



## MISSING ZEAL

Actor Bipasha Basu says she is missing the energy and exuberance to perform before live audience

LEISURE P2



## 161-FT TALL RAM TEMPLE

Authorities propose a 161-feet Ram temple along with five domes instead of three

TWO STATES P7



## FLOOD HAVOC

Nearly four million people in Assam and Nepal have been displaced by heavy flooding

INTERNATIONAL P10

# Elderly lady to cough up tax on ₹196cr in Swiss account

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, July 19:** The Income Tax tribunal has directed a woman in her 80s to pay tax and penalties on undisclosed income of ₹196 crore in a Swiss bank account.

According to a report, the Income-Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT)'s Mumbai bench confirmed the additional amount in the Swiss account of Renu T Tharani.

The HSBC Geneva account is in the name of Cayman Islands-based GWU Investments that transferred the funds to the Tharani Family Trust.

Renu Tharani is the sole discretionary-beneficiary of the account that was opened in 2004.

Usually, beneficiaries of overseas trusts deny foreign bank accounts, officials told the media. This aside, they often change their status to "non-resident", with a view to avoid paying



tax on their overseas income. According to the report, the inves-

tigating wing of the I-T department found that Tharani had not disclosed the Swiss bank account in her I-T returns for 2005-06.

In an affidavit, Tharani claimed that she is a non-resident. She also denied having a bank account in HSBC Geneva, and being a shareholder or director at GWU Investments.

In 2005-06, Tharani had given a Bangalore address in her I-T returns and declared an income of ₹1.7 lakh.

The ITAT bench said even after Tharani updated her status to "non-resident", it is unlikely that she would have accumulated ₹196 crore in the short duration of just a year.

ITAT further said that based on her previously declared income, it would take her 11,500 years to earn ₹196 crore.

The hearing in the case was concluded January 18, 2020 but the order was pronounced on July 16 in view of COVID-19 lockdown in Mumbai.

# Women easy targets of cyber criminals in state

CYBER CRIME AGAINST WOMEN HAS DOUBLED DURING COVID-RELATED SHUTDOWN

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** Cases of violence against women has witnessed an alarming rise in the state during the COVID-induced lockdown, a report said.

Aside from domestic violence, rape and torture, there have been several cases of cyber crime against women.

As people are locked inside their homes, they are prone to spending most of their time on browsing Internet. Cyber criminals are taking advantage of the situation, especially targeting unsuspecting women.

As of now, 54 cases of cyber crime targeting women have been filed with the National Commission for Women in April, while the number of such cases was 37 in March and 21 in February from across the country.

In Odisha, over 10 such cases have come to the fore. The victims are generally famous people like film and TV actresses. As per the NCW data, during the lockdown, cyber crime against woman has doubled. While few such cases are filed at cyber crime cells, police stations and the NCW, most of



them go unreported.

In most instances such as trolling or harassment on social media, obscene pictures and viral videos, blackmailing, account hacking, online threat and even fraud, women usually maintain a silence.

States like Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are in the forefront in dealing with such crimes,

while Odisha lags behind. Owing to this, cyber crimes against women are increasing in the state.

In fact, cyber crime against women has become a new trend now. Incidents like creating fake IDs, using photos of women; cyber bullying, online stalking has been a major challenge for the police these days.

According to the National Crime

## HARD FACTS

IN ODISHA, OVER 10 CASES OF CYBER CRIMES HAVE COME TO THE FORE AND THE VICTIMS ARE GENERALLY FAMOUS PEOPLE LIKE FILM AND TV ACTRESSES

STATES LIKE HARYANA, GUJARAT, MADHYA PRADESH AND RAJASTHAN ARE IN THE FOREFRONT IN DEALING WITH SUCH CRIMES, WHILE ODISHA LAGS BEHIND

IT EXPERT BANDANA SHARMA OBSERVED IF WOMEN ARE MADE AWARE OF THESE THREATS, INCIDENTS OF CYBER CRIME CAN BE REDUCED

Of these, 208 cases were related to cyber crime against women, while 172 cases involved uploading obscene pictures of women.

In 2017, the state Crime Branch recorded 824 such cases and 184 of them were related to obscene pictures and videos of women.

The number has been increasing every year.

In 2017, a total of 21,796 cases of cyber crime were registered. Of these cases, 19.5 per cent cases were related to women.

In some cases, emails appearing like COVID-related guidelines are sent to emails of woman. Once they click on the links, they are asked for personal. Assuming that the emails are from the government, women easily pass on their personal information. Cyber criminals use the data to manipulate things.

IT expert Bandana Sharma observed that if women are made aware of these threats, incidents of cyber crime can be reduced. They need to be made aware of how to safely use digital media, use strong pass words, be aware of suspected links, fake videos and emails to reduce cyber crime, she added.

Record Bureau (NCRB), Odisha is the second state after Assam in the country in terms of increase in cyber crime against women.

NCRB report-2018 says that the state has recorded 843 cyber crime cases - 506 related to fraud and 224 related to financial irregularities.

# Lockdown imposed in Gajapati, Bhadrak

Several areas of the two districts will be under lockdown from July 20-31

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** Close on the heels of a 14-day lockdown in four districts - Khurda, Cuttack, Ganjam and Jajpur from Saturday, the district authorities of Gajapati and Bhadrak Sunday announced COVID-linked lockdown in specific areas of the two districts from July 20 to 31.

The move comes in the wake of the spiraling rise in COVID cases in these two coastal districts. So far, Gajapati reported 703 confirmed cases of the viral disease and three COVID deaths, while the tally in Bhadrak rose to 322 cases with one death.

Gajapati and Bhadrak Collectors both issued separate notifications in this regard Sunday and relayed the importance of the lockdown in such conditions.

In Gajapati district, the lockdown has been imposed in all the block headquar-

## Plasma therapy shows positive results in state

**BHUBANESWAR:** Odisha government's move to introduce plasma therapy for the critical COVID-19 patients in the state seems to have worked well. The government Sunday claimed that four of the six patients who have been administered plasma therapy in the state have moved out of oxygen support and are on the path of recovery. The other two patients are also doing well and are expected to move out of oxygen support in the next few days.

ters and Urban Local Bodies. In Bhadrak district, the lockdown has been partially imposed in Bhadrak Municipality and Dhamnagar Notified Area Council (NAC).

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



The bridge is ready, Sir. Please inaugurate it before it collapses due to bad weather!

## Brown sugar worth ₹3 crore seized

**Bhubaneswar:** The Odisha Police seized brown sugar worth over ₹3 crore in Mayurbhanj district Sunday and arrested a drug peddler in this connection, a senior officer said. Acting on a tip-off, a team of the Special Task Force (STF) conducted a search operation in Kuliiana area and recovered around 3.28 kg of brown sugar from a dealer, Additional Director General (ADG), Crime Branch, Soumendhra Priyadarshi said.

## TikTok may shift HQs to London

**London:** TikTok has been in discussions with the UK government over the past few months to locate its headquarters in London, a source familiar with the matter said, as part of a strategy to distance itself from its Chinese ownership. London is among one of several locations the company is considering, but no decisions have been made, the source said. It was not immediately clear what other locations are under consideration.

# Indian national injured in firing by Nepal police

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kishanganj (Bihar), July 19:** An Indian national has been injured in firing by the Nepal Armed Police Force (NAPF) in the 'no man's land' on the Indo-Nepal border in Bihar's Kishanganj district, a senior police officer said Sunday.

The incident occurred around 9:30 pm Saturday near pillar number 152 when Jitendra Kumar Singh and three others had gone there to bring back their cattle that had strayed into the 'no man's land', Superintendent of Police Kumar Ashish said. The victim is a resident of Mafia Tola village under Patehgar police station of the district.

The family members rushed the injured man, who received a bullet injury on his left arm, to Kishanganj sadar hospital from where doctors referred him to Purnea for better treatment.

The SP said police and Sashastra Seema Bal, the Indian border guarding force deployed on the Indo-Nepal border, are probing the matter.

The SSBs 12th battalion

Commandant Lalit Kumar said that Nepal Armed Police Force opened fire on the suspicion that they were cattle smugglers.

Entering the "no man's land" is prohibited during the lockdown, he said, adding the Nepalese force opened fire following an altercation. The Nepalese personnel fired four rounds.

On June 12, an Indian national was killed while two others were injured in firing by the NAPF on Indo-Nepal border near Lalbandi Janki Nagar village in Bihar's Sitamarhi district.

The incidents have occurred in the midst of a raging boundary row between the two countries, with India sternly asking Nepal not to resort to any "artificial enlargement" of its territorial claims after Kathmandu recently released a new political map laying claim over Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura. New Delhi maintains that these are part of Uttarakhand, while Kathmandu, in its recent map, has shown them as part of Western Nepal.

## RECKLESS BUYERS



People through the Badagada meat market in Bhubaneswar on the second day of the 14-day lockdown Sunday throwing all social distancing norms to the wind

# 'Virus spread may spike in monsoon, winter'

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** A study conducted jointly by researchers at IIT-Bhubaneswar and the AIIMS here has shown that the spread of COVID-19 may pick up pace during peak monsoon and winter with a fall in the mercury.

The rainfall, decrease in temperatures and cooling of the atmosphere coupled with progression towards winter may

environmentally favour the spread of COVID-19 in the country, according to the study led by V Vinoj, Assistant Professor of the School of Earth, Ocean and Climatic Sciences at IIT-Bhubaneswar.

The report titled "COVID-19 spread in India and its dependence on temperature and relative humidity" took into account the pattern of the coronavirus outbreak and the number of such cases in 28 states between April and June.

The study revealed that the rise in temperatures leads to a decline in the transmission of the virus, Vinoj said.

"The study which is in its pre-print stage, shows that the temperature and relative humidity have a significant impact on the disease growth rate and doubling time."

"It suggests that a one-degree-Celsius rise in temperature leads to a 0.99 per cent decrease in cases and increases the doubling time

by 1.13 days, implying a slowdown of the virus spread," he told PTI.

The study also found that an increase in relative humidity tends to decrease the growth rate and doubling time of coronavirus cases by 1.18 days. The researchers, however, said since the study was not conducted during the period of high humidity starting from the monsoon and the onset of winter, more research needs to be undertaken to establish its exact impact.

# Nagpur Cong VP works as watchman to make ends meet

Once a proud City Father - today he is compelled to work as a night watchman outside the very same Nagpur Investment Trust building of which he was once the chairman



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Nagpur, July 19:** This is one dedicated and honest politician from Nagpur who seems to have missed the attention of the likes of Sharad Pawar and Rahul Gandhi or even Shiv Sena and BJP.

The soft-spoken leader is Nagpur Congress vice-president Deorao Tijare - once a proud City Father - who is today compelled to work as a night watchman outside the very same Nagpur Investment Trust building of which he was once the chairman! A former leader of Congress(S), Tijare, 72, was elected as a Municipal Corporator in 1985

and again in 2002 as a Nationalist Congress Party candidate - both parties led by Pawar.

In 1991, seeing his capabilities, the party rewarded him with the coveted post of chairman of NMC's Standing Committee, which is virtually the key to the city's finances, and he also headed the NIT.

"The doors of the NIT, which once were opened by someone else, today I stand on guard there... My salary is around ₹7,000 a month and I am doing it to support my family," Tijare told this news agency without a tinge of regret in his voice.

Around a decade ago, when his 'style' of leadership apparently be-

came out-of-sync with the modern-day 'politics of economics', Tijare even became a realty broker and earned commission with which he tended to his home fires.

But in the past five-six years, with the property markets on a downswing, the BA graduate from University of Nagpur had no options but grab the job of a watchman, doing nightshift duties in the very city he once lorded over as a City Father. He recalled the days when he was the NMC corporator from Shanti Nagar and took home an honorarium of ₹500 per month, and in his second term it was hiked to ₹3,000. Tijare had thrown his lot behind the former

Congress strongman and 5-time MP and 3-time MLC Datta Meghe, currently in the BJP, and considers him as his "political mentor".

"I remained with him till he joined the BJP... I have seen many of my other erstwhile colleagues making it big in the party or government over the years," he added without a hint of remorse.

In the 1980s, Tijare remembered how excited he would be when Pawar visited the state's second capital.

"I would hire a bicycle and ride down some 20 km to the Nagpur Airport to receive our leader, along with some other activists... Those were the days when people and val-

ues mattered in politics, now things have changed and everything seems commercialised," he smiled.

A far cry from today, when even ordinary party activists at the village level zoom around in expensive or imported vehicles to receive the local legislators or parliamentarians!

His family - comprising a dotting wife, Shubhangi, daughters Rajani Pundalik Landge (married), Prachi studying at the Nagpur Government Polytechnic, besides a son Dnyanesh - in his TYBCom at GS College of Commerce and Economics - is not only proud of him, but considers him a shining example of how people in public life should serve the people.

**WEATHER**

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	35.2°C	35.0°C
TEMP MIN	27.3°C	25.5°C
Humidity	74%	98%
Rainfall	NIL	19.0mm

Forecast: Light rain likely



## WHEN BLANCHETT WAS MISTAKEN FOR UPTON

Hollywood star Cate Blanchett, wife of playwright Andrew Upton, says she was mistaken for actress Kate Upton because of her marital surname. This happened when her sons went to school and the students thought she was the model.

## AMERICAN MUSIC AWARDS TO BE HELD NOVEMBER 22

The 2020 edition of the American Music Awards will take place November 22. It is unclear if an audience will be present or not. But the show promises to feature many performances and celebrate the top artistes across multiple genres, reports *variety.com*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You have ideas aplenty! And you want to roll them out to anyone who will hear them. You are also in a mood to love and give. Are you thinking of taking your grandmother to the beauty parlour for a makeover? Ganesh approves.

**TAURUS**  
You will want to be in control today and this could lead to verbal skirmish and resentment, says Ganesh. Some task might baffle you enough to drive you to your wit's end this afternoon.

**GEMINI**  
There are indications that your aggressive spirit and antagonistic trait will come to the fore today, says Ganesh. This may have a negative effect, but today you can even get away with murder! You will, in fact, get much-awaited good news at the workplace.

**CANCER**  
Today, you will feel blessed. And blessed you are, indeed. You will have the proverbial Midas touch, albeit with a slight difference: you will not touch the people you love and turn them to gold. You will just touch their heart and make them happier.

**LEO**  
The last you remember your soul mate was not a cross between Marquis de Sade and a Chinese politician, so it might be a little unnerving for you to come to terms with the authoritarian and dominating side of your partner, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Share thoughts, concepts and ideas with people. You may get new perspectives, says Ganesh. Don't let any opportunity pass to make your loved one feel special. Ganesh predicts you might seek the counsel of friends on professional and ethical issues.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh's got a feeling that today is going to be a good day for you, as you go ahead and indulge yourself and the ones around you. Chances are that you may shop till you drop, and spend a sizeable amount buying goodies for your loved ones later in the evening. In matters of business, Ganesh foresees you displaying your maturity, and setting an example for others in the team.

**SCORPIO**  
Self-improvement is on your mind today. Self-employed people should expect good profits in business. Expenditure may be more at work today. At the end of the day, the cocktail of work and family will be a heady, pleasing mixture, says Ganesh.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Investments for the future, especially for your children, should be made today, advises Ganesh. Work extra hard to clear up tasks you have been putting off for some time now. Romance is stirring, so take a break from your usual routing to enjoy its sweet smell.

**CAPRICORN**  
Various issues may perturb you, making you feel like it may not be a very fulfilling day. But at work, fortune will be biased towards you and will bring all the luck you need to excel in the work you may have undertaken, says Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
Hurry, splash on some Giorgio or curl your tresses! The spotlight is on you today, and you don't want a drab work jacket to take away the shine. You remain brilliant, both on the personal and professional fronts.

**PISCES**  
Your emotions are likely to rule you today. Expenses, which will cause you to dip into your savings, are indicated. Evening should see you build up an amazing connection with a special someone, says Ganesh.



## RAJAT MUKHERJEE BREATHES HIS LAST

**Mumbai:** Filmmaker Rajat Mukherjee, known for directing films like *Pyaar Tune Kya Kiyaa*, *Road* and *Love In Nepal* passed away Sunday. Actor Manoj Bajpayee confirmed the news on social media.

Manoj took to his verified account on Twitter, where he shared that Rajat Mukherjee was in a 'long battle with illness'. "My friend and director of *Road*, Rajat Mukherjee passed away in the early hours today in Jaipur after a long battle with illness!! Rest in peace Rajat! Still can't believe that we will never meet or discuss our work ever again. Khush reh jaha bhi reh (be happy wherever you are)," wrote the actor. Filmmaker Anubhav Sinha took to his verified Twitter account to express his condolence. He also shared that Rajat Mukherjee was 'dealing with multiple health situations'. Filmmaker Hansal Mehta wrote on his official Twitter account: "Just got news about the passing away of a dear friend. Many meals, many bottles of Old Monk consumed. Many more to consume in another world. Will miss you dear friend."

# Bipasha misses performing before live audience

**Mumbai:** Actress Bipasha Basu says she is missing the energy and exuberance of performing in front of a live audience.

Bipasha took to her verified Instagram account, where she shared a throwback picture of herself performing on stage. She said she cannot wait for it to happen soon.

"Miss the energy and exuberance of performing in front of a live audience... can't wait for it to happen again soon. This picture is from one of my most memorable performances at #iffaawards. Grooving to #DumMaaroDum #throwback," she wrote alongside the image.

Bipasha's husband and actor Karan Singh Grover took to the comment section from his verified Instagram account and dropped some love emojis. The actress recently went down memory lane and recalled shooting for her 2006 release, *Corporate*, which turned 14.

Bipasha and Karan, who worked together in the film *Alone*, tied the knot in April 2015.

On the work front, the two will next be seen sharing screen space in the upcoming film *Aadat*. IANS



## Simi opens up on 'conspiracy' to end her career

**Mumbai:** Veteran actress Simi Garewal says a 'powerful' person had viciously tried to destroy her career, but she stayed silent. She got encouragement to open up about her own experience after actress Kangana Ranaut made sensational statements following the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. "I applaud #KanganaRanaut who is braver & bolder than I am. Only I know how a 'powerful' person has viciously tried to destroy my career. I stayed silent. Because I am not so brave... @KanganaOfficial," Simi, popular for starring in films like *Mera Naam Joker* and *Karz*, tweeted. "I don't know what all of you felt after watching #KanganaSpeaksToArnaab... but it has left me quite depressed.. I'm distraught at what #SushantSingRajput endured... and also what many 'outsiders' go through in Bollywood.. it must change!", she added. Simi feels that Sushant's death maybe the "harbinger of an awakening in Bollywood". IANS

### PROMOTION OF TRADITIONAL ARTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

## 'Indian classical music heals, generates hope'

*Students connecting online from China to India, Bahrain, the UK, Germany, Canada and the US learn dance forms such as Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Odissi at the centre*

Indian classical music has been perceived as meditative music. It is not just for entertainment but for self- upliftment as well. Moreover, practising Indian classical music or dance helps in the development of the brain," states Sikidar, who has won the NRI (Non-resident Indian) of the Year award for 2018.

As per the musician, the idea is to learn these beautiful Indian art forms in the safety of your own home, as people are mostly confined within their four walls due to the pandemic. There are more than 200 families from all over the world who are taking live e-lessons via Microsoft Teams and Zoom with Malhaar gurus.

The centre has students of all ages connecting online from China to India, Bahrain, UK, Germany, Canada and the US learning traditional art forms and taking lessons in Indian classical vocal (Hindustani and Carnatic), devotional music and popular Hindi film melodies. In Indian classical dance forms, students are learning Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Odissi.

Elaborating how the e-learning module is different from classes-as-usual at Malhaar; he said that both physical and virtual lessons have their own advantages.

"In the new module, we have very small groups so that each student receives ample attention. After the lesson, we provide the students with customised audio-visual material to help them practice at home," he shared.

The best advantage of going online? "100 percent attendance," Sikidar concludes.

**New Delhi:** When everything else fails, we turn to art and music for a healing touch, says Jogiraj Sikidar, a Dubai-based musician who started the Malhaar Centre for Performing Arts to teach and promote Indian classical arts in the Middle East.

Touching upon his latest initiative to take classical training online and transcend the boundaries of both India and UAE, he says Indian classical music not only heals but also helps you to de-stress and generate hope.

From Mumbai-based entrepreneurs to Delhi-based media professionals and several homemakers in Indonesia and London, lovers and learners of Indian classical music can be found across the globe. During the Covid-19 lockdown, their love for music brought them together at the Malhaar Centre, UAE's home-grown brand for Indian classical arts.

This initiative has been taken to spread positivity and happiness among people when the entire world is going through a difficult time, says the founder.

"There is a huge interest in Indian classical music across the globe. Just like Yoga,

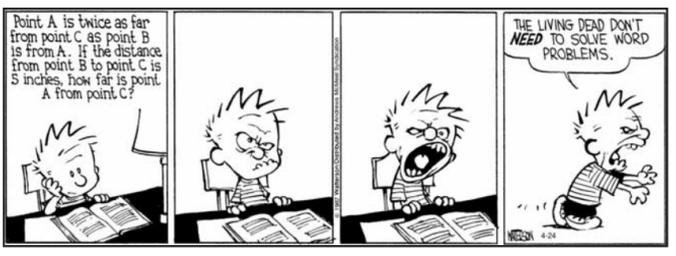


A student practising Kathak online

### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

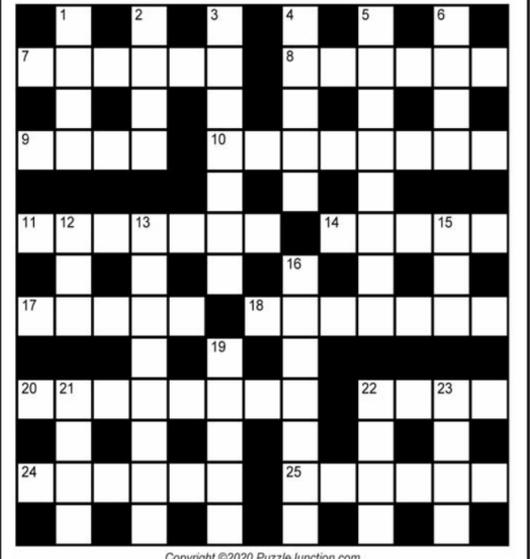


### BREVITY



### FUN post

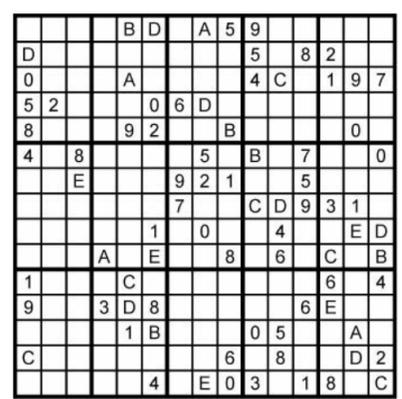
### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 On the double
  - 8 Spectacles
  - 9 Madcap
  - 10 Flood warning
  - 11 Palaces
  - 14 Up in the air
  - 17 Meddle
  - 18 Judicious
  - 20 Flabbergast
  - 22 Scruff
  - 24 Boundary
  - 25 Turn back
- Down**
- 1 Diva's delivery
  - 2 A deadly sin
  - 3 Danger for sailors
  - 4 Op-ed piece
  - 5 Enchanted
  - 6 Butcher's stock
  - 12 Barley bristle
  - 13 In-depth
  - 15 Flipper
  - 16 Grove of trees
  - 19 Baby grand, e.g.
  - 21 Hit hard
  - 22 Exploding star
  - 23 Harbour

### SUDOKU

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

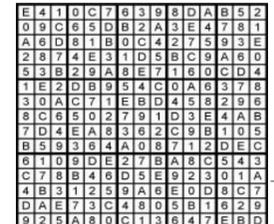


### SOLUTIONS

### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## MISSING THE WAVES

Fishing boats left idle on the beach in Puri during the weekend shutdown over novel coronavirus, Sunday

## LOCKDOWN EFFECT

Cars parked at College Square in Cuttack, Sunday, as the city has been placed under 14-day lockdown to check the spread of Covid-19



# Covid fire spreads in City slums..... What's BMC up to?

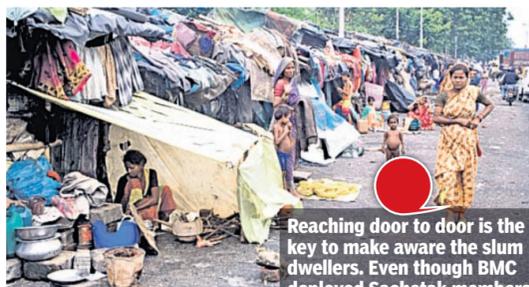
AVIRAL MISHRA, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** When the Centre announced unlocking measures, a 36-year-old Manoranjan Behera (name changed) of Ganjam decided to move to Bhubaneswar as soon he came to know of a construction firm hiring workers.

Left with no work and money for three months, Manoranjan moved to the capital city in early June and decided to stay with his younger brother who resided in slums of Trinatha Basti here. As per government instructions, Manoranjan who came from a Covid-19 hotspot put himself in home quarantine for 14 days.

However, only after a few days of his arrival, Manoranjan started experiencing diarrhoea and high fever. He was soon taken to the hospital and later found Covid positive. A week later, his brother's wife was also found positive and soon the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) declared the slum a containment zone.

Cases such as Manoranjan's are a few of many in the city that have soared the city's Covid numbers with the pandemic gradually spreading its fangs to the slums of capital. As per BMC reports, out of 442 slums in the city, over 40 have been affected with the virus and about



10 major slums including Salia Sahi, Halidipadia, Maa Mangala Basti and Mahisakhai Basti have reported community spread cases.

Blaming the increase partly on people and largely on the authorities, Anjan Nath, a social activist who has been assisting the slum dwellers in fight against the pandemic said the BMC is "acting too little and too late."

"The civic authority's awareness campaigns have been a failure. Reaching door to door is the key to make aware the slum dwellers. Even though BMC deployed Sachetak members and slum communities, lack of coordination between the members and the BMC has led to increase in cases. Furthermore, the BMC's order for institutional quarantine of slum returnees came in much later when the damage had

What started in the big metropolises is spreading its tentacles in the overcrowded City's slums. Though the state is yet to acknowledge that community spread has begun, recent cases put a question mark on BMC's prophylactic measures. **Orissa POST** takes a closer look:

OUT OF 442 SLUMS IN THE CITY, OVER 40 HAVE BEEN AFFECTED WITH THE VIRUS

ABOUT 10 MAJOR SLUMS INCLUDING SALIA SAHI, HALIDIPADIA, MAANGALA BASTI AND MAHISAKHAI BASTI HAVE REPORTED COMMUNITY SPREAD CASES

**Reaching door to door is the key to make aware the slum dwellers. Even though BMC deployed Sachetak members and slum communities, lack of coordination among the members and the BMC has led to increase in cases**

ANJAN NATH | SOCIAL WORKER

**Most of the cases have travelling history or are contacts of earlier positive cases. They were taken to institutional quarantine and then found positive. Moreover, under the sero-surveillance a total of 43,000 people from 11,000 families in the slums are being surveyed on a daily basis**

PREM CHANDRA CHAUDHARY | BMC COMMISSIONER

been done," Nath said. Nath's claims can be testified

from the fact when the BMC in an order, June 27, announced compulsory 14-day institutional quarantine for those returning to the city slums from other Covid hotspots of the state. The order had only come after 16 cases in the city were reported a day earlier which included a 50-year-old female from Abhiram slum in Sundarpada which the BMC termed 'a local' but failed to establish any contact of infection.

Moreover, apart from shortage of space in slum areas for social distancing, Nath also highlighted the fact that the home quarantine of suspected cases is unlikely as they lack proper access to toilets and food. "Unless they are provided with regular supply of meals and other necessities, they have to go out and other places - defeating the very purpose of home quarantine."

Responding to this, BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary said, "Most of the cases have travelling history or are contact of earlier positive cases. They were taken to institutional quarantine and then found positive. Moreover, under the sero-surveillance a total of 43,000 people from 11,000 families in the slums are being surveyed on a daily basis. This is an evolving situation and we are concerned for the welfare of city denizens."

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



## Three Covid care centres in Cuttack

**Bhubaneswar:** Three Covid care centres are all set to provide treatment to the mild and asymptomatic novel coronavirus patients in Cuttack, said sources in the civic body of the Silver City. These centres have been planned to treat mild patients with no comorbidity to reduce the burden on special Covid Hospitals and reserve beds for critical patients who need ventilators and ICU facility. This was revealed by Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Commissioner Ananya Das through a virtual press conference Sunday.

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**PREMISES REQUIRED ON LEASE BASIS FOR OPENING OF NEW BRANCH AT RAYAGADA**

SBIMS Pvt. Ltd., Administrative Office, Berhampur for and on behalf of Regional Business Office (SME Region, Berhampur), invites offers from the PSUs/Govt. Dept./ Promoters/Private Parties having ownership of R.C.C Building, ready for immediate occupation at prime location of Rayagada Municipality preferably at Ground floor on main road, with good communication & parking facility for opening of new branch. The intending parties may download the Tender document from [www.sbi.co.in](http://www.sbi.co.in) under the link "procurement, Empanelled, Service Providers & Others" from 20/07/2020 to 03/08/2020. The offers must be submitted to the aforesaid address on or before 5.00 PM on 05/08/2020. Earlier tender is hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons. The bidders applied earlier shall not apply as the premises are not suitable for the Bank

Name of the location	RAYAGADA MUNICIPALITY
Carpet Area in SQM/SQFT	278.80 Sqm / 3000 Sqft

Place : Berhampur  
 Date : 20.07.2020

Sd/-  
 Deputy Manager (Civil)  
 Mobile : 9437570450

# Temporary OPDs on SCB, AHRCC campuses 'soon'



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Sunday said that temporary Out Door Patient Departments (OPDs) will come up on the campuses of SCB Medical College and Acharya Harihar Regional Cancer Centre (AHRCC) soon.

The information was given by CMC Commissioner Ananya Das Sunday. She said, "The Medical Superintendent of SCB Medical College and Director of AHRCC told us in a recent meeting that more footfalls of patients in hospitals is making it tough for them to ensure social distancing inside the hospital campus."

She added, "We have decided to

rope in the Works department to create temporary OPD centres in such hospitals to spread the patient crowd in different areas to reduce gathering at one point. The Commissionerate Police has also extended its assistance for managing the crowd."

The official said that the city has till now seen close to 350 confirmed cases of the global pandemic while more than 200 patients from the area have also recovered from it. CMC also said that it has scaled up the antigen-based tests in the hospital to screen more people from hospitals.

"We are at the same time trying to reduce the workload in OPD and

trying to decentralise the doctor consultations and on the other side we are also screening the indoor patients for the viral disease. We have started conducting Covid-19 antigen tests for the indoor patients," she said.

She added, "The benefit of antigen testing is that the results come within 30 minutes and we get more time for timely action and contact tracing. We have been able to conduct a total of 1,700 antigen tests of indoor patients in hospitals."

Saurabh Garg, COVID Observer for Cuttack, told the media that close to 3,500 beds in Covid Care Homes in rural areas are ready to host asymptomatic suspected patients of Covid-19 in the district.

He said, "1,211 cases of Covid 19 have been detected in Cuttack district till now. Close to 860 such cases are from rural areas while a total of 350 cases are from the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) area. Recoveries have been good in the region."

He added, "Covid Care Homes in each panchayat have been setup which hosts close to 10-12 beds. We have been able to ensure 3,490 beds in such centres across the district."

# These graffiti speak a thousand words

**KHURDA MUNICIPALITY IS LEAVING NO STONE UNTURNED TO CREATE AWARENESS ON CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**



While a picture depicts the horrific image of coronavirus, another one shows how to wear masks; another one urges people to obey social distancing in market areas

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khurda, July 19:** If you have recently visited Khurda municipality office and new bus stand, you must have noticed murals on the boundary wall of the municipality office and on both sides of the wall of the bus stand. And a selfie corner for youths would not have escaped from your notice either.

The theme of these murals is coronavirus and they are all creating awareness among the denizens on how to win the battle against Covid-19. Khurda municipality has taken this initiative.

**To make people aware about the consequences of following and not following Covid-19 norms, many steps have been taken. These murals are a part of them**

SWETAPADMA SATPATHY | EXECUTIVE OFFICER, KHURDA MUNICIPALITY

While a picture depicts the horrific image of coronavirus, another one shows how to wear mask, another one urges people to obey

social distancing in market areas.

In some other pictures, people are asked to stay at home and take care of children, elderly persons and patients.

These apart, there are also several murals with Odia punch lines such as 'Corona Hariba, Ame Jitiba' (we will win the battle against coronavirus), and 'Corona niyama paluthiba, Corona ku durare rakhuthiba' (we keep coronavirus at bay as long as we obey Covid-19 norms).

Apart from these, there are posters and banners put up across the town. "The wall paintings in-

stantly draw our attention. I hope they will serve the purpose," said a Khurda resident.

When contacted, executive officer of Khurda municipality Swetapadma Satpathy said the number of coronavirus infected persons is on the rise in the municipality area.

"To make people aware about the consequences of following and not following Covid-19 norms, many steps have been taken. These murals are a part of them. I hope the paintings will leave a permanent mark on people," added Satpathy.

# RMRC to begin sero tests in Ganjam, Gajapati dists

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** The Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) Sunday said that it has conducted the initial phase of serological tests in Puri and Bhubaneswar and plans to extend it to other areas too. Ganjam and Gajapati districts are on the list.

Sanghamitra Pati, Director of RMRC, said that her office has also submitted the reports of initial testing to the Urban Local Bodies and the state government.

In a video message, Pati said, "We are doing sero-survey in collaboration with the state government. We have completed the sero survey in Puri. We have given the details of the survey to the government. In BMC area we are doing the survey in two phases."

She also added, "In the initial phase of community survey we conducted serological testing on 900 randomly selected persons and



submitted the details of the same to the BMC. We are now entering into the second phase of doing serological tests of high risk population."

"We have given the combined report to the BMC and the state government for their consideration. After Bhubaneswar we will extend serological testing to Ganjam, Baramba, Narasinghpur and Gajapati."

# LOCKDOWN TAKES THE SHINE OFF RAKHI BIZ

Rakhi traders fear that they will find it difficult to sell out all their stocks even though the lockdown is lifted August 1

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, July 19:** The 14-day lockdown over Covid-19 pandemic has caused disappointment among the Rakhi traders in the Silver City here.

The Rakhi traders are of the opinion that they will find it difficult to sell out all their stocks even though the lockdown is scheduled to be lifted August 1.

The Rakhi traders in the Silver City here usually start selling Rakhis (decorated wrist bands) around a month ahead of the Raksha Bandhan festival. Many stalls usually come up at Buxi Bazar, Choudhury Bazar, Dolamundai, College Square and Ranihat areas of the city to sell colourful Rakhis to customers.

According to sources, the traders in Cuttack procure varieties of Rakhis from Delhi, Gujarat and West Bengal to meet the demand of customers. Some of them also procure the wrist bands from Jatni in

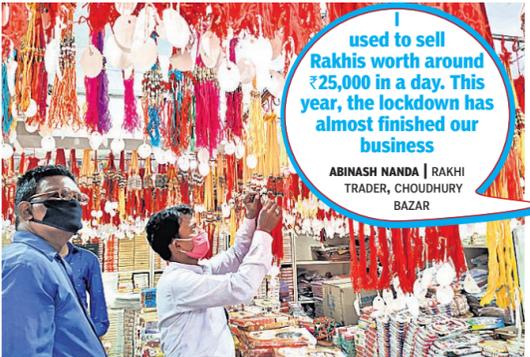
**Rakhi sale usually picks up around 15 days ahead of the Raksha Bandhan festival. But, this lockdown will continue till July 31. We will have only two days to sell Rakhis**

SISIR NAYAK | RAKHI TRADER, CHOUDHURY BAZAR, CUTTACK

Khurda district.

"Girls and women usually opt for new varieties of Rakhis to tie them on the wrists of their brothers on the day of Raksha Bandhan festival. Around 200 varieties of Rakhis including those made of silver are sold in Cuttack market. The prices of the wrist bands usually vary between Rs 2 and Rs 5,000 depending upon the design and quality," said a Rakhi trader.

Expecting a brisk business, the traders had procured huge quantities of Rakhis this year. They had



A customer goes through Rakhis, a few days before the state government clamped the 14-day lockdown

also started selling the wrist bands around a fortnight ago, sources said. However, the state government clamped the 14-day lockdown beginning July 18 in Cuttack and three other districts in Odisha to

**I used to sell Rakhis worth around ₹25,000 in a day. This year, the lockdown has almost finished our business**

ABINASH NANDA | RAKHI TRADER, CHOUDHURY BAZAR

check the Covid-19 infections. "The Raksha Bandhan festival is scheduled for August 3 this year. Rakhi sale usually picks up around 15 days ahead of the Raksha Bandhan festival. But, this lockdown will continue till July 31. We will have only two days to sell Rakhis. The lockdown has totally damaged Rakhi business in Cuttack," said Sisir Nayak, a Rakhi trader at Choudhury Bazar.

Abinash Nanda, another trader of the locality, claimed that he used to sell Rakhis worth around Rs 25,000 in a day. "This year, the lockdown has almost finished our business," he added.

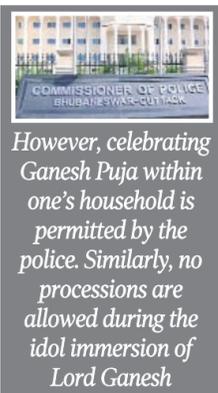
Many customers also expressed their disappointment over closing of Rakhi shops due to the lockdown. They claimed that they would not get enough time to send the wrist bands to their brothers who are working outside Odisha.

"Now, all Rakhi shops have been closed in accordance with the lockdown norms. There is no certainty that the shops will resume business after July 31. Perhaps, the prices of Rakhis will go up after the lockdown," said Sasmita Sahu, a customer.

# No public celebration of Ganesh Puja in Silver City: CP orders

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, July 19:** As expected the Ganesh Puja in the Silver City will not be celebrated in a grand way this year due to the pandemic. The decision was taken by the Commissionerate Police along with Mahanagar Shanti Committee of Cuttack and Cuttack Mahanagar Puja Committee. outgoing Cuttack DCP Akhileshwar Singh said Ganesh Puja will not be organised in public places in Cuttack this year. "We have also asked Durga Puja committees not to start advance preparations."



However, celebrating Ganesh Puja within one's household is permitted by the police. Similarly, no processions are allowed during the idol immersion of Lord Ganesh.

However, celebrating Ganesh Puja within one's household is permitted by the police. Similarly, no processions are allowed during the idol immersion of Lord Ganesh. Celebration of Ganesh Puja has been one of the major delights of the residents of Cuttack city. Every year, the festival is celebrated with pomp and show among the crowd. Ganesh Chaturthi falls August 22 this year. The festival falls on the fourth day of the waxing moon period also known as Shukla Chaturthi in the Hindu month of Bhadrpad.

# Ganesh Puja to be a muted affair this yr

The pandemic began as a health crisis, metamorphosed into an economic debacle and now its domino effects are visible everywhere

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** The Covid-19 pandemic, which began spreading its tentacles in the state four-five months ago, is not slowing down rather is getting aggravated.

Keeping this in mind, organisers fear that the annual festival, scheduled for August 22 this year, may not see that extravagance or glamour and might be a muted affair.

The pandemic, which began as a health crisis, has metamorphosed into an economic debacle and now its domino effects are visible everywhere.

Every year, across the state and particularly in the Capital city, the festival is marked by devotion, glamour and glitz, but this year organisers would not be on a spending spree, rather they will cut down on the budget.

Popular pandals across the City namely at Unit-IV, Sahid Nagar, Master Canteen, Rajmahal, Ashok Nagar, Bapuji Nagar and Laxmisagar may see



File photo of Lord Ganesh's Dashavatar idol

**We aren't organising anything big. We have to ensure social distancing and strictly adhere to the protocols. No musical programmes or cultural affair would be there**

BHABANI SHANKAR JENA | WINNERS ASSOCIATION, SAHID NAGAR

**Usually, we start making idols three-four months in advance. Our order book keeps getting bigger and bigger as we approach the puja date but it's like a drought this year as no one is willing to spend extravagantly and many have cancelled celebrations even**

BIRANCHI NAYAK | IDOL MAKER, KENDRAPADA

a low-key celebration. Orissa POST talked to several

puja organisers in the city and their somber replies testify that the sit-

uation is grim and excitement is at the lowest.

Bhabani Shankar Jena of Winners Association in Sahid Nagar said, "We aren't organising anything big. We have to ensure social distancing and strictly adhere to the protocols." It will be a low-key affair, he added.

"No musical programmes or cultural affair would be there. Lord Ganesh's idol will be immersed the next day only," Jena said.

"Last year, we created a 48-ft-tall Dashavatar Ganesh idol which gained a lot of attention, unfortunately this year there will be no such things."

Indrajeet Singh, secretary of Diamond Club in Budheswari Colony, said that this year the puja will be a simple affair as the pandemic has just worsened things.

Last year, the Diamond Club created a Ganesh idol with blue stones and Rajma.

Meanwhile, the state's Covid tally Sunday crossed the 17,000-mark with 595 fresh cases.

## DOMINO EFFECT

The domino effect of the pandemic woes can be gauged after speaking to the idol makers.

Biranchi Nayak, an idol maker from Kendrapada, said that his business "is almost gone."

"Usually, we start making idols three-four months in advance. Our order book keeps getting bigger and bigger as we approach the puja date, but it's like a drought this year as no one is willing to spend extravagantly and many have cancelled celebrations even."

It may be mentioned here with respect to religious affairs that this year, the Supreme Court put a bar on devotees pulling the majestic chariots in Puri Rath Yatra. Only 500 servitors and police personnel were allowed per chariot and a curfew was in place across the Pilgrim City to bar congregation of devotees.

Earlier, the Mumbai Ganesh Puja associations have also decided not to organise the Ganesh Puja festival.

## Between April-June, ECoR handled 7000 tonne of parcel

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** In the first quarter of current financial year—April to June, the East Coast Railway (ECoR) has loaded 7,000 tonne of parcel through Special Parcel Express trains.

Traditionally, a major share of Parcel Traffic used to be carried through regular coaching trains.

During lockdown, Time Tabled parcel trains were started as a new concept when regular coaching train operations were suspended to ensure uninterrupted supply of essential commodities.

The Special Parcel Express trains carried 6,160 tonne of essential commodities, 31 tonne of medicine including life-saving medicines and samples to laboratories and 20 tonne of medical equipment during this period.

Parcel Trains played an important role in maintaining the necessary supply-chain for edible items. Around 210 tonne of milk/dairy products and eggs were loaded and transported from ECoR jurisdiction. Dry milk powder and edible oil were also received in ECoR, said an official.

This period became very critical for farmers as sending their produce to the market was a challenge.

The ECoR came forward to help them in these testing times when 4376 tonne of fruits and vegetables were transported to various markets safely and timely. This includes 4345 tonne of mango from Andhra Pradesh to markets in Delhi.

During this period, 5,240 tonne of parcel has been received in ECoR jurisdiction. This inward traffic comprises of medical equipment, medicines, cotton bags, PPEs, hatching egg and milk, ECoR sources said.

## Arindam Chaudhuri's FB post on Lord sparks row

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, July 19:** Author and the director of Indian Institute of Planning and Management (IIPM), Arindam Chaudhuri, has triggered a controversy by mocking Hind deities including Lord Jagannath in a recent social media post.

The incident has invited sharp reactions from devotees and Srimandir servitors. The servitors and devotees condemned Chaudhuri for mocking Lord Jagannath and sought an apology from the latter.

In a Facebook post, Chaudhuri claimed that the novel coronavirus

**Chaudhuri also posted a photo where a doctor examines the health of Lord Jagannath**

cannot be checked through prayer to the deities. He advised people to read his book to keep them happy. Chaudhuri also posted a photo where a doctor examines the health of Lord Jagannath.

Chaudhuri further wrote that several priests at Tirupati Balaji temple tested positive for Covid-19 recently.

"We condemn the social media

post of Chaudhuri on Lord Jagannath. Lord Jagannath is the master of the whole universe. Chaudhuri has hurt Hindu sentiments and Jagannath culture through his social media post. He should tender an apology before the Lord," said senior servitor Binayak Das Mahapatra.

Devotee Saroj Kumar Behera too condemned Chaudhuri for mocking Lord Jagannath. "Chaudhuri should learn details regarding Jagannath culture. A good author never hurts the religious sentiments of people. Chaudhuri should apologise for the incident," Behera said.

## Brown sugar worth ₹3 crore seized in Kuliana; one held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** The Special Task Force (STF) of the state police claimed to have seized brown sugar worth over Rs 3 crore in Mayurbhanj district and arrested a drug peddler in this connection Sunday.

Acting on a tip-off, a team of the STF conducted a search operation in Kuliana area and recovered around 3.28 kg of the contraband from a 'dealer', Crime Branch additional director general (ADG) Soumendra Priyadarshi said. "The arrested person is being interrogated by the STF personnel as part of efforts to find out details about the drug racket and the involvement of other people in the illegal trade," Priyadarshi said.

Meanwhile, the DGP took to the Twitter to say, "STF of Odisha Police today morning seized approximately 3.28 KG of Brown Sugar from a place in Mayurbhanj

dist. One person has been detained. STF will share more info in due course (sic)."

With its sustained drive against illegal trade of drugs, the STF has seized over 15.64 kg of brown sugar so far this year, the ADG said, adding that a total of 40 people have been arrested by the STF so far in 2020 in such cases.

The STF claimed that the total seizure made by it in 2020 is much more than the cumulative seizure made by Odisha Police (all agencies of the state police) in the last eight years.

The amount of brown sugar seized by Odisha Police was 7.236 kilogram from 2013 to 2019. Apart from the latest seizure—3.285 kilogram, the major brown sugar seizures by STF include 1.746 kilogram March 11, 2.729 kilogram March 19, 1.008 kilogram June 2 and 4.458 kilograms seized June 19.

## 143 gm contraband worth ₹14L seized

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, July 19:** Town police seized 143 gram of brown sugar worth Rs 14,30,000 and nabbed a person during a raid at Rameshwarpur area here, Sunday.

The accused was identified as Ganeswar Khuntia, 40, alias Gania in the area. Cash worth Rs 2.26 lakh, a country-made pistol, a bike, aluminum foil rolls and a digital weighing machine were seized from his possession during the raid. This was stated here by SP Anupama James at a press meet organised at the district police headquarters, Sunday.

The seizure came when Town police IIC led by Namita Nayak was on patrolling duty during the weekend shutdown in the town, Sunday. Acting on a tip-off, they raided the house of Ganeswar and seized the consignment coming from Khurda and Balasore. A case was registered in this connection and the accused will be produced in court, she said. SDPO Sriharsha Mishra was present at the press meet.

# The beggar who donated ₹1L for a Shani temple

RAGHU STAYS ON THE PREMISES OF HATAKESHWAR TEMPLE AT BAGHMARI TOWN IN KHURDA DISTRICT

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khurda, July 19:** He is visually-impaired by birth and seeks alms for two square meals a day; he is in his twilight years too.

However, he is not bogged down by financial stress or age-related issues. Meet Raghu Rout.

A native of Ganjam, Raghu has donated Rs 1 lakh for construction of a religious structure.

Raghu stays on the premises of Hatakeshwar temple at Baghmari town in Khurda district. Asked about his age, he says he "must have crossed 70."

In a soiled white shirt, sporting



grey hair on his nearly-bald head with unkempt beard, Raghu, sitting near the temple, says he left his house when he was a child as he felt he was being neglected and rebuked by family members owing to his

**I HAVE STOPPED GOING OUT SINCE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK. I HAVE LEFT EVERYTHING TO GOD. IT IS HE WHO IS GETTING HIS TEMPLE CONSTRUCTED. I AM ONLY A MEDIUM**

RAGHU ROUT

physical limitations.

Hatakeshwar temple has been his home for about last ten years. He goes around nearby villages seeking alms and returns to the temple before evening.

"I can still remember the evening I was taking rest when the idea of getting a Shani temple constructed struck my mind. Assuming it as an order from the Lord himself, I started saving money, skimming on my expenses which were already limited. And now with the help of the villagers, the construction work on the temple has already begun," he says.

Raghu has so far given Rs 1 lakh in two phases.

"I have stopped going out since coronavirus outbreak. I have left everything to God. It is he who is getting his temple constructed. I am only a medium. The construction

work will be complete with the blessings of Lord Shiva and Lord Shani," he adds.

Hatakeshwar temple trustee Akur Rana said that Raghu has set an example for others. What Raghu has attempted for is something that even physically well and better-off persons can barely achieve.

"He is living a simple life. All the villagers revere him as a saint. He is a man who receives whatever the villagers give him. He is never heard cursing anyone for not giving alms," Rana added.

"His undiluted devotion to God is really inspiring. Words fall short to praise him," said a villager.

# 'Vehicle on rent' for chain snatching in Capital city

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** The Commissionerate Police Sunday busted a looters' unit involved in several cases of looting incidents in the Capital city. The arrested revealed that gangs are operating in the city, which are renting out vehicles for this illegal activity.

The cops have recovered huge cache of stolen items from the possession of arrested members of the gang.

The accused persons were identified as Sudarsan Naik, 30, alias Pappu and Sarbeswar Gochayat alias Tiki of Itamati, Bulu Naik, 25, of Khandapada in Nayagarh. Naik

had been staying in Unit-VI area under Capital police limits.

Police also arrested another two for helping the accused persons in disposing the stolen items. They were Lochan Kumar Behera, 48, of Badagada area in city and Susanta Kumar Moharana, 42, of Brahmagiri in Puri. Moharana had been residing at Bharatpur slum under Khandagiri police station here.

Police caught these persons while investigating a case (234/20) registered on the basis of the complaint of one Anasuya Das July 1. She had alleged that two unknown bike-borne miscreants snatched her gold chain in IRC village area.

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# This Swabhiman Anchal village fully depends on Andhra

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, July 19:** The inhabitants of Suapalli, a fringe village in the Swabhiman Anchal of Malkangiri district, have a feeling of living in the 'dark ages'. They say, 73 years have passed since Independence, but they have still been lacking basic amenities like connectivity, safe drinking water and education.

Though they belong to Odisha, they have to depend on neighbouring Andhra Pradesh for all their daily activities. Surprisingly, they all speak Telugu, instead of Odia.

The village is in Chitrakonda block, a part of Swabhiman Anchal (earlier known as cut-off region). The region was renamed after the Gurupriya bridge was commissioned to pave way of connectivity and hasten development.

A Rs 100-crore package was announced for the development of the region. Lack of road communication with mainland Odisha had kept Swabhiman Anchal, the erstwhile cut-off area of Balimela reservoir, underdeveloped and made it a safe haven for Maoists for decades.

The Gurupriya bridge connected this cut-off area with the



Villagers crossing a river due to lack of bridge

OP PHOTO

mainland in 2018.

Now, the government has been making all out efforts to fast track development in the region under security cover. Three BSF camps and two new police stations have been set up in the area so as to tackle left wing extremism.

Suapalli village in Ralegoda panchayat is encircled by hills. The village is accessible only after negotiating with three to four hills.

After traveling from Chitrakonda to Sarakubandha, there lies Ralegoda panchayat. Thereafter, one has to pass through several vil-

lages on the Odisha side and then some others in Andhra Pradesh before crossing a river to reach Suapalli.

A population of 300 belonging to 70 families lives in the village. Crossing the river is routine for them in the absence of road communication.

Besides, safe drinking water is a dream for the residents as the Swajaldhara Yojana has not been implemented. The villagers draw water from a stream by laying a pipe. They have spent their labour and money for the project.

A strange situation prevails in the education sector. The government has built a toilet for a non-existence primary school in the village.

Villagers Penaray Madkami, Apprao Madkami, Rambanu Madkami and Gana Madkami said some children of the village go to schools in Andhra Pradesh while some others stay in residential schools. The village is deprived of an Anganwadi centre. While the government has laid stress on sanitation, the villagers lack toilets as the Swachh Bharat Yojana has not been executed in the village.

They pointed out that as the village is 4 km away from the panchayat headquarters, the villagers have to depend on Korukunda in

Andhra Pradesh. Sadly, the residents are not well versed in Odia language. They only speak Telugu.

"While going to Korukunda, we have to risk our lives crossing the river. Patients and expectant mothers are carried on cots to nearby the hospital in case of emergency," the villagers said.

Their rations are distributed at another village, Alampakka.

They said that though they had drawn the attention of the administration several times in the past about their problems, no step has been taken to sort them out.

Our correspondent tried to contact Block Development Officer Lariman Kharsel over phone, but he was not accessible.



# Nurses complain of sexual harassment at Covid hosp



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Balasure, July 19:** The manager and a pharmacist of a dedicated COVID-19 hospital in Remuna Tehsil in Balasure district were detained by Sadar police Sunday for allegedly misbehaving with a staff nurse working at the same hospital.

The incident came to light after the nurse lodged an FIR at the police station complaining that the accused duo sent her objectionable videos at the same hospital.

"I was sexually harassed. The duo sent me objectionable videos

at night. They also threatened to dismiss me from the job if I didn't agree to their proposals," the victim alleged.

In the FIR the nurse mentioned that the duo has also harassed many other nurses by sending them objectionable videos and messages.

"Due to the fear of losing their jobs, no one is complaining in this regard," added the nurse.

When asked, Remuna Tehsildar Charles Nayak said that a probe against the duo is underway.

"After investigation we will take appropriate action against the accused duo in accordance with the law," added Nayak.

# Illegal maize cultivation thrives in reserve forest

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna/Koksara, July 19:** Even as outsiders have started making preparations for illegal maize cultivations in Sahajkhol reserve forest under Dharmagarh forest range in Kalahandi district, forest officials have turned a blind eye to the wrongdoings, a report said.

Reports said the mafia has taken over large tracts of land in the reserve forest and has been growing maize after felling a number of trees. It is alleged that forest officials though aware of the matter have done nothing to check this illegal cultivation.

As a result, the forest has lost its green cover. The mafia is also accused of killing wild animals while clearing the forest land for cultivation.

It is alleged that hundreds of acres of land in Kandagarh, Kuturu, Birimuhan, Sargiguda, Khaligad beats under Behera and Amapani forest sections of Dharmagarh forest range have lost their green cover due to illegal maize cultivation. Sources said the mafia comprising some Bengali speaking people from Umerkote



and private moneylenders from Maidapur, Papadahandi, Jharigaon, Chandahandi areas in Nabarangpur district have connived to take up this illegal cultivation. They are engaging tribal people who have migrated from Rayagada, Kalyanpur, Kashipur and Nabarangpur and settled down in the remote Gaibandha, Tirliama, Andhijharan, Kadomali, Sargipani, Lekama Chhakapada regions inside the reserve forest.

Currently, the tribals were seen sowing seeds after preparing the land for cultivation. However, the forest officials have not taken any action against such illegal

cultivation. These tribals earn their livelihood through shifting cultivation and by growing maize for which they clear large tracts of land every year inside the forest. The mafia makes hay from maize cultivation by engaging these tribals.

As a result, large parts of the forest have become denuded which were earlier filled with lush green cover and valuable timbers. Local residents have urged the forest official to take action against the illegal cultivation otherwise the day is not far when the forest will lose its green cover forever.

# VIMSAR to remain shut for 7 days

**SAMBALPUR:** The outdoor and other departments of VSS Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (VIMSAR) at Burla here will remain closed for seven days following a rise in Covid-19 cases in the hospital.

The number of positive cases has now increased to 22 within seven days. Among the affected patients, six doctors, 14 nurses, one attendant and a radiographer have tested positive for the virus. The matter came to the fore after Collector Subham Saxena issued an order in this regard, Sunday.

All the departments except the trauma and emergency surgery departments will remain closed from July 20 to July 26. The hospital premises will be sanitised everyday during this closure, the order said.

# Cops lauded for joining duty after recovery from Covid

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, July 19:** Ganjam SP Brijesh Kumar Rai lauded 12 coronavirus warriors Sunday for joining their duties immediately after recovering from the dreaded COVID-19 infection. The 12 cops are from Aska and Bhanjanagar police stations.

Rai tweeted, "Ganjam Police welcomes back its 12 heroes of Aska & Bhanjanagar PSs who defeated COVID-19 and immediately resumed frontline duty after recovering from coronavirus. We are proud of their dedication."

On the other hand Rai along with other cops is strictly checking the movement of people and vehicles at the Gurapalli check-post which is the border between Ganjam and Khurda districts. Only people associated with emergency and health-related work and



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Ganjam Police welcomes back its 12 heroes of Aska & Bhanjanagar PSs who defeated COVID-19 and immediately resumed frontline duty after recovering from coronavirus**

BRIJESH KUMAR RAI I  
GANJAM SP

with proper passes are being allowed to cross the border.

The district administration has collected approximately Rs 18.61 lakh in fines from people till July 19 for violating shutdown and lockdown guidelines.

Meanwhile, to ensure strict en-

forcement of lockdown in both villages and civic bodies, Hinjili police is appealing to residents through constant public announcements. Police are asking people not to venture out unnecessarily.

With 247 new positive cases detected Sunday in Ganjam district, the tally went up to 5,527. Currently the district has 1,915 active COVID-19 cases while 3,554 patients have recovered from the disease. The district so far has reported 54 deaths.

# Nomads take up manual labour to survive pandemic

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Boipariguda, July 19:** The COVID-19 crisis has altered many a life. A nomadic group from Maharashtra camping in Koraput district is no different.

As many as 120 members of 15 families hailing from Udas area in Nagpur district of Maharashtra have settled at different places in Koraput district for many years. The male members toured villages as astrologers and made a living out of selling colourful stones believed to have astrological impact.

The female members and children used to go around villages seeking alms.

After the nationwide lockdown was imposed, they found themselves up against the wall. They had to go hungry for several days.

After Odia daily 'Dharitri' published an article on them March 28, the District Collector directed the block administration to do something for the families. As a result,

they were provided cooked food for a month starting March 29. The administration stopped providing food to them after lifting of lockdown.

Finding the situation unfavourable to go on with what they had been doing, they started thinking about alternative ways of earning.

With no options left, they started working as labourers. As of now, female members are earning Rs 150 a day and the income of the male members is Rs 200 a day. Thus, every family is earning something between Rs 500 and 600.

Some of them work as farmhands as well. As there was shortage of labourers to work in paddy fields, they grabbed the opportunity.

"The pandemic has taught us a lesson. The trying times have showed us a way to lead a decent life. Only now are we realising the real charm of earning money by labouring hard," a nomad said.



# SANITISATION DRIVE

Fire personnel carrying out sanitisation drive near the royal palace at Palace Street in Paralakhemundi to ward off the threat of coronavirus pandemic, Sunday. Fire personnel also sanitised the district collectorate building, court premises and other areas as the number of Covid positive cases reached 700

OP PHOTO

# Angul's tourism sector stares at bleak future

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Angul, July 19:** The tourism sector in Angul district is staring at a bleak future. The sector is expected to take a severe hit due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, claimed Tourism Department official Prakash Roy.

Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the district's tourism sector, Roy said that losses to the tune of lakhs of rupees have happened in the last four months due to the complete shutdown of tourist spots. Businesses indirectly linked to the tourism sector have suffered losses of over Rs one crore, Roy added.

Tourist spots like Satkosia Sanctuary, Rengali, Derjanga water

reserve, temples of goddess Hingula and goddess Agnirupa in Talcher, Deuljhari in Atthamallik, Binkeai and many other historic places have remained closed in the last four months. So earnings have fallen drastically, Roy informed.

This has impacted the livelihood of thousands of people working in the unorganised tourism sector. Among them are travel agents, tour guides, vendors at tourist sites and owners of hotels and eateries.

An official source said in 2016, 8.36 lakh tourists had visited various places in the district. The numbers went up to 9.10 lakh (2017), 9.88 lakh (2018) and over 10 lakh in 2019.

Looking at the rising numbers

## COVID IMPACT

Tourist spots like Satkosia Sanctuary, Rengali, Derjanga water reserve, temples of goddess Hingula and goddess Agnirupa in Talcher, Deuljhari in Atthamallik, Binkeai and many other historic places have remained closed in the last four months

This has impacted the livelihood of thousands of people working in the unorganised tourism sector. Among them are travel agents, tour guides, vendors at tourist sites and owners of hotels and eateries

Looking at the rising numbers of tourists the district administration had also taken up various projects to promote the sector

of tourists the district administration had also taken up various projects to promote the sector.

Rajiv Panigrahi, owner of 'Prasanti Hotel' said, "The holi-

day season from April to July is good for us. Many people related to industrial sector come to the district every year and stay in our hotels which also generate good

sources of income. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic all businesses have stopped. We are not even in a position to pay electricity bills of hotels."

When two persons quarrel, both are in the wrong.

THE MOTHER



## Gold Coast

It seems Kerala has turned into the new Gold Coast for the time being. While earlier instances of gold smuggling were reported mostly from Gujarat, Daman and Maharashtra, Kerala has become the latest entrant. We in Odisha may not be surprised as similar and not so minor busts had taken place multiple times in the past couple of years. The regularity in locating smuggled gold at the Bhubaneswar International Airport should have alerted authorities to a major syndicate operating from the capital of Odisha. However, all those incidents were kept under wraps as far as investigation was concerned. With the onset of Covid-19 related Lockdown and stoppage of international flights, Bhubaneswar has successfully escaped the scanner. One can recollect that on an average, two to three busts were taking place every week at Bhubaneswar. While these incidents involved quantities exceeding five kilos, it is certain that a few hundred kilos must have gone through the Customs doorway at Bhubaneswar airport undetected. And some Customs officials should have built a nice little pile of cash at their homes.

The Kerala operators, however, seem to be novices since they got caught comparatively easy. An incident of gold smuggling via the international airport in Kerala's capital city Thiruvananthapuram, where the traffic to and from Gulf countries is generally high has caught the media's attention. A chance check on diplomatic packages in the first week of July found that a bag carried over 30kgs of gold, clandestinely brought in and addressed to the UAE Consulate in the city.

After investigations by the Customs, the CBI and the National Investigation Agency, it now turns out that, over past months, some 180 kgs of gold was brought in by a gang involving some former staff of the UAE consulate. The main official at the consulate, the Consular Attache has reportedly made an exit from the city, reached Delhi and then has supposedly flown back to the UAE. His absence might affect the investigations. Even when he was here, he enjoyed diplomatic immunity and was not questioned.

Some members of the gang have been arrested and the one who sent the consignment from the UAE, a Keralite, is at large. What adds curiosity and surprise to this incident was the close links Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's principal secretary in charge of the CMO maintained with the main smugglers, one of them being a woman whom the senior official had also placed as liaison manager in a state-run IT firm. Opposition alleges that the senior IAS officer working in the Chief Minister's office, was in the know of the gold smuggling activities of the woman and her associates.

As of now, the Chief Minister is not in the dock other than for the fact that he reposed a lot of faith in the senior bureaucrat. There is embarrassment for the LDF government as a whole, and how investigations will unravel will be closely watched.

Notably, the NIA stepped into the picture primarily because the Left front has been actively opposing the Modi government at the Centre. Local observers feel there is a political colour taking shape in this investigation.

Assessments are that some 70 per cent of the gold business in the country is dependent on smuggled gold. The corrupt elements in the Customs are known to be part of these rackets. A chance check of a diplomatic bag revealed the smuggling procedure of this particular gang. Unverified reports claimed that the gang has used this diplomatic channel at least 10 times earlier.

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval flying into Kochi to oversee the probe adds credence to the political angle of the ongoing investigation. Doval's visit is a clear indication of dangerous politicization of a criminal act. It seems uncanny that the same person who dealt with the Maulana of Tablighi Jamaat at 2 am and dispersed the possibly infected crowd without insisting on containment was also given the onerous task of dealing with the Chinese foreign minister and impressing upon him to disengage the PLA from the Galwan Valley, has been tasked with the job of not only unearthing details of the Kerala gold smuggling racket but probably and more importantly, the responsibility of destabilizing the Left Democratic Front government of Kerala. Unfortunately for India, whether it is the killing of gangster Vikas Dubey in Uttar Pradesh or gold smuggling in Kerala, every criminal activity is painted with a political brush. This makes the acts of criminals more political than illegal. When organs of governance such as the Police or Customs watch these events, obviously, their reactions are to cash in and not be honest.

### WISDOM CORNER

- Wisely and slow; they stumble that run fast. **WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**
- He who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealings with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals. **IMMANUEL KANT**
- Commit as many mistakes as possible, remembering only one thing: don't commit the same mistake again. And you will be growing. **OSHO**

### WORDSWORTH

#### Supererogation

In early September 2011, the publicists at Collins Dictionaries produced a list of words which the dictionary's editors considered to be obsolete and which were to be removed from the next edition of its dictionary. One of them is supererogate, to do more than is required of one, to go beyond the call of duty. The related noun, supererogation, is still used enough to be retained, however. It comes from Latin super rog re, from super-, beyond or above, plus rog re. The latter originally meant to pay out public money after asking the consent of the Roman people (it's from rog re, to ask). Super rog re literally meant to pay more than was necessary. In its figurative sense it appeared first in the parable of the Good Samaritan in a Latin translation of the New Testament. Supererogation has long had a special meaning within the Roman Catholic church for acts that are morally good but not required for salvation by God. Church doctrine holds that such good works make up a reserve fund of merit that can be drawn on by prayer in favour of sinners. In recent decades, supererogation has taken on another sense in philosophy, for a much-debated topic that refers to the nature of duty and to what extent moral actions can be optional. More loosely, supererogation can refer to something that's unnecessary or perhaps even undesirable:

For the rest, the staging is an act of supererogation, a distraction from the grandeur of Gluck's opera. The Times, 30 Oct. 2010.

### LOL

#### LOTTERY

Banta's business has gone bust and he has serious financial problems. He decides to ask God for help. He goes into the temple and begins to pray: 'Oh God, please help me, I've lost my business and if I don't get some money, I'm going to lose my house as well, please let me win the lotto.' Lotto night arrives and somebody else wins it. Banta goes back to the temple, 'God,



and I'm going to lose my car as well.' Lotto night comes and Banta still has no luck!! Back to the temple, he goes. Suddenly there is a blinding flash of light as the sky parts open and the Banta is confronted by the voice of the Lord, 'Oye Banta, you have to buy a ticket first.'

# CONG AS MODI'S STRENGTH

FOCUS POLITICS

The utter irrelevance of the Sachin Pilot-Ashok Gehlot spat is matched only by the saturation coverage accorded to the mishap by the media – at least a large section of it.

Of Rajasthan's storm in a teacup the amplification is more disturbing than the storm itself. It reinforces the perception which is most helpful to Narendra Modi: "Look, that is the dishevelled lot being positioned to replace me." Modi's own men will not be able to devise a script more favourable to him, and it is so simple: just keep the Gandhi family in focus as the only alternative.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, neo liberal strategist, Francis Fukuyama predicted the End of History. The neo liberal Utopia had arrived. He was wrong, indeed he was shamed. Observers of the Indian scene are liable to be proven equally wrong if they predict that the Congress party is about to go over the cliff. As in the mobile ad, the party may just splutter over the chasm. Much more helpful will be the analyst who can peer into his binocular and report, like Sanjay of Mahabharata, the departure of the Gandhi family.

This would be a welcome outcome not because some Lutyns' bungalows in their occupation will become available for other politicians. Quibbling over security for Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is partly misplaced. Sonia Gandhi was paranoid about the family's security (quite understandably) when a reluctant Rajiv ascended the gaddi soon after Indira Gandhi's assassination.

Once he had worn the crown, the security of the two Gandhi siblings was such a matter of concern that "uncle" TN Kaul, ambassador to the Soviet Union, had more or less arranged for Rahul, then 15 and Priyanka, 13, to be parked in Moscow, which seemed like a wonderful idea because Mikhail Gorbachev had so warmed up to the young Indian Prime Minister.

Had Rajiv lived through the 1991 elections, he would have sat in the opposition. His assassination in Thirupurambudur in



There is a huge lie Indian ruling classes have told themselves: like our masters in London and Washington, we have become a two-party system. A multi ethnic, multi religious, multi lingual country where currency notes indicate every denomination in 17 languages, most with classical literatures pre dating Christ – will this immense diversity ever be contained within two parties?

Tamil Nadu, half way through the campaign, changed Congress fortunes. It derailed the Gandhi family though.

Rajiv Gandhi was losing seats in the North in the first phase of the '91 campaign. The sympathy factor after the death operated in the South to boost the Congress barely upto the pipping post. The South Heavy Parliamentary party became the anchor for the party's first Prime Minister from the South, PV Narasimha Rao.

The wily Brahmin that PV was, his politics became clear from the very outset: no challenger would be allowed to prosper in the North particularly if he happened to be non-Brahmin, indeed a Thakur like Arjun Singh. It is interesting that the strongman of Madhya Pradesh, secular in the Nehruvian mould, whom Rajiv had once elevated as executive vice president of the party, was outside the pale for PV.

As late as June 4, 1992, two days before the Babri Masjid demolition, Singh was warning friends that the mosque could fall. After the fall, mass defection of the Muslim vote brought PV's Congress to its low-

est ever – 140 seats.

This was the state of play when Sonia concentrated on her children, family friends like Satish Sharma (they were Indian Airlines pilots) and sundry school friends. In 1997, Priyanka, 25, married an upwardly mobile Robert Vadra who had leaped from the family's brass business in Moradabad to the British School in New Delhi. He was married into the premier family, alright, but his mobility upwards would be boosted if Sonia Gandhi emerged from her political retirement.

Within months of the Priyanka-Vadra marriage, ambition stirred in Sonia Gandhi's breast too. PV's dethronement in May 1996 after his dismal performance and a general restiveness in the Congress Working Committee, that a low level, "teli" (seller of oil in rural India), Sitaram Kesari, then President of Congress, was angling to become Prime Minister, provided a suitable occasion. What speculation was dignified as fact by the senior-most Congressman, former President Pranab Mukherjee in his book "The Coalition Years".

Nothing became her less than the illegal manner of Kesari's ouster. He was locked up in his Congress office; just in case he protested. Pranab Mukherjee, among others, supervised the wrenching out of the Kesari nameplate: it was replaced by "Sonia Gandhi", Congress President, written in black ink as a temporary measure.

Quite unlike the Kesari's ouster, nothing ever became Sonia more than her refusal of the crown after the party's shock victory in 2004. That the 2004 to 2009 term was the high point of Sonia-Manmohan Singh team is not celebrated with high decibel drum-beating because a great deal of restraint and dignity was imparted to the power apparatus by the 61 Communist MPs who supported it from the outside. By setting up a National Advisory Council as a restraint on neo liberal excesses, Sonia Gandhi too asserted herself.

In the 2009 elections, the Congress's 209 seats were a huge improvement on 140, 141, 143, 145 under PV, Kesari and Sonia respectively. Before Rahul Gandhi could unfurl his wondrous talents, the party sank to 44 seats in 2014 and 52 in 2019.

There is a huge lie Indian ruling classes have told themselves: like our masters in London and Washington, we have become a two-party system. A multi ethnic, multi religious, multi lingual country where currency notes indicate every denomination in 17 languages, most with classical literatures pre dating Christ – will this immense diversity ever be contained within two parties?

By not moving out of the way, the Nehru-Gandhi family is holding up political movement, a churning, shuffling by which the regional parties will have a stake in an accommodative central unit which is not obsessed with the unrealistic desire to revive "on its own" just because the straight-laced Randeep Surjewala announces without an iota of embarrassment that his leader Rahul Gandhi is a "janeudhari Brahmin". By its mulish obstinacy, the Gandhi family is ensuring the perpetuation of one-party rule on the other side.

### SPECTRUM ECONOMY

# Enough of lockdowns, time to re-start

India has to end its lockdown completely for fast economic recovery. The unlocking is like a see-saw. While the Centre is keen on opening up, the states have become erratic, imposing closures, hurting the crucial revival after 15 weeks of complete or partial lockdown.

With a number of states re-clamping lockdown in parts, this led to closures again. Very few states are functioning to their full capacity. This is affecting supplies, trade, transport and health of businesses. Over 40 crore Indians are estimated to be still under various forms of local lockdown.

The governments are caring for the health and life of the people, which is a solace. However, the disease is not lethal, says ICMR DG Balram Bhargava. He said overall incidences are low and fatality is less than one per cent in smaller cities and hence ICMR does not consider this to be a fatal disease. A cautious post-unlock approach has caused more piecemeal closures though the impact is national.

Half of the year, first due to financial crisis since December 2019

and then severe Covid-19 closures, witnessed tepid recovery. Post-unlock, some select big industries such as the automobiles appear to be doing better but it's still far from normal. The US' flip-flop policies are hitting the global economy accentuated by poor shipping operations and other blockades. The trade war with China has hit the US hard. Disney and Apple among major US companies have become pawns of China.

India is no less hit by Chinese border and economic aggression. The country has taken tough steps to ban Chinese goods and 59 apps. Indian search for alternatives has begun but long dependence on Manmohanomics is delaying it. Complete swadeshi, or Atmanirbhar Bharat, is time-consuming. Total unlocking is needed to pace up these efforts.

June saw a pent up demand due to prolonged lockdown that gave hope. The e-way bills under GST needed for goods transportation also are seeing a slump at 17.2 million in July against 18.7 million till June 15. Similarly, labour participation is falling since June 21 and mobility indices fell 30 per

cent below since mid-June.

The news of Google's investment of \$10 billion and various other companies, including Facebook and Qualcomm are encouraging. At the same time, intermittent closures are impacting demand generation and production. Sales of large manufacturers and retailers of consumer goods, smart phones, automobiles have declined. It is affecting truck movements, already hit by high diesel prices and no relief post-lockdown in toll rates and GST procedures.

Policies like imports are not in a stable zone. The nation has to chart out a clear road map to swadeshi-atmanirbharata. Higher tariff barriers may not be a flat approach in an economy that has become dependent on global producers, including China, for many raw materials and finished goods. The nation has to come out of the quandary whether to fully produce internally or have a mix.

The policy to cut on public sector just to boost the private also needs review. The public sector has set a standard not only in production quality but also in creating models for labour engagement.

This strength of the PSUs is sought to be eroded through watering down of labour laws, wage policies and by denying companies like HAL a role in naval copter production to 'help' the private sector. The government should allow PSUs to function freely so that Indian private sector could also achieve an overall quality level. The nation needs to learn from the US, which despite private sector growth has not compromised on public sector.

The PSUs and private sector must compete to make this a strong nation and not annihilate each other. Growth of one is integral and mutually beneficial for the country. Similarly, for overall growth, they need to coexist and not go for handing over select profitable rail routes to private sector. It may emerge as a poor imitation of the Praful Patel policy of annihilating Air India.

India has to go on a fast trajectory. It must now open up, end lockdown irrespective of the disease and start operations of railways normally to avoid an abnormal shrinkage of the economy.

— INFA

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

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

#### Chit fund scam

Sir, It's surprising that the chit fund (Ponzi) scam probe panel has been disbanded. Where has all the people's money gone? The chit fund functioned in a wrong manner, large numbers of people invested in it and they lost their money. The government has lost interest in pursuing the matter. The only losers are the investors. What happened to the company directors, managers? Why did the government allow such companies to operate at all?

**Sunil Pradhan,**  
Khariar, Nuapada

#### Austerity, really?

Sir, On the one hand, the government is calling for austerity and has unveiled plans to cut around 2 lakh contractual jobs. On the other, it is giving extensions to retired bureaucrats of its liking, and this too with high perks. In a democratic structure, no one is inevitable, and all the constitutional posts are to be filled on merit. Once the term of an appointment is over, the same needs to be filled with new hands. Spending crores in commissions, giving doles in the name of promoting sports, offering jobs with hefty salaries, unnecessary spending in crores on litigation issues are all crazy actions of the government. Even in the face of the economic downturn and huge expenses from government to tackle the Covid-19 situation, the government is lavishly spending money on avoidable counts.

**Janaki Ballav Dash,** MAYURBHANJ

#### Rhea's slumber

Sir, It is quite astonishing that after a long gap of one month, actress Rhea Chakraborty has suddenly risen from her slumber. She is now seeking a CBI investigation into the alleged suicide of popular Hindi film actor Sushant Singh Rajput. It is suspected that Sushant was murdered. The role of the Mumbai Police is also suspected.

**Naresh Mandal,**  
Prachi Nagar, BHADRAK

#### Lady Singham

Sir, This refers to the lady constable of Gujarat in the news for discharging her duty efficiently but was harassed by the state government. India became independent over 70 years ago, but the colonial mindset has not been discarded by the ruling class here. Government servants who had honestly discharged their duty have been murdered, jailed, or transferred to remote places or have been compelled to quit jobs. The case of the contractual lady constable who stopped the son of a minister while he was flouting Covid-19 rules is an eye-opener.

**Pratysu Harichandan,**  
BHUBANESWAR

# J&K MOVE WILL 'MILITARISE STATE'

Regional parties fear arable and fertile land tracts available for agriculture activity will be handed over to Army

AGENCIES

**Srinagar, July 19:** Regional parties, including the National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), opposed the amendments made by the administration of Lt. Governor to laws which will allow it to declare any location in J&K as a "strategic area" for building infrastructure for security forces. "A headless dispensation in J&K proposes to put more chunks of land under the control of security forces. The proposed amendments are shocking and an attempt to undermine the civil authority and turn the entire region into a military establishment," said NC spokesman Imran Nabi Dar.

The NC has expressed apprehensions that the amendments will add to the pool of land under the possession of the Army by cutting on the remaining arable and fertile land tracts available for agriculture activity.

"The strategic importance of J&K is not confined to certain areas; as such the entire region is strategically important. So by that analogy the government will have a free hand to give as much land to security forces to



be used by the later for any means, which the proposed amendment is totally ambiguous about. It could be anything ranging from colonies to special deployment of defence equipment," Mr. Dar said.

The NC spokesman said under the President's rule, the J&K administration has already given up 243 hectares of forest land for Army and paramilitary use, over 727 hectares of designated forest land was diverted between September 18 and October 21 by the former forest advisory committee (FAC).

"A stroke of pen has our natural resources obliterated, affect-

ing forest wealth, civilian established population and tourist destinations. It's a part of a long-

## GOVT REJECTS CLAIMS ON EXPANSION

The J&K administration here Sunday said there had been no decision to either transfer any new land or declare areas outside cantonments or army land as strategic. Stating that the transfer, both acquisition or requisitions, continues to be governed by the existing law, the administration said it was "the stated policy of the government to regulate and harmonize the requirement of land by the armed forces to meet the competing demands of development and internal security." The clarification was issued to tackle the "misinformation being spread on regulating construction in 'strategic areas' for armed forces for their operational requirements." The administration said it had recently approved a special dispensation for regulating construction in "strategic areas", required for direct operational and training requirements of the armed forces.

term agenda of disenfranchising the people of J&K by grabbing their fertile and economically viable land tracts and natural resources," he said.

A PDP spokesman termed the move 'disastrous' and "aimed at changing the demography of J&K". "A decision that is directed towards our homes, where even our neighbourhoods could be designated as 'strategic areas'. This is scarier than the scrapping of special status. It seems we might not be left with enough land even for graveyards. It means no resident of J&K has any power in determining even the basic functions of local government," said PDP leader Naeem Akhtar.

# Ram Mandir to be 161-ft tall

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Ayodhya, July 19:** The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust during a meeting has decided that the proposed Ram temple here in Uttar Pradesh would have a height of 161 feet along with five domes.

The president of the trust, Mahant Nriyaya Gopal, presided over the meeting here Saturday. All members of the trust were present in this meeting that continued for over 2 hours and all the points regarding the construction of the temple were discussed.

Kameshwar Chaupal, a member of the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, said, "Ram Temple will be 161 feet high and now five domes will be built instead of three."

Chaupal said that for the construction of Ram temple, a proposal has been sent to the Prime Minister's Office for Bhoomi Pujan. PM Narendra Modi is expected to do Bhoomi Pujan for the temple in Ayodhya on August 3 or 5.

Besides, there was a discussion on the overall look and design of the Ram temple in the meeting. Ram temple would be modelled on the



## 5 DOMES INSTEAD OF 3

- After a map is finalised, temple will be completed in 3.5 years
- Trust to mobilise 10 crore families across country for crowdfunding
- The temple premises may be increased from 70 acre to 108 acre
- It will have 5 domes, instead of 3, as proposed earlier

basis of the design proposed by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad but its length, width, and height will be increased.

It would take around 3 and a half

years to complete the construction of the temple.

The construction work has been delayed due to the Coronavirus-triggered lockdown and other crises.

# Govt in soup over cherry-picking official

Throwing all norms to winds, Veena Pandita, who had retired as chairperson of Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education, was reappointed for the same post for another 2 years

AGENCIES

**Jammu, July 19:** Making a mockery of its own advertisement and trashing all norms, Jammu and Kashmir School Education Department marred chances of 'genuine aspirants' by reappointing retired official as chairperson of J&K Board of School Education (JKBOSE).

Throwing all norms to winds, Veena Pandita, who had retired as chairperson of Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education, was again reappointed for the same post for another two years. This cherry-picking of 'blue-eyed candidate' by the government has raised several brows and put a question mark over the credi-

bility of the selection procedure.

"If the government had to appoint her as Chairperson, why they enacted the drama of advertisement," asked one of the candidates, who had applied for the post.

It was April 8, the department constituted a search committee chaired by the financial commissioner to suggest a panel of potential candidates for the post. The members of the com-

mittee included Principal Secretary School Education Department, Secretary Higher Education Department, and Vice Chancellors of both

Kashmir and Jammu University. The committee was given 15 days time period to suggest a panel of candidates for the said post.

In the meantime May 22, the School Education Department came out with an official adver-

tisement cum notification for appointment of a new chairperson for JKBOSE. Upper age limit for the post as per the notification was fixed as 57 years, apart from other qualification criteria.

While the department brought out the advertisement notification, it extended Veena Pandita's term for another two months until the time a permanent chairperson was appointed. Her term expired on April 3, 27 days before her retirement.

As per norms on expiry of the term, she had to be repatriated to her college/higher education department on April 3, but her term was extended till April 30, so that she retires as chairperson of the board.

**NO REGARD FOR NORMS**

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# 'Not the right time to resume tourism'



AGENCIES

**Srinagar, July 19:** Most of the tourism players in the valley are not enthused over the Jammu and Kashmir government's move to reopen the Union Territory for tourists amid the COVID-19 pandemic, saying the ground situation is far from normal for any such activity to take place.

They said in these extraordinary times, the survival of people is paramount and everything else comes later.

"Even as the financial condition of the tourism players in the Kashmir valley is bad, majority of them do not want tourists to start coming yet, more so when there has been a spike in the COVID cases. Everyone is concerned about his safety and well-being," Javid Ahmad, a travel agent, said.

He said the situation in the wake of the pandemic was not conducive for resumption of tourism. "We see cases increasing with each passing day. The situation is far from normal. In fact, it is getting worse," Ahmad said. The Jammu and Kashmir administration has decided to open the tourism sector in a phased manner, but limiting

it to tourists arriving by air only.

However, it has advised the tourists above the age of 65 years to avoid coming to the UT and also announced compulsory RT-PCR testing of all tourists at the airport on arrival.

"All incoming tourists must have confirmed hotel bookings for the duration of their stay. All incoming tourists must have confirmed return air tickets to any place outside J&K, either to their departure point or any other destination," the J-K administration had said in an order. Ashfaq Siddiq, the president of Travel Agents Association of Kashmir (TAAK), said tourism and leisure is the last thing on the minds of people in the times of a pandemic.

"We have to see the ground realities, the whole of India, the whole of the world in fact, is grappling with COVID crisis. Tourism and leisure is the last thing on the minds of people in the times of a pandemic. Let us not fool ourselves and expect tourists to start coming. We have other states, where the footfall is higher and which have not yet allowed the tourism activities to take place," Siddiq told PTI.

# CM evading accountability: PGMV

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 19:** In a sharp attack on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Sunday said the fight against COVID-19 is in a bad state, but the CM is evading accountability by giving "childish statements" like calling it the century's weakest virus.

The Congress general secretary has been criticising the state government's response to the COVID-19 crisis repeatedly, alleging that it is indulging in propaganda, instead of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. "CM Sahib and his officials have repeatedly claimed having adequate number of beds and of everything being fine in the fight against coronavirus, but looking at the condition of Lucknow in these media reports, it will be understood that the policy of hiding



**Patients are worried, health workers are worried, but the head of the government is evading accountability by making childish statements**

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

UP government's inadequate preparedness, poor management and weaknesses, has resulted in this bad state of affairs," Priyanka Gandhi said in a tweet and tagged media reports on long wait for beds for COVID patients in Lucknow.

"Patients are worried, health workers are worried, but the head of the government is evading accountability by making childish statements like 'this is the weakest virus of the century'," she said.

Tagging a video of rain water pouring down from the ceiling of a

coronavirus ward of a hospital in Bareilly, Priyanka Gandhi said a "waterfall has erupted at a COVID-19 ward". Addressing an online yoga workshop last month, Adityanath had said one should not be afraid of the coronavirus.

"It is the weakest virus of the century, only the transmission of this virus is fast. You have to protect yourself from this infection, especially children, elderly and those who are already suffering from any disease are most vulnerable to this infection," he had said.

# Oppn slams UP govt over floods

AGENCIES

**Lucknow, July 19:** The Congress Sunday hit out at the Uttar Pradesh government, accusing it of doing little to provide relief to people hit by floods in the state.

In a Hindi tweet, UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu on Saturday evening had said, "Conducting an aerial survey does not provide any relief from floods. Concrete policies can help to combat it."



Visuals of Lallu wading through knee-deep water and taking a boat ride to meet people in the Tamukhraj Assembly constituency in Kushinagar also flashed on a few regional news channels.

Media convenor of the UP Congress, Lalan Kumar, Sunday said, "The common public and farmers are facing the fury of floods but the state government has done very little to provide any concrete relief to them. The state government is only giving statements."

He added that people in Kushinagar do not have enough ration and fodder for the cattle. The administration is not doing enough to provide relief to people, he added.

"To know problems of people in his constituency, UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu reached out to the people facing problems due to floods through boats and by wading through knee-deep water in agriculture fields," Lalan said.

Meanwhile, the BJP accused the Congress of "enacting a drama". UP BJP spokesperson Manish Shukla said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had held a meeting on flood relief before the onset of monsoon.

# Animal markets find few takers ahead of Bakrid

THERE IS A MASSIVE DROP IN DEMAND FOR SACRIFICIAL ANIMALS DUE TO THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE CRISIS

AGENCIES

**Lucknow, July 19:** The animal markets, which are usually bustling with activity ahead of Bakrid, are desolate this year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shorn all festivals of public celebrations, and people are apprehensive that the tradition of animal sacrifice may be affected due to social distancing norms.

Also there is a massive drop in demand for sacrificial animals due to the financial impact of the crisis.

Chairman of All India Jamiat-ul-Qureshi Sirajuddin Qureshi urged the government to come out with guidelines for carrying out the celebrations in the traditional way.

The festival will fall on July 31 or August 1. Buyers and sellers start thronging the animal markets almost two weeks ahead of the festi-

val. But this year only a negligible number of buyers have turned up in animal markets in old Lucknow areas including Nakkhas, according to traders.

It is very difficult to say as to what the government is thinking. 'Qurban' is a matter of faith for the Muslims. We appeal to the government to deliberate and find a solution. This is a national problem, and our office bearers are speaking to different state governments, Qureshi said.

In the absence of guidelines, not many madrassas are buying animals for sacrifice, he said.

The madrassas where collective 'qurban' is done, are also not coming forward. In Bakrid, along with goats, buffaloes are also sacrificed. The government should ensure that people who are transporting the animals are not harassed by the

police, Qureshi said. Prominent Muslim cleric Khalid Rasheed Farang Mahali said he had raised the issue with the Uttar Pradesh chief minister.

I have recently met Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath requesting him to issue guidelines for Bakrid. I am hopeful that the guidelines will be soon released, he said.

Rahat Ali, a goat trader from Rajasthan said, thousands of people will be affected due to the re-

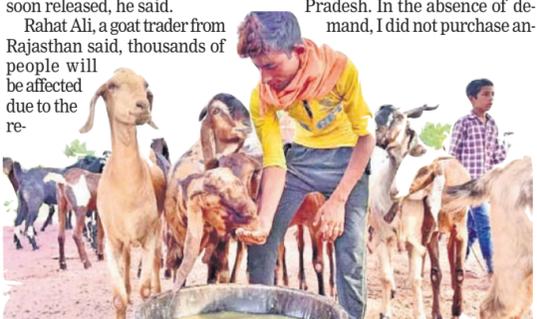
duced demand for animals. The animal trade works in a chain involving farmers who rear animals, small traders and big traders.

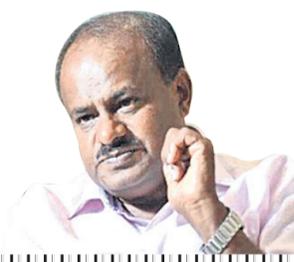
The traders buy the animals from the farmers. These are then sent to various states like Maharashtra, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. In the absence of demand, I did not purchase an-

imals this year, he said. Sajid, who supplies goats to various districts in western Uttar Pradesh, said the lockdown has affected the livelihood of people and not many have the money to buy animals for sacrifice.

The lockdown has drained the people of their money. As a result, the animals are not getting sold, he said. The Maharashtra government has come out with guidelines for Eid al-Adha, also known as Bakrid or Id-ul-Zuha, noting that there is a ban in place on all religious programmes and people should offer namaz in their homes and not in mosques.

It also said sacrificial animals should be bought online or over the phone as markets dealing with them will be closed, adding that qurban should preferably be symbolic.





The Karnataka government must utilise the services of private medical colleges in treating COVID-19 patients, by taking them into confidence

### WAR AGAINST VIRUS

Goa Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said his ministry is in talks with a technology agency to integrate WhatsApp for quick dissemination of Covid-19 test results



### of the day quote

There is no community transmission of the pandemic. If it were to be the case, the number of infections would be running into lakhs

K SUDHAKAR | MINISTER FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION OF KARNATAKA

I would like to once again make an appeal to the people of J-K. As you are aware, the lockdown remained imposed for two months during which the COVID-19 pandemic was brought under control. But, as restrictions were lifted, the number of COVID-19 cases has increased rapidly in the UT during the last 15 days. So, I appeal to everyone in this situation that besides continuing economic development, saving the lives of people is everyone's responsibility

GIRISH CHANDRA MURMU | J&K LT GOVERNOR

The health system has crumbled. The state government should have become a hawk in order to contain the spread of coronavirus. Instead, the JD(U) is engaged in organising culture rallies making people the victims (of the disease)

LALU PRASAD YADAV | RJD PRESIDENT

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LALU PRASAD YADAV | RJD PRESIDENT

### SHORT TAKES

#### Robbers blow up ATM

**Panna:** Two persons stole over ₹22 lakh from an ATM after blowing it up with explosives in Madhya Pradesh's Panna district in the wee hours of Sunday, police said. They held the ATM's guard at gunpoint while committing the robbery, the police said. The incident took place at the Automated Teller Machine (ATM) of a nationalised bank in Simaria town, about 60 km from the district headquarters.

#### Disaster averted

**Tirupati:** A major disaster was averted at Tirupati International Airport Sunday when a fire engine overturned on the runway minutes before a flight was about to land. The IndiGo flight from Bengaluru returned without landing at the airport due to the incident that took place at around 9.30 a.m., airport officials said.

#### Tiger kills farmer

**Chandrapur:** In the latest incident of man-animal conflict, a 42-year-old farmer was killed by a tiger while he was working in his farm in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra, a forest officer said Sunday. The deceased Jagdish Mohurle was a resident of Owala village which falls under Talodhi forest range in Bramhapuri division.

#### Naturopath booked

**Latur:** A naturopath has been booked for allegedly prescribing allopathic drugs to patients here in Maharashtra, police said Sunday. The clinic of the practitioner was raided Saturday by a health officer, an official said. The accused didn't hold a recognised degree in medicine and a valid license, he said.

#### Bodies found

**New Delhi:** A 28-year-old woman and her two children were found dead under mysterious circumstances at their home in Nihal Vihar Sunday, police said. The woman has been identified as Preeti, they said. Police suspect that Preeti's husband was behind the killings. He has been missing since the matter was reported to them. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) A Koan said an investigation is underway.

## India's Covid fatality rate drops below 2.5%

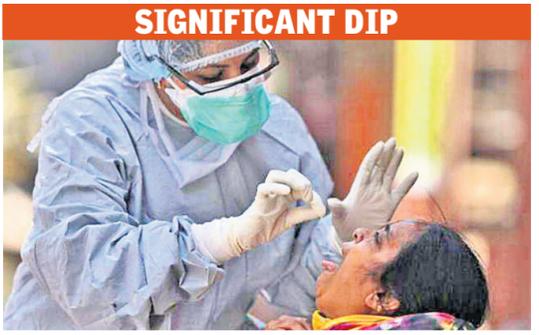
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 19:** India's Covid-19 fatality rate has fallen below 2.5 per cent for the first time, marking a significant dip and bringing the country in the queue of nations with the lowest fatality rates globally.

Interestingly, 29 states and Union Territories (UTs) have Case Fatality Rate (CFR) lower than the national average, says the latest report collated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). The CFR is progressively falling and currently it is 2.49 per cent, the MoHFW data said.

Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim, Mizoram along with Andaman and Nicobar Islands have zero per cent fatality rate while 14 states and UTs have a CFR of less than 1 per cent. The 14 states and UTs with less than one per cent fatality rate includes Ladakh (0.09), Tripura (0.19), Assam (0.23), Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (0.33), Kerala (0.34), Chhattisgarh (0.46), Arunachal Pradesh (0.46), Meghalaya (0.48), Goa (0.60), Himachal Pradesh (0.75), Bihar (0.83), Jharkhand (0.86) and Telangana (0.93).

Uttarakhand (1.22), Andhra Pradesh (1.31), Haryana (1.35), Tamil Nadu (1.45), Puducherry (1.48), Chandigarh (1.71), Jammu & Kashmir (1.79) and Rajasthan (1.94) have fatality rates lower than two per cent while Karnataka (2.08) and Uttar Pradesh (2.36) are in the bracket of 2 to 3 per cent fatality rate.



### SIGNIFICANT DIP

Interestingly, 29 states and Union Territories (UTs) have Case Fatality Rate (CFR) lower than the national average, says the latest report collated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Manipur, Nagaland, Sikkim, Mizoram along with Andaman and Nicobar Islands have zero per cent fatality rate while 14 states and UTs have a CFR of less than 1 per cent

"This shows commendable work done by the public health apparatus of the country," said the ministry, adding it happened because of focused efforts of the Centre and state and UT governments on efficient clinical management of hospitalised cases. "With effective containment strategy, aggressive testing and standardised clinical management protocols based on holistic standard of care approach, the CFR has significantly dipped."

The data comes when India's total coronavirus cases on Sunday reached 10,77,618 with a record 38,902 new cases reported in the past 24 hours. With 543 new deaths, the death toll stood at 26,816. Karnataka is the new hotspot state nearing 60,000 cases, as Maharashtra remained the worst-hit state, with 3,00,937 cases and 11,596 casualties. It crossed the 3-lakh mark on Saturday with Mumbai reporting over 1 lakh coronavirus cases so far. It is followed by Tamil Nadu with a total 1,65,714 cases, including 2,403 deaths.

The national capital, on the other hand is projecting an uplifting trend. For 17 of the last 20 days, including 11 in a row now, the number of people recovering from Covid in Delhi has remained higher than newly-detected infections - no other state has come close to such a trend. Globally, over 14 million people have been infected with the virus.

## Congress seeks Shekhawat's scalp

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Jaipur, July 19:** The Congress Sunday demanded the resignation of Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat for his alleged involvement in a conspiracy to topple the Ashok Gehlot government in Rajasthan.

Citing the two audio clips, in one of which Shekhawat is allegedly heard during a conversation on a plot to bring down the state government, Congress leader Ajay Maken said the BJP leader should quit on moral grounds. He said the Anti-Corruption Bureau of the state police has registered a case in connection with the audio tapes.

"If Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat is claiming that it is not his voice and the reference in the audio clip is of some other Gajendra Singh, then why is he afraid of giving his voice samples," Maken asked. He said Shekhawat has no moral authority to continue as a Union minister and should resign so that the investigation is not influenced. Maken also alleged that the police in Haryana and Delhi are giving protection to the rebel Congress MLAs from Rajasthan.

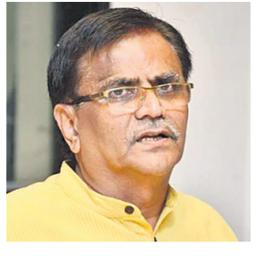
He said the Centre is threatening in the name of the CBI because it wants to stop the probe into the conspiracy.

The former Union minister also asked why a team of the Rajasthan Police was "stopped by Haryana Police" to carry out its investigation and take voice samples of MLAs Bhanwarlal Sharma and Vishvendra Singh. If the BJP has no role in it, then why the MLAs took shelter in the party-ruled Haryana, he asked in an apparent reference to reports that dissident MLAs are staying in two hotels in Gurgaon.

On charges of horse-trading, Maken asked the BJP to "reveal the route of black money" as it is being said that ₹30-35 crore were offered to each MLA. Maken, who has come to Jaipur as a Congress observer, said it is the betrayal of people's mandate and the murder of democracy if an elected government is toppled with money power. If such attempts are not stopped, then people will lose faith over the voting process and democracy, he added.

of the most revered heroes in Indian history. A large portrait of Guru Nanak Dev is installed on the right side of that picture.

## Dhankar new Haryana BJP chief



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chandigarh/New Delhi, July 19:** Senior BJP leader and former Haryana minister Om Prakash Dhankar was Sunday appointed as the party's state president.

The 58-year-old, a former MLA from Badli, was minister for agriculture and farmers' welfare in the previous Manohar Lal Khattar cabinet. He replaces Subhash Barala, who has completed his tenure.

By appointing Dhankar, the BJP has continued with a Jat face to lead the party in Haryana. Jat is the most dominant caste in the state. Dhankar was appointed as the state unit chief by BJP president J P Nadda, the party said in a statement and added that the appointment has been made with immediate effect.

The appointment is also being seen as an attempt to balance the caste equations in the state, where politics revolves around Jats and non-Jats. The BJP had formed its government in Haryana for the first time on its own strength in 2014. Five years later, it returned to power in alliance with the Jannayak Janta Party and Khattar, who is a non-Jat and belongs to the Punjabi community, was sworn-in as chief minister.

Both Dhankar and Barala had lost the 2019 Haryana assembly elections. The appointment has been delayed by more than eight months. It was expected that a new president would be appointed after the announcement of the state assembly results.

Dhankar thanked the party high command for reposing faith in him.

## LIGHTNING KILLS 10 IN BIHAR

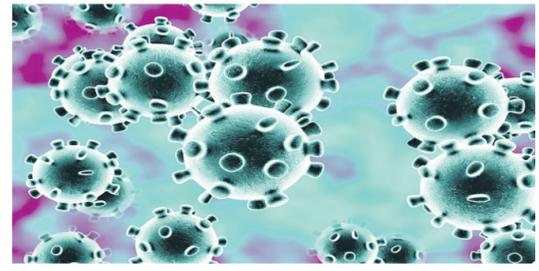
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Patna, July 19:** At least 10 people were killed in lightning strikes during a thunderstorm in seven districts of Bihar Sunday, officials said.

Three persons were killed in Purnea, two in Begusarai and one each person in Patna, Saharsa, East Champaran, Madhepura and Darbhanga districts, a Disaster Management Department official said. More than 160 people have died due to lightning strikes in the state in the past three weeks. 83 people were killed in lightning strikes in 23 districts June 25. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar expressed grief over the death of 10 persons due to lightning strikes, an official release said, adding "he was with the families of victims of lightning in the hour of disaster".

Kumar directed payment of ₹4 lakh as ex-gratia next of the kin of each deceased. The chief minister appealed to the people of the state to remain vigilant and stay indoors as far as possible during the bad weather. He also asked people to follow advisories issued by the Disaster Management Department in this regard.

## Govt team in Bihar to review virus situation



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Patna, July 19:** A three-member central team reached here Sunday to take stock of the COVID-19 situation in Bihar, which has witnessed a surge in novel coronavirus cases, an official said.

The team sent by the Union health ministry is being led by Luv Agarwal, who is a joint secretary in the ministry. The director of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Dr S K Singh, and Associate Professor of Medicine, AIIMS, New Delhi, Dr Neeraj Nishchal are also part of the team. The team will hold meetings with authorities of the health department and other officials concerned to discuss ways to contain the spread of the disease, the official said.

Taking serious view of the spread of the novel coronavirus in Bihar in the recent past, the team was asked to "undertake the visit immediately and coordinate with state health authorities to review the existing situation and provide necessary support and guidance", he said. The state has witnessed a

The recovery rate in Bihar has dropped to 63.17 per cent on July 19 from 77.52 per cent on July 1

Following the hike in positive cases, the Bihar government July 16 announced the imposition of a complete lockdown till July 31

The team will hold meetings with authorities of the health department and other officials concerned to discuss ways to contain the spread of the disease, the official said

2.5 times rise in COVID-19 cases since July 1 when the case count was 10,075. Till Saturday evening, the number of total positive cases in the state stood at 24,967.

The recovery rate in Bihar has also dropped to 63.17 per cent on July 19 from 77.52 per cent on July 1. The number of sample testing is over 10,500 per day in the state at present. Following the hike in positive cases, the state government July 16 announced the imposition of a complete lockdown till July 31.

### POWER NAP



A boy takes rest on the luggage along a road, during Unlock 2.0 in Kolkata, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

## Dog runs 12 km, helps nab murder accused

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Davangere, July 19:** A 9-year-old sniffer dog ran 12 km in the night to trace a murder accused and helped the police arrest him in Karnataka's Davangere rural area, an official said Sunday.

"Doberman Pincher Tunga ran 12 km non-stop from the crime spot at Basavapattana in the city to a house at Kashipur in the rural area where murder accused Chethan, 25, was hiding and helped us arrest him on July 17," Davangere Police Superintendent Hanumantha Rai said.



Davangere is 260 km northwest of Bangalore. "Though Chethan allegedly shot dead his friend Chandra Nayak with a stolen service revolver on July 10 over sharing the booty (gold ornaments) of the theft they had committed recently with two others. We took fe-

male dog Tunga to the crime spot on July 16. She led the sleuths to the area where Chethan was hiding with two accomplices," Rai recalled.

While trained sniffer dogs normally run 4-5 km from a crime spot, Tunga could track the accused 12 km away. When Tunga's handler (Head Constable Prakash) took her to the crime scene at 9.30 pm, she sniffed around and ran 12 km non-stop to Kashipur. She halted at a wine shop and went to a food joint later. Then she stopped at a house nearby at 12.30 am. The prime accused (Chethan) was present in the house of his relative.

## 55.1% households had only two meals a day: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 19:** About 55 per cent of households in 24 states and two union territories managed only two meals a day during the period from April 1 to May 15, indicating affordability challenges amid the Covid crisis, according to a survey of 5,568 families.

The 'Unmasking the Impact of COVID-19 on Asia's Most Vulnerable Children' early recovery assessment report released by child-rights NGO World Vision Asia Pacific, found that resulting economic, psychosocial, and physical strain on Indian families has negatively affected all aspects of child well-being including access to food, nutrition,

healthcare, essential medicines, hygiene and sanitation facilities, as well as child protection and safety.

The report based on data gathered from 5,668 households across 119 districts from 24 states and 2 union territories (Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir) during the period of April 1 to May 15 highlighted that the livelihoods of more than 60 per cent of parents or caregivers were fully or severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Daily workers, who are the largest segment in the survey, are the hardest hit and the loss of livelihoods that has resulted from government lockdown measures has become the top-most concern for the rural and urban poor, the survey found.

### CORONA CRISIS



"About 67 per cent of urban parents/caregivers have reported loss of jobs or income reduction in the previous weeks," it said. The results

of the report revealed that 55.1 per cent of the interviewed households could get only two meals a day, which indicated limited access to basic food supplies due to affordability challenges, the report said.

The study found that only 56 per cent of respondents always had access to hygiene items, and 40 per cent had access only sometimes. "Access to adequate water and sanitation remains a challenge, which increases the risk of malnutrition and the spread of the diseases, including COVID-19."

"The stress on families related to loss of income, lack of school, change of children's behaviour and quarantine measures contributes to children experiencing physical pun-

ishment and emotional abuse," the report said.

The report also indicated that 40 per cent of children are stressed out due to the current situation. "Women and children are usually the worst affected in any disaster. The COVID-19 crisis is proving to be no different. It is causing cascading damage to poor and vulnerable children — through stretched health services, inadequate medical supplies, higher risk of violence & exploitation, minimal access to education and lower intake of nutritious food stemming from the severe drop in income levels in families," said Cherian Thomas, Regional Leader, World Vision International, South Asia and Pacific region.

## of the day quote

The BJP has institutionalised lies -- (on) Covid-19 by restricting testing and misreporting deaths; (on) GDP by using a new calculation method; and (on) Chinese aggression by frightening the media. The illusion will break soon and India will pay the price

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

Given the corona-induced social distancing norm, the logistics of seating of MPs requires detailed deliberation and planning. The government also recently reached out to both the presiding officers (Naidu and Birla) on holding the Monsoon session. We are on course

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | RAJYA SABHA CHAIRMAN

Need for Vaccine: Virus of 'corrupt means' to topple elected governments has spread through a 'Wuhan like facility' in Delhi

KAPIL SIBAL | CONGRESS LEADER

## SHORT TAKES

### Two Cong MLAs test Covid positive

**Chandigarh:** Two Congress legislators in Punjab have tested positive for COVID-19, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said Sunday. Singh wished both of them a speedy recovery. "My colleagues @INCPunjab Mla Phagwara, Balwinder Dhaliwal ji & MLA Tarn Taran @DrDharambir ji have tested positive for #Covid19. Wishing them a speedy recovery," the CM said in a tweet. Earlier, cabinet minister Tript Rajinder Singh Bajwa had tested positive for the virus. He was the first minister to have contracted the infection.

### Liquor seized

**Araria:** Liquor worth ₹70 lakh was seized in Bihar's Araria district and seven persons were arrested in a joint operation by the excise department and the police, officials said Sunday. Acting on a tip off, police and excise officials intercepted two trucks at the toll plaza in Town police station area on Saturday night and seized 648 cartons of liquor, Araria Sub-Divisional Police Officer Pushkar Kumar said.

### Jawan dies

**Shillong:** Two more Covid-19 patients, including a BSF personnel, died at a hospital here Sunday as Meghalaya's death toll due to the disease rose to four, officials said. Both the patients died while undergoing treatment at the North Eastern Indira Gandhi Regional Institute of Health & Medical Sciences (NEIGRIHMS) here in the early hours, its director P Bhattacharyya said.

### Eight arrested

**Junagadh:** The Gujarat forest department has arrested eight persons in Junagadh district for allegedly hunting wild animals, and recovered an injured monitor lizard and a dead jackal from their possession, an official said Sunday. The accused were held by the Junagadh forest officials from Vadala village in Manavadar taluka Wednesday, the official said.

### Three injured

**Panaji:** A portion of an old building collapsed in Panaji city in the early hours of Sunday after heavy rains, a fire and emergency services official said. Three people who were sleeping in the building got trapped under the debris but were rescued immediately, he said.



**Amused by Foreign Minister S Jaishankar's defence of a directionless foreign policy. Rhetoric and tweets do not change ground reality. Neighbourhood first has been a priority of India's foreign policy but sadly derailed by a cavalier approach**

ANAND SHARMA | CONGRESS LEADER

## PM'S TWITTER FOLLOWERS RISE

The followers of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on microblogging site Twitter has risen to six crore. Modi is known for reaching out to the masses through social media



# Maoists trying to regroup in Telangana

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad, July 19:** Maoists appear to have stepped up their efforts to regroup in Telangana, their former stronghold, if the two incidents of exchange of fire between police and ultras in Kumaram Bheem Asifabad and Bhadradi-Kothagudem districts last week are any indication.

As many as 18 cadres of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), including a leader escaped after the encounters in the forests bordering neighbouring Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra. Hundreds of security personnel, including the personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the elite anti-Maoist force Greyhounds were on a hunt for the Maoists.

That the police force has also taken a serious note of the attempts by the banned outfit is evident from the fact that the police chief M. Mahender Reddy himself flew in a helicopter to the region to review the situation. During his two-day visit the police chief discussed with

## FORMER STRONGHOLD



senior officials the operational strategies to contain the renewed attempts by Maoists to gain a foothold in the tribal areas.

The police higher-ups see the recent incident as a proof of the serious bid by the Left-wing extremists cadre to revive the activity since Telangana was carved out of Andhra Pradesh as a new state in 2014. The Maoists made a determined bid to revive the activity during COVID-19 when the police force was busy enforcing the

lockdown. Some cadres crossed over from neighbouring Chhattisgarh and reached the interior villages to take up the issues of tribals.

During the exchange of fire in Kumaram Bheem Asifabad district on July 14, five Maoist including a senior member, carrying a reward of ₹25 lakh, managed to escape. The team was led by Mailarapu Adellu alias Bhaskar, Telangana State Committee member of the CPI (Maoist). Believed to be armed with AK-47, Bhaskar and his team entered from neighbouring Maharashtra during the lockdown period, by pretending to be migrant workers. The DGP said during his visit that 500 personnel, including Greyhound commandos were on the hunt for the Maoists. He appealed to people not to provide shelter to the outlaws.

His appeal came after police arrested one villager on charges of providing shelter and food to the extremists. Police officials of Mulugu, Jayashankar Bhupalapally, Mahabubabad and Bhadradi-Kothagudem districts released pho-

tos of 18 Maoists and announced rewards of ₹5 to ₹10 lakh to anyone providing information about them.

The police chief said that at a time when the government has taken up a lot of development and welfare programmes, Maoists are seeking to create terror and tension among tribals and sow seeds of suspicion. The DGP also warned that if Maoists were allowed to re-enter, development and welfare programmes undertaken by the state government, particularly for the benefit of the tribals, would be hampered.

The DGP vowed to "foil the sinister designs of Maoists to make a re-entry into the state from Chhattisgarh to carry out disruptive activities and hamper its development". He said the CPI (Maoist) State committee leaders based in Chhattisgarh were making desperate attempts to vitiate the peaceful atmosphere in the state. He alleged that Maoist leaders like Haribhushan, Damodar and others were leading a luxurious life in the neighbouring state while exploiting innocent tribals.

## DELUGE AND DEVASTATION

# ASSAM FLOODS: PM ASSURES SUPPORT



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guwahati, July 19:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday assured all support to Assam in dealing with the flood havoc, which has claimed 81 lives so far this year.

Discussing the flood situation with Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal over phone, Modi also enquired about the COVID-19 scenario and the ongoing efforts to douse the raging blaze at the Oil India's Baghjan gas well. "Hon'ble PM Shri @narendramodi ji took stock of the contemporary situation regarding #AssamFloods2020, #COVID19 and Baghjan Oil Well fire scenario over phone this morning," Sonowal tweeted.

"Expressing his concern & solidarity with the people, the PM assured all support to the state," he said. An official at the Chief Minister's Office said that Sonowal informed Modi about all the measures the state has taken so far in dealing with the problems faced by the people.

The total number of people killed in this year's flood and landslide has gone up to 107 across the state, of whom 81 were killed in flood-related incidents and 26 died due to landslides, the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said in its morning bulletin.

Floods have hit over 27 lakh people in 26 of the 33 districts of Assam

**Discussing the flood situation with Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal over phone, Modi also enquired about the Covid scenario and the ongoing efforts to douse the raging blaze at the Oil India's Baghjan gas well**

and destroyed houses, crops, roads and bridges at several places. On the COVID-19 front, Assam has recorded 22,981 cases, of which 10,503 have been reported from the Guwahati city alone.

The total number of persons losing their lives due to COVID-19 in the state has gone up to 53. However, five more COVID-19 patients have died, but the government's Death Audit Board has not included them in the tally of deaths caused by the COVID-19 virus. They had other ailments.

Meanwhile, the damaged Baghjan gas well of the PSU major Oil India Ltd in Assam is spewing gas uncontrollably for the last 54 days since the blowout took place on May 27, followed by the inferno on June 9.

## Guna man thrashed; FIR against eight

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Guna, July 19:** A man belonging to an Other Backward Class (OBC) community was severely beaten by a group of people in Madhya Pradesh's Guna town after he was allegedly caught stealing pesticide from a market, police said Sunday.

The incident took place Thursday, two days after a Dalit couple consumed pesticide and the husband was beaten by police while being evicted from a government land here. A video of the Thursday's incident, which has gone viral on social media in Guna, purportedly showed a bleeding man being beaten and then dragged with a towel tied around his neck while he lay on the ground.

The police claimed the man was "a thief and a drug addict" and cases in this connection were registered against him in neighbouring Ashoknagar district. The man, aged around 25, was arrested and sent to jail on Friday for allegedly stealing pesticide a day before that under Kotwali police station limits, Guna Superintendent of Police Rajesh Kumar said.

He is a member of an OBC community, the official said. "On his complaint, we registered an FIR against eight unidentified people on Thursday. We are identifying the people seen in the video to take action against them for beating the man," he said.

"At that time, we did not know the man was wanted in a case by police in Ashoknagar district, from where he hails," Kumar said. Asked about the man's background, the official said he was "a thief and a drug addict".

He has six criminal cases pertaining to theft, burglary and narcotics registered against him in Ashoknagar district, Kumar said. In one of the cases, an arrest warrant has been issued against him, the official said. All these cases had been registered by the Kotwali police in Ashoknagar. Tuesday, a Dalit couple allegedly consumed a pesticide while a drive was underway to evict them from a government land. A video of the incident showed some police personnel purportedly beating up the husband with batons, prompting a huge outrage.

## RAIN WOES



People wade through the waterlogged ITO Ring Road following heavy rainfall in New Delhi, Sunday

PTI PHOTO

# Rajasthan shocker: 5-yr-old gangraped

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kota (Rajasthan), July 19:** A five-year-old girl was left bleeding after she was allegedly raped by three boys in a village in Rajasthan's Baran district, police said Sunday.

While the five-year-old girl was playing outside her house at Tanki Mohalla in Nahargarh town Friday evening, the three minor boys of the neighbourhood promised to give her a ₹5 coin and later took turns to rape her in a nearby field, SHO at Nahargarh police station, Dalpat Singh said.

The mother was cooking inside the house at the time of the incident, he added. The family members found the girl missing and began searching for her. The mother, then, spotted the girl crying and bleeding on Gogacha Road near their home, the policeman said.

Later that night, the mother and the minor daughter reached the police station and lodged a com-



plaint, he further said. The three accused boys are absconding and a search is on for them, Singh said while adding that further investigation into the matter has been forwarded to the DSP and Circle Officer of Kajodmal.

A medical board carried out an examination upon the minor survivor on Saturday at Baran district hospital and her statements under Section 164 of CrPC would be recorded before a magistrate on Monday, the SHO said.

## Naxals thrash villagers, 25 hurt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Raipur, July 19:** At least 25 villagers were injured, eight of them seriously, after being allegedly beaten by Naxals for seeking development in their area in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh, police said Sunday.

The incident took place Friday night in Parcheli village under Katekalyan police station limits. A police team rushed there on Sunday after being alerted about the incident, Dantewada Superintendent of Police (SP) Abhishek Pallava said.

The SP said he and district collector recently visited the area during which some people from Parcheli had demanded construction of roads, setting up of ananganwadi (government-run women and child care centre) and other development works in their village.

The officials had assured the villagers to consider their demands, he said.



## PMO's sermon

Without lowering the guards and bargaining hard on the LAC in Galwan and other areas, the Prime Minister's Office has signalled to ministers and BJP functionaries not to raise the pitch against China, at least for now. The frontal organizations and trade bodies connected with the saffron party have also been conveyed to restrain in their anti-China rhetoric. One should notice that no minister has uttered a word since the disengagement announcement on July 7

against China even on trade and business issues. Obviously, the Chinese want India to guide its public opinion and stop strong anti-China rhetoric and recall all anti-China steps taken by any departments, states and companies to restore full normalcy. The boycott Chinese goods call has suddenly gone silent.

## Nadda to rejig team

It has been decided that changes in the Union Cabinet will be after BJP president J P Nadda gets a new team. The file is pending with the PM for his approval as Nadda has finalized his proposals. More than having a major reshuffle in his team of general secretaries, Nadda's focus is on bringing new talent in 25 Morchas and Departments. Of course, two new general secretaries may come as Dr Anil Jain, in charge of Haryana may be given a new responsibility. Another general secretary Manoj Sinha, a former Railway Minister of State, may be brought in as new general secretary. Bhupendra Yadav and Kailash

Vijayvargiya over-seeing two poll-bound states of Bihar and West Bengal respectively will be retained. The Yuva Morcha chief, Poonam Mahajan may be replaced by another young face.

## India's new concern

Even as the government is grappling with China to sort out differences over LAC in the Galwan and other areas, it is faced with regular onslaught from friendly neighbour Nepal. India had dispatched its top officers of the security and intelligence establishment who camped in Kathmandu for nearly four days together to calm down tempers. The top officials were there to ramp up support for India ahead of the crucial meeting of the powerful Standing Committee of the ruling Nepal Communist Party on Wednesday to decide on the fate of Nepalese Prime Minister KP Oli. Chief of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) Samant Kumar Goel and Intelligence Bureau chief Arvind Kumar were involved in hectic parleys with

leaders of the political spectrum there.

## Baijal invites Shah's wrath

It is now clear that all is not well for the Delhi's Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal. Gone are the days when he was the Man-Friday of the powers that be. After all, he was hand-picked by the South Block due to his connections with the Vivekanand Foundation. But he seems to have run out of his luck in the corridors of powers. The Home Minister Amit Shah is reported to be extremely unhappy with his handling of the coronavirus crisis in Delhi. Instead of bringing various political groups including Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and BJP run three Municipal Corporation of Delhi and others together, Baijal failed to do the assigned task. When Amit Shah went to inaugurate the 10,000 specially erected Quarantine facility on June 28, at Radha Soami Satsang Beas, Chhattarpur, he took Kejriwal along leaving Baijal in the lurch. This was the major public snub to the LG who is now home quarantined. Since

then, Anil Baijal is politically quarantined.

## Priyanka's house riddle

After being told to vacate the 35 Lodhi Estate bungalow and twitter war with Hardeep Puri, the last word on Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's next destination continues to baffle the political class. It had been widely reported that she will be shifting to Lucknow in the house of her grand aunt late Sheila Kaul. It was also indicated by her close managers that she will not go for appeal against the eviction orders and move over to Lucknow to strengthen the Congress Party as general secretary in charge of UP. She has to vacate the 35 Lodhi Estate by July 31. She is unwilling to shift to Lucknow immediately. It is easier said than done to revive the Congress in UP all alone. Secondly, she doesn't want to take the risk of traveling to UP along with the family during these tiring times. Robert Vadra has made it clear that he cannot make UP his base due to his business empire. He wants her to shift to Gurugram.



**China will respond resolutely to any attempt by Britain to sanction Chinese officials following the imposition of a security law in Hong Kong**  
LIU XIAOMING | CHINESE DIPLOMAT

## TRIBUTE TO FALLEN HEROES

Myanmar's public marked one of the Southeast Asian nation's darkest moments Sunday with tributes to slain independence heroes, though the annual Martyrs' Day gatherings were muted by the pandemic due to social distancing measures



## of the day quote

The coronavirus pandemic is showing no sign of stopping  
**POPE FRANCIS**

We have a vision for our country under which business of all kinds and all types of activity can eventually get back to as close to normal as possible  
**BORIS JOHNSON | UK PRIME MINISTER**

Saddened to hear the news of civil rights hero John Lewis passing, Melania and I send our prayers to he and his family  
**DONALD TRUMP | US PRESIDENT**

## SHORT TAKES

### Israeli PM's graft trial resumes

**Jerusalem:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's corruption trial will resume in earnest in January, with three-weekly evidentiary hearings set to begin then, a Jerusalem court decided Sunday. It was not immediately clear if Netanyahu would be required to be present at each hearing, although some Israeli media reported he would.

### 27 IS suspects held in Turkey

**Ankara:** Turkish police have detained 27 people in Istanbul over suspected links to the Islamic State group, state-run media said Sunday. The Anadolu news agency reported that the suspects were held in simultaneous early morning raids by anti-terrorist police in 15 districts across Istanbul as they allegedly prepared to carry out attacks.

### Syria holds parl elections

**Damascus:** Voting was underway Sunday for Syria's parliamentary elections, the third since the start of the civil war in 2011 and also as President Bashar al-Assad marks 20 years in power. A total of 7,277 polling stations opened across the government-controlled areas Sunday morning, reports said.

### Buddha statue vandalised in Pak

**Peshawar:** A rare life-sized statue of Buddha that was smashed into pieces with a sledgehammer by construction workers in Pakistan's northwest Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province belonged to the Gandhara civilisation and was nearly 1,700 years old, a senior official has said. Four persons were arrested on Saturday for vandalising the statue that was discovered during excavation at an agriculture farm in tehsil Takht Bhai of Mardan district.

### US state sues govt

**Washington:** The Attorney General for the US state of Oregon has filed a lawsuit against the federal government, accusing it of "unlawfully detaining" protesters, the media reported Sunday. The lawsuit filed by Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum on Saturday came after the deployment of federal agents in Portland, which according to the government was in an effort to restore order in the city which have witnessed nightly protests since the killing of George Floyd in police custody May 25 in Minneapolis, reports the BBC.

## Floods in India, Nepal displace nearly 4mn

*The overflowing Brahmaputra River, which flows through Tibet, India and Bangladesh, has damaged crops and triggered mudslides, displacing millions of people*



REUTERS

**Kathmandu/ Guwahati, July 19:** Nearly four million people in India's northeastern state of Assam and neighbouring Nepal have been displaced by heavy flooding from monsoon rains, with dozens missing as deaths rose to at least 189, government officials said Sunday.

The overflowing Brahmaputra River, which flows through China's Tibet, India and Bangladesh, has damaged crops and triggered mudslides, displacing millions of people, officials said.

More than 2.75 million people in Assam have been displaced by three waves of floods since late May that has claimed 79 lives after two more deaths were reported overnight, a state government official said.

"The flood situation remains critical with most of the rivers flowing menacingly above the danger mark," Assam water resources Minister Keshab Mahanta told Reuters. Assam is facing the twin challenge of combating floods and the coronavirus pandemic. Out of 33 districts, 25 remained affected after the current wave of flooding, beginning a fortnight ago. India is grappling with the novel coronavirus, which has infected nearly 1.1 million people and 26,816 have

died from the COVID-19 disease, government data showed Sunday. In neighbouring Nepal, the government asked residents along its southern plains Sunday to remain alert as heavy monsoon rains were expected to pound the Himalayan nation where more than 100 have died in floods and landslides since June, officials said.

Some 110 people were killed and another 100 injured as landslides and flash floods washed or swept away homes, upended roads and bridges and displaced hundreds of others in 26 of the country's 77 districts, police said. Home ministry official Murari Wasti said the death toll was expected to rise as 48 people were still missing. "Search and rescue teams are looking for those who are missing in different places but chances of finding them alive are slim," Wasti told Reuters.

Barun Paudel of the weather forecasting office in the capital, Kathmandu, said heavy rains were expected to pound much of the mainly mountainous nation in the next four days. "We have urged residents to remain alert against possible landslides and floods," he said. Landslides and flash floods are common in Nepal, India's Assam and Bihar states during the June-September annual rainy season.

## Kanye West schedules campaign event in South Carolina

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Washington, July 19:** American rapper Kanye West, who announced his bid for the US presidential election earlier this month, is set to hold his first campaign event Sunday in the state of South Carolina, a media report said citing an official document.



The 21-time Grammy winner will host Sunday's event at the Exquis Event Center in North Charleston for registered guests only, Politico news website quoted the campaign document as saying Saturday.

He tweeted Saturday for supporters to get him on the ballot in South Carolina. "Hi guys please sign up to put me on the ballot in South Carolina at any of these locations," he said, listing eight venues and linking to the website kanye2020.country. "You can also sign up at the website."

## China blasts dam to release water as flood toll rises

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

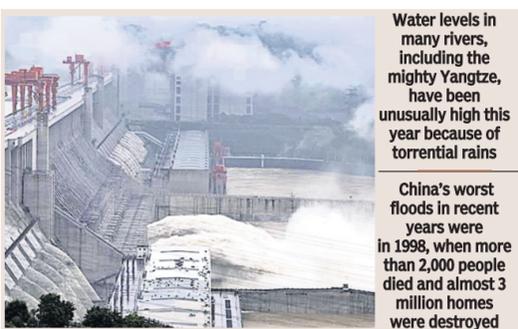
**Beijing, July 19:** China blasted a dam over a river in Anhui province Sunday to discharge the surging flood waters as torrential rains and floods wreaked havoc in the country, killing over 100 people.

The dam on the Chuhe river, a tributary of the mighty Yangtze River, was destroyed with explosives to ease the flood control pressure in the river basin, state-run CCTV reported.

Water levels on many rivers, including the Yangtze, have been unusually high this year because of torrential rains.

The Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze last week opened three floodgates as the water level behind the world's biggest dam rose more than 15 metres above flood level. Last week, official media reported that over 140 people were killed or missing since June, 37.89 million have been affected and over 2.24 lakh people relocated as China faced "flood catastrophe" with 433 rivers were on spat.

On Sunday, China's national observatory renewed a yellow alert for rainstorms, as incessant



Water levels in many rivers, including the mighty Yangtze, have been unusually high this year because of torrential rains

China's worst floods in recent years were in 1998, when more than 2,000 people died and almost 3 million homes were destroyed

downpours would continue to wreak havoc in vast stretches of the country.

From Sunday morning to Monday morning, heavy rains and rainstorms are expected in parts of Tibet, Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi, among other regions, the National Meteorological Centre said, warning that some areas of Jilin, Liaoning and Anhui will experience downpours with up to 150 mm of daily rainfall.

Some of these regions will see over 70 mm of hourly precipitation, accompanied by thunderstorms and strong winds, the

centre said. The centre advised local authorities to remain alert for possible flooding, landslides and mudslides, and recommended halting outdoor operations in hazardous areas.

Also Sunday, the centre renewed a yellow alert for high temperatures in the country's southern areas, as well as in Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia and Sichuan.

Parts of Zhejiang, Fujian, Jiangxi, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan and Xinjiang will see temperatures range from 37 to 39 degrees Celsius and even exceed 40 degrees Celsius Sunday.

## TikTok may shift HQs to London to avoid China links

LONDON IS AMONG ONE OF SEVERAL LOCATIONS THE COMPANY IS CONSIDERING, BUT NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE

REUTERS

**London, July 19:** TikTok has been in discussions with the UK government over the past few months to locate its headquarters in London, a source familiar with the matter said, as part of a strategy to distance itself from its Chinese ownership.

London is among one of several locations the company is considering, but no decision has been made, the source said.

It was not immediately clear what other locations are under consideration. But it has hired aggres-

sively in California this year, including poaching Kevin Mayer, a former Walt Disney Co executive, to be TikTok's chief executive. He is based in the United States.

TikTok is facing heavy scrutiny in Washington over suspicions China could force the company to turn over user data. TikTok is owned by China-based ByteDance.

The source said the company is largely focused on its issues in the United States over the last few weeks, but has not ruled out London as a potential location for its new headquarters. TikTok is expected to "significantly" increase the size



of its workforce in London and other key locations outside of China

over the next several years, the source said. The *Sunday Times* re-

## Global coronavirus death toll crosses six lakh-mark

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Johannesburg, July 19:** The number of people around the world who have died as a result of the coronavirus has passed the 600,000 mark as countries from the US to South Africa to India struggle to contain infections.

Hong Kong also warned of resurgence in the virus as it issued tougher new rules on the wearing of face masks. The World Health Organisation is again posting a single-day record of new confirmed coronavirus cases. It announced 259,848 new cases Saturday.

Concerns are rising that the pandemic has found fresh legs over the past few weeks, with Johns Hopkins University and the World Health Organisation both recording daily highs in newly reported infections. While the US leads global



infections, South Africa now ranks as the fifth worst-hit country in the pandemic with more than 350,000 cases, or around half of all those confirmed on the continent. Its struggles are a sign of potential trouble to come for nations with even fewer health care resources.

In Europe, where infections are far from their peak in the spring but local outbreaks are causing concern, leaders of the 27-nation

European Union haggled for a third day in Brussels over a proposed 1.85 trillion-euro EU budget and coronavirus recovery fund.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said there is "a lot of good will, but there are also a lot of positions" in the talks, which have laid bare the fissures in the bloc about how the countries hit hardest by the pandemic, such as Italy and Spain, should be helped and under what conditions. She said the talks, which were initially scheduled to end Saturday, could still end without a deal.

Confirmed global deaths from or with COVID-19 rose to more than 602,000, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins.

The United States tops the list with over 140,000, followed by more than 78,000 in Brazil, 45,000 in the United Kingdom and 38,000 in Mexico.

## VISUAL TREAT



Fireworks light up the night sky over the manmade Palm Jumeirah archipelago in Dubai

PTI PHOTO

## Turmeric compound could kill certain viruses: Study



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Beijing, July 19:** Aficionados of Indian food already know about the medicinal properties of turmeric. Now researchers have found that a natural compound found in this commonly used spice could help eliminate certain viruses.

At higher doses, the compound was also found to kill virus particles.

Infection with TGEV causes a disease called transmissible gastroenteritis in piglets, which is characterised by diarrhoea, severe dehydration and death.

TGEV is highly infectious and is invariably fatal in piglets younger than two weeks, thus posing a major threat to the global swine industry. There are currently no approved treatments for alpha-coron-

aviruses and although there is a vaccine for TGEV, it is not effective in preventing the spread of the virus.

To determine the potential antiviral properties of curcumin, the research team treated experimental cells with various concentrations of the compound, before attempting to infect them with TGEV.

They found that higher concentrations of curcumin reduced the number of virus particles in the cell culture.

The research suggests that curcumin affects TGEV in a number of ways: by directly killing the virus before it is able to infect the cell, by integrating with the viral envelope to 'inactivate' the virus, and by altering the metabolism of cells to prevent viral entry.

Curcumin has been shown to inhibit the replication of some types of virus, including dengue virus, hepatitis B and Zika virus.

The compound has also been found to have a number of significant biological effects, including antitumor, anti-inflammatory and antibacterial activities.

short video app still currently shares its headquarters with ByteDance in Beijing. While TikTok was released in China in 2016, it soared to worldwide acclaim in 2017 when it became available on iOS and Android in most other markets throughout the globe.

The app found even more popularity in the US market in 2018 when it merged with Musical.ly and became the most downloaded app in the App Store in 2018 and 2019. TikTok has already been downloaded over two billion times globally, since its inception.



Going forward, we do estimate an increased demand for personal transportation and two wheelers as people would be wary of using public transport. This we believe will augur well for us and for the industry as a whole

SIDDHARTHA LAL | MD, EICHER MOTORS

## ALLIANCE AIR TO BRING BASTAR INTO AVIATION MAP

Air India's regional subsidiary Alliance Air is all set to bring the remote Bastar area of Chhattisgarh on India's aviation map by connecting Jagdalpur to Raipur and Hyderabad. Accordingly, the airline will commence flights from August 5, 2020 with all inclusive one way fares



## of the day quote

While the number of untraceable exporters as a percentage of total number of exporters is not much yet untraceability of such a large number of businesses requires concerted efforts to trace them and bring them to books

SHARAD KUMAR SARAF | PRESIDENT, FIEO

We feel that Canada can be a very important market for Indian food and beverages industry as Canada has a large population, about 2.4 million, of the Indian diaspora

MOHIT SINGLA | CHAIRMAN, TPCI

The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed public health to the top of global agenda. At RB, we see the need for a new paradigm that brings together the highest quality scientific-based evidence and informed public health recommendations to generate large-scale behaviour change for a cleaner, healthier world

LAXMAN NARASIMHAN | CEO, RECKITT BENCKISER

## SHORT TAKES

### Excitel eyes fund raise

**New Delhi:** Broadband service provider Excitel is in talks with investors to raise ₹200 crore in funding as it looks to expand FTTH (fibre to the home) deployment on its network and establish presence in 50 cities by December 2021. The company, which has about 4 lakh subscribers, currently operates in nine cities including Delhi-NCR, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Vijayawada, Kanpur, Lucknow, Jaipur, Jhansi and Guntur.

### 'Aim to gain market share'

**New Delhi:** Drug major Sun Pharma aims to gain market share in all the verticals it is present in amid challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, as per a company official. "Our endeavour will be to gain market share in each of our business by doing better. Despite the near-term uncertainties related to COVID-19, we hope to be able to do better consistently," Sun Pharmaceutical Industries MD Dilip Shanghvi said in an analyst call.

### M&M Finance posts ₹156 cr profit

**Mumbai:** Mahindra and Mahindra Financial Services has reported more than two-fold jump in standalone net profit to ₹156 crore in the quarter ending June helped by cost rationalisation measures and lower funding cost. It had reported a profit after tax of ₹68 crore in the same quarter of last year. On a consolidated basis, the lender reported a profit after tax of ₹432 crore during the quarter as against ₹108 crore last year.

### Cost overruns by 401 infra projects

**New Delhi:** As many as 401 infrastructure projects, each worth ₹150 crore or more, have been hit by cost overruns of over ₹4.02 lakh crore owing to delays and other reasons, according to a report. The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation monitors infrastructure projects worth ₹150 crore and above. Of the 1,692 such projects, 401 projects reported cost overruns and 552 projects time escalation.

# 'Downgrading credit rating amid pandemic limits policy options'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 19:** Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has made a strong case for rating agencies to refrain from frequent rating downgrades during the prevailing COVID-19 pandemic, which has put economies across the globe under stress and raised the need to increase spending even at the cost of enlarging deficits.

Participating in the 3rd G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting under the Saudi Arabian Presidency through video conferencing, Sitharaman said that procyclicality of credit rating downgrades by the rating agencies was an issue in current times, especially with regard to its deterrent impact on policy options, particularly for emerging market economies such as India.

The economic stress which the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about has not been seen by the rating agencies differently as they downgraded their ratings for several economies, including India.

In early June, Moody's downgraded India's rating by a notch to 'Baa3' for the first time in two decades. Fitch Ratings has also revised downward its rating outlook for India from stable to negative, while S&P Global Ratings affirmed 'BBB-' credit ratings for India.

A rating downgrade in current times puts extra stress on the governments and the industries to mobilise overseas funding for domestic spending. It also impacts the investment cycle.

## DETERRENT IMPACT

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In early June, Moody's downgraded India's rating by a notch to 'Baa3' for the first time in two decades

The FM said that the G-20 Action Plan in the COVID-19 times would require international coordination in addressing the spill-over effects of exit strategies



Sitharaman said that the G-20 Action Plan in the COVID-19 times would require international coordination in addressing the spill-over effects of exit strategies.

Emphasising that the Action Plan needs to reflect on how the economies are balancing their supply side and demand side measures in response to Covid-19, the Finance Minister shared with her counterparts how India is working on ensuring this balance through credit schemes for greater liquidity, direct benefit transfers, and employment guarantee schemes.

In this regard, she specifically referred to India's comprehensive economic package to address recovery and growth amounting to over ₹295 billion, about 10 per cent of the country's GDP.

The G-20 meeting was organised to discuss the global economic outlook amid the evolving Covid-19 pandemic crisis along with other G20 Finance Track priorities for the year 2020.

In the first session, Sitharaman talked about the G20 Action Plan in response to Covid-19 which was endorsed by the G20 Finance Ministers and central bank Governors in their previous meeting on April 15.

This G20 Action Plan lists a list of collective commitments under the pillars of Health Response, Economic Response, Strong and Sustainable Recovery and International Financial Coordination, aimed at coordinating G20 efforts to fight the pandemic.

## BIZ BUZZ

### Edelweiss goes asset-light; turns focus on retail credit

**Mumbai:** In a drastic business overhaul, the Edelweiss Group will be completely exiting the wholesale credit business by 2022, shifting its focus solely to retail lending along with asset and wealth management verticals. Since the IL&FS bankruptcy-induced liquidity crisis in the shadow banking sector in September 2018, the group has been reducing its wholesale loan book and it is down 43% from peak in FY18. The group will be selling down ₹3,000 crore more of wholesale loans by March and completely exiting by 2022, says group chairman and CEO Rashesh Shah. Wholesale lending has been the mainstay for the 25-year-old group for long, but since IL&FS pulled down the whole industry, quantum of sticky loans, mostly extended to commercial realty, ballooned forcing it to re-align the focus now.



### Fuel price hike may push up freight charges, say truckers bodies

**Mumbai:** Demanding monthly or quarterly revision in diesel prices, which saw an increase for 23 days on the trot last month, truckers bodies Sunday warned that transporters may be forced to increase freight charges by 20% as the daily hikes in fuel prices are making operations "unviable". Fuel charges account for as much as 65% of the operating cost of a truck. Toll charges are another major component, which is about 20% of the operating cost. "Already the demand is low and the idling of the vehicles (trucks which are off-road) is at about 55%. It has become difficult to sustain operations. The road transport sector is devastated due to back-to-back lockdowns amid COVID-19," Bal Malikit Singh, chairman core committee and former president of All India Motors Transport Congress (AIMTC) said in a statement.



# Tata Motors announces lucrative offers on PVs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** Country's leading automaker, Tata Motors, along with its dealer partners in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack (Dion Automotives and Trupti Enterprises in Bhubaneswar, and Gugnani Auto Cars in Cuttack), is inviting customers to claim attractive offers on its entire fleet of passenger vehicles (PVs).

The company offers packages on hatchbacks, sedans and SUVs - Tiago, Tigor, Nexon and Harrier with multiple options for easy financing, affordable EMIs and long tenure loans.

"Customers can choose from three value adding options while paying their final EMI. (i) They can pay their last installment as a bullet EMI (approximately



### The company offers packages on hatchbacks, sedans and SUVs - Tiago, Tigor, Nexon and Harrier

₹90,000 on the loan of ₹5 lakh) and take full ownership of the vehicle; (ii) choose to roll over the loan period for a further period

of 1 year; (iii) exchange the vehicle at the end of tenure for a brand new Tata vehicle as an upgrade and avail finance facility on thereto," Vashist said.

In case customers do not want to avail the bullet EMI option with five year loan tenure, they can take the loan for a period of seven years upfront, with step up option of lower EMI for the first 12 months.

## COVID-19 STRESS

# State govt reschedules banks' working hours



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** Odisha government is in its path to contain and prevent the COVID-19 spread across the state by imposing several guidelines and lockdowns. Recently, the state government imposed lockdown in four Covid-affected districts and a Municipal Corporation area for 14 days till July 31.

In the meantime, the government has also directed the banks under the aforementioned lockdown areas, to offer preventive guidelines while offering banking services to the customers.

In its order July 17, the state government asked banks to operate with not more than 25% of their manpower for essential banking transactions during the said lockdown period.

The government partially modified an earlier order for banks' working hours. "All banks operating in the jurisdiction of

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, Ganjam, Cuttack and Jajpur districts and Rourkela Municipal Corporation (Sundergarh district) shall function from 8 am to 2 pm with customer service hours from 8 am to 1 pm," read the notification.

"In view of the lockdown, it felt necessary to reschedule the working hours of all the banks in the areas under lockdown, to morning hours and allow operation with a manpower of up to 50% of their total strength, to avoid heavy rush in the bank premises and ensuring proper distancing," mentioned the government's notification.

The working hour order will come into effect from July 20 (today) till July 31 (month-end). The banks are asked to follow the norms strictly. "The district administration and local police will provide the required support to the banks in order to ensure effective physical distancing, as and where required," the notification concluded.

## JIO ADDS 7 LAKH USERS DURING JAN-MARCH: TRAI

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 19:** A leading telecom service provider Reliance Jio added over 1.9 lakh subscribers in the month of March 2020, as per the mobile subscriber data released by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), recently.

"State-owned telecom major BSNL added about 52,000 subscribers in the same month. Other telecom majors like Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea lost 1.07 lakh subscribers and 1.83 lakhs subscribers in March, respectively," TRAI's report claims.

Also, the TRAI report says that Jio added over 7 lakh new subscribers in the state in the first three months of 2020. During the same period other telecom majors like Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea together lost over 6 lakh subscribers in the state, as per the subscriber data released by TRAI.



Overall mobile subscriber base in Odisha witnessed a decline of 47,595 subscribers in the month. As per the TRAI data for March 2020, Jio leads the market with 1,25,15,137 subscribers and 37.55% customer market share. Jio further consolidates its position in Pan-India level as the no. 1 mobile service provider with addition of around 47 lakh subscribers in March 2020, as per the data released by TRAI.

## So far, FPIs pull out ₹9,015 cr in July

**New Delhi:** Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) remained net sellers in Indian markets in July so far as they pulled out ₹9,015 crore from equities and debt securities with the surging markets providing profit booking opportunity amid concerns over rising cases of COVID-19. According to depositories' data, FPIs withdrew ₹6,058 crore from equities and ₹2,957 crore from the debt segment on a net basis during July 1-17. The net outflow from Indian markets stood at ₹9,015 crore during the period under review. The latest withdrawal has come after investment of ₹24,053 crore by FPIs in domestic markets in June.

# 'Hiring outlook bleak for manufacturing sector'

THE OVERALL CAPACITY UTILISATION IN MANUFACTURING HAS WITNESSED A DECLINE TO 61.5% IN Q4 2019-20

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 19:** The employment scenario that worsened amid the pandemic is unlikely to see a revival any time soon, as a survey by FICCI shows that most of the companies in the manufacturing sector, a major employer in the country, are unlikely to hire more workforce in the next three months.

The FICCI's Quarterly Survey on Indian Manufacturing Sector for the April-June quarter showed that around 85% of the respondents from the sector are unlikely to hire additional workforce in the next three months compared with 78% in the fourth quarter of 2019-20. The survey painted a very grim situation in the sector as only 10% of the respondents in the manufacturing sector reported an increase in production in the first quarter of fiscal 2020-21.



"The percentage of respondents reporting higher production in the first quarter of 2020-21 has fallen significantly vis-a-vis the Q4 of 2019-20. The proportion of respondents reporting higher output during April-June 2020 fell to just 10% compared with Q4 of 2019-20 (15%,"

said the FICCI's latest quarterly survey painting a dismal scenario compared with previous few quarters of 2019.

The survey elicited responses from over 300 manufacturing units in both large and SME segments with a combined annual turnover

of over ₹2.5 lakh crore.

Respondents expecting low or same production totalled 90% in Q1 2020-21, which was 85% in Q4 of 2019-20.

The overall capacity utilisation in manufacturing has witnessed a decline to 61.5% in Q4 2019-20 compared with 76% in Q3 2019-20, as per the survey.

The future investment outlook looks subdued as only 22% respondents reported plans for capacity additions in the next six months compared with 28% in the previous quarter.

High raw material prices, high cost of finance, uncertainty in demand, shortage of skilled labour and working capital, high logistics cost, low domestic and global demand due to imposition of lockdown to contain spread of coronavirus are some of the major constraints affecting the expansion plans of the

respondents.

The average capacity utilisation for Q4 2019-20 has decreased for all sectors, except medical devices as well as metals and metal products, wherein average capacity utilisation has remained the same in Q4 of 2019-20 compared to Q3 2019-20.

Further, the FICCI survey also showed that in certain areas like automotive, textiles machinery and leather and footwear firms are looking at alternative sources of inputs and raw material.

In terms of back-to-business status, the survey noted that on an average, firms are operating (depending on sectors) between 28 to 63% of their capacities with a workforce deployment ranging from 33 to 57%.

This assessment is also reflective in order books as 85% of the respondents in April-June 2020-21 expected lesser orders as against 54% in January-March 2019.

SHORT TAKES

Archer fined

**Manchester:** The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has officially warned speedster Jofra Archer and fined him an 'undisclosed amount' for breaching the bio-security protocols ahead of the second Test against the West Indies. The fast bowler broke the bio-bubble and left Monday for his home in Brighton. The unauthorised visit saw him getting dropped from the ongoing second Test at the Old Trafford. "Following a disciplinary hearing held Friday evening, July 17, England cricketer Jofra Archer has been fined an undisclosed amount and received an official written warning after admitting to breaching the team's bio-secure protocols Monday 13," the ECB said.

Saif's revelation

**Mumbai:** Actor Saif Ali Khan revealed how former England cricketer Geoff Boycott's comments once annoyed his father - former India captain Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi. "Boycott, who I really looked up to, made me really angry one day. He said: 'I heard about your father, it's not possible to play Test cricket with one eye'. I told my father that, and he got really annoyed. He said, 'Well, I was bloody good with two eyes. I'm just good with one. That was the only arrogant remark I ever heard him make,'" stated Saif. Mansur Ali lost vision in his right eye when he was only 21. In spite of that he led India in 40 of 46 Tests he played in, and won nine of them.

Djokovic recovers

**Belgrade:** World No. 1 tennis player Novak Djokovic has returned to training after recovering from coronavirus. Boris Bosnjakovic, head coach at the 'Novak Tennis Centre' in Belgrade posted pictures on his Instagram handle of the Serbian going through the motions, along with compatriot Filip Krajinovic. It should be stated here that Djokovic was one of several tennis players who tested positive for COVID-19 during his Adria World Tour. The 17-time Grand Slam winner attracted criticism for the lack of social distancing measures.

Humpy loses

**Chennai:** India's top woman player Koneru Humpy went down to Alexandra Kosteniuk 5-7 of Russia in the final of the fourth leg of the Women's Speed Chess Championships here Sunday. Humpy, the World Rapid Champion, lost the opening game but bounced back to win the next and level the final with some brilliant play. The two were involved in a close battle and played out interesting games before the Russian, a former World Champion, sealed the win against the World No. 2.

Bucknor's woes

**New Delhi:** Steve Bucknor retired from umpiring in 2009 after officiating in 128 Tests and 181 ODIs. For much of his career, he had an unblemished record but that was somewhat undone by few errors that he made in his final years. Among his wrong decisions were the blunders during the infamous 2008 Sydney Test between India and Australia. "I made two mistakes in the Sydney Test in 2008. Mistake one, which happened when India were doing well, allowed an Australian batsman to get a hundred. Mistake two, on day five, might have cost India the game. Those two mistakes seem to have haunted me," Bucknor was quoted as saying.

Racial abuse

**Bristol:** Police have launched an investigation after Bristol City striker Famara Diedhiou was targeted with racism online after missing a penalty in the second-tier Championship. The Senegal international hit the post Saturday from the spot in a 0-1 loss at Swansea. It ended his team's chances of reaching the playoffs to make the Premier League. Diedhiou later tweeted "Why??" alongside a screenshot of a Twitter user who sent him a message consisting of three banana emojis. The police are investigating the matter.

# Complaints galore, BCCI sacks GM Cricket Operations, Saba Karim

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 19:** The Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI) GM Cricket Operations, Saba Karim has been asked to leave, insiders said Sunday. His position has been under scrutiny for a while and this agency had reported June 26 that he was under the scanner. In fact, even in the Apex Council meeting Friday, it was KVP Rao who discussed and presented the roadmap for domestic cricket with officials. It should also be stated here that Rao had played under Karim in the Bihar team.

A BCCI functionary said that the former Indian cricketer's role has been under the scanner ever since the current dispensation under Sourav Ganguly took charge. Also the outgoing women selectors informed them of Karim's constant interference in selection matters. It could have been the final nail in the coffin. According to many, it



was because of Karim that the controversy between Mithali Raj and Harmanpreet Kaur surfaced. "Saba was not invited to present the changes in BCCI domestic structure at the recently concluded

Apex Council meeting. Instead, Rao made the presentation, making it clear what was in store," the functionary said.

"His appointment has been in scrutiny since the new office-

bearers took over last year. The eligibility was tweaked to suit Karim in a closed-door meeting between Vinod Rai and Rahul Johri after the appointment process had commenced. This severely disad-

vantaged the others who had the same qualifications but weren't even aware that they could apply," the functionary explained.

Another former BCCI official said that Karim's style of functioning was incorrect as he often came across as arrogant. "In my experience of working with him, a few things stood out. However, he was arrogant with the members who would have a genuine query. He lacked the ability to think his decisions through and they were decisions that impacted domestic cricket deeply. He would take credit for other people's hard work," the official stated.

Echoing the sentiments, another BCCI functionary said even in the National Cricket Academy (NCA)

part, there have been official complaints against some of the recruitments done under Karim.

"Saba's involvement in the appointment of coaches and other staff at the NCA is also under investigation. A senior BCCI employee has sent in several complaints to the office-bearers highlighting how people were given backdoor entry into the NCA," the functionary said.

"The BCCI members have raised the issue of appointment of women's team support staff without following the process. The issue was brought to notice by a senior employee of the BCCI and the BCCI legal team confirmed that the regulations were not followed in the appointments," the functionary added.

The 52-year-old Karim played one Test and 34 ODIs for India. This development comes after BCCI CEO Johri's resignation was accepted earlier this month.

## FA CUP HOLDERS KNOCKED OUT BY COUNTER-ATTACKING ARSENAL

# Gunners ambush Man City



**TERRIFIC FINISH:** Arsenal's Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (in red and white jersey) scores the first of his two goals against Manchester City in the FA Cup semifinal played Saturday

AGENCIES

**London, July 19:** Arsenal ambushed FA Cup holders Manchester City as Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored a goal in each half to secure

a 2-0 semifinal victory at an empty Wembley Stadium here Saturday.

Days after Mikel Arteta's side beat Premier League champions Liverpool the Spaniard outfoxed his managerial mentor Pep

Guardiola as his players executed his plan to perfection.

Predictably Manchester City enjoyed the majority of possession, but Arsenal were gritty and disciplined as well as being lethal on the counter-

attack as they reached their 21st FA Cup final. Standing in the way of Arsenal's 14th FA Cup triumph and a trophy for Arteta in his first season as a manager will be either Chelsea or Manchester United who play Sunday.

City dominated the early exchanges, pinning Arsenal back, but were stopped in their tracks when Aubameyang produced a neat finish in the 19th minute following a flowing end-to-end move.

Pep Guardiola's side never fully recovered and, just when they were beginning to exert some real pressure after the break, Aubameyang produced another sublime finish, racing through to fire past goalkeeper Ederson in the 71st minute.

Arsenal then comfortably soaked up City's late pressure as they ended a miserable run of seven successive defeats against the former.

"It was a great result against one of the best teams in the world. We were humble, we understood the way we had to play and we took the opportunities to score," Arsenal defender David Luiz, who has been transformed in recent weeks, said.

Arsenal's first goal could have come straight from the Guardiola textbook. An 18-pass move that started in Arsenal's own area, ended with Aubameyang conjuring a clever finish to guide Nicolas Pepe's cross in off the post.

# Harikrishna finishes on top at Biel tourney



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Chennai, July 19:** Indian Grandmaster (GM) P Harikrishna finished on top in the ACCENTUS Chess960 tournament, part of the 53rd Biel Chess Festival 2020, with 5.5 points from seven rounds.

Harikrishna (Elo 2690) remained unbeaten through the seven rounds and benefitted from the loss of Poland's Radoslaw Wojtaszek in the final round to Swiss player Noel Studer to claim the top spot late Saturday night.

German Vincent Keymer, 15, was the surprise package in the event (also known as Fischer random chess). He claimed second spot with five points while Wojtaszek, with 4.5 points, took the third spot.

Harikrishna started with a draw against England's Michael Adams and posted wins over Alexander

Donchenko and Studer of Switzerland in the second and third rounds respectively.

The 34-year old Indian then settled for draws against Keymer and Wojtaszek in rounds four and five before victories in the next two rounds over Romain Edouard and Spain's David Anton Guijaro, the highest-ranked player in the tournament, saw him emerge triumphant.

GM Arkadij Naiditsch replaced GM Salem Saleh as the UAE player could not make the trip due to the COVID-19 travel restrictions.

The tournament continues Sunday with the rapid event and the classical event will begin July 21 after a day's rest Monday.

The Biel Chess Festival is being held by adhering to all health protocols due to the pandemic, according to the tournament website.

# Brathwaite, Brooks hold Windies innings together



AGENCIES

**Manchester, July 19:** West Indies were propped up by some resolute knocks by Kraigg Brathwaite (75, 165b, 8x4) and Shamarr Brooks (60 batting) as they reached 227 for four at tea on the fourth day of the second bio-bubble Test at the Old Trafford here Sunday. Earlier hosts England, who are trailing 0-1 in the three-Test series, had declared their innings on 460 for the loss of nine wickets.

Brathwaite was associated in small but important partnerships during his tenure at the pitch. He put on 54 runs for the second wicket with Alzarri Joseph (32, 52b, 3x4). He followed it up with another partnership for the third wicket of 53 runs with Shai Hope (25). Then came the most important stand as Brathwaite and Brooks put on 76 runs for the fourth wicket in a little over 20 overs. The two frustrated the England bowlers with some determined and dogged approach.

Brathwaite finally fell to Ben Stokes who caught his off his own bowling when the batsman was looking good for a century. It was

## Umpires disinfect ball after Sibley uses saliva

**Manchester:** The ICC's new guidelines were put into practice Sunday after England's Dom Sibley inadvertently used saliva on the ball. It prompted on-field umpires to disinfect the red cherry during the second Test against West Indies here. This is the first time that umpires intervened for sanitising the ball since the new COVID-19 guidelines were announced by the ICC. The incident happened just ahead of lunch before the beginning of the 42nd over when umpire Michael Gough was seen rubbing a tissue on both sides of the ball.

a normal delivery down the leg side which Brathwaite could have hit anywhere. However, he got a leading edge while trying to flick and the catch was gleefully accepted by the bowler himself. **Brief scores:** England 460 for nine declared; West Indies 227 for four (Kraigg Brathwaite 75, Shamarr Brooks 60 batting). Match to continue.

# AUSTRALIAN BATSMAN LOOKING FORWARD TO INDIA SERIES Bumrah hard to tackle: Labuschagne

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 19:** He has played just one Test against India but Australian batsman Marnus Labuschagne is quite confident of 'staying a step ahead' of the world-class pace attack come December even though Jasprit Bumrah is 'hard to get past'. Labuschagne in his first 14 Tests for Australia has been quite sensational. He has an average of 63 with four hundreds and seven half centuries.

The Australian is eagerly awaiting the four-match Test series against India though he knows it will be an acid test for him.

"They are all good bowlers but it is hard to get past Jasprit Bumrah," the 26-year-old said Sunday. "He has the ability to consistently bowl around 140 kmph and swing the ball when conditions are suitable. He is also able to angle the ball back in at the stumps. You always want to test yourself against the best. Jasprit is probably the leader of that Indian attack," Labuschagne added.

Labuschagne also feels that Ishant Sharma, in the past two years, has been phenomenal. "Ishant has been very good during the last couple of years. Coming over here and angling the ball back into right-handers, that would be a good challenge for us also," said Labuschagne. The middle-order batsman also said that he wouldn't have made it big without the support of former Australian skipper Steve Smith. "I have learnt from him and the way he goes about his game and added that to my game which makes me better as a player. We both love talking about cricket and batting so I am lucky enough to learn from him," said the youngster.

What's the best advice that Smith has given him? "One thing I have



Jasprit Bumrah is the best Indian bowler at the moment says Labuschagne

**Bumrah has the ability to consistently bowl around 140 kmph and swing the ball when conditions are suitable. Hard to get past**

MARNUS LABUSCHAGNE

learnt from Steve is the ability to play the conditions. Knowing which bowlers to take on and not just playing a generic game," he revealed.

Labuschagne is mightily pleased that even the great Sachin Tendulkar has praised his technique and temperament. "For someone (Tendulkar) of his calibre speaking highly of me is an amazing feeling. I haven't yet met him in person.

We missed each other on a few occasions. I can't wait to meet him as there is a lot to learn from a player of his stature," Labuschagne stated.

At 26, Labuschagne could well be considered a future captaincy candidate. He would accept it graciously if the opportunity comes but right now, the focus is to cement his place further in the current set-up.

"I think it's every kid's dream to captain their country. So, if I say that I wouldn't want that, it wouldn't be true. I would like to captain my country as it will be a great privilege and honour," Labuschagne said. "But right now, it's just about making sure that I focus being Australia's No. 3 in Tests and No.4 in ODIs. I want to make those spots my own and help Australia win," he added.

# HAMILTON DRIVES TO EASY VICTORY AT HUNGARIAN GP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Budapest, July 19:** Budapest, July 19: World Champion Lewis Hamilton took the lead for the first time this season by cruising to a convincing victory in the Hungarian Grand Prix here Sunday. The British driver who had won a record pole position for the 90th time Saturday maintained his lead from the start.

It was the Briton's eighth victory on this twisting track situated 20 minutes outside of the Hungarian capital. In the process, Hamilton matched Michael Schumacher's feat of winning eight times at a certain venue. In Schumacher's case his victories came at Magny-Cours in France.

With three rounds complete in the truncated Formula One season due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hamilton now leads Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas by five points. Bottas has won the first race of the season.

The 35-year-old Hamilton led from the start to the finish. The only thing that could threaten him was rain. Hamilton even told Mercedes team members at the paddock over radio that he was seeing some droplets on the car's windscreen.

But the rain did not fall during the 70-lap race, leaving Hamilton to win on a surface quickly drying from the start. Max Verstappen of Red Bull and Bottas finished second and third respectively.

"It's been a good outing and I really enjoyed this run," said Hamilton who clocked his fastest time on the 69th lap. The British driver had at one point of time built up a 22-second lead over Verstappen. In the end, he was a clear winner by five seconds.