



RELIVING SCHOOL DAYS

Actor Taapsee Pannu posts a picture on Instagram where she poses in school uniform with friends

LEISURE P2



BLAST NEAR OIL WELL

A massive blast occurred near Oil India Limited's Baghjan well in Assam, injuring 3 foreign experts

TWO STATES P7



HOME NOT SAFE?

People are more likely to contract COVID-19 from their own family members, a study finds

INTERNATIONAL P10

SHORT TAKES

PM lures US firms to invest in India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday invited US companies to invest in India's healthcare, infrastructure, defence, energy, farm and insurance sectors, saying the country offers openness, opportunities and options for investments. "Today, there is global optimism towards India. This is because India offers a perfect combination of openness, opportunities and options. Let me elaborate. India celebrates openness in people and in governance," Modi said while addressing the US-India Business Council.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Don't worry about us. Just save these documents. We will need them for NRC

4 RS MPs from state take oath

New Delhi: Four newly-elected Rajya Sabha MPs from Odisha took the oath of office at Rajya Sabha chamber in Parliament House here, Wednesday, while adhering to physical distancing norms. Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MPs - Subhash Singh, Muzibulla Khan, Sujeet Kumar and Mamata Mahanta - are among 45 parliamentarians, who were administered oath by Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu.

STATE TO GO FOR CREDIT LIFELINE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Amid shortfall in revenue collection, the state government has decided to go for massive borrowing to mobilise funds required in the battle against COVID-19, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy said here Wednesday.

This decision was taken at the Council of Ministers meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Wednesday. Briefing media persons about the decisions, Tripathy said that at this time, the most important priority of the government is to save lives. Finance department has presented a detailed proposal titled 'Life before Everything Else' before the council.

"The revenue collection has gone down and the fund flow from Centre will also be affected due to the pandemic. Therefore, the state government has decided to go for market borrowing to meet the capital requirement," Tripathy said.

While allowing the states to borrow up to 5 per cent of the gross state domestic product (GSDP) for this fiscal year instead of the existing 3 per cent, the Centre has set certain conditions for the states. The state government has started work-

FUNDING BATTLE AGAINST COVID-19

- ◆ State to borrow from **CAMPA and OMBAD funds** with a fixed 3% interest rate
- ◆ **Over ₹1,900 crore** spent in COVID management so far
- ◆ No new scheme to be taken up; **ongoing social schemes** to continue
- ◆ There will be no compromise in spending for **health sector**
- ◆ Priority will be given to **employment generation, agriculture & allied activities**



ing for implementation of the reforms to enhance the limit, he said, adding, "Now, we can borrow up to 3.5 per cent of the GSDP as there is no restriction and government will go for it." The state has so far borrowed nearly ₹95k crore including ₹4830 crore in this fiscal.

During the meeting, the council was apprised of the present Covid situation in the state and steps taken in this effect. The state government has so far utilized over ₹1,900 crore for Covid management. While ₹624 crore was spent from

State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), ₹340 crore from Chief Minister Relief Fund (CMRF), ₹875 crore by Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and ₹73 crore from MLA LAD fund.

The council also prepared a roadmap to augment revenue collection. It was decided to mobilise public money sanctioned under different schemes and remained idle at various levels. The state has also planned to go for out of court settlement for revenue dues pending due to litigations.

Disengagement in Ladakh slows down

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 22: China has not pulled back troops from all the areas that it had intruded into Ladakh near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in May, government sources said Wednesday.

After several rounds of military talks, the Chinese have not held up their part in the disengagement process in eastern Ladakh, where 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a clash with the Chinese on June 15. China's troops are still present in the Depsang Plains region, Gogra and the Fingers region along the Pangong Lake where India and China had started a mutual disengagement by creating a buffer zone between both sides.

There has been disengagement in Galwan, Hot Springs and a part of the Fingers region along Pangong Lake. However, sources say there has been no movement in Gogra as expected or in the Depsang plains. It also appears that the Chinese do not want to move east from Finger 5, which they illegally occupy, to Finger 8 - their traditional base in the contested area.

According to sources, the Chinese are reluctant to move out of the Finger 5 area and retreat as they want to create an observation post in the Finger area. "The Chinese have not shown any signs of deescalation as they continue to maintain their heavy troop deployment of almost 40,000 troops supported by heavy weaponry like air defence systems, armoured personnel carriers and long-range artillery in front and depth areas," news agency ANI quoted sources as saying.

The last round of military talks between the neighbours was on July 14-15 with both sides agreeing to mutually monitor the disengagement process. There has been no major progress since then.

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Chariots of Holy Trinity to be preserved in Puri

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, July 22: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) would preserve the three chariots of this year's Rath Yatra to remember the uniqueness of the festival which was organised without the congregation of devotees in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

As per a decision taken by the temple administration, the three chariots would be displayed for devotees and people at Srijagannath Ballav Mutt in the Holy City. "This year's Rath Yatra has added a new chapter to the history of Srimandir. The Shree Jagannath Temple Managing Committee and the Chhatisha Niyog of Srimandir had passed a resolution to preserve the three chariots of this year's Rath Yatra. Today, we held a meeting to deliberate on the



process to preserve the chariots at Srijagannath Ballav mutt," said SJTA chief administrator Krishan Kumar. "The three chariots have been parked at the Lions' Gate of Srimandir. A technical team would be formed to dismantle the chariots with utmost care and then reconstruct them at Jagannath Ballav mutt for preservation purpose," said a senior official of SJTA.

Notably, there was much uncertainty with regard to the organisation of this year's Rath Yatra due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, the annual festival was organised without the congregation of devotees on the Grand Road in accordance with the Supreme Court order.

Rajasthan drama in apex court now

AGENCIES

Jaipur, July 22: A day after the Sachin Pilot camp got a breather from the Rajasthan High Court, Assembly Speaker CP Joshi on Wednesday said that he will file a Special Leave Petition in the Supreme Court to avert what he called a constitutional crisis in the state.

"The Speaker (of the Assembly) holds the right to disqualify MLAs. No one can interfere in the Speaker's decision," Joshi told the media here.

On Tuesday, the High Court had asked him to defer till Friday action against rebel MLAs led by Pilot, who was sacked as PCC chief and deputy CM on July 14 by the Congress leadership.

Joshi has served disqualification notices on dissident Congress MLAs for remaining absent from two successive Congress Legislative Party meetings after Pilot raised a



Amid political impasse, ED raids Gehlot's brother in connection with a decade-old fertiliser scam

banner of revolt against the leadership of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. Team Pilot has responded with a petition asking to be heard before the court decides on the Speaker's request. **GEHLOT WRITES TO PM** Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging attempts to topple his government and naming Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. In the letter written on Sunday, the chief minister accused Shekhawat, other BJP leaders and some "over ambitious leaders" of his own party for being involved in the "conspiracy".

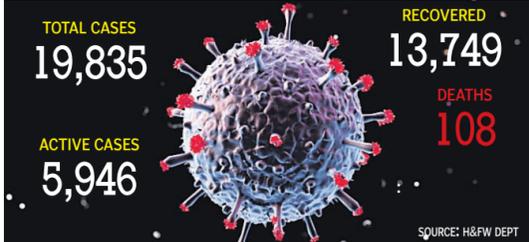
Daily spike breaches 1k-mark

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The state saw a record single-day jump of 1,078 COVID-19 cases Wednesday, while the virus toll rose to 108 as five more persons succumbed to the viral infection, an official said.

The fresh infections have taken the state's virus count to 19,835, of which 6,387 cases are active and 13,309 people have recovered so far, added the official.

Ganjam, the worst-hit district in the state, reported three fresh fatalities, while Gajapati and Kandhamal registered one death each, said the official, adding that



all the deceased were suffering from diabetes.

Ganjam accounted for 62 of the 108 COVID-19 deaths reported in the state so far, while other dis-

tricts that registered a high number of such fatalities are Khurda (14), Cuttack (nine) and Gajapati (six). Deaths due to the coronavirus were also reported in 11 other districts, the official said.

43 CASES REPORTED FROM BERHAMPUR CIRCLE JAIL

Swab samples of as many as 43 persons from Berhampur Circle Jail including 33 inmates, jailer and 10 staffers tested positive Wednesday. All infected inmates were kept under isolation inside the jail campus, following detection. Likewise, the infected jail staffers were asked to remain in home quarantine. However, they were also advised to get themselves admitted to Covid-19 care facilities for treatment, if they develop any symptom in the days ahead.

US directs China to shut consulate

AGENCIES

Beijing, July 22: China said Wednesday that the US has ordered it to close its consulate in Houston in what an official called an outrageous and unjustified move that will sabotage China-US relations.

Foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin condemned the action, which comes as tensions rise between the world's two largest economies. He warned of firm countermeasures if the US does not reverse its decision.

"The unilateral closure of China's consulate general in Houston within a short period of time is an unprecedented escalation



tion of its recent actions against China," Wang said at a daily news briefing. There was no immediate confirmation or explanation from the US side.

Media reports in Houston said that authorities had responded to reports of a fire at the consulate. Witnesses said that people were burning paper in what appeared to be trash cans, the Houston Chronicle reported, citing police.

China is considering ordering the closure of the US consulate in the central city of Wuhan, a person with direct knowledge of the matter said on Wednesday, after Washington told China to shut its consulate in the city of Houston.

China's foreign ministry did not immediately reply to a request for comment, but at a media briefing earlier on Wednesday warned of possible retaliation over the US decision.

Both the US and China were locked in a political and strategic conflict in recent months on a host of issues including the origin of the coronavirus, China's decision to implement its national security law in Hong Kong and deepening trade frictions.

MARKET WATCH

| INDEX | VARIATION |
|--------|------------------|
| SENSEX | 37871.52 ↓ 58.81 |
| NIFTY | 11132.60 ↓ 29.70 |
| DOLLAR | 74.63 ↓ ₹0.06 |
| EURO | 86.27 ↑ ₹0.86 |
| GOLD | ₹49,822 ↑ ₹295 |
| SILVER | ₹59,667 ↑ ₹2325 |

WEATHER

| | BHUB | CTK |
|----------|--------|--------|
| TEMP MAX | 31.8°C | 34.2°C |
| TEMP MIN | 24.3°C | 24.5°C |
| Humidity | 95% | 86% |
| Rainfall | Trace | 1mm |

Forecast: Generally cloudy sky

RANGABATI BILUNG Sambalpur village named after wildly popular folk song

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The Odisha government has renamed Bilung village in Sambalpur district as 'Rangabati Bilung', as the lyricist of the hugely popular 'Rangabati' song, Mitrabhanu Gountia was born in the village, a senior official said Wednesday.

The state's Revenue and Disaster Management department has renamed Bilung village in Sambalpur district as 'Rangabati Bilung' after getting no objection certificate from the Central government, the official said.

Earlier, the Sambalpur District Collector, the Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC), Board of Revenue and Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had also recommended renaming Bilung village

as 'Rangabati Bilung' revenue village.

This is a rare moment in the history of art of culture of the state, Revenue and Disaster Management secretary B P Sethi said, adding that the government declared the village after the song keeping in view its popularity among all sections of people of the state.

The Rangabati song was first recorded in All India Radio (AIR), Sambalpur in 1975-76. Keeping its wide popularity in view, the Indian Record Manufacturing Company Ltd (INRECO) also recorded this song in disc format in 1976, the disc was released in 1978-79.

Gountia, the lyricist of Rangabati song was born in Bilung village in 1942 and has composed about 1,000 Sambalpur songs.

He received Padma Sri Award in 2020 in addition to Odisha State Sangeet Natak Academy Award and Akashvani National Award for music.

Rangabati's male singer Jitendra Haripal received the Padma Shri award for the song in 2017.

The music composer for this number is Late Prabhudatta Pradhan. Rangabati has the unique

distinction of being re-created in many other regional languages of India and the song is very popular in West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar as well as Chhattisgarh.

During the 7th World Water Forum in South Korea (2015), Korean dancers performed to the tune of Rangabati.

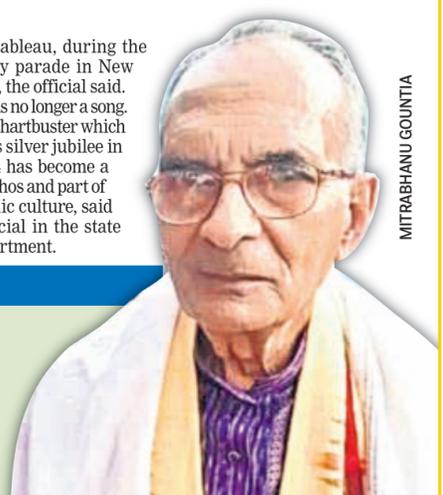
Before that, the song was officially recognized and played on

the Odisha tableau, during the Republic Day parade in New Delhi in 2007, the official said.

Rangabati is no longer a song. This unique chartbuster which celebrated its silver jubilee in the year 2004 has become a part of our ethos and part of our panoramic culture, said a senior official in the state Culture department.

UNIQUE CHARTBUSTER

- ◆ **Rangabati** has the unique distinction of being re-created in many other regional languages of India and the song is very popular in neighbouring states
- ◆ Mitrabhanu Gountia, the lyricist of the song was born in Bilung village in 1942 and has composed about 1,000 Sambalpur songs
- ◆ The song was first recorded in All India Radio (AIR), Sambalpur in 1975-76. Indian Record Manufacturing Company also recorded this song in disc format in 1976



MITRABHANU GOUNTIA

leisure



Theron Teases The Old Guard Sequel

Actress Charlize Theron does not rule out a sequel to her recently-released digital film, *The Old Guard*. *The Old Guard* dropped a while back at Netflix, and the digital platform predicts the film will reach out to 72 million households in its first four weeks, reports *variety.com*.

Raven Opens Up About Marriage

Actress-singer Raven Symone is on cloud nine ever since she married Miranda Maday, a UCLA graduate currently working as a social media manager for a mobile app that highlights secret items available at bars and restaurants.



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ARIES

You will want to catch up with old friends that you have been neglecting for some time. The stars suggest that you will enjoy yourself. Your excitement will brighten up your activities. Your frankness and honesty are what set you apart from others, says Ganesh.

TAURUS

This day you will tend to be too bossy, too harsh on your subordinates or employees and end up making them miserable as well as hostile. Their insubordination could corrode the respect you get and, in addition, make things unworkable.

GEMINI

You will try to think up creative ways to perform your daily routine to get a break from the boredom and the rut of your daily schedule. You need to mingle more with people and practice some humility.

CANCER

The day looks set to be so good that you may end up inviting jealousy and envy from people around you. The stars are favourable for matters pertaining to heart. In short, a great day for boosting love and relationships.

LEO

Your decisions today will be not only be correct, but also resolute and steadfast. Your health will be fine. At the work-place, things ought to proceed as usual. However, you will concentrate more on work today.

VIRGO

Ganesh says you realise the importance of family matters today. You have great skills when it comes to negotiations, and you will use them in settling disputes amicably. Ganesh says you have learned the lessons of life on staying level-headed, and that you keenly believe that opposition eventually leads to progress.

LIBRA

Ganesh says you will be getting good news from abroad, which will make you happy. Those of you who are searching for jobs will get good news coming your way. Ganesh says that you should not expect too much or you would feel dejected and disappointed when it is not met.

SCORPIO

You are one social butterfly today. However, shunning the gossips, you spread kindness and happiness in your social groups. People will look up to you today for this reason. What goes around, comes around; spread joy and you are sure to receive joy, says Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS

It's time for some entertainment. Movies, picnics and dining out is on your mind. Invite your beloved and enjoy quality time with each other. Also, you will spend time with your family and friends, and attend a music concert together.

CAPRICORN

You have projected yourself as a confused individual. You may have a tendency to remain in a double mind. But, today you'll come up with a very specific plan that will surprise many of the people around you.

AQUARIUS

You wish to have more than twenty-four hours in a day! You are determined to finish off your pending work but somehow you will find it extremely difficult to get the load off your shoulders.

PISCES

Ganesh feels that you will sympathize with people today. This will help you get people's good wishes. You can prove to be a good boss, co worker, husband or wife and son or daughter. Ganesh advises you to carry on with these virtues.

Taapsee relives her school days in new post

Mumbai: Actress Taapsee Pannu has gone down memory lane on Instagram, reliving her school days. She has posted a picture where she is seen posing in uniform with friends at school.

"School! This is my 12th standard. braces (for the second time), embarrassing hair (coz i was combing my curly hair) that fence (which could take those spare Extra kilos of mine for the entire years!), the batch on my coat (the only goal in my life that I set for myself n ended up achieving it) and the friends who made memories worth discussing for years after; #throwback #archive #quarantinepost,"

she wrote alongside the image.

Actress Tisca Chopra took to the comment section and wrote: "Cutie then and now".

Filmmaker Tahira Kashyap said: "Lovely picture".

Taapsee recently recalled a 'scary' time when she 'nearly' drowned in a pool as a kid. She added that it was only nine years ago that she got over the fear and learned how to swim.

Taapsee has *Hasen Dilruba*, *Rashmi Rocket*, and *Shabaash Mithu* coming up, and the Hindi remake of the German experimental thriller film *Run Lola Run*.



Urvashi gains seven kilos for Virgin Bhanupriya

Mumbai: Actress and former beauty queen Urvashi Rautela reveals how she went for method approach to bring alive her latest role.

For the title role of her new film, *Virgin Bhanupriya*, Urvashi gained seven kilos. As an actor, her challenge was primarily physical, mental and emotional, she says.

"For the character of Bhanupriya I gained seven kilos, which is 15.432 pounds, and I would say preparation is as much as an actor's job as a performance itself, because Bhanupriya's physicality, speech or persona are vastly different from my own. As an actor my challenge was primarily physical, mental, emotional and even vocal," Urvashi said.

She further said she truly wanted to imbibe the traits of her screen avatar,

Bhanupriya.

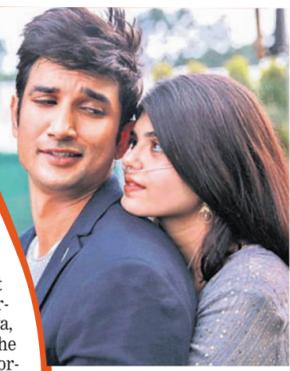
"I wanted to produce the most memorable and admirable performance, and become Bhanupriya, which required dedication," she said, adding: "So I looked at portraying Bhanupriya from a different perspective. It was very important to focus on Bhanupriya's internal problem and then express the issue through moments," she said.

Bhanupriya, played by Urvashi, is a college-going conservative girl who decides she has to lose her virginity. She thinks it should be the easiest thing in today's world. However, all her attempts go in vain and a soothsayer predicts it won't happen in her life.

"So I would always repeat moments and gestures of Bhanupriya, to allow my physical memory to build my performance on an unconscious level, so once the body remembers proper gestures, any improvisation comes naturally with your character," she explained.

The filmmaker added: "Usually, watching a film on OTT is quite an individual affair and films are released at midnight. But this is the first time we want people to come together in their homes to watch the film together."

Dil Bechara also features Sanjana Sanghi, Sahil Vaid, Swastika Mukherjee, Milind Gunaji and Saif Ali Khan. The music is by AR Rahman and the latest released song, *Khulke Jaane Ka*, sung by Arijit Singh and Shashaa Tirupati, is already winning hearts. *Dil Bechara* will release on Disney+ Hotstar and the OTT platform has decided to make the film available for free viewing to all, as a mark of respect to the late Sushant.



Dil Bechara to premiere at 7.30 pm Friday

Mumbai: *Dil Bechara*, the last film of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput, will be digitally premiered Friday evening at 7:30 IST, unlike the OTT norm of releasing films at midnight. Along with India, the film will also be available for viewers in the US, the UK and Canada, said director Mukesh Chhabra.

The filmmaker says premiering *Dil Bechara* at a specific time would give the audience a chance to enjoy it together with their loved ones and family, exactly the way they would do in the theatres. Sharing the news with IANS, Chhabra said: "We are going live with *Dil Bechara* Friday at 7:30 pm IST. People in the US, the UK and Canada can also watch it at the same time. We are announcing the time beforehand so that all the people out there can finish their work and make their plan to watch the film."

Artists brainstorm on survival of art practice during pandemic

More than 150 painters and sculptors from nine countries are participating in the 10-day online exhibition



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar: Art exhibition has always been an opportunity for an artist to understand the progression of his/her practice. However, the pandemic has put a brake on such events across the globe making the practitioners solely rely on digital technique to showcase their creations.

One such international online art exhibition is underway in Bhubaneswar with the participation of 150 artists from nine countries. Titled Artists for Artist, the virtual expo is being organised by Dhauri College of Art and Crafts, Bhubaneswar in collaboration with Kala Mitra Foundation, Hyderabad.



The 10-day exhibition was inaugurated by Ram Krishna Vedala, secretary, Lalit Kala Academi, New Delhi and Andani VG, secretary, Ideal Fine Art Society, Karnataka.

Painter Pradeep Kishore Das exhibited his works showcasing the uncertain

future of the artists during COVID-19 Tuesday, on the seventh day of the exhibition. Artist Neeraj Mitra from Delhi put his paintings and sculpture on display and shared his struggling journey with the participants. "I have mostly reflected common man's turbulence in my sculptures while my paintings speak the body languages of horses," Mitra said.

The expo witnessed the works of many celebrated artists from countries like Korea, Lebanon, Vietnam, Nepal, Hungary, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Sri Lanka showcasing 92 acrylic, 13 water colour, 18 oil paintings and 15 sculptures. Some of the prominent names from India who exhibited their creations included Prem

Singh, CS Krishnasetty, Moninder Puri, Onkar Rahi, Bairu Raghuram, Anil Kumar Sinha, Sunita Lamba, Pradosh Swain, Sajal Patra, Subhra Chand, Nibedita Pattnaik, Kalikinkar Dey, Anup Chand and Tapan Das. Bhim Prasad Sharma (Nepal), Hungarian women artist cum photographer Turso Magreta and several artists from other countries are also participating in the exhibition.

Earlier, on the inaugural day M Ramesh, president of Kala Mitra Foundation introduced the guests followed by a brief speech delivered by Panchanan Samal, principal of Dhauri College of Art and Crafts on the survival strategy to be adopted by the artists during these difficult hours.

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

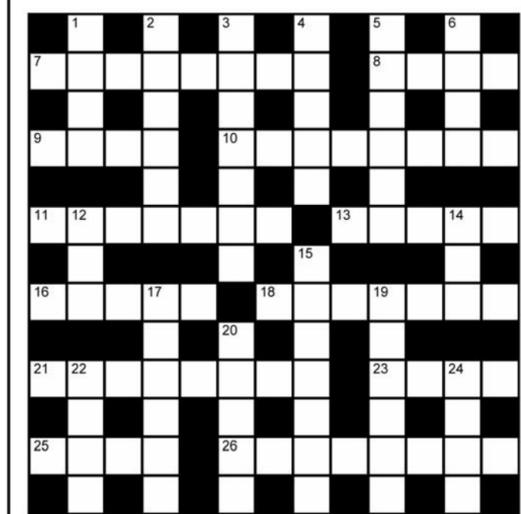


BREVITY



FUN post

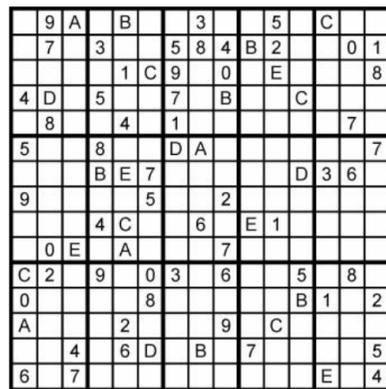
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Hermit's choice
 - 8 Karate blow
 - 9 Greek god of love
 - 10 Vinegar type
 - 11 Trade stappage
 - 13 Renaissance fiddle
 - 16 Garden tool
 - 18 Graceful antelope of Africa
 - 21 Small tuna
 - 23 Therefore
 - 25 Purple shade
 - 26 Initials, usually
 - 6 Mongolian desert
 - 12 Tourist's aid
 - 14 Migratory fish
 - 15 Hot pepper
 - 17 Adult male ducks
 - 19 Come into view
 - 20 Like shaving cream
 - 22 Praise
 - 24 Bearded farm animal
- Down**
- 1 Decant
 - 2 Sonora snooze
 - 3 Backache
 - 4 Quartet member
 - 5 Cooling-off period (3,3)

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



KILLER SPRAY

Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation and Team Admark jointly sanitise bus stop passenger shelters in the Capital City, Wednesday

LIVELIHOOD AT STAKE

Daily wagers wait for some work in Nayapalli area of Bhubaneswar, Wednesday, amid the lockdown over Covid-19



AIR, FM shows on but revenue dips

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Radio broadcasts in Odisha continue to reach the audience even though the production process at the radio stations across Odisha has been badly hit due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

With restricted movements due to lockdowns, the radio stations across the state have devised alternate strategies to ensure content production and broadcasting.

The All India Radio (AIR), Cuttack has been badly hit by the health crisis, but the undeterred broadcaster continues the broadcasting.

"Most of us chipped in to run the show. The announcers recorded their voices and contents from their home while the producers produced the content through their computers at home. Our well-coordinated approach helped us to continue radio broadcasting," a senior official from AIR, Cuttack told **OrissaPOST** requesting anonymity.

He said that radio has always been a powerful means to reach out to people during disasters. "We started broadcasting programmes on Covid prevention and awareness since February. We have aired more than 100 interviews of 'Corona Warriors' from Odisha and from across the country to inform the audience correctly to ward off the disease," he said.

The official said that at a time when several FM channels and community radio stations have forayed into the sector, AIR has carved its own niche through its global presence.

The AIR stations are now available through mobile apps-AIR Live and AIR News- which enable the audience to listen to it from anywhere in the globe. While FM Gold is serving the metropolitan cities, FM Rainbow has been trying to cater to the recreational needs of the radio lovers in states like Odisha. The availability of AIR programmes through Medium Waves also increases its penetration in remote areas.

The private FM channels, on the other hand, also had been working hard to target their audience and design their contents to cater to the needs of Covid awareness. "We used our RJs to talk more on disease management and tried interviews of celebrities and popular figures to spread awareness. We also designed several digital contents to bridge the gap," said Saubhagya Behera, Station Head, Big FM, Bhubaneswar.

He also admitted that revenue of private FM channels across the

National Broadcasting Day



OP
SPECIAL

state has dipped owing to the lockdowns. "It was heavily hit during March and April but improved a bit since then. However, we continued broadcasting. Most of us worked from home and continued productions to serve the masses," he added.

While the public broadcasters are benefited from government advertisements more, reduced advertisement flow from private play-

ers has hit the revenue of private FM channels, it was learnt.

People working in the sector also claimed that joblessness and salary cuts have marred radio broadcasting. "A number of radio broadcasters of Odisha working in other states have now returned to their own state after losing jobs while in Odisha several private FM channels have deducted salaries of the broadcasters," said Subrat Kumar

'At a time when several FM channels and community radio stations have forayed into the broadcasting sector, AIR has carved its own niche through its global presence'

Pati, an independent announcer of an FM channel and founder of Radio Bhubaneswar (online radio) said.

He said that the government has failed to fully understand the potential of radio broadcasting during such a health crisis. "Radio broadcasting during natural and health disasters has been properly harnessed in foreign countries but here we are yet to use its full potential. For example, several education and training related programmes could be aired at this juncture," he added. An official from state I&PR department, however, said the radio stations are aided through government advertisements especially in the form of jingles related to awareness against the global pandemic.

Community radios bridging info gaps

At a time when Covid-19 restrictions are in force making it tougher for the mainstream media like newspapers to reach out to people in remote areas, community radio stations seem to be doing it by reaching out to the last man standing.

Radio Swayamshakti, a community radio station at Khariar in Nuapada district, has been broadcasting programmes in Kosali language, a local dialect of Odia to help the local population.

"We use mostly Kosali to help the Kosali speakers. However, we also mix Odia as many government officers are not used to the dialect and they speak Odia. We keep the local community informed with the latest local happenings and developments in their own language, dialect. This is the beauty of community radios," said Biswajit Padhi, Station CEO of Radio Swayamshakti.

This radio station serves the local population with a reach of around 50 km and covers four blocks of Nuapada, two of Bolangir and one of Kalahandi district.

The story of Radio Bulbul from Bhadrak is also admirable. This community radio station has been broadcasting in Odia as well as Hindi. Hindi language has been



Radio Swayamshakti, a community radio station at Khariar in Nuapada district, has been broadcasting programmes in Kosali language

This radio station serves the local population with a reach of around 50 km and covers four blocks of Nuapada, two of Bolangir and one of Kalahandi district

Radio Bulbul from Bhadrak, a community radio station, has been broadcasting in Odia as well as Hindi

used to cater to the needs of a few communities from the area and others.

"Our radio station proved a vital point of authentic information during lockdown. We often roped in the district Collector and other government officials who used our medium to reach out to the public

and informed them about important government announcements besides our own programmes," said Sk Md Niyaz, Director, Radio Bulbul, Bhadrak.

Sisir Das, Station Head of Radio Surabhi from Daspalla (Nayagarh) said that community radio stations could be a vital alternative to reach out to the people during natural and other disasters.

"It is a hyper-local mode of broadcasting where we try to reach out to the population in our locality in the language they speak. Such stations can play a key role in disaster management by empowering them with authentic and useful information when other communication channels are compromised," he said.

NA Shah Ansari, Station Head of Radio Namaskar, Konark, cited examples on how their productions were used by the vigilant citizens to put a curb on the unhealthy practices of the villagers who did not pay heed to lockdown rules earlier.

"We kept on broadcasting important information relating to Covid-19 in the last few months. Many of the frontline workers and villagers found it a good source to gather information. In many villages in Puri district we are able to make dedicated listeners groups," he said.

Plasma therapy at Rourkela IGH soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: After successful implementation of plasma therapy at Cuttack and Ganjam, the state government is going to start the treatment at Ispat General Hospital (IGH) in Rourkela.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting presided over by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik here Wednesday.

Plasma therapy is effectively working in treating critical Covid patients. To provide better treatment to Covid patients of western Odisha, Naveen announced to open a plasma bank at IGH in Rourkela. He also announced that the number of beds in Rourkela's Covid Care Centres (CCCs) would be increased from 700 to 1,700.

He lauded Sundargarh and Jajpur district teams for achieving the high recovery rates of 85 per cent and 86.5 per cent respectively.

Sundargarh has spent ₹20 crore from DMF for Covid management. Further, ₹15 crore will be spent in the next three months for strengthening of dedicated Covid Hospital and CCCs, he said.

The situation is under control in spite of more than 26,000 migrants coming back to Jajpur district. The district will be spending ₹13.5 crore from DMF for strengthening Covid care system. Additional 250 beds will be operationalised at the CCC in Jajpur, the Chief Minister said. Naveen sanctioned ₹5 crore from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) to each district.

Four Rajya Sabha MPs from Odisha take oath



Muzibulla Khan



Subhash Singh



Mamata Mahanta



Sujeet Kumar

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 22: Four newly-elected Rajya Sabha MPs from Odisha took the oath of office at Rajya Sabha chamber in Parliament House here, Wednesday, while adhering to physical distancing norms.

Four Biju Janata Dal (BJD) MPs - Subhash Singh, Muzibulla Khan, Sujeet Kumar and Mamata Mahanta - are among 45 parliamentarians, who were administered oath by Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu in the House chamber. The leaders from Odisha took oath in Odia language.

The Rajya Sabha elections were held for 61 seats between March and June, of which 42 members were elected unopposed, including

28 first-timers, and elections were held for 19 vacancies and 15 other first-timers won a berth in the Rajya Sabha. As many as 49 MPs were elected to the upper house for the first time while 12 were re-elected. The BJD MPs had been elected to the Upper House unopposed March 18, 2020. Significantly, due to Covid-19 pandemic, the oath taking ceremony was held inside Rajya Sabha chambers during inter-session for the first time. Other MPs who were not present at the ceremony will be administered oath later.

Addressing the new members, the RS Chairman said that they should reflect on their roles and responsibilities and not fall for the temptation of disrupting the House for short-term gains.

NEED OF THE HOUR



The employees of SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack being sensitised about the precautionary measures against novel coronavirus, Wednesday

Plight of senior citizens amid Covid pandemic

After the nationwide lockdown imposed in March, calls from lonely elderly citizens from different parts of Bhubaneswar flooded Helpege India's helpline number. There were requests ranging from delivery of daily essentials to support for health check-up. However, some requests sounded unreal. "We have everything, but no one to interact with. Please find someone with whom we could, at least, talk, everyday," pleaded some callers.

"It not only surprised me, it stirred my emotion," says Helpege India's Odisha head, Bharati Chakra.

Even for Chakra who has been dealing with issues facing senior citizens for two decades, it was an unusual experience. She spent some time with some of these people; her colleagues also chatted with them at regular intervals. "Covid has shaken the lonely elderly ones, mentally," puts Chakra.

Incidentally, the cases Chakra is referring to are not isolated ones. With the children chasing their career, in some other parts of the country or abroad, scores of such lonely aging parents are experiencing a different type of old age blues. For, the pandemic has further stretched the existing widening physical distance, between such parents and their children.

A case in point is Dibakar Tripathy, 75, a retired government servant. Days before the lockdown was imposed, Tripathy who was in Mumbai with his wife to attend a family event, fell seriously ill. As Tripathy was wheeled straight into

a hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU), his worried septuagenarian wife desperately dialed their US based son. The son, cajoling his mother, told not to worry.

Dutifully, he forwarded details of the health insurance policy so that his father's hospitalisation costs are taken care of. However, what the mother was hoping for - someone by her side to attend to her husband - couldn't be realised. Post recovery, the elderly couple is back in Odisha, thanks to the support of relatives. However, even four months after, the wait for their son's visit continues.

"Covid has aggravated the emotional vulnerability of the elderly couples living alone, they never felt more helpless, before," puts ex English professor, Chinmay Jena.

Jena's colony in Bhubaneswar's Old town locality has many such senior citizens like ex-reader, Kamala Prasad Mohapatra. He says, "Once one is over 65, a sense of insecurity creeps in and the absence of children is felt more. If your child is around, it gives the mental strength."

While a majority of such 'living alone' elderly parents say their children, who are regularly in touch with them through mobiles, other gadgets, social media or digital mediums, also concede that the pandemic has erected a wall of uncertainty. When could they meet their children or play with the grand kids, worries them.

Forget about daily essentials, they can't step out even for a leisurely walk as they are prone to Covid infection. Result: Many are feeling



claustrophobic. It's an issue in almost every city in India.

"The government should ensure delivery of daily provisions for senior citizens," intones an ex-soldier, Col. Suranjan Bhuyan of Bhubaneswar.

"The government is doing that in many areas and it may extend the services to other places as well," Chakra argues. "But, what about those needs, like going to banks, withdrawing cash from ATMs or regular health check-ups which the elderly have almost stopped in Covid era," she asks.

Chakra suggests, "The need of the hour is to develop a localised, police verified, volunteer base. These volunteers can respond quickly to emergencies. Also, we must promote digital literacy among the senior citizens."

As per a June 2020 study titled "The Elder Story: Ground Reality" by Chakra's organisation, during Covid-19, a disturbing 62% of the

elder respondents reported suffering from chronic diseases: asthma, hypertension, diabetes, cancer etc. Of these, 53% were from rural and 47% from urban areas.

According to the 2011 Census, those above 60 years of age constitute 8% of India's population. A 2016 report by the social statistics division of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation puts the number of elderly at nearly 104 million: Rural (73 million) and urban (31 million). India is the second largest populated country in the global population of elderly citizens. According to WHO estimate, the elderly population is increasing by 3.5% per year and by 2050 around 20% of our country will be seniors.

Sociologist Navaneeta Rath thinks the lonely parents have reconciled that they have to stay alone. They understand that after all, the children have the right to pursue their own career and live the way they wish. "With the growing threat of

Covid infection, sealing of borders and grounding of the aviation sector; compression of distance and time due to globalisation has faced a great defeat and the concept of global village has been eroded suddenly," thinks Rath.

However, psychologist Basant Das, well versed with the different facets of human behaviour, says, "During counselling sessions, he advised those parents complaining against the apathy of children or other related issues, that they must live a life with dignity. And they shouldn't hold on to the early idea that their children would look after them forever."

"Instead of being liabilities on their children, the parents should take care of themselves and try to be an asset for the children," Das, says adding, "The children are also grappling with a lot of stress in their professional life."

A lonely father residing in Bhubaneswar's Nayapalli area says,

"The children know parents are silent sufferers... wouldn't complain and so can easily be dispensed with."

Experts say due to factors like a fiercely competitive life, professional stress, fast lifestyle, changing attitude, ambition to climb up in career, strive for materialistic comfort and peer pressures, children lack the time and energy and so are unwilling to shoulder more responsibility (of parents).

However, Rath believes, today, there is still some amount of consciousness among the children about their parents. "We are about to step into a more individualistic world governed by the 'let alone and leave alone' principle," she says.

According to Rath, till the end of 1980's, it's believed that the nearer was the child the dearer he became to the parents. Today, it's different. "Each parent is enveloped with sky touching aspirations. In our pursuit to pitch the child in the global market from school days, not only we put tremendous stress on the young minds, alienate them from family culture but in the process kill the value system," Rath explains.

Also, for most parents, a cosy job for the child in a global entity with a fat pay package, ensures them a better stock value in the social stock market or among peer groups.

According to a 2019 Helpege India study, Elder Abuse in India- Role of Family in Care giving - challenges & responses - conducted across 20 Indian cities, 29% care givers in the family (mainly son, daughter-in-law, daughter, son-in-law) felt the

'burden of care giving of an elder' was moderate to severe, for 15% it was severe. And 35% though 'never' felt happy looking after the elderly.

Perhaps that's created a space and also market for old age care providers. In Bhubaneswar alone there are at least over a dozen agencies offering home nursing facility. Like Orange cross, a professionally run, start-up.

"There's a growing demand for this kind of service in Bhubaneswar and other cities," agrees Ajay Bhanja, CEO, Orange Cross. Bhanja an IIT (ISM Dhanbad) alumnus with an advanced management course from Kellogg School of Management, Chicago, has entered the sector; after a 25-year stint at the global corporate arena. Besides transforming Orange Cross into a 360 degree chronic care provider for the elderly people, Bhanja intends to branch out the service to some other cities in the country. The potential of the market is easily understandable.

However, Covid-19 has brought some positive changes too. As Rath says, "Job loss and income loss has brought a 'home reversal mood to many children' staying away from parents. The lockdowns also helped create a new bondage as elderly parents have got their home confined children to play games (chess and ludo) with them, through digital connections, though.

Perhaps it's Covid's way of maintaining a balance.

(A few names have been changed as requested)

- Debi Mohanty

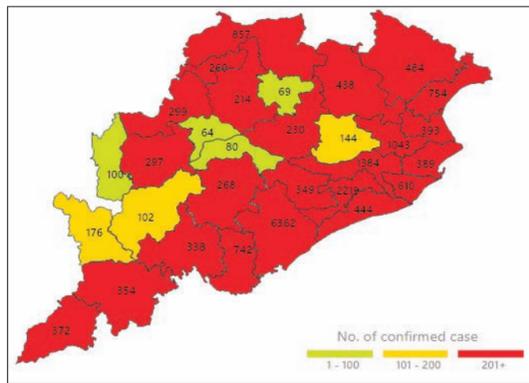
From 1 Covid case to nearly 20K in 127 days

Ganjam accounts for 62 of the 108 Covid-19 deaths reported in the state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Fresh Covid infections have taken the state's virus count to 19,835, of which 5,944 cases are active and 13,749 people have recovered so far, said an official.

Ganjam, the worst-hit district in the state, reported three fresh fatalities, while Gajapati and Kandhamal registered one death each, added the official; all the deceased were suffering from diabetes.



the official pointed out.

"Regret to report the demise of five COVID positive patients while undergoing treatment in hospital," the H&FW department said in a statement.

Ganjam accounted for 62 of the 108 Covid-19 deaths reported in the state so far, while other districts that registered a high number of such fatalities are Khurda (14), Cuttack (nine) and Gajapati (six). Deaths due to the coronavirus were also reported in 11 other districts, the official said.

Another 59-year-old Covid-19 patient died in Ganjam district due to chronic liver disease, taking the toll of coronavirus patients dying due to other ailments in the state

to 31, the official said.

As many as 721 fresh cases were detected from quarantine centres while a record number of 357 people tested positive for the infection during local contact tracing, said the official.

Ganjam district reported the highest number of new cases at 371, followed by Khurda (121), Rayagada (96), Malkangiri (66) and Cuttack (57), said the official.

The Koraput district administration, in a statement, said two BSF personnel are among the 15 new cases reported in the district, taking the number of jawans of the paramilitary force testing positive for the infection in the state so far to 55.

UNDERSTANDING THE DAILY SPIKE

- July 3: The state crossed the 500-mark in terms of daily cases with 561 infections that day
- July 10: Cases peaked to 755 (then highest daily spike)
- July 19: 736 cases were recorded and the daily infection nos. never crossed that mark till July 22
- July 22: Two days later, state records 1078 cases on a day

"A 40-year-old woman and two men, aged 61 and 60, died due to Covid-19 in Ganjam. Two men, aged 72 and 86, died in Gajapati and Kandhamal districts respectively."

Min confirms trimmed syllabi for Class I to XII

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Considering the reduced classroom teaching time due to Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, Odisha School and Mass Education department (S&ME) decided to reduce the syllabus for Class I to XII students. After suggestions from SCERT expert committee and CHSE officials for the academic year 2020-21, it made its decision.

Addressing the media, School

At this point of time, we cannot confirm how much syllabus will be reduced because we are yet to decide on reopening of schools

SAMIR RANJAN DASH | MINISTER, SCHOOL & MASS EDUCATION DEPT

and Mass Education minister Samir Ranjan Dash Wednesday said, "The decision has been taken by the department after taking approval

from Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik."

"To reduce the syllabus of Class I to X students, the SME department will take the help of State Council of Educational Research & Training (SCERT) and to finalise the reduced Class XI to XII syllabus the department will take suggestions of Council of Higher Education Department (CHSE)."

On being asked about the extent of reduction in syllabus, the minister said, "At this point of time, we

WOMAN KILLED IN ROAD MISHAP

The incident took place between Manguli Square and Choudwar on NH 55

POST NEWS NETWORK

Choudwar, July 22: A 22-year-old woman was crushed to death as a speeding truck hit her scooter on national highway 55 here Wednesday, a police official said.

According to the official, the incident took place between Manguli Square and Choudwar when the victim—Madhusmita Dalai of Nua Sahi in Ward 18 here—was returning from her office in the noon.

"Dalai had been working with a private firm in Manguli area here. She was heading for home when a truck knocked her scooter down from the rear. The heavy vehicle dragged Dalai and her scooter for a few metres, killing her on the spot," said the official who reached the spot on being informed by a passersby.

CB probe ordered into jumbo deaths

BHUBANESWAR: The state government Wednesday ordered a Crime Branch probe into the deaths of three elephants in Boudh and Keonjhar districts. While a bullet-ridden carcass of a three-year-old male elephant was found in the forests near Mundeswara under Madhapur forest range in Boudh, two elephant carcasses were found in forest of Keonjhar in June. It was alleged that the elephants were killed by poachers.

FLIRTING WITH VIRUS



People flout the social distancing norms while buying fish at Nayapalli market in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday. OP PHOTO

14.8 pc YoY fall in MV tax collection

The State Transport Authority collected ₹96 crore in June 2020 as against ₹112.70 crore in the same period last year

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 22: Revenue collection from motor vehicles (MV) has come down by around 14.8 per cent in June as compared to the corresponding period last year, an official of the State Transport Authority said, Tuesday, attributing the poor show to coronavirus-induced lockdowns.

The STA has collected ₹96 crore in June this year while it had collected around ₹112.70 crore in the same period last year. There is a dip of around 14.8 per cent in revenue collection, the official said, adding that amid lockdowns and shutdowns, Odisha did fare well in June as compared to other states.

The Centre and the state have been imposing lockdowns across the country since March 22. Along with other commercial establish-

ments, vehicle showrooms also kept their shutters down to comply with the governments' bid to break the virus chain.

"Although vehicles' sale was allowed from the first week of May, showrooms remained mostly dry. The state usually registers sale of around 75,000 vehicles a month. Around 15,000 vehicles were sold in May. June, however, saw a sale of around 43,300 units of vehicles. The STA had registered a sale of around 64,000 vehicles in June 2019," said the official.

Apart from poor sale of vehicles due to closure of showrooms, suspension of driving and learning licence services, rebate on bus tickets and poor penalty collection during lockdowns have also dealt a blow to the revenue collection of STA, said the official, hoping for some better days ahead.

State BJP appoints district in-charges

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: State BJP president Samir Mohanty Wednesday appointed 36 leaders as in-charge (pravari) of the party's organisational districts.

MLA Bishnu Sethi has been appointed as 'pravari' of Baripada district while Nauri Naik will look after Barghar district. Senior BJP leader Kalandi Samal is BJP's new in-charge of Bhadrak district, Bhubana Mohan Jena for Bhubaneswar, Prithviraj Harichandan for Cuttack Sadar, Pravati Parida for Dhenkanal and Sankar Oram for Jharsuguda. Among others, former MP Balabhadra Majhi is the new 'pravari' of Koraput district BJP unit, Bhruhu Baxipatra will look after organisational affairs in Khurda district, Mukesh Mahalingam—Nabarangpur; Rabi Narayan Naik—Panposh, Lekhashree Samantsinghar—Puri, Mohan Majhi—Rairangpur and Tankadhar Tripathy—Sambalpur.

Focus on jobs for migrant returnees

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The State Labour and ESI department Wednesday asked all the Collectors to collect information on the migrant returnees and include them under the Mission Mode Project.

Department secretary Anu Garg in her letter to the Collectors said that as per the data available with Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water department about 8.24 lakh Odia migrants have returned to the state due to the ongoing pandemic situation. She said that skill mapping of the returnees revealed that majority of them (close to 1.4 lakh) are daily wagers in the construction sector. She told the Collectors that the Union government has issued advisory norms on Mission Mode Project for building and construction workers.

Mancheswar 'super spreader' infects 26 people

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: A Covid-19 positive person from Mancheswar area under Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) has spread the infection to 26 persons in the area, BMC said Wednesday.

All the 26 persons are males and work for a flour mill located in Mancheswar.

BMC officials informed that the 26 persons contracted the virus from a man while he was on a visit to the flour mill over some work. The 26 positive persons are between the age group of 20 and 70.

On the other hand, a total of 91 cases were reported Wednesday



ALL THE 26 PERSONS ARE MALES AND WORK FOR A FLOUR MILL IN MANCHESWAR

THE 26 POSITIVE PERSONS ARE BETWEEN THE AGE GROUP OF 20 AND 70

taking the total number of Covid cases to 1,343 in Bhubaneswar; the BMC said in a tweet.

Of the 91 cases, 72 have been reported from quarantine centres while 19 are local contact cases.

All the positive cases have been shifted to Covid hospitals, the BMC said. In addition, a total of 99 patients have been reported to be cured of the infection and discharged from the Covid hospitals.

ROAD FATALITIES DOWN BY 65 PC DURING LOCKDOWN

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, July 22: With vehicular traffic reduced during the Covid-induced lockdown, Odisha has registered a sharp decline in deaths due to road mishaps, an official said.

The number of such deaths fell by 65 per cent between March 25 and May 31, a senior official at the State Transport Authority (STA) said.

Noting that during the lockdown period, 384 persons died and 722 persons were injured in 836 road ac-



idents, the official said, in the corresponding period of 2019, as many as 1,087 persons had died and 2,175 people were injured in 2,107 road mishaps.

In April this year, the number of

deaths due to road accidents stood at 118, against 485 in the same period in 2019, registering a decline of about 74 per cent. Total 231 road mishaps were reported in April, 2020 against 877 in April last year, he pointed out.

During the month of May, 2020, the number of deaths stood at 243, against 494 in May 2019, thereby recording a decline of about 51 per cent. Total 551 road accidents were reported in May this year against 953 in the same month last year, the official said.

Trains to West Bengal on its lockdown days are on: ECoR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: East Coast Railways informed the rail passengers travelling to West Bengal from Odisha July 23, 25 and 29 'to take necessary steps accordingly' as train movement would be affected due to lockdown.

Due to increased cases of Covid-19 in West Bengal, the Mamata government has declared complete lockdown July 23, 25 and 29 in the state. There will be a complete lockdown in West Bengal on these days to fight the spread of Covid-19.

Presently, there are two special trains originating from East Coast Railway: 02074 (Bhubaneswar-Howrah) Special Express and 02202 (Bhubaneswar-Sealdah) Special Express running to West Bengal on

West Bengal government has declared complete lockdown July 23, 25 and 29 across the state

the above mentioned dates.

Apart from the above, two trains of other zones are also passing through East Coast Railway jurisdiction to West Bengal i.e. 02246 (Yashvantpur-Howrah) Special and 02704 (Secunderabad-Howrah) Special Train.

Passengers of above trains were 'advised to be prepared accordingly'. As per government order, the movement of individuals will be strictly prohibited between 10 pm to 5 am on the three days except for essential and emergencies activities.

Keep an eye on animal killings during Eid: Peta

PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS WRITES TO DGPs OF ALL STATES TO CHECK ILLEGAL TRANSPORT AND KILLING OF ANIMALS IN THE LEAD-UP TO BAKR-EID

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India has written to the director generals of police of all state governments including Odisha and union territories to keep an eye on illegal transport and killing of animals in the lead-up to Bakr-Eid.

It requested the DGPs to take all possible precautionary measures to stop the activities in the lead-up to Bakr-Eid (July 31) - "which was also advised by the Animal Welfare Board of India earlier."

"All religions call for compassion - none requires killing or eating animals, and hacking them to death with weapons is just plain cruel," said



PETA India Advocacy Associate Pradeep Ranjan Doley Barman. "The state governments have a duty to uphold and enforce India's animal

protection laws, and PETA India is calling on authorities to prohibit the cutting of animals' throats by untrained people in the street."

PETA'S POINTS

Laws regarding preventing cruelty to animals and the food safety and standards guidelines permit slaughter of animals for food only in registered or licensed slaughterhouses

Laws do not permit killing camels for meat, a common practice during Bakr-Eid

In its letters, PETA India pointed out that on two matters regarding the sacrifice and killing of animals for meat: "the Supreme Court ruled that animals can be slaughtered only in officially licensed slaughterhouses and that municipal au-

thorities must ensure compliance with this ruling. The laws regarding preventing cruelty to animals and the food safety and standards guidelines permit the slaughter of animals for food only in registered or licensed slaughterhouses equipped with species-specific stunning equipment and do not permit killing camels for meat, a common practice during Bakr-Eid." Laws on the transportation of animals are also frequently violated during this festival, it added.

Earlier, the Odisha government had sanctioned ₹54 lakh to feed stray animals in various cities and towns across the state as they are struggling to find food during the ongoing nationwide lockdown.

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Post facelift, Rani Bakhri still out of bounds for tourists

Cops assault vendor, driver; SP orders probe

POST NEWS NETWORK
Sambalpur, July 22: Even as the historical Rani Bakhri (Queen's Palace) here was restored to its former glory at an expenditure over Rs 1 crore, it has remained out of bounds for tourists and residents due to lack of a proper entrance, a report said.
This is so because the owners of the farmlands around Rani Bakhri have refused to part with their land for providing entrance to the site. One can reach the site through a narrow lane near the Pataneshwari temple. Senior IAS Arabind Padhee welcomed the renovation of Rani Bakhri with a tweet.
Moreover, the file relating to sanction of Rs 70 lakh by the state government suddenly missing has raised doubts in the minds of people. The fund was sanctioned by then tourism minister Ashok Kumar Panda. Panda had assured to acquire the vacant land in front of

the structure but it is to be done yet. Rs 70 lakh was sanctioned for grass-laying work at the entrance, construction of a compound wall and beautification works.
The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) recently completed the restoration and structural conservation of the structure at an expenditure of Rs 1 crore.
The Rani Bakhri was constructed by Raja Baliar Singh, the fifth Chouhan king of Sambalpur between 1660 and 1670 on five decimals of land. The Rani Bakhri, built in Rajasthani architectural style, is constructed near the Pataneshwari temple in the town.
Notably, the three-storied Rani Bakhri also known as Jemadei Mahal has now acquired bridal look after renovation. It has a total of 15 rooms comprising seven rooms on the ground floor, six on the first floor and two beautiful rooms on the second floor with a verandah.



The structure was in a dilapidated condition when the state government roped in INTACH for its restoration. Prior to that, only the palace's roof was rebuilt in 2001 with funds from the Centre.
INTACH experts used traditional techniques for the restoration work without affecting the original structure. A mixture of lime, gum of Bael (wood apple), Reetha (soap nut) and jaggery was used for plastering the monument.
Motifs inside the palace have been uniformly coloured while damaged paintings were restored and pathways created. The old plaster of the historical structure was re-

moved and fresh plastering undertaken in the entire structure, informed Director of Intach Conservation Institute, INTACH Mallika Mitra.
The INTACH officials before the restoration work cleared the encroachment of the monument by a saw mill. The adjoining land behind Rani Bakhri was developed into an amphitheatre with required illumination and landscape for future use of the premises for revenue generation purposes, INTACH Sambalpur chapter member and historian Deepak Panda said.
Amenities for visitors like toilets, drinking water supply and ticket counter have also been set up on the premises. INTACH plans to hand over the monument to the tourism department later this month. When contacted, Hemant Kumar Pradhan, district tourism officer, said the landowners have refused to leave their land for which there is no proper entrance



LAND HURDLE
■ The Rani Bakhri was built by Raja Baliar Singh, the fifth Chouhan king of Sambalpur between 1660 and 1670 AD in Rajasthani architectural style
■ Rs 1 crore was spent for its restoration. The owners of the farmlands around Rani Bakhri have refused to part with their land for access to the site

to the monument. He said only wide entrance could increase the importance of the site and the tourist flow.

POST NEWS NETWORK
Kandhamal, July 22: Kandhamal Superintendent of Police (SP) has ordered a probe into alleged assault by two police personnel of a vegetable vendor and a driver. Their act was caught in the camera.
Various quarters had condemned the incident after it came to the fore. Locals had demanded action against the errant cops.
The inquiry has been ordered after two videos, purportedly showing some policemen assaulting a vegetable vendor and the driver of a milk van, were seen circulating on social media.
Kandhamal SP Vinit Agarwal, took to Twitter, issuing an order for an investigation into the incidents. Reports said, sub-inspector Rajesh Srichandan of Raikia police station Wednesday slapped the driver of the van during the lockdown enforcement.

Scanty rainfall delays paddy transplantation

BARGAON FARMERS IN SAMBALPUR LAMENT, PARVATI GIRI LIFT IRRIGATION IS OF NO USE NOW

POST NEWS NETWORK
Bargaon, July 22: Farmers in Bargaon area of Sundargarh district are a worried lot because of scanty rainfall in June and July. All agricultural activities were affected for lack of rain. Farmers alleged that Parvati Giri mega lift irrigation project built on Safai river has failed to deliver at this crisis times.
If no rain happens in the first week of August, a drought-like situation can't be ruled out in the region.
"Paddy saplings need to be transplanted after 21 to 23 days of their raising. But there has been no rainfall in last 40 days. Sapling transplantation has been affected for lack of water in the farm land," farmers said.
They also pointed out that some farmers have been trying to irrigate land with pump-sets by lifting water from nearby ponds and rivers.



On the other hand, some farmers alleged that only 40 to 50 per cent of the seeds (like Swarna, Soubhagya and Pratiskhya) they had got from LAMPS have germinated, causing loss to them.
"Parvatigiri mega lift irrigation project has been built on Safai river

per cent rainfall in July and 1.25 per cent in the first week of August. If there is no immediate rain in next few days the situation may turn alarming," Deputy Director of Agriculture (Jeypore), Kalidas Biswas said.
"The present situation is not very encouraging. Without rains over next few days, the area will definitely witness a drought-like situation," said some farmers.
People of Bhoipally, president of Jay Jawan Jay Kisan Krsushk Sangathan Rabindra Patel, block chairperson Puspanjali Minj, samiti members Sisir Routray, sarpanch Mandakini Bariha submitted a memorandum to the Collector through Bargaon tehsildar on the gloomy situation of agriculture. The inordinate delay in sapling transplantation will affect paddy harvest this year, lamented farmers of Machamara and Pamara villages.

Malkangiri admin plans wider job scope for migrants in urban areas

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, July 22: Even as Covid has been spreading across Malkangiri, frequent lockdowns and shutdowns have worsened the plight of daily wagers and returnee migrants for lack of scope for livelihood.
The district administration is struggling to provide livelihood and income-generation activities for them. Meanwhile, over 16,000 migrant workers from various states have returned to the district.
The state government has asked the district administration to create jobs under MGNREGS. To alleviate the miseries of migrant workers in urban areas, the district administration has sanctioned 61 projects under the rural job scheme.
The administration aims to ensure work scope for 22,000 more workers in near future while the state government has sanctioned Rs 128.05 crore for these projects. These projects are being exe-



cutted in Malkangiri municipality area and Balimela NAC. The projects entail works like road-side plantation, pond excavation, construction of cement tanks, creation of greenery on vacant government land, water conservation through check dams, wall paintings for awareness, carpentry, conservation of groundwater, and vegetable cultivation under nutrition garden programme.
The state government had directed the administration to ensure that migrants get scope of income generation and timely payment of wages.

Collector Manish Agrawal has approved 61 projects and allocated funds. All these projects are being executed under the supervision of PD (DRDA) Balmukunda Bhuyan.
Now, migrant workers are seen working in these projects in lockdown period. It was learnt that 4,000 workers have been paid Rs 12.04 lakh as wages till date.
The PD said that the plan has been made to ensure work scope for 22,000 workers in near future while the state government has sanctioned Rs 128.05 crore for these projects. The administration has been trying to engage labourers in the projects being executed by the road and the buildings department, the rural development department, the rural water supply and sanitation department, the horticulture department and in the projects pertaining to digging of farm ponds.
It was learnt that under rural housing scheme, the administration has set a target to build 23,294 houses in the district in the current year to create work scope.

3 held for disrobing, assaulting woman

POST NEWS NETWORK

Ganjam, July 22: In a shocking incident, an elderly woman was disrobed and assaulted on road by the family members of her neighbour over a petty issue at Kaibarta Sahi in this town, Tuesday. The accused yet to be identified are a man, his wife and son in the area.
The victim fervently pleaded with them to spare her but the accused trio refused to leave her and disrobed and assaulted her on the road. The matter came to the fore after a video of the incident went viral in social media.
Following the incident, local residents strongly condemned the incident and demanded action against the accused.
Later, the victim lodged a complaint in the Ganjam police station. Police detained three persons and questioning them in this connection.
When contacted, Ganjam IIC Dillip Kumar Sahu confirmed the matter stating that a case has been registered and soon the accused will be arrested.

Fears of community transmission

In Malkangiri, 26 Covid warriors have tested positive for virus

POST NEWS NETWORK

Malkangiri, July 22: Even as Covid cases are rapidly rising in Malkangiri, the district reported 66 new cases Wednesday. The spurt in infections has caused headache for people and the administration even as fears of community spread prevailed in most pockets.
What is alarming is that, of the total cases, 26 were identified as Covid warriors. This was informed by the District Collector.
The Collector further said a total of 372 positive cases have been detected in the district to date, out of which 180 have recovered and 192 are active cases.
In Malkangiri municipality, 15 cases were detected while 9 are close contacts with previously found positive cases of Padmagiri.
Kalmela block reported seven cases while three have a travel



and fever clinic.
Balimela NAC reported 13 cases while 8 cases are close contacts with previously found positive cases and two symptomatic referrals from a flu and fever clinic and three cases were found positive during household survey.
Malkangiri block reported one case which was a close contact with previously found positive cases of Padmagiri.
Kalmela block reported seven cases while three have a travel

history to a hotspot district of the state. Four are returnees of Tamil Nadu housed in the TMC. Besides, Khairput block reported three cases while one of them is a Karnataka returnee housed in TMC and two have close contacts with previous positive case.
Similarly, Mathili block reported 25 cases while two are community health workers who were infected due to close contact with previously found positive case.
23 have close contact with previously found positive cases out of which 19 are from SDH, Mathili and one is an administrative officer and two are symptomatic referral from flu and fever clinic.
In Korukonda block, one case was detected during a house hold survey while Podia block reported a symptomatic case.

BANKS IN KANDHAMAL SHUT

PHULBANI: Amid a fast increase in Covid infections, Kandhamal district administration has ordered closure of all bank branches in the district for a week. It has advised bank staff to stay in home isolation during this period.
Kandhamal Collector Dr Brundha D issued an order to this effect and observed that most of the bank officials working in branches at district level have been detected positive in recent days.
On further assessment of the status of the pandemic in the district and to prevent its further spread and keeping in view the health interest of public, she imposed the restrictions. Premises of all banks will be sanitized.

If any employee develops symptoms he/she should immediately report to CDM & PHO, Kandhamal and the district administration in any of the given numbers such as COVID control room - 06842-253229/ DPHO, Kalyani Madam - 7855933715/ COVID monitoring Cell - 06842-253650.
Branch managers were asked to ensure adequate feeding of cash in all ATM counters to meet the requirements of customers while no employee should leave headquarters without prior permissions of the undersigned.
In containment zones, the banks will remain closed and the functionalities of ATM feeding will have to take vehicle permission from the administration.

100 Covid warriors to donate plasma

ASKA: As plasma therapy treatment for COVID-19 infected patients has started in the state, 100 warrior cops are set to donate plasma for the purpose, Ganjam Superintendent of Police Brijesh Kumar Rai informed Tuesday.
All voluntary donors shall undergo COVID-19 test and other ancillary tests. As per norms of the state government, a donor should be in the age group of 20 to 50 years with minimum body weight of 55kg and should have got cured from COVID-19 infection for at least not less than four weeks.
During the felicitation ceremony of these COVID-19 warriors at Aska police station premises, Rai said, "Out of 150 coronavirus infected policemen in Ganjam district, 120 have already got cured from the disease, all of whom are interested to voluntarily donate plasma for COVID-19 therapeutic treatment".
Aska government hospital medical officer Mohan Barik, sub divisional police officer Suryamani Pradhan, police station in-charge Prashant Kumar Sahu were dignitaries present on the occasion.

Fish production hit in Kandhamal dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, July 22: The district administration had plans to scale up fish production in Kandhamal this year by roping in self-help groups (SHGs) under the Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM). However, fish farming at several panchayat ponds has exhibited very poor output.
The total production, it has been learnt, was even less than the annual demand in the district.
Local denizens have been depending on Andhra Pradesh to meet their fish demands. Supply from Boudh district also feeds into the district fish markets to a large extent.
Kandhamal administration claims that it has been providing ample funds including costs for training in fish farming. There are three fish production centres at Phulbani, Phiringia and K Nuagaon areas.
Nearly 292 kg of fishlings are fed into the ponds at Phulbani centre. After fish seeds grow bigger, they are shifted to Tandrigaon centre of



Phiringia and Sirtiguda centre of K Nuagaon for further processing.
It is alleged that, inadequate government assistance and poor working knowledge have resulted in low fish production. In addition, six posts of assistant fishery officer (AFO) remain vacant as against the sanctioned number of nine posts under 12 blocks in this district.
On being contacted, local assistant fishery officer Gyanaranjan Sethy said, "There is acute shortage of staff in fishery department. Moreover, we are getting insufficient grants for fish farming in Kandhamal district."

Angul high-tech bus terminal project falters

TWO CONTRACT FIRMS ASSIGNED THE WORK ARE DELAYING THE PROJECT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, July 22: A high-tech bus terminal project at Angul town the foundation stone of which had been laid seven years back has eluded the local denizens. The ambitious project has allegedly made little progress since then.
Two contract firms

namely Angul Bus Terminal Company Pvt Ltd and Milan Developers and Builders Pvt Ltd who had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Talcher-Angul-Meramundali Development Authority (TAMDA) in this regard have delayed the progress and the district administration is staying

indifferent. Even as the contract firms have already taken seven years, there is no progress in the bus terminal construction work. The time mentioned in the MoU for completion of the project was two years. Moreover, the firms have written to the state government for an extension of six month's time.
A high-tech bus terminal at Angul town was a long-awaited demand of local residents. A high level meeting of the state transport department chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had decided on setting up of bus terminals at Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Bhubaneswar and Sambalpur July 13, 2011.
Following the CM's order, tendering process for Angul bus terminal was initiated and the MoU was signed April 9, 2012. The estimated cost of the high-tech project was Rs 56.31 crore.
As per the MoU, the proposed bus terminal was to be constructed on 9.72 acres. Accordingly, Rs 13.95 crore was sanctioned for the terminal on 5.83 acres and Rs 42.36 crore was sanctioned for a commercial complex on 3.89 acres.
The contract firms were required to start con-

struction within six months, monitor maintenance work for the next 15 years and possess the commercial complex on lease for a period of 99 years.
The district administration has conducted several review meetings in this regard, but nothing concrete has so far materialized, a source said.



EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender No. SBP-ELECT-2020-T-107
Name of Work: REPLACEMENT OF DAMAGED/BURIED EARTHINGS OF RAILWAY STAFF QUARTERS IN TITLAGARH-THERUBALI SECTION OF SAMBALPUR DIVISION.
Approx cost of the work: ₹6,84,000/-, EMD: ₹13,700/-, Cost of Tender Document: ₹2,360/-, Completion Period of the work: 06 Months.
Date & time of Tender Closing: 05.08.2020, 1530 hrs.
Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored.
Complete information including e-Tender documents of the above e-Tenders is available in website <http://www.reps.gov.in>
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G) Sambalpur
PR-174/L/20-21

Govt. of Odisha
Department of W&CD and Mission Shakti
Odisha State Child Protection Society (OSPCS)
Mission Shakti Bhawan, Gandamunda, Pokhariput, Bhubaneswar- 751030
Ph.No.2353122/2353049, E-mail-ao.oscps.od@nic.in
No. 1030 /OSPCS Dt: 22.07.2020
SHORT TENDER CALL NOTICE
Sealed Short Tenders are invited from GST Registered supplier in Bhubaneswar for supply of one Apple MacBook Pro Laptop in view of COVID-19 emergency. The eligibility criteria and detail terms & conditions may be downloaded from the website www.wcdodisha.gov.in & www.oscps.nic.in. The short tender should reach the office of the OSPCS on or before dated 29.07.2020 by 5 P.M. through Registered Post / Speed Post only. The authority reserves the right to modify/cancel the Short Tender at any point of time.
Sd./- Director, Odisha State Child Protection Society

There is nothing finite. It is only the infinite who can make for himself limits; the finite can have no beginning nor end, for the very act of conceiving its beginning and end declares its infinity.

SRI AUROBINDO



More about pigeons

A month ago, I received distress calls from people in Mumbai that the municipal commissioner had suddenly swooped down on a 20-year-old feeding platform (chabutra) for pigeons, which was on the side of the road in Khar, had covered it with plastic sheets and posted police people so that no one could feed the birds. The pigeons left inside died of starvation as they were not allowed out. The pigeons outside, who had been fed for years, had nowhere else to go so they stayed on the road waiting to be fed. Hundreds were run over by cars. Anyone who tried to feed them was made to sit in a police station. In the meantime, the municipal commissioner had got several completely untrue articles published in local papers about how dangerous pigeons are to human health.

I talked to the commissioner and this is the reason he gave me: "Pigeons lay eggs. The eggs are eaten by crows. We don't want crows. So, if we get rid of pigeons, the crows will leave."

There is no scientific proof of any link between pigeon eggs and crow breeding. Crows are scavengers. They will continue to breed as long as humans generate filth.

We need to know why pigeons are in the cities. Thousands of people feed them – in Delhi there are designated feeding areas and people come in scooters and cars to throw feed. My hospital has over a thousand pigeons that have been hurt by cats, dogs and cars.

There are no pigeons in the wild any more. How did they become city creatures like dogs and cats?

As far back as 10,000 years ago, people in Mesopotamia and Egypt began coxing them with food and encouraging them to feed and breed near human dwellings. These birds were then caught and eaten. People started breeding them like chickens to eat. And the breeding and domestication led to the subspecies in our cities today. Over time, people started breeding them as a hobby. Pigeons were transported all over the world by ship to feed the pigeon-breeding hobby. Obviously, many escaped and began to breed freely in the cities. They had been bred over time to be comfortable with humans and so they took up nesting on building ledges, window sills: anything that looked like a cliff edge.

People realised that pigeons had a talent for navigation, and sailors used them to point lost ships towards land. They became valuable as airborne messengers and even armies started using them. Pigeon posts were recognised all over the world. Genghis Khan used pigeons as daily messengers both to enemies and allies. They were used widely in both World Wars.

America alone used 200,000 of them in the Second World War. Medals for bravery were given to pigeons. The last messaging service using pigeons in the world was disbanded in 2006 by the police force in the state of Odisha.

By then, pigeons had also adapted their appetites from berries, insects and seeds to anything that humans would feed them – from grain to ice cream and biscuits – and they became expert trash hunters. There is a lovely film on You Tube about a pigeon in Canada that steals a bag of chips from a shop every day!

What is there to hate in pigeons? They are good-looking with iridescent necks and so many colours. People who have adopted injured pigeons who cannot fly any more say that they are beloved members of the household.

Charming, affectionate, sociable with individual personalities. When they live indoors, they keep themselves very clean and love bathing! They are easy to potty train. Pigeons are important to the cleanliness of a city. Crows are still too shy to walk around with people. But pigeons eat all the trash that we throw on the sidewalk. They are smart with complex social systems. I think that they think they are people too.

What is their importance? We need hawks, eagles, falcons and kites, and pigeons are a food for them. Pigeon compost is considered the best of all manures. In early history, perhaps, the domestication of pigeons led to advances in the ability to grow the best possible crops. Pigeon faeces were so valuable that armed guards were hired to protect dovecotes from thieves.

In the Middle East, where eating pigeon flesh was forbidden, dovecotes were built simply to provide manure for growing fruit and this practice continued for centuries. In France, Italy and Spain guano was used extensively on hemp crops and for the fertilisation of vineyards. It is nitrogen-rich. There are ads on the net advertising pigeon manure which sells for twice the price of other manures. Their compost is unsurpassed for fertilising tomatoes, watermelon, eggplant, roses, and other plants that like a rich soil.

Who hates them? The same people who drove out sparrows, wrens, warblers, blue jays, cardinals, egrets, and everything else. The same people who choose sterile joyless streets as a representation of "cleanliness" and "development" over human happiness.

And they make up these stories about disease-spreading. Do pigeons spread disease? No. If they did, they would not have been eaten for centuries without a single case of disease reported. In the 19th Century, the American government urged people to collect pigeons and eat them for protein.

Ironically, the pigeon is now wrongly perceived as a disease-carrier as a result of commercial propaganda pumped out by the pest control industry. In reality they pose little or no risk at all. I have a staff of people who look after diseased and sick pigeons. Not one person – and they work without gloves and face protectors – has ever fallen sick in the last 40 years.

Do pigeons, or their excrement, transmit diseases to human beings? The answer is, no. How to reduce pigeon numbers in the city? The answer is very simple. Making pigeon chabutaras and designated feeding sites, and using pigeon lofts where eggs can be removed, has been proven to be successful in every city where it has been tried. If the Mumbai Municipal Commissioner wants to reduce pigeons, it can only be done by establishing chabutaras, not by removing them.

To join the animal welfare movement contact gandhim@nic.in, www.peopleforanimalsindia.org



Maneka Gandhi

Pigeons are important to the cleanliness of a city. Pigeons eat all the trash that we throw on the sidewalk. They are smart with complex social systems. I think that they think they are people too.

FOCUS NATURE

VALUE OF A TREE



For a wholesome environment and balanced ecology, at least 30 per cent of the Earth's land area should be covered with trees and forests

A mother can never be evaluated in terms of money. She is simply priceless. So is tree, which provides us all the motherly care throughout our lives. This includes clean air to breathe, pure water to drink, nutritious food to eat and keeping the environment and ecology wholesome and healthy.

According to a report from the US Department of Agriculture, one acre of forest absorbs six tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, thereby reducing greenhouse effect and limiting climate change. It also generates four tonnes of oxygen, enough to meet the requirements of 18 humans. Trees, shrubs and turfs filter air by removing dust and absorbing pollutants like carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide, making the environment healthy. These also control the devastating effects of climate by moderating the heat of the Sun, heavy rain and strong winds. Properly placed around buildings, trees can reduce the need for air-conditioning by 30 to 50 per cent.

A sound ecosystem is heavily dependent on trees, which includes preservation of rain water and ground water recharge, maintenance of soil health as well as providing food and shelter to various species. Those also cause rain, the primary source of pure water. Besides, trees appeal to our aesthetic sense and generate peace in our mind, similar to what we feel in the presence of our mother. It is said living among the greenery provides the comforts of a mother's lap, ensures good health and long life. The services rendered by trees, quiet as they are, are uncountable.

Usually, we calculate the conventional market value of a tree by taking into consideration its total weight and quality of timber or fruits or the biomass it produces. Scientists view it from a totally different angle. They evaluate it, considering the importance of the services it renders, which may be a few thousand times more. Some of them quantify those in terms of money in order to make us, the materialists, to realise it. The pioneer among them is Prof TM Das

of Calcutta University. In a paper published in the journal Indian Biologist in 1979, he had calculated that the value of various environmental benefits and services derived from a tree with an average life span of 50 years could be \$1,96,250 at the market rate prevailing then. At the 68th session (1981) of the Indian Science Congress held at Varanasi, he elaborated his views. It attracted worldwide attention and found a place in UN documents. In those, the Indian currency was converted into dollar, pound, yen etc. In 1983, the Films Division produced a documentary film titled "Service of a Tree" based on the theme.

The value of a tree (\$1, 96,250) as stated in the original paper of Prof Das in 1979 has been changing from time to time in accordance with the new experimental data and the price index. Therefore, it has been revised to \$7, 09,760 in 2011-2012. The values of different inputs calculated in these two years respectively are: a) oxygen production (31,250 and 10,500); b) conversion to animal flesh and bone (3,000 and 3,000); c) controlling soil erosion and soil fertility (31,250 and 10,000); d) water recycling, control of humidity and air temperature (37,500 and 1,54,500); e) shelter to birds, squirrels and insects, beneficial to ecology (31,250 and 1,29,700); f) removal of SPM - suspended particulate matter, carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide etc from air (62,000 and 4,02,000). One may multiply these by 75 to convert them into rupees.

The most precious contribution of a tree to humans is oxygen. As per a calculation, the amount of oxygen a human inhales a day is equivalent to three cylinders of oxygen available in hospitals for critical care. One cylinder of oxygen costs nearly ₹700. So, a person consumes oxygen worth 700 x 3 = ₹2,100 per day generated free by plants. The average life-span of a human is 65 years. In his life time, he gets a share of 2100 x 365 x 65, which is approximately ₹5 crore worth of oxygen from the plants. It has been calculated that two trees (about 32ft tall) produce the oxygen required for one person. India has more than 130 crore people. We may calculate how much the cost of oxygen that trees provide us.

Again, the animals and birds, domesticated as well as wild, essential for our day-to-day life and which keep our ecology wholesome, need much more oxygen to breathe. Besides, the combustion of fuels in our homes, industry and transport also consume oxygen, whose cost can be astounding.

All trees are not equally capable of producing oxygen. However, those like peepal, mango, jackfruit, neem and arjun, which grow to an average weight of six tonnes in 50 years, produce nearly 7.5 to eight tonnes of oxygen.

The other benefits of trees have also been evaluated, which can be briefly stated as follows: a) Dry leaves, twigs and branches provide 40 per cent of the cooking fuel to rural India (Environment Review, 2008); b) Mangroves boost

fishery yields by an average of about \$37,500 per year per hectare (University of California, San Diego, 2016); c) A tree (about 32 ft tall) generates 260 lbs of oxygen a year, more than half of the requirement (386 lbs/year) of a human (The Economist, 2012); d) One acre of forest absorbs 6 tonnes of carbon dioxide and puts out four tonnes of oxygen per year (US Department of Agriculture); e) An urban tree gives 53 to 67 times return to every dollar spent on it, which is in terms of storm management costs, waste water treatment, improving air quality, reducing energy requirement for cooling etc (Christian Science Monitor, 2006); f) Trees act as buffers and absorb noise (nearly 50 per cent), thereby reducing noise pollution (US Department of Energy/Environment News, 2020); g) The evaporation from a single large tree can produce the cooling effect of a 10-room size air conditioner operating 20 hours a day (US Department of Agriculture); h) Trees are said to reduce criminal mentality and induce self-discipline and greater mental health.

On the other hand, people living in areas without trees, experience more deaths due to heart and respiratory problems (Earthshare.org). For a wholesome environment and balanced ecology, at least 30 per cent of the Earth's land area should be covered with trees and forests. However, in many parts of the world, those are much below this critical limit; and to make matters worse, those are declining fast @ 15 billion trees a year.

The time has come to understand the real value of tree and protect it. Otherwise, increasing global warming and climate change along with various kinds of environmental pollution and ecological disaster will continue taking their ever-increasing tolls.

Dr. Ramesh Chandra Parida is a retired professor of Chemistry of Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology. Dr. Pranab Kumar Ghosh is assistant director, National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, New Delhi.

Dr. Ramesh Chandra Parida and Dr. Pranab Kumar Ghosh

THE MOST PRECIOUS CONTRIBUTION OF A TREE TO HUMANS IS OXYGEN. AS PER A CALCULATION, THE AMOUNT OF OXYGEN A HUMAN INHALES A DAY IS EQUIVALENT TO THREE CYLINDERS OF OXYGEN AVAILABLE IN HOSPITALS FOR CRITICAL CARE

SPECTRUM SCHOOLING

The worst preys of pandemic

With the onset of Covid-19 causing immense disruption to normal life, the world is busy fighting to check its spread. While the pandemic has pushed millions of people into economic hazards, we are yet to fathom the extent of damage that this challenge on the humanitarian front will indirectly inflict on children.

According to UNICEF, the pandemic and the lockdown have impacted 247 million children enrolled in elementary and secondary schools in India. The reasons are lack of school infrastructure, the digital divide between rural and urban children and the absence of a policy that carries the very spirit of ensuring "Education for All".

Online education in India causes inequality, creates a divide among students and estranges the most marginalised and underprivileged ones. Though classroom-based learning has shifted to virtual model of education, a National Sample Survey (NSS) report for 2017-18 had said only 23.8 per cent of households had access to internet.

While the students from the upper strata have coped with the shift, the unprivileged ones are left behind. With no access to internet and even to computer or smartphone, these children en-

rolled in government schools are deprived of the alternative mode of learning. Lack of digital infrastructure and the rural-urban divide will keep millions of children at the periphery of the education system during Covid-19 shutdown, the NSS report states.

The Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) approach usually refers to a set of desired competencies to be achieved by all children. Recently, the Atmashakti Trust, an NGO, undertook a study on the learning level of government school children, covering over 4,000 heads across the country. The findings showed that in Class-VIII, only 49.79 per cent, 54.35 per cent and 79.14 per cent passed the test in English, Math and regional language respectively. In Class-V, only 41.04 per cent, 48.72 per cent and 71.12 per cent passed the test in English, Math and regional language respectively. Similarly, 43.42 per cent and 27.64 per cent students in Class-III did not meet the expected learning levels in Math and regional language.

According to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2019, only 16 per cent of children in Class I in 26 surveyed rural districts were in a position to read the school texts at the prescribed level. Almost

40 per cent of them could not even understand letters and only 41 per cent of these children could read two-digit numbers.

Lack of school infrastructure poses another challenge during the pandemic, which will affect the education of children from poor backgrounds studying in government schools. Numerous studies suggest that students in schools with poor infrastructure can have lower scores than those with access to better infrastructural facilities. An overcrowded classroom with a chaotic learning environment can adversely affect students' learning capabilities. A NITI Aayog report states that 93 per cent of government schools are running without a computer; 23 per cent without a ramp; 79 per cent without a playground; 81 per cent without electricity; two per cent without boys' toilets; one per cent without girls' toilets and 0.4 per cent without proper buildings. The same abysmal situation prevails in several states that were covered under the survey.

In states, where the basic infrastructure of the school is in a bad state, the government will require to provide immediate attention to the betterment of students' learning. A report of the World Economic

Forum (WEF) states that there is no equality of suffering or equality of sacrifice during an epidemic that is unreasonably hurting the poorest and the most vulnerable of the populations. Therefore, underprivileged and disadvantaged children will be the worst preys of the pandemic.

With the existing digital divide, relying only on online education will push the have-nots out of the education system as well as compel them to work to support their families. Moreover, schools are more than a teaching-learning place for underprivileged children. For them, the school remains the centre of social protection, health and nutrition.

In this situation, a question is, what solution can state governments offer to ensure children's 'right to education' during the pandemic. Experts say governments should use the lockdown as an opportunity to provide remedial classes for weaker students so that they shall be on par with the other students once regular school starts. And, if we address the issue in a serious manner, especially during the pandemic, cases of drop-out and the like will significantly come down.

The writer is a Right to Education activist.

WISDOM CORNER

- The human race has one really effective weapon, and that is laughter. **MARK TWAIN**
- Respect yourself and others will respect you. **CONFUCIUS**
- Give me a fish and I eat for a day. Teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime. **CHINESE PROVERB**

WORDSWORTH

Swamper

In Canada, a driver's assistant is called a swamper. Why so? The Oxford English Dictionary has all the details. It seems it was originally applied to workmen who cleared roads for the fellers of trees in a swamp or forest. The word uses swamp in its old sense from the American colonies of an area of rich soil having trees and other vegetation, but too moist for cultivation, not necessarily an area that always contains standing water. The usage goes back at least to 1857. The job was unskilled labouring and later the word moved over to refer to other jobs of similar kind – a man-of-all-work in a liquor saloon, an assistant to a cook, then an assistant to a driver of horses or mules. This dates from 1870.

Salary cuts, austerity

Sir, A prudent fiscal plan to improve India's financial health is essential. The double whammy of increasing taxes and steep inflation is hitting the public hard. The skyrocketing of prices – more than the fear of contracting Covid – is forcing the common man to stay indoors. Frequent lockdowns and shutdowns are not helping the economy revive. Through generations, a disproportionately large share of the nation's wealth is concentrated in the hands of a few rich. The Modi government is urged to levy a super-rich tax on the elite class and enforce austerity by cutting salary, pension and perks of our bureaucrats and lawmakers. A complete abolition of income tax will help the middleclass breathe easy. Instead, orthodox moves like reducing the interest rate on the savings of small depositors will only compound the misery.

Nanigopal Singh, Sankarpur, CUTTACK

Virtual classrooms

Sir, Schools are shut down and the pandemic is spreading fast. Recently, the HRD Ministry has requested parents to furnish feedback on the opening of schools. No parents will want to send their children out of home till the virus spread is controlled. The classes on virtual platform will be of little help to students in rural Odisha. For every 100 people, just 16 have internet access; this, with an overall tele-density of 61.81 per cent. About 11,000 villages out of the total 51,311 in the state are without tele-towers. Even large parts of semi-urban Odisha are struggling with the problem of lack of internet access. After Bihar, Odisha is the second state with largest BPL population, at 32.59 per cent; and 83 per cent of the state's population resides in rural areas. Under these circumstances, the efforts at education via virtual platform will not help much.

Pranab Kishore Pattanayak, KORAPUT

Railways, privatisation

Sir, Privatisation of Railways is a long-standing call. Different stakeholders viewed the matter from different perspectives. However, the government has decided to roll out private coaches. The Railways has issued a pre-bid notification inviting private players to come forward. Around 15 firms have expressed interest. The news is interesting, but a question is whether these trains would run on capitalist lines or socialist lines.

Santosh Kumar Satapathy, PARALAKHEMUNDI

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

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GHAZIABAD SCRIBE'S KILLING

Assam flood situation grim

In UP, crime virus more active than coronavirus: Oppn targets Yogi govt

AGENCIES

Ghaziabad, July 22: Ghaziabad-based journalist Vikram Joshi, who was shot in the head by some assailants two days ago, succumbed to the injuries Wednesday, his family said. Joshi, who had made a complaint with police alleging harassment of his niece July 16, was attacked around 10.30 pm Monday while he was returning home in Vijay Nagar on a two wheeler along with his two daughters, according to officials.

The scribe aged around 35 years worked with a local Hindi daily. Joshi was admitted to a private hospital where he died during treatment. He is survived by his wife, two daughters and mother.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, BSP chief Mayawati and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal were among leaders who condemned the attack on the journalist and questioned the law-and-order situation in UP.

Police have registered an FIR on the basis of a complaint by Joshi's brother Aniket, who alleged the journalist was given a life threat by the accused men. Three suspects - Ravi, Shahnoor alias Chhotu and Akash - were named in the FIR,



Journalist Vikram Joshi was killed for opposing the molestation of his niece. My condolences to the bereaved family. The promise was of giving 'Ram Raj', but gave 'Gundara'

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

while some unnamed people were also accused in the case.

The district police have identified Shahnoor alias Chhotu as the man who had shot Joshi after the group waylaid him while he was returning home Monday night.

SSP Kalanidhi Naithani said nine assailants were nabbed Tuesday and Pratap Vihar police post in-charge Raghvendra Singh was suspended with immediate effect for dereliction of duty as he

did not pay heed to the harassment complaint lodged by Joshi. Joshi had filed a police complaint July 16 that Ravi and his accomplices were harassing his niece, the SSP said.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced a financial aid of Rs 10 lakh for Joshi's family, a job for his wife and free education for his children, an official spokesperson said in Lucknow.

Condemning the incident, Rahul Gandhi slammed the Adityanath government over the law and order in the state. "Journalist Vikram Joshi was killed for opposing the molestation of his niece. My condolences to the bereaved family. The promise was of giving 'Ram Raj', but

Criminals have a field day

A CCTV footage of the attack on the journalist that has surfaced on social media purportedly shows Vikram Joshi's two-wheeler swerving before falling down and him getting attacked by the armed group of men. His daughters ran away to some distance, while the men caught hold of Joshi and started thrashing him. Suddenly, one of them opened fire and Joshi fell on the ground. The accused fled the spot, while his elder daughter rushed back to him and sat next to him on the road looking for help, the purported footage showed.

gave 'Gundara'," he said in a tweet.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala also reacted to the killing of the journalist and said there was "gunda raj" and "jungle raj" in the state.

"The way heinous crimes like murder and those against women are continuing unabated, it is clear that instead of law and order, jungle raj is prevailing in UP. Crime virus of criminals is more active than coronavirus in UP. People are fed up and the government must address this issue," Mayawati said on Twitter.

The Delhi chief minister too demanded "strictest punishment" for the accused.

AGENCIES

Guwahati, July 22: The flood situation in Assam deteriorated Wednesday with two more persons losing their lives, even as the number of people affected rose to over 26 lakh across 26 districts, an official bulletin said.

According to the daily flood report of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), one person each died at Baghbor of Barpeta and Morigaon revenue circle in Morigaon district. With this, the total number of people losing their lives in this year's flood and landslide has gone up to 115 across the state - 89 were killed in flood-related incidents and 26 in landslides.

The ASDMA said over 26.31 lakh persons are hit by the floods in Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Biswanath, Darrang, Baksa, Nalbari, Barpeta, Chirang, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, South Salmara, Goalpara, Kamrup, Kamrup Metropolitan, Morigaon, Nagaon, Hojai, Golaghat, Jorhat, Majuli, Sivasagar, Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, West Karbi Anglong and Cachar districts.

Goalpara is the worst-hit district with over 4.68 lakh people suffering, followed by Barpeta (3.82 lakh people affected) and Morigaon (3.08 lakh people). The National Disaster Response Force, the State Disaster Response Force, district administrations and local people have rescued 452 persons since Tuesday by deploying 80 boats across the state.

Till Tuesday, more than 24.19 lakh persons were suffering due to the deluge across 24 districts.

At present, 2,525 villages are under water and 1,15,515.25 hectares



A man walks on a temporary bamboo bridge to reach a ferryboat along the banks of swollen Brahmaputra in Guwahati, Wednesday.

PTI PHOTO

of crop areas have been damaged across Assam, the ASDMA said.

It further said authorities are running 391 relief camps and distribution centres across 20 districts, where 45,281 people have taken shelter. A total of 3,383.81 quintals of rice, dal and salt, and 606.10 litres of mustard oil along with other relief materials such as tarpaulin, baby food, candle, matchbox, mosquito net, biscuit, soap, drinking water, cattle feed, mink and wheat bran have been distributed.

The Brahmaputra is flowing above the danger marks at Dibrugarh, Dhubri and Goalpara cities, besides at Nimatighat in Jorhat and Tezpur in Sonitpur districts. Its tributaries Dhanisiri at Numaligarh in Golaghat, Jia Bharali at NT Road Crossing in Sonitpur, Kopili at Kamrup and Dharamtul in Nagaon, Beki at Road Bridge in Barpeta, Kushiya at Karimganj town and Sankosh at Golokoganj in Dhubri are also flowing above the danger levels.

Massive erosion has been reported from different places of Biswanath, Majuli, Baksa, Udalguri and Kokrajhar districts, the ASDMA said. The bulletin said that a total of 131 camps out of 223 at Kaziranga National Park, 18 out of 40 camps at Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park and 24 out of 25 camps at Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary have been affected by the deluge.

The deluge has so far taken away the lives of 120 animals, while 147 others were rescued in Kaziranga National Park, the bulletin said quoting the forest officer of the Eastern Assam Wildlife Division.

The flood has also affected 23,89,401 domestic animals and poultry across the state, it added.

Blast near oil well on fire for a month



AGENCIES

Tinsukia/Dibrugarh, July 22: A massive blast occurred near the Oil India Limited's Baghjan well in Assam's Tinsukia district Wednesday, injuring three foreign experts involved in the dousing of the well fire raging for over a month.

The experts have been rushed to a hospital at Dibrugarh, Oil India Limited's senior manager, public affairs, Jayanata Bormudoi, said.

The experts have been identified as Anthony Steven Reynolds, Doug Dallas and Craig Neil Duncan, he said.

The blast occurred when the experts were on their way to open the spool of the well before putting up the blow out preventer (BOP) that finally douses the fire, Bormudoi said.

The well has been spewing gas since May 28 and a fire has been raging in the area since June 9 in which two firefighters lost their lives.

The dousing operation has been called off at Baghjan after the blast. The cause of the blast, its scale and nature are being ascertained, the official said.

The oil well at Baghjan, 500 km from Guwahati, had a blowout May 28 and has been leaking gas since, causing damage to the region's wetlands and biodiversity. The well had caught fire last month while clearing operations were going on. Two firefighters of Oil India Ltd were last month found dead at a wetland near the site. The fire was so intense that it could be seen

ECO HAZARD

THREE FOREIGN EXPERTS INVOLVED IN THE DOUSING OF THE WELL FIRE RAGING FOR OVER A MONTH WERE INJURED IN THE BLAST AND WERE HOSPITALISED

THE WELL HAS BEEN SPEWING GAS SINCE MAY 28 AND A FIRE HAS BEEN RAGING IN THE AREA SINCE JUNE 9 IN WHICH TWO FIREFIGHTERS OF OIL INDIA LTD LOST THEIR LIVES

LOCALS HAD LAST MONTH SHARED PICTURES OF CARCASSES OF ENDANGERED GANGETIC DOLPHINS AND OTHER AQUATIC LIFE FLOATING IN THE DIBRU-SAIKHOWA NATIONAL PARK, BARELY 3 KM FROM THE OIL FIELD

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE LIVING IN A 1.5-KM RADIUS OF THE WELL HAD BEEN MOVED TO SAFETY

from as far as 10 km away.

Thousands of people living in a 1.5-km radius of the well had been moved to safety; they have been living in relief camps since. The company had announced a compensation of Rs 30,000 to the displaced residents.

Locals had last month shared pictures of carcasses of endangered Gangetic Dolphins and other aquatic life floating in the Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, situated barely 3 km away from the oil field.

UP Cong: A battlefield for Rahul, Priyanka loyalists

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 22: The Congress in Uttar Pradesh is gradually turning into a battleground for Rahul Gandhi's loyalists and his sister Priyanka's supporters.

What began as a covert standoff, is now turning into an open battle. "It all began in October last year when Ajay Kumar Lallu was appointed UPPC president and he arrived in Lucknow to take charge. The UPPC office reverberated with 'Sonia Gandhi zindabad', 'Priyanka zindabad' and 'Ajay Kumar zindabad' but no one said 'Rahul Gandhi zindabad'. The speakers at the function also avoided mentioning the name of Rahul. That was the day we realised that this Congress had turned into Priyanka Congress," said a veteran leader.

According to party insiders, all Rahul loyalists in the party have been completely sidelined. "There is no room for us in the present dispensation where Priyanka's men - including her personal secretary Sandeep Singh and UPPC president Ajay Kumar Lallu - call the shots. Priyanka meets only those partymen whose names are cleared by these two and we cannot even get our views across to the party leadership," the leader said.

An example of this is the 10 senior Congress leaders who were expelled in November last year for 'anti-party activities'. Expelled party leader and former MLC, Haji Siraj Mehdi, said, "Some of us had decided to meet on Nehru Jayanti November 14 and pay our tributes to the nation's first Prime Minister because we had not been informed or invited to the function at UPPC. Four days after the meeting, we

WORST-HIT RAE BARELI



A leader, on condition of anonymity, said, "Priyanka Gandhi's problem is that she has implicit trust in those who have come in from outfits like AISA and Rihai Manch. These people lack political decorum and dignity and are not even well acquainted with the Congress ideology. They can make noise but not an impact."

Rae Bareli has been worst hit in the Priyanka era. Two Congress MLAs, Aditi Singh and Rakesh Singh, have revolted against the party and the Congress petition seeking their disqualification has also been rejected by the Speaker

Rae Bareli, now, does not have even a single Congress legislator even though it is the parliamentary constituency of interim Congress chief Sonia Gandhi

learned that we had been expelled. We sent letters to the Congress president, seeking an appointment, but got no response. It is clear that the Congress president does not wish to interfere in UP matters."

"We understand that the family does not wish to interfere in each other's domain but they should also realise that it is the party that is going to bits. Priyanka's advisors are responsible for the gaffes on the bus controversy and her tweets that gave the Yogi government an opportunity to lash out at the Congress," said a former UPPC president. Party leaders admit that since the past one year, all veteran leaders - from Salman Khurshid to RPN Singh to Nirmal Khatri, Rajesh Mishra, Shri Prakash Jaiswal, Arun Kumar Munna and Raj Babbar have maintained a safe distance from the party since Lallu took over in 2019. Jitin Prasada, on the other hand, is busy with his own outfit, the Brahmin Chetna Parishad, and is charting his own

course in Brahmin politics.

Nadeem Ashraf Jaisi, a senior party leader from Rae Bareli, who quit the Congress to join Aam Aadmi Party a few months ago, said, "Those who have worked with Rahul Gandhi are now being sidelined and ignored. If someone like Chaudhary Zile Singh (Noida) who has worked with late Rajiv Gandhi, is forced to quit the Congress, those at the helm of affairs should do some introspection."

Former Congress MP, Santosh Singh - one of those expelled from the party - said that apart from pushing out dedicated party workers, the party was now 'importing' youth from other parties and Leftist outfits like AISA and Rihai Manch. "Priyanka should learn to recognise Congress leaders and develop leadership from within the party instead of importing leaders for outside. If this trend continues, the Congress may not win even a single seat in the next Assembly elections," he said.

UP board drops 'Merchant of Venice' from syllabus

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, July 22: The Uttar Pradesh Secondary Education Board (UPSEB) has knocked William Shakespeare's 'Merchant of Venice' off from the Class 12 syllabus.

This is a part of an exercise to cut the annual syllabus by 30 per cent in view of the disruptions in the academic session due to the pandemic. As per the curtailed syllabus for all subjects for Classes 9-12, the deleted chapters include 'Ninda Ras' by satirist Harishankar Parsai and Kalkayi's repentance song by Maithili Sharan Gupta.

Challenges of the Congress system and political party dominance in independent India; Harappan civilisation; and Partition: History and na-

tionality, sectarianism and division of 1940 in 'division based on physical sources' have also been dropped.

In the 'Contemporary World Politics' section, the deleted chapters include the US hegemony in world politics, security in contemporary world, and globalisation. UPSEB Secretary Divya Kant Shukla said the syllabus has been shortened to make up for the academic loss caused due to COVID-19.

"We have only deleted the topics from the examinations and not from textbooks. So, if students want, they can still study the dropped topics," Shukla said and added that the Board has done its best to retain relevant and important topics.

"For instance, if there were four



poems of Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala' in the Hindi textbook, we have kept two and dropped the other two from this year's syllabus," he said. The 30 per cent of the top-

ics removed from Class 10 civics syllabus includes content on democracy, caste, religion and sexual issues. In mathematics, chapters like circle, probability, some trigonom-

'CORONA WARRIORS ARE EXHAUSTED'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, July 22: The daily average of new coronavirus cases in Agra in July works out to almost 15, compared to eight in June. Opening of markets and increased public mobility are feared to have led to the increase in infections.

"The reality is that all corona warriors, including police, are tired - doctors, paramedics, sanitation workers are all exhausted and feel drained," a private medical practitioner claimed. A private doctor advocated more active role of the private hospitals at this stage, so that public health sector could take a breather. Agra reported 19 new coronavirus cases in the last 24 hours till Wednesday morning, taking the total tally to 1,536, including 94 deaths. The recovery rate is 82.68 per cent with 172 active cases in the district. Neighbouring districts too are reporting corona cases in double figures on a daily basis. A health activist said private facilities should be allowed to conduct antigen tests to detect coronavirus infections and the kits should be made available at chemist shops.

"The government's whole approach so far seems to be to keep the coronavirus figures in check and present a positive profile of the country at the international level. It's a strange fix -- people are not satisfied with governmental efforts but it won't let the private sector play its role. For over three months now, most private clinics have remained closed and doctors gone on holi-



day, depriving the common man of prompt medical treatment," social activist Shrawan Kumar Singh said. In Agra district, only 36,112 samples have been collected for testing as against its population of around 50 lakh. The district had only 200 beds in L-3 category, though 4,000 beds are now available in government and private hospitals.

Chief Medical Officer Dr RC Pandey said the district's preparedness was much better

now to cope with any challenge, even in case of any further spike in the number of corona cases in the future. After the state government allowed home quarantine for asymptomatic patients, the Indian Medical Association is offering a Rs-600 daily package to such patients, which includes medicines, consultations, testing and continuous monitoring.

The government's whole approach so far seems to present a positive profile of the country at the international level. It's a strange fix -- people are not satisfied with governmental efforts but it won't let the private sector play its role

SHRAWAN KUMAR SINGH | SOCIAL ACTIVIST



There was already a lot of concern about Covid-19. But Bihar suffered a double whammy due to the floods during the Covid-19 situation. The situation of health sector is critical in Bihar and the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the state a lot

HIMACHAL CM IN QUARANTINE

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur Wednesday quarantined himself at his official residence as a precautionary measure after a Deputy Secretary-level official in his office tested positive for Covid-19, officials said



of the day quote

It's important that the one-day session give utmost priority to the Covid pandemic, financial condition of the state, revival of economy, environmental issues, like proposed projects causing damage to the Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and the Mollem National Park, double tracking of rail passing through villages in coastal areas

Till July 19, the state government has readied at least 20,404 beds in 187 Covid first-line treatment centres (FLTC). The government has appointed 305 doctors, 572 nurses, 62 pharmacists and 27 lab technicians. We plan to set up 742 FLTCs by July 23 raising the number of beds to 69,215

Had an excellent interaction with the newly elected BJP Rajya Sabha MPs. It was wonderful to hear their views and passion towards public service

GEHLOT'S BROTHER RAIDED, CONGRESS QUESTIONS TIMING



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 22: As the Enforcement Directorate (ED) carried out searches Wednesday at over a dozen locations in Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and West Bengal in the fertiliser scam case, including the house of Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's brother Agradain Gehlot, the Congress questioned the timing of the action.

Gujarat, six in Rajasthan, two in West Bengal and one in Delhi.

The official said that the financial probe agency is also carrying out searches at the premises of Agradain Gehlot, whose firm Anupam Krishi held authorised dealership of Indian Potash Ltd (IPL). An ED source claimed the company owned by Agradain Gehlot was involved in exporting Muriate of Potash (MoP) fertiliser, which is banned for exports. MoP is imported by IPL and distributed among farmers at subsidised rates.

Following the ED raids, the Congress flayed the Modi government and maintained that when the Centre's attempts to topple the party's state government failed, the ED had conducted raids, including at the premises of Gehlot's brother.

The source further said that Agradain Gehlot is facing a Rs 7 crore Customs penalty in the fertiliser case. According to the source, Agradain Gehlot was an authorised dealer for IPL and between 2007-09, his company bought MoP at subsidised rates and instead of distributing to farmers sold it to few other companies, who in turn exported it to Malaysia and Singapore in the guise of industrial salt.

SC nod for judicial probe panel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: The Supreme Court Wednesday approved Uttar Pradesh government's draft notification for appointing former apex court judge Justice (ret'd) B S Chauhan as chairman of the 3-member inquiry commission on the killing of eight policemen and the subsequent encounter killings of gangster Vikas Dubey and five of his alleged associates.

DUBEY ENCOUNTER



Reference as approved by us, shall be issued immediately. The Commission shall sit at Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh and start functioning within a period of one week from today," the bench said in its order. "It is made clear that the secretarial assistance for the Commission shall be provided by the Central Government, from such services/Departments as may be directed by the Chairman of the Commission," the bench said.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde directed that the inquiry commission should start functioning within a week and the probe be concluded within two months. The other two members of the inquiry commission would be - former high court judge Justice (ret'd) Shashi Kant Agarwal and retired Director General of Police of Uttar Pradesh K L Gupta.

The bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, cleared the draft notification and asked the Uttar Pradesh government to notify it. "We direct that the notification constituting the Commission and incorporating the Terms of

ED joins Kerala gold smuggling probe

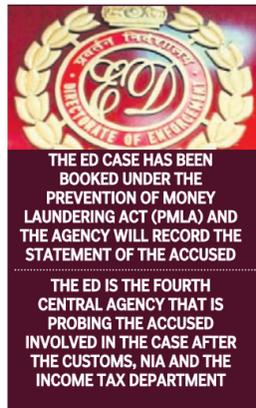
THE ED HAS POWERS TO ATTACH THE IMMOVABLE AND MOVABLE ASSETS OF THE ACCUSED UNDER THE PMLA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a money laundering complaint in connection with the Kerala 'diplomatic baggage' gold smuggling case, officials said Wednesday.

They said the agency has registered an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR), equivalent of a police FIR, after studying the NIA complaint filed in the case recently. The ED case has been booked under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the agency will record the statement of the accused, they said.

The central agency will investigate if proceeds of crime were generated by the accused by laundering of funds that were earned through the alleged gold smuggling racket. The ED also has powers to attach the immovable and movable properties of the accused under the PMLA. The case emerged on



July 5 when gold, weighing over 30 kg, was seized by the Customs department from the 'diplomatic baggage' that had landed by air cargo at the Thiruvananthapuram international airport from the Gulf.

The seized gold is stated to worth nearly Rs 15 crore. The ED is the fourth central agency that is probing the accused involved in the case after the Customs, NIA and the Income Tax Department. The NIA had arrested the prime accused in the case, Swapna Suresh and her associate Sandeep Nair, from Bengaluru on July 11.

The NIA had told a special court in Kochi on Tuesday that Suresh, Nair and others conspired to damage the country's monetary stability by smuggling large quantity of gold from abroad. In a report submitted to the court, the NIA also said it is suspected that the accused had used the proceeds of smuggling for financing terrorism through various means.

The accused deliberately used the diplomatic baggage of UAE as a cover to transact illegal business and it may have serious repercussions in India's diplomatic relations with the UAE government and it is prejudicial to the monetary

and economic security of India as well, the NIA said. The NIA has interrogated Suresh and Nair who are in its custody till July 24. It has booked Suresh, Sarith P S, Nair and Fasil Fareed under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. Suresh was working in the Information Technology department and her contractual service terminated after her name cropped up in the gold smuggling case.

IAS officer M Sivasakar was removed as Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and the state IT Secretary over his alleged links with Suresh and other accused in the case. She is also stated to be a former employee of the UAE consulate in Thiruvananthapuram.

Sarith P S, also a former employee of the UAE consulate in Kerala, was arrested by the Customs department after the gold was seized. Dubai-based businessman Fareed is still at large.

BE ALERT



Actors dressed as Hindu deities Chitrugupta and Yama during an awareness campaign on Covid in Jabalpur, Wednesday

CORONA BACKLASH

Maha villagers defy Covid tests

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Raigad (Maharashtra), July 22: Hundreds of angry Bodni villagers, including at least 2 Covid-19 patients, trooped out on the road to defy the government, police and medical teams coaxing them to undergo Covid-19 tests, officials said Wednesday.

The ire of the villagers was such that one of them allegedly attempted to spit on a PPE-clad medico, ostensibly to prove that nothing was wrong with them and they didn't require Covid tests. The ruckus was witnessed in the small coastal fishing hamlet of Bodni in the Alibag sub-district of Raigad district, where around 60 families, among whom at least 72 persons have tested positive so far, created a huge health scare among the district medical, police and administration teams.

"This was unexpected. The villagers seemed to be under some misunderstanding and we sent our Tehsildar and other officials to convince them. But they remained adamant," a top official in the Alibag Collectorate said, requesting anonymity.

The official added that the particular fishing hamlet in Bodni has already been declared as a containment zone, but the people there have been noticed flouting all norms routinely. "From tomorrow, we plan to clamp stringent containment measures as per the laws. Nobody will be allowed inside or outside the area and other rigorous protocols shall be implemented, besides testing all the residents," the official cautioned.

The incident came almost simultaneously with a huge commuters' protest and train blockade which was witnessed in Nala Sopara town in Palghar district where irate commuters demanded resumption of public transport services.

At Bodni, two ambulances carrying a medical team arrived to carry out swab tests on the locals, but were stunned to find themselves blocked at the hamlet entrance by a menacing crowd, booing and screaming at them to go back.

SHORT TAKES

Woman dies

Lucknow: A woman from Amethi district who had attempted immolation along with her daughter in front of the Lok Bhawan in Lucknow on Friday, succumbed to her burn injuries Wednesday. Safia (50) had suffered over 70 per cent burns while her daughter Gudiya (28) suffered 35 per cent burns. Both were admitted to the Civil Hospital. Safia had a dispute with some of the residents of her village on a drain which passed near her house but she alleged that nobody paid heed to her complaints.

Covid patient alleges assault

Kolkata: A suspected COVID-19 patient, his pregnant wife and child were allegedly beaten up by their neighbours at Patuli in the southern part of the city, police said Wednesday. An investigation has been initiated into the case after a complaint was lodged at the local police station by the man. "My three-year-old son, my wife who is three months pregnant and I have been assaulted physically by our immediate neighbours on Tuesday afternoon. They pushed my wife and beat me with shoes. Our neighbours are opposing our stay at our home though we are staying strictly inside our flat and have not violated any quarantine protocol," the man said.

Woman saves 4-year-old son

New Delhi: A woman resolutely held out against two motorcycle-borne men who tried to kidnap her four-year-old child in Shakarpur area of east Delhi, forcing them to flee without their bike. The whole incident, on Tuesday, was captured on CCTV camera in which the two helmet-wearing kidnapers are seen forcibly trying to grab the child. However, the mother pounced on the bike like a lioness, making them panic and lose balance. While the woman snatched back the child, one of the men ran away on foot while the other tried to flee on the bike. Hearing the shrieks of the woman, area residents gathered at the spot, and an alert man among them blocked the passage of the bikers with a two-wheeler. After a brief scuffle, the criminals managed to flee, leaving their vehicle behind.

Widow of Colonel killed in clash appointed Dy Collector

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, July 22: The Telangana government Wednesday appointed the widow of Colonel B. Santosh Babu, who was killed in the clash with Chinese troops in Ladakh last month, as a Deputy Collector. Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao handed over the appointment letter to Santoshi at Pragathi Bhavan, the official residence of the Chief Minister. He instructed officials concerned to post Santoshi in Hyderabad or its surrounding areas. He also asked his Secretary Smita Sabharwal to be with Santoshi till she gets the proper training and settles down in her job.

KCR, as the Chief Minister is popularly known, had lunch with 20 of the family members of Santoshi who accompanied her to Pragathi Bhavan. He enquired about their well-being and assured that the govern-

ment would always stand by Santosh Babu's family.

It was exactly a month before that KCR had visited the family of Santosh Babu in Suryapet town to console his parents and other family members and handed over Rs 5 crore as ex gratia. He had also handed over to Santoshi the letter of her appointment to Group-1 job and documents on the allotment of a house site measuring 711 square yards in Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.

Meanwhile, officials were busy making arrangements to handover the land to the family. Hyderabad Collector Shweta Mohanty and other officials inspected the land which is to be handed over to the martyr's family. Santosh Babu and 19 other soldiers were killed in the clashes with Chinese troops in Galwan Valley of Ladakh on June 15. The Colonel is survived by his wife, a nine-year-old daughter and a four-year-old son.

BORDER ROW WITH CHINA

Combat readiness sent a strong message: Rajnath

THE DEFENCE MINISTER SAID THE NATION'S RESOLVE TO DEFEND ITS SOVEREIGNTY STANDS FIRM

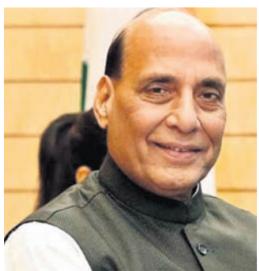
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh Wednesday complimented the Indian Air Force for its rapid deployment of assets at forward locations in response to the border row with China in eastern Ladakh, saying its Balakot strike and the current combat readiness have sent a strong message to "adversaries".

Singh also talked about the "professional manner" in which the IAF conducted the air strikes deep inside Pakistan's Balakot last year and appreciated the force for its proactive response in bolstering its operational capabilities over the past few months.

"He stated that the professional manner in which IAF conducted the air strikes in Balakot as well as rapid deployment of IAF assets at forward locations in response to the prevailing situation in eastern Ladakh has sent a strong message to the adversaries," the defence ministry said in a release.

He said the nation's resolve to defend its sovereignty stands firm on the faith its people have in the



capability of its armed forces. Singh also mentioned the ongoing efforts to de-escalate tension along the Line of Actual Control and urged the IAF to stand ready to handle any eventuality.

Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria said that the IAF was well prepared to counter short term as well as strategic threats and the units were "evenly poised" to counter any aggressive action by the adversary.

He said the response by all commands in ensuring deployment and readiness of forces was prompt and laudable. He also emphasised on the need to focus on the ability to handle situations at a short notice for ensuring a robust response. In his address, the defence minister also acknowledged the IAF's role in adapting to changes in technology.

He also talked about adopting emerging capabilities like nano technology, artificial intelligence,

cyber and space domains. He assured the commanders that all requirements of the Armed Forces, whether financial or otherwise, would be fulfilled, the ministry said.

In the conference, the IAF commanders will carry out an in-depth review of the country's air defence system which will include deployment of the first batch of Rafale fighter jets in the Ladakh sector.

The main focus of the commanders' conference will be to liberate on the overall situation in eastern Ladakh and enhance the IAF's combat prowess over the country's air space in all sensitive sectors along the de-facto border with China including in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Uttarakhand,

the sources said.

The commanders are expected to specifically deliberate on deployment of first batch of around six Rafale jets in the Ladakh sector by early next month as the aircraft are set to join the IAF's fighter fleet by July 29, the sources said. In a demonstration of its aerial prowess, the IAF has been carrying out night time combat air patrols over the eastern Ladakh region in the last few weeks, in an apparent message to China that it was ready to deal with any eventualities in the mountainous region. The IAF has deployed almost all its frontline fighter jets like Sukhoi 30 MKI, Jaguar and Mirage 2000 aircraft in key frontier air bases in eastern Ladakh.



Big Day in India's Nuclear history as indigenously designed 700 MWe Kakrapar Atomic Power Plant-3 in Gujarat achieved criticality. Nation salutes our scientists on this stellar achievement. New India is marching ahead to realise PM @NarendraModi's vision of #AtmaNirbharBharat

NEW HIMACHAL BJP CHIEF

Lok Sabha member from Shimla (reserved) constituency, Suresh Kashyap, was appointed the BJP Himachal Pradesh unit president Wednesday. The announcement was made by JP Nadda



of the day quote

One year has passed since the law against triple talaq was passed and there is a decline of about 82 per cent in triple talaq cases thereafter

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI | UNION MINISTER OF MINORITY AFFAIRS

Congress will not be impacted by Jyotiraditya Scindia's exit and Sachin Pilot's rebellion

BHUPESH BAGHEL | CHHATTISGARH CM

My heartfelt condolences to the family of Vikram Joshi, a fearless journalist who passed away. He was shot in UP for filing an FIR to book his niece's molesters. An atmosphere of fear has been created in the country. Voices being muzzled. Media not spared. Shocking

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

BHARATPUR ROYAL SCION MURDER

Convicts get life term

The convicts, who were sentenced to life term by Mathura District Judge Sadhna Rani Thakur, include former Deeg Dy SP Kan Singh, 82, and local police station in-charge, sub-inspector Virendra Singh, 78, who had led a police team in killing the Bharatpur royal scion and his two colleagues Sumer Singh and Hari Singh on February 21, 1985

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mathura, July 22: All 11 former policemen from Rajasthan, convicted for killing Raja Man Singh of the erstwhile Bharatpur royal family and his two colleagues over 35 years ago in Deeg area of the state, were awarded life sentence by a court here Wednesday.

The convicts, who were sentenced to life term by Mathura District Judge Sadhna Rani Thakur, include former Deeg Dy SP Kan Singh, 82, and local police station in-charge, sub-inspector Virendra Singh, 78, who had led a police team in killing the Bharatpur royal scion and his two colleagues Sumer Singh and Hari Singh on February 21, 1985.

The other policemen sentenced for the crime are ex-ASI Ravi Shekhar

and former constables Sukh Ram, Jeevan Ram, Jag Mohan, Bhanwar Singh, Hari Singh, Chhatar Singh, Sher Singh, Daya Ram and Ravi Shekhar, all above 70 years of age.

The encounter had taken place in Deeg grain market a day after Raja Man Singh, then contesting the state Vidhan Sabha election as an independent candidate, had allegedly banged his jeep into former Rajasthan's chief minister Shiv Charan Mathur's helicopter.

According to the prosecution, he was also accused of damaging some publicity material and a stage set up for Mathur to address an election rally in favour of the Congress candidate Brajendra Singh, a retired IAS officer, the prosecution had told the court. Days after the killings of the royal family chief and his two col-



leagues, the case was transferred by the then central government to the CBI on February 27, 1985. The trial was later shifted from a Jaipur special court to Mathura in Uttar Pradesh by the Supreme Court in November 1989 on the plea of complainant Vijay Singh, a son-in-law of the slain chief of the erstwhile riyasat.

"Besides undergoing life imprisonment, all the eleven convicts will have to furnish a fine of ₹10,000 each failing which they will have to undergo additional imprisonment of two months each," District

& Session Judge Thakur announced in a jam-packed courtroom.

Besides being held guilty of murder, all 11 former policemen were also convicted for "committing riots armed with deadly weapons" and being part of the unlawful assembly committing an offence with common objective under sections 148 and 149 of the IPC respectively. For these two offences, all 11 convicts were sentenced to two years and six months respectively in jail and were imposed fines of ₹2,000 each. All sentences would run concurrently, the court said.

The court also ordered payment of ₹30,000 to the next of kin of each of the deceased and ₹2,000 to the four injured persons, Vijai Singh, Chandan Singh, Nawab Singh and Babu Lal, in the encounter.

Youth dies after police 'assault'

Yaricharla Kiran, who was going on a motorbike with a friend, was stopped by police, for not wearing a mask

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati, July 22: Beaten up allegedly by a policeman with lathi for not wearing a face mask, a youth succumbed to his injuries in Andhra Pradesh's Prakasam district Wednesday.

Yaricharla Kiran, who was injured in a July 19 incident, died while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Guntur. Kiran had questioned the police's attitude and reminded them about the rules, when they took him into custody and whisked him away in a police jeep.

According to reports, Kiran was a private employee in Hyderabad, who had come to his home town due to the lockdown. He was allegedly beaten up again while in the jeep and to escape that he jumped off the vehicle, sustaining head injuries. His family alleged that the police

hit him on his head, resulting in the injury and ultimately death. Tension prevailed in Thomaspetta area of Chirala following the youth's death. Police deployed additional forces to prevent any untoward incident.

Kiran, who was going on a motorbike with a friend, was stopped by police near Kottapeta checkpoint, for not wearing the mask. The policemen, including sub-inspector of II-Town police station Vijay Kumar allegedly manhandled him.

Prakasam Superintendent of Police, Siddharth Kaushal said an inquiry would be conducted by the officials of a neighbouring district into the incident. He said a case was already booked against the sub-inspector on a complaint by the youth's father. Denying allegations against the police, the SP said the youth were stopped as they were allegedly in an inebriated condition.

SHORT TAKES

Maha minister tests Covid+

Aurangabad: Maharashtra minister and Shiv Sena leader Abdul Sattar Wednesday said he has tested positive for coronavirus. In a Facebook post, Sattar, who is an MLA from Sillod constituency in Aurangabad and is a minister of state in the Maha Vikas Aghadi government, said he has home quarantined in Mumbai and appealed to those who came in contact with him to get themselves tested. Earlier, state cabinet ministers Jitendra Awhad, Ashok Chavan and Dhananjay Munde had tested positive for the disease and later recovered.

Doctor dies

New Delhi: After almost a three-week-long battle with the coronavirus disease, a 42-year-old doctor employed at Delhi's National Health Mission took his last breath in All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) trauma centre. Dr. Javed Ali had tested positive for coronavirus on June 24, was hospitalised and kept on ventilator in the last ten days. The contractual doctor is survived by his wife and two children. In April, the Delhi government had announced compensation of ₹1 crore for health worker's families if they die while dealing with coronavirus cases.

Jumbo electrocuted

Kolkata: A male elephant died Wednesday after coming in contact with a live electric wire in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district, the second such incident in the district in as many days. Chief Wildlife Warden, Ravikant Sinha, said the pachyderm died while trying to eat a branch of a jackfruit tree which was entangled with live wire at Nagrakata block in Bamandanga tea estate area.

CONTEMPTUOUS TWEETS

SC NOTICE TO BHUSHAN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 22: Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu urged 45 newly-elected members of the House who took oath Wednesday to uphold rules and procedures while discharging their duties as lawmakers and not fall prey to disruptions.

The 45 members, including 36 first-timers, took the oath of office in the Rajya Sabha chamber while following physical distancing norms. In total, 61 members have been elected to the House of which 43 are first-timers.

Twelve sitting Rajya Sabha members who have been re-elected, including Sharad Pawar, Harivansh, Ramdas Athawale, Digvijaya Singh, Bhubaneswar Kalita, Prem Chand Gupta and Biswajit Daimary, also took oath.

BJP leader Jyotiraditya Scindia and Congress' Mallikarjun Kharge are among the first-time members of the House who took oath. Scindia, who has been elected to the Rajya Sabha from Madhya Pradesh, greeted his arch-rival Digvijaya Singh, and Kharge before his oath-taking.

Scindia and Singh had huge differences and this was one of the reasons of Scindia quitting the Congress. Scindia also greeted Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad. Those members who could not take oath Wednesday will do so during the ensuing Monsoon Session.

After the oath-taking ceremony, Naidu urged the MPs not to fall prey to the temptation of disrupting the proceedings of the House for "short-term gains". The chairman suggested the members to question themselves if they had acted to enhance the dignity of the institution at the end of each day during the session and whether their conduct was ethical during the inter-session period.

"Answers to these simple questions would guide you on the right path," he said. "Ensuring rule of law is the spirit of our law of the land (Constitution). It shall begin with your compliance with the rules and procedures of this House," Naidu said.



The Bench questioned Twitter why it couldn't disable the tweets on its own even after a contempt case had been initiated. The counsel for Twitter said he understood it and would convey the court's intent to his client.

He also submitted before the Bench to direct it to disable tweets by Bhushan, and insisted that Twitter couldn't delete tweets without the court direction. "We take suo motu cognizance of the aforesaid tweet also, apart from the tweet quoted above

and suo motu register the proceedings. We issue notice to the Attorney General for India and to Prashant Bhushan also," the court said referring to Bhushan's two tweets.

The Supreme Court initiated suo motu contempt proceedings against Bhushan for allegedly making derogatory comments against the top court on Twitter. The first tweet, posted on June 27, alleged the last four Chief Justices had played a role in the "destruction of democracy" during undeclared "emergency" for the last six years.

The second tweet on June 29 allegedly said the present Chief Justice rode a stationary bike at Nagpur while keeping the apex court in lockdown and denying citizens their right to access to justice. The apex court has been hearing cases through video link all through the lockdown.

A Bench, comprising Justices Arun Mishra, B.R. Gavai and Krishna Murari, asked Bhushan and Twitter to file reply by August 5

Serological survey in Delhi every month

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 22: Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain Wednesday said that the serological survey will now be conducted in the national capital every month.

On Tuesday, a serological survey conducted by the National Centre for Disease Control in collaboration with the Delhi Government revealed that 22.86 per cent people have the antibodies for the viral disease, while 77 per cent of the population is still susceptible.

Addressing a press conference, Jain said, "Delhi government has decided to conduct sero-survey every month. It will be done from the first day of the month till 5th

of every month." The next survey will be conducted on August 1, Jain said, adding that more samples will be taken this time as compared to the last.

For the last exercise, survey teams were formed, blood samples were collected from selected individuals after taking written informed consent and then their sera were tested for the IgG antibodies.

As many as 21,387 samples were collected during the survey. Out of the 11 districts, eight have sero-prevalence of more than 20 per cent. In the central, north-east, north and Shahdara districts, the sero-prevalence is 27 per cent.

Delhi's south-west area has 12.95 per cent sero-prevalence, the least in the city.



Villagers move to a safer place from a flood affected area in Bihar, Wednesday

PTI PHOTO

DEVOTION AMID PANDEMIC

GOA LEADERS BACK ONLINE 'PUJA' IN CORONA TIMES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Panaji, July 22: With public movement restricted due to the Covid-19 pandemic and "pujaris" (priests) reluctant to visit homes out of caution, a new online "puja" initiative started on the eve of the festival-heavy Shravan month by a local religious centre, has found backing across political lines.

The initiative started by the Shree Datta Padmanabh Peeth based in South Goa's Ponda sub district, offers online puja solutions for several festivals like Nag Panchami, Shravan Somvar, Satyanarayan Puja, Narali Pournima, etc. These are held during the Hindu calendar month of



Shravan (beginning on July 23) which winds up with the culmination of Ganesh Chaturthi.

"Whatever the severity of the pandemic, it cannot be allowed to wean us away from God. So we have to take support of technology for worship. You can now offer prayers from the comfort of your home. Look at this as an opportunity and not an impediment," Sadguru Brahmeshanandacharya, spiritual head of the peeth said Wednesday.

The peeth, also referred to as the Tapobhoomi is a politically sensitive entity with a mass following among the state's Bahujan Samaj (a non Brahmin caste grouping) in Goa.

According to Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, the online puja service would do away with the need for pujaris, who are reluctant to visit homes due to fear of contracting the dreaded viral infection during the pandemic. Goa currently has more than 1,400 active Covid-19 cases and has reported 25 deaths.

"All of us in Goa are facing several kinds of problems due to the pandemic. Pujaris who would frequent homes in Goa for purpose of puja are now reluctant to pay such visits. In view of this, I welcome initiative taken by the Padmanabh sampradaya to the start online puja service," Sawant said in a video

message. "Even in absence of pujaris, the online puja service will make us feel that there is a pujari by your side to help assist with all rituals and observances," Sawant said.

Union Minister of State for Defence and AYUSH Shripad Naik has also backed the initiative. "Puja by video conference simplifies the process of worship for users, especially in these times," Naik said. Leader of Opposition and former Chief Minister Digambar Kamat has also backed the online puja service. "There are Covid-19 cases increasing in Goa. Shravan is a holy month with many religious festivities. The online puja service will encourage social distancing," Kamat said.

PM to attend historic Ram temple event

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, July 22: Swami Govind Devgiri Maharaj, one of the members of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra trust, Wednesday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the ground-breaking ceremony of the proposed Ram temple in Ayodhya August 5.

Talking to reporters here, he said all chief ministers must be invited for the ceremony. "The PM has agreed to come to Ayodhya on August 5 for the 'bhoomi puja' of Ram temple. He will be there for one-and-a-half hours. Earlier, there were speculations that he would attend the ceremony virtually, but I insisted that it should be done in person," Swami Govind Devgiri Maharaj, also known as Kishorji Vyas, said.

Replying to a query whether Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray will be invited to the ground-breaking ceremony, he said, "He must be invited." "There is no question of not inviting CM Thackeray. He must be invited...I think there is no point in not inviting anybody. We must invite all the CMs, notable saints and social leaders," he added.

"But considering some practical difficulties due to COVID-19 and as the PM is coming there, only those people can come there, who can land in Lucknow and can come to Ayodhya by road as helicopters cannot land there," he said.

"According to me, late Balasaheb Thackeray was a great hero, who had emphasised building a grand Ram temple in Ayodhya," he said. Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut had on Tuesday said that Uddhav Thackeray will definitely go for the ground-breaking ceremony of Ram temple construction.



The UK now has a huge opportunity to cement its place at the vanguard of green innovation, setting an example worldwide while growing the economy and creating new jobs

BORIS JOHNSON | UK PRIME MINISTER

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE FOR CORONAVIRUS

The World Health Organisation and the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have launched an effort to explore the role of traditional medicine in the coronavirus pandemic



of the day quote

Certainly we're at a really, really challenging phase of this pandemic



BRETT SUTTON | AUSTRALIA'S CHIEF HEALTH OFFICER

I want the Windrush generation to have no doubt that I will reform the culture of the department so it better represents all of the communities we serve



PRITI PATEL | UK HOME SECRETARY

It is the responsibility of the government to protect the endangered species



MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA | SRI LANKAN PRIME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

PIO nurse gets President award

Singapore: A 59-year-old Indian-origin nurse in Singapore has been conferred with the prestigious President's Award for Nurses for serving on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

UK 'citizenship' for Hong Kongers

London: Britain's government announced Wednesday that it will open a new special pathway to obtaining British citizenship for eligible Hong Kongers from January 2021.

Najib to pay \$400mn tax bill

Kuala Lumpur: A Malaysian court Wednesday ordered former Prime Minister Najib Razak to settle 1.69 billion ringgit (\$397.41 million) in unpaid taxes over seven years while he was still in office.

Two men, baby killed in shootings

Canton (US): An infant was killed and his twin brother was wounded when someone fired several shots into an Ohio home early Wednesday, authorities said.

Pak journalist freed; top court expresses alarm over abduction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, July 22: A top Pakistani court Wednesday expressed alarm at the abduction of a prominent journalist Matiullah Jan, who was later freed, noting that kidnappers wore police uniforms and wanted to "scare" other people too.

The Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Athar Minallah heard the habeas corpus petition against Jan's abduction filed by his family Tuesday. The court took prompt action and ordered Secretary Interior, Commissioner, Islamabad and Inspector General, Islamabad to produce the journalist on Wednesday or personally appear before the court.

Jan, who is highly critical of the government and the security institutions of the country, was freed on Tuesday, hours after he was abducted by plainclothes and uniformed personnel in the national capital. Chief Justice Minallah noted that CCTV footage showed that some kidnappers were in police uniforms.



"Someone has the nerve to do such a thing in police uniforms... What impression will the public get that people are roaming around freely in police uniforms," he said. He further said the vehicle used in the incident had police headlights and the kidnappers wanted to "scare" other people also.

When Islamabad Police Deputy Inspector General for Operations Waqar ud Din told the court that an FIR was registered, the Chief Justice said it was a test case for police. "If there is no rule of law, there will be nothing here except chaos," Justice Minallah said and wrapped up the case. Earlier, he refused to monitor the follow up by police by saying that the police should do its duty to investigate the incident and take action.

India next to US in Covid testing: Trump

AGENCIES

Washington, July 22: The US is leading the world in terms of COVID-19 testing and India is second, President Donald Trump has said while warning Americans that the pandemic may "get worse before it gets better."

Over 140,000 Americans have died due to the coronavirus and 3.8 million have tested positive in the country. While the US economy is slowly coming back to normal, the pandemic is now spreading in many Sun Belt states, including in Arizona, Florida, Texas and parts of California.

"As one family, we mourn every precious life that's been lost. I pledge in their honour that we will develop a vaccine and we will defeat the virus. We're doing very well with vaccine development and therapeutic development," Trump said at a White House news conference Tuesday, his first on coronavirus after several weeks.

His daily news conferences ended soon after he suggested in April that the virus might be treated by injecting disinfectant into people, for which he was scorned by doctors, scientists and political rivals.



Trump insisted the American response to the pandemic was "much better" than in other places. But he also warned that the disease could get worse in the coming days.

"It will probably unfortunately get worse before it gets better," he said. Cases are surging in several US states, particularly in southern states that were initially reluctant to enforce lockdowns or mandate the wearing of masks.

Florida is currently the epicentre of the US epidemic. In recent weeks, hospitals across Florida warned that their ICUs were at capacity and that they were unable

to accept any new patients. Trump said his administration will stop at nothing to save lives and shield the vulnerable.

US SIGNS CONTRACT WITH PFIZER FOR VACCINE DOSES

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar announced Wednesday that the US has signed a contract with Pfizer for delivery in December of the first 100 million doses of a COVID-19 vaccine the pharmaceutical company is working to develop.

'China's behaviour was unacceptable'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, July 22: US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Wednesday said the recent clashes 'initiated' by the Chinese military against India in eastern Ladakh are the latest examples of the 'unacceptable behaviour' of ruling Chinese Communist Party.

He also praised India's decision to ban 59 Chinese apps, including TikTok, which he said are "security risks" to the Indian people. "The recent clashes initiated by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) are just the latest examples of the Chinese Communist Party's unacceptable behaviour. We were deeply saddened by the deaths of 20 Indian service members. I'm confident that with our concerted efforts, we can protect our interests," he said.

Asserting that the United States has never been more supportive of India's a security, he said New Delhi too, is an important partner and a key pillar of President Donald Trump's foreign policy.

Pompeo noted that the so-called quad compile comprised that the



The troops of India and China are locked in a standoff in several areas along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh since May 5

The situation deteriorated last month following the Galwan Valley clashes that left 20 Indian Army personnel dead

US, India, Japan and Australia has been revived.

"India is also part of a group of like-minded nations that I've convened regularly to advance shared interests," he said.

He also noted that the US has also invited Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi to the next G-7 (summit), where the leaders will advance the economic prosperity network. India, Pompeo said, has a chance to attract global supply chains away from China and reduce its reliance on Chinese com-

panies in like telecommunications, medical supplies and others.

The United States, he said, desires a new age of ambition in its relationship with India.

"We don't just interact on a bilateral basis. We see each other for what we are great democracies, global powers and really good friends. India is one of a few trusted like-minded countries whose leaders I call on a regular basis for counsel and collaboration on issues that span continents," Pompeo added.

Afghan girl shot dead Taliban fighters who killed her parents

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Ghazni, July 22: An Afghan girl shot dead two Taliban terrorists and wounded several more after they dragged her parents from their home and killed them for supporting the government, officials said.

The incident happened last week when terrorists rushed in the home of Qamar Gul, a teenager from a village in the central province of Ghor.

The fighters were looking for her father, the village chief, local police head Habiburrahman Malekzada told AFP.

Her father was a government supporter, which is why the Taliban terrorists went to his house

and dragged him out, Malekzada said. When his wife resisted, the Taliban terrorists killed the couple outside their home, Malekzada said.

"Qamar Gul, who was inside the house, took an AK-47 gun the family had and first shot dead the two Taliban fighters who killed her parents, and then injured a few others," he said. Gul is aged between 14 and 16, according to different officials. It is common for many Afghans to not know their precise age. Several other Taliban terrorists later came to attack her house, but some villagers and pro-government militiamen expelled them after a gunfight.



Quake jolts Alaska towns, produces small tsunami

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Anchorage, July 22: A powerful earthquake off Alaska's southern coast jolted coastal communities late Tuesday, and some residents briefly scrambled for higher ground over fears of a tsunami.

There were no immediate reports of damage in the sparsely

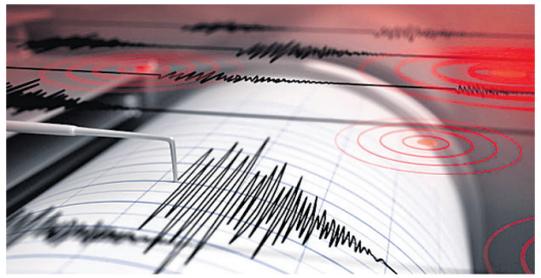
populated area of the state, and the tsunami warning was canceled after the magnitude 7.8 quake off the Alaska Peninsula produced a wave of a less than a foot.

According to the US Geological Survey, the earthquake struck Tuesday at 10:12 pm local time and was centered in waters 65 miles (105 kilometers) south-southeast

of the tiny community of Perryville, at a depth of 17 miles (28 km). Because of the temblor's location, nearby communities along the Alaska Peninsula did not experience shaking that would normally be associated with that magnitude of a quake, said Michael West, Alaska State Seismologist.

That doesn't mean they slept through it, West said residents in small towns within a hundred miles (160 kilometers) of the quake reported very strong shaking. Some shaking was also felt more than 500 miles (805 kilometers) away in the Anchorage area, West said.

The tsunami warning prompted coastal residents to evacuate to higher ground, with social media posts showing long lines of people fleeing towns like Homer and Kodiak as tsunami sirens wailed in the background.



ADORABLE BOND



A baby hippo is seen with its mother at Zacango Zoo in Calimaya, Mexico

REUTERS

People more likely to contract Covid at home: Study

By age group, the infection rate within the household was higher when the first confirmed cases were teenagers or people in their 60s and 70s

AGENCIES

Seoul, July 22: South Korean epidemiologists have found that people are more likely to contract the new coronavirus from members of their own households than from contacts outside the home.

A study published in the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) July 16 looked in detail at 5,706 "index patients" who had tested positive for the coronavirus and more than 59,000 people who came into contact with them.

The findings showed just two out of 100 infected people had caught the virus from non-household contacts,

while one in 10 had contracted the disease from their own families.

By age group, the infection rate within the household was higher when the first confirmed cases were teenagers or people in their 60s and 70s. "This is probably because these age groups are more likely to be in close contact with family members as the group is in more need of protection or support," Jeong Eun-kyeong, director of the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) and one of the authors of the study, told a briefing.

Children aged nine and under were least likely to be the index patient, said Dr. Choe Young-june, a



Hallym University College of Medicine assistant professor who co-lead the work, although he noted

WORLD IN CHAOS

- Global coronavirus infections surged past 15 million Wednesday
- HK will mandate face masks at indoor public places
- US President Donald Trump warned the pandemic would "get worse before it gets better"
- India reported almost 40,000 new cases Wednesday. India is now facing the twin challenge of combating the pandemic and massive flooding in the country's northeast

that the sample size of 29 was small compared to the 1,695 20-to-29-year-olds studied.

Children with COVID-19 were also more likely to be asymptomatic than adults, which made it

harder to identify index cases within that group.

"The difference in age group has no huge significance when it comes to contracting COVID-19. Children could be less likely to transmit the virus, but our data is not enough to confirm this hypothesis," said Choe.

Data for the study was collected between Jan. 20 and March 27, when the new coronavirus was spreading exponentially and as daily infections in South Korea reached their peak. KCDC has reported 45 new infections as of Monday, bringing the country's total cases to 13,816 with 296 deaths.

business



I think 5G is going to be a really big deal as and when things stabilise and people start using it. The fact is that Internet (coverage) in the rural areas is only 25%. So can you think about it when Internet in rural areas touches something like 90%?

V VAIDYANATHAN | MD AND CEO, IDFC FIRST BANK

AMBANI GOES PAST BUFFETT

RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani is now the fifth richest person in the world, according to the Billionaires List by business magazine Forbes. The billionaire surpassed ace American investor Warren Buffett on the real-time ranking by Forbes, which estimated Ambani's wealth at \$75 billion (₹5.61L cr)



of the day quote

To a lot of extent, COVID-19 has put a brake to this (disinvestment process), as several processes are involved. To some extent, we have to grant extensions to the Expression of interests that we have issued



TUHIN KANTA PANDEY | SECRETARY, DIPAM

With the health and safety of our guests and hosts in India top of mind, these Enhanced Cleaning Protocols are the need of the hour in the tourism sector. We are working to bring our hosts' global best practices backed by expert counsel and medical guidance



AMANPREET BAJAJ | GM, AIRBNB INDIA, SE ASIA, HK AND TAIWAN

Some business models of our customers could undergo changes which could open up new hitherto unknown opportunities. Given the heightened uncertainty (due to lockdown) we are aligned to opportunities that may open up in coming months



TT SRINIVASARAGHAVAN | MD, SUNDARAM FINANCE

COVID-19 crisis: GDP to shrink 6% in FY21, says report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 22: Citing the yet to be stabilised infection curve and the COVID-19 caseload in economically key states, Singaporean brokerage DBS Wednesday forecast deeper distress for the country which will lead to a 6% growth contraction in FY21.

In its earlier forecast, the brokerage had penciled in a minus 4.8% growth for the current fiscal. According to the report, just 7% of the districts in economically key states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, accounting for 30.5% of the national economic output, and in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh account for as much as

70% of the caseload.

This will prolong the recovery and the pandemic is set to take a deeper economic bite, it said.

The virus infections have crossed 1.15 million in the country while the death due to the same are close to 29,000 now, making the country the third worst affected by the pandemic after the US with close to 3.9 million infections and Brazil with nearly 2.2 million cases.

"We temper growth forecasts to minus 6% for FY21 due to the prolonged sub-normal reopening as the country is yet to stabilise the infection curve and the pandemic is going to take a deeper economic bite," DBS economist Radhika Rao said in a note.



The yet to be stabilised infection curve reflects a deeper double-digit contraction in Q1 of FY21 and a

shallower pickup in Q2 and a return to growth in Q3, she added. "Our granular analysis shows

that about 7% of the districts account for 70% of the total infection tally in economically key states like Maharashtra (14% of national GDP), Tamil Nadu (8.5%), Gujarat (8%), and Karnataka and Andhra contributing significantly to the national economic output," she said.

On top of this, localised lockdowns continue even today with Bihar and cities like Pune and Bengaluru still in lockdowns till July-end. Domestic flights are also selectively restricted by some states

and if more states go down this path, this may pose renewed supply chain disruptions as well as uncertainty for manufacturers, including automakers and electronics firms, warned the report.

On recovery, Rao said much depends on the extent to which rural demand and farm output, which is forecast to be at 2% in FY21, will act as counter-balancing buffer for a slump in non-farm output.

She also expects another round of fiscal support package/stimulus in September/October, when the economy is fully opened.

The depth and permanency of the growth shock will also dictate when an upturn in the growth cycle can take root, she added.

We temper growth forecasts to minus 6% for FY21 due to the prolonged sub-normal reopening as the country is yet to stabilise the infection curve and the pandemic is going to take a deeper economic bite

RADHIKA RAO | ECONOMIST, DBS

Huawei, Apple to push 5G handset production in 2020

Chinese brands are expected to occupy four out of the top six spots of 5G smartphone brands ranked by production volume

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 22: Driven by Huawei and new Apple iPhones which are set to join the ranks, the 5G handset production is expected to reach 235 million units at an 18.9 per cent penetration rate by the end of the year, according to a new report.

Led by Huawei, Chinese brands are expected to occupy four out of the top six spots of 5G smartphone brands ranked by production volume, said market research firm TrendForce.

Huawei has shifted its focus to the domestic Chinese market under the impact of US sanctions and in preparation for China's active 5G commercialization efforts.

The company is expected to produce about 74 million 5G smartphones this year.

Apple's yearly 5G smartphone production is expected to total about



70 million units in 2020, which lands the iPhone maker in second place.

"However, 5G functions will increase the production cost of smartphones accordingly. If Apple decides to directly reflect this added cost on the retail prices of the iPhone 12 series, it may lower its consumers' willingness to purchase, in turn affecting the sales performances of the new iPhones," said the report.

Samsung's 5G smartphone production this year is forecasted at 29 million units, placing the company in third place globally.

Vivo, OPPO (including OnePlus, OPPO, and Realme) and Xiaomi are tied for fourth place.

Vivo, OPPO and Xiaomi's yearly 5G smartphone production volumes are projected to reach about 21 million, 20 million, and 19 mil-

lion units, respectively.

5G remains a hot topic in the smartphone market this year, as smartphone brands and mobile processor manufacturers, such as Qualcomm and MediaTek, strive to expand their shares in the 5G market.

"As such, Chinese brands, which were ahead of their competitors in 5G strategies, occupied a 75 per cent share in the global 5G smartphone market in the first half of 2020," said the report.

The report predicted that an aggressive push by mobile processor manufacturers will lead to the rapidly increasing presence of 5G chipsets in the mid-to-low end market, driving 5G smartphone production to surpass 500 million units in 2021, which will potentially account for about 40 per cent of the total smartphone market.

CIL gains over ₹3K cr from improved quality, supply

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: State-owned CIL Wednesday said supply of improved quality coal over committed grades and supply beyond annual contracted quantity have resulted in the PSU gaining over ₹3,125 crore.

"Coal India Ltd's (CIL) concentrated efforts on supply of improved quality coal over committed grades and supply beyond annual contracted quantity (ACQ) have paid off as the company on whole gained a tidy amount over these twin attributes," the maharatna firm said in a statement.

An amount of around ₹1,365 crore provisioned under coal quality variance in the earlier years has been withdrawn, in the last fiscal, which is the net gain to CIL on whole, it said.



The PSU's coal supplies, above agreed ACQ to its customers, having fuel supply agreement (FSA), also netted the company a substantial amount of over ₹1,760 crore under performance incentive during the previous two fiscals combined, it said.

June vehicle registration tumbles by 33% in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) released the monthly vehicle registration data which claims that vehicle registration tumbled by 33.13% in Odisha in the month of June. All vehicle categories in the State registered de-growth in June as the Indian economy continues to battle with COVID-19 pandemic.

On a Yo-Y basis, the two-wheeler segment showed de-growth by 31.80%, three-wheeler by 72.54%, Commercial Vehicles (CV) by 74.19%, and Passenger Vehicles (PV) by 25.96%. However, tractor registrations witnessed a positive growth by 25.76%.

The two-wheeler registrations in Odisha totalled 37,072 in June as compared to 54,356 in the year-ago period. Meanwhile, the three-wheeler category saw 506 registrations as compared to 1,843 in 2019.

Similarly, CV and PV registrations witnessed a downswing in June. Around 615 registrations were made for CV versus 2,383 in June 2019, showed FADA's data. PV saw 3,168 registrations as compared to 4,279 in same period the previous year.

According to FADA's report, the overall vehicle registration in Odisha saw only 42,806 which lowered significantly as compared to the pre-



The overall vehicle registration in Odisha was 42,806 as compared to 64,010 in the year-ago period

vious year's registrations. In 2019, the vehicle registration in all categories was 64,010 in the state.

On other hand, the country also witnessed the downfall of vehicle registration for the month of June, 2020. Vehicle registration plummeted by -42% in June due to the impact of pandemic-induced-lockdown.

On a Yo-Y basis, all vehicle categories register unprecedented de-growth. 2-Wheeler witnessed a de-growth by -40.92%, 3-Wheeler by -75.43%, CV by -83.83%, and PV by -38.34%. Tractors registrations continue to march ahead with June numbers showing a growth of 10.86%.

SHORT TAKES

Sensex snaps five-day rally

Mumbai: Ending the rally of five consecutive sessions of gains, the Indian equity indices Wednesday settled in the red as traders took to profit booking. The decline in the domestic market was in line with the negative trend in the global markets. Heavy selling pressure was witnessed in auto, IT and capital goods stocks.

Zee Media board director resigns

New Delhi: Punit Goenka, the MD and CEO of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) has resigned from the directorship of Zee Media Corporation with effect from the close of business hours Wednesday. In a regulatory filing, Zee Media said that Goenka resigned on account of "preoccupation". This is to inform you that Punit Goenka, a Non-Executive-Non-Independent Director, has tendered his resignation from the directorship of the company with effect from the close of business hours of July 22, 2020," it said.

Gold prices hit all-time high

New Delhi: Gold prices in the national capital hit a new record high rising ₹430 to ₹51,500 per 10 gram Wednesday, reflecting gains in the international prices of the precious metal, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, gold had closed at ₹50,490 per 10 gram. Silver was also in huge demand as its prices zoomed ₹2,550 to ₹60,400 per kg, from ₹57,850 per kg Tuesday.

Sharekhan unveils edu platform

Mumbai: French financial power house BNP Paribas-owned brokerage Sharekhan Wednesday unveiled an edutainment platform called MoneyFlix to help drive digital revolution in financial education. Catering to both the digitally-savvy millennials and the not-so-millennials, MoneyFlix, from Sharekhan Education, offers financial modules with entertainment that aims to keep viewers engaged, said Rahul Ghose, the head of MoneyFlix, while launching the platform.

BIZ BUZZ

Govt extends WFH norms for IT, ITes cos till Dec 31

New Delhi: The government Tuesday said it has extended connectivity norms for work from home for IT and BPO companies till December 31. The time period for work from home was expiring July 31. "DoT has further extended the relaxations in the terms and conditions for other service providers up to 31st December 2020 to facilitate work from home in view of the ongoing concern due to COVID-19," the Department of Telecommunications said in a late night tweet. Currently, around 85% of the IT workforce is working from home and only those performing critical functions are going to offices.



AI slashes employee allowances up to 50% despite protests

New Delhi: National carrier Air India has gone in for a massive cut in employee allowances even as protests from all sections of the employees continue. As per an office order, this has been done as per the directions of the Ministry of Civil Aviation and following approval from the Board of Directors of Air India Ltd. The rationalisation of allowances will be effective from April 1, 2020 and shall remain in force till further review by the Air India Board. This is an across the board cut in allowances for all employees, rather than just the pilots and the other flying staff. The salary and allowances will remain unchanged. The rate of allowances other than DPE allowances will stand reduced by 40% of the approved allowances.



New hot strip mill to begin soon at RSP: SAIL Chairman

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 22: The Chairman of Steel Authority of India (SAIL) Anil Kumar Chaudhary Wednesday said that the New Hot Strip Mill will start functioning in Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) very soon.

Chaudhary said, "The New Hot Strip Mill will start functioning in RSP very soon. Facilities have been added to Special Plate Plant and new products are being developed in other units as import substitutes, that will help the country in become self-reliant in steel."

The Chairman was addressing the media during an e-press conference organised by the RSP, Wednesday. Dipak Chattaraj, CEO, RSP also participated in the press



meet and interacted with the media persons.

The press conference was organised to mark the national record created by RSP July 2, 2020 by registering 48 blows from a single converter on a single day in its Steel Melting Shop-2.

Elucidating on RSP achieving 48 blows, Chaudhary said that it required tremendous amount of coordination from several departments that have put RSP on a higher

pedestal.

Mentioning about the Super Specialty hospital that is under construction in Rourkela, the Chairman said that SAIL is making an all-out effort to get the best doctors and, also looking for established partners so that the hospital can provide the best quality health care facilities.

Chaudhary also said that SAIL is committed to contributing its best in the making of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

In his address, Dipak Chattaraj said that the clarion call by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in making India self-reliant, has strengthened the determination of RSP's collective effort to make high-quality indigenous steel in order to meet the nation's requirement.

'Consumers cautious about spending amid pandemic'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 22: Consumers in India are cautious about spending in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic with 78% of respondents claiming to reduce discretionary spending, according to a survey by consultancy firm KPMG.

However, consumers in tier-II and tier-III cities were almost two-times more optimistic on their spending habits than those in tier-I, hence it could be the next focus area to monitor spending habits, as per KPMG in India's report titled 'Time to open my wallet or not?'. The new spending patterns emerging from a consumer's perspective.

Interestingly, the survey said "overall 51% of respondents feel that the impact of COVID-19 will be short-lived and normalcy is not far".



Commenting on the findings, KPMG India Partner and Head - Consumer Markets and Internet Business Harsha Razdan said, "Our study indicates that 22% consumers in tier-II and 30% consumers in tier-III feel that their spending will either increase or remain the same as prior to COVID-19 and this could be the next focus area for retailers

to expand their presence."

"In the next three months, 49% respondents intend to spend up to Rs 5,000, across categories which makes this the most popular basket value and indicates that consumers are cautious about spending," she added.

Elaborating on consumer spending habits, the KPMG India survey said, "78% of the respondents claim

NEW SPENDING PATTERNS

78% of respondents claim to reduce on discretionary spending

Overall 51% of respondents feel that the impact of COVID-19 will be short-lived

KPMG said the survey has been conducted with 2,376 respondents, of which 66% were males and 34% females

to reduce on discretionary spending... tier-II and -III cities are 1.9x more positive than the tier-I cities."

Consumers in tier-III cities were 1.4 times more inclined towards spending on apparel than those in tier-I cities for spending more than ₹5,000, it said.

Across all categories, males intend to splurge more than females in

the spending range of over ₹5,000 with 60% of males intending to shell out up to ₹5,000 in skin care and cosmetics, it added.

In terms of consumer age band, the survey said, "The 20-30 age band is more optimistic on discretionary spending, while spending habits reduced considerably among both male (76%) and female (82%) consumers."

The survey also said a comparative study of pre and post COVID-19 scenario clearly showed that preference for online channels have seen 1.6 times growth.

KPMG said the survey has been conducted with 2,376 respondents, of which 66% were males and 34% females. It was conducted across tier-I, tier-II, and tier-III cities, among different types of spenders and age groups, between May 18, 2020 and June 7, 2020.

Banking sector woes impacting growth: CEA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 22: India's banking sector woes have impacted investments and growth, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy V Subramanian said Wednesday.

Speaking at the Ficci's 17th Annual Capital Market Conference 'CAPAM2020', he said the sector faced two problems of "scale and quality". The CEA elaborated that these problems are major factors for slow growth.



According to Subramanian, NPAs and risk aversion have impacted investment, which has in turn hit growth and eventually lowered consumption. Besides, he pointed out the need to focus on bringing scale to the banking sector. He asserted that India needs large banks.

The CEA cited that India lags behind "spectacularly" in terms of large banks, as it only has one bank in top 100, while China has 18 such financial institutions.

Furthermore, he said that quality of large borrowers is not very good and that banks should first check the financial status of the borrowers before lending. Apart from the sector's woes, he said banks are investing more than lending.

Citing last year's data, he said that credit given during that time period, similarly, during the lockdown phase, low credit was given except for the aECLGS scheme for MSMEs'.

WATFORD'S RELEGATION CONCERN DEEPENS FOLLOWING 0-4 THRASHING TO GUARDIOLA'S MEN

MAN CITY ON RAMPAGE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Watford, July 22: As the ball rolled past him and Manchester City's score racked up, goalkeeper Ben Foster increasingly feared for Watford's Premier League survival.

"You get into a state of trying to minimize as much damage as you can," he said, "and it's a dangerous way to do things."

Taking points off City was always going to be a tough task but collapsing to a 0-4 loss to the Premier League runners-up also wiped out Watford's goal-difference advantage over relegation rivals Tuesday.

A 1-0 win for Aston Villa over Arsenal hours later dropped Watford into the bottom three, because of its inferior goal difference to Villa. "The confidence is so crazy, crazy low," Foster said.

It wasn't even lifted by Watford's last desperate roll of the dice — firing its third manager of the season. Hayden Mullins was promoted for a second temporary stint in charge after the ousting of Nigel Pearson for the final matches against City and Arsenal Sunday.

"You can't ever blame it on anything but your own performances," Foster said. "You just get used to it. In football nowadays, nothing seems to shock and you roll with the punches." The only record Watford is setting is for the number of managers fired in a season.

City winger Raheem Sterling left Vicarage Road with a welcome record of his own. A first-half double — a half-volley and a follow-up after having a penalty saved — took his season's goal tally to a personal high of 19.

Sterling set up the third when his close-range shot was saved by Foster — Watford's star performer — and Phil Foden tapped into

an empty net in the 63rd minute. When it comes to assists, Kevin De Bruyne leads the way in England. The Belgium



playmaker is now one away from a league record-equaling 20 assists after providing a cross for Aymeric Laporte's downward header in the 66th minute. Trying to secure a fifth straight season in the top tier, the only



Watford custodian Ben Foster, as well as his teammates (inset), wear a dejected look after conceding a goal against Man City, Tuesday

thing in Watford's favor was Gabriel Jesus having a fifth goal ruled out for offside in stoppage time.

Even if fans were allowed into the stadium — they remain locked out due to the pandemic — there would have been nothing for the Watford players to celebrate with them after this final home match of the season.

Watford have now been outscored 18-0 in its last three meetings with City in all competitions with three different managers in charge.

Javi Gracia was still at the helm when City crushed Watford 6-0 in the final game of last season in the FA Cup final.

The Spaniard was fired in September before he got the chance to take Watford to City later that month where Quique Sanchez Flores oversaw an 8-0 humiliation.

Flores didn't even reach the midpoint of the season before he was dismissed in December and replaced by Pearson, who was denied

the chance of replicating the shock over Liverpool in February that ended the eventual champion's unbeaten start.

"You can't ever blame it on anything but your own performances," Foster said. "We have to look at ourselves."

For a City side that has already surrendered the Premier League trophy to Liverpool, one comfort will be trimming the deficit to 15 points from 25 when the league was paused in March for 100 days to contain the spread of COVID-19.

The Champions League doesn't resume until August when City will be protecting a 2-1 lead over Real Madrid in the last 16.

"It's really good if all the attacking players are attacking and assisting running up to the game," Foden said, looking ahead to City protecting a 2-1 lead over Real Madrid in the last 16. "It seems like everyone in front of the goal is going to score in our team."

Ibra brace lifts AC Milan

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Milan, July 22: Zlatan Ibrahimovic rolled back the years with two impressive goals to help AC Milan beat Sassuolo 2-1 in Serie A. The 38-year-old Ibrahimovic netted twice in the first half, either side of Francesco Caputo's penalty for Sassuolo Tuesday.

Sassuolo had to play the entire second half with 10 men after midfielder Mehdi Bourabia was sent off on the stroke of halftime following a second yellow card.

It was Milan's seventh victory in the nine games since Serie A resumed following the pandemic-enforced shutdown and moved the team up to fifth. They drew the other two matches.

It was confirmed after the match that Milan coach Stefano Pioli had signed a two-year extension to his contract, keeping him at the club until June 2022.

Ibrahimovic rejoined Milan in December on a six-month contract with an option for next season. "Will I stay? There are still three matches, 10 days and no one has said anything else," the Swedish forward said. "But I'm working, we are doing good things and if we take the table since I arrived I think we would be second or third."

Milan has lost just two matches since Ibrahimovic's arrival. "We will talk with him immediately after the end of the season, he is also completely focused on these matches and he is doing so in an excellent manner; as always," Milan sporting director Frederic Massara said.

Ibrahimovic gave Milan the lead in the 19th minute with a diving header at the back post following a cross from Hakan Calhanoglu.

There was a dramatic end to the half as Caputo leveled from the spot three minutes from the break. The referee had awarded the penalty after reviewing the incident on the pitchside monitor and judging that the ball had hit Calhanoglu's arm.

Calhanoglu redeemed himself moments later with a second assist — a through-ball for Ibrahimovic to run onto, round the goalkeeper and place into the back of the net. It was the first time since 1999 that



Zlatan Ibrahimovic is ecstatic after scoring the first goal through a diving header for AC Milan against Sassuolo, Tuesday

Milan has scored at least two goals in nine successive matches. Bourabia was given his marching orders but Sassuolo goalkeeper Andrea Consigli kept the scoreline down with several good saves, including preventing Ibrahimovic from getting his hat-trick.

In the other match, Luis Muriel proved he has no lasting effects from a domestic accident as he scored the only goal to help Atalanta beat Bologna 1-0.

Muriel, who was wearing protective headgear after needing stitches following a fall on the edge of a swimming pool last week, scored in the 62nd minute.

Atalanta moved into second spot, six points behind Juventus and two above Inter, which both have played a match less.

It also saw Atalanta become the first team since Fiorentina in 1958-59 to score 95 Serie A goals in a season.

VELOCITY FEST IN JAMAICA

Srabani first Indian to compete in meet



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kingston, July 22: Ace sprinter Srabani Nanda has become the first Indian track and field athlete to participate in a competition

amid the COVID-19 pandemic, running in a meet in Jamaica alongside some of the world's best.

The 29-year-old Srabani competed in the 100m race at the Velocity Fest meeting at Jamaica College Sunday, representing the MVP Track club. She won heat two in 11.78 seconds for a third-place finish overall.

Apart from Nanda, the Velocity Fest also had double Olympic sprint champion Elaine Thompson and Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce competing. The Velocity Fest was Jamaica's first track-and-field event since March.

Reigning Olympic champion Thompson, also representing MVP Track Club, was the overall winner in 11.19 seconds. Fraser-Pryce, representing Nike, won the women's 200m in 22.74 seconds. Former 100m World Champion Yohan Blake won the men's 200m in 20.62 seconds.

Srabani has a personal best of 11.45 in 100m and 23.07 in 200m. She took part in the 2016 Olympics and finished sixth in her heat.

She was part of the bronze winning 4x100m relay quartet in the 2017 Asian Championships. She had also won a 200m gold and a 100m silver in the 2016 South Asian Games.

WADA extends suspension of NDTL by 6 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 22: In a massive jolt to India's Olympic preparations, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has extended the suspension of the country's National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) by another six months citing non-conformity to international standards.

The WADA first suspended NDTL in August last year for a period of six months. A fresh round of inspection by the world body, much to the embarrassment of country's sporting establishment, showed that non-conformities still existed.

"The World Anti-Doping Agency has suspended the accreditation of the NDTL in New Delhi, India, for a second period of up to six months," WADA said in a statement.

The suspension prohibits the NDTL from carrying out any anti-doping activities, including all analyses of urine and blood samples.

Sports minister Kiren Rijiju said that technical problems are being addressed. "WADA served suspension notice before I took over as Chairman of NDTL. The rules of revoking its accreditation after 6 months suspension is avoided by extending the suspension period because all technical problems are being addressed no," Rijiju tweeted.

England to 'consider rotating' Stokes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

From a training perspective we try and rein him (Stokes) in where possible and keep him as fit as a fiddle because I know we're a better team with him out there... We've got to look after him the best we can

CHRIS SILVERWOOD

Manchester, July 22: England will 'consider rotating' star all-rounder Ben Stokes even though his presence makes it a better team, said coach Chris Silverwood ahead of the third and final Test against the West Indies beginning Friday.

Stokes scored 176 and 78 not out in the two innings and also took three wickets as England beat West Indies by 113 runs in the second Test to tie the three-match series 1-1.

His performance also earned Stokes the numero uno position in the ICC all-rounder rankings, displacing West Indies skipper Jason Holder.

"We want him out there as much as we can; everyone can see how good he is," Silverwood said. "But you know what, we're going to consider rotating him. He's been at the centre of the last couple of games and we've got to make sure



he's okay. But if he is fit and healthy, he'll play."

The 29-year-old had pulled himself out of the attack midway through his 15th over in West Indies' second innings but later insisted that

there was 'absolutely nothing to worry about'.

Silverwood said Stokes will have to 'rein' him in during training as he is always looking push himself. "He'll keep pushing himself,

which is why he is as good as he is," said Silverwood.

"But from a training perspective we try and rein him in where possible and keep him as fit as a fiddle because I know we're a better team with him out there... We've got to look after him the best we can."

Following the third Test against the West Indies, England will play another three-Test series against Pakistan starting August 5.

England had picked James Anderson, Jofra Archer and Mark Wood for the opening Test, while including Stuart Broad, Chris Woakes and Sam Curran in the second match.

With six to seven seamers at his disposal, Silverwood will face a selection headache but he said he is determined to pick the 'strongest attack' to win the third Test.

"We've got to put out the strongest attack out that's available to us. It's very difficult to keep everybody happy all the time. But if you do things for the right reason, I think there's an understanding there," the 45-year-old said.

"Everyone wants to play all the time and I'd probably be more disappointed if they didn't. When you're leaving out world-class players, from my point of view it's a very good place for English cricket to be. It's never easy and you're always going to get pushback. But you try to be as honest as possible," Silverwood added.

Great to play IPL in UAE: Williamson

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mount Maunganui, July 22: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson Wednesday said he is excited about playing the IPL in the UAE but a lot of 'planning and organising still needs to be done' amid the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

The Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) skipper spoke to the media on the sidelines of the national team's training camp after the ICC postponed the T20 World Cup due to the pandemic.

"Like I said, considering what it actually looks like where it is and all the details that come with it, to play in the IPL is always an amazing thing so, absolutely, it will be great to play in it and be a part



Williamson gets ready for a hit in the nets at Bay Oval. PHOTO: ESPNCRICKINFO

It's a shame to see the World T20 postponed but I suppose it's the nature of what we're faced with in the current climate. Exciting at the potential opportunity individually to see some cricket come on to the horizon

KANE WILLIAMSON

of it," Williamson said but also wanted to know more about security arrangements.

"But there's a lot of details to come through before any final decisions will be made. It will be nice to know more. By all accounts the IPL, they're looking to host that tournament which is a fantastic tournament to

be a part of and attracts such an incredible audience," he added.

Williamson said he foresees good viewership for the IPL when it happens as people are starved of live sports right now. Williamson also welcomed the move to have an IPL at a safe place like the UAE as India's case load is above 11 lakh.

"...in terms of the IPL as an isolated event, they're looking at the best options to host it in a safe place where people can be quarantined much like you're seeing with other sports around the world.

"Like I said, there's a lot of planning still to be done to make sure that happens and we only know what we know and that's no different from what you're hearing," Williamson added.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bagan give 'triumph' bonus to players, staff

Kolkata: I-League champions Mohun Bagan Wednesday announced that they have paid their title-winning bonus to all coaches, players and ground staff. Having won the I-League with four rounds to spare before the COVID-19 lockdown, Mohun Bagan merged with Indian Super League champions ATK. The football entity is now known as ATK Mohun Bagan FC. "With immense pleasure, we wish to inform you that as per our commitment, today we have paid the I-League 2019-20 winning bonus to all coaches, players, support staff and office staff including ground staff," the club said in a statement. Earlier this month, Mohun Bagan had cleared the dues of their players following a delay because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commentary from home likely in IPL

New Delhi: The IPL broadcaster is toying with the idea of introducing 'virtual commentary' in the upcoming franchise-based league after being emboldened by its successful recent experiment in an exhibition match. For a live game at Centurion Park in South Africa Sunday, Irfan Pathan was doing commentary from his Baroda home, Deep Dasgupta from Kolkata and Sanjay Manjrekar from his Mumbai residence. IPL broadcaster Star Sports has experimented with virtual commentary for a 36-over exhibition game featuring three teams at Centurion Park. The experiment was fairly successful, notwithstanding a few teething issues. It could be a regular feature in the upcoming IPL, if not for the main feeds in Hindi and English, at least for growing regional feeds like Tamil, Telegu and Kannada to start with.

Mane's 'dream is to win Ballon d'Or'

New Delhi: It was high praise for Sadio Mane when Lionel Messi summed up the Liverpool star winger's fourth-place finish in the 2019 Ballon d'Or vote as 'shameful'. "Will see what's going to happen for the Ballon d'Or but my dream is to win the Ballon d'Or and would love to do it one day," Mane told Star Sports show Football United. The 2020 awards night was cancelled recently owing to the pandemic.