



MEMORABLE MOMENTS

Actor Dia Mirza says playing the role of Sanjay Dutt's wife Maanayata in *Sanju* was a surreal experience

LEISURE P2



FLOODED COVID FACILITY

Basement of a COVID facility in Surat was flooded after water from an underground tank overflowed

TWO STATES P7



COVID AFFECTS BRI

Majority of the projects under BRI are partially affected by the pandemic

INTERNATIONAL P10

Chinese firms contributed to PM-CARES fund: Cong

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 28: Amid political mudslinging between the opposition Congress and the ruling BJP on the issue of donations from Chinese companies, the Congress has alleged that PM-CARES fund also received donations from Chinese firms.

Senior Congress spokesper-

son Abhishek Manu Singhvi said, "Why has PM Modi received Chinese money in the PM-CARES fund, despite the overt Chinese hostilities? Has PM received ₹7 crore from the controversial company Huawei? Does Huawei have a direct connection with People's Liberation Army of China? Has the Chinese company owning TikTok facilitated a donation of

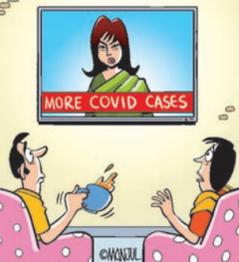


₹30 crore to the controversial PM CARES Fund?" The Congress has also asked if Paytm, which has 38 per cent Chinese ownership, given ₹100 crore, Oppo ₹1 crore and Xiaomi ₹15 crore in the fund. "Has Prime Minister Modi diverted the donations received in PMNRF to the controversial PM-CARES Fund and how many hundred crores is the amount diverted?"

Singhvi asked. Singhvi said reports suggest that as May 20, 2020, the fund received ₹9,678 crore. "The shocking part is that though Chinese forces have transgressed into our territory, Prime Minister has received money in the fund from Chinese companies," he alleged. "No one knows the constitutional or operational framework of the PM-CARES fund

and how it is controlled or money given to it utilised. The fund is not even subject to audit by any public authority including CAG. PMO has gone to the extent of saying this fund is not a public authority." "The fund appears to be solely run by the Prime Minister in an opaque and secret fashion with zero transparency and zero accountability," claimed Singhvi.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Do not step out even if lockdown ends. It could be fatal. Remember, police are everywhere.

SHORT TAKES

CBI to probe TN custodial deaths

Salem (TN): The Tamil Nadu government has decided to transfer the probe into the death of a father-son duo, alleged victims of police torture in Tuticorin district, to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Chief Minister K Palaniswami said Sunday. P Jayaraj and his son Fennix, arrested for "violating" lockdown norms over business hours of their cellphone shop, died at a hospital in Kovilpatti June 23, with their relatives alleging they were severely thrashed at the Sathankulam police station by police personnel earlier. The incident has triggered a national furore, leading to the suspension of four policemen, including two sub-inspectors.

Petrol, diesel prices unchanged

New Delhi: In a big relief for the common man, the continuous rise in petrol and diesel prices came to a halt Sunday. Fuel prices across the metros were unchanged for the first time after price hikes for 21 consecutive days. Petrol prices, however, were unchanged for a day during this 21-day period after the daily revision based on dynamic pricing was reinstated. In the national capital, petrol price was unchanged at ₹80.38 per litre Sunday. Cost of diesel also was the same as Saturday at ₹80.40 a litre.

Crocodile kills boy

Malkangiri: A 10-year-old boy has been killed by a crocodile in a reservoir in Malkangiri district, police said Sunday. The incident happened when two school students from Jholaguda Operate Colony in Chitrakonda went to the reservoir on Sileru river for a bath Saturday afternoon, a police officer said. One of the boys, Kailash Majhi, was dragged into the water by a crocodile, he said. Some locals later found his mutilated body floating on the reservoir, the officer said.

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	MAX 35.2°C	33.4°C
	MIN 26.7°C	24.8°C
Humidity	98%	95%
Rainfall	18.1mm	18mm

Forecast: Light to moderate rain likely

China sent martial artists to India border before clash

AGENCIES

Beijing, June 28: China reinforced its troops near the Indian border with mountain climbers and martial arts fighters shortly before a deadly clash this month, state media reported.

Tensions are common between the two nuclear-armed neighbours in the mountainous border terrain, but this month's fighting was their deadliest encounter in over 50 years.

Five new militia divisions including former members of a Mount Everest Olympic torch relay team and fighters from a mixed martial arts club presented themselves for inspection at Lhasa June 15, official military newspaper China National Defense News reported.

State broadcaster CCTV showed footage of hundreds of new troops lining up in the Tibetan capital. Tibet commander Wang Haijiang said the Enbo Fight Club recruits would "greatly raise the organisation and mobilisation strength" of troops and their "rapid response and support ability," China National Defense News reported, although he did not explicitly confirm their deployment was linked to ongoing border tensions.

Chinese and Indian troops clashed later that day in the most violent confrontation between the two powers in decades, in the Ladakh region 1,300 kilometres away.

India says 20 of its own soldiers were killed in brutal hand-to-hand combat that day, while China suffered an unknown number of casualties.



Both sides have blamed each other for the battle, which was fought with rocks and batons without any shots fired. India said Thursday that it had reinforced troops in the contested Himalayan border region, saying it was matching a similar buildup by China. In recent weeks, Chinese state media have highlighted military activity including high-altitude anti-aircraft drills in the Tibet region bordering India.

The new troops were recruited with the aim of "strengthening the border and stabilizing Tibet," China National Defense News said.

India claims Chinese troops ambushed Indian soldiers and forced them down a ridge where they had gone to remove a Chinese "encroachment". A bilateral accord prevents the use of guns, but the fighting was still fierce, with rudimentary weapons. China has in turn accused Indian

soldiers of twice crossing the Line of Actual Control, the unofficial boundary, provoking its troops.

The two countries fought a war over the border in 1962. There is an understanding between the nuclear-armed neighbours that their troops in the disputed and inhospitable region will not use firearms.

Hectic construction activities at border

BEIJING: Construction activity appeared underway on both the Indian and Chinese sides of a contested border high in the Karakoram Mountains a week after a deadly clash in the area left 20 Indian soldiers dead, satellite images showed. The images released this week by Maxar, a Colorado-based satellite imagery company, show new construction activity along the Galwan River Valley, even as Chinese and Indian diplomats said military commanders had agreed to disengage from a standoff there. The images appeared to show that the Indians had built a wall on their side and the Chinese had expanded an outpost camp at the end of a long road connected to Chinese military bases farther from the poorly defined border, according to experts. The contradictions in words and deeds showed the fragility of an agreement following the worst violence since the Asian giants went to war in 1962 over their competing claims to the arid border region, experts said.

BEFITTING REPLY GIVEN: PM

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserted Sunday that India has given a befitting reply to those who cast an evil eye on its territory in Ladakh, stating that its brave soldiers have shown that they will not allow the nation's pride to be hurt. Modi's strong words on his monthly 'Mann ki Baat' broadcast came amid a standoff between Indian and Chinese armies in eastern Ladakh, with the opposition Congress constantly attacking the central government over the issue. India honours the spirit of friendship and is also capable of giving an appropriate response to any adversary, without shying away, Modi said without naming China. "A befitting reply has been given to those who cast an evil eye on Indian territory in Ladakh. Our brave soldiers have shown that they will never allow the honour of mother India to be hurt," Modi said.



CONVEYANCE ALLOWANCE

Workers can now claim I-T exemption

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: The government has allowed individuals under new lower tax regime to claim I-T exemption on conveyance allowance received from employers.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has now amended Income Tax Rules to prescribe certain exemptions which can be availed by the employees.

These include any allowance granted to meet the cost of travel on tour or on transfer, any allowance, whether granted on tour or for the period of journey in connection with transfer, to meet the ordinary daily charges incurred by an employee on account of absence from his normal place of duty.

It also includes exemption for any allowance granted to meet the expenditure incurred on conveyance in performance of duties of an office or employment of profit, provided that free conveyance is not provided by the employer. The CBDT has further clarified that while determining value of perquisites, no exemption will be available in respect of free food and non-alcoholic beverage provided by employer through paid voucher.

Further, blind, deaf and dumb or orthopedically handicap employees can also claim ad-hoc exemption of transport allowance of ₹3,200 per month while computing salaried income.

Offering an optional lower rate of income tax to individuals, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget for 2020-21 proposed new optional tax regime under section 115BAC of I-T Act for individuals willing to forego certain specified deductions or exemptions while computing total income for tax purpose.

Under this, annual income up to ₹2.5 lakh is exempt from tax. Those individuals earning between ₹2.5 lakh and ₹5 lakh will pay 5 per cent tax. Income between ₹5 and 7.5 lakh will be taxed at 10 per cent, while those between ₹7.5 and 10 lakh at 15 per cent.

Those earning between ₹10 and 12.5 lakh will pay tax at the rate of 20 per cent, while those between ₹12.5 and ₹15 lakh will pay at the rate of 25 per cent. Income above ₹15 lakh will be taxed at 30 per cent. The new I-T slabs would be for individuals not availing certain specified deductions or exemptions.



Ganjam dist takes the burden of highest returnee population

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 28: The state government has been witnessing the return of migrant workers since May 3 when the partial lockdown relaxations were announced and Ganjam district seems to be the destination of a large chunk of them.

According to data furnished by the state Health Department in their COVID-19 dashboard, a large chunk of the returnees from across the country headed towards the coastal district of Ganjam after arriving in their home state amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

According to government estimates a total of 3,47,042 stranded workers returned to the state via Shramik Special trains till June 14. A total of 1,28,737 persons (37 per cent) of them headed towards Ganjam district after entering the state.

Aside from Shramik Specials, of the 1,70,492 stranded people who reached the state by road so far, 22,201 (13 per cent) went to Ganjam till June 26. This is the highest influx of people registered by any district in the state.

In addition 3,345 people reached Bhubaneswar by air from different parts of the country as well as abroad

and travelled to Ganjam.

The district administration claims that more than 2 lakh people have arrived in the district till now. "According to official estimates more than 2 lakh returnees have come to our district after the lockdown was relaxed partially," Ganjam Collector Vijay Amrut Kulange said.

With the largest influx of people from other states, the district also witnessed the steepest rise in COVID-19 cases in Odisha. It also reported the maximum deaths owing to the virus. So far, 11 people in the district have succumbed to their infections.

The district has also received the maximum allocations from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) to tackle the pandemic. Ganjam has so far received Rs20 crore additional against the scheduled funds sent to all District Collectors to deal with the disease.

Health department claims that the district now has a total of 3,020 quarantine centres spread across several panchayats with bed capacity of 1,46,457—the highest in any district in the state. Ganjam is also harnessing facilities at seven COVID Care Homes and one dedicated COVID Hospital with 200 beds and 20 ICU beds.

STATE'S COVID-19 TOLL MOUNTS TO 21

BHUBANESWAR: The COVID-19 death toll in the state mounted to 21 Sunday with three more patients succumbing to the disease, while the count of cases rose to 6,614 after 264 more people tested positive for the infection, a health official said. The fresh fatalities were reported from Bhubaneswar, Ganjam and Cuttack districts, the Health and Family Welfare Department said in a statement. The deceased persons included a 73-year-old man from Bhubaneswar, who was suffering from diabetes, hypertension and chronic kidney ailments, a 65-year-old man from Cuttack and a 75-year-old man from Ganjam, both of whom had diabetes and hypertension, the official said. The COVID-19 death toll in Ganjam district has increased to 10, followed by Khurda (5), Cuttack (4) and one each in Bargarh and Puri, he said, adding that the state had reported its first COVID-19 fatality in Bhubaneswar April 6.

Total cases 6,614
New cases 264

Biden drags Kashmir in his campaign to woo Muslims voters

BIDEN'S FOCUS ON KASHMIR, THE CAA AND THE NRC IS DRIVEN BY THE ASCENDANCY OF THE LEFT IN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, June 28: In an openly communal appeal to Muslim voters, Joe Biden, the Democratic Party candidate for President, has dragged Kashmir into his campaign in a religious context rather than as a foreign policy or a general human rights issue.

His "Agenda for Muslim American Communities" published by his campaign also criticises the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens.

Biden is assured of being formally nominated by the Democrats as its candidate at the party's national convention in August to challenge President Donald Trump in the November election as he has

won the required delegates in the primary elections.

Unlike in India, parties are allowed to openly appeal to voters on the basis of religion.

Turning what are foreign policy or general human rights matters into a religious issue, Biden's Muslim agenda says: "In Kashmir, the Indian government

should take all necessary steps to restore rights for all the people of Kashmir. Restrictions on dissent, such as preventing peaceful protests or shutting or slowing down the Internet, weaken democracy."

Turning to other contentious issues, the agenda, which is the basis for outreach to Muslim voters, says: "Joe Biden has been disappointed by the measures that the government



of India has taken with the implementation and aftermath of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam and the passage of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) into law." "These measures are inconsistent with the country's long tradi-

tion of secularism and with sustaining a multi-ethnic and multi-religious democracy."

While criticising the CAA, Biden's Muslim agenda, however, is silent on the US legislation similar to the CAA. Tucked into the US budget bill, the Specter Amendment excludes Muslim refugees from Iran from getting preferential asylum as religious refugees.

The Biden campaign has not issued so far an agenda for Hindu-Americans or Sikh-Americans or Buddhist-Americans.

But separately, Biden has taken up the issue of persecution of Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan.

After a terror attack on a gurdwara in Kabul killed at least 25 Sikhs in March, Biden issued a statement expressing concern over

the "intense persecution of the members of the two religions in Afghanistan" and urged the State Department to consider refugee protection for them.

Trump officials have declined make a commitment to allowing Sikhs and Hindus in Afghanistan coming to the US as refugees to avoid persecution.

Biden's Agenda for Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities, which is not religiously-oriented, mentioned Hindus and Sikhs, along with Muslims, as victims of "discrimination and hate" in the US and said the situation was made worse by "Trump's dangerous rhetoric".

The Muslim agenda noted that the administration of former President Barack Obama in which he was

the Vice President began to separately monitor hate crimes against Hindus and Sikhs.

It said that the Obama-Biden administration "added 'Anti-Sikh' and 'Anti-Hindu' to the Department of Justice's hate crime reporting categories". It said "his (Biden's) Justice Department will prioritise prosecuting hate crimes".

But the Obama-Biden administration had failed to act on anti-Hindu hate crimes like the placing of a severed cow's head at a Hindu cow sanctuary in 2016 in Pennsylvania. Biden's focus on Kashmir, the CAA and the NRC is driven by the ascendancy of the Left in the Democratic Party, which is led by House of Representatives members like Pramila Jayapal, Ilhan Omar and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.



SHREK 2 DIRECTOR KELLY NO MORE

Kelly Asbury, best known for directing Academy Award-nominated animation films *Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron* and *Shrek 2*, has died. He was 60. The director died Friday morning in Los Angeles following a long battle with abdominal cancer, reports *variety.com*

PUGH APOLOGISES FOR ABUSING INDIAN CULTURE

Actress Florence Pugh felt sad about Indian culture being abused for profit, and went on to apologise for disrespecting the beauty of the religion that had been taught to her many years ago. The 24-year-old actress posted the statement on Instagram, reports *people.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
You realise it's a good thing to share the secrets of your success. Whatever you give, says Ganesh, will come back to you multiplied by nine. Now that you seek to be open and accommodating, more respect will come your way.

TAURUS
Today will be a day of nostalgia as all your good memories bring a smile to your face. You might encounter a few problems that will drive you to the edge of the cliff. Do not delay pending conversations with your better half and bring affection to the table when you do so, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
There are strong indications that today will be an action-packed day for you, says Ganesh. Though you will be burdened with a lot of responsibilities, you will be able to show your family members how much you care for them.

CANCER
Early today, you may spend a great deal of time thinking about your career and future, predicts Ganesh. In the afternoon, you will device a plan on how to go about it, and by evening, you may even put the plan into action.

LEO
Champagne, anyone? Well, Ganesh seems to favour a good celebration today as you give a major boost to your reputation in your chosen field. You will bring success and glory to all your associates. Do not be misled by the initial stress of your workplace, as it shall fade away with the passage of day.

VIRGO
Reap and harvest the good things in your life. You may seem to arrive at your wits' end today, Ganesh predicts that you will probably sort all of it when you sit down with your better half and discuss the issues at hand.

LIBRA
Does money really matter when compared to your loved ones? You might be asking yourself this question at some point in time during the day, foresees Ganesh. Chances are high that today, you may be at the receiving end of some sort of financial loss accelerated by someone close to you.

SCORPIO
The day will usher refreshing changes into your personal life, foresees Ganesh. No matter which side of the bed you woke up on, the day promises to present itself in a cheerful light. You will build and enjoy harmonious and cordial relations with your peers at work.

SAGITTARIUS
Business tycoons, be ready to scale new heights today! Ganesh sees a fantastic day of massive business growth. In the afternoon, your professionalism will be held in high esteem by friends and foe alike.

CAPRICORN
You will be brimming over with power and energy, so much so that you may go head first into a new business venture, something that can match your ability and bring you the desired satisfaction. Pending work will be done away with, leaving you more time for recreation, says Ganesh.

AQUARIUS
As the day begins, you will be irritated and troubled by the most trivial of matters. But you won't let it hamper your pace and sincerely pursue your goals. Evening promises some kind of monetary windfall. Make full use of opportunities on the career front, if any, says Ganesh.

PISCES
Your cauldron of conflicts boils over, says Ganesh. At work, confrontations with your peers are a distinct possibility. Domestically, property related squabbles with your siblings are possible. Your family will be the cause of some monetary loss today. Keep a calm head.

Playing Maanayata was surreal: Dia

Mumbai: Putting oneself in another's shoes is never easy. A considerable amount of empathy is expected, and that is the one experience actress Dia Mirza hasn't forgotten, from her role as Sanjay Dutt's wife Maanayata in the 2018 biopic *Sanju*.

Directed by Rajkumar Hirani, the film traces Sanjay's real-life as a star

kid, his love affairs, encounter with drugs, the 1993 Mumbai blasts, and his imprisonment.

"Having worked with Raju Sir before, the comfort level was already established. The entire experience at the time was surreal. Sanjay sir was always wonderful to me through all our projects together. I owe him some of the most special films in my life, *Sanju* being one of them," Dia said.

While Hirani's association with the project was a big factor in the actress' eagerness to do the role, another special factor was her personal connection with Sanjay Dutt himself. Dia has shared screen space with Dutt in films like *Parineeta*, *Lage Raho Munna Bhai* and *Dus*. She found that her role as Maanayata brought things to full circle.



SRK clocks 28 yrs in movies, thanks fans

Mumbai: Superstar Shah Rukh Khan has completed 28 years in Hindi film industry, and he feels it's the people who allowed him to entertain them for almost three decades.

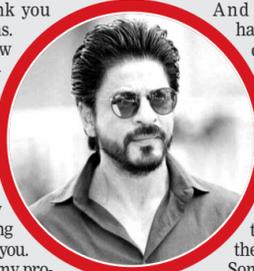
"Taking to Instagram, SRK penned a thank you note for his fans.

"Don't know when my passion became my purpose and then turned into my profession. Thank you all for so many years of allowing me to entertain you.

"More than my professionalism I believe my passion will see me through many more years of service to all of you. 28 years and counting," he wrote.

Shah Rukh made his foray into acting with small screen shows like *Circus* and *Fauji*. Then, in 1992, Shah Rukh entered big screen with *Deewana*.

And with the hard work he continued to put into his career, he gradually found a special place in the history of cinema and became one of the top personalities of the country. Some of his remarkable movies include the names of *Darr*, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, *Dil To Pagal Hai*, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* and *Chak De! India*.



Starry faces of gaming

After dominating cricket grounds for nearly two decades, Sachin Tendulkar has played an active part in developing innovative gaming experiences such as the Sachin Saga VR, which was India's first virtual reality cricket multi-player

New Delhi: Gaming is for nerds, a myth long ingrained in us. Gone are the days when gaming was associated with negative connotations, and gamers were stereotyped as lazy, inactive users.

"Gaming, as an industry, has exponentially grown over the years across markets. Today, the gaming industry has evolved from a casual hobby to a serious business perspective, worth over a billion dollars. This has encouraged celebrities to be vocal about their gaming interest, and invest in innovative gaming companies," says Anton Rublevskiy, CEO, Parimatch International.

Here is a list of celebrities who have poured their money and fame into exciting gaming opportunities.

SACHIN TENDULKAR
After dominating the cricket ground for two decades, Tendulkar entered the gaming space by investing in Smaash Entertainment, a sports and gaming arena, prevalent across India. Under Sachin's mentorship, Smaash developed innovative gaming technologies such as Virtual Reality and multiple digital entertainments, to be established as an enhanced gaming experience pioneer in the country. He has also launched and played an active part in developing innovative gaming experiences such as the Sachin Saga VR, which was India's first virtual reality cricket multi-player.

MIKE TYSON
After retiring from the ring, the Hall of Fame boxing champion has taken an interest in the world of e-sports by purchasing ownership stake in Esports company, Fade 2 Karma. Tyson regularly puts out his gaming videos on streaming channels and has also shown

interest in reviving the Mike Tyson Punch Out game, originally released by Nintendo in 1987.

ASHTON KUTCHER
The star of *That '70s Show*, Ashton Kutcher has stepped-up from being a successful actor to a venture capitalist by co-founding the investment firm, Sound Ventures, in 2015. Kutcher, an avid gamer since childhood, has voiced his opinion about the potential of e-sports and the need to mainstream the segment, on numerous occasions.

DRAKE
Canadian rap sensation Aubrey Drake Graham, popularly known as Drake, has been as consistent in pushing out hit singles, as he has been in engaging with the e-sports and gaming world. Drake's love for gaming is widely known as he plays a lot during his downtime in the recording studio. Drake took the center stage in the gaming world when he live-streamed and played Fortnite with a globally famous gaming



streamer, Tyler "Ninja" Blevins, which brought in more than 635,000 concurrent viewers.

MS DHONI
Known for his legendary helicopter shot and swift wicket keeping, former Indian cricket team captain, MS Dhoni, is also a gaming maverick off the field as he has been spotted gaming on his mobile during cricketing tours. Taking his love for gaming further, Dhoni has also been the brand ambassador for Dream11, a fantasy sports, and gaming platform. Reportedly, MSD has a penchant for games like PUBG and Call of duty.

MICHAEL JORDAN
The NBA superstar is an active investor in the world of sports and technology. The basketball legend entered the e-sports and gaming industry by investing in AXIOMATIC Gaming, which owns the professional-gaming franchise Team Liquid. Over the years, Jordan has been a part of multiple video games and has actively supported it, to the extent that he has been widely credited for turning basketball fans into hardcore gamers.

With more celebrities vying to get a slice of the gaming and e-sports pie, the day is not far when the gaming industry thrives and dominates major markets across the world.

ERICA OPENS UP ON HER LOVE LIFE

Mumbai: Putting an end to all rumours of dating her *Kasautii Zindagii Kay* co-star Parth Samthaan, actress Erica Fernandes has revealed that she is not single and has been in a relationship with a person who does not belong to the entertainment industry.

In a live chat on Instagram, Erica opened up about her relationship status.

"I am not single. I am in relationship and he's not from the industry," she said.

She also spoke about her bond with her beau.

"It's been over three years now. We are very good friends. We speak about all kinds of nonsense..he doesn't like watching me romance any other guy on screen," Erica quipped.

Not only this, Erica also mentioned how her linking rumours with Parth and her previous co-star Shaheer Sheikh forced her to speak about her love life in public.



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

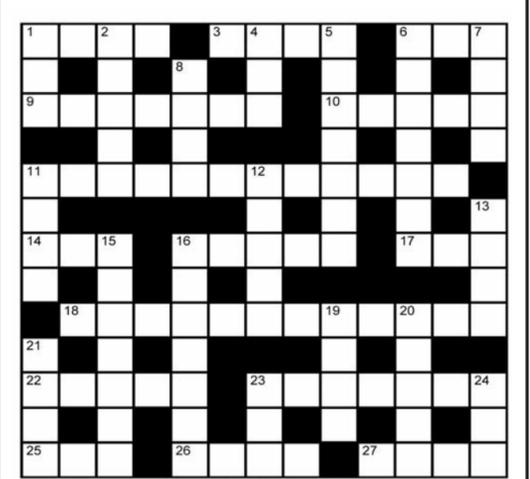


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



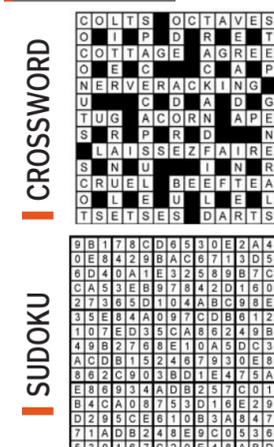
- Across**
- 1 Blubbers
 - 3 Hotel employee
 - 6 Position
 - 9 Yield
 - 10 Little finger
 - 11 Like a vampire?
 - 14 Psyches
 - 16 Stares
 - 17 Parisian way
 - 18 Panda's dinner order? (6,6)
 - 22 Orange drink
 - 23 Vivid
 - 25 Casting requirement?
 - 26 Fortuneteller
 - 27 Diva's delivery
 - 8 Bit of sweat
 - 11 Fedora feature
 - 12 River horse
 - 13 Family rooms
 - 15 Albatross, e.g.
 - 16 Fancy wine holders
- Down**
- 1 Dry, as wine
 - 2 "That's it!"
 - 4 Epoch
 - 5 Leaves
 - 6 Clean-up guy
 - 7 Bodies of water
 - 8 Despise
 - 19 Title holder
 - 21 Open slightly
 - 23 Swelling reducer
 - 24 Greek vowel

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



FULL OF VIGOUR

Kathajodi, a distributary of Mahanadi, in spate near Cuttack, Sunday, after the release of floodwater from Hirakud dam

BALANCING ACT

A scooterist covers himself with a polythene sheet while travelling amid the rain at Rajmahal Square in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



Cong against weekend shutdowns

CONGRESS MLA SURESH ROUTRAY BLASTS THE STATE GOVT AND DEMANDS AN END TO THE WEEKEND SHUTDOWNS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 28: Odisha Congress Sunday criticised the state government for imposing the weekend shutdowns saying it "is affecting the normal functioning of the state during this critical hour." Congress leader Suresh Routray said that the government should make the testing campaign more aggressive and go for more screening of the population rather than imposing shutdowns. "The government has been struggling in managing Covid-19. They need to scale up their testing. This weekly shutdown should come to an end and resource should be mobilised towards better management of the disease," he added. He also said that the idea to bring back the migrants back to their state during the lockdown was a bad idea. "The idea to bring back the migrants during lockdown was not a good idea. I have been telling the government to let the migrants remain



NOT A SOUL IN SIGHT: The Bapuji Nagar market in Bhubaneswar, which rarely remains devoid of crowd in the afternoon, wears a deserted look Sunday as the weekend shutdown is on

where they are, provide them food and get them tested and treated in positive cases." Routray said that as soon as the influx of migrants started in the

state, the cases of Covid -19 skyrocketed. "As soon as the migrants started coming to the state, the cases went up significantly. The whole concept was flawed and

the consequences are before everybody." He said that the government is not hearing to the experts and other experienced people. Routray also raised concerns about the livelihood of the people affected by the lockdown and the shutdowns. Party spokesperson Satya Prakash Nayak also had attacked the government "for doing lesser tests" in the state if taken into account the population.

REBUTTAL

The government, however, has been claiming that the state is doing more tests per million population compared to the national average. National Health Mission (NHM) Managing Director Shalini Pandit has recently said that compared to the national average the state is conducting far more than that when it comes to per million of population. She also claimed that the positive rate in the state is one of the lowest in the country.

Weekend shutdowns necessary, says former City AIIMS director

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 28: Noted neurosurgeon and former neurosurgery head from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, Dr Ashok Mohapatra Sunday voiced support for the weekend shutdown in the state. Speaking to reporters here Sunday, the former director of AIIMS Bhubaneswar said, "The state may be moving towards community transmission but no one can confirm it." "We can do some important basic things to reduce the chances of spread of the disease. We need to have shutdowns on Saturdays and Sundays," he said. "What is the need of the people now to venture out of their homes if they don't need to attend offices," he asked. Dr Mohapatra highlighted that a lot of people have succumbed to the viral disease across the globe and "we should take every possible precaution to control the global pandemic."



The state may be moving towards community transmission but no one can confirm it. However, if people don't follow the guidelines, Odisha will definitely move towards community transmission

DR ASHOK MOHAPATRA | FORMER DIRECTOR, AIIMS BHUBANESWAR

"Close to 3,000 people are getting infected daily in metropolitan cities. Imposing lockdown is a good idea. We do not have any clear idea on what could have happened if lockdown was not imposed but seeing the large population, the infection numbers could have been much higher," he added. Dr Mohapatra said that the lockdown helped in reducing the chances of infection to a greater extent. "People should abide by the state government rules because the government relaxed lockdown and shutdown norms, and the

Union government went for un-lodging India. But that does not mean that we become careless," he stressed. He said that a lot of people are now rampantly flouting norms of social distancing and mask-wearing despite higher cases of the disease, especially in the markets and haats. It may be mentioned here that Dr Mohapatra has received national and international awards for successfully operating on Jaga and Balia, the conjoined twins from Kandhamal when he was working in the neurosurgery department of AIIMS, New Delhi.

ECoR has handled 636 Shramik Special trains

3 LAKH PEOPLE FERRIED SINCE MAY 1

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 28: The East Coast Railway (ECoR) has handled more than 636 Shramik Special trains from the first week of May this year. It has almost completed the task of ferrying migrants and more than 3 lakh persons have so far been brought to their homes in Shramik Special trains in its jurisdiction during the massive exercise. While, the ECoR has received about 250 Shramik Special trains in its jurisdiction, as many as 14 Shramik Special trains were sent from ECoR jurisdiction towards different places including one

DEADLINE MET

As per the directives of Supreme Court, ferrying of migrant labourers to their homes by Shramik Special trains was to be completed by June 24. In ECoR, this exercise was almost completed well within time, as currently there is very little demand for ECoR-bound Shramik Special trains in any state, official sources said. Shramik Special trains were provided as and when demand was raised by the state governments, an official said. As per the directives of Supreme



- ECoR received about 250 Shramik Special trains in its jurisdiction
- 14 Shramik Specials were sent from its jurisdiction towards different places including one from Sambalpur, two from Bhubaneswar and rest from Visakhapatnam

from Sambalpur, two from Bhubaneswar and rest from Visakhapatnam. These inward trains to Odisha have been received from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Delhi and Andhra Pradesh. More than 372 Shramik Special trains also passed safely through ECoR jurisdictions which were provided meals, water and other services at different stations in ECoR. Operation of Shramik Special trains was started from May 1, 2020 to bring back migrant workers, tourists and students to their homes during lockdown due to Covid-19

Court, ferrying of migrant labourers to their homes by Shramik Special trains was to be completed by June 24. In ECoR, this exercise was almost completed well within time, as currently there is very little demand for ECoR-bound Shramik Special trains in any state, official sources said. Apart from Odisha, ECoR has also fulfilled all the demands from Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh for outward Shramik Special trains. More than 12 lakh free meals and drinking water bottles were served in the Shramik Special trains by ECoR with the assistance of IRCTC.

Chariots turn southward, reach Nakachana gate

Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra will return to the Lions' Gate of Srimandir by riding their respective chariots on the occasion of Bahuda Yatra July 1

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, June 28: A day after the performance of Herapanchami ritual, the three chariots of Srimandir deities were turned southwards near Srigundicha temple Sunday ahead of the Bahuda Yatra. Lord

Jagannath and his siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra, who are on a sojourn to Srigundicha temple, will return to the Lions' Gate of Srimandir by riding their respective chariots on the occasion of Bahuda Yatra July 1. The three chariots were turned southwards after receiving Aagynamala (consent) from the deities who are now being worshipped at the Adapa Mandap of Srigundicha temple. "The Aagynamala of the deities were placed on their respective chariots at 11.15 am following the completion of rituals like Mangala Alati, Abakash, Gopal Ballav, Sakala Dhoopa and Bhogamandap," said a servitor.

BAHUDA YATRA PREP

The Aagynamala of the deities were placed on their respective chariots at 11.15 am following the completion of rituals like Mangala Alati, Abakash, Gopal Ballav, Sakala Dhoopa and Bhogamandap

SRIMANDIR SERVITOR

Darpadalan chariot of Devi Subhadra was turned southwards by police personnel and parked at the Nakachana gate of Srigundicha temple. Subsequently, Taladhwa chariot of Lord Balabhadra and Nandighosa chariot of Lord Jagannath were also given a southward turn and pulled to the Nakachana gate. "The three chariots were pulled to the Nakachana gate of Srigundicha temple by 5.55 pm," added the servitor. Earlier, a group of engineers, carpenters and blacksmiths Saturday examined the status of the three chariots thoroughly. Subsequently, some minor repair works were carried on the chariots to make them fully fit for the Bahuda Yatra. **ANGRY GODDESS** It is worth mentioning here that 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 Saturday. As per the tradition and belief, Goddess Mahalaxmi 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 Sharadhaball after her master refused to accompany her. Goddess Mahalaxmi was taken back to Srimandir soon after the Herapanchami ritual.



Security personnel turn Darpadalan chariot southwards near Srigundicha temple in Puri, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Lord's Podapitha being baked at Mausii Maa temple

NANDIGHOSA, TALADHWAJA AND DARPADALAN CHARIOTS MAKE A HALT NEAR THE MAUSII MAA TEMPLE DURING BAHUDA YATRA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, June 28: Lord Jagannath and his siblings Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra would be offered Podapitha, a traditional cake, on their respective chariots near Mausii Maa temple here during the Bahuda Yatra July 1. Priests at the Mausii Maa temple here have started baking the special cake for the Srimandir deities. As per tradition, the three deities are offered the special cake on their chariots during their return journey from Srigundicha temple to Srimandir. Nandighosa, Taladhwa and Darpadalan chariots make a brief halt near the Mausii Maa temple during Bahuda Yatra for the unique ritual. **THE LEGEND** According to legend, a river, named as Malini, was flowing in between Srimandir and Srigundicha temple long ago. The Gajapati rulers were then forced to construct six chariots for the annual Rath Yatra.



Three chariots were used to carry the deities from Srimandir to the Malini riverbank while another three chariots were pressed into service for Lord Jagannath and his siblings' journey once they were ferried to the opposite side. It is believed that Lord Jagannath's maternal aunt, Devi Ardhahosini, was instrumental in drying up Malini river for the smooth conduct of the Car Festival. In order to express his gratitude, Lord Jagannath had promised his aunt to make a halt near her temple and accept Podapitha during Bahuda Yatra. Mausii Maa temple priests claim that they prepare the special cake by churning flour, cheese, sugar, ghee and some aromatic substances. "We fry the mix with pure ghee after keeping it on hot steam for seven to eight hours. Podapitha is baked in traditional hearths. Pujapanda servitors distribute the specially-made cake among devotees after offering it to deities," the priests said.



The delicacy being readied, Sunday

OP PHOTOS

Suspended IAS officer Bijay Ketan Upadhyaya reinstated

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 28: The state government in a notification Sunday revoked the suspension of Bijay Ketan Upadhyaya and reinstated him as Secretary, Board of Revenue, Cuttack. Vigilance sleuths had arrested Upadhyaya December 30 last year on charges of accepting a bribe of Rs 1 lakh from the representative of a private firm. "This Department order No. 14147/AIS dated 17.06. 2020 regarding extension of suspension of Dr. Bijay Ketan Upadhyaya, IAS w.e.f. 27.06.2020 is hereby superseded," read the letter. Earlier, the Vigilance department had written to the Horticulture department asking to furnish details regarding Upadhyaya's assets, sources said. In its reply, the Horticulture department had informed

Vigilance sleuths that Upadhyaya had not submitted any information on his assets. Horticulture department had claimed that Upadhyaya had worked as its director from August 20, 2018 to December 30, 2019. During that period, Upadhyaya's net salary was Rs 14,35,830 while his gross salary was Rs 17,60,935. During his tenure, Upadhyaya had not withdrawn money from his provident fund. Similarly, the IAS officer had not sought any permission from the Horticulture department to buy any property. "Upadhyaya had not submitted any information on his assets. Besides, he had not informed the department reading his spouse's occupation and earnings. The IAS officer had not sought the required permission to accept any gift from any source," said the Vigilance department in its reply.

State's recovery rate climbs to 69.64 per cent

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 28: Another 137 COVID-19 patients recovered in the state Sunday taking the total number of recovery cases in Odisha to 4,743.

Official sources said samples of another 137 COVID-19 patients tested negative for COVID-19 and the recovered cases are being discharged from hospitals.

A maximum number of 33 patients from Ganjam district cured of the virus infection.

While 29 persons from Khurda, 22 from Cuttack, 13 from Balasore districts recovered, nine from Jajpur and six from Kalahandi districts cured of the disease.

A total of four patients from Bhadrak, three each from Mayurbhanj, Nayagarh and Puri districts recuperated and tested negative for the deadly virus.

Two each from Boudh, Baragarh, Jharsuguda and Kendrapara districts and one each from Angul, Balangir, Jagatsinghpur and Nuapada districts recovered.

Odisha's recovery rate is at a stiff 69.64 per cent which is way higher than Uttar Pradesh which is at 64.86 per cent, followed by Karnataka at 62.86 per cent, Tamil

Nadu at 55.42 per cent and neighbouring Andhra Pradesh at 45.23 per cent.

Similarly, the State's death rate is at a moderate 0.39 per cent. Slightly higher than Odisha is Andhra Pradesh with 1.27 per cent. Next comes Tamil Nadu with 1.28 per cent, Karnataka 1.64 per cent, Uttar Pradesh 3.01 per cent and Maharashtra at 4.65 per cent death rate.

Coming to how Odisha has fared internationally, first let's observe its stats. While Odisha's population is 4.4 crores, the total number of cases is at 6180 and the death toll stands at just 17. Comparatively, Spain with 4.7 crore population had 2.95 lakh cases and 28,338 deaths. The United Kingdom had 3.09 lakh cases and 43,414 deaths reported with a population of 6.6 crores.

Odisha's death rate is at a moderate 0.39 per cent

CDA Sec 9 declared containment zone

Cuttack: The Sector-9 area under Cuttack Development Authority (CDA) here was declared 'containment zone' after a 46-year-old male resident of the locality was tested positive for novel coronavirus, a civic body official said Sunday.

According to CMC commissioner Ananya Das, the civic body move follows a few hours after a personnel of Odisha Police, a resident of the locality, tested positive for the viral infection.

"As Sector-9 is populous, chances of community transmission of the virus is high in the locality. Hence, active contact tracing is a must as it would go a long way to help curb spread of the virus. The area has been declared containment zone to ensure curb on entry



to and exit from the locality. The residents have been asked to stay indoors," Das said, adding that private and government offices in Sector-9 have also been asked to remain shut till further orders.

Das further said that dedicated teams have been constituted to en-

sure essentials and healthcare facility reach to the residents of Sector-9. The containment zone covers plot no. D-47 to D-49 in south, plot no. D-1 to D-49 in west, plot no. D-1 near Ambatota Road to B-34 in the north and from the rear part of plot no. B-35 to A-46 in the east.

Residents in the containment zone get essentials and can avail medical facilities, if necessary. They have also been asked to dial 1929 helpline for any assistance," a senior BMC official said.

Moreover, the zonal deputy commissioner (south west) has been directed to seal entry and exit points of the containment zones with the help of police, a BMC official said.

Two new containment zones in Capital city

BHUBANESWAR: Laxmi Bazar slum and Subhadra apartment in Patia area here have been declared containment zones after new coronavirus cases were reported from the localities, an official of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), said Sunday.

While a couple with no travel history was tested positive for the viral infection at Subhadra apartment in

Kalarahanga panchayat of Bhubaneswar block, four new cases were reported from the Laxmi Bazar slum in Siripur. With this, a total of nine cases have been reported from the slum in a span of 20 days, according to BMC.

"We have banned people's movement in the containment zones until further orders. Civic teams will ensure that

Cops violate orders with scribe buddies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 28: More secrets have been coming out in the incident related to the visit of two senior cops to the holy town, Puri on the Rath Yatra day, June 23 flouting the state government's order prohibiting entry to the Pilgrim city till June 24 afternoon.

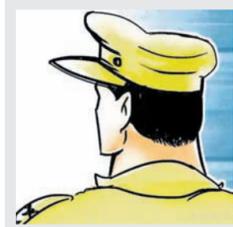
Sources revealed that the officers did not visit Puri alone but were accompanied by some journalist friends from Bhubaneswar.

The errant officers also reportedly clicked selfies with their scribe friends near the chariots without caring the imposition of section 144 in Puri. This episode unraveled the brazen show of misuse of power by these two senior officers.

Meanwhile, the officials probing into the incident have been asked to submit the report at the earliest.

Notably, highly-placed sources have revealed that one Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) deployed at Khurda and an assistant commissioner of police (ACP) in Bhubaneswar Urban Police District of Commissionerate Police had visited Puri during Rath Yatra despite the prohibitory orders.

Following the incident, On June 24, the state police, in haste, released an advisory restricting the



The errant officers also clicked selfies near the chariots with complete disregard for the imposition of Section 144 in Puri

visit of cops who were not on Rath Yatra duty to not visit Puri apparently to avoid any further embarrassment.

However, the state police officials are keeping mum over the incident in public. The department has also undergone embarrassing moments due to the misdeeds by the same officers in the past too.

'Economic patriotism' vital to tide over crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 28: With the COVID-19 pandemic casting a shadow on business and industrial activities, top leaders of national trade union organisations have pleaded with the government to support MSMEs to tide over the crisis.

Participating in a web meeting conducted by the National Institute of Personnel Management (NIPM), trade union leaders emphasised that the government, management of companies, and the labour force must work in unison in a coordinated manner to pull the economy out of the crisis and spur growth.

Seeking concrete measures to increase the purchasing power of workers, the national president of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), CK Saji Narayanan, said it will boost economic activities and facilitate growth in the country.

The BMS leader also advocated steps to infuse a sense of 'economic patriotism' among people.

"Efforts should be made to improve the purchasing power of the labour force... the best solution is to have a wage-led growth mechanism in the country," Narayanan said.

Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) president G Sanjeeva Reddy stressed the need to consider workers as social partners, saying it will go a long way in inculcating a sense of belonging

among them.

Amarjeet Kaur, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) general secretary, insisted that the MSME sector, which has been hit hard by the pandemic, needs to be given adequate support as it is very difficult for them to get back on their feet at this hour.

The government should take steps to provide more loans to the MSMEs, she said.

Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) general secretary Tapan Sen emphasised the need for measures to enhance trust between the government and the labour force, whose livelihood sources have dwindled amid the lockdown.

Suggesting that labour code should be done away with, he said privatisation should also be stopped for ensuring proper growth of industry.

The national president of NIPM, Vishwesh Kulkarni, following the inauguration of the meeting, said that steps should be taken to ensure that both management and trade union move in the same direction and at same speed for proper functioning of any business organisation in the present scenario.

Summing it all up, AK Balyan, the former national president of NIPM, who moderated the panel discussion, said, "We have to face the situation head on as a united team... the management, trade unions and the government have to work in tandem for the success of industry and economy."

Trade union leaders emphasised that the government, management of firms and labours must work in unison to spur growth



Cesu seeks police help against fake job advertisements

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 28: Youths aspiring for jobs at various government departments are the new targets for the cyber fraudsters. Recently, several fake advertisements for various posts in the Central Electricity Supply Utility of Odisha (CESU) have been doing rounds for the past few days.

The fraudsters are reportedly demanding high amounts to the tune of lakhs when contacted by the gullible aspirants. Some alert youths recently drew the attention of the CESU authorities towards the fake job advertisements.

Subsequently, CESU officials were directed by authorities to lodge complaints at their local police stations.

Accordingly, Electrical manager of Bhubaneswar City Distribution Division-I (BCDD-I) has filed a complaint with Capital police which began investigations and registered a case (238/20).

Puppetry spreads awareness on masks

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 28: Despite strict guidelines being issued by the state to prevent the spread of coronavirus, people are gradually becoming callous in wearing masks and maintaining social distancing.

Odisha Police has collected heavy fines from people caught in public places without face masks across the state, a top police officer said.

To create awareness in this regard, police and others have employed various innovative methods. On similar lines, a Std VIII student of Kendriya Vidyalaya in the city is using puppetry videos to create

awareness on wearing mask. Her puppetry video was also tweeted by Commissionerate Police.

The Commissionerate police tweeted "We are thankful to Sneha Saina of Standard-8, KV-3 for creating this innovative puppet show to create awareness for wearing a mask. We again request all to #MaskUpOdisha, for yourself, your family, your country"

In the video the puppets are enacting a scene of how police are stopping a person from going outside without masks.

The Odisha Police is also using social media regularly to create awareness on coronavirus.

PRECIOUS DROPS



A woman collects water from a leaking pipe junction near City College in Bhubaneswar, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Centre urged to save hotel industry

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 28: The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Odisha (HRAO) Sunday urged the Union Minister for Tourism, Prahalad Singh Patel, to help the hotel industry tide over the COVID-19 crisis.

In a letter to the Union Minister, HRAO Chairman JK Mohanty said there is no occupancy in hotels as people are scared to travel by trains and flights due to the fear of pandemic. The hotel industry in Odisha is bleeding due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the Union Minister, in



response to the demands of various associations, has asked the state government to provide relief to the industry, precious little has been done in this regard as the industry has neither received any help from the state nor from the Centre, Mohanty said.

The HRAO chairman said the Union Minister has directed to provide relief among other things on Excise License Fee, electricity

charges and duties as well as fixed costs (Minimum Demand) charges on electricity for hotels and establishments' property tax and reducing the current rate by half for hotels and hospitality sector.

He said the Union and the state government must realise that the benefits of reviving the sector would be more than the assistance required by struggling hotels.

Mohanty appealed to the Union Minister to think of the long term benefit that the industry can contribute to the country in terms of employment, Indian and foreign exchange earnings and image building of the country.

7-year-old kid's unending passion for astronomy

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rayagada, June 28: Ask him anything about the solar system, the evolution of life and astronomy, this seven-year-old kid's impromptu and accurate answers will leave you spellbound.

Meet the prodigy Bibhunanand Nath, son of Gourahari Nath, a resident of Collectorate Road area in Rayagada town. He is a Class II student.

Gourahari says they were not aware of the fact that Bibhu pos-



It was Arabinda Takri, the tutor of Bibhunanand Nath's elder sister, who first noticed the hidden talent

essed such an amazing hidden talent. It was Arabinda Takri, the tutor of Bibhu's elder sister, who

first noticed this. "Bibhu used to sit next to his sister in tuition classes. Unbeknownst to him, Bibhu

was minutely listening to him, particularly when he taught science. He often asked Takri several questions relating to science. Most questions often left Takri searching in Google. Later, Takri started asking some questions only to find Bibhu correctly answering all questions," Gourahari says.

"Realising the god-gifted talent, Takri one day called us to the tuition class and informed us about Bibhu's talent. Like any other parents, we were delighted to hear about our son and started encouraging him to ac-

quire more knowledge," he adds.

Seeing Bibhu's interest in the field of astronomy, his parents say they are sanguine about their son's future. "For last two years, we often spotted Bibhu watching videos on YouTube and Google on our mobile phones. We would take it casually and think he might be watching cartoons or something else," they added.

While talking to Orissa POST, this little science wizard said that he wants to join NASA and do research in astronomy.

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A thought is an arrow shot at the truth; it can hit a point, but not cover the whole target. But the archer is too well satisfied with his success to ask anything farther.

SRI AUROBINDO



SLOGANS GALORE, NO RESULTS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has, in his *Mann Ki Baat* radio programme this Sunday, made a renewed appeal for purchasing and promoting local 'Made In India' items. Notably, this has been the PM's theme ever since the start of his first term in 2014 when he came up with the Make In India slogan. How much progress India has achieved in this respect in recent years, or the lack of it, is evident from the way Chinese items have flooded the Indian markets. Slogans were not limited to just this one scheme. It was followed by many others such as Stand Up India, Walk Away India and so on. All such slogans actually made many crooked but state-favoured businessmen to walk away from India with all our money.

At the same time, official claims are that the manufacturing sector has the 'potential' to reach a level of \$1 trillion by 2025. This may sound as a tall claim since the government is also claiming in the same breath that India would attain rank among the top three manufacturing destinations of the world soon. This claim is particularly hilarious as the government itself has not made any efforts at projecting India as a safe and secure option for foreign investments. To imagine that Indian corporates can undertake the task of meeting indigenous demands of a variety of products is similar to asking for a slice of the moon. Today, the situation that we see in India is an outcome of government-corporate bonhomie at the cost of the nation's taxpayers. Indian corporates have never made the effort to have a long-term goal of being long-term players. Our corporates have survived for long only because no competition is allowed to thrive. This is where the government has abetted the crimes of the Indian corporates.

It is easier to understand this scenario if it is juxtaposed to the event of movie star Sushant Singh Rajput. This young actor, who was highly talented and had won the hearts of millions of viewers. However, his popularity and abilities turned out to be his biggest enemies. The well entrenched Bombay film world personalities were mighty threatened by the non-film family youngster who emerged with promise. Sushant Singh may not have been the only one in the film industry to have perished before shining. Similarly, the Indian corporate world also does not permit random growth of new players. To attain their targets, the all powerful Bombay club type personalities have always used governmental methods of oppressing and destroying new entrepreneurs. This has resulted in India not being able to create many small and medium industrialists or businessmen who could have met the challenge of Make In India now. Our system has always preferred to encourage growth of traders and shopkeepers.

Conveniently forgetting Make In India because it made no headway, the Union government is now pitching the new Atma Nirbhar scheme claiming that every Indian should be self-sufficient. Like Make In India, this new Atma Nirbhar slogan sounds pretty logical. But then, the preacher must show the path by practicing what is preached. In other words, the Union government must first become self-sufficient and not collect billions through a devious indirect taxation system. If the government thinks fit to increase gas, diesel and petrol prices virtually every day to fill its coffers so that it can implement these fancy named programmes then it becomes extremely difficult for the poor of India to be *Atma Nirbhar*. No doubt, the media caters to only a certain part of the population. It is these very people who sat in the comfort of their homes and appreciated the visuals of inhumanities heaped on the migrant labourers by the police. It is these people who presume their cities, amenities and work or business are the direct outcome of their petty little income tax payments. We have to remember that a nation is created with the labour of millions. Therefore, to consider the migrant labourer as deserving subjects of police brutality is demonstration of a mindset that is unwilling to accept others' contribution towards our own well being. Unfortunately, the Union government seems to be catering to this very crowd. For instance, when China has killed 20 young Indian soldiers, the government thinks it fit to divert attention and blame the opposition. The party in power conveniently forgets that it, too, has been in the saddle for the seventh year now. That is a long enough time to stop blaming the past and actively contribute towards course correction.

WISDOM CORNER

Education is the best friend. An educated person is respected everywhere. Education beats the beauty and the youth.

KAUTILYA

My tastes are simple: I am easily satisfied with the best

WINSTON CHURCHILL

That's why they call it the American Dream, because you have to be asleep to believe it

GEORGE CARLIN

WORDSWORTH

Stemwinder

For those who were in the US in the years just after the Civil War, the latest and neatest thing to possess was a stem-winding watch. This had been perfected by a French maker, Adrien Philippe, while working in Geneva in the 1840s for a business known today as Patek Philippe. Before his invention, watches were wound like clocks, using a key. This was an awkward procedure and wise watch owners kept the key on their fob chain to be sure of not losing it. M Philippe added a knurled knob attached to a rod (or stem), which was permanently connected to the spring mechanism, making it much easier to wind. Hence stem-winding watch or stem-winder (this was the US name; in Britain it was called a keyless watch). The idea of winding a watch at all now seems odd to most people, accustomed as we are to possess one with a battery or other energy-providing mechanism that doesn't require us to think about it from month to month. But in the second half of the nineteenth century, a stem-winder watch was state-of-the-art, something to boast about. As a result, by the end of the 19th Century the term stem-winder had taken on a figurative meaning of something first-rate or excellent. As a further extension it meant something powerful or persuasive, and became attached in particular to somebody who was an effective public speaker or impassioned talker. Later still it was used of the speech itself, if it were entertaining and tub-thumping oratory. Several of these senses were used by writers of the latter part of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries.

LOL

FOOD

A husband and wife were at a restaurant for dinner. The orders were placed and the waiter brought the food to the table. When the husband started eating, the wife interjected with a question. "Darling, when you take food at



home, you have prayers done first. And, you are already eating without prayers now..." The husband smiled and replied. "That's home sweetheart....You know this is cooked by the chef who knows how to cook."

FOCUS NATION

STORM IN THE WAITING

Globalisation may not have been part of the discourse 45 years ago when Indira Gandhi shelved Civil Liberties after declaring the Emergency but it is not possible to sketch that bleak episode on a wide enough canvas without touching such disparate points on the world atlas as Latin America and India's cow belt. There was, after all, an external and an internal context to the Emergency as, indeed, there is to the erosion of civil liberties in India today.



Saeed Naqvi

WILL THE STORM MATERIALISE GIVEN SUCH A STALE, LIMP OPPOSITION AT THE CENTRE? THE JURY IS STILL OUT

The coup in 1973 which ousted and killed Salvador Allende, the world's first Communist leader to have come to power through the ballot box, had a ripple effect on the Communist movements in Europe. The counterpunch from the Right caused Enrico Berlinguer, leader of the powerful Italian Communist party, to nimbly distance himself from the Soviet Union, invent Eurocommunism and seek a "historic compromise" with the Christian Democrats. This was roughly the trajectory of all European Communist parties. True, Communists had come to power in Angola in 1975, but White South Africa was full square behind Jonas Swimb's relentless guerilla war against the Angolan regime.

This was the state of play between the power blocks, when Indira Gandhi, weakened by defeat in eight states in 1967, sought to consolidate her power by splitting the Congress party in 1969 and seeking support of the Left, specially the Communist party of India (CPI), which attached itself to Congress (I). The (I) stood for Indira — as a sort of ideological motor.

"Unite and Struggle" was how Sriprata Dange, party chairman, described the arrangement — unite with the Congress but "struggle" against its "anti-people" policies.

India's principal party, the Congress, in such apparent dalliance with the Left, set against the backdrop of the global Left-Right contest touched upon earlier; had to invite a counter punch. A group to administer such a counterpunch was readily at hand: the "syndicate", the Congress regional power brokers, placed by the split on the Right of the political spectrum —



The global war on terror and subsequent Islamophobia provided just the tailwind the Hindutva project required. Now come the headwinds — a shattered economy, dismally mismanaged pandemic, China hovering like Banquo's ghost, unknown fate of the millions who walked in distress, and, FIRs upon FIRs as a preemptive strategy to cope with the gathering storm on the horizon

CB Gupta, Atulya Ghosh, S. Nijalingappa, Morarji Desai etc. The RSS, Socialists and sundry anti-Communist forces began to hold a meeting here, a seminar there, and plan.

At this stage, Jayaprakash Narayan had more or less given up his socialist party work. He became a heavy duty Gandhian attaching himself to Acharya Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodaan, or the land gift movement. Then a series of youth movements began to look for a leader; and typical of the Indian mind, a father figure to reverse, which is not the same thing as "respect".

It would be flawed to find links with Kent State campus in the US, barricades in Paris, and Grosvenor Square pickets in London, but it is uncanny that the Navnirman Samiti in Ahmadabad which was triggered by an agitation against increased hostel fees erupted at the same time. JP, as he was affectionately called, was now in the drill to lead the much more powerful Bihar movement from the cozy comfort of his house in Patna's Kadamkuan, where he accommodated me in a room on the ground floor. This gave me a ring-side seat to cover the story for The

Statesman along with my partner in sin, the wonderful photographer Raghu Rai. Remember, there were no multiple channels then and Raghu's photographs amplified the movement sky high. The movement was primarily carried on the shoulders of the RSS cadres, and under Nanaji Deshmukh's firm leadership. Paradoxically, it also spawned caste leaders like Karpoori Thakur, Laloo Prasad Yadav and Nitish Kumar.

1969, the year of so much political upheaval, also happened to be Mahatma Gandhi's birth centenary year. To celebrate the occasion, Frontier Gandhi Abdul Gaffar Khan was invited for a tour of India. Indira Gandhi and JP (with RSS, Socialists, Gandhians in tow) began to vie for favourable utterances from the Frontier Gandhi. He collected shawls at every function, diligently counted them at night, and at every meeting the next day proceeded to chastise both the political formations for having "betrayed Gandhi".

All concerned were in deep soup when the Frontier Gandhi arrived in Ahmadabad in September, a few days short of the Gandhi centenary on October 2. He decided to put down anchor in "Gandhi's

and Sardar Patel's city". This to witness firsthand the fiercest Hindu-Muslim riots in which the hand of the Gujarat Congress was discernable. The Khan docketed all these details which became inputs for the hundreds of public speeches he delivered across the country during that tour.

According to the Jagannathan Reddy Committee, the death toll was 660; of which 430 were Muslims. Unofficial figures exceed thousands. That the great singer Rasoolan Bai's house was burnt is a detail etched on my memory. These were the first riots where I heard the terrible slogan for the first time: "Musalman ke do sthan; Pakistan ya Qabrstan". (There are two destinations for Muslims; Pakistan or the graveyard).

This was the beginning of the series of riots climaxing with the macabre pictures that Gujarat yielded in February 2002. There is a major difference: an element of retaliatory violence on the part of Muslims was on show in 1969; 2002 was a pogrom, a trend inaugurated with the anti-Sikh monstrosity of 1984.

In a nutshell, the Emergency of 1975 was in an East-West, Left-Right context and it lasted 18 months. The East-West context disappeared in 1990, exactly when Manmohan Singh embarked on economic policies which worldwide were creating inequalities. Economic distress strengthened demands for social security nets, and political establishments channeled popular discontent into identity politics which, in the Indian context, translated into rank communalism.

The global war on terror and subsequent Islamophobia provided just the tailwind the Hindutva project required. Now come the headwinds — a shattered economy, dismally mismanaged pandemic, China hovering like Banquo's ghost, unknown fate of the millions who walked in distress, and, FIRs upon FIRs as a preemptive strategy to cope with the gathering storm on the horizon.

Will the storm materialise given such a stale, limp Opposition at the Centre? The Jury is still out.

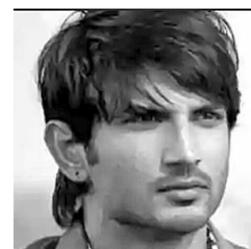
The writer is a seasoned journalist.

SPECTRUM ENTERTAINMENT

Bollywood — and idea of guarded kingdom

Earlier this month, popular actor without any B-Town blood Sushant Singh Rajput was found dead in his apartment. He was 34; an excellent student, an astrophysics enthusiast, a philosopher at core, a dance freak, social service-minded and philanthropist. He was just out of the conventional fulcrum in his acting career. The suspected suicide has upset his fans. As mystery continues to shroud this unfortunate incident, the reality of India's imagination personified through the Hindi cinema is unfolding.

Popularly known as Bombay's Hollywood, the B-Town as an industry is larger than life. From Dadasaheb Phalke's silent cinema *Raja Harishchandra* (1913) to the highest Bollywood grosser till date *Dangal*, Bollywood has traversed myriads of paths, wove many dreams and ruined dreams too, to now stand as a ₹206-billion business. In this journey of more than 100 years, Bollywood has not only evolved in its scope, scale and size, but also created a visibly protected empire or power centres of a selected few in the lines of the laws of inheritance. The two major questions pertinent here are:



Firstly, why is the Indian film industry, particularly Bollywood, low in terms of its business than of its global counterparts, despite making the largest number of films? Secondly, are protected empires or power centres of Bollywood systematically destroying its growth to protect the idea of a guarded kingdom? SSR, an "outsider" with no blood/or general connection to Bollywood, has, with his death, pulled the G-string of Bollywood to fathom the outlined questions here.

While attempting to unfold the realities of the Bollywood, and in retrospect, one could perceive that the eventual process of cinematic craft that started with a passion for the profession has over the years bred insecurities among its self-

proclaimed protagonists, pulling down the Bollywood's growth story. Power of being larger than life, power of becoming the superior human, power of seeing everybody as the "others" and power of shielding the hereditary journey of Bollywood empires have led to a situation of black economy driving the industry for a long time now. This is the primary reason why Bollywood has always been criticised as one of the most-organised cinema industries in the world.

Until very recent, and now too, most of the movies are driven by either specific individuals or home-grown empires of Bollywood, disallowing the craft called cinema to evolve. This nexus of power has been age-old and history too suggests that there has been a huge influence and investment of under-world dons in the Bollywood and in its actors. There were many cases, as also proofs against film personalities in connection with their involvement in illegal activities. Even the politics within has successfully salvaged the larger-than-life images of Bollywood, fetching votes and securing seats in central representative bodies.

When we vote for cinema celebri-

ties in elections, we as spectators are making these celebrities godly and powerful. Popular stars like Rajinikanth and Amitabh Bachchan have not only won a special place in the hearts of millions but have also their statues put up in temples. This culture of worship of humans has contributed immensely to mediocrity in Bollywood, where cinemas starring these godly celebrities usually become a blockbuster just on the mention of their names in the casting list. The worship culture has stood in the way of the industry achieving excellence and this has also allowed the power centres to breed within these set-ups.

So much so, today, though the opening of the Indian economy saw the Indian cinema being accorded Industry status, Bollywood primarily continues to be individual-driven and family-run business. It has worked as a major force for restricting the industry from opening up for "others" (read outsiders), both in terms of creativity and business-wise. Though companies like Fox Star, Disney, UTV (now part of the Disney Star Network), Viacom etc have ventured, the obsession of 'we vs others' still rules Bollywood.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST

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RTI queries, CIC

Sir, It turns out that some organisations linked to the Congress party received hefty funds from China. The Congress was the ruling party. Now, accusations are that UPA government led by the Congress helped China hurt our trade interests and make gains for it. Way back in 2009, when the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation was asked through an RTI query to provide info on its funds and expenditure, the RGF gave a one-line reply that, "RGF doesn't come under RTI". Any public institution setup under relevant rules, and receiving public or government funds, is liable to share information. RGF did not, and a complaint filed with the Central Information Commission (CIC) is left unattended till now. This shows the callous manner in which CIC functions. RGF is run by a single family with some of its loyalists too on board. It diverted a staggering ₹10,000 crore from government when Narasimha Rao was PM, it is now reported. Several other trusts in the name of Gandhi, Nehru etc are also not revealing details of the funds they received and the money spent on various purposes. CIC is keeping quiet when RTI questions are not answered. This is highly unacceptable and defeating the very purpose of setting up the RTI system.

Janaki Ballav Dash, MAYURBHANJ

China, media

Sir, News agency PTI released details of an interview it did with the Chinese Ambassador in India. Question is, will the Chinese media similarly interview the Indian ambassador there? It is very unlikely. The way newspapers are publishing such interviews, in the present context, this is disgusting too.

Lakshmi Narayanan, BHUBANESWAR

Boycott call

Sir, The recent face-off between Indian and Chinese armies at Galwan Valley has left many treaties and Confidence Building Measures (CNMs) out in the cold. The death of 20 Indian Army personnel in the tussle has shocked the people here. There are massive protests. Government departments such as the Railways went back on their pacts with China. There are those who call for a ban on Chinese products. A month ago, Prime Minister Modi appealed to the nation for "Atmanirbhar" in ways as to encourage local products. Undoubtedly, the cost factor is in favour of Chinese products. But the spirit of nationalism among us would prompt us to pay more and still buy local.

Santosh Kumar Satapathy, PARALAKHEMUNDI

Virus takes a toll on Guj's diamond industry

Surat/Bhavnagar, June 28: Coronavirus infections are taking a toll on the diamond industry of Gujarat.

The sector has been hit ever since the nationwide lockdown was imposed to contain the spread of the deadly virus. Though many diamond units in the state resumed operations in June, frequent cases of workers getting infected by the virus are affecting the industry.

In the latest case, six workers of a diamond polishing unit in Bhavnagar have tested coronavirus positive, following which the establishment has been partially shut, officials said Sunday.

This comes amid COVID-19 cases being reported among the workers of the diamond polishing units in Surat, which is said to be the world's biggest diamond polishing hub.

Bhavnagar is one of the smaller diamond polishing hubs in Gujarat with around 800-1,000 units that employ around 1.25 lakh workers.

"Six workers of a diamond polishing unit have tested COVID-19 positive so far. We are analysing from



SOARING INFECTIONS

- COVID-19 cases being reported among the workers of the diamond polishing units in Surat, which is said to be the world's biggest diamond polishing hub
- In Surat, 300 diamond workers have so far tested COVID-19 positive, prompting the local authorities to impose restrictions
- Local authorities have asked the diamond units to carry out oxygen saturation screening of the workers, in addition to thermal screening, for effective detection of coronavirus cases

INDIA IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST PRODUCER OF CUT AND POLISHED DIAMONDS, WITH ABOUT 15,000 BIG AND SMALL FIRMS IN THE WESTERN STATE OF GUJARAT SUPPLYING PROCESSED DIAMONDS TO JEWELLERY BRANDS GLOBALLY

where they contracted the infection. We have closed two floors of the unit and its other employees have been home quarantined," Bhavnagar Municipal Commissioner M A Gandhi said. Local authorities have asked the diamond units here to carry out oxygen saturation screening of the workers, in addition to thermal screening, for effective detection of coronavirus cases.

"We have closed the floors of the unit from where the cases were reported and also sanitised the entire building. We have directed the units to go for an oxygen saturation screening of workers," Gandhi said. President of the Bhavnagar Diamond Association, Vitthal Mendapara, said that the diamond units in the district are taking special precautions to control the spread of the infection.

The association has been running an awareness campaign on COVID-19 ever since the units started functioning again from June 19, he said. "There are around 1.25 lakh workers in around 800-1,000 diamond polishing units in Bhavnagar district. These establishments started working June 19," Mendapara said. "These units are ensuring that the workers maintain social distance,"

he added. Bhavnagar district has reported 240 coronavirus positive cases so far, out of which 147 persons have recovered, while 13 others have succumbed to the infection. A total of 80 cases are active.

In Surat, 300 diamond workers have so far tested COVID-19 positive, prompting the local authorities to impose restrictions.

Three main diamond hubs in Surat are kept shut two days a week to curb the spread of the virus.

The authorities there have decided to keep an entire unit shut for a week if three or more cases are found there.

India is the world's largest producer of cut and polished diamonds, with about 15,000 big and small firms in the western state of Gujarat supplying processed diamonds to jewellery brands globally.

The industry employs more than 1.5 million people, mostly in small units, with wages as low as one rupee. The chairman of the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC), set up by the Indian government, warned the industry stood to lose a billion dollars in exports due to the coronavirus.

'Fake Gujarat model': Flooded Covid facility gives Congress ammo



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Surat, June 28: The basement of a civic hospital in Gujarat's Surat being used as a COVID-19 facility was flooded after water from an underground tank overflowed causing hardships to 65 patients, an official said Sunday.

The incident happened late Saturday night and was set right soon after, he added. However, videos of the flooded facility went viral on the social media some time later.

Surat Municipal Corporation Deputy Commissioner (Health), Dr Ashish Naik, confirmed there were 65 coronavirus positive patients at the COVID facility set up in the multi-level parking of the SMIMER Hospital.

"Water from an underground tank overflowed and flooded the basement briefly. The water was flushed out and the issue resolved within half an hour," Naik said.

Meanwhile, state Congress president Amit Chavda shared the video and attacked the Vijay Rupani government over what he claimed was the 'fake Gujarat model'.

Chavda also questioned state Health Minister Nitin Patel over preparations to contain the outbreak.

"See the condition of ward for patients of #Covid_19 in #BJP-ruled Surat Municipal Corporation hospital in @narendramodi's #Fake_Gujarat_model. @vijayrupanibjp@Nitinbhai_Patel please tell us, was this your preparation to defeat #Covid_19?" he tweeted along with a 30-second video.

Surat has seen a rise in COVID-19 cases recently, with the district reporting its highest single-day tally of 184 cases Saturday, of which 174 were in Surat civic limits.

Hospital fined for Covid-19 death

Ahmedabad: The Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) has imposed a fine of Rs 77 lakh on a private hospital and its management and filed an FIR for negligence after a COVID-19 patient died, an official said Sunday. Rajasthan Hospital, where a 73-year-old coronavirus positive man died June 18 while being shifted from another facility, was issued a show-cause notice by AMC last Sunday, he added. "We have imposed a fine of Rs 77 lakh, which comprises Rs 25 lakh on Rajasthan Hospital, Rs 2 lakh each on eight board members (Rs 16 lakh) and on 18 trustees (Rs 36 lakh). The money will be used to treat COVID-19 patients," AMC in charge medical officer of health Bhavin Solanki said, adding that an FIR had also been lodged. A Shahibaug police station official said the FIR was under IPC sections relating to death by negligence and criminal conspiracy among others. The AMC action comes after Gujarat High Court observed in an order that the incident was 'very painful' and called for 'strictest action' against those responsible. June 18, the COVID-19 patient was being shifted to Rajasthan Hospital from another facility as he required ventilator support, but he had to wait for 20 minutes at the corona gate of the hospital as the staff took time to open it.

Zomato staff burn official T-shirts to protest Chinese investment in firm



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 28: A group of Zomato food delivery platform employees in Kolkata tore and burnt their official T-shirts to protest Chinese investment in the firm.

The agitation comes in the backdrop of the killing of 20 Indian soldiers in a deadly clash with Chinese troops in eastern Ladakh's Galwan Valley June 15. During the protest at Behala in the southwestern part of the city Saturday, some agitators

claimed that they have quit their jobs as Zomato has a sizeable Chinese investment and urged people to stop ordering food via the company.

In 2018, Ant Financial, a part of Chinese major Alibaba, had invested USD 210 million in Zomato for a 14.7 per cent stake. The food delivery major recently raised an additional USD 150 million from Ant Financial.

"Chinese companies are making profits from here and attacking the Army of our country. They are

FOREIGN INVESTMENT

In 2018, Ant Financial, a part of Chinese major Alibaba, had invested USD 210 million in Zomato for a 14.7 per cent stake

The food delivery major recently raised an additional USD 150 million from Ant Financial

trying to grab our land. This cannot be allowed," one of the protesters said. Another protester said they were ready to starve but would not work for companies that have investment from China.

In May, Zomato laid off 520 employees or 13 per cent of its workforce in a huge retrenchment exercise due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. There was no immediate reaction from Zomato and whether the protesters were among those who were retrenched was not known.

FINAL JOURNEY



Athletes run a marathon towards the burial site of martyr Rajesh Orang, who died during a clash with Chinese troops in Galwan valley, in West Bengal's Birbhum district, Sunday.

PTI PHOTO

Action if Covid beds kept deliberately vacant: Gujarat HC

Brijesh Trivedi, amicus curiae in the Covid-19 issue, made a shocking observation that the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital was keeping some beds deliberately vacant, despite patients needing it, so as to ease the pressure and burden of working

Gandhinagar June 28: Taking a serious note of its amicus curiae reporting that the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital has been keeping some Covid-19 beds vacant deliberately, the Gujarat High Court has warned the state's top health official of action if this was found to be true.

Brijesh Trivedi, the amicus curiae in the Covid-19 issue taken up by the court suo motu, made a shocking observation that the hospital was keeping some beds deliberately vacant, despite patients needing it, so as to ease the pressure and burden of working.

A bench of Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice JB Pardiwala said: "This is serious, and if it is true, then we warn the Principal Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Department of Gujarat government, that appropriate action will be taken." Hearing a number of petitions filed in conjunction with the suo motu case on the Covid-19 situation in Gujarat, the court has sought response of the state government on various issues raised in the petitions filed by various applicants.

It has also directed the state government to ensure some points raised in the PILs, especially ensuring that each of the private hospitals display, near the reception

table, the charges fixed by the state government for Covid-19 testing and treatment. It has also directed the government to give publicity in daily newspapers, vernacular as well as English, and inform the medical associations in the state, of the eligibility criteria and procedures for private labs to obtain ICMR approval for conducting Covid-19 tests. All such private labs shall be granted approval from the ICMR in seven days, and similarly, the NABL accreditation is also to be granted in seven days.

The court has also questioned the state government with regards to the discharge

policy of cured Covid-19 patients prevailing on date, asking whether it would be in larger interest of the public that patients are tested one last time before their actual discharge. It has also sought a response from the state government regarding testing of all medical practitioners and frontline health workers without the need of any prescription, as the apex court has also declared that anyone who desires, should be permitted to be tested and the state government was bound to implement the same more particularly with respect to medical practitioners and frontline health workers.

Only 14 pc in Kolkata have antibodies: ICMR survey

Kolkata, June 28: Over 14 per cent of Kolkata residents have developed COVID-19 antibodies, a seroprevalence survey by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has said.

A seroprevalence survey conducted via random and rapid tests -- the IgM and the ICG -- indicate the rate of transmission in a community and whether it has started developing herd immunity to a virus. The survey was conducted on the basis of random samples but the sample size was not mentioned.

According to senior doctors, the survey indicated that the transmission is high in the metropolis,

which is far from developing herd immunity or antibodies to combat COVID-19. In neighbouring South 24-Parganas district, it is 2.5 per cent while it is 1 per cent in Alipurduar district, the survey said.

There has been less than 1 per cent of antibody positivity rate in districts of Purba Medinipur, Bankura and Jhargram, the survey stated.

Antibody is a protective protein produced by the immune system in response to the presence of a foreign substance, an antigen. In this case it is the new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2.

West Bengal Sunday registered its highest single-day spike of 572 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking the



NO HERD IMMUNITY

The survey indicated that transmission is high in the metropolis, which is far from developing herd immunity or antibodies to combat COVID-19

Antibody is a protective protein produced by the immune system in response to the presence of a foreign substance, an antigen. In this case it is the new coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2

discharged from different hospitals. The state now has 5,451 active COVID-19 cases, the health bulletin added. Since Saturday, 10,563 samples have been tested in the state.

Isolated by kin, virus survivors slip into depression

Residences of some recovered patients were marked 'Corona flat' or 'Corona House' by neighbours to warn people to keep out

Kolkata, June 28: Most of the people recovering from COVID-19 in West Bengal are suffering from depression after being socially isolated by family members, relatives and neighbours, said a senior doctor at a state-run hospital in Kolkata Sunday.

Dr Sanjib Bandyopadhyay, in-charge of the post-COVID follow-up clinic at ID and BG Hospital in Beliaghata area, said the residences of some of the recovered patients were marked 'Corona flat' or 'Corona House' by neighbours to warn people to keep out.

Dr Bandyopadhyay said some people, including police officers, had to return to their home towns after their neighbours did not allow them to enter their residences in Kolkata. Even pathologists have refused to collect blood samples or conduct any clinical examination of family members of several recovered persons, he said.

No doubt the pandemic has aggravated the mental health issues in many people, who are forced to remain indoors socially isolated



Almost 100 per cent of the people who have recovered from COVID-19 are suffering from depression after being totally left out by neighbours and relatives

"Physically they are experiencing weakness, fatigue and loss of appetite but almost all of them said they felt detached from the society as their neighbours have stopped interacting with them. This type of stigmatisation is running deep under their skin," he said.

The follow-up clinic at ID and BG Hospital has been running for nearly a month to provide a proper counselling to recovered patients to stabilise them. People recovering from COVID-19 are also being treated for diabetes, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and hypertension.

"So far around 60 recovered people have consulted us and all of them have shared similar experiences of being socially isolated. Even though they have recovered, society is not ready to accept them.

Experts say nervousness, fear of contamination, constant reassurance-seeking behaviour, sleep disturbance, feelings of helplessness and possibility of an economic slowdown are the major factors leading to depression and anxiety among people.

A recent study by the Assam government has found COVID-19 patients in the state too are facing mental health problems over issues such as job loss, financial dis-

stress and social stigma, and needed counselling. Of the people surveyed for the study, 97 per cent had their sleeping pattern disturbed and 12 per cent felt anxiety, fear and panic. At least 7 per cent were stressed because of the stigma attached to the coronavirus disease.

Recovered persons do not have the virus in them anymore and there is no risk of transmission, the guide says.



At a time when coronavirus cases are rising across the country, UP government's decision to start classes for MBBS students can jeopardise their safety

MAHA LOCKDOWN TO CONTINUE

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray Sunday indicated that the ongoing Sunday restrictions will go beyond June 30, though the unlock down process is being gradually implemented to put the economy back on track



of the day quote

There is no need for Class 10 board exams for a while for these two years, this year and next year and then they could relook at this policy



KAPIL SIBAL | CONGRESS LEADER

In the time of a calamity, there is torment of locusts and losers, and both should be dealt with strongly. The entire country is strongly working for turning disaster into opportunity but the Congress is trying to turn disaster into anarchy



MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | UNION MINISTER

Modi-Shah led BJP, is this the vision on New India in the BJP, forcing the police to release BJP workers caught playing cards at 2 in the night



NARENDRA SALUJA | MP CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON

SHORT TAKES

Man, son killed

Tikamgarh (MP): A 57-year-old man and his son were allegedly beaten to death with sticks by their neighbours in Tikamgarh district of Madhya Pradesh following an argument over washing of sand, police said Sunday. The incident occurred in Baniyani village, about 25-kms from the district headquarters, late Saturday night, police said. A case has been registered against 17 persons in connection with the offence, sub-inspector Brajesh Kumar of Baldevgarh Police Station said.

Ex-Guj CM tests Covid positive

Ahmedabad: A former chief minister of Gujarat has tested positive for coronavirus, his aide said Sunday. He was suffering from fever for last three-four days and was quarantined at his home in Gandhinagar under doctor's guidance, he said.

Tiger kills man

Chandrapur: A man who had gone to collect bamboo in the forest in Chandrapur district was killed in a tiger attack, a Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra officials said Sunday. The incident took place in compartment number 26 under Tohagaon forest range in Gondpipri tehsil, some 60 kilometres from the district headquarters, on Saturday evening, said FDCM divisional manager Navakishor Reddy.

Another cop dies

Mumbai: A 55-year-old constable has become the 38th personnel of the Mumbai Police to die of COVID-19, an official said Sunday. The deceased was posted at Dharavi police station in central Mumbai. "The constable was first admitted to Seven Hills hospital on May 15. He was later shifted to Reliance Hospital in Marine Lines where he died on Saturday late night," the official said.

Woman dies

Latur: A woman was killed while working at a dal processing machine in a mill in Maharashtra's Latur district, police said Sunday. The incident happened Saturday afternoon in MIDC area here when the 35-year-old woman, identified as Maya Bajulge, was putting dal from a height into the machine, an official said. "The plate of the machine on which she was standing toppled and she fell into the machine and got killed," the MIDC police station official said.

DAMAGE-CONTROL EXERCISE CBI TO PROBE TN CUSTODIAL DEATHS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Salem/Tuticorin (TN), June 28: The Tamil Nadu government has decided to transfer the probe into the death of a father-son duo, alleged victims of police torture in Tuticorin district, to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Chief Minister K Palaniswami said Sunday.



The inspector of Sathankulam police station where the duo was allegedly thrashed has been suspended and replaced with a new official in his place, police said in Tuticorin

The government's decision will be informed to the Madras High Court, which is seized of the matter, and secure its approval before transferring the case to the central agency, Palaniswami said in Salem.

The inspector of Sathankulam police station where the duo was allegedly thrashed has been suspended and replaced with a new official in his place, police said in Tuticorin. The Opposition DMK said the Chief Minister had ordered for a CBI probe due to "intense pressure" from people and political parties, besides the media.

The government's decision will be informed to the Madras High Court, which is seized of the matter, and secure its approval before transferring the case to the central agency, Palaniswami said in Salem. "The government has decided that the CBI will probe the case," Palaniswami said.

He recalled the court had by itself taken cognizance of the matter. However, the family of the victims said they will wait for the next hearing in the Madurai bench of the Madras High Court on Tuesday, when reporters sought their response to the chief minister's announcement on handing over the probe to CBI.

DMK President M K Stalin said if the government had the determination to provide justice in this matter, those allegedly involved in the incident would not be "roaming free" even now. "The chief minister has transferred the probe to the CBI due to intense pressure

from the people, political parties and the media," he said in a tweet.

P Jayaraj and his son Fennix, arrested for 'violating' lockdown norms over business hours of their cellphone shop, died at a hospital in Kovilpatti on June 23, with their relatives alleging they were severely thrashed at Sathankulam police station by police personnel earlier.

The incident has triggered a national furor, leading to the suspension of five policemen, including an inspector and two sub-inspectors. Sunday, Palaniswami further said guidelines have already been issued to police on how to deal with the public and traders, indicating that the men in khaki must have a humane approach towards them.

"They have been advised that public cannot be disturbed. If there is any issue, a case has to be filed and due action taken," he said.

Covid recoveries exceed active cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: The gap between recoveries and active cases of COVID-19 has crossed 1,00,000, the Union health ministry said Sunday as coronavirus cases in India mounted to 5,28,859 and the death toll rose to 16,085.

The recovered cases have exceeded the active cases by 1,06,661 as on Saturday, the ministry said. A total of 3,09,712 patients have been cured of COVID-19 so far with 13,832 patients having recovered in the last 24 hours, it said.

"The recovery rate is 58.56 per cent amongst COVID-19 patients," the ministry said. "The graded, pre-emptive and pro-active steps taken by the Government of India along with the states and UTs for prevention, containment and management of COVID-19 are showing encouraging results," it said in a



Presently, there are 2,03,051 active cases and all are under active medical supervision

The recovery rate is 58.56 per cent amongst COVID-19 patients," the ministry said

statement.

Presently, there are 2,03,051 active cases and all are under active medical supervision, it said. India now has 1,036 diagnostic labs dedicated

to COVID-19. This includes 749 in the government sector and 287 private labs.

"Daily more than 2,00,000 samples are being tested. The samples tested

AVIAN CARE



Pigeons fly over the Besant Nagar beach as a volunteer feeds them, during the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown in Chennai, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

Drones to go after locusts

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, June 28: Drone-as-a-Service (DAAS) provider Garuda Aerospace will soon start spraying anti-locust pesticide in several parts of Uttar Pradesh, including Noida near Delhi, said a top company official.

"We have got the order to deploy five drones for anti-locust operations under Banda University of Agriculture & Technology, Uttar Pradesh. We will be sending 10 pilots for operating the drones. The mandate is to deploy the drones for a total of 50 hours at the locations specified by the University," Agnishwar Jayaprakash, Managing Director of city-based Garuda Aerospace, said.

He said the company has already deployed its drones in Rajasthan in locust control operations. "This is the first time drones are being used in locust control measures in India. It is a new case scenario," Jayaprakash said.

According to him, there are two methods of spraying the pesticide - one by flying above the swarm of locust and spraying on them and the other is to spray the pesticide beforehand on the areas where the locusts are expected to land.

He said the state government agencies predict the flight path of

WINGED MENACE



the locust and give us one/two days notices on the location where the drones are to be used. Sometimes the notice is very short. Jayaprakash said the locust hit percentage is about 70 per cent as per the state government officials.

"Unlike bees that attack an adversary, locusts swarm does not attack drones. Perhaps they see it as a big bird, their enemy and avoid. Their main purpose is to eat, procreate and fly," Jayaprakash said.

According to him, the Banda University order will be executed in three/four days as the total 50 hours of flying can be completed by the five drones in that time.

"The five drones will be flown by air on Monday," he added. Garuda Aerospace has been carrying out drone based anti-coronavirus sanitation orders from several mu-

nicipal corporations and smart cities like Varanasi, Rourkela, Raipur, Chennai and Hyderabad.

"While the government contracts for anti-coronavirus sanitation orders have been completed, the corporate sector has started using our services. And now the orders are for locust control operations," Jayaprakash added. According to him, the Covid-19 pandemic and locust attack has increased the focus on drones and their use. Apart from spraying anti-coronavirus disinfectants, drones were used by police in Tamil Nadu to monitor the lockdown violators.

Jayaprakash said Garuda Aerospace has manufactured and serviced drones for several government departments in Tamil Nadu, like forests, electricity, police, mining, agriculture, Indian Coast Guard and others.

IN SOUP

Family fined over lavish wedding

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, June 28: The Bhilwara district administration has slapped Rs 6.26 lakh fine on a family for organising a lavish wedding, attended by 250 guests flouting all Covid-19 norms and restrictions, on June 13.

While the number of guests was much above the permitted 50, one person died and 15 attendees, including the groom, had tested coronavirus positive by June 27. Officials said the groom's grand-father died from Covid-19, and his aunt and uncle also tested coronavirus positive. However, the bride and 17 others tested negative.

All the 15 Covid-19 patients have been admitted to hospital and over 100 quarantined. The state government slapped a notice on the groom's father ordering him to foot the bill of the quarantine facility and treatment of infected people by paying Rs 6,26,600 fine.

Bhilwara District Magistrate Rajendra Bhatt has asked the



Tehsildar to recover the fine from the groom's father within 3 days, and deposit that in the Chief Minister Relief Fund. Other expenses, to be incurred in coming days, should also be recovered from the groom's family, the order, issued under the Epidemic Act, added.

The order also said the groom, Rizul, and his father Gheesu Lal Rathi didn't follow the social distancing norms, were not wearing masks and there was no use of sanitiser at the event.

Bride dies during wedding rituals

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kannauj (UP), June 28: In a tragic incident, a bride died even before the wedding rituals could be completed and the groom had to return without the bride.

The incident took place in Bhagatpurva village under Thathia police circle in Kannauj. The groom, Sanjay, arrived with his family members and the wedding rituals began Friday night.

As the rituals began 19-year-old bride Vinita, suddenly complained of uneasiness and collapsed. Her family members rushed her to a medical facility that denied her admission until she tested negative for corona.

Her father, Kishora Batham, rushed her to Kanpur but by then her condition had deteriorated and Vinita passed away. The family informed the police on emergency number 112 and the body has now been sent for post-mortem.

"We will take action, if needed, after the post-mortem report comes," said the Kannauj police spokesman. While the family performed the cremation of Vinita on Saturday evening, the beraat returned without the bride.

Fuel price hike: Congress plans stir

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 28: To counter the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) virtual rallies, the Congress has decided to launch five-day protest, starting on June 30, against fuel price hike in each block of the country.

The party would also hold protests, between 11 a.m. and 12 noon Monday in front of the central government offices against the fuel price hike, said senior Congress leader K.C. Venugopal.

The protest is aimed at highlighting the people's plight due to the rising fuel prices and also to counter the BJP's policies and programmes. Criticising the BJP for virtual rallies, the Congress said the ruling party was only targeting votes and was insensitive towards the problems, like Covid-19 pandemic, locust attack and Chinese transgression. The prices of motor fuel had been rising for the past 21 days.

Govt order to oil firms in Kashmir sparks speculations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, June 28: A government order asking oil marketing companies to stock up two months' supply of LPG cylinders in Kashmir Valley has sparked speculations, especially in the wake of the LAC face-off, with NC leader Omar Abdullah questioning the need for such a move.

According to the June 27 order issued by the director of the Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Department in Kashmir, an adviser to Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor G C Murmu has passed directions in a meeting on June 23 "to ensure sufficient stocks of LPG in the valley as the supply of the same gets affected due to closure of the National Highway on account of frequent landslides".

Describing the order as a "matter most urgent", the director asked



the oil marketing companies to make adequate stocks of LPG which can last up to two months both at bottling plants as well as godowns. Though similar exercises are common in winter months in view of fre-

quent disruptions on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway, such huge stocking does not usually take place in summers.

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah also

cited another communique by the Ganderbal district police for making provisions for lodging of central forces and said such orders create panic in Kashmir and sought an explanation from the government.

"Government orders are creating panic in Kashmir & unfortunately after all the lies & false assurances last year even if/when the government explains these orders hardly any of us will take the assurances at face value. That said they still need to explain these orders," Omar tweeted, referring to the Centre's decision to abrogate Article 370 provisions in August last year.

In his communique, the senior superintendent of police (SSP) of Ganderbal has requested the district administration to make available 16 educational institutes, including ITI buildings, middle and higher secondary schools, in the central Kashmir district.

The SSP said the buildings were needed to accommodate central armed paramilitary forces (CAPFs). "In view of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra-2020, and due to the dearth of accommodation facilities in district Ganderbal for incoming CAPF companies, it is requested that these accommodation centres/ education institutes may kindly be made available for accommodation of the CAPF companies during the period of the yatra," the SSP said.

National Conference leader Tanvir Sadiq also demanded an explanation from the government, saying the people of Kashmir cannot afford to live another year in "fear and uneasiness".

"It's summer so not many landslides. Stock for two months. Matter most urgent. These three points need clarity at the highest level. People of Kashmir can't afford to live in yet another year of

fear and uneasiness," he posted on Twitter. Shabir Ahmad, a resident of Ganderbal, sought to link the orders with the situation along the LAC. "...whatever it is, it is causing anxiety among the people in the valley," he said.

Indian and Chinese armies have been on a six-week standoff in several areas of eastern Ladakh. The ties between the two countries came under severe strain after Chinese military killed 20 Indian Army personnel and injured around 76 in a violent clash in Galwan Valley on June 15.

Another Ganderbal resident, Owais Mir, also raised apprehensions about the move. "We know about the yatra arrangements, but this year the yatra is supposed to be a low-key affair, so what is the government going to do with such a huge number of forces," he said.

of the day quote

As the Karnataka government has not maintained transparency in its measures to control the spread of coronavirus, it has given rise to suspicion, insecurity among people

SIDDARAMAIAH | CONGRESS LEADER

Our Prime Minister launched a scheme, which covers 116 districts in the country, but none from Bengal could be included as the TMC government didn't bother to share any data with us

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | UNION FINANCE MINISTER

The unemployment in the state is at the 45-year high, as revealed by the government data. The unemployed youth are being cane-charged for demanding jobs

AJAY KUMAR LALLU | UP CONGRESS CHIEF

SHORT TAKES

50 prisoners test corona positive

Akola: Fifty prisoners of the Akola district jail and 28 other people here in Maharashtra tested positive for coronavirus Sunday, health authorities said. The district jail currently has nearly 300 prisoners, a jail official said, adding that the facility has not taken in any new prisoner in the recent past. On Sunday morning, reports of 78 people, including 50 male prisoners of the district jail, came out positive, an official from the Government Medical College and Hospital here said.

Bihar minister, wife test Covid positive

Katihar: Bihar's Backward and Extremely Backward Classes Welfare Minister Vinod Kumar Singh and his wife tested positive for COVID-19 Sunday and were sent to an isolation ward at a city hotel in Katihar district, officials said. Katihar District Magistrate Kanwal Tanuj confirmed that both the minister and his wife have tested positive for the pathogen. The couple has been kept at an isolation ward created at a city hotel here, the DM said.

Jawan cremated

Midnapore (WB): The last rites of CRPF jawan Shyamal Kumar, who was killed in a militant attack in Kashmir's Anantnag, were conducted with full state honours at his home town in West Midnapore district Sunday. The 27-year-old was the only child of his parents Badal Kumar De and Shibani. He had joined the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in 2015, a family member said. Kumar was killed as terrorists, belonging to Jammu Kashmir Islamic State (JKIS), opened indiscriminate fire on a road opening party of the CRPF in Anantnag's Bijbehara area Friday, according to officials. An eight-year-old boy was also killed in the attack, they said.

Three killed

Jammu: Three people were killed and as many injured on Sunday in a car accident on the outskirts of the city here, police said. The speeding car was carrying some local labourers for work in the fields when its driver lost control over the vehicle at Gondla village in R S Pura area around 8.15 am, a police official said. The car rolled over several times after skidding off the road and rammed into some trees, he said, quoting eye-witnesses.

India unlocking sectors in lockdown for decades: PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: The country will have to focus on defeating coronavirus and bolstering the economy as it exits from the lockdown and enters the "unlock" phase, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday underscoring the need to keep guard against the deadly virus.

He also stressed that India has always transformed adversities into stepping stones to success and this year won't be different. "During this unlock period, one will have to focus on two points - defeating coronavirus and strengthening the economy," Modi said in his monthly "Mann ki Baat" radio address.

He said as people move out during the unlock period, they have to remain more vigilant compared to the lockdown period. His remarks come against the backdrop of rising cases of coronavirus in some parts of the country.

"Always remember, if you do not wear a mask, do not observe the two-way social distancing norms or do not take other precautions, you are putting others at risk besides yourselves, especially the elderly and children at home," he cautioned.

Referring to the recent decisions taken by his government, Modi said during this unlock phase, "many other things are getting unlocked", which had shackled the country for decades. He referred to reforms in the mining, space, agriculture and other sectors, saying these will not



BOLSTERING GROWTH

■ He stressed that India has always transformed adversities into stepping stones to success and this year won't be different

■ He said as people move out during the unlock period, they have to remain more vigilant compared to the lockdown period

only pace up the movement towards self-reliant India, but also boost the advancement of technology in India.

On the various challenges thrown up during the year 2020, Modi said people often discuss as to when the year will end. Referring to coron-

avirus, the prime minister said as if one calamity wasn't enough, the country has had to face an unending slew of challenges.

"A few days ago, our east coast had to face the fury of cyclone Amphan; on the West coast it was cyclone Nisarg. In many states, farmers had to bear the brunt of swarming locust...many parts of the country have been witnessing intermittent earthquakes," he said. In an apparent reference to China's actions in east Ladakh, he said, "Amidst all these, the country has had to deal with the designs of some of our neighbours."

Rare are the occasions when one gets to hear of adversities of this kind, that too simultaneously, he said. The prime minister was of the view that despite adversities, people should not consider 2020 as a bad year.

We have received good results of 'Chase the Virus' campaign in Mumbai and we have now decided to implement it across the state

UDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

EXCESS RAINFALL

Madhya Pradesh has received 88 per cent excess rainfall in June so far as compared to the normal average due to the early onset of monsoon and conducive atmospheric systems, an IMD official said Sunday



CIC junks 141 RTI petitions in one go

The applicant, Dinesh, had filed a number of pleas under the Right to Information with the Lt Governor's office seeking details of properties, illegal constructions, and allotment of houses among other things through separate petitions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: The Central Information Commission has dismissed in one go 141 petitions filed by an RTI applicant against the Delhi Lt Governor's office, calling it a misuse of the transparency law to inundate the office with pleas seeking information unrelated to it.

Warning the applicant, Information Commissioner Y K Sinha said in case such an avalanche of "frivolous, vexatious and wasteful" litigation is received by the Commission, it will be compelled to dismiss such applications without hearing on the grounds of being repetitive and as such adjudication will serve no larger public interest.

The applicant, Dinesh, had filed a number of pleas under the Right to Information (RTI) with the Lt Governor's office seeking details of properties, illegal constructions, and allotment of houses among other things through separate petitions. Claiming that he had not received any information in response, he approached the CIC seeking directions to the LG office for issuance of the information sought by him.

The LG's office represented by noted RTI activist Subhash

Agrawal said the applications have been replied to or transferred to the concerned authorities after intimating the applicant.

Sinha said, "...it is noted that the appellant has consistently stated that he has not received any information from the PIO or the FAA and yet he incessantly kept filing all the RTI applications in the LG's office. Response/s received from the Respondent, however reveals a different story".

Dismissing all 141 petitions in five separate orders, Sinha noted that though the queries raised by the appellant are claimed to be in the larger public interest, his modus operandi is to file a large number of pleas which are "irrelevant" and "unrelated". "In the current environment with the outbreak of the pandemic, COVID-19, and with the consequent lockdown the normal functioning of all organisations has been severely impacted. For the Commission, this only adds to the already huge backlog of cases," Sinha said.

He said in such circumstances, there is a pressing need to identify cases such as the ones under reference for cumulative disposal in order to facilitate expeditious adjudication of cases of genuine information seekers.

Vice Prez, PM pay tributes to Narasimha Rao



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday paid tributes to the late P V Narasimha Rao on his birth anniversary, saying he led the country through a critical phase.

In his monthly "Mann ki Baat" radio address, the prime minister said June 28 marks the commencement of the birth centenary of Rao. He said the former prime minister led the country through a "critical phase".

Rao was the prime minister between June 21, 1991 and May 16, 1996. "He was rooted in Indian values; and had knowledge of western literature and science as well," Modi said, adding that Rao was one of the most experienced leaders of India. The prime minister recalled that Rao had joined the freedom movement in his teens.

When the Nizam of Hyderabad refused permission to sing "Vande Mataram", he took an active part in the movement against the Nizam. From a young age, Rao raised his voice against injustice, Modi said.

"His rise from a very simple background, his emphasis on education, his eagerness to learn, and, along with all these qualities, his leadership ability are all memorable," Modi noted. He also urged people to know more about Rao in his centenary year.

Salons reopen in Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 28: With the further easing of coronavirus-induced curbs in Maharashtra, some salons opened in Mumbai Sunday after a gap of three months while many remained closed due to lack of manpower.

The parlours and salons falling under the COVID-19 containment zones did not open. Salon owners, who opened their shops for restarting business, said they were adhering to the government's guidelines like checking temperatures of their customers, asking them to use hand sanitisers before entering the premises, and serving customers in small batches.

Some, however, complained of low turnout, saying people were scared of availing salon services. The Maharashtra government earlier said salons and beauty parlours will be allowed to reopen from Sunday with restricted entry and prior appointments for customers.

A revised set of guidelines, issued as part of the government's 'Mission Begin Again' phase four, said only select services like hair cut, dyeing, waxing will be allowed as of now in these outlets.

Assam flood worsens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Guwahati, June 28: The flood situation in Assam worsened further Sunday with two more persons losing their lives in the deluge which affected nearly 9.3 lakh people in 23 districts, the State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said.

According to the ASDMA daily flood report, one person died at Jonai revenue circle of Dhemaji district and another at Udalguri revenue circle of Udalguri district due to flood. With two more deaths, the fatalities due to flood this year has gone up to 18.

ASDMA said more than 9.26 lakh people have been affected due to floods in Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Biswanath, Udalguri, Darrang, Nalbari, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, South Salmara, Goalpara, Kamrup, Morigaon, Hojai, Nagaon, Golaghat, Jorhat, Majuli, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and West Karbi Anglong districts.

Barpeta has emerged as the worst-hit district with nearly 1.35 lakh people having been affected, followed by Dhemaji with almost

one lakh people and Nalbari with more than 96,000 persons hit by this natural calamity. SDRF district administrations, civil defence and Inland Water Transport departments have evacuated 9,303 people during the last 24 hours in five districts, the bulletin said.

Till Saturday, more than 4.6 lakh persons were affected due to the deluge across 21 districts. At present, 2,071 villages are under water and 68,806.73 hectares of crop areas have been damaged, ASDMA said.

It further said authorities are running 193 relief camps and distribution centres across 12 districts, where 27,308 people have taken shelter.

The authorities have distributed a total of 1,206.32 quintals of rice, dal and salt, and 2,195.92 litres of mustard oil along with other relief materials such as tarpaulin, baby food, snacks, candle, match box, drinking water, milk, biscuit and mosquito coil.

The Brahmaputra is flowing above the danger mark at Guwahati, Nimatighat in Jorhat, Tezpur in Sonitpur, Goalpara town in Goalpara and Dhubri town in Dhubri districts.



POLITICKLE by MANJUL



FIGHTING COVID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: The Railways' air conditioned trains will now have operation theatre-like fresh air pumped into its coaches, replacing the circulated air which raises the chances of spread of infections, officials have said.

The experiment, started with 15 pairs of air conditioned trains being run by the Railways on the Rajdhani routes since May 12, will be replicated in all AC trains as part of the national transporter's preparations for post-COVID operations. "The Roof Mounted AC Package Unit (RMPU) system of Indian

New normal in AC trains



Railways AC coaches replaces air more than 16-18 times per hour just like in OTs," officials said.

Previously, these AC trains had air change six to eight times per hour and 80 per cent of the air that was pushed into coaches was re-circulated air, while 20 per cent

was fresh air. However, with the increase in the number of air changes, there has been a 10 to 15 per cent increase in energy consumption.

"This is the price one has to pay for the safety of passengers. This is the new normal. The way an AC works is that it uses re-circulated air so that it gets cooler faster. When we use fresh air it takes more time to cool, so there's additional energy consumption," an officer said.

The Railways has also increased the centralised AC's temperature from the usual 23 degrees to 25 degrees as passengers are no longer being provided linen.



India snubs China

India snubbed China by deciding to keep major Chinese telecom company, Huawei out of the 5G technology trials. Huawei had been selected at the last minute by the government in the 5G trials race ignoring strong US protests in December 2019. A number of Indian security experts and others had also raised objections over Huawei for the 5G technology trials. They had said inclusion of Huawei will be great

risk to national security apparatus and will have far-reaching consequences if allowed to enter 5G technology. Some of the top US officials had even visited India to dissuade the Modi government in December itself. But the Indian government ignored these warnings and went ahead by including Huawei to be part of the 5G trials. However, the Galwan Valley crisis that erupted on the LAC in the Ladakh region changed all this in one stroke. At a high-level meeting among the top ministers and DoT officials it has been decided to postpone the 5G trials itself and reverse the entire process that began in December 2019.

Physical meeting nixed

No Opposition party leader supported the idea floated by the Congress that the Prime Minister should hold a face-to-face meeting rather than "virtual." The Congress wanted the PM should meet leaders physically for effective interaction on Galwan Valley crisis. Nationalist Congress president Sharad Pawar rejected

the proposal saying "virtual meeting is as good as physical in the times of Covid." Pawar reminded that Sonia Gandhi had herself held a virtual meeting with leaders on May 22. DMK leader M K Stalin did not agree. A top aide of Sonia Gandhi contacted leaders personally after the government initiated move to hold the meeting on June 19. But there was no positive response from leading parties. CPI's Secretary D Raja confirmed saying, "I personally had no objection to the physical meeting. But other leaders were perhaps not willing," he said. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was also contacted. But she too declined to agree with the proposal.

Covid deaths highest in Guj

Contrary to popular perception that situation is worst in Delhi and Maharashtra, the Centre is more worried about the death rate in Gujarat. The number of deaths in India may show a sudden jump in these two states during the past three days. But experts say it's an

aberration as this steep rise is because the states updated the death toll after audit when they got a rap from the Centre and courts for hiding data. An in-depth analysis of toll data collated of between June 1 and 17 clearly showed that India's death rate and numbers are far below the world average. But shockingly Gujarat is highest in the country in death toll average at 6.23% on June 17 and Maharashtra was 4.88% and Delhi was 4.11%. Tamil Nadu which imposed lockdown due to Covid-19, the death toll rate is lowest at 1.09%.

PM to perform 'Bhumi Poojan'

Narendra Modi, who was keeping away from Ram Janmabhoomi issue after taking over as the PM due to the matter being in the Supreme Court, is likely to be part of Bhumi Poojan ceremony in Ayodhya virtually. UP CM Yogi Adityanath will be present in Ayodhya in person to perform necessary rituals. It is likely to

happen in the first week of July. It is learnt that senior VHP leader and the person involved with Ram Janmabhoomi movement Champat Rai met with the PM requesting him to join the Bhumi Poojan. The PM apparently accepted the proposal but due to distancing norms in place, he is likely to perform it from Delhi itself.

Modi tightens ministries

Acting swiftly on the directions of the Prime Minister, the Railways and other Central ministries have acted fast to cut costs. The PMO directed that the ministries to avoid holding ceremonial functions physically and move over to digital platforms. The Railways under Piyush Goyal and, Road Transport under Nitin Gadkari and others used to hold at least 6-7 functions per day on an average. Not anymore. The Ministries have been told to cut down the use of stationary at least by 50 per cent and identify areas where costs can be cut immediately by 20%-25%.



Until a vaccine is found, we are unlikely to see a return to our pre-COVID-19 way of life
LEE HSIEN LOONG | PRIME MINISTER OF SINGAPORE

KIDS MORE RESILIENT AGAINST CORONAVIRUS

Most children with COVID-19 fared better than adults during the first four months of the pandemic, according to a systematic review of 131 studies worldwide



of the day quote

The economic pressure that began in 2018 has increased and today it is the toughest pressure on our country
HASSAN ROUHANI | IRANIAN PRESIDENT

We're going to make sure that we have plans to help people whose old jobs are not there anymore to get the opportunities they need. We are absolutely not going back to the austerity of 10 years ago
BORIS JOHNSON | UK PRIME MINISTER

I will not be silenced by @UKLabour MPs who continue to dismiss the contributions of those who don't conform to their view of how ethnic minorities should behave
PRITI PATEL | UK HOME SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

Dozens held in Hong Kong

Hong Kong: Hong Kong police arrested at least 53 people Sunday after scuffles erupted during a relatively peaceful protest against planned national security legislation to be implemented by the mainland Chinese government. Armed riot police were present as a crowd of several hundred moved from Jordan to Mong Kok in the Kowloon district, staging what was intended as a "silent protest" against the planned law.

Largest LGBTQI online pride event

Mexico City: Mexico's LGBTQI community along with celebrities came together for the world's largest online pride event, held virtually this year due to the coronavirus pandemic. Organised and coordinated by the Inclusive T (Includes You) Committee, the event with the hashtag #ElOrgulloPermanece (#PrideEndures) took place Saturday evening and was aired live on Youtube, Facebook and Mexican broadcaster Canal Once, reports *Efe* news.

B'desh braces for massive floods

Dhaka (Bangladesh): Weather officials in Bangladesh have predicted massive floods in the northwest and southeast portions of the country bordering India, as incessant rains have inflated rivers, posing serious threat to life and damage to farmland.

Shootings across Chicago kill 3 kids

Chicago: Shootings across Chicago over the weekend have left three children dead, including a 10-year-old girl who was struck in the head by a stray bullet that came through an apartment window. The Saturday night death was among at least 10 shooting fatalities since Friday evening, which follow a deadly Father's Day weekend and fresh concerns about a violent summer ahead.

Lanka lifts curfew

Colombo: The Sri Lankan government Sunday completely lifted a curfew imposed to contain the spread of the coronavirus after no new case of community infection was recorded for nearly two months in the country. Sri Lanka has been under a continuous lockdown since March 20, a week after the first local victim of the pandemic was reported.

Pandemic hits China's BRI projects

AGENCIES

Beijing, June 28: Majority of the projects under China's ambitious multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are either adversely or partially affected by the coronavirus pandemic, according to a Chinese official.

About a fifth of the projects under the BRI, which aims to boost trade and investment across Asia, Africa and Europe to further China's global influence, had been "seriously affected" by the pandemic, according to Wang Xiaolong, director-general of the foreign ministry's international economic affairs department.

About 40 per cent of the projects were "adversely affected", and a further 30-40 per cent were "somewhat affected", Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* quoted Wang as saying.

It aims to link Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea route. The CPEC, which connects Gwadar Port in Pakistan's Balochistan with China's Xinjiang province, is the flagship project of the BRI. China last week held the first video conference of the BRI as part of its efforts to kick start the projects. The projects which were disrupted included \$60 billion China-



The BRI was launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping when he came to power in 2013

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the report said. For instance, COVID-19 disruptions have affected the CPEC, Cambodia's Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone and Indonesia's Jakarta-Bandung high-speed rail, it said. Many projects under BRI are either on hold or receiving minimal works. The BRI is seen as an attempt by China to further its influence abroad with infrastructure projects funded by Chinese investments all over the world. The initiative also led to allegations of smaller countries reel-

ing under mounting Chinese debt after Sri Lanka gave its Hambantota port in a debt swap to China in 2017 on a 99-year lease. By early January, 2,951 BRI-linked projects valued at \$3.87 trillion were planned or underway across the world, the Post quoted research and publishing firm Oxford Business Group. Many countries in Africa and Asia have not been able to continue with mega projects, mostly funded by Beijing, because they are struggling to service debts, the report said. In Nigeria, a \$1.5 billion rail project is facing delays because of coronavirus disruptions, while many Chinese funded projects in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Algeria and Egypt have been put on hold or may be delayed as the countries fight to control the spread of COVID-19, it said. Many of the countries that took billions

INDIA HAS PROTESTED TO CHINA OVER THE CPEC AS IT IS BEING LAID THROUGH PAKISTAN-OCCUPIED KASHMIR

SOME ASIAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING MALAYSIA, BANGLADESH, INDONESIA, PAKISTAN, CAMBODIA, AND SRI LANKA HAVE IN THE RECENT PAST EITHER SLAMMED THE BRAKES ON OR REPORTED DELAYS FOR CHINESE-FUNDED PROJECTS

Global nCoV cases exceed 10 million

A COVID-19 vaccine candidate developed by a Beijing unit of China National Biotec Group (CNBG) has shown positive results in early human trials

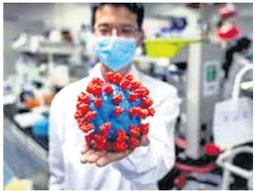
AGENCIES

Beijing, June 28: Worldwide confirmed coronavirus infections hit the 10 million mark Sunday as voters in Poland and France went to the polls for virus-delayed elections.

Vice President Mike Pence called off campaign events in Florida and Arizona after surges in infections prompted worries that the US has lost control of its outbreak.

The figure is roughly double the number of severe influenza illnesses recorded annually, according to the World Health Organisation.

The milestone comes as many hard-hit countries are easing lockdowns while making extensive alterations to work and social life that could last for a year or more until a vaccine is available. Some countries are experiencing a resurgence in infections, leading authorities to partially reinstate lockdowns, in what experts say could be a recurring pattern in the com-



ing months and into 2021. North America, Latin America and Europe each account for around 25% of cases, while Asia and the Middle East have around 11% and 9% respectively, according to the Reuters tally, which uses government reports.

The first cases of the new coronavirus were confirmed on Jan. 10 in Wuhan in China, before infections and fatalities surged in Europe, then the United States, and later Russia.

The pandemic has now entered a new phase, with India and Brazil battling outbreaks of over 10,000 cases a day, putting a major strain on resources.

GODZILLA DUST COULD MAKE THE PANDEMIC EVEN WORSE

REUTERS

New York, June 28: A massive plume of dust whipped up from the Sahara desert will hover over the US Southeast, forecasters say, shrouding the region in a brown haze and raising more health concerns in states where the coronavirus crisis is worsening.



The 3,500-mile-long (5,600 km) cloud, dubbed the "Godzilla dust cloud," traveled 5,000 miles (8,047 km) from North Africa before reaching the region stretching from Florida west into Texas and north into North Carolina through Arkansas, the National Weather Service (NWS) said. "It's a really dry layer of air that contains these very fine dust particulates. It occurs every summer," said NWS mete-

orologist Patrick Blood. "Some of these plumes contain more particles, and right now we expecting a very large plume of dust in the Gulf Coast." This year, the dust is the most dense it has been in a half a century, several meteorologists said earlier this week as it crossed over the Caribbean. The Saharan dust plume will hang over the region until the middle of next week, deteriorating the air quality in Texas, Florida and other states where the number of COVID-19 cases has recently spiked. "There's emerging evidence of potential interactions between air pollution and the risk of COVID, so at this stage we are concerned," said Gregory Wellenius, an professor of environmental health at Boston University's School of Public Health.

JOVIAL MOOD



A boy plays in the lavender fields at Cotswold Lavender near Broadway, England, as virus restrictions are relaxed allowing people to visit the tourist destinations
PTI PHOTO

Protests turn deadly in Louisville

Video footage showed a man firing more than a dozen shots at a park in Louisville, Ky., where protesters had gathered to call for justice for Ms. Taylor, who was killed by the police in March



AGENCIES

Louisville, June 28: Authorities were investigating a fatal shooting Saturday night at a park in downtown Louisville, Kentucky, where demonstrators had gathered to protest the death of Breonna Taylor.

Reports of shots fired at Jefferson Square Park came in around 9 p.m., Louisville Metro police said in a statement, followed by calls that the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department was performing life-saving measures on a male who died at the scene.

Shortly after, police were told of a shooting victim across the street

at the Hall of Justice. That person was hospitalised with non-life-threatening injuries. Officers cleared the park and police "are trying to gather as much information as possible in order to identify all who were involved in the incident," the statement said. No information about arrests, possible suspects and the victims' identities and ages was immediately released. Officials did not immediately release additional information. "I am deeply saddened by the violence that erupted in Jefferson Square Park tonight, where those who have been voicing their concerns have been gathered," Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer said

in a statement. The Saturday night shooting was at least the second during nearly a month of protests in Louisville over Taylor's death. Seven people were wounded May 28 when gunfire erupted near City Hall, prompting a statement from Taylor's mother asking people to demand justice "without hurting each other." Taylor, a 26-year-old Black woman, was killed in her Louisville home in March by police who were serving a no-knock warrant. Kenneth Walker, Taylor's boyfriend, was originally charged with attempted murder after he fired a shot at one of the officers who came into the home.

INDIANS IN US WORRIED ABOUT FINANCIAL STABILITY

30% of the Indian-Americans have had financial impact on their job and internship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, June 28: Two in five Indian-Americans are worried about their long-term financial stability due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but almost all are changing their lifestyle, according to a first-of-its-kind survey about the contagion's impact on the community.

Similarly, 30 per cent of the Indian-Americans have had financial impact on their job and internship, the Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS) said in a report.

According to the report which is based on a recent COVID-19 survey, one in six tested positive or know a family member of the Indian community member who tested positive. However, only a few Indian-Americans

CORONA IMPACT

faced immigration impacts from this pandemic.

"FIIDS conducted the survey of Indo-Americans to find out the impact of the COVID-19 on them and the community's response," said Khanderao Kand, director of FIIDS. This is the first of its kind survey about the impact of the coronavirus pandemic among the Indian-Americans. The US is the worst affected country with over 2.5 million cases and more than 1,25,000 deaths. The COVID-19, which originated in China's Wuhan city in December last year, has also battered the world economy with the International Monetary Fund saying that the global economy is bound to suffer a "severe recession".

GILGIT-BALTISTAN ELECTIONS TO BE HELD AUGUST 18

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, June 28: Pakistan will hold general elections in Gilgit-Baltistan August 18, the government has announced after the country's top court allowed holding of polls in the region, notwithstanding India's strong protest to Islamabad for its efforts to bring "material change" to the territories under its "illegal and forcible" occupation.

The Pakistan Supreme Court April 30 allowed the government to amend a 2018 administrative order to conduct general elections in the region. President Arif Alvi Saturday approved August 18, 2020 as the poll day for general elections to the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) Legislative Assembly, according to a statement from the President House. The Gilgit-Baltistan order of 2018 provided for administrative changes, including authorising the Prime Minister of Pakistan to legislate on an array of subjects. India last month issued a demarche to a senior Pakistani diplomat in New Delhi and lodged a strong protest over the apex court ruling.

UN CHANGES PHRASE AFTER OBJECTION BY INDIA, FIVE OTHERS

AGENCIES

United Nations, June 28: UN General Assembly President Tijjani Muhammad-Bande has changed a phrase in the draft declaration to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations after India along with countries including the UK and the US raised objection to the sentence, understood to be similar to wording used by the Chinese Communist Party.

According to United Nations Association-UK (UNA-UK), a charitable company focusing on UK action at the UN, Britain's acting ambassador Jonathan Allen broke the silence procedure June 24 "on behalf of the members of the 'five eyes' intelligence community - the UK, US, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and India. It said that the six countries objected to one phrase towards the end of the declaration that read - "to realise our shared vision for a common future". The countries wanted this wording to be replaced with "to realise our shared vision for a better future as envisaged in the preamble of the UN Charter." The declaration by the "Heads of State and Government representing the peoples of the world" to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the UN is to be adopted September 21, 2020 and takes note of the COVID19 pandemic that "continues to reverberate around our world."

GLOBAL BRIEFS

Locust swarms enter Nepal

Kathmandu: Nepalese officials have confirmed that swarms of desert locusts, which ravage crops, have entered the country after more than two decades. The locusts were spotted in Nepal's southern plains of Bara, Sarlahi, Parsa and Rupandehi districts Saturday morning, Hari Bahadur KC, spokesperson of the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, told *Efe* news. The government officials, however, have not ascertained the scope of the swarms that have wreaked havoc in 60 countries.



Malawians elect new Prez

Blantyre (Malawi): Lazarus Chakwera has been sworn in as Malawi's new President Sunday after the announcement



the previous night that he had won the southern African country's rerun elections. Chakwera is Malawi's sixth President after winning the historic election held last week, the first time a court-overturned vote in Africa has resulted in the defeat of an incumbent leader.

Poland holds election

Warsaw: Poles voted in a presidential election Sunday that was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic and was taking place amid deep cultural and political divisions in the European Union nation.



President Andrzej Duda, a 48-year-old conservative backed by the nationalist ruling Law and Justice party, was running against 10 other candidates as he sought a second 5-year term. Whether Duda wins or not will determine whether the ruling party keeps its near-monopoly on political power in Poland.



The answer to calls for boycotting Chinese imports lies in making Indian manufacturing much more competitive, deeper and widespread, but people should remember that shunning (Chinese) products may lead to them paying more for goods

RC BHARGAVA | CHAIRMAN, MARUTI SUZUKI INDIA

'AUTO COMPONENT INDUSTRY SHOULD TARGET 5% OF GLOBAL TRADE'

The Indian auto components industry should look at enhancing exports by targeting 5% of global trade, which stands at around \$1.3tn, in next 5 years. To achieve this feat, government's support in terms of favourable policies would be crucial, ACMA India DG Vinnie Mehta said



of the day quote

Developing a strong agri ecosystem by providing access to better marketing avenues for farmers' produce and freeing up the sector from restrictive laws is a key focus area for the government

SANJAY AGARWAL | SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS' WELFARE

I expect the retailers to continue with the momentum they have built for online business during the lockdown and extend to their wider categories in the future to build a truly omni channel business

PINAKIRANJAN MISHRA | PARTNER AND NATIONAL LEADER, CONSUMER PRODUCTS AND RETAIL, EY INDIA

Amazon Pay is already accepted at millions of local shops, we are trying to make customers' buying experience at local shops even more convenient and safe through Smart Stores

MAHENDRA NERURKAR | CEO, AMAZON PAY

SHORT TAKES

Marriott to expand food delivery biz

Mumbai: Leading hotel chain Marriott International, which has seen its business plunge over 90% across its 123 properties since the lockdown, will expand and continue its delivery and take-away business even after the pandemic-induced lockdown and social distancing end, as it does not see normalcy returning anytime soon. The American group runs 123 hotels under 16 brands in the country, offering a little over 24,000 rooms.

'No plans to sell non-core assets'

New Delhi: There are no plans to sell non-core assets, including subsidiaries, in the current financial year, Punjab National Bank managing director SS Mallikarjuna Rao has said. However, the bank intends to sell some of its real estate assets and properties, including its old headquarter building, he said. "We have a lot of real estate assets because of the merger. We are planning to sell a good amount of these assets by the end of the third quarter provided the market is available," he said.

Govt to auction mineral blocks

New Delhi: The government will begin Monday auction five mineral blocks in Gujarat and Karnataka having reserves of 667.2 million tonnes. The development assumes significance in the wake of the Centre asking each state having mineral resources to identify at least five new mining projects for auction with pre-embedded clearance on a pilot basis, with a view to expediting the sale process as well as operationalisation of the blocks.

'Demand to rebound by 2021'

Dubai: Careem, a unit of Uber Technologies, expects ride-hailing demand to recover to pre-pandemic levels "sometime" in 2021, encouraged by a better-than-expected pickup as countries started to ease coronavirus-related curbs. "It's been a tough couple of months," Careem Chief Executive Mudassar Sheikh said. "It's really anyone's guess. We have planned for a recovery (in ride-hailing) sometime next year but...the recovery has begun and it has been faster already than our initial projections."

WB approves \$500mn to boost quality of education

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: The World Bank Sunday said its Board of Executive Directors has approved USD 500 million (about ₹3,700 crore) loan to improve quality and governance of school education in six Indian states.

The board approved a loan for Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS) June 24, 2020, the World Bank said in a statement.

"Some 250 million students (between the age of 6 and 17) in 1.5 million schools, and over 10 million teachers will benefit from the program. The STARS program builds on the long partnership between India and the World Bank (since 1994), for strengthening public school education and to support



the country's goal of providing Education for All," it said.

Prior to STARS, the bank had provided a total assistance of more than USD 3 billion towards this goal at the national level, through the Samagra Shiksha, and in partnership with Odisha and five other states like

Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan, it said. STARS will also help improve learning assessment systems, strengthen classroom instruction and remediation, facilitate school-to-work transition, and strengthen governance and decentralised management. India

FOR A CAUSE

The Board of Executive Directors approved a loan for Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS) June 24, 2020

Prior to STARS, the bank had provided a total assistance of more than \$3 billion towards this goal at the national level in partnership with Odisha and five other states

The multilateral funding agency noted that India has, over the years, made significant strides in improving access to education across the country

recognises the need to significantly improve its learning outcomes to fuel future growth and meet the demands of the labour market, World Bank Country Director in India Junaid Ahmad said. "STARS will support India's response to this challenge by strengthening implementation at the

local level, investing in teacher capacity and ensuring that no child of any background is left behind from the right to education," he said.

Investing more in the early years of education will equip children with the skills required to compete for the jobs of the future, he added. The multilateral funding agency noted that India has, over the years, made significant strides in improving access to education across the country; between 2004-05 and 2018-19, the number of children going to school increased from 219 million to 248 million.

However, the learning outcomes of students across all age groups continue to remain below par: The USD 500 million loan from WB for Reconstruction and Development, has a final maturity of 14.5 years.

Govt again extends deadline to bid for Air India by 2 months

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 28: The government has again extended the deadline to bid for Air India by two months till August 31 as the COVID-19 fallout has disrupted economic activities globally. This is the third time the deadline has been extended. The divestment process for the national carrier was initiated January 27.

Issuing a corrigendum to the Expression of Interest (EoI) for sale of Air India, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) said the deadline has been extended in view of the "request received from the IBs (interested bidders) in view of the prevailing situation arising out of COVID-19." While issuing the EoI in January, the last date for bids was kept at March 17, which was later extended till April 30. This was further extended to June 30, and now till August 31.

Also, the date for intimation to Qualified Interested Bidders (QIBs) has been extended by two months till September 14, the DIPAM said in the corrigendum posted on its website.

"Further changes with respect to



The divestment process for the national carrier was initiated January 27

This is the third time that the deadline has been extended owing to the disruption created by the COVID-19 pandemic

While issuing the EoI in January, the last date for bids was kept at March 17, which was later extended till April 30 before further getting extended to June 30

the Important Dates, if any, will be communicated to the Interested Bidders subsequently," it added.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns have disrupted economic activities globally.

The aviation sector has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, with airlines cancelling flights and announcing pay cuts for employees. The government has already ex-

tended the time given to investors to bid for its entire 52.98 per cent stake in Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) to July 31. The initial deadline was May 2, which was extended till June 13.

After its unsuccessful bid to sell Air India in 2018, the government in January 2020 restarted the divestment process and invited bids for selling 100 per cent equity in the state-owned airline, including Air India's 100 per cent shareholding in AI Express Ltd and 50 per cent stake in Air India SATS Airport Services Private Ltd. In 2018, the government had offered to sell 76 per cent stake in the airline.

Of the airline's total debt of ₹60,074 crore as of March 31, 2019, the buyer would be required to absorb ₹23,266.5 crore, while the rest would be transferred to Air India Assets Holding Ltd (AIAHL), a special purpose vehicle.

For the current fiscal, the Budget has pegged disinvestment proceeds at ₹2.10 lakh crore. This includes ₹1.20 lakh crore from CPSE share sales and ₹90,000 crore from share sales in public sector banks and financial institutions, including LIC.

India to end Central control of gas prices

To boost gas usage, India is expanding infrastructure including building new LNG import plant

REUTERS

New Delhi, June 28: India will gradually end Central controls on gas pricing as it seeks to attract foreign investment and technology to lift local output, Petroleum and Natural Gas minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said.

India, which is a large emitter of greenhouse gases and has multiple gas pricing regimes, aims to raise the share of gas in its energy mix from the current 6.2% to 15% by 2030.

"This is an incentive we are giving to investors to come to India and take advantage of pricing and marketing freedom and produce more and invest more," Pradhan said at the BNEF summit.

To boost gas usage, India is expanding infrastructure including building new liquefied natural gas (LNG) import plants and connecting households with an expanding gas pipe network. New Delhi said recently that no authorisation was needed to set up LNG dispensing facilities for vehicles.

India's top gas importer Petronet LNG said Friday it wants to part-



ner with fuel and gas retailers on LNG stations along highways for long-haul trucks and buses.

Petronet wants to set up 5 LNG stations in the fiscal year ending March 2021, and 300 by 2023. It eventually aims to have 1,000 LNG stations across India, it said on its website.

Meanwhile, Indian Oil Corp, the country's top refiner and fuel retailer, said it wants to start LNG retailing through its fuel pumps.

GAIL (India) Ltd's executive director Rajeev Mathur said his firm is looking for partners to set up LNG dispensing facilities.

Mathur said India's gas demand is expected to rise by 3%-4% between October 2020 and March 2021, after witnessing a huge fall in April-May due to a coronavirus lockdown.

BIZ BUZZ

ICT tariff case: India to block Japan

New Delhi: India will block the requests of Japan and Chinese Taipei for setting up of a dispute settlement panel at the World Trade Organization (WTO) against New Delhi's customs duties on imports of certain information and communications technology (ICT) products, an official said. The



requests of both the countries are scheduled to come up on Monday in the dispute settlement body meeting in Geneva and "we will block it", the official added. According to the trade dispute norms of the WTO, if these countries would come with their requests for second time, the panel will be set up in the case. In May last year, both the countries filed a case against India in the WTO over the import duties imposed on certain electronic goods.

Dvara KGFS facilitates digital banking

Bhubaneswar: Dvara KGFS, a leading NBFC in India, announced transactions worth ₹7 crore achieved since April 19, 2020 through its Aadhar Enabled Payment System (AEPS). It has a strong presence in Odisha and five other states, spread across 48 districts with 297 branches and more than 1 million enrolled customers. Dvara KGFS official said, "We are happy that we were able to provide AEPS service to around 45,000 villagers and facilitate a gross cash withdrawal of more than 7 crore through our 300 odd branches in such a short span of time. Our wealth managers have received a lot of appreciation from the villagers on facilitating this service and we are seeing this as an effective tool which will help us move closer towards our mission of maximising financial well-being for every individual in remote rural India."

RSP bags over 6K tonne of CE-mark plate order for EU

PNN/PTI

Bhubaneswar, June 28: In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, the Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) Sunday said it bagged an order of over 6,000 tonne of special grade plates for supplying to the European market.

RSP a unit of state-run SAIL, will supply CE-marked plates conforming to the European standards, mentioned in a company's statement.

According to RSP's statement, the 'CE' is defined as the European Union's (EU) mandatory conformity marking for regulating goods sold within the European Economic Area.

The 4.3 metre wide new plate mill of RSP is equipped with state-of-the-art technology and produces a wide range of plates with close tolerance to meet stringent international standards.



According to RSP, 'CE' is defined as the EU's mandatory conformity marking for regulating goods sold within the European Economic Area

The steel maker also said plates produced by the mill are utilised in

earth moving equipment, wagon building, railway projects, bridges and highways, nuclear power plants and many other sectors.

The mill has got an approval of DNV-GL (Det Norske Veritas-Bermanischer Lloyd) business assurance to produce CE-marked plates for the European market and has been exporting its products to different countries.

The fresh order has been bagged by the steel plant a few weeks after it completed exports of 60,000 tonne of special grade slab to China and 2,700 tonne of plates to Vietnam, the RSP sources said.

While putting up a tough fight against COVID-19, the RSP is simultaneously making all-out efforts to generate revenue in one of the most sluggish market environments the world has ever seen, the statement said.

Amazon India announces 20K seasonal jobs



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 28: Amazon India Sunday announced that it has opened close to 20,000 seasonal or temporary employment opportunities in its customer service organisation to ensure customers worldwide continue to have a seamless online shopping experience.

The new positions are now open in Hyderabad, Pune, Coimbatore, Noida, Kolkata, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Mangalore, Indore, Bhopal and Lucknow. Most of the positions are part of Amazon's 'Virtual Customer Service' program that provides flexible work-from-home options, the company said in a statement.

"The new associates who will join us in our offices or work from home through our Virtual Customer Service program will play a key role in relentlessly advocating for our customers and raising the bar on their experience," says Akshay Prabhu, Director for Customer Service, Amazon India.

"Over the past few months, we have scaled up to prioritise the safety of our CS associates and continue to serve our customers' needs. These new seasonal positions will provide candidates job security and livelihood during these unprecedented times," he added.

Earlier this year, Amazon had announced that it plans to create 10 lakh new jobs in India by 2025 through continued investments in technology, infrastructure, and its logistics network.

SIDBI aims to help MSMEs tide over COVID-19 crisis



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 28: Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) is setting up 'Swavalamban Crisis Responsive Fund' to support free on boarding of MSMEs on Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS).

Receivables Exchange of India Ltd. (RXIL), M1xchange and Invoicemart are three TReDS platforms which help MSMEs gain access to working capital through invoice discounting via multiple financiers. SIDBI CMD Mohammad Mustafa said, "The government has been taking several steps to strengthen the MSME ecosystem and these vehicles to implement several GoI initiatives towards quick response to COVID-19 fallout.

The present endeavour of setting up Swavalamban Crisis Responsive Fund (SCRF), under Swavalamban Resource Facility, where SIDBI partners with Department for International Development (DFID) UK, is yet another differentiated intervention by the Bank."

SUPER TOP-UP HEALTH PLANS: AN AFFORDABLE AID

As healthcare costs are on a constant rise, planning financial resources towards unanticipated medical costs is absolutely imperative. While, sustaining a few medical expenses from one's own pocket may not hit the bank balance hard, it is notable that a single critical medical condition is well capable of perturbing your finances. With increasing awareness and well contemplated employee benefits, though many are covered under basic retail and group mediclaim health insurances, it is ideal to have double protection to face such exigencies. Typically, the opted sum insured range for basic health insurance policies varies between ₹3-5 lakh. Bearing medical expenses beyond this sum can take a toll on an individual's hard earned sav-

ings. Super top up health insurance plans are an added protection in scenarios when the maximum payout from a basic health policy gets exhausted. Under Super Top Up policies, a customer can choose a specific limit/ deductible amount that a policy holder will have to bear,

before the insurance policy starts paying out during 'claim'. This limit is termed as aggregate deductible in insurance parlance and a customer can opt for the figure depending on the maximum coverage of his or her basic medical policy or the expense one may extract from one's own income.

In a super top up plan, your insurer considers the sum total of all the eligible medical expenses in a given policy period and if this amount crosses the chosen deductible in the policy, you become eligible for a claim payout. Thus, Super Top Up plans are a comprehensive and economical shield against the unforeseen medical costs that may be incurred beyond the cap of a basic health policy.

Super top up health insurance plans are an added protection in scenarios when the maximum payout from a basic health policy gets exhausted

In order to offer maximum coverage, Super Top Up policies can be availed either as an individual or as a floater policy. With this type of policy one can cover self, spouse, dependent children and parents under the same policy and total number of family members covered in one policy can go up to six members.

The entry age criteria for dependent children and parents may vary from one insurer to another. There are a number of benefits that a super top up plan offers besides the regular inpatient, pre and post-hospitalisation expense covers such as aggregate deductibles, road and optional air ambulance covers, cover for organ donor expenses and free medical check-ups. There are plans available in the market with sum in-

sured ranging from ₹3 lakh to ₹50 lakh with the aggregate deductibles options from ₹2 lakh to ₹10 lakh. Waiting period for pre-existing diseases remains to be there in the Super Top Up plans.

However, few insurers have now started introducing a much shorter waiting period such as 12 months for pre-existing diseases.

Opting for affordable super top up plans can be a good way of keeping your finances in good health, as they come at a less premium and shield you during the critical medical needs. Waiting for a bad experience to teach you may not be wise, when a stitch in time can save you nine.

(The writer is the Chief Technical Officer of Bajaj Allianz General Insurance)

SHORT TAKES

Exposure needed

New Delhi: Former Australia and Jamshedpur FC striker Tim Cahill believes Indian football's young talents can flourish with systematic exposure at the top level. Cahill ended his career in the 2018-19 season after a stint at Jamshedpur FC. "Indian talents just need more games, get them playing all the time and competing and when they go into international fixtures you (will) see that they can handle the pressure," Cahill was quoted as saying by the Asian Football Federation website. The 40-year-old said India is moving towards the right direction to achieve greater heights. "The ISL and the leagues that are being played with their infrastructure are great. The only thing that the game needs more than anything is unity," added Cahill.

Sharp eye

Sydney: Former Australian all-rounder Tom Moody has said that wicket-keeping great Rod Marsh had earmarked Ricky Ponting for greatness right from the latter's teenage years. "Ponting was part of the Australian Academy even before he played a first-class game. Marsh was head of the academy. He told me that he had never seen anyone pick length as quickly as Ponting did," Moody said during a show on the ICC website. "This was when Ponting was a 16-year-old kid and Marsh had said he is going to be a superstar," Moody added. Ponting became Australia's all time highest run scorer in ODIs and Tests. He also won three consecutive World Cup titles and was captain in two of the editions.

Noble gesture

Paris: Marseille's club president Jacques-Henri Eyraud has praised playmaker Dimitri Payet for accepting a significant pay cut when signing a new two-year deal until 2024. Eyraud said Payet will slash his reported monthly salary of 5,00,000 euros (USD 5,61,000) in half next season, then by 30 per cent the following season and 40-60 per cent for the two extra years on his new contract. "Dimitri came to see me to tell me that he wants to be 'Marseille for life'. I really liked hearing these words," Eyraud said. "Saying you love the club is all well and good, showing it is better. I really want to be a part of Marseille and help the club grow," Payet said.

Rising star

Mumbai: Maharashtra's rising racing star Aashi Hanspal has been shortlisted for FIA's ambitious 'Girls on Track-Rising Stars Project', the FIMSC announced here Sunday. Thirteen-year-old Aashi has been selected along with 19 others in the age group of 12-16 out of 70 entries from five continents. As the first step, she will take part in the 'aShoot Out' at the Paul Ricard Circuit in France October 12 and 13. "Should you be successful, you will join our training camps, and potentially have the opportunity to become (Team Ferrari's) first ever female driver, Michele Mouton, president of the FIA Women in Motorsport Commission, said in her letter to Aashi.

Unrealistic schedule

Madrid: World No. 2 Rafael Nadal's uncle and former coach Toni Nadal has criticised the ATP for hurriedly arranging schedules. He said Rafa is unsure about which tournament to play in. The ATP has announced that the US Open and French Open will be played within four weeks of each other. Toni said it is unfair on veterans like Rafa and Novak Djokovic. Incidentally Rafa is the defending champion in both the events. "The schedule is unrealistic, especially for veteran players, who cannot compete for so many weeks in a row," Toni said during a TV show. "I think it is a bit ugly what the ATP has done. This decision is totally against players like Rafa and Novak (Djokovic). "With everything they have done for tennis for years, I am surprised that they do this," Toni added.

IAGO ASPAS' LATE STRIKE FORCES CATALAN GIANTS TO DROP POINTS IN 2-2 DRAW

Barca title hopes dented again

AGENCIES

Vigo (Spain), June 28: Spain striker Iago Aspas dealt a fresh blow to Barcelona's La Liga title hopes by striking a late free-kick to snatch a 2-2 draw for Celta Vigo here Saturday at home to the Catalans as Quique Setien's side twice threw away the lead in a thrilling match.

The draw put Barcelona back on top of the table on 69 points after 32 games but Real Madrid, on 68, can go two points clear at the summit if they beat Espanyol away from home Sunday. Incidentally Real have played a game less.

Luis Suarez headed Barca in front in the 20th minute thanks to a piece of ingenuity from Lionel Messi, who looked certain to fire at goal from a free-kick but instead lofted the ball towards his Uruguayan strike partner.

Russia striker Fedor Smolov equalised for Celta early in the second half, knocking in a pass from Okay Yokuslu to complete a quick counter-attack after Barca's Ivan Rakitic had given the ball away.

But Suarez restored Barca's lead in the 67th minute after combining again with Messi, swivelling to fire into the bottom corner.

The second goal looked to have averted a second consecutive away draw for Barca after last week's goalless stalemate at Sevilla. However, Aspas won a late free-kick after falling over the outstretched legs of Gerard Pique.

Celta's talismanic striker made the late opportunity count by sending a low drive around the wall and

into the near bottom corner, flummoxing Barca goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen. Celta should have

won the game in added time when Nolito arrived at the far post with the goal gaping, but instead of tapping into the net his shot went straight at Ter Stegen.

The draw left Suarez, who scored both Barcelona goals, fuming. "I'm happy to have

been able to help the team with my goals but overall I'm left with sensations of anger and frustration," Suarez said.

"We feel as though we have dropped two points and there are many things we need to improve. We are giving away a lot of points away from home which we didn't used to do in previous seasons," he added.

Barcelona's next match is a testing home fixture against third-place Atletico Madrid. Real have a slightly more comfortable run-in, with their hardest match looking like being an away game against Athletic Bilbao.

"We're feeling very negative because we have lost two more points in the fight for the title," Suarez asserted.



Luis Suarez sets off in celebration Saturday after scoring Barcelona's opening goal against Celta Vigo

I am happy to have scored goals for my team, but overall I am angry and frustrated at the result

LUIS SUAREZ

City to honour Klopp's Liverpool

AGENCIES

London, June 28: Manchester City will give newly crowned Premier League champions Liverpool a guard of honour when the teams meet Thursday at the Etihad Stadium.

This information was given Sunday by City manager Pep Guardiola.

Liverpool ended their 30-year wait for a top-flight title when last season's champions City were beaten 1-2 by Chelsea last week. It handed the Merseyside club an unassailable 23-point lead at the top of the table.

Liverpool's first match since being confirmed as champions is at City's stadium and Guardiola said his players would pay tribute to Jurgen Klopp's title-winning side.

"We are going to do the guard of honour of course," Guardiola said. "We will greet Liverpool, when they come to our house, in an incredible way. We are going to do it because they deserve it," Guardiola added.

The 49-year-old stated that he was already looking forward to helping City come back stronger

next season. "In sport you have to live in the future," Guardiola said. "Never can you have one eye on what you have done. Never forget that we are an incredible club and organization and what you have to do is learn. I think we know the reason why we suffered this season and we are going to try to solve it for next season," he signed off.

Meanwhile Klopp has said his main focus is to ensure the squad that delivered the title is not broken up in the near future.

Klopp, who took charge of Liverpool in 2015, has overseen a period of sustained dominance, delivering the Champions League last season and the Premier League title this year.

"I cannot promise we will dominate football now, nor do I know if it is time to talk about major upheavals," he was quoted as saying by German newspaper 'Bild'. "But I know our goal is to keep the team together. It would help in setting the pace every season. I am a person who believes in retaining players," Klopp added.

I know what the deficiencies were this season for which we suffered. We will try to overcome those faults next time

PEP GUARDIOLA

Maguire fires United into FA Cup semifinals

AGENCIES

Manchester, June 28: Captain Harry Maguire fired Manchester United into the semifinals of the FA Cup with a winner deep into extra-time Saturday against 10-man Norwich City at the Carrow Road ground.

The game looked to be heading for a penalty shootout after Norwich, who had Timm Klose sent off in the 89th minute, defended superbly against constant pressure from Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side before Maguire's goal two minutes from the end, ended their hopes.

The win extended United's

unbeaten run in all competitions to 14 matches. It also secured a 30th appearance in the last four of the FA Cup for the club.

"It wasn't a spectacle, we didn't threaten enough or create enough chances," said Solskjaer. "But I am delighted we are into the last four and it was a good workout, we got some minutes for a lot of players. We are through and that is what counts in the Cup," said the Norwegian.

After a low-key first half, the Red Devils went ahead in the 51st minute when Juan Mata flicked on a cross from Luke Shaw and Nigerian striker Odion Ighalo did well to hook the falling

ball home. But Norwich stuck to their task and drew level through a sweetly struck long-range drive from Todd Cantwell, the winger drilling into the bottom corner from 25 yards out with 15 minutes remaining.

Solskjaer threw on Paul Pogba and Nemanja Matic as United looked to avoid extra-time. However, the game went into the extended period. It was one-way traffic in extra-time but Norwich's defence did well.

But with Norwich agonisingly close to the shootout, Maguire was able to strike a loose ball after a scramble in the box.



CRUCIAL STRIKE: Harry Maguire (No. 5) dinks the ball home to get the crucial winner for Manchester United against Norwich City in their FA Cup encounter, Saturday

FORMER LEFT-ARM PACER EXPLAINS HOW DHONI EVOLVED AS A SKIPPER

MSD's trust for bowlers grew slowly: Irfan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 28: Former India pacer Irfan Pathan has revealed that World Cup-winning ex-skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni liked to control his bowlers when he started his captaincy stint back in 2007. However, he started trusting them by 2013, a phase during which he also became a calmer leader.

The 35-year-old Pathan played under Dhoni as part of both the 2007 T20 World Cup-winning team and the 2013 Champions Trophy-clinching side. He said the years, as they went by changed Dhoni the captain in more ways than one.

"In 2007, it was the first time and you understand that when you are given a big responsibility of leading a team, you get excited," Pathan said on a TV show when asked how Dhoni changed as a captain between 2007 and 2013.

"The team meetings were always small though, both in 2007 and 2013 during Champions Trophy. Most meetings lasted just five minutes," added the bowler, who announced his retirement from all forms of cricket earlier this year.

Pathan also talked about the one



Irfan Pathan (left) and Mahendra Singh Dhoni

change that he noticed in Dhoni as he evolved as a captain. "When young Mahendra Singh Dhoni became a captain in 2007, he used to run from the wicket-keeping end to the bowler in excitement and try to control the bowler as well," Pathan informed.

"By 2013, he was letting the bowler control themselves rather he controlling them. He understood that and he was very calm and in con-

trol in the 2013 Champions Trophy," added the bowling all-rounder.

Dhoni has not played any cricket since India's semifinal exit from the ODI World Cup last year: Pathan said by 2013, Dhoni had started employing the spinners in crunch situations to win matches. "He (Dhoni) slowly grew in experience. By 2013, he was very clear that in crucial time he needs to get his spinners in to play to win the games," Pathan said.

'Dressing room full of thinkers'

Johannesburg: A vital cog in the Chennai Super Kings (CSK) wheel, the seasoned Faf du Plessis has said the successful IPL outfit's dressing room comprises many 'thinking cricketers'. One of them is their legendary skipper skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni. "With Chennai, my experience there has been that of a calm dressing room. There are a lot of thinking cricketers in the room," Du Plessis said. "There is a confidence in the CSK dressing room that someone will pull the team through. On each occasion, it is someone different. The guys share the load in winning games, it is a confidence factor by doing it again and again," Du Plessis added. CSK won the IPL trophy in 2010, 2011 and 2018 with Dhoni as skipper.

WINDIES SKIPPER WANTS RACISM OUT OF SPORTS

Holder advocates harsh punishment for racists

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Manchester, June 28: West Indies skipper Jason Holder has called for strict action against players found guilty of making racist comments. He has said that they should be penalised just like dope offenders and match-fixers.

"I don't think the penalty for doping or corruption should be any different for racism," Holder told BBC Sport. "If we've got issues within our sport, we must deal with them equally."

According to ICC rules, a player can be banned for life for on-pitch racist abuse if he breaches the anti-racism code three times. A first offence results in four to eight suspension points. Two suspension points equate to a ban for one Test or two one-day internationals or two T20 international matches.

Holder said anti-racism feature can be introduced where players will be briefed about the issue ahead of each series.

"We have anti-doping briefings

There's no place for racism in sport. Racists should be punished the same way dopers and match-fixers are. The action should be the same

JASON HOLDER

and anti-corruption briefings. Maybe we should have an anti-racism feature before we start a series," he said. "My message is more education needs to go around it. I've not experience any racial abuse first hand but have heard or seen a few things around it. It's something you just can't stand for," added Holder.

The death of African-American George Floyd at the hands of a white police officer has triggered global outrage. The 'Black Lives Matter' movement has grown by the day. Holder had earlier said that the West Indies team is firmly behind the 'Black Lives Matter' movement.

West Indies begin their three-Test campaign against England with the first starting July 8.

INDIAN PACE BOWLER AGAINST TINKERING OF RULES TO BRING IN MORE SPECTATORS IN WOMEN'S CRICKET

Not innovations, bring investments, Pandey tells ICC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

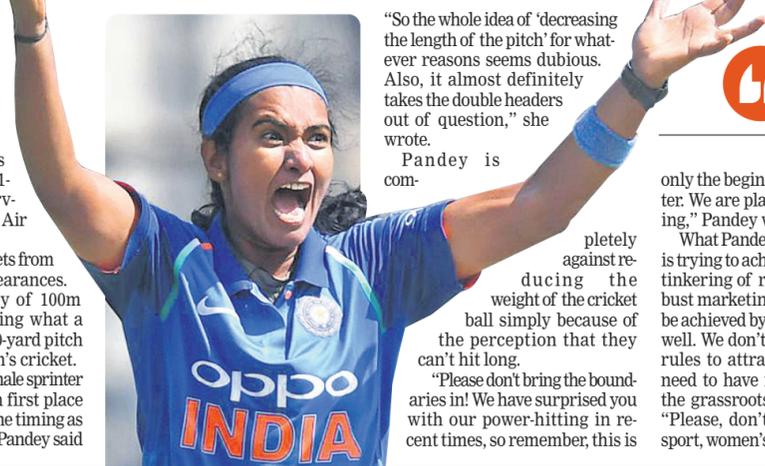
New Delhi, June 28: Women's cricket needs better marketing and investment to grow, and not 'dubious' innovations like a shorter pitch or smaller boundaries, according to India pace bowler Shikha Pandey. She said she finds suggestions such as use of smaller balls and shorter pitches to make women's game appealing to be 'superfluous'. Pandey urged the ICC 'not to tinker' with rules to attract more audience.

Pandey, one of India's finest new ball bowlers after Jhulan Goswami, shared a series of tweets in the wake of a recent ICC webinar featuring New Zealand captain Sophie Devine and India's rising star Jemimah Rodrigues where some of the suggestions were floated.

"I have been reading/hearing a lot about the changes being suggested to help grow women's cricket make it a more attractive product. I personally feel most of the suggestions to be superfluous," 31-year-old Pandey, a serving officer of the Indian Air Force (IAF), wrote.

Pandey has 113 wickets from 104 international appearances. She drew the analogy of 100m sprints while describing what a light weight ball and 20-yard pitch would mean for women's cricket.

"An Olympic 100m female sprinter doesn't run 80m to win first place medal and clock the same timing as her male counterpart," Pandey said



"So the whole idea of 'decreasing the length of the pitch' for whatever reasons seems dubious. Also, it almost definitely takes the double headers out of question," she wrote.

Pandey is com-

pletely against reducing the weight of the cricket ball simply because of the perception that they can't hit long.

"Please don't bring the boundaries in! We have surprised you with our power-hitting in recent times, so remember, this is

Women's cricket is completely different from that of men. You have to see it from a different perspective. Women's cricket needs investments, not tinkering of rules

SIKHA PANDEY

only the beginning, we will get better. We are players, who are evolving," Pandey wrote.

What Pandey finds objectionable is trying to achieve growth through tinkering of rules rather than robust marketing. "Growth can also be achieved by marketing the sport well. We don't have to tinker with rules to attract an audience. We need to have more investment at the grassroots," asserted Pandey.

"Please, don't compare women's sport, women's cricket, in this case,

with men's sport," she added.

She took one game as an example. "We need to see it as a different sport altogether... A sport that 86,174 spectators turned up to watch March 8, 2020 and several million watched live on their television sets," Pandey said, referring to their T20 World Cup final against Australia at the MCG.

"They saw something special in us, and here's hoping you do too," Pandey concluded with a hastag 'champions in our own rights'.