



## SANYA'S EXPERIENCE

Actor Sanya Malhotra says working on 'Shakuntala Devi' biopic has been a fulfilling experience

LEISURE P2



## SCAVENGERS RISK HEALTH

Hundreds of scavengers expose themselves to a disease that has infected more than 15 million globally

TWO STATES P7



## CHINA RETALIATES

In a tit-for-tat move, China Friday ordered the US to close down its consulate in Chengdu

INTERNATIONAL P10

## SHORT TAKES

### State approves new investments

**Bhubaneswar:** The Government of Odisha Friday approved four investment proposals in sectors like metal and metal downstream in the 93rd State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) meeting. The four approved proposals are worth of over ₹2172.92 crore and also likely to generate employment for 1,122 people in the state. The investment proposals got the go-ahead at SLSWCA meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Asit Kumar Tripathy in Bhubaneswar. P4

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Good that the minister has launched immunity-boosting papad. It is the only thing we can afford now!

### Sasmit Patra in RS VC panel

**New Delhi:** Biju Janata Dal MP Sasmit Patra was Thursday nominated to the panel of Vice-Chairmen of the Rajya Sabha along with five other MPs by Upper House Chairman and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu. Naidu also nominated BJP MP Bhubaneswar Kalita, Nationalist Congress Party MP Vandana Chavan, All India Trinamool Congress MP Sukhendu Sekhar Ray, BJP MP Surendra Singh Nagar and Congress MP Dr L Hanumanthaiah to the panel of Vice-Chairmen.

### MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	38101.12 ↓ 39.35
NIFTY	11194.20 ↓ 21.30
DOLLAR	75.08 ↑ ₹0.01
EURO	86.92 ↓ ₹0.03
GOLD	₹ 51,024 ↑ ₹324
SILVER	₹ 61,515 ↑ ₹ 325

### WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	30.4°C	31.0°C
TEMP. MIN	25.8°C	24.0°C
Humidity	97%	92%
Rainfall	0.5mm	1mm
Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	

# CENTRE THE PEEPING TOM

### IT dept to share PAN, bank account data with 10 probe, intel agencies under NATGRID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** The Income Tax Department will share PAN and bank account details of any entity with 10 investigative and intelligence agencies, including the CBI and the NIA, under the integrated counter-terrorism platform NATGRID, according to an official order.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes, which frames policy for the I-T Department, said in a July 21 order that information like permanent account number (PAN), Tax Deduction and Collection Account Number (TAN), bank account details, summary of IT Returns and tax deducted at source (TDS) and "any other information as mutually agreed" will be shared with the 10 agencies.

The "furnishing and receiving of information to and from" these central agencies will be done through the National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID), a robust mechanism envisaged to track suspects and prevent terrorist attacks with real-time data and access to classified information like immigration, banking, individual taxpayers, air and train travels.



**THE 10 AGENCIES ARE:** CBI, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Enforcement Directorate, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, Cabinet Secretariat, IB, Directorate General of GST Intelligence, Narcotics Control Bureau, Financial Intelligence Unit and the NIA

The 10 agencies are: the Central Bureau of Investigation, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Enforcement Directorate, Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, Cabinet Secretariat, Intelligence Bureau, Directorate General of GST Intelligence, Narcotics Control Bureau, Financial Intelligence Unit and the National Investigation Agency.

These agencies are already authorised to obtain real-time NATGRID data as part of a legal arrangement made in the past. "While furnishing the information,

The CBDT, which frames policy for the I-T Department, said in an order that information like PAN, Tax Deduction and Collection Account Number (TAN), bank account details, summary of IT Returns and TDS and "any other information as mutually agreed" will be shared

the specified income-tax authority shall form an opinion that sharing of such information is necessary for the purposes of enabling these agencies/bodies to perform its functions under their respective laws," the CBDT order said.

The CBDT and the NATGRID will sign a Memorandum of Understanding to finalise the latest information-sharing mechanism, it said.

The tax department and the NATGRID already have an agreement for sharing PAN-related information since

2017 and the new measure is a step forward for better and confidential sharing of the data between all the probe and intelligence agencies so that they are better enabled to analyse and counter any armed, financial or cyber threat to the country, a senior officer said.

The necessity for the NATGRID came after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks exposed the deficiency that security agencies had no mechanism to look for vital information on a real-time basis.

Lack of quick information was considered to be one of the major hurdles in detecting US terror suspect David Headley's movement across the country during his multiple visits between 2006 and 2009.

Headley had provided key information and videos of terror targets to Pakistan-based terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba that carried out the attacks in Mumbai that killed 166 people including foreigners. The Cabinet Committee on Security had given approval to the ₹3,400-crore NATGRID project on April 8, 2010 but its work slowed down after 2012. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi later directed for its revival.

## IPL TO START SEPTEMBER 19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** The eagerly-awaited Indian Premier League (IPL) will start September 19 in the United Arab Emirates with the final slated November 8, well-placed BCCI sources have told this news agency.



While the IPL Governing Council will meet next week to chalk out the final details and approve the schedule, it is understood that the BCCI has informally intimidated the franchisees about the plan.

"IPL, in all likelihood, will start September 19 (Saturday) and the final will be held November 8 (Sunday). It is a 51-day window which will suit the franchisees as well as the broadcasters and other stakeholders," a senior BCCI official said on conditions of anonymity Thursday night.

The IPL has been made possible by the ICC's decision to postpone the October-November T20 World Cup in Australia owing to the COVID-19 pandemic due to which the host country expressed its inability to conduct the event.

While there was speculation that the IPL will start from September 26, the BCCI decided to advance it by a week in order to ensure that the Indian team's tour of Australia is not jeopardised. P12

## Raj HC intrudes on Speaker's domain

AGENCIES

**Jaipur, July 24:** The Rajasthan High Court Friday ordered a status quo with regard to disqualification notices issued to the 19 rebel Congress MLAs, even as it accepted a plea filed by MLA Prithviraj Meena, one of the petitioners, to make the Centre a party to the ongoing case.

Former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot and 18 other party MLAs moved the High Court following the disqualification notices to them by Rajasthan Assembly Speaker CP Joshi. The Speaker has now been barred, for now, to act on the July 14 notices. The HC also accepted an application to make the Central government a party in this matter.

In his plea filed Wednesday, Meena said: "It is humbly prayed that the Union



of India through the Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice, (Dept of Legal Affairs) be made a party/respondent to the present writ petition in the interest of justice and law. The High Court said that the petition is maintainable, but the matter is under the consideration of the Supreme Court. Assembly Speaker CP Joshi had served the disqualification notices to the rebel MLAs, including Pilot, on the charge of "anti-party activities" soon after they skipped two Congress legislative party meetings in July. The Speaker was first asked to defer

action in the matter by three days last week, when the High Court began hearing the case in which the petitioner MLAs challenged Para 2(1)(a) of the Schedule X of the Constitution.

The Pilot camp got another three-day breather Tuesday from the High Court after it finished hearing the arguments and reserved the judgment for July 24. The rebels had argued that no whip can be issued when the Assembly is not in session and maintained that they had no plans to quit the ruling Congress but wanted a change in its Rajasthan leadership.

Meanwhile, Speaker Joshi Wednesday filed a CLP in the Supreme Court, and its hearing is scheduled Monday.

Meanwhile, Congress MLAs, who sat on a dharna outside the Raj Bhawan, were Friday assured by the Governor that he would call the Assembly session shortly. Following this, the dharna was lifted.

## 1st COVID patient given plasma therapy recovers

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** In a major achievement for the doctors in the state, the first COVID-19 patient, a 48-year-old woman, from Odisha who was administered plasma therapy has not only recovered, but also discharged from the hospital.

"Happy to share that a 48-year old female COVID patient in Cuttack who was the first to be treated with plasma therapy (at Ashwini COVID hospital) has recovered and is being discharged today," the State Health and Family Welfare de-

partment said Friday. The state government claimed that following the commencement of plasma therapy in the state, they reached out to 13 critical patients. "So far, 13 patients, we have received plasma therapy in the state and most are recovering well," the department said in a statement.

The State Health department further said that the therapy has worked well on patients and most of them have seen progress on their health. The government now plans to set up plasma banks in other areas to encourage plasma donations from the cured

patients of COVID-19.

"The technical team of doctors claims that the therapy has worked well on COVID 19 patients. Keeping in mind the power and potential of the therapy, we have planned to start two more plasma banks in the state," Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra, Additional Chief Secretary, Health department had said Thursday.

The department has appealed to the cured COVID patients to come forward to donate plasma. The Health department said that the donors will be given certificates of appreciation for their noble gesture.

## KALIA SCHEME

# Ineligible recipients told to refund money

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** At a time when the farmers are reeling under the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, the state government has asked all ineligible beneficiaries who received money under the KALIA Yojana to refund the money.

Prior to the 2019 general election, the BJD government had launched Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) scheme and, in a hurry, distributed financial assistance of ₹5,000 each to over 51 lakh farmers. Later, during scrutiny, the government found that 2 per cent (nearly 1 lakh) people are ineligible to receive financial aid under the scheme.

Now, the government is asking all ineligible beneficiaries to refund the entitlement given to them under the scheme.

Speaking to the media here Friday, Agriculture Secretary Saurabh Garg said, "We have sent request letters to all ineligible beneficiaries of KALIA scheme who have not refunded the amount on their own. They have been informed about the bank account number through which they can refund the money."

Garg said that out of 51 lakh beneficiaries who have availed assistance under the Kalia scheme, 98 per cent were eligible. He further said that many inel-



igible beneficiaries like farmers with large holdings, income tax payers and government employees have refunded the assistance transferred to them voluntarily.

However, nearly 50,000 others have not refunded the amount they received, the secretary added.

Rakesh Kumar Meena, a beneficiary of the scheme said, "I have utilised the amount given by the government. Now, during this pandemic, the government asked to refund. How can I repay it now?"

Meanwhile, Opposition BJP and Congress have slammed the move of the government and demanded action against the officials responsible for inclusion of the ineligible people in the beneficiary list. Terming the government as anti-farmer, state BJP farmer wing president Pradipt Purohit demanded roll-back of the decision.

# Cong takes pride in Narasimha Rao's feats: Sonia Gandhi

## GUILTY OF IGNORING THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER, CONG PLANS TO CELEBRATE HIS LEGACY

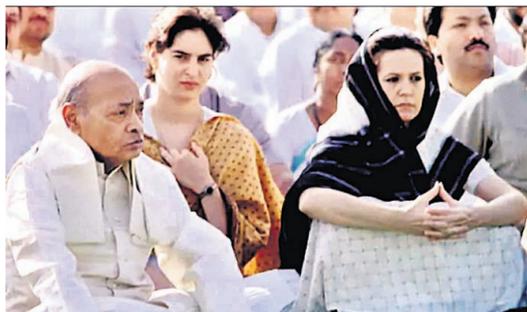
AGENCIES

**Hyderabad, July 24:** Describing former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao as a bold leader and a dedicated Congressman, AICC president Sonia Gandhi Friday said the grand old party takes pride in his accomplishments and contribution.

"Shri PV Narasimha Rao's tenure was also marked by a number of political, social and foreign policy achievements that have endured. Above all he was a dedicated Congressman who served the party devotedly in various capacities," she said in a message read out by Telangana Congress President Uttam Kumar Reddy at the inaugural function. The top leaders of the party, which often faced criticism for dumping the political legacy of the

late leader, recalled his services on the occasion of his birth centenary celebrations organised by the Telangana unit of the party. This is perhaps for the first time since Rao's death in 2004 that the top party leadership paid tributes to him.

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's move to launch the year-long birth centenary celebrations June 28 appears to have forced the Telangana unit of Congress party to conduct a similar event. Both Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi sent their messages on the occasion and the same were read out by Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) chief Uttam Kumar Reddy. Sonia Gandhi described PV as the late former Prime Minister was popularly known, a scholarly and erudite personality. She



also went on to call him a very respected national and international figure and said that the Congress party takes pride in his many accomplishments and contributions. "The birth centenary of Shri PV.

Narasimha Rao is an occasion for us to recall and pay tribute to a most scholarly and erudite personality. After a long career in state and national politics, he became Prime Minister of India at a time of grave

economic crisis. Through his bold leadership, our country was able to overcome many challenges successfully," reads her message.

"The Union Budget of July 24, 1991 paved the way for the economic transformation of our country. Shri PV Narasimha Rao's tenure was also marked by a number of political, social and foreign policy achievements that have endured. Above all he was a dedicated Congressman who served the party devotedly in various capacities."

He noted that July 24 marks the 29th anniversary of the 1991 budget. "On this day, India embarked on a bold new path of economic transformation. Shri PV Narasimha Rao and Dr Manmohan Singh played a pivotal role in ushering in the era of liberalization," he said.

# leisure



## JAMES CAMERON DISAPPOINTED

Filmmaker James Cameron is disappointed with the delay in release of his much-awaited sequels in the *Avatar* franchise, by a year. Cameron, of course, has promised that the wait will be worth it, saying that the sequels will deliver to the expectations.

## MAREN EXPRESSES ANGER

Singer Maren Morris is completely against mommy shammers. Morris recently made headlines when a section of social media users criticised her for posting a picture in a low-cut top. Now, in a chat show, she opened up on the criticism, slamming trolls.



## FORTUNE FORECAST

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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

**ARIES**  
Without apparent reason you may go into your shell today. No doubt you will acknowledge the contribution of others, but Ganesha says you have to do more than that; you will have to share your knowledge with your peers.

**TAURUS**  
Ganesha sees you being very planned and focuses, poised and practical in handling your affairs today. You'll be able to take identify the best strategy, course of action that the situations demand. This day you would be performing like a specialist, a real expert and will not fail to accomplish whatever you have set out to do.

**GEMINI**  
Today will be a day of joy, happiness and festivities on the home-front. You will try and spend as much time as possible with the children and will enthusiastically participate in home improvement projects. You will be able to solve pending issues at home by taking an intelligent interest in them, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**  
You have always been quite prudent when it comes to spending your hard-earned moolah, yet today you may feel stingier. And, you will rightly be so, for there may be unnecessary burdens and demands made on you by your near and dear ones.

**LEO**  
You may not get the desired results inspite of working hard. You need to keep your weaknesses in mind, and your mistakes, before starting anew again. You will need to do more than necessary, if required, to make sure that your business relationships stay strong.

**VIRGO**  
Today is the right time to start a new project, while older projects which had been postponed will be finished. Over the next week you will try to boost your energy levels. Parties will lead to a lot of entertainment and joy. Ganesha says children will bring home pride which will put you in even higher spirits.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesha says that for people you may appear to be a miser but when it comes to your closed ones you will never hold back or hesitate to spend. Today is a good day to take your loved ones shopping.

**SCORPIO**  
Life is the best teacher, they say. And today, you even experience this. You may learn to survive the neck-tight competition in the market. This may invite a lot of envy, but nothing shall bother you. Ganesha reminds you of the adage, 'To err is human, to forgive is divine,' so, it's fine even if you commit some errors.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You are a social butterfly as you attend a series of parties and events today, says Ganesha. You may even bump into old pals and relive good of days. Also, you meet your extended family! It's time for soiree and merry-making.

**CAPRICORN**  
Now is the perfect time to showcase your talents and skills. You are all geared up to hit your target and do everything that is needed to be done. Your efforts will not go in vain as they will bear fruits for sure, says Ganesha. You will spend quality time with your family member and catch with old friends.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will spend the day introspecting, but the mental peace will still seem distant. Some unavoidable circumstances will force you to handle the situations with diligence, feels Ganesha. Due to your devotion to the Almighty and spiritualism, you will be able to deal with problems pretty well.

**PISCES**  
It is difficult for you to be part of one team and to work as a member on two teams, but today you can do anything you want. You will be able to show your expertise to your team today and will be praised by all. Women will make a profit today and will feel encouraged.

# 'NEED TO HAVE QUALITY ODIA CONTENT TO WOO BIG OTT PLAYERS'

WITH ONLY A COUPLE OF GOOD ODIA MOVIES LIKE *KHYANIKA* AND *TULASI APA* RELEASED ON OTT PLATFORMS, THAT TOO FOR A BRIEF PERIOD, THE ODIA ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY APPEARS TO HAVE FAILED TO CATCH UP WITH THE OTT BOOM IN INDIA

ARINDAM GANGULY. OP

**BHUBANESWAR:** Over-the-top (OTT) video services are the future of home entertainment in India and their consumption can grow 10 fold in next five years, a number of studies predicted in 2018. Multiple factors such as new technologies, dropping data charges, universalisation of entertainment and most importantly sudden spike in active smartphone users had a lot to do with this prediction. At that time, only web series used to get released on these platforms but not the mainstream films. However, shutting down of theatres has put the OTT industry on an unprecedented growth trajectory.

Several big ticket movies like *Gulabo Sitabo*, *Angeezi Medium* and *Ghoomketu* are now streaming online while quite a few biggies such as *Shakuntala Devi*, *Laxmi Bomb*, *Yaara*, *Bhuj*, *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl* have got their release dates. OTT market with its millions of users is growing steadily and the streaming services are set to rule the entertainment scene like never before. While the pre-existing major OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Zee5 or Disney Plus Hotstar have geared up to woo local users churning out quality content, some regional language OTT services such as Hoichoi in Bengali and Sun NXT in Tamil, Telugu and Kannada have also managed to take their slices of this pie.

However, with only a couple of Odia movies like *Tulasi Apa* and *Khyanika* being released on OTT platforms, that too for a brief period,



the entertainment industry back home appears to have failed to catch up with the OTT boom in India.

This is what people from Odia entertainment industry had to say about the poor presence of Odia content on digital format.

Siddhartha Mohapatra, vice-president of Aao TV, a new homegrown OTT platform, says, "The big players have so far ignored Odia language content. We took this as an opportunity to come up with a platform that can offer fresh Odia shows and movies to the users. We are also in talk with a few Odia producers and makers to stream their content on our channel. Even as

they are little apprehensive to commit anything at the moment, we will soon catch up with the national trend."

Aao TV is planning to release multiple web shows in coming days, added Siddharth.

Joyeetya Roy, a media expert and owner of Signature 24 Productions, says "Most of the leading OTT platforms are thriving due to users' demand and wider base of viewership. Unfortunately, they don't get quality content in Odia language and this could be a reason they are shy away from releasing Odia films on their platforms. They won't take Odia shows and films seriously un-

less we produce good content"

Regional OTT platforms in state like West Bengal, Bihar and Maharashtra are giving tough competition to the big players because they produce content which attracts the users. But it is yet to happen in Odisha, she added.

Echoing similar sentiment, actor Partha Sarthi Ray said, "Most of the films produced here are poor remakes of big budget movies of other regional languages. There is no reason why a user would subscribe a channel to watch substandard stuff when he has option to watch the original one."

Actress Prakriti Mishra, whose

award winning movie *Hello Arsi* will soon stream online, said, "Big OTT players always need content in bulk to retain their users. But unfortunately, we don't have a healthy pool of content to choose from. They want enough good Odia movies in their buckets which we, unfortunately, don't produce these days."

Prolific filmmaker Akshaya Parija whose Hindi and Bengali films are streaming in Netflix, Hotstar and Hoichoi, said, "Odia film industry should create more original content rejecting the ongoing 'copy-paste' formula to get the films released in big OTT platforms.

Regional OTT platforms in state like West Bengal, Bihar and Maharashtra are giving tough competition to the big players because they produce content which attracts the users. But it is yet to happen in Odisha

JOYEETA ROY | OWNER OF SIGNATURE 24 PRODUCTION

The big players have so far ignored Odia language content. We took this as an opportunity to come up with a platform that can offer fresh Odia shows and movies to the users. We are also in talk with a few Odia producers and makers to stream their content on our channel. Even as they are little apprehensive to commit anything at the moment, we will soon catch up with the national trend. We are planning to release multiple web shows in coming days

SIDDHARTHA MOHAPATRA | VICE-PRESIDENT OF AAO TV

"Out of 30 odd films made in a year, 29 are poor remakes. How do you expect pure business driven media service providers like Netflix and Amazon to stream them online," Asked Parija.



## 'Working on Shakuntala Devi a fulfilling experience'

**Mumbai:** Actress Sanya Malhotra says working on the upcoming *Shakuntala Devi* biopic has been a fulfilling experience.

In *Shakuntala Devi*, Sanya plays the role of late mathematics genius Shakuntala Devi's daughter, Anupama Banerji.

"Working on *Shakuntala Devi* has been a very fulfilling experience. Being a part of such a talented cast and crew was very special, especially since this one explored a mother-daughter equation," she said. Vidya Balan essays Shakuntala Devi in the film, which also stars Jisshu Sengupta and Amit Sadh.

Describing her chemistry with her co-stars, Sanya said: "I shared a lovely chemistry with Vidya ma'am. Similarly, I was also fortunate to spend a lot of time with Jisshu, who plays my father in the film."

Directed by Anu Menon, *Shakuntala Devi* is set to stream July 31 on Amazon Prime Video. IANS



## Shradha comes to the aid of stray animals

**Mumbai:** Shradha Kapoor is an actress who has been kind and virtuous overall, especially when it comes to helping animals in any way she can. She has always given a voice to the voiceless and spread awareness about animal cruelty that is prevalent in the world. Her video 'lockdown zoo' had created quite a stir on social media and was really inspiring.

Time and again, the actress has lent a helping hand towards animals and this time, it's coming to the rescue of some stray cats around her house who needed medical attention. Shradha took to her social media and posted a video of an adorable stray cat who needed some medical attention. Check out the caption she posted along with the video:

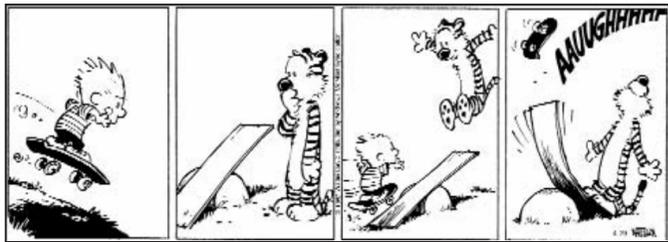
"The stray cats around my home needed urgent medical attention and Narsing and Rahul from @worldforanimaladoptions championed their aid! Thank you for handling them with so much love! Massive thank you @shazamorani for being so prompt in sending this help!" IANS

## FUN post

### PEANUTS



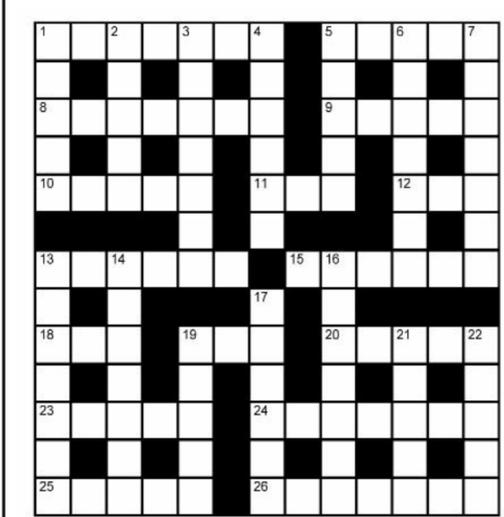
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



### CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Leaves
  - 5 Mill output
  - 8 Backache
  - 9 Show flexibility
  - 10 Slipped up
  - 11 Moving option
  - 12 Engine need
  - 13 Zodiac sign
  - 15 Herring
  - 18 Groove
  - 19 Egg warmer
  - 20 Marriage and others
  - 23 Farm animals
  - 24 Sharp
  - 25 Rodeo rope
  - 26 Camera supports
  - 4 Develop
  - 5 Shrimp
  - 6 Dense fog (3,4)
  - 7 Snake in the grass
  - 13 Fire opal
  - 14 Gloves
  - 16 Nazareth native
  - 17 Wee one
  - 19 River horse
  - 21 Forbidden
  - 22 Punches
- Down**
- 1 Untrue
  - 2 Foxy-faced primate
  - 3 Forsake

### SUDOKU

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

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

### SOLUTIONS

#### CROSSWORD

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

#### SUDOKU

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

# downtown



## FUEL FOR HEARTH

A woman carrying firewood to home in Nayapalli area of Bhubaneswar, Friday

## LOCKDOWN & CITY

Bicycles from the 'Mo Cycle' fleet parked near Sishu Bhawan Square Bhubaneswar amid the lockdown over Covid-19, Friday



# Govt to pump in ₹1K cr for livelihood support

# State nod to big-ticket investments

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The state government has decided to spend around Rs 1,000 crore for creating sustainable livelihood opportunities under Odisha Forestry Sector Development Project (OFSDP), Phase-II in a bid to boost economic activities in hilly and forest regions during Covid-19 pandemic.

The decision was taken at a meeting presided over by Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy recently Sustainable livelihood and income generating activities have been taken up in 12 territorial forest divisions on joint forest management (JFM) mode with direct participation of Vana Suraksha Samitis (VSSs) and self help groups (SHGs) under OFSDP Phase-II.

It was decided to identify forest divisions with specific 'product clusters' and scale up those through interdepartmental convergence in terms of resources, technical support, skill building and marketing.

Tripathy directed the officials to maximise convergence of resources from OSFDP, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

## BOOSTING INCOME IN HILLY AREAS



■ The state will set up product clusters like sal seed involving 435 VSSes, tamarind involving 242 VSSes, harida with 260 VSSes, bahada with 258 VSSes and others

**Around 88,000 households would get additional income from these clusters**

Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM), Orissa Tribal Empowerment & Livelihoods Programme (OTELP) Plus and other similar activities.

Forest and Environment department additional chief secretary Mona Sharma suggested to take up farm, non-farm and non-timber forest produce (NTFP) based on livelihood interventions through

■ Livelihood programmes to be taken up in 12 forest divisions involving local community

■ It was decided to identify forest divisions with specific 'product clusters' and scale up those through interdepartmental convergence in terms of resources, technical support, skill building and marketing

community-level institutions.

The state will set up product clusters like sal seed involving 435 VSSes, tamarind involving 242 VSSes, harida with 260 VSSes, bahada with 258 VSSes, char with 333 VSSes, cashew with 121 VSSes, mango with 223 VSSes, mahua with 395 VSSes, and neem seed cluster involving 187 VSSes. Around 88,000 households would get additional

income from these clusters, the source said.

Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mohapatra, who was also present in the meeting, has ordered for establishment of livelihood resource centres to provide technical input, required skill, training and, linking to financial institutions. He instructed the officials to provide continuous handholding support for product development, branding and marketing linkages.

OFSDP director Sudarshan Panda said 778 VSSes covering around 50,000 households in the project villages of 12 forest divisions have been linked with respective departments for carrying forward the livelihood activities.

Seven sal leaf making clusters have been set up at the forest divisions of Baripada, Rairangpur, Karanjia, Keonjhar, Baliguda and Phulbani involving 4,645 households organised under 460 SHGs, Panda said. Apart from this, 497 community development projects estimated to be around Rs 11.38 crore have also been approved which will be implemented in convergence with MGNREGS.

## FOUR PROPOSALS WORTH OVER ₹2,172.92 CRORE ARE LIKELY TO GENERATE 1,122 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The state government, Friday, approved four investment proposals in sectors like metal and metal downstream in the 93rd State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA) meeting. The four proposals worth over Rs 2,172.92 crore are likely to generate 1,122 employment opportunities in the state.

The investment proposals got the go-ahead at an SLSWCA meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Asit Kumar Tripathy in Bhubaneswar where Hemant Sharma, Principal Secretary, Industries outlined the project proposals for consideration.

In a big boost to the state's metal downstream sector, M/s Rungta Mines Limited is looking to set up 34 MTPA beneficiation plant in two phases, with an investment of Rs 975 crore and providing employment to about 290 people.

In addition, M/s Rungta Mines

M/s Rungta Mines Limited is looking to set up 34 MTPA beneficiation plant in two phases, with an investment of ₹975 crore and providing employment to about 290 people		The company will also set up 20 MTPA underground slurry pipe line from its proposed beneficiation plant at Bonai/Champua sub-division to its three different plant locations
M/S Shyam Metallics and Energy Limited is eyeing for expansion of its Pellet Plant from 0.3 MTPA to 1.2 MTPA capacities		

M/s Wellman Steels Gangeya Supply Agency Private Limited will set up 1.8 MTPA beneficiation plant and 1.2 MTPA pellet plant, with an investment of Rs 170 crore

Limited will be setting up 20 MTPA underground slurry pipe line from its proposed beneficiation plant at Bonai/Champua sub-division to its three different plant locations. The firm will invest around Rs 951 crore which has the capacity of providing employment opportunities to 72 people.

Similarly, M/S Shyam Metallics and Energy Limited is eyeing for expansion of its Pellet Plant from

0.3 MTPA to 1.2 MTPA capacities. Around Rs 76.92 crore will be invested for the expansion and around 610 people will get employment.

Lastly, M/s Wellman Steels Gangeya Supply Agency Private Limited will set up 1.8 MTPA beneficiation plant and 1.2 MTPA pellet plant, with an investment of Rs 170 crore. Two plants will provide additional employment opportunities to 150 people.

# Scrap UG, PG exams: Amar Patnaik to Centre



**There is a chance of contracting infection as the exams would be held in a confined space for 2-3 hours, says Amar Patnaik**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader and Rajya Sabha MP Amar Patnaik Friday wrote to Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' for not conducting the final semesters of UG & PG courses in view of the alarming Covid-19 situation.

He wrote the letter after being approached by several students and parents expressing their concern about the situation. In the letter,

Patnaik said that given the alarming situation of the pandemic, the Odisha government had cancelled all pending examinations of UG and PG final semesters for the current academic session. However, the Centre and the UGC have issued revised guidelines mandating the state government and universities to conduct the examinations.

Similar concerns have been raised by other state governments, but the UGC is yet to withdraw its revised guidelines. It has to be realised that in a situation like examination, it is not possible to maintain social distance all the time. Besides, there is a chance of contracting infection as the examinations would be held in a confined space for 2-3 hours.

"As reported, the students have contracted this infection at Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala recently under similar circumstances. Therefore, I request you to kindly direct the UGC to immediately withdraw the circular," Patnaik wrote in his letter.

Earlier, state Higher Education Minister Arun Sahoo had written to the MHRD for the second time Thursday seeking cancellation of UG and OPG semester exams.



People make a beeline at Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar, Friday, to get their swab samples tested for the novel coronavirus

OP PHOTO

## Man kills wife in City; arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** A woman was allegedly killed by her husband at Kargil Slum under Airport police limits here Friday evening.

The deceased was identified as Shakuntala Majhi, 25, a native of Panchagan in Athagarh block of Cuttack. The accused, Muralidhar Behera, was arrested by the Airport police while he was trying to flee the city. Police sources claimed that they had tied knot in February this year.

Police have been interrogating the accused after registering a case (233/20) under section 302 of the IPC. Cops suspected that Behera killed Majhi with a sharp weapon after a heated exchange between them over some issues.

## 4 more RRTs to counter nCoV surge

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Observing the rising cases of Covid-19 in the Capital city, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Friday, stated that it would add four new Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) to its fleet to expedite contact tracing process.

As the city saw a massive spike of 248 fresh cases Friday, the civic authority held a detailed review meeting in this regard under the chairmanship of Covid observer, Anu Garg, Labour Commissioner Thirumala Nayak and BMC Commissioner, Prem Chandra Chaudhary, who were also present at the meeting, held discussions about a holistic and effective Covid management strategy as the cases continue to rise.

"It can be mentioned that prior to this 10 RRTs were working with



Senior officials at the review meet in Bhubaneswar, Friday

the BMC. Out of these 14 RRTs, six are at zonal level while the remaining teams are at the Central Covid Control Room at BMC. With the addition of four more teams, these 14 dedicated teams will specifically focus on contact tracing and assisting in shifting of patients to across various hospitals, Covid care centres and home isolation," Chaudhary mentioned.

Sources at the BMC also said

that more teams are likely to be added as the city is witnessing a rise in positive cases every day. Meanwhile, as the testing for the novel coronavirus is being scaled up, the city is likely to see further rise in Covid-19 cases.

The RRTs which mostly consist of healthcare experts from Community Medicine and AYUSH will have additional numbers to combat the sudden surge of cases.

## Rape accused gets bail after marrying victim

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, July 24:** The Orissa High Court Friday granted bail to a rape accused after he married the victim and submitted an affidavit to the court in this regard.

Justice Bibhu Prasad Routray granted bail to accused Gyanranjan Behera of Kanteikolia village under Handapa police limits in Angul district. As per the court proceedings, Behera had allegedly raped a girl of Kishorenagar block on the pretext of marriage. A complaint in this regard was lodged with police.

Police arrested Behera from one of his relatives' house in Bhubaneswar February 13 this year and produced him in the court of Angul additional sessions judge after registering a case in this regard.



Behera had filed a bail petition in the HC and expressed his willingness to marry the victim. He had informed the court that the victim's family had given its consent for the marriage proposal. The HC had earlier granted him an interim bail for 30 days and directed the accused to submit the proof of his marriage with the victim before the lower court. Behera once again filed a bail application and submitted an affidavit on him tying the knot with the victim. The court accepted Behera's plea and directed the lower court to frame conditions for the accused's bail.

## Gangster Tito's video in Jharpada jail goes viral

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** A video reportedly of gangster Tito in Jharpada jail has again exposed the weak security arrangements at the prison.

The state prisons' department authorities' claims on the installation of mobile phone jammers inside the jails have proved to be an eyewash. Mobile phone inside the jail and capturing of the video of the gangster openly holding durbar over there has exposed the jail security.

Sources from Jharpada jail informed Orissa POST that a case has been registered with Laxmisagar police in this regard. The jail authorities have been suspecting that the video was shot by some staff and later posted on social media. It is also baffling how a dreaded criminal like Tito is mingling with other inmates inside the jail. Meanwhile, as many as 100 prisoners and 84 staffers in the Jharpada jail Friday underwent swab test for Covid-19. The test reports are expected to come by two or three days.

# Safety of cops, enforcing lockdown now priority: DCP

The 2008-batch Odisha cadre IPS officer, Umashankar Dash, has assumed the charge of Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) for Bhubaneswar Urban Police District (UPD) recently. Dash has proved his mettle during the devastating cyclonic storm Fani in 2019, smooth maintenance of law and order during the eviction drive in Puri for the Heritage Corridor project this year. He has also received Governor's Medal for his efforts during the Fani. The newly-appointed DCP shares his thoughts with Orissa POST on the challenges ahead...

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

■ Please tell us about your plans to ensure safety of on-duty policemen as the virus is spreading like wildfire and the cops have to enforce the lockdown in a fool-proof manner.

■ In this time of the pandemic, safety of police personnel is very important. We are following all the safety protocols like social distance,

wearing of masks and sanitisation among others. Our work places are being sanitised regularly. Our staffers are getting tested in large numbers. Sufficient PPE kits, gloves etc have been provided to all the personnel. Internal awareness campaign is being taken up to prevent them from getting infected.

■ The entire police force is engaged in Covid-19 and other law and order

duty. Do you think it would affect the investigations? If yes, how you are going to handle this?

■ Now, our priority is containing Covid-19 as it is an immediate threat to people's lives. However, we are also emphasising on our core functioning and making efforts so that it is not significantly affected.

■ How are you going to rein in the rampant drug peddling in the

## Capital city?

■ Drug menace is a threat to the present and future of our society. It affects our youth very adversely. Other forms of crimes are also linked with drug abuse. We are aware of the menace and making consistent efforts to weed it out.

■ Chain snatching gangs have again made their presence felt in city and we are very likely to see more such incidents in future as a Covid-19 fallout. What are the strategies to deal with these anti-socials?

■ We are analysing the previous incidents of chain snatching and also known criminals. We will take all chain snatching incidents seriously and try to control it.

■ There are many cases including some sensitive ones pending for investigation at the city police stations. How would you address this?

■ It's true that several cases have been pending at the police stations for long and I will try my best to ensure the disposal of pending cases at the earliest.

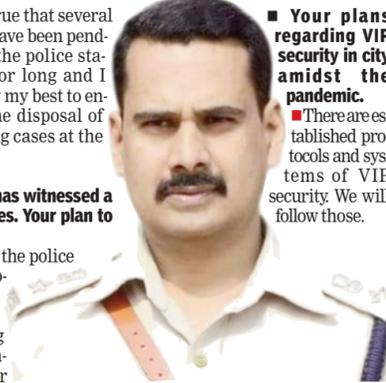
■ Of late, the city has witnessed a spike in cybercrimes. Your plan to tackle it.

■ Only the IICs in the police stations are authorised to handle cybercrimes. Keeping in view the rising cases, we are planning to arrange cyber

training for the sub inspectors at the police station level so that they can assist the IICs during the investigations.

■ Your plans regarding VIP security in city amidst the pandemic.

■ There are established protocols and systems of VIP security. We will follow those.



## MINISTERS TO URGE PEOPLE TO DONATE PLASMA

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** In order to encourage patients recovered from Covid to donate plasma for treatment of serious patients, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday assigned various districts to the ministers.

The ministers will visit their assigned district and encourage recovered patients to donate their plasma. The ministers have also been instructed to facilitate plasma donation of such recovered patients in the nearest plasma bank. Chief Minister will review the progress in regular interval, sources in the CMO said.

According to the source, minister Niranjana Pujari has been given the charge of Puri district while Bikram Keshari Arukha will look after Ganjam and Kandhamal districts, Prafulla Mallik—Bargarh, RP Swain—Bhadrak & Kendrapara, Padmanabha Behera—Jharsuguda & Boudh, Pratap Jena—Mayurbhanj & Cuttack and Arun Sahoo—Nayagarh and Khurda.

Similarly, Health Minister Naba Das has been given the responsibility of Kalahandi & Nuapada, Sudam Marndi—Sonepur, Susant Singh—Sambalpur & Bolangir, Tukuni Sahu—Deogarh & Sundergarh, Jagannath Saraka—Gajapati & Koraput, DS Mishra—Dhenkanal, Ashok Panda—Angul, Sameer Das—Jajpur, JP Panigrahi—Balasore, Premanand Nayak—Keonjhar, Raghunandan Das—Jagatsinghpur & Nabarangpur, Padmini Dian—Rayagada and Tusharkanti Behera—Malkangiri.

# Pandemic getting worse in City

■ 248 FRESH CASES IN BHUBANESWAR ■ 870 ACTIVE CASES IN THE STATE CAPITAL

PNN/AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** The Capital city Friday reported the highest single-day spike of 248 Covid-19 cases, taking the total virus tally in Bhubaneswar to 1,717.

Of 248 new confirmed cases of COVID-19, 207 were detected from quarantine centres and 41 are the local contacts, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) said in a tweet, adding that 29 persons who had earlier tested positive for the disease recovered Friday.

With this, the Temple city has 870 active cases. Bhubaneswar has so far lost 11 lives to the viral infection, said the civic body.

According to sources, slums in the city have become a major concern for the authorities as 45 cases were detected from a slum at BJB Nagar and 20 in a slum in Nayapalli area here.

As per information shared by BMC, all the cases in two slums have link with earlier positive cases.

Healthcare facilities in the Capital city are no more safe zone as 27 woman employees of a private hospital linked with an earlier positive case were found to have been infected with the Covid-19, said a source. The BMC, meanwhile, sealed a flour mill at Mancheswar in the state capital here after 61 of its employees tested Covid positive during the past couple of days.

The Cuttack Municipal Corporation reported 93 cases Friday taking the virus tally in the Silver City to 579. Three were detected from institutional quarantine, one from paid quarantine, 14 are local contact cases and 75 are home quarantine cases.

- OUT OF THE 248 NEW CASES OF COVID-19 DETECTED IN BHUBANESWAR, 207 ARE FOUND FROM QUARANTINE CENTRES AND 41 ARE LOCAL CONTACT CASES
- 29 PERSONS WHO HAD EARLIER TESTED POSITIVE FOR NOVEL CORONAVIRUS RECOVERED FRIDAY
- SLUMS IN THE CAPITAL CITY HAVE BECOME A MAJOR CONCERN FOR AUTHORITIES AS 45 CASES WERE DETECTED FROM A SLUM AT BJB NAGAR AND 20 IN A SLUM IN NAYAPALLI AREA

### HARINAGAR BASTI SEALED

After detection of many Covid-19 cases, Harinagar Basti in BJB Nagar was sealed and declared as containment zone by BMC, Friday. BMC marked the containment boundary from Baragada Canal to Gayatri Mandir; from Gayatri Mandir to Scholar Boys Hostel; from Scholar Boys Hostel to Harinagar Basti entrance and Harinagar Basti entrance to Baragada Canal. "Public will be restricted from entering into and going out of the zone. BMC will ensure supply of essentials/medicines in the area," the order said.

## Tracking virus from cough sounds

A wing of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and a healthcare initiative formed by Indian and Norwegian governments have launched a study to detect coronavirus infection from cough sounds of people using artificial intelligence (AI), an official said.

A mobile app has been developed by Norway-India Partnership Initiative, in which people who are not infected by the virus are recording their cough sound, while researchers have collected such sounds from COVID-19 patients.

An analysis using AI will be conducted on the mixed database of cough sound samples to find out if coronavirus infected person, Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) director Sanghamitra Pati said Friday. The RMRC of Bhubaneswar is a

A similar study was conducted in case of X-ray analysis of pneumonia patients in the past. The goal was to identify which is the X-ray of a pneumonia case and which is not

SANGHAMITRA PATI | RMRC DIRECTOR

permanent research centre of ICMR. "A similar study was conducted in case of x-ray analysis of pneumonia patients in the past. The goal was to identify which is the x-ray of a pneumonia case and which is not," Pati said. People of Odisha have started participating in the study using the app, she said.

## ENTRY CURBS EYEWASH

# Maha doctor visits Lions' Gate with kin



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Puri, July 24:** Members of a doctor's family from Maharashtra Friday visited the Lions' Gate of Srimandir in the Holy City here even though the administration

has imposed restrictions on the entry of outsiders to Puri district in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic.

The incident has exposed loopholes in the police checking system at the entry points to the district.

The administration has put restrictions on the entry of outsiders into Puri district to check the spread of novel coronavirus. It has deployed police personnel at all the six entry points to the district to check the vehicles and prevent outsiders from entering into the district without any necessary work.

However, at least eight members of a doctor's family from

Maharashtra visited the Lions' Gate of Srimandir Friday afternoon. The doctor's family reached Puri from Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Bhubaneswar on road, sources said.

"Members of the doctor's family reached the Lions' Gate of Srimandir in two vehicles. They spent around an hour near the 12th century shrine before returning from the city. The police personnel deployed near Srimandir turned mute spectators," said a source.

Many locals, meanwhile, expressed displeasure over the incident. "Maharashtra has reported highest number of Covid-19 positive cases. How could a family from that state enter Puri and reach the Lions' Gate of Srimandir? Did they have any necessary work here?" asked a local.

The administration has put restrictions on the entry of outsiders into Puri district to check the spread of novel coronavirus

## Forbes India confers Great Evangelist Award on Minaketan

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Satyabrata Minaketan has been honoured with Great Evangelist of India Award among other forty awardees by renowned international organization Forbes India.

Minaketan received this award from internationally eminent writer Chetan Bhagat in a felicitation cum interview session at Ahmedabad.

Forbes India has acclaimed his exemplary service to mankind. Starting from a slum school with only 10 students, he has built a school of international benchmark spreading educational and cultural excellence, written seventeen motivational books of high values, inspired thousands of people as a motivational speaker.

Also, Minaketan has been doing yeomen philanthropic service for the downtrodden. He has been also honoured with the National Award from the President of India for his excellence in the field of education with dedication and devotion despite a humble beginning.

## UNENDING CRISIS

# Parents seek Guv's help on school fees

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** In a letter to the Governor Ganeshi Lal Friday Odisha Parents' Federation demanded waiver of school fees of all students in view of closure of all educational institutions due to coronavirus-induced lockdowns in the state.

In the letter, many stated that they have lost their livelihood during the lockdowns imposed by government due to the pandemic. Amid such a scenario, the reopening of schools is still in doubt.

"We are a panicked lot. Our primary concern is to keep our family safe. It is difficult to make ends meet without work. Our lifetime savings are already spent during this difficult situation. We don't have funds to manage our family in this position," the letter read.

"In such times, we received calls from management of every

school to pay school dues without any classroom teaching. They are threatening us of removing our kids from the school if dues are not paid in time. We have requested and wrote letters to the state government many times but officials remain silent due to their nexus with private schools," it added.

"Amid such a grim scenario, we request you to kindly instruct the state government to issue an order to protect parents and students alike. There should be a 'No Schools No fee' order," it said.

Badrinath Patnaik, President, Confederation of Odisha Public School, said, "The parents should respond in a proactive manner and pay fees of their ward irrespective of whether the school is offering online education or not and not ask for actual expenses incurred for the lockdown period."

## STATE TO FIELD POST-PG DOCS ON COVID DUTY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** To meet the required of specialised doctors in Covid hospitals, state government has decided to appoint doctors who have completed PG and on bond service in various Covid hospitals.

Health and Family Welfare additional chief secretary PK Mohapatra has written a letter to all dean and principals of medical colleges at Berhampur, Cuttack and Burla in this regard.

As many 447 post-PG doctors are posted in different vacant posts in medical colleges and periphery for fulfilling the bond condition of serving for the state for two years. These doctors will now be appointed on Covid duty.

"In view of the Covid-19 pandemic leading to detection of more number of positive cases and increase in death trend, the services of more number of specialists in different fields have become inevitable for control of the pandemic situation. Hence, in exercise of Covid-19 pandemic Regulations, government has decided to utilise the services of the post-PG doctors in different institutions of the state," Mohapatra said in his letter.

The PG doctors will be posted in Covid hospitals, Covid Care Centres and Covid Health Centres for 14 days duty followed by institutional quarantine of another 14 days.



Dark clouds hover over Bhubaneswar sky, Friday

OP PHOTO

## On failing, students can retake exam

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Biju Patnaik University of Technology (BPUT) officials Friday announced fresh guidelines of conducting final semester online exams where students will get an 'exit opportunity'.

In a circular, exam director Deepak Kumar Sahoo said that as per the order passed by the vice chancellor of the university July 24, 2020, if a regular student avails this exit opportunity in the final semester examination and fails to

pass the examination for whatever reason, he or she will be allowed to appear for the examination in the offline mode in regular subjects once the colleges reopen.

Earlier, BPUT's final semester exams were postponed due to lockdowns in four districts up to July 31.

Prior to that, students of the university stirred against holding of exams amid the coronavirus pandemic as it would have endangered them. They also said that as many

of them stay outside the state, it will be difficult for them to appear physically for the exams due to the lack of transport services.

The students had demanded that the varsity promote students on the basis of results of previous semesters and internal examinations like other reputed educational institutions. Moreover, the students have also proposed holding an online exam, evaluation of answer sheets and result declaration through a third party in Telangana.

**BPUT FINAL SEMESTER**

## NORMS THROWN TO WINDS



People violate social distancing norms at Unit-1 market in Bhubaneswar, Friday

OP PHOTO

## Civil society demands postal voting for migrants

A collective memorandum has been prepared by the Citizens for Justice and Peace, the Lok Shakti Abhiyan, Odisha, the All India Union of Forest Working Peoples, Bangla Sanskriti Mancha and Bharatiya Nagarik Adhikar Suraksha Manch, Assam to bat for the demands

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Members from the civil society have now put forth their demand in front of the Election Commission of India (ECI) to allow migrant workers to use postal ballots to vote during elections.

A collective memorandum has now been prepared by the Citizens for Justice and Peace, the Lok

Shakti Abhiyan, Odisha, the All India Union of Forest Working Peoples (AIUFWP), Bangla Sanskriti Mancha and Bharatiya Nagarik Adhikar Suraksha Manch, Assam to bat for the demands.

"A vast majority of migrant labourers are unable to exercise their franchise due to economic constraints and their inability to undertake the commute to their home states in the one day nation-wide

holiday that is declared for Parliamentary elections," the memorandum said.

It also added, "They are also unable to cast votes in their host states as they do not fulfill the requirements of 'ordinary resident' or usual resident to be registered as



a voter of that constituency. That leaves them in a lurch doesn't it?" Prafulla Samantara, Chairman of Lok Shakti Abhiyan, Odisha

said, "Several migrant workers from Odisha who go to outside the state fail to register their votes for elections of MP/MLAs of Odisha despite having valid voter cards and names on register. So we have raised the demand to ensure their voting rights."

A 2012 study showed that 78% of migrant labourers surveyed possessed voter ID cards and names present on voting lists of their home cities. "One solution to this would be to allow migrant workers to cast their votes from their host states in the form of postal ballot. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, a total of more than 28 Lakhs votes were received via postal ballots," the memorandum to ECI said.

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# Farmers see drought spectre in Boudh

THEY FRET AS THE WEBSITE FOR PMFBY FAILS TO OPEN UP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Manamunda, July 24:** Even as things have gone from bad to worse owing to Covid-induced shutdowns and lockdowns, poor rainfall has added to the worries of farmers in many parts of Manamunda block of Boudh district.

The area saw scanty rainfall in June and July while paddy sapling transplantation has not been carried out as yet. All agricultural activities were affected for lack of rain in Manamunda, Gudvelipadar, Bilashpur, Bargochoha, Sundhipadar, Jogindrapur, Khatakhatia, Ghikundi, Similipadar, Dapala, and Palasoga panchayats.

Farmers alleged that rain has done a vanishing act while agricultural activities have lagged behind in most areas, except for irrigated areas.

"Farmlands are almost dry, making it difficult for us to raise paddy saplings and transplantation. Without sufficient water, farm-

lands can't be cultivated and processed for the transplantation work.

A drought-like situation can't be ruled out in the region if the area doesn't have rains in next few days," rued some farmers.

They also pointed out that the rain is playing hide and seek at this time when agricultural activities could have been carried forward.

Fearing a drought situation and crop damage, farmers are in a hurry to seek coverage under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. "But, concerned websites for crop insurance are not opening at Jana Seva Kendras. The final date for depositing premiums for the insurance coverage is July 31," they pointed out.

With websites not opening up, farmers are in a fix as to how to submit their premiums in the next few days.

Farmers of Katapalli, Manamunda, Damamunda, Bhaliapadar, including Shivratra Singh, Nurpar Guna Dani, Santosh Sahu, Sankirtan Pradhan and Babula Mahakud demanded that the deadline for the premium deposit of the insurance be extended.

# Farmlands in Mayurbhanj dry

EFFECTS OF SCANTY RAINFALL



**BARIPADA:** With a few days left for July to end, many blocks in Mayurbhanj have received scant rainfall dooming the prospect of farming in the district.

Farmlands of Budhikhamari village and some other places under Baripada block were found dry while paddy seedlings have started wilting, ringing alarm bells for

farmers, a report said.

"If there is no rain within a week, farmlands in Mayurbhanj district could be hardly hit which would give rise to a drought-like condition," Rabindra Mohanta, a local farmer, lamented.

The district has recorded 374.82 mm of rainfall in all 26 blocks during July till date. Precisely,

Shyamakhunta block recorded 135 mm, Badasahi block 174 mm, Betanoti block 197 mm, Morada 191 mm, Rasagobindapur 147.20 mm, Suliapada 150.9 mm, Bangiriposi 116.2 mm, Baripada 158 mm, Khunta 140.7 mm, Gopabandhunagar 140.7mm, Udala 80.8mm, Kaptipada 156 mm, Bijatala 140 mm, Rairangpur 218 mm, Kusumi 36 mm, Jamada 142 mm, Tiring 99.6 mm, Jashipur 140 mm, Karanjia 60 mm, Thakurmunda 136.5 mm, Sukruli 64 mm and Rarun 65 mm of rainfall during this time.

On an average, each block has recorded rainfall of 144.16 mm, official sources said.

When contacted, Mayurbhanj deputy director of agriculture Damodar Sethy said, "Weather condition these days has been precarious for farming activities. We advise local farmers to make use of KALIA yojana assistance money to buy pump sets and irrigate their farmlands by lifting water from nearby resources." The department gives a subsidy of 50 per cent to farmers for pump sets, Sethy added.

# Berhampur ITI gets job offers despite Covid curbs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, July 24:** The government ITI, Berhampur, received good response from recruiters who carried out an online campus placement. As many as 374 students participated in the programme out of which 293 students got offers in Bangalore, New Delhi and Chennai-based companies.

Students so selected have received digital appointment letters and will join work in the first week of August. This was stated here by Principal Rajat Panigrahi. The authorities said many companies have approached them to conduct interviews through digital platform due to restrictions caused by Covid 19. "The object behind the digital re-



crucial process was to build the confidence of job seekers at a time when mass lay-offs have dented the confidence of students and thousands returned from their workplace in the wake of the pandemic," he said.

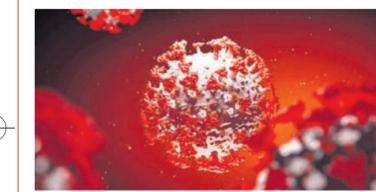
The companies have sought the permission of the district administration and made arrangements of special buses to take the recruits to their workplaces.

# Police excess on sarpanch; cop suspended

**Kabisuryanagar:** Amid intensified efforts to contain Covid-19 spread, a sarpanch, who is empowered as Collector, was allegedly beaten up by policemen of a patrolling team for not wearing mask at Athagarpatana village under Kabisuryanagar block of ganjam Friday. The incident triggered tension in the village when sarpanch Sunil Polei along with villagers staged protests against the police excesses. They blocked a road for two hours. Purusottampur SDPO, IIC, and tehsildar rushed to the spot and pacified the angry crowd. They intimated the issue to the Ganjam SP, who suspended a policeman. A sub-inspector was shifted to the office of the district police headquarters.

## COVID EFFECTS

# JEYPORE CIVIC BODY SHUT FOR FOUR DAYS



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Koraput, July 24:** Amid a rapid rise in COVID-19 infection cases in Koraput district, particularly in Jeypore, the local administration Friday announced a four-day shutdown in the municipality area.

As per an official notification issued by Koraput Collector Madhusudan Mishra, the four-day shutdown will come into force from July 24 midnight till July 28 (including weekend shutdown Saturday and Sunday).

During the enforcement of the shutdown, all non-essential services will remain suspended while there will be no restrictions on movement of individuals and agencies engaged in delivery of emergency and other essential services.

As per the data shared by the I&PR department, 33 COVID-19 cases were reported from Koraput district over last 24 hours, among which 10 are from Jeypore municipality area. With this, the COVID-19 tally in the district rose to 414 Friday.

The services allowed and the number of prohibitions during the four-day shutdown in the municipality area included petrol pumps, LPG

## Polasara MLA, wife test +ve

**Berhampur:** Biju Jatana Dal MLA from Polasara Assembly constituency Srikant Sahu and his wife have tested positive for COVID-19, the state health department said Friday. According to sources in Ganjam district administration, the MLA contracted the virus locally. The district health department has transferred the MLA to a COVID-19 hospital. Contact tracing of the people who have come in contact with the MLA has already started. Family members of the MLA have been asked to undergo a 14-day home quarantine. Earlier, three other legislators from Odisha tested positive for COVID-19. They are BJP's Nilgiri MLA Sukanta Kumar Nayak, BJD's Salepur MLA Prasant Behera and BJD MLA Sudhanshu Shekhar Parida from Remuna constituency in Balasore district. Notably, the state recorded the highest single-day spike of 1,594 Covid cases Friday.

distribution, fire services, hospitals, police, telecom and postal services, sanitation, ATM kiosks to function as usual.

All medicine stores will remain open. All state and central government offices will function for discharging emergency duty under COVID-19. Road transport on highways are allowed. Garage, tyre and spare parts shops alongside NH will remain open. Banks will operate from 8 am to 2 pm. Hotels are allowed to operate up to 30 per cent of capacity for providing service to in-house guests only. No two/three/four wheelers are allowed to ply except on medical/emergency grounds.

# 6 cops test +ve in Bhadrak; 60 local cases spark fear

**BHADRAK:** Even as Covid-infections are increasing in Bhadrak, eight Covid warriors, including six police personnel, have tested positive for the deadly virus in the district Friday. This was informed by the district administration.

An ASHA, six police personnel and a female health worker have been infected with the virus, informed the District Collector wishing for their speedy recovery. The district reported 60 new cases Friday, taking the tally to 484. Among them are 41 local infection cases.

Local infection cases have left the administration and people worried. Fears in community spread now prevailed at Nagamahala, Aparibindha, Kadambada, Gabasahi, Kuansa, Charigharia, Hariapur, Charampa Canal Road, Pandagadia, Banitia, Adampur, Bandalo, Bant Barikpur, Bushnupur, Pahimahura, Todagan Baradeswar, Dhamnagar NAC, Dhamnagar police colony and Bansada. All these areas were declared as containment and buffer zones.

## Covid warrior dead

**Berhampur:** A Covid warrior of Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) engaged in battle against Covid-19 died due to coronavirus infection, Ganjam Collector said Thursday. The deceased, Kailash Chandra Nayak, worked as an assistant engineer at the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) in Ganjam district. He lost his life while undergoing treatment at the KIIMS Covid Hospital in Bhubaneswar Thursday. Through a message, the Collector has extended his deepest sympathy to the bereaved family members for loss of life. Expressing deep condolence, Kulange wrote, "The dedication and devotion shown by him while discharging his duty definitely set an example for others and indeed inspires others in the war against Covid-19."

# Vegetable farmers hit hard by shutdown

**RASULPUR:** The ongoing lockdown and shutdown implemented in Odisha have compounded the woes of farmers living in this block. All their produce are going to waste with no buyers. Large piles of vegetables lying without takers have become a common sight in Rasulpur block of Jajpur district.

The farmers alleged they are incurring huge losses as their produce are going waste.

"After harvesting, we are storing the vegetables in our houses. But there are no buyers because the traders do not have the passes that will permit vehicular movement," the farmers said. "We are also not being able to sell the vegetables in local markets as



they have been closed due to ongoing shutdown," they added.

Pradipta Nayak is one of the farmers who has suffered losses. "We are getting one or two traders. But they are offering prices that are much less than the market rates. We

are forced to accept their rates as something is better than nothing," Nayak said.

This season, farmers in Jabara, Nathuabara, Sribantpur, Singhapur, Odisho, Barabati, Badakainchi, Bhotaka, Rasulpur and Rahamba

panchayats have grown vegetables like lady's fingers, various types of gourds, cucumbers, and beans. Besides selling to traders, the farmers also sell the vegetables in local daily and weekly markets.

"We welcome the steps taken to stop the spread of coronavirus. But at the same time we feel bad that there is no government scheme for us. During lockdown, the government should buy our produce. After fixing a price, it should allow registered traders to procure our produce on behalf of the government. We urge the government to set up cold storages near the markets to preserve the vegetables," some farmers said.

# DGP asks ultras to surrender

AGENCIES

**Phulbani July 24:** A day after two Maoists were gunned down in Kandhamal district, DGP Abhay Friday appealed to members of the outlawed organisation to surrender as the security force is determined to make the state free from Left-Wing Extremism.

During a visit to Kandhamal district to review the situation, the Director General of Police (DGP) said, the Maoists should shun violence and return to mainstream by taking advantage of the "attractive" surrender and rehabilitation policy announced for them by the state government.

"We once again appeal to Maoists operating in Kandhamal and elsewhere in Odisha to lay down arms. They should join the mainstream as the state government has a very generous surrender and rehabilitation policy for them," Abhay told reporters after holding a meeting with senior police officers.

The DGP said that the police are determined to make Kandhamal a Maoist-free district as done in five other districts recently. "Our aim is to eliminate Left Wing Extremism (LWE) from the entire state," he said.

If the Maoists fail to surrender, they will have to face tough action as anti-Naxal operations will be stepped up



to eliminate the LWE menace from the state, the DGP said. The police chief's call comes a day after two Maoists, in-

cluding a woman, were gunned down during an exchange of fire with security personnel in a forest in Tumudibandha area.

A fortnight ago, the state government had approved a proposal of the state police to exclude Angul, Boudh, Sambalpur, Deogarh and Nayagarh districts from the areas that are entitled to benefits under a central scheme for LWE-hit places. No Naxal activities had been reported from the five districts.

**Directorate of Medical Education & Training, Odisha**  
HOD Building, Bhubaneswar - 751001  
**ADVERTISEMENT**  
(For opening of new DMLT & DMRT Institutions)  
No. 12998 dated 23.07.2020  
No.E-136:- In pursuance to Govt. of Odisha Health & Family Welfare Department notification No.-26601/H dated 22.10.2019 applications are invited from interested persons/Trustees/Societies/Private hospitals to open institutions for DMLT/DMRT courses in the state of Odisha. The Govt. notification, guidelines, inspection fees, online application format and name of districts for which applications invited are available in the website: [dmetodisha.gov.in](http://dmetodisha.gov.in)  
The last date of receipt of online applications is 16th August 2020. Application after due date will not be entertained.  
Sd./- Addl. DMET (O) & Chairman, DMLT/DMRT Council  
OIPR-10016/11/0006/2021

**Government of India**  
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities  
5th floor, Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi-110003  
**Toll-Free Helpline numbers for Persons with Disabilities**

- For understanding and identifying symptoms of autistic disorder among children, parents may dial All India Institute of Medical Sciences 24x7 toll free helpline number 1800-11-7776.
- Call the toll free helpline number 1800-572-6422 of National Institute of Empowerment of persons with Intellectual Disability for information regarding (I) Mental Health related issues, (II) Special Education, (III) Occupational therapy, (IV) Vocational Counseling, (V) Speech Therapy and Physiotherapy of persons with intellectual disabilities from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm from Monday to Friday.
- For information relating to aids and assistive devices and services thereof, call ALIMCO Toll Free Helpline No. 1800-180-5129 from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm from Monday to Saturday.
- For information regarding and guidance on loan scheme, Skill Training, Divyangjan Swavalamban Yojna, Vishesh Microfinance Yojana (VMY) call NHFDC toll free helpline number 1800-11-4515 from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm from Monday to Friday.

davp 38117/11/0008/2021

# Women veg farmers pluck success in Mayurbhanj

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khunta, July 24:** As many as 70 women from 10 self-help groups (SHG) have scripted a success story by cultivating vegetables at Chapaldih village under Badapathara panchayat in Khunta block of Mayurbhanj district. These women have now become famous as women farmers not only in the locality but also in the entire district.

Mayurbhanj Collector Vinit Bhardwaj recently visited the vegetable farm-

land of these women and heaped praise on them for setting an example for others.

"We have now realised that it is only our confidence that has taken us thus far. We put in hard labour and the result is there before everyone to see," a member of the SHG said.

Udala ITDA had supplied vegetable seeds and fertilisers to these SHGs under Agriculture Product Cluster Yojana. As many as 70 women prepared a total of 37 acres and sowed the

seeds. Now, they grow crops such as eggplants, ridge gourds, bitter gourds and corns.

The women started harvesting only from the first week of this month and have so far sold 57 quintals of vegetables and corns which has fetched them a return of over Rs 2 lakh.

They sell their produce at a local procurement centre being run by ORMAS in Baripada. Water scarcity continues to remain a major challenge for them, they added.

**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER BOLANGIR (R&B) DIVISION, BOLANGIR**  
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Ph.No. 06652-232374  
**e-Procurement Notice**  
**BID IDENTIFICATION No. BGR R&B/03/2020-21**  
NO.2322/DTD. 06.07.2020  
No.B-169:- 1. The Executive Engineer, Bolangir (R&B) Division, Bolangir on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in Single cover system in ONLINE MODE for construction of building work detailed in the table below from eligible contractors.  
2. Nature of work : Building work  
3. No of tender : 1 No. building work  
4. Tender cost : Rs.6,000/- (Tender paper cost)  
5. Class of contractor : 'D' and 'C' Class  
6. Date & time of sale & receipt of bids: From Dt.28.07.2020, 11 00 A.M. Dt.12.08.2020 upto 5.00 P.M.  
7. Date of opening of bid : Dt.14.08.2020 at 11.30 A.M.  
8. The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>  
Sd./- Executive Engineer, Bolangir (R&B) Division  
OIPR-34028/11/0002/2021

FOCUS ENVIRONMENT

# LIVING WITH FLOODS



The engineers love large toys like dams, barrages and embankments because of obvious reasons but these will only push us into deeper floods and human sufferings. India and China have to choose between toys for our engineers and safety of our people with protection of the sacred land

surely helped. But, for how long? The sediments brought by the rivers got deposited between the embankments and that is leading to the rise in the level of the riverbeds.

The engineers raised the height of the embankment in parallel. Soon, the level of the riverbed became higher than the surrounding land. The river now flows above the ground like the Metro Rail. And, when the embankments break, as they necessarily have to sooner or later, then the water gushes out and inundates much larger area because the land between two rivers becomes like a bowl and the floodwaters cannot now flow to the sea since their pathways are obstructed by the raised river courses.

We will have to learn to live with the floods. I had an occasion to study the floods in Gorakhpur in the 90s. Local people told me that previously the floods were welcome. Villages were made on raised lands and people lived safely in their houses during the floods. The floodwaters used to flow like a sheet of water. They brought sediments that fertilised the soil. They used to grow certain varieties of paddy that increased in height as the floodwaters rose. The floods would soon recede and they got not only paddy crops but floods fertilised soil for their rabi crop.

We will have to revert to this approach of 'living with the floods.' We will have to remove the dams, barrages and embankments. We can still obtain drinking water for Delhi and irrigate our fields by undertaking groundwater recharge in the plains of Uttar Pradesh. We can store about 76 billion cubic meters (cumecs) of water in the groundwater aquifers of UP. The 2.6 billion cumecs stored in the Tehri Dam is a pittance, by comparison.

However, the engineers love large toys like dams, barrages and embankments because of obvious reasons but these will only push us into deeper floods and human sufferings. India and China have to choose between toys for our engineers and safety of our people with protection of the sacred land.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore.

China is facing the worst floods in hundred years though it made the largest numbers of dams in the world. India too is facing floods in Bihar despite having arrested floodwaters in the Tehri Dam. Assam is regularly facing severe seasonal floods. The reason is that we consider rivers only as carriers of water and ignore their role as the carriers of sediments.

We forget that the land mass from Haridwar to Kolkata has been made by the sediments brought by the Ganga. The water of the Ganga has been spreading all around for thousands of years and depositing the sediments. These sediments have become the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal. Yet, floods also cause human suffering. Question is how should we deal with this?

Ganga has the highest load of sediments among the major rivers. She deposits sediments in her channel every year. Then, these sediments are pushed to the sea during major floods that come every five or ten years and the channel is restored to its earlier depths and high capacities to carry water. However, we have stopped such major floods by making the Tehri Dam and removing much water from the Haridwar and Narora barrages for irrigation.

As a result, the sediments being deposited in her channel every year are no longer being pushed to the sea; the level of the channel is gradually rising; the Ganga's capacity to carry the floodwaters is getting reduced; and even a 'small' flood now inundates the banks and causes huge damage as is seen in Bihar today. We have actually increased the flood fury by making the Tehri Dam.

The Farakka Barrage has made the problem worse. Hydrologists tell us that even making the pillars of a bridge causes serious obstruction to the flow of the river and reduces its velocity and ability to carry the floodwaters. It follows that the velocity of the Ganga is reduced even if all the gates of the Farakka Barrage are opened. The reduced velocity leads to the river depositing more of sediments upstream of Farakka. This

leads to a double-reduction of the capacity of the Ganga to carry the floodwaters. The reduction in velocity directly reduces the extent of water that she can carry to the sea; and a reduction in the depth of the channel further reduces the extent of water she can carry. As a result, the floods in Bihar are increasing.

Some scientists believe that the flow of the Ganga has been reduced from Barh to Farakka while others say the flow has been reduced from Buxar onwards. The capacity of the tributaries like Kosi and Gandak has been reduced in tandem because the Ganga cannot accept the water brought by them just as it is difficult to enter a Second Class railway coach that is already full. No wonder, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has been seeking a reassessment of the relevance of Farakka Barrage.

Two studies got done by the Tehri Hydro Development Corporation found that the reservoir of the dam will get completely filled up in 140 to 170 years. Thereafter, we will not be able to hold any water and the major floods will be restored. However, by that time, the sediments deposited in the riverbed would have got stabilised and hardened and the major floods may no longer be

able to push the sediments to the sea as they can do today. In this way, we are putting our future generations in peril by our penchant for controlling the floods today.

Another fateful consequence of arresting the sediments in the Tehri Dam is that the sediments that would have reached the Sunderbans are no longer reaching there. This is resulting in huge erosion. The sea has a natural hunger for sediments and it begins to eat the land if its hunger is not met. The erosion of the Sunderbans is partly due to the rise in sea level due to global warming but also partly due to the deprivation of the inflow of sediments from the Ganga. It can be said that the Tehri Dam and Haridwar and Narora Barrages are 'eating' away the sacred land by opening the path for the sea to eat our land.

Indeed, the Tehri Dam is providing drinking water to Delhi and these barrages are providing irrigation and enhancing our food security—but at the cost of loss of the sacred land.

The engineers of Bihar are not behind. They have made a number of embankments on the sides of the rivers. They wanted to restrict the flow of the river to her channel so that the floodwaters did not spread and create havoc. The people were



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

WE WILL HAVE TO REMOVE THE DAMS, BARRAGES AND EMBANKMENTS. WE CAN STILL OBTAIN DRINKING WATER FOR DELHI AND IRRIGATE OUR FIELDS BY UNDERTAKING GROUNDWATER RECHARGE IN THE PLAINS OF UTTAR PRADESH

## Kerala babu's fall from grace

The gold-smuggling racket unearthed in Kerala has created a major controversy and a senior IAS officer staring at the abrupt end of his once brilliant career in the civil service. At the centre of the episode is M Sivasankar, principal secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan as well as the state Information Technology Secretary.

Perhaps sensing that the scandal could be used to undermine his office, Vijayan was the first to demand an inquiry into the case, and promptly removed Sivasankar from the two posts that the babu held in the government. The accused babu now faces a probe into his connection with the main accused in the smuggling of 30 kgs of gold.

According to sources, Sivasankar wielded immense clout in the government and is widely credited with pitching Kerala as an ideal destination for investment. Known as a no-nonsense and hands-on babu, Sivasankar played a crucial role in the government's flagship projects such as providing high-speed internet connectivity in the state and the Startup Mission, among others. This makes his fall even harder to comprehend for many of his colleagues.

### Nagaland move irks Centre

The Nagaland government landed itself in a soup when it posted non-IAS officers as district magistrates or deputy commissioners in six of its 11 districts, in contravention of the All India Service Rules. The Centre has come down on the state government like a ton of bricks for "misgovernance".



BABUDOM BYTES

Dilip Cherian

According to sources, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has written to Nagaland Chief Secretary Temjen Toy pointing out the contravention and also observing that there was no dearth of suitable IAS officers for the state government to take such a step. It is said that nine active IAS officers have been posed to ex-cadre or subordinate posts instead of as deputy commissioners.

Apparently, Rule 9 of the IAS Cadre Rules states that cadre posts shall not be filled by a non-IAS officer barring a few exceptions, and it shall only be a temporary solution that requires the state government to take prior approval of the Centre.

Interestingly the state Governor RN Ravi too has written to Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio about initiating transfers only after prior approval of the Governor. Seems like the start of a political battle, with babus as pawns.

### EC Lavasa named ADB Vice-President

The appointment of Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa as Vice-President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has clarified several things. Lavasa who was next in line to become Chief Election Commissioner after the retirement of Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora in April 2021 will now resign to take up his new assignment. He will be the first sitting EC to get another appointment before completing his term. The other EC Sushil Chandra will now be a natural claimant for the next CEC. The move also clears the deck for the government to appoint another ex-babu to the poll panel.

Curiously, Lavasa apparently wasn't aware of his new appointment although many international institutions do not announce appointments unless the respective government is on board with the decision.

A former Haryana cadre IAS officer who also led Finance, Environment, Forests and Civil Aviation ministries, has had a rocky relationship with the government once he became EC. He was the lone dissenter in the poll panel when it gave clean chits to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah for alleged poll violations in last year's general elections. He and his family had to face a slew of IT notices for alleged misdemeanours.

The new appointment will likely make Lavasa a relieved man. It may also come as a relief for the government to see a "dissenter" exit the poll panel at a time when critical state elections are coming up next year.

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthercherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect

### WISDOM CORNER

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

Simple can be harder than complex: You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But it's worth it in the end because once you get there, you can move mountains. STEVE JOBS

Never belong to a crowd; Never belong to a nation; Never belong to a religion; Never belong to a race. Belong to the whole existence. Why limit yourself to small things? When the whole is available. OSHO

### WORDSWORTH

#### Swan upping

It was reported in the Washington Post in July 2010 that the Queen was considering how to reduce the cost of running the British monarchy, one suggestion being to lay off her official Swan Marker. The British media didn't mention this; perhaps the idea of the Queen having one in the first place to get rid of didn't seem so strange to them as it does to Americans. The report came a week before that official took part in an annual ceremony on a 70-mile stretch of the River Thames upstream from London: swan-upping. It's not as rude as it sounds: it's an annual census in which the mute swans and their cygnets are upped — taken up from the river to be inspected and marked. The census — it takes five days — is operated by the Swan Marker and the Swan Uppers of two of the ancient trade guilds of London, the Vintners' and Dyers' livery companies. The census is said to date from the 12th Century, at a time when the sovereign claimed ownership of all swans (they were valuable birds that were served up at banquets and feasts). These days, royal ownership is claimed only on the Thames and some tributaries and — you may be pleased to learn — the Queen doesn't actually eat any of her swans. The birds used to be tagged by nicks on their beaks — which is why the Swan Marker has that name — but these days are ringed on their legs. As a side-note, there are several pubs in England that have the name Swan With Two Nicks. Two nicks put on a swan's bill at the time of swan-upping signified that it was owned by the Vintners, hence the connection with pubs. The link has often puzzled people. Down the centuries several such pubs changed their names to Swan With Two Necks, in the toponymic equivalent of popular etymology.

### LOL

#### I WISH I WERE A BOOK

John, for heaven's sake, why can't you just talk to me once in a while," whined Mari. "Look around you!" she yelled as she pointed around the room. "All these books. Your head is always buried in books. You don't even know I'm alive!"



"You know, sometimes I wish I were a book. Then you'd at least look at me." "Hmmm," John mumbled in deep thought, adding, "That's not a bad idea. Then I could take you to the library every few days and change you for something more interesting."

### SPECTRUM COVID-19

# Insurance cover in times of pandemic

Dr. Bhaskar Nath Biswal

ALL 30 GENERAL AND HEALTH INSURANCE COMPANIES ARE HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED TO PURCHASE 'CORONA KAVACH', ON THEIR WEBSITES, AFTER THE MANDATE WAS GIVEN BY THE INSURANCE REGULATORY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Shield Yourself Against the Rising Medical Expenses due to Covid-19. This is the slogan displayed on the website of an insurance company. This is about the new insurance policy it is offering, styled as 'Corona Kavach'. In fact, all the 30 general and health insurance companies across the country are highlighting the need to purchase this policy on their websites after the mandate was given by the Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India (IRDAI).

The treatment cost of the Covid-19 patients is leaving the general public stunned. It is beyond the reach of the common man. In government hospitals, treatment is given freely but the corporate hospitals are charging as high as ₹25,000 to ₹1,50,000 a day for patients. Some state governments cap the rates for Covid treatment in private hospitals. The Karnataka government fixed rates ranging from ₹5,200 to ₹25,000, depending on the condition and severity of the case. The Punjab government fixed the treatment cost from ₹8,000 to ₹18,000 on the basis of severity of the symptoms and the category of hospital. The Telangana government capped

the fee for conducting a Covid-19 test in private lab at ₹2,200 and the fee for treatment of patients in private hospitals from ₹4,000 to ₹9,000 a day. Apart from this, the cost of some antiviral injections is around ₹40,000 to ₹50,000; which will be charged separately.

These figures speak volumes about the financial burden on the family of patients admitted to these private hospitals. In order to overcome this risk, IRDAI has designed a common Covid-19 health insurance product, addressing basic health insurance needs of the people with common policy wording across the industry. IRDAI mandated the 30 general and health insurance companies to offer the Individual Covid Standard Health Policy, 'Corona Kavach'.

On July 10, the authority issued clearance to these companies to market this policy. A day later, it issued another advisory, allowing a five percent discount in premium to Covid warriors like doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers as a token of recognition of their services in fighting the pandemic. Further, the authority released another press release on July 21, extending the coverage of 'Corona

Kavach' policy to groups. The statement revealed that the group policy can provide protection to a large number of workers employed in manufacturing, services, MSMEs, SMEs, and migrant workers.

The basic features of the policy are that this is available on individual or family floater or group basis and that the base cover will be on indemnity basis (Covid hospitalisation cover) or optional cover on benefit basis (hospital, daily cash); a 15-day waiting period; three categories of time-period — three and a half months, six and half months and nine and half months' waiting period; people between the age group of 18 to 65 years can avail the policy for themselves; spouse, parents, parents-in-law and dependent children up to the age of 25 can be covered; medical expenses of hospitalisation on diagnosis of Covid shall be admissible from 15 days prior to hospitalisation and 30 days post hospitalisation; cost of treatment incurred by the person on availing treatment at home on positive diagnosis up to 14 days per incident; ambulance charges ₹2,000 per hospitalisation; optional cover of hospital daily charges at 0.5 per cent of the sum insured per day, subject to

a maximum of 15 days in a policy period for every insured member; any set up designated by the government as hospital for the treatment of Covid shall be considered as a hospital; a single premium policy; and any co-morbid condition triggered due to Covid 19 shall be covered during hospitalisation.

IRDAI has instructed all insurance companies to educate policy holders by disseminating information on the precautions to be taken by them to protect themselves from the infection.

This, in sum, is a right kind of health insurance policy introduced at the right time. Insurance companies should market it in the interest of the society at large, as Covid-19 is affecting the lives of millions, physically, mentally, and financially. The individual and family policies help in providing peace to the family members. When the lockdown restrictions are eased, business organisations will operate as usual and the group insurance will provide them necessary protection. As this is a new one, many of us are not aware of it.

Dr. Bhaskar Nath Biswal is head of Department of Commerce, Nabarangpur College.

### Covid-19, Odisha

Sir, A study published in an international journal on the levels of vulnerability of Indian states claimed that Odisha is among top eight states to report the highest exposure to Covid-19. The study also says MP, Bihar and Telangana are the most vulnerable. It highlighted the status of the states in terms of socio-economic factors, demography, housing and hygienic conditions, etc. Odisha is most vulnerable from housing and hygiene points of view. MP has an equivalent vulnerability index. Odisha performed well on demographic vulnerability and vulnerability arising out of non-availability of health instructions. The state government is urged to take this report seriously, fill the gaps in its response systems and further activate its defense mechanisms. Hitesh Kumar Parida, Panikolli, JAJPUR

### Hagia Sophia

Sir, The opening of Hagia Sophia as a mosque is not well-received. The problem with some 'leaders' is that they want to change the history in a day. Today you change a church into a mosque, and after a few years you might see it again as a church. These monuments are symbols of history. They should be respected and worshipped by all. The best way is to share the ownership of the monuments with all. There are monuments around the world where locals worship together. People who think that their religion is supreme are harming the social fabric. Politicians enjoy a 'divide and rule' policy. As always, the common man is a pawn at the hands of those who wield power. Sunil Pradhan, Khariar, NUAPADA

### Defections, politics

Sir, Political defection has become a regular feature in today's democracy. This may be justified to some extent, but overall it is an unethical practice. There is no fault in a political party; the fault lies in the one who leaves the party in the lurch. Political defection may be a short-term solution to one's problems, but it harms the defector in the long run. Politics sans ethics and morality is a dirty game. It is self-corroding and self-damaging. History will write everyone's epitaph in the sands of time. Indian democracy is mortally wounded and politically damaged by defections. Prabhuduti Dash, BHUBANESWAR

# 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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## Meet India's first legislator from African-origin Siddi tribe

**It is an honour to represent our tribal community in the legislative council but to serve everybody. Service to people is service to God**

SHANTHARAM BUDNA SIDDI | KARNATAKA MLC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, July 24:** Shantharam Budna Siddi, a 55-year-old African-origin Siddi tribal, is elated on being nominated as a Karnataka Legislative Council (MLC) member by Governor Vajubhai Vala.

"It is an honour to represent our tribal community in the legislative council but to serve everybody. Service to people is service to God," a beaming Siddi told IANS on phone in Kannada and Hindi from his village Hitalahalli near Yallapur taluk in Uttara Kannada coastal district.

Yellapur is 425 kms northwest of Bangalore in the southern state. Siddi is among five persons nominated Wednesday to the Upper House to fill vacancies caused after the term of the incumbents lapsed



**Though they are a small community of 6,000 people, with a majority of them dwelling in the forest fringes across the Western Ghats, the Siddis have their own identity, language (Siddi bhasha), culture and food habits**

in the 75-member legislative council. The four others are former ministers AH Vishwanath and CP Yogeeshwar, academician Talwar Sabanna and BJP women's wing president Bharathi Shetty.

"I am grateful to the state government for giving our community a voice in the legislature and an opportunity to make laws for the benefit of all," said Siddi. First in the community to grad-

uate in BA, Siddi is the secretary of Vanavasi Kalyana Ashram, which he joined as a young cadre in 1989. "Though I had an offer to join as a school teacher on graduating, I preferred to do farming in our agriculture field and work for the welfare of my community," Siddi recalled.

Siddi, however, runs a common hostel for tribal boys and girls in his village so that they could study well and become independent.

"The Siddis are an ethnic group who descended from the Bantu-speaking people of South-East Africa and were brought to India by Portuguese merchants 400 years ago," Yellapur local body official DG Hegde told IANS.

Though they are a small community of 6,000 people, with a ma-

majority of them dwelling in the forest fringes across the Western Ghats, the Siddis have their own identity, language (Siddi bhasha), culture and food habits.

"Like their ancestors, Siddis sport thick curly hair and are dark in complexion. They are strong and healthy. Many of them work as labourers in plantations and agricultural fields," pointed out Hegde.

The state government has recognised the Siddi community as a Scheduled Tribe for extending its benefits, including reservation in education and jobs, besides voting rights. "As a member of the Western Ghats conservation task force, Siddi has been working for the welfare of other tribal communities like Gaulis and Lambanis in rural and forest areas over the years," added Hegde.

## Scavengers risk health to sift coronavirus debris

**DELHI USED TO PRODUCE NEARLY 600 TONNES OF MEDICAL WASTE A DAY, BUT THAT HAS RISEN BY 100 TONNES SINCE THE PANDEMIC STRUCK**

REUTERS

**New Delhi, July 24:** Mansoor Khan and his wife Latifa Bibi have been collecting scraps of plastic and other items at an enormous landfill site on the outskirts of New Delhi for nearly 20 years.

Their \$5 daily earnings each keep their three children at school, in search of a better future than their parents' lives amid the stench of rotting garbage. But over the past few months, increasing amounts of biomedical waste have been arriving at the dump - a result, experts say, of the novel coronavirus pandemic and a huge risk for those who work there.

Spread over 52 acres and rising more than 60 metres, the site is littered with used, plastic coronavirus test kits, protective gear and cotton stained with blood and pus - among hundreds of tonnes of waste coming daily from across the Indian capital, including small hospitals and nursing homes.

Sifting with bare hands, hundreds of scavengers including children expose themselves to a disease that has infected more than 15 million people globally and claimed



**Protocols for disposal of biomedical waste were not necessarily being followed during the outbreak, putting those who sift through landfills at risk**

DINESH RAJ BANDELA | CENTRE FOR SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

over 600,000 lives. India has reported almost 1.2 million cases overall, behind only the United States and Brazil.

**"WHAT IF WE DIE?"** Khan, 44, is aware of the dangers but feels he has little choice.

"What if we die? What if we get this disease? But fear will not fill our bellies, that is why we have to do this work," he told Reuters, standing outside his two-room concrete house at the foot of the garbage mountain.

Bibi, 38, said she was worried about bringing the infection home to the couple's children, aged 16, 14 and 11. "When I return from there, I feel afraid to enter my house because I have children at home. We are re-

ally afraid of this disease," she said. Dinesh Raj Bandela, an expert in biomedical waste at the Delhi-based think tank Centre for Science and Environment, said protocols for disposal of biomedical waste were not necessarily being followed during the outbreak, putting those who sift through landfills at risk.

Neither the North Delhi Municipal Corporation, which runs the dump, nor India's Central Pollution Control Board, immediately replied to requests for comment. According to Bandela, the Indian capital used to produce nearly 600 tonnes of medical waste a day, but that has risen by 100 tonnes since the virus hit.

## Almost a quarter of Delhi has had Covid: Study

**Blood tests on 21,387 randomly selected people across Delhi conducted by the National Centre for Disease Control found that 23.48 per cent of them had IgG antibodies - indicating past exposure to the virus**

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



**New Delhi, July 24:** Almost a quarter of people in New Delhi have had the coronavirus, according to a study that cast serious doubt on the official numbers both in the megacity and across India.

India last week became the third country after the United States and Brazil to hit one million cases but many experts have long said that with testing rates low, the true number could be much higher.

Blood tests on 21,387 randomly selected people across Delhi conducted by the National Centre for Disease Control found that 23.48 per cent of them had IgG antibodies - indicating past exposure to the virus.

With Delhi's population of more than 20 million, the findings published Tuesday by the federal health ministry suggest that 4.7 million people have had the virus, almost 40 times the official tally of 125,000.

While praising the government restrictions that have limited the spread of the virus, the ministry said the study 'indicates

that a large number of infected persons remain asymptomatic'. The survey was conducted between June 27 and July 10.

And more than 75 per cent are still vulnerable, including those at higher risk, Sujet Kumar Singh, head of the National Centre for Disease Control, told a news conference.

India's COVID-19 case count crossed the 13 lakh mark Friday. Maharashtra, Delhi and Tamil Nadu states are the

worst affected. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government imposed one of the world's strictest lockdowns in late March, but it has been steadily eased in recent months to lessen the devastating economic impact.

But, independently from the federal government, states have been tightening restrictions as case numbers have soared - including in Karnataka, Bihar, West Bengal and parts of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Delhi's daily new cases have been steadily falling in recent weeks, with a fewer than 1,000 new infections recorded Tuesday - the first time in 49 days - down from a peak of almost 4,000 in late June.

## Outrage over sealing of corona patient's flat

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Bangalore, July 24:** In a shocking incident a Covid-19 patient's flat in the city's eastern suburb along with that of her neighbour's was sealed with metal sheets, leading to an uproar and forcing Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Commissioner N. Manjunatha Prasad to express regret and promise action against the erring staff.

"The commissioner has regretted the civic body staff's action in sealing the home-quarantined patient's flat and that of her neighbour's with metal sheets and assured of action against those found guilty," the official told IANS here Friday.

The metal sheets were removed Thursday night after a video clip went viral on the social media and sparked protests by owners of other flats in the residential building.

The incident came to light after the victim's neighbour tweeted pictures of metal sheets nailed to the wall across the main doors of the two flats, preventing their residents from coming out.

"It's unfortunate that instead of advising the victim to stay home under quarantine and not to allow anyone to enter her flat, the overzealous staff sealed the flats in violation of the standard operating procedure," the official maintained.

Though a 9-day lockdown was lifted on Wednesday, containment zones across the city remain sealed

to prevent the virus spread, while asymptomatic patients are strictly told to remain in home quarantine.

According to the coronavirus patient, the civic body's health officials came to the flat and told her that they would seal the floor to check the virus spread.

"Instead, the civic staff sealed the two adjacent flats by clamping metal sheets across their main doors," the official admitted.

As Karnataka's epicentre of the pandemic, Bangalore reported 2,207 new cases on Thursday, taking its Covid tally to 39,200, including 29,090 active cases. As many as 9,326 patients have been cured and discharged, including 1,038 in the last 24 hours. A total of 783 patients have succumbed to the infection since March 9.

**INCIDENT CAME TO LIGHT AFTER THE VICTIM'S NEIGHBOUR TWEETED PICTURES OF METAL SHEETS NAILED TO THE WALL ACROSS THE MAIN DOORS OF THE TWO FLATS, PREVENTING THEIR RESIDENTS FROM COMING OUT**



## Unfounded fears keep plasma donors away

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** The response to a call for donating convalescent plasma for COVID-19 patients in Delhi has been 'lukewarm', doctors said Friday and attributed it to unfounded apprehensions about associated health risks and the tendency to put off donation for any future need of family members.

Just about 320 people have donated plasma in Delhi since the initiative began July 2, whereas more than 1,00,000 COVID-19 patients have recovered till July 23, according to officials.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Thursday said the government would provide plasma for free and people do not need to buy or sell it.

The chief minister and other senior members of the government have repeatedly appealed to people, who have recovered from COVID-19, to donate plasma to other patients. But the response to the calls has been muted at the first-of-its-kind 'plasma bank', inaugurated by Kejriwal at ILBS here July 2, and another one opened a week ago at LNJP Hospital, a dedicated coron-



avirus facility.

"At ILBS, while on the opening day, 10 donors had come, mostly the hospital staff who had earlier been infected with COVID-19, now the daily average is about 15, which makes it around 300 donations in total till date, a rather lukewarm response," a senior official of the facility told PTI. This is despite the fact that to-and-fro transportation facilities and food are provided to the donors at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Science (ILBS).

"The main reason behind this low response...is that people are

still feeling apprehensive even though there is no risk involved," the official, also a doctor, said.

At LNJP Hospital's plasma bank, 30 donors have volunteered till July 23, but 11 were rejected, as they could not fulfil the eligibility guidelines. "So, effectively, we are left with 19 donations which is not a very encouraging number, and some of which have been used already. But it is heartening that young people, mostly in the age group of 20-40, are donating their plasma," Medical Director, LNJP Hospital, Dr Suresh Kumar, told PTI.

**EACH DONOR, A PERSON WHO HAS RECENTLY RECOVERED FROM COVID-19, DEVELOPS ANTIBODIES, WHICH IS TRANSFERRED TO THE RECIPIENT THROUGH PLASMA**

**People aged 18-60, who have fully recovered from COVID-19 and showed no symptoms for 14 days can go for donation, subject to strict guidelines for eligible donors**

**SOMEONE WEIGHING LESS THAN 50 KG; WOMEN WHO HAVE EVER BEEN PREGNANT, CANCER SURVIVORS, AND THOSE WITH KIDNEY, HEART, LUNG OR LIVER DISEASES ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO DONATE PLASMA**

Both ILBS and LNJP Hospital are under the Delhi government.

Asked why such a low response despite the chief minister and his colleagues urging people to donate plasma, Kumar said there seem to be multiple factors.

"Though there are no side effects as such, but still many have apprehensions that something will

happen if they donate plasma. Secondly, many COVID patients who have recovered, are apparently putting off donation so that they can offer it to their family members, in case they get infected, and the fear of near and dear ones getting infected is very palpable," he said.

For donors, there are some strict criteria and counselling and screening is done for them before actual donation process begins, so, about two to two-and-a-half hours is the total time per donor.

"Also, we do TTI (Transfusion Transmissible Infections) tests. So, the donor should not have HIV, hepatitis B or C, syphilis among other ailments. The donor also should not have any co-morbidities like diabetes, hyper tension or renal problems," a senior doctor at the ILBS said. "Each person can donate 250-500 ml of plasma. We give first dosage of 250 ml to the recipient, and if needed second dosage of 250 ml after 24 hours," Kumar said.

Kumar said that when he takes a round in wards and ICU, "some patients, who are serious, and their relatives, ask us as to when will be they getting plasma."

## Powerlifter does his bit for burial of virus victims

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bangalore, July 24:** For someone who has lifted 295 kg without breaking a sweat, famed powerlifter Mohammed Azmathulla feels the pain of carrying the bodies of COVID-19 victims, as he goes about giving a dignified burial to them.

"The pain I experience while carrying the body of someone who has died due to coronavirus can't be explained," the champion powerlifter said. As coronavirus now carries a stigma borne out of public fear, many people avoid touching victims' bodies, protest against their cremation or burial in the vicinity and look at the relatives of the deceased with fear.

Azmathulla, fondly called Azmat, has taken up the task of giving a



Mohammed Azmathulla (inset) with other volunteers from Mercy Angel prepares to cremate a Covid victim, at a crematorium in Bangalore. PTI PHOTO

dignified burial to coronavirus victims and has associated himself with the Mercy Mission for the purpose. A programme manager in

DXC Technology, an IT firm, Azmat works for five days and reserves the weekends for this social cause. He said he has rostered himself

for this work Saturdays and Sundays. "I was part of the drive for relief work during the lockdown and when I saw people dying in huge numbers in July, I decided to associate myself with the Mercy Mission," Azmat told PTI.

The challenge those at Mercy Mission face is that the last rites is a time-consuming process, right from the procedures involved at the hospital and at burial grounds. Besides, volunteers also have to confront protests, which further delays the procedure.

The deaths due to COVID are rising but that has not scared the powerlifter. "Death is certain, so there is no need to be bothered much about it. But I do take the utmost precautions, which is multi-layered because I too have a family," Azmat said.

**The pain I experience while carrying the body of someone who has died due to coronavirus can't be explained**

MOHAMMED AZMATHULLA

About coronavirus, he said almost 90 per cent of those who died due to the pandemic and those he had buried were those who had never ventured out of their houses.

"If you have to get the disease, you will certainly get it even if you have caged yourself in the house. I have seen young people in their twenties without any comorbidities dying of coronavirus and also seen elderly people with comorbidities escaping from it. It's a very tricky disease," Azmat added.



There is a certain section of overambitious young leaders. They are becoming restless and feeling they are not getting their due in the party and are looking for other options to satisfy their individual ambitions

ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY | CONGRESS LEADER

## ANANDBEN TO BE MP ACTING GOVERNOR

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel will continue to hold additional charge as acting Governor of Madhya Pradesh until a new appointment is made for the gubernatorial post, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said Friday



## of the day quote

The EC is mandated to monitor the social media activity of all parties



The news of death of man kidnapped in Kanpur is saddening. Government remained inactive after warning. Now the government should give at least ₹50 lakh to the aggrieved family. SP will give ₹5 lakh to the family



The UP government needs to immediately come into action, especially on the issue of crime control and law and order



## SHORT TAKES

### Bhushan new Union Health Secy

New Delhi: In an administrative reshuffle announced Friday, the Central government appointed senior IAS officer Rajesh Bhushan as Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare. The 1987-batch Bihar cadre officer will succeed Preeti Sudan, given a three-month extension in April, when she demits office on July 31. The appointment comes at a time when the country is fighting the Covid-19 pandemic and the Health Ministry has a crucial role to play. Ajay Tirkey, a 1987-batch IAS officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre, has been appointed Secretary, Department of Land Resources. Tirkey will replace Ruolkhumli Buhri, who retires on July 31. Mines Secretary Sushil Kumar, a 1987-batch IAS officer of Tripura cadre, has been appointed Secretary of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

### 128 inmates test Covid+ in UP

Jhansi (Uttar Pradesh): Four barracks of the Jhansi district jail have been converted into a level one COVID hospital after a total of 128 inmates tested Corona positive. A spokesman of the Director General (Prisons) said "two inmates were symptomatic while 126 were asymptomatic" about the Thursday development. So far, 748 inmates in the district jail have been tested and of these, 126 have turned out positive.

### Kolkata cop dies of corona

Kolkata: A Kolkata Police inspector-rank official who was suffering from Covid-19 died Friday. Abhigyan Mukherjee was a Kolkata Traffic Police inspector posted at the city police headquarters in Lalbazar. "I am extremely saddened to hear about the untimely demise of our colleague inspector Abhigyan Mukherjee," Kolkata Police commissioner Anuj Sharma tweeted.

### Man killed

New Delhi: A 28-year-old man was crushed to death by a low floor DTC bus Friday morning in Outer Delhi's Rani Bagh. The man was rushed to the hospital but the doctors declared him brought dead. "We received a call of an accident in the morning by a low floor DTC bus. The victim succumbed to the injuries. We are in the process of identifying the deceased. He was crossing the road when the accident took place," said a police officer.

## RENEWING EFFORTS

# AQIS planning retaliation: UN report

ISIS and al-Qaida remain active on social media, using platforms and messaging applications to share information and communicate with followers for the purposes of recruitment, planning and fundraising, the report stated

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 24: Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) is planning retaliation operations and an Indian ISIS affiliate -- Hind Wilayah -- has 180 and 200 members present in Kerala and Karnataka, as per the United Nations Security Council.

The revelation was made in the 26th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team which was released Thursday. The report stated that "ISIS Indian affiliate -- Hind Wilayah -- which was announced on May 10, 2019, has between 180 and 200 members."

According to the report, there are significant numbers of ISIS operatives in Kerala and Karnataka. The report also states that AQIS is planning retaliation operations in the region to avenge the death of its former leader Asim Umar. About AQIS, the reports point out that the terror outfit operates under the Taliban umbrella from Nimruz, Helmand and Kandahar Provinces. It reportedly has between 150 and 200 members from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Pakistan.

"The current leader of AQIS is Osama Mahmood, who succeeded the late Asim Umar. AQIS is plan-



The report also states that AQIS is planning retaliation operations in the region to avenge the death of its former leader Asim Umar

ABOUT AQIS, THE REPORTS POINT OUT THAT THE TERROR OUTFIT OPERATES UNDER THE TALIBAN UMBRELLA FROM NIMRUZ, HELMAND AND KANDAHAR PROVINCES. IT REPORTEDLY HAS BETWEEN 150 AND 200 MEMBERS FROM BANGLADESH, INDIA, MYANMAR AND PAKISTAN

ning retaliation operations in the region to avenge the death of its former leader," the report stated.

ISIS and al-Qaida remain active on social media, using platforms and messaging applications to share information and communicate with followers for the purposes of recruitment, planning and fundraising, the report stated. Although the Europol operation in November 2019 to remove extremist content from Telegram appears to have had some impact on the ability of IS to disseminate its message, the group has found ways to mitigate the clampdown.

To achieve a wide dispersal of video and audio messages in April

and May 2020, IS used several smaller platforms and file-sharing services, including Dropbox, Files.fm, Internet Archive, Microsoft OneDrive, Nextcloud, Ok.ru, Rocket.Chat and Vimeo. For messaging, ISIS and al-Qaida are looking for tenable alternatives to Telegram.

In a May 2020 issue of Ibaa' magazine, ISIS affiliate He'at Tahrir al-Sham had actively urged its followers and other militant groups in the Syrian Arab Republic to move permanently away from Telegram, Facebook Messenger and Viber and instead use other end-to-end encryption applications such as Conversations, Riot, Signal and Wire.

## Haryana man held for killing his children

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, July 24: A 38-year-old man has been arrested in Haryana's Jind district after he confessed to killing his five children in the last four years, including two of them recently, a senior police official said Friday.

The man, identified only as Jumma, is a labourer and belongs to a village in Safidon in Jind, he said, adding that his wife is pregnant with the sixth child. The bodies of two of his daughters, ages 11 and 7, were recovered from the Hansi-Butana Link canal near his home in Didwara village on July 20, five days after the accused had lodged a police complaint stating the duo had gone missing.

However, during the course of investigation, Jumma kept changing his statements which raised suspicion. Jind ASP Ajit Singh Shekhawat said. The police presumed that he was under mental stress due to the death of his children and did not subject him to sustained questioning at the moment. The village panchayat was later involved in the investigation, and the man confessed before them and later, the police, that he killed his five children. Jumma admitted that he drugged his two minor daughters and threw them in the canal a few days ago, the ASP said. "We arrested him on Thursday evening, and he has been charged with murder," said Shekhawat. Earlier, Jumma's three children, all below 11, had also died mysteriously.

At that time, he had told his neighbours that one of his sons died in sleep, a daughter died while playing and another son started vomiting and died.

## FITNESS SECRET



Patients perform yoga at CWG village COVID-19 Care Centre, near Akshardham in New Delhi, Friday

PTI PHOTO

## Maha village finally gets electricity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Akola, July 24: Residents of Navi Talai, a tribal village in Akola district of Maharashtra, erupted in joy when they got electricity in their homes for the first time two days ago.

Earlier residing in core area of the Melghat Tiger Project in Amravati district, they were shifted and rehabilitated by authorities in Navi Talai in 2018. However, the village under Telhara taluka, which has a population of around 540, was without electricity connection since then, forcing people to live in darkness.

This changed on July 22 when Navi Talai finally got electricity for the first time, ending a long wait for power for its residents, who had to go to neighbouring villages to recharge their mobile

phones. A Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd (MSEDCL) official said it was the state-run utility's duty to provide power connection to the village. "MSEDCL works on mission mode... so all the houses in the village are now lit up. It's MSEDCL's duty," the official said. For the residents of Navi Talai, it was an early Diwali and a moment of joy as they celebrated the occasion by lightning up lamps while children cut cake and played on the streets in night.

The groundwork for bringing electricity to the village was prepared by local social activist Gopal Kolhe and MLC Amol Mitkari, who regularly visited Navi Talai and liaised with MSEDCL for setting up transformers and to ensure every home gets power connection.



EARLY DIWALI

## ADVANI DEPOSES VIA VIDEO LINK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, July 24: Veteran BJP leader L.K Advani Friday recorded his statement before a special CBI court in the Babri mosque demolition case.

The statement of the 92-year-old former deputy prime minister was recorded through video conferencing in the court of special Judge SK Yadav in the presence of his counsel Vimal Kumar Srivastava, KK Mishra and Abhishek Ranjan, who were present in the court. CBI lawyers Lalit Singh, P Chakravarti and

## BABRI DEMOLITION CASE

RK Yadav were also present.

Thursday, the court recorded the statement of BJP veteran Murlidhar Manohar Joshi in the case. Dubbing prosecution witnesses in the Babri mosque demolition case as "liars", Joshi had asserted that he was innocent and implicated in the case by the then Congress government at the Centre.

The 86-year-old leader had pleaded innocence while making his statement under section 313 of the CrPC.

The Babri mosque demolition trial is presently at the stage of recording of statements of 32 accused in the case under Section 313 of CrPC during which they get an opportunity to refute the prosecution evidence against them.

# Border talks signal total disengagement

The two countries reviewed the situation in the region during a fresh round of online diplomatic talks under the framework of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on border affairs



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 24: India and China Friday agreed for an "early and complete" disengagement of the troops from the friction points in eastern Ladakh, holding that full restoration of peace and tranquility in border areas was essential for the overall development of bilateral relations.

The two countries reviewed the situation in the region during a fresh round of online diplomatic talks under the framework of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on border affairs.

The parleys took place against the backdrop of reports that the disengagement process has not moved forward as expected following the last round of marathon Corps Commander-level talks on July 14.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said the two sides agreed that the Friday talks that another meeting of their senior army commanders may be held soon to work out further steps to ensure complete disengagement "expeditiously".

"They agreed that early and complete disengagement of the troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and de-escalation from India-China border areas in accordance with bilateral agreement and protocols and full restoration of peace

and tranquility was essential for smooth overall development of bilateral relations," it said in a statement.

The MEA said the two sides noted that this was in accordance with the agreement reached between the two Special Representatives during their telephonic conversation on July 5.

National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held

a nearly two-hour-long telephonic conversation on July 5 to bring down tension between the armies of the two countries in eastern Ladakh.

Both sides commenced the disengagement process from July 6 following talks between Doval and Wang who are Special Representatives for the boundary question. In Friday's talks, the MEA said both sides agreed that it was necessary to "sincerely" implement the understandings reached between senior commanders in their meetings till date.

"The two sides agreed that another meeting of the Senior Commanders may be held soon so as to work out further steps to ensure expeditiously complete disengagement and de-escalation and restoration of peace and tranquility in the border areas," the MEA added.

## LAC ROW

# Naidu nominates new RS members to House panels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 24: Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu nominated new members to various Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committees, after administering the oath/affirmation to them.

Jyotiraditya Scindia (BJP) has become a member of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Resource Development (HRD), while Congress member Digvijaya Singh has been nominated to the Committee on Urban Development. NCP leader Sharad Pawar has been made a member of the Committee on Defence.

Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge has been nominated to the Standing Committee on Commerce, former Lok Sabha

Jyotiraditya Scindia has become a member of the Parliamentary Committee on HRD, while Digvijaya Singh has been nominated to the Committee on Urban Development. NCP leader Sharad Pawar has been made a member of the Committee on Defence

deputy speaker M Thambi Durai to the Committee on HRD, and former Rajya Sabha deputy speaker Harivansh to the panel on Agriculture. Former Prime Minister HD Deve

Gowda, who took oath as Rajya Sabha member, has been nominated to the Committee on Railways, while former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi has been made a member of the Committee on External Affairs. Vinay P Sahasrabudhe has been appointed as the Chairman of the Committee on Human Resource Development further to the expiry of the membership of Satyanarayan Jatiya.

With this, those who have made oath/affirmation on July 22 will get to participate in the meetings of respective committees. Forty-five of the 61 newly elected members of Rajya Sabha took oath Wednesday.

The remaining 16 new members would participate only after subscribing to oath/affirmation, an official statement said.

# Phase-I human clinical trial of potential Covid vaccine begins

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 24: The phase-I human clinical trial of India's first indigenously-developed vaccine against novel coronavirus, Covaxin, began at the AIIMS here on Friday with the first dose of the injection given to a man, who is in his 30s.

Already, over 3,500 volunteers have registered themselves for the trial at AIIMS since last Saturday, of whom the screening of at least 22 people is underway, said Dr Sanjay Rai, Professor at the Centre for Community Medicine at AIIMS and the principal investigator of the study.

"The first volunteer, a resident of Delhi, was screened two days ago and

all his health parameters were found to be within the normal range. He also does not have any co-morbid conditions. "The first dose of 0.5 ml intramuscular injection was given to him around 1.30 pm. No immediate side-effects have been observed so far. He was under observation for two hours and will be monitored for the next seven days," Rai said.

Few more participants would be given the vaccine on Saturday after their screening reports come. AIIMS-Delhi is among the 12 sites selected by the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) for conducting phase I and II randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trials of Covaxin.



In phase I, the vaccine would be tested on 375 volunteers and the maximum of 100 of them would be from AIIMS. The second phase would include around 750 volunteers from all 12 sites together, Rai said. Phase I of the vaccine trial will be done on healthy people aged 18-55 years having no co-morbid conditions. Women with no pregnancy will also be selected to be a part of the trial in the first phase.

In the second phase, 750 people will be recruited between 12-65 years, AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria had said. Already, around 1,800 volunteers have registered themselves for the trial at AIIMS, he had said.

"In the first phase we see the

safety of the vaccine which is of primary importance and the dose range is also calculated," he said.

There are three formulations of the vaccine, and each subject will be given any one of the formulation in two doses two weeks apart. The first 50 will get the lowest strength dose of the vaccine. If it is found to be safe in them, then it will be given to another 50 patients in high doses, according to Rai.

COVID-19 vaccine candidate Covaxin, developed by the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the ICMR and the National Institute of Virology (NIV), had recently got the nod for human clinical trials from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI).



I kept warning them (govt) on COVID-19 and the economy. They rubbished it. Disaster followed. I keep warning them on China. They're rubbishing it

**RAHUL GANDHI** | CONGRESS LEADER

## CORONA STINGS UP HEALTH MINISTER

Uttar Pradesh Health Minister Jai Pratap Singh has tested positive for coronavirus and has been put in home isolation



### of the day quote

It's not a matter of the Congress government only, but the whole democratic setup has been shaken. There is a kind of earthquake in the democratic setup and I doubt that at the centre of this is the Centre (Union government). I hope my doubts are baseless

**KAMAL NATH** | EX-MADHYA PRADESH CM

The internal feud for supremacy between Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Siddaramaiah and the main opposition party's state unit president Shivakumar has manifested in the form of levelling allegations against our government

**N. RAVI KUMAR** | BJP'S K'TAKA GENERAL SECY

After Vikram Joshi, now abducted Sanjeet Yadav in Kanpur has been killed. The police got the money paid to the kidnapers and he was killed as well. A new 'gundaraj' has come into being

**PRIYANKA GANDHI** | CONGRESS LEADER

# IAF draws roadmap for enhancing aerial prowess

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** At the end of a three-day brainstorming conclave, top commanders of the Indian Air Force Friday drew up a broad roadmap for next 10 years to significantly enhance the country's aerial prowess to confront emerging threats including from the adversaries on the northern and western fronts, officials said.

The IAF commanders held detailed deliberations on the border row with China in eastern Ladakh, key short-term and long-term security challenges facing the nation and on the complex geo-political power play in India's neighbourhood, they said.

In his closing remarks, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhaduria emphasised on the need for rapid capacity building, increase in serviceability of all assets and dedicated work towards effective integration of new technologies in the "shortest timeframes".

An IAF spokesperson said the Chief of Air Staff talked about the vision 2030 for the force and laid down milestones for transforming it in the coming decade. He stated that it was important to recognise the nature of emerging threats in a rapidly changing world. The official said the commanders held a series of discussions and carried out reviews on operational preparedness and strategies for countering se-



security threats envisaged across the entire spectrum.

"They discussed the current situation and thereafter carried out a thorough review of the IAF's transformation roadmap for the next

decade," spokesperson said. In his address on the opening day of the conclave, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh complimented the IAF for its rapid deployment of assets at forward locations in responding to the border row with China, saying its Balakot strike and the current combat readiness have sent a strong message to the "adversaries".

Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh and Chief of the Army Staff Gen MM Naravane too addressed the conference and interacted with the commanders as well as the principal staff officers (PSOs) at Air headquarters.

The interactions covered a wide range of subjects including ways to

ensure of jointness and ensuring integrated war fighting. The spokesperson said the IAF chief underlined the need for work on the IAF's long term goals for building sustainable capability, employment of niche technologies and development of indigenous platforms and weapons.

"The chief stated that since human resource was the most valuable asset of the IAF, recruitment, training and motivation strategies should keep pace with the changing times," he said. Officials said the commanders also 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.

# Another Dubey aide arrested

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kanpur, July 24:** The Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force (STF) has arrested Shivam Dubey, another aide of slain gangster Vikas Dubey who killed eight policemen in an ambush on July 3 in Bikru village.

ASP STF, Vishal Vikram Singh said that 24-year-old Shivam Dubey was present on the day of the ambush as per electronic evidences and also the statements given by other members of the gang who have been arrested earlier. Shivam was arrested Thursday night from near Ghadi soap factory near Chaubeypur police station in Kanpur Nagar.

Shivam was reportedly hiding at his maternal aunt's place in HarDOI. He shifted location after the police started tracking him. His presence in Kanpur was tipped off by an informer. The double barrel gun used by him to attack the cops has already been seized, according to the STF.

Besides, Shivam Dubey, the STF has earlier arrested Daya Shankar Agnihotri, Shyam Bajpai, Jahan Yadav and Shashikant. Others still at large include Chotu Shukla, Monu, Shiv Tewari, Vishnu Pal Yadav, Ram Singh, Ramu Bajpai, Gopal Saini, Viru Dubey and Bal Govind.

# Covid: Fatality rate at 2.38%; recovery 63.45%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** For the third day in a row, the number of COVID-19 recoveries in a 24-hour span saw another record high, with 34,602 patients having recuperated pushing the recovery rate to 63.45 per cent, the Union health ministry said Friday. The case fatality rate has further declined to 2.38 per cent, it said. According to data updated at 8 am, the total recoveries have climbed to 8, 17,208, while there are 4,40,135 active cases of coronavirus in the country at present, the ministry said as the COVID-19 tally surged to 12.87 lakh.

India also saw a record single-day spike of 49,310 cases while the death-toll mounted to 30,601 with 740 new fatalities, the data said. The ministry said as a result of constantly growing number of recoveries, the recovered patients outnumber the active cases by 3, 77,073. "This difference is showing a progressively growing upward trend."

Further, a cumulative total of 1, 54, 28,170 samples have been tested for COVID-19 up to July 23. On Thursday, 3, 52,801 samples were tested. "This translates to 11179.83 tests per million (TPM) for India, which has seen a steady increase since the adoption of the 'test, track and treat' strategy," the ministry said.

The rise in TPM has been achieved with a steady rise in the number of labs (1290 so far), and efforts by the Centre and state governments and union territory administrations to facilitate wide-spread testing through an array of options, it



India also saw a record single-day spike of 49,310 cases while the death-toll mounted to 30,601 with 740 new fatalities, the data said

The sustained rise in number of recoveries is the result of a well formulated and executed strategy of containment of COVID-19 by the state and union territory governments under the guidance of the Union government

noted. There are currently 897 labs in the government sector and 393 private labs.

As for the country registering increasing number of recoveries, the ministry said that efforts of states and union territories are bolstered by the central teams of experts sent to high case-load areas and through strategic discussions held by Central government through video conferencing with state and district officials.

"With the dedicated efforts of healthcare workers, the recoveries are improving and case fatality

is continuously falling, which currently stands at 2.38 per cent," the ministry said.

The sustained rise in number of recoveries is the result of a well formulated and executed strategy of containment of COVID-19 by the state and union territory governments under the guidance of the Union government.

It primarily focuses on early detection through aggressive testing along with house-to-house surveys, contact tracing and surveillance of SARI/ILI cases to actively search for cases in the highly vulnerable categories. This is followed by effective containment plans and efficient clinical management through the ramped up three-tier health infrastructure and well executed standard of care protocol.

These have successfully aided in effective treatment in the hospitals and through home isolation which in turn has ensured that the hospitals remain unburdened for critical patients, the ministry said.

# Happy weekends for tipplers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Lucknow, July 24:** While the entire Uttar Pradesh will remain locked down on weekends, the Yogi Adityanath government has allowed liquor shops to remain open even during the weekend curbs.

Shops can remain open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on all days but the government has specified that it will not allow drinking in public places. According to an order issued on Thursday night, the government has allowed retail shops selling beer, model shops, foreign and country made liquor, and bhanga to remain open on weekends.



However, this order is not applicable on those shops which are located within containment zones. UP started implementing restrictions over weekends, from July 10 in view of the rising number of Corona cases in the state.

During this period, all shops, malls, grain wholesale markets and restaurants remain closed in an effort to discourage people

from venturing out. Additional Chief Secretary (Excise) Sanjay Bhoosreddy said that if any District Magistrate wants to alter the time of operation of these shops, he or she can only do so after seeking permission from the Excise Commissioner. This was stated in view of the fact that some district magistrates were taking unilateral decisions regarding closure time of liquor shops.

The Liquor Seller Welfare Association, meanwhile, has welcomed the decision, saying that they had been facing major losses during weekend lockdown.

## SHORT TAKES

### 20 arrested

**Chandigarh:** In a major crackdown on trafficking of pharmaceutical opioids across the country, the Punjab Police Friday said it has busted a drug cartel, operating across 11 states, and arrested 20 people. The Punjab Police also termed the action as "one of the biggest crackdowns on supply of pharmaceutical opioids across the country". Twenty people have been arrested with a huge cache of drugs, drug proceeds-money and five vehicles, in an operation that spanned over eight weeks, Punjab DGP Dinkar Gupta said.

### Opium seized

**New Delhi:** The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has seized nearly 234 kgs of opium from Rajasthan, the "largest" seizure this year yet, and arrested two people on charges of drug trafficking, the agency said Friday. The seizure was made on July 19 from Shadi village in the state's Chittorgarh district. "A team from the Jodhpur zonal unit raided the residential premises of a person, R Lal, and seized 233.97 kgs of opium. Another person M K Dhakad of Bhilwara district has also been arrested," NCB Deputy Director (Operations) K P S Malhotra said in Delhi.

### Quake hits Assam

**Guwahati:** An earthquake of 3.5 magnitude hit Assam's Karbi Anglong district Friday, the third quake to rock the state in past nine days, officials said. No loss of life and property was reported so far, the officials said. The earthquake occurred at 11.08 am and its epicentre was in the hill district of Karbi Anglong in central Assam, 58 km south-southeast of Tezpur, according to the National Center for Seismology.

### Man held

**Mumbai:** A 25-year-old man was arrested for allegedly sexually abusing an eight-year-boy at Dharavi in Central Mumbai, police said Friday. The incident took place Thursday afternoon at Ganpatipada Chawl on M G Road, an official said. The accused lured the victim to his house with the promise of giving him toys and sexually abused him, he said. The arrested accused also threatened the child of dire consequences if he told anyone about the incident, the official said. A case under relevant sections of the IPC and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act has been registered against the accused, he said.

# Migrant labourer sells newborn to make ends meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kokrajhar (Assam), July 24:** Driven by extreme poverty and lack of work during the COVID-19 crisis, a migrant labourer in Assam sold his 15-day-old daughter for ₹45,000 but police rescued the baby, officials said Friday.

The man and two women have been arrested on the charge of human trafficking. Dipak Brahma, a resident of Dhantola Mandaria, a forest village in Kokrajhar district, had recently returned from Gujarat, where he worked as a labourer. He was jobless and find-



ing it hard to support his family, according to an official of an NGO working against human trafficking.

After his return, the family started living at the house of his in-laws in Kochugaon Patakata village in the same district. The family still lived

a hand-to-mouth existence, neighbours said. During these tough times, Brahma's wife gave birth to the girl, their second daughter. Their elder daughter is a year old, Nedan Foundation Chairman Digambar Narzary said.

"Brahma tried to find a job during the pandemic but it was hard to come by. With almost all doors to earn a living closed, Brahma decided to sell the newborn," he added. The man sold his daughter to two women for just ₹45,000 on July 2 but kept his wife in dark, Narzary said.

Brahma's wife and villagers lodged a complaint at Kochugaon po-

lice station after they came to know about it later. "On receiving the complaint, police swung into action and rescued the baby from the two sisters. We also arrested the man (Brahma)," police said.

During interrogation, the two women claimed that they had bought the baby for a childless couple related to them. "We are really thankful to the police for rescuing the baby. But the issue is of very serious nature. Because of the lockdown, poor people do not have any work. The situation is getting worse for those living in forest villages," Narzary said.

Lakhs of labourers returned to

their homes in Assam from large cities outside the state after they became jobless during the lockdown. Though the state government had announced that it will create job opportunities for them through various initiatives, including under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the COVID-19 outbreak has badly hit most economic activities in the state. People are facing the double whammy of the pandemic and floods which have created havoc in the state. A total of 28.32 lakh people in 26 of the state's 33 districts have been affected by the deluge.

## DELUGE AND DEVASTATION



An elderly woman rows a makeshift raft to cross a flood-affected area of Mayong village in Morigaon district of Assam, Friday

PTI PHOTO



Russia won't join any alliance aimed against anyone, especially against China, as Moscow and Beijing share special relations  
DMITRY PESKOV | KREMLIN SPOKESMAN

COVID-19'S HIDDEN THREAT  
The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic could push nearly one third of Nepal's population below poverty line due to the loss of livelihoods in the wake of the health crisis, the World Bank said in a report



## of the day quote

According to Russia's arrangement the BRICS countries foreign ministers meeting will be held in September and all parties are in close communication regarding this arrangement  
WANG YI | CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER

The old paradigm of blind engagement with China simply won't get it done. We must not continue it. We must not return to it  
MIKE POMPEO | US SECRETARY OF STATE

US harasses a scheduled civil airliner - endangering innocent civilian passengers - ostensibly to protect its occupation forces  
MOHAMMAD JAVAD ZARIF | FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER OF IRAN

# China tells US to close consulate in Chengdu

CHENGDU IS AN IMPORTANT DIPLOMATIC OUTPOST FOR THE US, COVERING A LARGE SWATH OF THE COUNTRY, INCLUDING THE SENSITIVE REGION OF TIBET

Beijing, July 24: China Friday ordered the US to close down its consulate in Chengdu in retaliation to Washington's decision to shut the Chinese mission in Houston, further straining the already tense bilateral ties. A statement by the Chinese Foreign Ministry said the US Embassy here has been informed of the Chinese government's decision to withdraw its consent for the establishment and operation of the US Consulate General in Chengdu, the provincial capital of southwestern Sichuan province. Chengdu is an important diplomatic outpost for the US, covering a large swath of the country, including the sensitive region of Tibet. The Chinese foreign ministry also asked the US to stop all operations and events by the US Consulate General in Chengdu. "On July 21, the US launched a unilateral provocation by abruptly demanding that China close its



Consulate General in Houston. The US move seriously breached international law, the basic norms of international relations, and the terms of the China-US Consular Convention," the Foreign Ministry statement said. "It gravely harmed China-US relations. The measure taken by China is a legitimate and necessary response to the unjustified act

bilateral relationship back on track", it said. The US Wednesday ordered the closure of the Chinese consulate in Houston, a move it said was aimed "to protect American intellectual property and private information." Reacting strongly to the US move, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin Thursday termed it as an "unprecedented escalation" and warned of retaliatory measures. "This is breaking down the bridge of friendship between the Chinese and American people," Wang said. Top American officials have accused the Chinese consulate in Houston of being part of Beijing's espionage operation in the US. US President Donald Trump Wednesday said he may order the closure of more Chinese consulates in the country. Meanwhile, the US has charged four Chinese nationals with visa fraud for allegedly lying about their membership of Beijing's armed forces, a media report said Friday.

# Pak govt draws flak for providing legal option to Jadhav



Islamabad, July 24: The Imran Khan government in Pakistan is facing uproar for facilitating legal remedies for alleged Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav, with the opposition parties slamming it for bringing in a "National Reconciliation Ordinance". The session of the National Assembly saw a heated debate on the matter after Pakistan People Party (PPP) chief Bilawal Bhutto Zardari cited out quorum to prevent the government from laying down

an ordinance pertaining to granting foreign citizens an opportunity to file a review appeal. The Opposition blamed the government for trying to get a rubber stamp from the parliament on what it called "facilitating a terrorist, who had confessed to his role in promoting unrest and terrorism in Pakistan". "A terrorist who has confessed to bring involved in terrorism in our country, against whom we have completed legal proceedings - what has happened now that we are formally legislating to facilitate him?" asked Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Khawaja Asif. "When we (PML-N) were in the government, Kulbhushan was a slur used against us. It was said that Nawaz Sharif and PML-N were appealing India. Who is appealing India today?" Lashing out at the Imran Khan government, Asif sought to remind them of the "taunts" the PML-N government faced from the then opposition party of Imran Khan. "We were taunted, now this government and this Prime Minister

must tell us why he is stooping so low in front of India?" he said. In its response, the government contended that the PML-N government should never have gone to the International Court of Justice in the first place. Pakistan maintains that it has been asked by the ICJ to review and reconsider the conviction and sentence of Jadhav, adding that Islamabad promulgated the ordinance, under which he and India were invited to file review proceedings before the Islamabad High Court. "Neither has done so till date. Accordingly, to comply with the directive of the ICJ, the Federation has filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court for appointment of a lawyer for Commander Jadhav, so that the review proceedings can be initiated," said Pakistan Foreign office spokesperson. Jadhav was arrested in March 2016 by the Pakistani intelligence agencies in what they claim as an "Intelligence Based Operation". Jadhav's video later came out in which he is seen confessing to have been working for India's RAW and involved in espionage and terrorism in Pakistan. Jadhav was given a death sentence by a Pakistani military court. He later filed a mercy petition, which is pending before the Pakistan Army chief. India took the case up to the ICJ, which halted the death sentence of Jadhav and asked Pakistan to provide consular access as well as ensure effective review and reconsideration of his sentence.

## EU unveils plans to step up fight against child sexual abuse

Brussels, July 24: Worried by an alarming spike in child sexual abuse before and during the coronavirus pandemic, the European Union's executive arm on Friday unveiled plans for a centre devoted to preventing the mistreatment of children and for legislation requiring online platforms to report child pornography. Under the European Commission's plans, the centre would help coordinate actions among the EU's 27 nations in the areas of law enforcement, deterrence and assistance for victims of child sex abuse. The commission did not provide a timeline, but said it will immediately launch discussions with member states and EU lawmakers. The commission said the centre would be similar to the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, a US nonprofit refer-

## DON'T FEAR



An oriental whip snake slithers in the bush at the Windsor Nature Park in Singapore



ence centre which helps families when a child goes missing and exploited victims. The commission pointed out that lockdowns imposed to slow down the spread of the coronavirus have exacerbated the problem for children who spent more time online and were more vulnerable to predators in isolation. Reports of online child sexual abuse in the EU have increased from 23,000 in 2010 to more than 725,000 in 2019, according to figures from the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children relayed by the EU.

## India-UK move towards 'Early Harvest' trade pacts

London, July 24: India and the UK are committed to a free trade agreement (FTA) and will kick off that process with "Early Harvest Agreements" as a start, the Indian government said following the first-ever virtual India-UK Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) Friday. Minister of Commerce and Industry and Railways Piyush Goyal and UK Secretary of State for International Trade Liz Truss agreed to intensify the work of joint Working Groups through frequent meetings in order to achieve some of the Early Harvest

## SIBERIAN HEATWAVE Wildfires rage in Arctic, sea ice melts

Geneva, July 24: The UN weather agency warned Friday that average temperatures in Siberia were 10 degrees Celsius (18 Fahrenheit) above average last month, a spate of exceptional heat that has fanned devastating fires in the Arctic Circle and contributed to a rapid depletion in ice sea off Russia's Arctic coast. "The Arctic is heating more than twice as fast as the global average, impacting local populations and ecosystems and with global repercussions," World Meteorological Organisation Secretary-General Petteri Taalas



said in a statement Friday. He noted that Earth's poles influence weather conditions far away, where hundreds of millions of people live. WMO previously cited a reading of 38 Celsius in the Russian town of Verkhoyansk June 20, which the agency has been seeking to verify as a possible record-high temperature in the Arctic Circle. It comes as fires have swept through the region, with satellite imagery showing the breadth of the area surface. The agency says the extended heat is linked to a large "blocking pressure system" and northward swing of the jet stream that has injected warm air into the region.

# WHO chief scientist sees no coronavirus herd immunity yet

Herd immunity is usually achieved through vaccination and occurs when most of a population is immune to a disease, blocking its continued spread

London, July 24: The chief scientist of the WHO, Dr Soumya Swaminathan, Friday warned that the concept of "herd immunity", or a large section of the population developing antibodies against COVID-19, is still a long way off and can be sped up by a vaccine. In a social media live event organised by the World Health Organisation from Geneva, the scientist said that more waves of the infection would be required to get to a stage of natural immunity. Therefore, she warned, that at least for the next year or so, the world needs to be "geared up" to do

everything possible to keep the novel coronavirus at bay while scientists work on vaccines. Meanwhile, therapeutics will help keep death rates low and allow people to get on with their lives. "For this concept of herd immunity, you need 50 to 60 per cent of the population to have this immunity to be actually able to break those chains of transmission," explained Swaminathan. "That's much easier to do with a vaccine; we can achieve it faster and without people getting sick and dying. So, it is much better to do it that way, to achieve herd immunity through natural infection. We would have several waves [of infection] and unfor-

## COVID CHAOS



tunately also the mortality that we see," she said. She added: "Over a period of time, people will start developing natural immunity. We know now from the studies that have been

done in many of the affected countries that usually between 5 to 10 per cent of the population has developed antibodies. In some places it's been higher than that, up to 20 per cent. "As there are waves of this infection going through countries, people are going to develop antibodies and those people will be hopefully immune for some time and so they will also act as barriers and brakes to the spread of this infection," said Swaminathan, a paediatrician from India and a globally-recognised researcher on tuberculosis and HIV. The scientist, who was addressing a range of questions on

coronavirus vaccines and therapeutics, said that for the foreseeable future, it is important to be focused on doing the "right thing" such as public health measures that are known to work while the world waits for a vaccine. Elaborating on vaccine development, the chief scientist said there are over 200 candidates in some stage of development as she highlighted the extraordinary speed at which the science has been moving around the understanding of the novel coronavirus. According to Johns Hopkins University, the COVID-19 pandemic has so far infected more than 15.5 million people and killed over 6.3 lakh across the world.

## SHORT TAKES

### Taliban ready for talks with Kabul

Islamabad: The Taliban say they are ready for talks with Afghanistan's political leadership after the Muslim holiday of Eid ul Adha at the end of July, offering to hand over the last of the government prisoners in a week's time, providing the government frees the last of its Taliban prisoners. The offer made by Taliban's political spokesman Suhail Shaheen in a tweet late Thursday follows one of the most significant shakeups in the Taliban in years.

### Vietnam bans wildlife imports

Hanoi: Vietnam announced Friday that it was banning wildlife imports and would close wildlife markets in response to renewed concerns about the threat from diseases that can jump from animals to humans, such as the virus that causes COVID-19. An order signed by Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc Thursday bans all imports of wildlife dead or alive and includes eggs and larvae. It also merits tougher penalties for crimes involving the trade in wildlife.

### Hagia Sophia opens for prayers

Istanbul: Istanbul's iconic Hagia Sophia opened its doors to Muslim worshippers for Friday prayers for the first time since the 1,500-year-old UNESCO World Heritage site was converted into a mosque. "Muslims are excited, everyone wants to be at the opening," the BBC quoted Istanbul Governor Ali Yerlikaya as saying in a televised address Thursday. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is expected to offer his prayers Friday.

### CPEC projects unaffected

Islamabad: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects have remained unscathed by the COVID-19 pandemic, officials and think tank representatives said. The remark was made Thursday at a webinar attended by experts of Chinese and Pakistani think tanks, reports Dawn news.

### Russia to resume flights August 1

Moscow: Russia will resume international flights with three countries starting August 1, the government announced Friday. Air traffic will resume with Britain, Turkey and Tanzania, and Russia is working to expand the list, according to Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova.

# business



**IHS Markit forecasts that the Indian economy will rebound as the impact of the pandemic recedes, with improving economic growth momentum in the second half of 2020 and positive GDP growth of 6.7% in FY 2021-22**

**RAJIV BISWAS** | CHIEF ECONOMIST (ASIA PACIFIC), IHS MARKIT

## CCD PROBE GIVES CLEAN CHIT TO I-T DEPT

An investigation into the circumstances that led to the alleged suicide of VG Siddhartha, who was the owner of the Coffee Day group, has revealed ₹3,535 crore being siphoned off from the company by the entrepreneur's personal firms. The probe gave a clean chit to the tax department that was being alleged to have harassed Siddhartha



## of the day quote

We have identified 20 sectors in which Ficc and other associations are very much part of our engagement, where we have identified sectors where India can not only meet our own domestic needs but also become globally competitive and become a global leader supplying to the world



**PIYUSH GOYAL** | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

The lockdown created a major disruption in the supply chain, and the demand-to-supply ratio was not balanced with the demand increasing exponentially. Our report was based on the patterns and trends observed



**SAAHIL GOEL** | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, SHIPROCKET

From the start of the COVID-19 crisis, we have been guided by clear priorities in line with our multi-stakeholder business model to protect our people, safeguard supply, respond to new patterns of consumer demand, preserve cash and support our communities



**ALAN JOJE** | CEO, UNILEVER

## SHORT TAKES

### Green shoots visible: Niti VC

**New Delhi:** The Indian economy will start recovering completely by the fourth quarter of the current fiscal and could grow by 6% in the next financial year as green shoots are visible in many sectors where business is back to pre-COVID levels, Niti Aayog VC Rajiv Kumar said. Kumar also expressed hope that COVID-19 will begin to taper off from the metros and their economic activity will be normal in the coming quarter. The Niti Aayog VC noted that green shoots of recovery are already visible in multiple sectors.

### NFRA bans another auditor

**New Delhi:** The National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) has slapped a five-year ban on an auditor for alleged irregularities in the audit of IL&FS Financial Services Ltd (IFIN). Apart from the ban, a fine of Rs 5 lakh has been imposed on Rukshad Daruvala. Deloitte Haskins and Sells LLP conducted the statutory audit of IFIN for 2017-18. Daruvala is a partner at Deloitte.

### Jenburkt launches COVID-19 drug

**New Delhi:** Drug firm Jenburkt Pharmaceuticals Friday said it has launched antiviral drug Favipiravir under the brand name 'Favivent' for the treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms at a price of Rs 39 per tablet. The tablet will be available in 200 mg strength in the form of a strip of 10 tablets, it added. The drug will be manufactured at a pharmaceutical plant in Telangana, Jenburkt Pharmaceuticals said in a statement.

### Twitter user base hits 186mn

**San Francisco:** Recovering from the biggest hack yet, Twitter reported 19% decrease in total revenue (y-o-y) in the Covid-hit second quarter as its user base went up 34% to reach 186 million average monetisable daily active users (mDAU). The sales were \$683 million in Q2, reflecting moderate recovery in advertising demand relative to the last three weeks of March.

## 'More economic reforms needed to attract investment'

AGENCIES

**Washington, July 24:** India's concerted efforts to strengthen the business climate and encourage investment in trade have helped attract investment, but the country needs further economic reforms to ensure sustainable and more inclusive growth, according to the IMF.

The remarks by International Monetary Fund's Chief Spokesperson Gerry Rice Thursday came in response to a question on the recent FDI announcements made by global giants like Facebook and Google in India.

In recent weeks, several international companies have pledged \$20 billion FDI in India, and

a whopping \$40 billion this year so far.

"Concerted efforts have been made in recent years, in India, to strengthen the business climate and encourage investment in trade, and these have helped to attract investment and improve the current account financing mix and also help to contain external vulnerabilities," Rice told reporters at a news conference here.

"Relevant reforms have included the new bankruptcy code, the National Goods and Services Tax. These have helped to gain in India's doing business ranking, moving up rapidly in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index, up to 63 in 2020, from 100 in 2018, significant progress there, indeed," Rice said.



In recent weeks, several international companies have pledged \$20 billion FDI in India, and a whopping \$40 billion this year so far

"Nonetheless, further economic reforms, including labour, product mixed land, and others, and additional infrastructure investments are necessary, in our view, to attract even more investment, and to ensure sustainable and more inclusive growth in India," he said in response to the question.

Recently, the IMF in its update to the World Economic Outlook projected India's growth rate at 4.5 per cent, and then six per cent recovery, for the fiscal year 2020-21 and fiscal year 2020-22, respectively, he said.

"Our projection for fiscal year '20-2021 was revised down, as was

the case for most countries driven by the impact of the pandemic," Rice said. "On balance, I think we would say the risks to the economic outlook remain," he said.

Despite gradual recovery in activities and a solid agricultural performance, the downside risks remain. "The main downside risk is, of course, the continued spread of the pandemic," he noted, referring to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Further outbreaks could require additional lockdowns, and concerns about the virus could also dampen consumer confidence and delay the economic recovery. Again, this is the case not just in India, but in many countries, Rice said.

## Banks' gross NPA may rise to 12.5% in 2021: RBI

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, July 24:** Gross non-performing assets of all banks may jump to 12.5% by the end of this fiscal under the baseline scenario, from 8.5% in March 2020, according to the Financial Stability Report (FSR) released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Friday.

The resilience of Indian banking in the face of macroeconomic shocks was tested through macro stress tests which attempt to assess the impact of cumulative shocks on banks' balance sheet and generate projections of gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratios and capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRARs) over a one-year horizon under a baseline and three adverse -- medium, severe and very severe -- scenarios, the report said.

"The stress tests indicate that the GNPA ratio of all scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) may increase from 8.5% in March 2020 to 12.5% by March 2021 under the baseline scenario. "If the macroeconomic environment worsens further, the ratio may escalate to 14.7% under the very severely stressed scenario," the report showed.

The baseline scenario is derived from the forecasted values of macroeconomic variables such as GDP growth, combined gross fiscal deficit-to-GDP ratio and CPI inflation



### FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT

The resilience of Indian banking in the face of macroeconomic shocks was tested through macro stress tests which attempt to assess the impact of cumulative shocks on banks' balance sheet and generate projections of GNPA ratios

Given the fact that impact of moratorium is still uncertain and evolving, the exact nature of how the same will play out on the quality of banking assets is difficult to ascertain accurately

among others, the report said. As the asset classification in March 2020 could have been influenced by the regulatory moratorium in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the projections for this

exercise are built up using data from June 2011 up to the quarter ended December 2019 (instead of March 2020), it said.

"Given the fact that impact of moratorium is still uncertain and evolving, the exact nature of how the same will play out on the quality of banking assets is difficult to ascertain accurately," it said.

The report said that the regulatory dispensations that the pandemic has necessitated in terms of the moratorium on loan installments and deferment of interest payments may have implications for the financial health of banks, going forward.

Under the baseline scenarios, state-run banks' GNPA ratio may increase to 15.2% by March 2021 from 11.3% in March 2020. The GNPA ratio of private banks and foreign banks may increase from 4.2% and 2.3% to 7.3% and 3.9%, respectively, over the same period.

## E-COMM PRODUCTS

## Apex court notice to Centre over plea on 'country of origin'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, July 24:** The Supreme Court Friday issued a notice in a petition seeking direction to the Union government to formulate policies to ensure that e-commerce companies must disclose the 'country of origin' of the products on their sites.

The Bench headed by CJI SA Bobde and comprising justices AS Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian sought Union government's response in the plea filed by Advocate Divya Jyoti Singh.

In his petition, Singh sought for the 'country of origin' for products, should be made available to customers so that a decision can be made. The petitioner challenged that a wave of anti-Chinese sentiment is flowing in the country and that people have been boycotting Chinese products since the Indo-Chinese military standoff at Galwan Valley. E-commerce companies like Amazon and Flipkart, by not revealing the 'Country of Origin' on their web portals, are playing with the nationalistic sentiments of Indians. This, in a way is creating hindrance in promoting the local manufacturers and brands; as called for by Prime Minister



Narendra Modi, in his efforts towards making India 'self-reliant' (Atmanirbhar Bharat) which is the need of the hour.

The petition has been filed in the Supreme Court with an aim to further fuel the anti-Chinese movement. The petitioner said that revealing the 'country of origin' for products will help in boycotting Chinese goods.

Singh also called for an amendment to the Section 2(9) of the Consumer Protection Act which states that a consumer's rights include "the right to be informed about the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods, products or services, as the case may be, so as to protect the consumer against unfair trade practices."

He urged that the Consumer Protection Act to include the right of a consumer to know the 'Country of Origin' in the e-commerce portals.

## OSIC aims biz up to ₹1,000 cr by FY'21

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 24:** Odisha Small Industries Corporation (OSIC) planned to boost up its business to Rs 1,000 crore by end of current financial year (FY'21). This was informed by Dibya Sankar Mishra, Minister for Energy, Industry and MSME during a brief review of its activities at Cuttack.

It was emphasised that the Energy Department shall be contacted to award orders to OSIC for electrification work and supply of equipments, solar power equipments, solar power stations, solar pumps and others to enhance its business activities.

In order to stretch out, the corporation has decided to open six new



sales counter in the state in Jeyapore, Jharsuguda, Berhampur, Koraput, Boudh and Phulbani (Kandhamal).

These sale counters shall market various products manufactured by the MSME units of Odisha. It was decided to request IDCO authorities for allotment of suitable land for the new sale centres as planned. Mishra suggested seeking cooperation of local MSMEs for sale of their products after adequate assessment of requirement by various government establishments.

## BIZ BUZZ

### ArcelorMittal India begins ops in state

**New Delhi:** ArcelorMittal India has commenced operations at Thakurani iron ore block in Odisha. The announcement was made by ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India, which is a 60:40 joint venture between LN Mittal-owned ArcelorMittal and Japan-based Nippon Steel Corporation. Located in Keonjhar district, Thakurani block has an estimated reserve of around 179 million tonne (MT) and will meet up to 75% of current requirements of ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India for its manufacturing facilities in the state.

### Reliance becomes world's 2nd most valuable energy firm

**New Delhi:** Reliance Industries (m-cap of \$189.3bn) has overtaken ExxonMobil (m-cap of \$184.7bn) to become the world's 2nd most valuable energy company after its market capitalisation scaled to a record high of over ₹14 lakh crore. The oil-to-telecom conglomerate is now ranked 46th globally on market cap, according to stock market data. Reliance was ranked 48th, Thursday and was behind ExxonMobil. Its share price Friday scaled an all-time high of ₹2,163 before settling at ₹2,146.20, taking the company to 46th position. The ₹13.6 lakh crore m-cap of Reliance together with ₹54,262 crore m-cap of its partly-paid shares that were issued in the recent rights issue.



Honda BS-VI Activa 6G

Today, with over 11 lakh dispatches & counting, more Indians are riding their favourite BS-VI Honda 2Wheeler, that comes packed with the company's globally acclaimed patented technology, first-in-class features, style, convenience and more.

Director (Sales & Marketing) of Yadvinder Singh Guleria said, "It's a matter of great pride for us at Honda that our 11 advanced BS-VI models have won the vote of confidence & created a new joy of riding amongst customers across India.

### Purple to launch e-beauty products August 4

**Bhubaneswar:** India's leading beauty marketplace Purple, will launch country's largest online beauty sale from August 4-8, 2020. The five-day sale festival, branded as "I Beauty" (I Heart Beauty) will offer over 15,000 beauty products across 500 Indian and international brands on purple.com making it India's largest online sale of beauty products across skin care, hair care and makeup categories. The online sale festival will be offering products from Purple's exclusive beauty brands like Good Vibes, Alps Goodness, NY Bae, Stay Quirky as well as renowned global brands like Maybelline NY, L'Oréal Paris and The Face Shop, among others. Co-Founder & CEO of Purple Manish Taneja said, "Purple has a large portfolio of exciting beauty brands. The breadth of products being offered will be matched with equally exciting consumer offers ranging from 3 times deeper discounts to free product bundles."



## US-China conflict to impair global trade: Ex-RBI Guv

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New York, July 24:** As the US presidential election draws near, the conflict between America and China will escalate, impairing global trade which is "extremely important" for emerging markets like India and Brazil that are re-opening amidst COVID-19 pandemic, according to former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan.

Cautioning that there will be "deeply damaged firms" in the economy, Rajan said the post-pandemic recovery has to be accompanied by a process of repair.

"There's going to be enormous bankruptcies in the United States certainly and quite possibly in Europe also as we repair the econ-

omy, reallocate resources, re-structure capital structures," he said Thursday at the PanLIT USA virtual conference titled 'The New Global Economic Norm: Post COVID-19'.

"Certainly as we get closer to the US election, the conflict between the US and China is going to increase and that impairs global trade, which is going to be extremely important going forward, especially for emerging markets like India, Brazil, Mexico, which are going to be significantly impaired by the virus and need some source of demand to pull them out as they start opening up again," he said.

The US election will be held November 3. The contest is between incumbent President

Donald Trump and Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

"Global trade is going to be an important factor if they can jump on to it, whether it's trade in goods and services or trade in digital services, it's going to be very important and our countries desperately need an open world," Rajan said.

Rajan, an IIT Delhi graduate and the Katherine Dusak Miller Distinguished Service

As we get closer to the US election, the conflict between the US and China is going to increase and that impairs global trade, which is going to be extremely important going forward, especially for emerging markets like India

**RAGHURAM RAJAN** | FORMER RBI GOVERNOR



Professor of Finance at University of Chicago Booth School of Business, said that containment of the coronavirus in countries like the US and India has not happened despite lockdowns, while in some countries containment has been a 2-2.5 month process and virus cases have been brought down to the single digits leading to re-openings.

"There are countries, of course the United States being a prime example, but also India as well as Brazil, Mexico where the containment has not happened despite lockdowns, despite enormous costs. As a result, the cost of the virus is going to be significantly greater than for the countries that have been successful," he said.

Rajan said that for countries like India and the US that are still battling the virus, the main issue right now is to contain the virus, even as he asserted that "unfortunately the spread has become significant enough that containment is going to be very difficult".

"This creates an enormous amount of uncertainty because businesses don't know whether there'll be fresh lockdowns and how difficult they will be. Some states in the US are talking about fresh lockdowns, some states in India are talking about lockdowns and have actually sort of implemented some of those right now," he said. Rajan also spoke about some of the trends that may emerge post-pandemic.

Cash-rich T20 league set to be played in UAE as final to take place November 8

# IPL to embark Sept 19



Defending champions Mumbai Indians would be keen to retain the title when they take the field

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** The eagerly-awaited Indian Premier League will start September 19 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with the final slated November 8, IPL Chairman Brijesh Patel told PTI Friday.

While the event's Governing Council will meet next week to chalk out the final details and approve the schedule, it is understood that the BCCI has informally intimated the franchises about the plan.

"The GC will meet shortly but we have finalised the schedule. It will run from September 19 to November 8. We expect the government approval to come through. It is a full 51-day IPL," Patel confirmed the development after PTI reported the dates on Thursday.

The IPL has been made possible by the ICC's decision to postpone the October-November T20 World Cup in Australia owing to the COVID-19 pandemic due to which the host country expressed its inability to conduct the event.

Patel said that the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) from the BCCI, which will finalise the logistics in the IPL Governing Council meet next week.

"Strict safety protocols have to be put in place both for off-field and on-field activities to make the IPL safe and successful. They should not be compromised at all," Wadia told PTI.

"I would want as much testing as possible and preferably daily. If I was a cricketer, I would be very happy in getting myself tested

Stadium, Sheikh Zayed Stadium (Abu Dhabi) and the Sharjah ground. It is learnt that the BCCI will be renting the grounds of the ICC Academy for training of the teams.

The ICC Academy has two full-sized cricket grounds along with 38 turf pitches, 6 indoor pitches, a 5700 square foot outdoor conditioning area along with physio-

therapy and medicine centre.

As per the current health protocol in Dubai, there is no need to be in quarantine if people are carrying a negative COVID-19 test report, but if they are not, they will have to undergo a test.

While there was speculation that the IPL will start from September 26, the BCCI decided to advance it by a week in order to ensure that the

Indian team's tour of Australia is not jeopardised.

"The Indian team will have a mandatory quarantine of 14 days as per the Australian government rules. A delay would have sent the plans haywire," a BCCI official said on conditions of anonymity.

"The best part is that 51 days is not at all a curtailed period and broadcasters will be happy with full seven-week window," he added.

While the original schedule had five double-headers, Patel said the new one will feature around 12 double-headers which means two matches each on both Saturdays and Sundays.

The Indians are set to play a four-match Test series against Australia starting December 3 in Brisbane after the IPL.

It is expected that with each and every team needing at least a month's time to train, the IPL franchises will be leaving base by August 20 which gives them exactly four weeks time to prepare.

The cash-rich event was originally scheduled to start at the end of March but the COVID-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions that were put in place to contain the virus, led to an indefinite postponement.

However, BCCI President Sourav Ganguly had always maintained that the event will be held sometime this year.

## Wadia calls for daily virus testing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** Kings XI Punjab co-owner Ness Wadia Friday advocated daily testing of players during the IPL and predicted that the upcoming edition in the UAE will be the most watched in the tournament's history.

Wadia's comments came after IPL chairman Brijesh Patel confirmed that the T20 league will be held from September 19 to November 8. All teams are now awaiting the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) from the BCCI, which will finalise the logistics in the IPL Governing Council meet next week.

"We are making the SOP and it will be ready in a few days. To allow crowd or not depends on the UAE government. Anyway social distancing has to be maintained. We have left it for their government to decide on that. Will also be writing to the UAE board formally," Patel said.

There are three grounds available in the UAE - Dubai International



everyday. There is no harm in it," he added.

It is pretty clear that the IPL won't be able to maintain a bio-secure environment like the England and Wales Cricket Board has managed for the ongoing Test series against the West Indies with both teams staying on site.

The logistical challenges are much bigger for an eight-team event like the IPL. The organisers wouldn't even require that in the UAE, where a negative COVID-

19 test report is all that is needed.

"Bio-secure is something that should be very seriously considered but don't know if it can be implemented in an eight-team tournament. We are waiting for the SOPs from the BCCI.

"UAE also has a very high testing rate (472,575 per million) and they have all the technology at their disposal. The BCCI will need the help of local government in ensuring adequate testing is done," Wadia said.

"From the logistics perspective, we have done IPL in the UAE before. But this time you have to add a lot more protocols. I am sure the BCCI will do the needful. There is also enough knowledge to be gained from football leagues like the EPL on how they are going about their job in COVID times."

Finding sponsors in the current financially fickle environment can be an issue for teams but Wadia feels the benefits to be associated with the IPL this year are too good to be missed out on.

## SACHIN, SHASTRI TIPS 'TRANSFORMED' VIRAT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 24:** The lesson of 'forward press against fast bowlers' from Sachin Tendulkar and a tip from head coach Ravi Shastri to stand outside the crease led to his transformation as a prolific Test batsman after a disastrous England tour in 2014, feels India captain Virat Kohli.

Kohli had a nightmare of an England tour where he failed in 10 successive innings but came back later in the year against Australia scoring four tons in four games, including two in Adelaide.

In a chat with Mayank Agarwal for 'bcci.tv', the Indian skipper decoded his technical changes post that England tour. "The 2014 (tour) will be a milestone in my career. Lots of people take good tours as a milestone in their careers but for me 2014 will be a milestone," Kohli told Agarwal in the show 'Open Nets with Mayank'.

"I came back from England and spoke to Sachin Paaji and had a few sessions with him in Mumbai. I told him that I am working on my hip position. He made me realise the importance of big stride, a forward press against fast bowlers," Kohli explained.

"The moment I started doing that with my hip alignment, things started falling in place nicely and then the Australia tour happened," said Kohli.

He explained what went wrong in England and how he realised it. "My hip position was an issue during that England tour. It was basically not adjusting to the conditions and doing what I wanted to do. So being rigid doesn't take you anywhere. It was a long and painful realization but I realized it," he said.

The opening of hip limited his shot making ability, Kohli realized. "One thing stood out, right hip opens or closes too much you now you are in trouble. Keep that hip po-



sition nice and side-on and balanced so that you can play through both off side and leg side with equal control is very important," he said.

Anderson was taking him out mainly with outgoing deliveries. "I was too worried thinking about the ball that might come in. I was opening up a bit too early so the ball that was going away I was getting out to it every time. I just couldn't get past that confusion," he admitted.

However with the tweak in technique also came a tweak in his stance, which was suggested by Shastri (Team Director in 2014-15) just before the start of 2014-15 Australia tour and the rest is history.

"He (Shastri) told me one thing, to stand outside the crease. He explained the mindset behind it. 'You should be in control of the space you are playing in and not giving opportunities to the bowler to get you

out'."

Shastri also explained the logic that by standing outside the crease, so many dismissals get taken out. "So I started practising that the same year and results were unbelievable."

He also credited former India coach Duncan Fletcher, someone with vast knowledge about batting. "I made my stance bigger after a conversation with Duncan Fletcher, who has amazing understanding of the game. He only asked one question, 'Will I be able to play the short ball with a forward press and that base (widened stance)'. I said I can."

There was another interesting little chat with Shastri which was an example of Kohli's determination. "Ravi bhai asked me that if I was scared of short ball," Kohli laughed. "I said I am not scared and I don't mind getting hurt but I don't want to get out," the India skipper added.

## England stumble to 131/4 at tea

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Manchester, July 24:** England's truncated batting department fell cheaply as disciplined bowling by the West Indies reduced the hosts to 131/4 by tea on the first day of the deciding Test at Old Trafford Friday.

Ollie Pope (24 batting) and wicketkeeper Jos Buttler (2 batting) were aiming to rebuild the innings in Manchester, with only a long tail left for England after the dismissals of Ben Stokes and Rory Burns in the second session.

Stokes — promoted to No.4 so England could squeeze in another fast bowler — was bowled by a beauty through the gate by Kemar Roach (2/28) for 20, having added 13 runs to his score at lunch.

Burns reached his sixth Test half century but departed soon after completing his fifty, wafting at a ball from spinner Roston Chase (1/1) that was too close to him and finding an edge that was taken one-handed — and brilliantly — by Raheem Cornwall at slip.

Before lunch, the West Indies snared Dom Sibley in the first over and captain Joe Root, to a run-out, near the end of the session after putting



West Indies pacer Kemar Roach (2nd from R) is congratulated by teammates after dismissing an England batsman in Manchester, Friday. PHOTO: ESPNCRICINFO

England into bat under gray skies.

England's batting lineup has been weakened after choosing to select four fast bowlers as well as a spinner for the series decider.

The series is tied at 1-1 and the Windies, who won the first test in Southampton, are looking to capture

a Test series in England for the first time since 1988.

**BRIEF SCORES (AT TEA):** England 131/4 (Rory Burns 57, Ollie Pope 24 batting; Kemar Roach 2/28, Roston Chase 1/1) vs West Indies. Match to continue.

## Juve lose to Udinese as title party delayed

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Milan, July 24:** Juventus missed a chance to clinch a record-extending ninth straight Italian league title as they lost 2-1 at relegation-threatened Udinese.

Ilija Nestorovski canceled out Matthijs de Ligt's opener and Seko Fofana grabbed the winner in second-half stoppage time to keep Juve's celebrations on ice.

Juventus remained six points clear of second-place Atalanta and can secure the title with a win over Sampdoria Sunday. They could even be crowned earlier, if Atalanta lose at AC Milan Friday and Inter fail to win at Genoa Saturday.

The points could prove crucial for Udinese as they went seven points clear of the relegation zone, with three rounds remaining.

Juventus knew a victory at Udinese would secure the title as the Bianconeri hold the tie-breaker over Atalanta courtesy of a better head-to-head record.

Ciro Immobile boosted his hopes of finishing the season as the league's top scorer with the winning



Seko Fofana reacts after scoring the winner for Udinese against Juventus

goal in Lazio's 2-1 victory against Cagliari. With the goal, he went one ahead of Juve's Cristiano Ronaldo.

Sergej Milinkovic-Savic had netted the equalizer for Lazio with a powerful volley shortly after the break. Giovanni Simeone's effort was deflected in on the stroke of half-time to give Cagliari the lead.

The victory secured Lazio a spot in next season's Champions League with the capital side now guaranteed at least fourth place in Serie A.

■ VOTED BY FOOTBALL WRITERS IN ENGLAND

## Henderson player of year

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**London, July 24:** Jordan Henderson was voted player of the year by football writers Friday after captaining Liverpool to their first English league title in 30 years and also playing a leading role in raising money for Britain's health service during the coronavirus pandemic.

Henderson beat Manchester City midfielder Kevin De Bruyne to the award by the Football Writers' Association. "As grateful as I am, I don't feel like I can accept this on my own," said the central midfielder, who lifted the Premier League trophy Wednesday.

"I don't feel like anything I've achieved this season or in fact during my whole career has been done on my own. I owe a lot to so many different people but none more so than my current teammates, who have just been incredible and deserve this every bit as much as I do."

Winning the league completed a stunning 13 months for Liverpool, which also won the Champions League and the Club World Cup in that period. Henderson has been an inspirational leader in that time,



with Liverpool's performances often dipping in his rare absences.

The England midfielder also played an important role behind the scenes during the suspension of the league during the pandemic, leading an initiative that saw players team up with a charity to raise money for the National Health Service.

"Leadership is intangible and often unquantifiable unless it is inarguable." FWA chair Carrie Brown said. "Jordan Henderson is both the ultimate professional and now a bona fide Liverpool

legend. Jordan is a player his teammates look to on the pitch and who his rivals look up to off it. The voting criteria for the Football Writers' Association Footballer of the Year is one who leads by precept and example and in this country's darkest moment, Jordan, unprompted, personally rallied club captains to establish #PlayersTogether."

The FWA's Footballer of the Year accolade is the oldest individual football award in the world. It was first awarded in 1948.

## Fabinho's home burglarised while Reds celebrating title

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Liverpool, July 24:** The home of Liverpool midfielder Fabinho was burglarised while he and his teammates celebrated their Premier League title.

The burglary occurred in the town of Formby, north of the city, either late Wednesday or early Thursday while Liverpool hosted Chelsea, Merseyside police said.

Jewelry and an Audi RS6 were stolen, although the car was later recovered 20 miles away in Wigan, police said. The occupants discovered the burglary when they returned home early Thursday.

Police said they are collecting security footage and have forensically examined the 26-year-old Brazil international's home and car.

Liverpool beat Chelsea 5-3 at Anfield — their final home game of the season — before lifting the Premier League trophy to end a 30-year title drought. The team had clinched to title with seven games to spare.

Nine of the estimated 3,000 fans who gathered outside the stadium were arrested on charges ranging from assault to disorderly conduct,



Fabinho and his wife Rebeca Tavares pose with Premier League trophy

police said Thursday.

Fans were urged to stay home because of the coronavirus pandemic. Police said the "vast majority of the crowd were good natured and had dispersed by 2 am."

Fabinho is the latest star athlete to be victimized. Tottenham player Deli Alli was held at knife-point by burglars who stole jewelry from his London home during coronavirus lockdown in May.