struck a deal that called for a phased US troop withdrawal. US troop strength in Afghanistan is down to nearly 8,600, well ahead of a schedule agreed with the Taliban, in part because of concerns about the spread of the coronavirus, US and NATO officials said in late May.

Biden surges ahead of Trump in some polls



A New York Times/Siena College poll released this week shows Biden with a strong, 14-point advantage, at a time when Trump is still fighting the pandemic, as well as dealing with the economy

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Washington, June 27: Democratic presumptive presidential nominee Joe Biden was ahead of President Donald Trump in some polls, but experts have said the winner of the 2020 race to the White House was still far from a done deal.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and recent civil unrest, Trump has come under severe criticism on a number of fronts.

A New York Times/Siena College poll released this week shows Biden with a strong, 14-point advantage, at a time when Trump is still fighting the pandemic, as well as dealing with the economy, badly hit by the nationwide lockdown.

The lockdown triggered by the pandemic has put millions of Americans out of work, and the jobless rate now stands at levels not seen since the Great Depression nearly 90 years ago.

Many Americans still support Trump, as his administration rolled back years of red tape and regulations that slowed economic growth. But now, the thriving econ-

omy with a constant growth and a low level unemployment rate in the past recent years has been erased, and the president is racing against the clock to get the economy moving forward again in the next crucial months before November's elections.

While Trump has maintained the economy will bounce back in a so-called "V shape", many economists were sceptical. Moreover, Trump's personal style may be a turn-off to many voters, although his supporters love his outspoken and sometimes outlandish persona.

"The emotional basis for Trump's campaign is: things are bad, this is the fault of bad people... Such people are trying to stop me from fixing what's wrong. Join me and I'll crush them and then I'll make things better," Clay Ramsay, a senior research associate at the Center for International and Security Studies at University of Maryland, told Xinhua.

However, there are several X factors, one of which is that polls showing Biden ahead might not predict the general election.

COLOURS OF DISCONTENT



A rainbow appears over a statue of Abraham Lincoln ahead of a racial inequality protest calling for the removal of the statue at the Emancipation Memorial at Lincoln Park near the US Capitol in Washington

Nepal-India border issue figures in NCP meeting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, June 27: Nepal-India border dispute and a proposed \$500 million US grant assistance to Kathmandu were among the major issues discussed during the ongoing meeting of the ruling Nepal Communist Party's powerful Standing Committee here Saturday, sources said.

Nepal last week completed the process of redrawing the country's political map through a Constitutional amendment, incorporating three strategically important Indian areas.

India has termed as "untenable" the "artificial enlargement" of the territorial claims by Nepal after its Parliament unanimously approved the new political map of the country featuring Lipulekh,

Kalapani and Limpiyadhura areas which India maintains belong to it.

On Saturday, most of the speakers of the 48-member Standing Committee deliberated on the Nepal-India border issue and described the government's recent move to redraw the country's political map incorporating Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura through Constitution amendment as "measures to consolidating Nepal's national unity and sovereignty", according to sources.

They, however, raised questions on the government's inability to hold talks with India on the border issue. Speaking at the meeting, Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali claimed that India did not show any interest in holding a dialogue with Nepal on the border issue despite Kathmandu's repeated

efforts, according to senior leader of the NCP Ganesh Shah, who was also present at the meeting.

"Nepal seeks to resolve the border dispute through political dialogue and will continuously initiate for talks to resolve the matter through dialogue," Gyawali said. Even Indian television channels and print media are highlighting the border issue, he told the meeting.

India has said that Nepal's action violates an understanding reached between the two countries to resolve the boundary issues through talks. "This artificial enlargement of claims is not based on historical fact or evidence and is not tenable. It is also violative of our current understanding to hold talks on outstanding boundary issues," spokesperson in the MEA Anurag Srivastava said earlier this month.

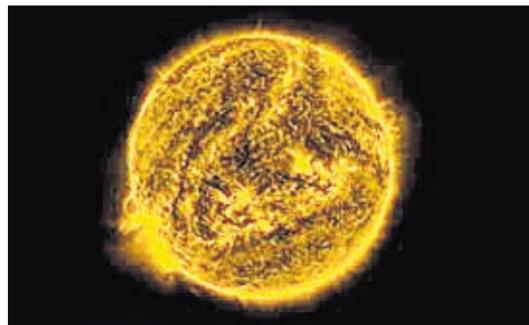
NASA releases startling 10-year time-lapse video of Sun

THE VIDEO SHOWS THE RISE AND FALL IN ACTIVITY THAT OCCURS AS PART OF THE SUN'S 11-YEAR SOLAR CYCLE

AGENCIES

Washington, June 27: The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has released a startling video of 10-year time-lapse of the Sun, condensing a decade of activity into an hour. NASA's Solar Dynamics Observatory (SDO) has been watching the Sun non-stop for over a full decade. While orbiting around the Earth, SDO has gathered 425 million high-resolution images of the Sun, NASA said in a statement while releasing the time-lapse footage.

As of June 2020, SDO has now been watching the Sun non-stop for over a full decade. From its orbit in space around Earth, SDO has gathered 425 million high-resolution images of the Sun, amassing 20 million gigabytes of data over the past 10 years. This infor-



mation has enabled countless new discoveries about the workings of our closest star and how it influences the solar system.

With a triad of instruments, SDO captures an image of the Sun every 0.75 seconds. The Atmospheric

Imaging Assembly (AIA) instrument alone captures images every 12 seconds at 10 different wavelengths of light. This 10-year time lapse showcases photos taken at a wavelength of 17.1 nanometers, which is an extreme ultraviolet

wavelength that shows the Sun's outermost atmospheric layer - the corona. Compiling one photo every hour, the movie condenses a decade of the Sun into 61 minutes. The video shows the rise and fall in activity that occurs as part of the Sun's 11-year solar cycle and notable events, like transiting planets and eruptions.

This 10-year time lapse of the Sun at 17.1 nanometers (an extreme ultraviolet wavelength that shows the Sun's outermost atmospheric layer - the corona) shows the rise and fall of the solar cycle and notable events, like transiting planets and solar eruptions.

While SDO has kept an unblinking eye pointed toward the Sun, there have been a few moments it missed. The dark frames in the video are caused by Earth or the Moon eclipsing SDO as they

pass between the spacecraft and the Sun. A longer blackout in 2016 was caused by a temporary issue with the AIA instrument that was successfully resolved after a week. The images where the Sun is off-center were observed when SDO was calibrating its instruments.

The organisation also explained that the dark frames in the video were caused by Earth or the Moon eclipsing SDO as they pass between the spacecraft and the Sun. An instrument failure in 2016 resulted in a longer blackout.

NASA said the SDO and its other missions will continue to watch our Sun in the years to come, providing further insights about our place in space and information to keep our astronauts and assets safe.

In 2016, NASA had also released a time-lapse of Mercury zipping past the Sun in a rare transit.



**Atmanirbhar Bharat does not mean that nothing will be imported but that India will have the capacity to produce globally competitive goods and services**

UDAY KOTAK | PRESIDENT, CII

## FOREX RESERVES FALL BY OVER \$2BN

India's foreign exchange reserves fell by \$2.078 billion during the week ended June 19. According to RBI's weekly statistical supplement, the overall forex reserves decreased to \$505.566 billion from \$507.644 billion reported for the week ended June 12. India's forex reserves comprise FCAs, gold reserves, SDRs and reserve position with the IMF



## of the day quote

The export orders are on a medium performance-level now but the order-enquiry for the next quarter is good. On the whole, the market situation of textiles is gradually recovering amid the massive impact of COVID-19

PRABHU DAMODHARAN | CONVENOR, ITF

Once accounts are red-flagged, it is imperative for banks to also then conclude it either ways in a reasonable period of time to ensure that appropriate actions are initiated. Timely intervention will enable banks to protect and ring-fence good business within the account

SANJAY DOSHI | FINANCIAL SERVICES ADVISORY LEADER, KPMG IN INDIA

Analysis shows that an extended period of lockdown, along with the increase in the number of (COVID-19) infected cases, is restraining the return of supply side normalcy

ARUN SINGH | CHIEF ECONOMIST, DUN & BRADSTREET INDIA

# US-based Carlyle buys 20% stake in Piramal Pharma for over ₹3,700 cr

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** US-based global investment firm Carlyle Group Inc has agreed to buy a 20% stake in the pharmaceutical unit of Indian conglomerate Piramal Enterprises Ltd for about \$490 million (over ₹3,700 crore), the companies said in a statement Saturday.

The capital raise will accelerate Piramal Pharma's organic and inorganic growth plans, the Ajay Piramal-led Piramal Enterprises and Carlyle Group said in the joint statement.

... CA Clover Intermediate II Investments, an affiliated entity of CAP V Mauritius Ltd, an investment fund managed and advised by affiliated entities of The Carlyle Group Inc has agreed to invest fresh equity capital for a 20 per cent stake in Piramal Pharma Ltd...."

The transaction values the pharma business at an enterprise value (EV) of USD 2.775 billion (over ₹2,980 crore), with an upside component of up to USD 360 million (over ₹2,720 crore) depending on the company's FY'21 performance, the statement said.

"Based on the EV (excluding the upside component), exchange rate

**This fresh growth investment into our pharma business will be used as growth capital for the pharma businesses to expand capacity across our sites as well as to tap attractive acquisition opportunities within and outside India**

NANDINI PIRAMAL | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PIRAMAL ENTERPRISES

and pharma net debt as on March 31, 2020, the estimated equity capital investment for Carlyle's 20% stake in Piramal Pharma would amount to USD 490 million (over ₹3,700 crore)," it added.

The final amount of equity investment will depend on the net debt, exchange rate and performance against the pre-agreed conditions at the time of closing of the deal.

The transaction is expected to close in 2020, it added.

"This is an affirmation of the strength of our ability to build new, attractive and scalable businesses with a significant runway for continued organic growth and opportunities for consolidation," Piramal Enterprises Chairman Ajay Piramal said.

This infusion of funds "will further strengthen our balance sheet and provide us with a war chest for the next phase of our strategy," he added.

Asked about the stake Piramal Enterprises will hold in the company post the transaction, Ajay Piramal told PTI it will have 80 per cent stake.

On whether Piramal Enterprises Ltd (PEL) will list Piramal Pharma going forward, he said: "We have publicly stated in the past, that in the medium term we will separate the two PEL businesses. This is a step closer towards that endeavour."

PEL has two businesses - pharma and financial services.

Piramal Enterprises Executive Director Nandini Piramal said, "This fresh growth investment into our pharma business will be used as growth capital for the pharma businesses to expand capacity across our sites as well as to tap attractive acquisition opportunities within and outside India.

## Requested Comm Min to allow export of PPE kits: Gadkari

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari Saturday said he has requested the Commerce Ministry to allow export of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits, as the country is producing it in large quantities.

Addressing a webinar on the occasion of International MSME Day, Gadkari, who also holds the portfolio of Road Transport and Highways, said about two months ago that India imported PPE kits from China via a special aircraft but now the country's industry and MSMEs were manufacturing lakhs of PPE kits per day.

"Now, already I have requested the commerce ministry" to allow export of PPE Kits from India, the minister said, adding that it was being considered. Stressing that PPE has export potential, he said that people are getting orders for PPE kits from Dubai, Canada, the US and European countries.



Recently, Indian apparel export industry body AEPC had also urged the government to lift the ban on exports of PPE kits as its production has reached 8 lakh units per day.

Gadkari also launched the report of the GAME National Task Force for MSMEs, entailing industry wide recommendations to boost the units and entrepreneurial dynamism in India.

# RBI extends enhanced borrowing limit under MSF till September 30



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Mumbai, June 27:** Amid the ongoing economic woes created by the coronavirus pandemic, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to extend the enhanced borrowing facility provided to the banks to meet their liquidity shortages till September 30.

The RBI, as a temporary measure, had increased the borrowing limit of scheduled banks under the marginal standing facility (MSF) scheme from 2% to 3% of their Net Demand and Time Liabilities (NDTL) with effect from March 27, 2020.

Under the MSF, banks can borrow overnight funds at their discretion by dipping into the Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR).

This relaxation, which was granted till June 30, 2020, has now been extended till September 30.

"On a review, it has now been decided to extend this enhanced limit till September 30, 2020," the RBI said in a circular.

Banks may continue to access overnight funds under the MSF

The RBI had increased the borrowing limit of scheduled banks under the MSF scheme from 2% to 3% of their Net Demand and Time Liabilities with effect from March 27, 2020

against their excess SLR holding, it added. The marginal standing facility rate currently stands at 4.25%.

The RBI has also extended the relaxation on the minimum daily maintenance of the Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) at 80% for a further period of three months till September 25, 2020.

The minimum daily maintenance of the CRR, March 27, was reduced from 90% of the prescribed CRR to 80% till June 26, 2020.

This was done in view of the continuing of hardships faced by banks in terms of social distancing of staff and consequent strains on reporting requirements.

## SHORT TAKES

### Sheer profiteering by Centre: Sinha

**Patna:** Former Union Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha Saturday alleged that the Centre is resorting to "profiteering" by increasing fuel prices on a daily basis. On one hand, the Centre announced a ₹20-lakh crore package to uplift the economy, while on the other, it "robbed" people who travel by motorbikes, scooters and other vehicles, he said. While diesel rates were hiked for the 21st straight day Saturday, petrol prices have been increased on 20 occasions in three weeks.

### NHPC net profit dives 60 pc

**New Delhi:** State-owned hydro power giant NHPC reported over 60 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to ₹238.64 crore in March quarter, mainly due to lower revenues. Its consolidated net profit was ₹602.91 crore in the fourth quarter previous fiscal, the company said in a regulatory filing. Total income was ₹2,382.36 crore in the period under review, compared to ₹2,450.08 crore in the year-ago period. Consolidated net profit for 2019-20 stood at ₹3,324.72 crore, compared to ₹2,835.79 crore in 2018-19.

### GM wants judge removed

**Detroit:** General Motors asked a federal appeals court Friday to overturn an order that requires its CEO to meet with the head of Fiat Chrysler by next week to try to settle a lawsuit related to corruption by union leaders. GM also asked the appeals court to remove US District Judge Paul Borman from the case. GM is suing crosstown rival FCA alleging that it got an advantage by paying off union leaders to reduce labour costs during contract talks.

### ITC Q4 profit rises 9.3%

**New Delhi:** FMCG-to-hospitality major ITC has reported a 9.28% growth in its consolidated net profit for the January-March quarter at ₹3,926.46 crore. During the same quarter of the previous fiscal, FY 2018-19, the company had reported a net profit of ₹3,592.80 crore. For the full fiscal year basis, the company's profit after tax grew by 21.4% to ₹15,136.05 crore, aided by reduction in corporate income tax rates during the year.

## BIZ BUZZ

### Thai low-cost airline NokScoot shuts down

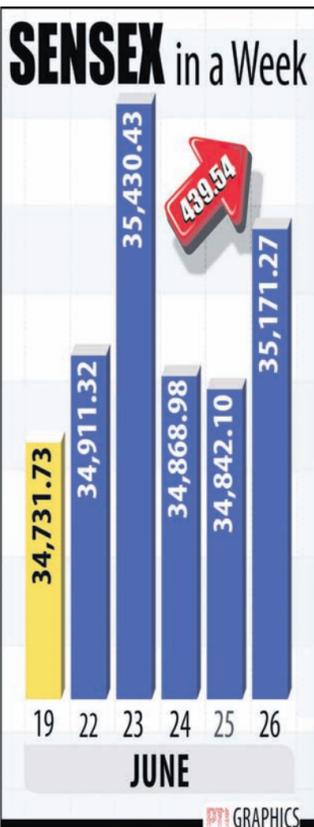


**Bangkok:** Thailand's low-cost carrier NokScoot has announced that it was shutting down due to mounting economic losses in recent years that became unsustainable after a complete halt in operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. NokScoot was established as a joint venture between Singaporean airline Scoot and Thailand's Nok Air six years ago, reports Efe news. In a statement released Friday, Scoot which owns 49% stake in NokScoot announced that the low-cost airline's Board of Directors had approved the company's liquidation, although the decision has to be passed in a general meeting of shareholders within two weeks. The Singapore-based airline said that NokScoot had accumulated losses ever since it was founded in 2014 due to intense competition in its sector and the situation had grown worse due to the global health crisis.

### Hitachi, Microsoft ink multi-year deal

**Tokyo:** Hitachi and Microsoft have announced a multi-year strategic alliance to accelerate the digital transformation of the manufacturing and logistics industries across Southeast Asia, North America and Japan. Hitachi will integrate its industry-leading solutions such as Lumada, and its Internet of Things (IoT)-ready industrial controllers HX Series, with the Microsoft cloud platform, leveraging Azure, Dynamics 365 and Microsoft 365 to help businesses increase their workforce productivity and operational efficiency. The first joint solutions will be available in Thailand in July, the companies said in a statement.

"Through this collaboration with Microsoft, we will be able to accelerate our customers' digital transformation and continue to deliver social, environmental and economic value," said Jun Abe, Vice President and Executive Officer, CEO of Industry and Distribution Business Unit, Hitachi.



# Oil imports see biggest drop in over a decade

IN THE PERIOD OF APRIL-MAY 2020-21, INDIA'S OIL IMPORT BILL HAS FALLEN TO A MEAGRE \$5.4BN AS AGAINST \$19.3BN IN THE SAME PERIOD A YEAR AGO

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, June 27:** India is on its way to make its biggest savings in the oil import bill this year with COVID-19 related disruptions and sluggish demand conditions squeezing down the country's crude payments to a fourth of previous year's level in the first two months of current fiscal.

In the period of April-May 2020-21, India's oil import bill has fallen to a meagre \$5.4 billion as against \$19.3 billion in the same period a year ago. Apart from lower oil prices, the quantum of imports in the two month period has also fallen to 31 million tonne (MT) from 39 MT last year.

The fall has been more stark in the month of May this year when the oil import bill stood at a mere \$2.3 billion as compared to \$9.5 billion last year. In fact, India's crude



oil import in May fell 22.6% to 14.6 MT, the biggest single month drop since 2005, as both fuel demand and refinery production was hit by COVID-19 disruptions.

Interestingly, between April and May, global crude oil prices have

bounced back 60% from a level of average \$20 a barrel in April to over \$30 a barrel in May. But compared to May, 2019's average crude price of over \$70 a barrel, the current price are still at less than the halfway mark.

## SLUGGISH DEMAND

■ The fall has been more stark in the month of May this year when the oil import bill stood at a mere \$2.3bn as compared to \$9.5bn last year

■ India's crude oil import in May fell 22.6% to 14.6 MT, the biggest single month drop since 2005

"The conditions this year are ideal for India to bring its oil import bill close to the halfway mark of FY'20 levels. But it will depend on how oil producers respond to current disruptions and how long the current coronavirus crisis continues and controls the demand conditions. Oil price have risen this month to over the \$40 mark, but could rise further if a concern about the prolonged presence of

the virus gets re-established," said an oil sector expert.

As per the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell's (PPAC) provisional estimates, India's oil imports bill is expected to settle just over \$100 billion mark in FY'20. If it falls closer to \$50 billion mark in FY'21, the government would be able to cover its increased spending to pump up the economy in Covid times easily. Already taxes on petroleum products have been jacked up to mobilise additional resources for these unplanned expenditures.

While India imported crude oil worth \$112 billion in FY'19, its import bill has transited substantially lower in the previous three financial years with oil import bill standing at mere \$64 billion in FY'16 when oil prices slipped on over supplies, especially with the entry of US shale oil.

# No logic in bringing co-op banks under RBI lens: OSCB prez

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, June 27:** The Government of India Saturday brought cooperative banks under the regulatory framework of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) by amending the 70-year-old Banking Regulation Act through a Presidential Decree. President Ram Nath Kovind promulgated the Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020 which will ensure helping co-operative banks to access the capital.

The new ordinance seeks to protect the interests of depositors and strengthen cooperative banks by improving governance and oversight by extending powers already available with the RBI.

However, Odisha State Co-operative Bank (OSCB) claimed why there was a need to bring cooperative banks under regulatory framework of RBI. The president of OSCB Akshaya Kumar Mohanty said, "We majorly provide loans to farmers, and we hardly gets repayment



AKSHAYA KUMAR MOHANTY  
PRESIDENT, OSCB

from these lonees. And the deposits are also safe with us. Therefore, we don't calculate why cooperative banks were brought under RBI framework. There is no logic in the new ordinance."

Instead, Mohanty said, urban cooperative banks should be brought under regulatory framework of RBI. "Urban cooperative banks offer loans to other firms rather than farmers. If these banks would come under

the regulation, the interests of depositors would be secured," he said.

There are 17 central co-operative banks and just one state co-operative bank in Odisha. "OSCB has set a target to disburse Kharif crop loans of amounting ₹9,000 crore to farmers till September 30, 2020. Co-operative banks (Central level + OSCB) in Odisha have deposits of over ₹10,000 crore," said the President.

The amendments do not affect existing powers of the State Registrars of Co-operative Societies under the state co-operative laws.

The Ordinance by the President also amends Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act, to enable making of a scheme of reconstruction or amalgamation of a banking company for protecting the interest of the public, depositors and the banking system and for securing its proper management, even without making an order of moratorium, so as to avoid disruption of the financial system.

## IDBI Bank to sell stake in insurance JV to partners

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, June 27:** IDBI Bank Saturday said its board has approved the sale of more than half of the bank's 48 per cent stake in IDBI Federal Life Insurance Co Ltd (IFLI) to current joint venture partners for ₹595 crore.

In a regulatory filing, IDBI Bank said it will sell 23% stake to Ageas Insurance International N.V and 4% to Federal Bank.

After the deal, the Belgian insurer Ageas stake in IFLI will increase to 49%, while Federal Bank's stake would go up to 30%. Post stake sale, IDBI Bank will have 21% stake in IFLI.

"The board of directors, at its meeting held Friday, June 26, 2020, has approved to sell IDBI bank's stake in IDBI Federal Life Insurance Company Limited (IFLI) to the extent of 23% to Ageas and 4% to Federal Bank at a combined value of about ₹595 crore," it said.

PORTUGUESE BACK IN FORM AS JUVENTUS CRUSH 10-MAN LECCE 4-0



# CR7 lifts Juve

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Rome, June 27:** Cristiano Ronaldo is back in form. He set up two goals and converted a penalty to help Juventus beat 10-man Lecce 4-0 Friday and boost their chances of claiming a record-extending ninth successive Serie A title. Ronaldo had struggled since football resumed in Italy, but his return to form pushed Juventus seven points clear of second-placed Lazio, which hosts Fiorentina Saturday. "What's important is that we continue to get results," Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri said when asked about their increasing advantage at the top of the table. "We struggled at the beginning and then we managed to get going at the end of the first half. But I saw a good mentality because even when the match was over, we still continued to attack."

Lecce remained in the relegation zone but is level on points with Genoa, which occupies the last position of safety. Lecce started brightly but its chances of getting anything from the match diminished when defender Fabio Lucioni was shown a straight red card for a last-man challenge on Rodrigo Bentancur, leaving the visiting side in 10 men for nearly an hour. "Until the sending off the match was balanced," said Lecce coach Fabio Liverani, who also bemoaned the number of players he is missing through injury. "Maybe if we had had every player available I could have made different moves. At the moment I have a maximum of 14 players available. But I am sure that with a bit of fortune, getting some players back, we can have our say in matches against direct rivals."

Juventus scored all of its goals after the red card and in the second half, but struggled to break down the visitors. Ronaldo had several chances but sent an overhead kick past the left post and somehow headed over an empty goal from two yards out. However, the Portugal international set up Juve's opener eight minutes after the break as he cut the ball back to Paulo Dybala who curled into the roof of the net from the edge of the area. Ronaldo then got on the score-sheet himself with his second penalty in as many matches after he was tripped by Luca Rossettini. Ronaldo also set up Juve's third in the 83rd minute, back-heeling the ball for Gonzalo Higuain to score shortly after coming off the bench. Matthijs de Ligt headed in a Douglas Costa cross two minutes later to cap a great night for Juventus.

# PUJARA GRATEFUL TO DRAVID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** India's Test batting mainstay Cheteshwar Pujara cannot describe in words the influence that Rahul Dravid has had on his life but says he will always remain grateful to him for teaching the importance of switching off from cricket. Often compared to Dravid, who was considered the 'Wall' of Indian cricket, Pujara said he is thankful to Dravid for teaching him how to keep personal and professional lives separate. "He helped me understand the importance of switching off from cricket. I had the same thought, more or less, but when I spoke to him, it gave me a lot of clarity about it and I was sure of what I needed to do," he told 'ESPNCricinfo'. "I also saw in county cricket how they keep personal and professional lives separate. I value that advice a lot. Many people consider me to be focused. Yes, I am focused, but I also know when to switch off. There is life beyond cricket." In his illustrious international ca-

reer, Dravid amassed 13288 runs in 164 Tests and 10889 runs in 344 ODIs. He also captained India in 79 ODIs, winning 42 of them, which includes the world record of 14 successive wins while chasing. "I cannot say in one line what Rahul bhai means to me. He has always been an inspiration, and will remain one," Pujara said. His mental fortitude and batting technique is often compared to Dravid but Pujara said 'despite my enchantment with him' he never tried to 'copy him'. "There is a similarity in our games, but that's not because of my fascination with him. That came mainly through my experiences with Saurashtra, where I learned that scoring a hundred alone isn't enough, you have to carry your team," he said. "That is how I learned responsibility - it is about helping my team to raise a big total, and for that I ought to attach importance to my wicket. I learned that from my junior cricket days with Saurashtra, which was a weaker team in domestic cricket."



## Viswanath recalls hurtful past



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, June 27:** Former Indian batsman Gundappa Viswanath Saturday revealed that he was 'very hurt' after his distinguished career came to an abrupt end following a poor Test series against Pakistan in 1982-83. Along with Sunil Gavaskar, he was one of the mainstays of the Indian batting line-up through the '70s, playing some fine knocks against the best pace attacks of that era.

However, a poor outing in a six-Test series against Pakistan cut short his career as he was dropped for the tour of the West Indies and subsequently could not make it to the 1983 World Cup squad. "I was very, very hurt when I was dropped. At that time, in all the three times (innings) I took wrong decisions. It is part of the game. But in that (situation) in two innings, if I had scored well, they would not have removed me," Viswanath said on 'Star Sports 1 Kannada' show

## Roberts slams Hetmyer for his 'no' to Eng tour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, June 27:** West Indies pace legend Andy Roberts has slammed batsman Shimron Hetmyer for opting out of the England tour because of health concerns amid the coronavirus pandemic. Along with senior pro Darren Bravo, Hetmyer pulled out of the tour of UK and forced the Roger Harper-led selection committee to make some last-minute changes. "They would have played an integral part of the batting. As much as we don't like the way Hetmyer has been playing, he is one of the batsmen for the future. But somebody has to get into his head and let him realise that you can't score runs sitting in the pavilion," Roberts said in an episode on Michael Holding's YouTube channel. Holding, Roberts' equally illustrious pace bowling partner through the 1970s and '80s, had called the two batsmen's move 'unfortunate'. According to Roberts, the challenge for most West Indies batsmen was they 'don't really train and practise enough to work the ball into gaps. We believe in boundaries'.

## Gerrard pays tribute to captain Henderson



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Liverpool, June 27:** Former Liverpool skipper Steven Gerrard paid a heart-warming tribute to current captain Jordan Henderson after the latter guided the club to a historic Premier League title. Liverpool were crowned champions of the league after Manchester City lost to Chelsea 1-2 at Stamford Bridge. This meant that the defending champions couldn't overhaul Liverpool's point tally with

seven matches to go and the Reds were crowned league winners. This is Liverpool's first top-flight title in 30 years and their maiden Premier League crown. Even Gerrard, who is widely regarded as the best captain in Liverpool's history, failed to achieve what Henderson managed to do. Gerrard acknowledged Henderson's feat and shared an image of the two together on Instagram and his post read: "Couldn't of (sic) passed it to a better person. Proud of you, mate."

## Suarez lauds former teammate Jordan

**Liverpool:** Barcelona striker Luis Suarez has labelled Jordan Henderson as 'one of the best captains' in Liverpool's history while expressing his delight at seeing his former club win the Premier League. "It's a pleasure for me to speak with you and the Liverpool fans. I am so excited as well because I played for a few years there and I have so many friends there," Suarez told Liverpoolfc.com. Henderson is the only player remaining at Anfield since Suarez's time on Merseyside - which concluded in the summer of 2014. "When I saw last year (him winning) the Champions League, I was so happy for him. Why? Because as some people know he had some problems with his dad and he had really good moments and some bad moments in Liverpool," the 33-year-old said. "When he lifted the trophy, the dream is done but this season I (will be happy to) see him lifting the (Premier League) trophy because he is a really good person. I speak sometimes with him and I said to him, 'You have a really good chance this season' and he is so excited. We watch some (Liverpool) games when we can and we see that Jordan, he is the captain from the midfield. He (Henderson) speaks a lot and for his teammates this is so important, when they have confidence with the captain. For me, Jordan is one of the best captains in Liverpool's history," Suarez added.



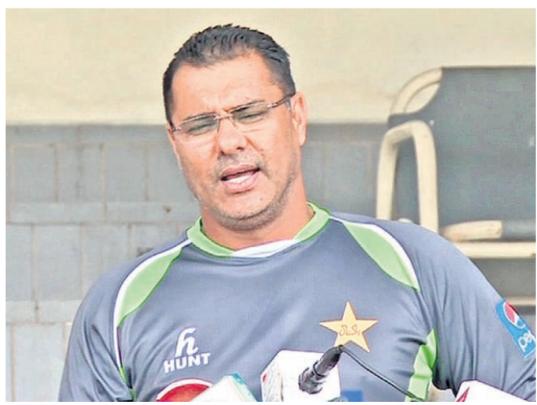
# Not being part of 1992 WC glory hurts Waqar

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lahore, June 27:** Former Pakistan speedster Waqar Younis has recalled the heartbreaking moment in 1992 when he missed the World Cup in Australia due to an injury. The fast-bowler had to miss the showpiece event Down Under because of a stress fracture in his back right before the tournament. Waqar had to watch his team lift the trophy from home and he has stated it wasn't a happy moment for him. "That (tournament) was not the best time for me. I got injured. I broke my back, got a stress fracture in my back, just before the World Cup started," Waqar said

during the 'Cricket Badger Podcast' as per Cricket Pakistan. "I was on tour, with the team, and in one of the warm-ups something went wrong in my back and I couldn't really walk after that World Cup for a long time. "That was probably the worst time because I was (at the) top of my game, I was bowling really well. And me being in the team, Pakistan were favourites to win that World Cup. Pakistan still won the World Cup, but missing out on that glory, was probably a not-so-happy moment for me," he added. Waqar also spoke about how his teammates made him feel like he was part of the squad after their return to Pakistan with trophy. Despite

that, Waqar stated he had a mixed-bag feeling, considering he couldn't play any part in team winning the prestigious cup. "I was very, very happy. I still remember the day they came back to Pakistan, they landed at Lahore, I was there, I was there to receive them with the chief minister of the time," Waqar recollected. "It was heartening as well as heart-breaking. It was a mixed feeling, but I was more happy. They recognised me that I missed out - they lifted me up and put me up on the truck, and gave me all the respect and love that I missed out on. I was hurting, in a way, but also it was very, very pleasing," he added.



# Ojha opens up on Kumble

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, June 27:** Former India spinner Pragyan Ojha has said that spin great Anil Kumble had contrasting personalities on and off the pitch. Ojha, who took 113 Test wickets in his brief five-year international career, said that Kumble was as aggressive on the field as he was calm off it. "When he was on the ground, Kumble used to be very aggressive, both with the opponent and with his own players," Ojha told 'Wisden' in an interview. "Off the field, you won't be able to relate. I was taken aback, 'Am I talking to the same person who I saw on the ground?' He used to compete hard, but off the field, he was very soft-spoken." Ojha played his entire international career under the captaincy of MS Dhoni. His time with the Indian team coincided with the old guard of Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman phasing out and the arrival of the likes of Virat Kohli



and Rohit Sharma. "Sachin paaji used to be very calm, composed. He never used to give any reaction. He had a different approach. Anil bhai had a different approach. Dhoni and Kohli, they want to win games for the country, but their approach is completely different," he said.

"Someone like VVS Laxman would listen to Suprabhatam and then go and bat. That is his aggression. Someone like a Kohli will be listening to loud, Punjabi music, showing body language - not gestures - and he likes to show he is in your face. It is not wrong in any way, it was just different."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Yuzi picks winner between him, Kohli**  
**New Delhi:** India spinner Yuzvendra Chahal Saturday tried to get the better of skipper Virat Kohli on popular social media platform Twitter. Sports broadcaster 'Star Sports' asked a quirky question to their followers on social media that who would come out on top if Kohli had the ball in hand and Chahal was batting. Their post read: "Yuzi Chahal with the bat vs Virat Kohli with the ball - who would you think would win this battle??" The leg-spinner was quick to respond and wrote: "No doubt Yuzi Chahal only @StarSportIndia."

**Lewandowski voted 'Player of the season'**  
**Berlin:** Bayern Munich's free-coring striker Robert Lewandowski has been named as Bundesliga's 'Player of the Season'. Lewandowski won more than 50 per cent of the votes and defeated the likes of Timo Werner, Jadon Sancho, Amine Harit, Erling Haaland, Kai Havertz and Serge Gnabry. Borussia Dortmund star Sancho finished second overall, with Bayer Leverkusen's Havertz completing the podium. Lewandowski was once again the league's leading goalscorer, according to the official Bundesliga website.

**Odisha FC, asst. coach Singto part ways**  
**Bhubaneswar:** Indian Super League (ISL) club Odisha FC and its assistant coach Thangboi Singto have parted ways. Singto had joined the club ahead of 2019 ISL and was also the head of club's youth development. "It was a great and wonderful experience for me at Odisha FC and would like to thank everyone at the club for their support. It was great to work with Head Coach Josep Gombau. I would like to wish the club, management, staff and players all the best for the upcoming ISL season. Will miss Odisha, its peace loving people and the cheers of the Juggernauts. Dhanyabad OFC," said Singto.