



COMPLYING TO NORMS

Actor Prachi Tehlan says every safety measure is being taken at her wedding venue in Delhi

LEISURE P2



US TO BAN TIKTOK

President Trump may ban TikTok as Microsoft eyes buying the Chinese-owned app

INTERNATIONAL P10



PSG STAMP AUTHORITY

Parisians complete domestic quadruple with Coupe de la Ligue triumph edging past Olympique Lyonnais 6-5

SPORTS P12

COVID TRAVELOGUE: FROM GUJ TO ODISHA

About 10 lakh people from various states and countries returned to the state between March and July; 4 lakh from Gujarat alone

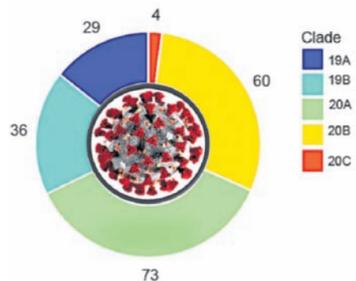
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: Gujarat—from where nearly about 4 lakh people arrived to Odisha during the lockdown period—is found to be responsible for major Covid-19 transmission in the state.

This was revealed from a study conducted by Bhubaneswar based Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) and Institute of Life Sciences (ILS) after analysing 225 viral genomes of Covid positive patients who had migrated from 13 Indian states including Gujarat.

About 10 lakh people from various states and countries returned to the state in between March and July. Of them, about 4 lakh were from Gujarat alone and most of them returned to Ganjam district, which has reported highest 10,672 cases so far.

"We have analysed the samples for sequenc-



ing collected during March to July, 2020. Analysis of samples showed the presence of all five reported clades (19A, 19B, 20A, 20B and 20C) of Covid-19 genome in the patients of Odisha," said RMRC director Sanghamitra Pati.

ANALYSING STRAINS

- Analysis of samples shows presence of all five reported clades (19A, 19B, 20A, 20B and 20C) of Covid-19 genome in patients of Odisha
- Clade 19B found to be much more prevalent
- Majority of the 19A and 19B clades were present in cases that migrated from Gujarat state
- Clades 20A and 20B evolve rapidly in Indian population and are major source of transmission in the country

However, clade 19B was found to be much more prevalent in analysed samples as compared to other genomes reported so far from India, she said. The study showed evolution of 19A and 19B

in parallel. Majority of the 19A and 19B clades were present in cases that migrated from Gujarat state suggesting it to be one of the major initial points of disease transmission during month of March and April.

The director added phylogenetic analysis showed that clades 20A and 20B evolved quite rapidly in the Indian population and are major source of disease transmission in the country. Whereas, 20C strain is rarely detected and appeared to be less adapted or somehow contracted at early stages of infection.

The analysis also revealed higher proportion of symptomatic patients with clades 20A, 20B and 20C. The clade 20C was observed in Odisha and not present in any other isolates included in 1000 genome analysis. From these results it is obvious that Europe and Southeast Asia are two major routes of disease transmission in Odisha, she concluded.

JSW Neosteel Pure steel, Pure mazbooti. Consistent quality across the bar, Highest level of purity, Best banding with cement.

11 killed as crane collapses on PSU premises in Vizag

Some workers were believed to be trapped under the collapsed crane since their phones were heard ringing from below the machine during the rescue operations



Rescue operations underway at the mishap site in Visakhapatnam

AGENCIES

Visakhapatnam, August 1: At least 11 persons were reported killed and several others injured when a jerry crane collapsed Saturday at the Hindustan Shipyard Limited premises.

According to eyewitness accounts, the mishap occurred between 11.30 am and 12 noon when officials were testing the crane. At least 20 persons were working on the spot when the crane broke and fell on its side, crushing many workers.

Of the 11 casualties reported so far, four persons are said to be regular employees, while the remaining seven are contract staff. District authorities rushed to the spot and took stock of the situation.

District Collector V Vinay Chand said: "The 70-tonne capacity jerry crane was procured and commissioned two years ago and its full-fledged trials were initiated this morning. During the trials, officials

During the trials, officials were testing the dead-weight capacity of the crane when its cabin portion on the top and its base portion separated and the crane collapsed

were testing the dead-weight capacity of the crane when its cabin portion on the top and its base portion separated and the crane collapsed."

While rescue efforts were underway, some workers were believed to be trapped under the collapsed crane since rescuers and bystanders could hear the ringing of mobile phones under the collapsed crane.

Saturday's incident is the third major mishap in the port city since May this year, when a gas leak in LG Polymers had led to 12 deaths.



IRREGULAR by MANJUL. New policy allows one to pick subjects from different streams. I guess it's time you acquire a few more degrees, sir!

3 lads booked in epic Twitter hack

AGENCIES

San Francisco, August 1: The US Department of Justice has charged three young individuals including one juvenile with hacking Twitter last month that compromised the accounts of 130 high-profile celebrities, politicians and businesses. Accounts of former US President Barack Obama, Joe Biden, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk, Apple and Uber are said to have been compromised.

The 19-year-old Mason Sheppard (aka 'Chaewon') of the UK was charged in a criminal complaint in the Northern District of California with conspiracy to commit wire fraud, conspiracy to commit money laundering, and the intentional access of a protected computer.

- Of the three, the youngest of them is said to be the mastermind
- The trio broke into accounts of 130 Twitter accounts and duped followers of influential users to transfer more than \$100,000 in Bitcoin accounts
- The incident raises concerns around Twitter tools and levels of employee access

"Nima Fazeli, aka 'Rolex', 22, of Orlando, Florida, was charged in a criminal complaint in the Northern District of California with aiding and abetting the intentional access of a protected computer," the Department of Justice said in a statement Friday.

The third defendant is said to be 17-year-old. "With exceptions that do not apply to this case, juvenile proceedings in federal court are sealed to protect the identity of the juvenile," said the statement.

Twitter has revealed that the massive hack that spread a cryptocurrency scam by hijacking accounts of high-profile celebrities, politicians and businesses was a result of a phone spear phishing attack.

WEATHER	
BHUB	CTK
MAX 35.2°C	36.2°C
MIN 26.6°C	25.5°C
Humidity 94%	76%
Rainfall 5.6mm	Nil
Forecast: Partly cloudy sky	

Immunity-boosting Vit C tabs selling like hot cakes

Despite new entrants in the market to cater to the demand, prices up by 3 times

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 1: The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic in the state has led to surge in demand for Vitamin C tablets owing to its immunity boosting qualities.

As the demand grows exponentially, chemist shops are running out of 'nutraceutical' and other products.

It is found that several alternatives or substitutes by some pharmaceutical companies have made inroads into the market but interestingly, they have further pushed the prices up. A few companies have rebranded their products and upped the prices by three times without even changing the combination. There are also some firms which have changed the composition to cater to the high demanding micronutrient. A close survey of some of the chemist shops in the state capital revealed that some new brands have also entered the pharma market to sell their version of the nutraceutical.

"Earlier, there was hardly anyone buying Vitamin C tablets but now due to the surge in demand because of Covid, we are seeing many customers. Several new brands offering the tablet and some with a combination of Vitamin C and Zinc have now entered the market and are making good business," said a representative from Shree Krishna



Medical Store, Satya Vihar in the city. Medically speaking, both Vitamin C and Zinc are considered as micronutrients with immunity boosting capabilities. "Both the nutrients are taken to boost immunity. They are even recommended by the ICMR for treatment of Covid patients. As they are nutraceutical, they are easily bought over the counter without any prescription," said Dr Manoj Sahu, a gastroenterologist from the city.

He also said that prolonged and excessive use of the drug should be avoided. Dr Sahu highlighted that while many countries do have norms to regulate sales of nutraceuticals, India is yet to finalise the norms. "The process had started for regulation of norms, but Covid pandemic delayed it further," he said. With lesser regulations, several pharmaceutical firms have now chipped in to get dividends from the high demanding product.

Nevertheless, doctors and pharma representatives claim that prices of life-saving and essential drugs have not been tinkered with during this hour of crisis.

"There could be some sporadic reports of black-marketing but at large we have not seen any rise in prices of drugs for most of the diseases. In fact, prices of cancer drugs have come down due to the regulation of the lifesaving drugs by the National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) in the past two years," said Ajay Goenka, Treasurer, Utkal Chemist and Druggists Association, Cuttack.

Dr Alakta Das, a gynecologist from the city also said that the prices of drugs for hypertension and diabetes and other common co-morbidities have not changed drastically. She added that surgical and medical equipment like masks, sanitisers and gloves have seen a spike in prices with the onset of Covid-19 in the state.

PPE kits revive single-use 'plastic' monster

MICROBIAL FORCES TO DEFEAT HARD-FOUGHT VICTORIES THAT CURBED SINGLE-USE PLASTIC IN THE STATE

AVIRAL MISHRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 1: Odisha was set to earn accolades as an eco-friendly state in the country after it had snubbed plastic. The government, in a notification September 30 last year, prohibited manufacture, sale, trade, import, storage, transportation and distribution of single-use plastics.

However, we are back to square one after the pandemic hit us. PPE kits, armour against Covid-19, have become a headache now as disposing them involves health risk apart from environmental concerns.

PPE or Personal Protective Equipment which includes goggles, face shields, masks, gloves, coveralls or gowns are made of plastic. Used largely by doctors and researchers, PPEs which are Single Use Plastic (SUP) have seen an exponential rise in demand.

Moreover, apart from the PPE kits, countless masks, gloves and other protective gears made of SUP



and discarded after use by the public are finding their way to water bodies. A study by environmentalists and conservationists presented a grave picture. The report said: If each citizen (state's) uses a single-use face mask a day for a year, it would create an additional 32,000 tonnes of contaminated waste and 17,000 tonnes of plastic packaging.

"These are disturbing numbers as Odisha is already struggling to curb single-use plastic. There are several reports of PPE kits and masks being

of Nabarangpur June 26 after used PPE kits were found dumped on a busy road, the report added.

Furthermore, with the state government's priorities shifting from battling plastic to battling Covid, single-use plastics have resurfaced in markets and shops. "Even though a drop in demand for plastics has been observed due to closure of restaurants, malls, poor enforcement has seen plastics and polythene re-emerge," said Shubhendu Roy, an environmentalist.

As per sources, the state had seized about 21,845 kg of plastic and collected fines of about ₹59.20 lakh from 30 districts until January. The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) too boasted seizing 5,100 kg of plastic with ₹13.26 lakh fines during the same period. However, ever since the first Covid case was detected in the city in March no such information regarding fines and raids had been presented.

"Our priority has always been conservation of our nature but



- Coronavirus survives as long on plastic as it does on other surfaces such as stainless steel
- Irresponsible dumping of PPE kits and other plastic-made Covid safety gears has exacerbated the situation
- Sanitation workers exposed to infection threat as denizens don't mind segregating daily waste from plastic waste

right now it has shifted to safety of our people," a senior BMC official said. "We have shifted our attention and allocated manpower to battle Covid and once this is over we will continue our fight against plastic," he added.

Odisha records 1,602 Covid cases in 24 hrs

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: Odisha reported its highest single-day spike of 1,602 coronavirus cases in the last 24-hour cycle, taking the state's total to 33,479, the Health Department said Saturday.

The death toll increased to 187 after 10 more fatalities were reported from Ganjam, Khurda, Gajapati, and Sundargarh districts. Corona hotspot Ganjam district has so far recorded 99 fatalities, followed by Khurda at 25.

Of the 1,602 new cases, 993 were reported from quarantine centres and 609 are local contacts. The new cases have been detected in 29 districts. Contact-tracing and follow-up actions have been initiated, said an official. Ganjam district registered the highest 308 new cases, followed by Khurda (285), Rayagada (164) and Gajapati (108). The active cases now total 12,737, with 20,517 patients cured and discharged so far.

P4



RYAN PUSHES FOR MORE DIVERSITY IN HOLLYWOOD

Hollywood star Ryan Reynolds has announced a new initiative to support aspiring filmmakers from the unrepresented communities. Reynolds took to Twitter to share the news of the initiative through a two-minute video, reports *variety.com*.

COURTNEY COX IS BACK IN SCREAM SAGA AS JOURNO

Actress Courtney Cox will be back as news reporter Gale Weathers in the upcoming reboot of hit film, *Scream*. Filming is expected to begin later this year in Wilmington in North Carolina, reports *variety.com*.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
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ARIES
Believe it, life is good sometimes; today is one such day. Things will not be hectic, even though you remain occupied, both at work and in your personal life. With no troubles brewing, what more can you ask for? Perhaps, Ganesh is trying to impart the crucial lesson of contentment.

TAURUS
The three Es will rule your mood throughout the day: energy, exuberance and excitement. Such enthusiasm is always contagious and near and dear ones will be charmed by it. Things will get better as the day progresses. Take a break from work to relax and recharge if you feel weary, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
God helps those who help themselves. Maybe. But He definitely helps those who help others. Support your colleagues and they will be grateful to you. This way, even your bosses will notice your talents, if they haven't already. They will shower praise on you, and favours too. An entirely enjoyable evening with your loved ones will serve as the icing on the cake, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You are likely to be in good spirits throughout the day. With you brimming with confidence and positive energy, others around you will also feel upbeat. The entire day, you will be looking forward to the evening, so that you could spend some quality time with your loved ones. It will be worth the wait.

LEO
With Lady Luck smiling down on you, today promises to be rather special, forecasts Ganesh. Expect to find favourable conditions and come out with flying colours in whatever task you undertake, especially if it happens to be something like an interview. Bask in the kudos and appreciation at work, as your performance far exceeds the expectations of the management.

VIRGO
Helping your colleagues will bring loads of good will. Your superiors will be super happy with your work. Interaction with friends will be special. Revel in the company of your loved ones, says Ganesh.

LIBRA
It's all about family today. In fact, the bigger the better since Ganesh foresees it is quite likely that both close and distant relatives will fill your heart with glee today. It might be some good news worthy of raising a toast to. However, you might be doubtful about getting along with your peers at work.

SCORPIO
It is quite likely that you will have an outstanding field day today, predicts Ganesh. At the workplace, you will possibly feel that you are stuck in the rut doing regular activities day after day. In relationship matters, evening will be full of surprises and excitement for you, expects Ganesh.

SAGITTARIUS
Handicraft business is likely to draw your attention. People around you will marvel at your commitment and dedication to work and family alike. Ganesh advises you to bite the apple of love and share some romantic moments with your spouse.

CAPRICORN
Not many know how stupendous is your wealth of wisdom; today will be a good day to make a display of it, says Ganesh. You will have your wits about you and will impress many with your show of intellect. In the social circuit, you will indulge in spreading the message of love while at work, your excellent managerial skills will ensure that everything is under control.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will speak and everyone else will listen! Your eloquence will bring you recognition. But you must take it a step further. You will also manage to impress someone, and Ganesh sees the beginning of a new relationship. But don't forget to listen sometimes.

PISCES
There is a lot of brain-racking in store for you today, as you try to conjure up ways to convert your extraordinary brilliance into exceptional performance. Keeping in mind that your family is the foundation of your success could provide some vital insights, says Ganesh.

ALIA TURNS CAT PAPAARAZZO

MUMBAI: Actress Alia Bhatt is a big cat lover, and she has surely turned into a cat paparazzo during the lockdown. Alia took to Instagram Saturday and posted a few pictures of her black cat, Juniper, and white cat, Edward.

"When all else fails turn cat paparazzi," she captioned the post. Reacting to the post, celebrity lensman Manav Manglani quipped: "Nice click. you can join my team."

Alia bought home Juniper last month. "This girl duo just became a girl trio. Meet our new baby Juniper: Her skills include biting, self-taking and being generally adorable," Alia had shared.

On the work front, Alia will be seen in *Sadak 2*, which is directed by her father Mahesh Bhatt. The film is a sequel to his 1991 film of the same name, starring Pooja Bhatt and Sanjay Dutt. *Sadak 2* will release on OTT platform.



SRK's Eid tip to fans

MUMBAI: Shah Rukh Khan has a witty suggestion on the occasion of Eid, in the time of social distancing.

Extending festive greetings on his verified Twitter account Saturday afternoon, the actor advised everyone to give themselves a 'self hug' on Eid, as customary hugging won't be possible this year owing to the Covid pandemic.

"Eid Mubarak to everyone. May this day and actually everyday bring peace happiness and health to all your loved ones. Everyone give yourself a self hug," tweeted Shah Rukh Khan.

The actor also shared a silhouette photo of his younger son AbRam, stretching his palms in prayer.

Fans of the superstar wished him on the occasion.

"Love you #SRK."



commented a fan.

"What a beautiful pic! The silhouette of a precious angel in B&W, the sight of innocence, wishing peace, happiness and health to all like his sweet dad.

May Life wrap you with love and its best gifts. Tons of love," wrote another fan.

Prachi to tie knot Aug 7

Mumbai: Actress Prachi Tehlan will get married August 7 in New Delhi, and says every safety measure is being ensured at the celebrations.

The actress, who was last seen in the Mammooty-starrer *Mamangam*, is getting married to Delhi-based businessman and wildlife conservationist Rohit Saroha, whom she has been dating since 2012.

"We have kept the engagement and wedding on the same day - engagement ceremony will be held in the morning while the latter will take place in the evening. Accordingly, we have invited 50

people for each function and made all the arrangements of masks and sanitisers at the venue," said Prachi.

The wedding will take place at a farmhouse in Delhi.

The *Diya Aur Baati Hum* actress is a former captain of the Indian Netball Team which represented the country in the 2010 Commonwealth Games. Under her captaincy, the Indian team won its first medal in 2011 South Asian Beach Games.



STATE'S FIRST EVER ONLINE THEATRE FEST KICKS OFF

Eminent Odissi exponent Padma Vibhushan Sonal Mansingh delivered the Foundation Day lecture of Nandanik on Abhinaya and Abhivyakti in dance

POST NEWS NETWORK

KORAPUT: In a maiden initiative, the first ever online theatre festival organised by Nandanik, a local theatre troupe, started Saturday here in the district.

The three-day festival was inaugurated by Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi, Minister for Culture & Tourism, Government of Odisha, Koraput Lok Sabha MP Saptagiri Sankar Ulaka, Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi secretary Prabodh Rath and renowned theatre personality Ananta Mohapatra.

Eminent Odissi exponent Padma Vibhushan Sonal Mansingh, while delivering the Foundation Day lecture 2020 of Nandanik, elaborated the concepts of *Abhinaya* and



Sonal Mansingh explaining a concept of Indian performing arts

Abhivyakti in Indian tradition of performing arts. She also demonstrated the use of body and psyche to express the *Bhavas* and *Rasas* during a performance. Dwelling upon other con-

cepts of Indian classical performing arts traditions like *Nataraj*, *Lingaraj*, *Harihara*, *Chakshoosha Yagna*, *Astapadi*, *Rasa Nispatti*, *Shanta Rasa*, *Shatha Nayaka*,

Dheera Lalita and *Manodharma*, Mansingh highlighted the contribution of Odia litterateur Sitakanta Mohapatra, whose works she had adapted. She also reminisced her tutelage by Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra.

The third Asim Basu Memorial Award was conferred on Himanshu Ranjan Satapathy by actress Bhaswati Basu in virtual mode. The award, named after Asim Basu, late theatre thespian of Odisha and a joint venture by Nandanik and Asim Basu Foundation is given every year as a mark of encouragement to young theatre artists of KBK region.

An e-Book titled, *Dhema Maro Nona*, on the activities of Nandanik in Koraput over last five years, was

released on this occasion by Mrinal Chatterjee, Regional Director, IIMC, Dhenkanal. Chatterjee lauded the theatre troupe for hosting a series of programmes in a remote area like Koraput.

Eight plays in five Indian lan-

guages with two webinars will be streamed through Nandanik's social media page over the next two days, informed group's secretary Monideepa Gupta.

Sourav Gupta, Director of Nandanik moderated the session.



A scene from Bengali play *Sujaner Golpo*

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

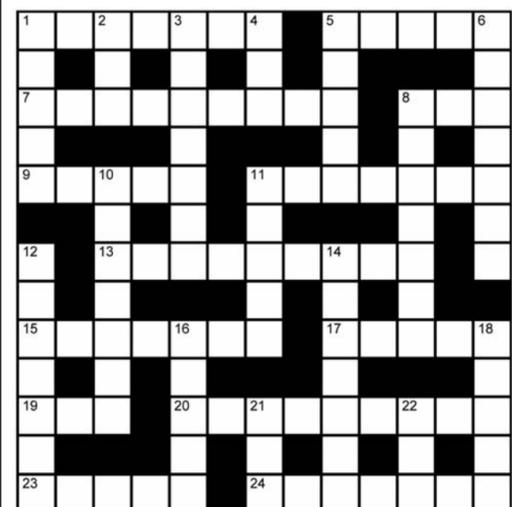


BREVITY



FUN post

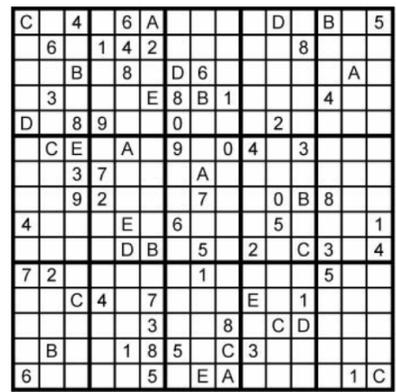
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Quake
 - 5 Home planet
 - 7 Snooker equipment (4,5)
 - 8 Barley bristle
 - 9 Regions
 - 11 Deprives of freedom
 - 13 Web browsing problem
 - 15 Akin
 - 17 Word with ear or peace
 - 19 Wool weight
 - 20 One-eighty (5-4)
 - 23 Man with horns
 - 24 Casks
- Down**
- 1 Yellow quartz
 - 2 Psyche
 - 3 Linen fabric
 - 4 Abate
 - 5 Apply, as pressure
 - 6 The best policy
 - 8 Rhone River town
 - 10 Ribbed
 - 11 Passé
 - 12 Oxygenised
 - 14 Airman
 - 16 Hiker's path
 - 18 Stinks
 - 21 Heavenly body
 - 22 Lumberjack's tool

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS

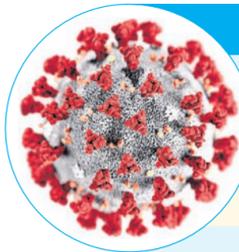


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



FESTIVAL AHEAD

Women buy rakhi from a stall in College Square area of Cuttack ahead of the 'Raksha Bandhan' festival, Saturday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	1,78,58,865	1,12,31,434	6,84,897
India	16,95,988	10,94,374	36,511
Odisha	33,479	21,273	187

Ganjam gets two more Covid hospitals

AT LEAST 85 PER CENT OF RURAL GANJAM IN GREEN ZONE, SAYS CHIEF MINISTER

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: In a bid to further strengthen the health-care system in Covid hotspot Ganjam district, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Saturday inaugurated two Covid care hospitals in Berhampur through video-conferencing.

The two hospitals were opened at Kanishi and paediatric ward of MKCG Medical College of Berhampur. These hospitals with 150 beds and 24 ICU beds each with ventilators will provide critical care for patients from within the district itself, Naveen said.

After Unlock 1, lakhs of Odia people living outside the state returned to Ganjam district, especially from Covid hotspot areas. "Thanks to the dedication and sacrifice of our Covid warriors, cooperation and support from my beloved people of Ganjam, the district is fighting the pandemic very well," he said.

The Chief Minister further



PATNAIK APPEALED TO EVERYONE TO AVOID STEPPING OUT IF IT IS NOT REQUIRED AND AVOID CROWDED PLACES AND NOT TO ALLOW COMPLACENCY

THE CM ASSURED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL LEAVE NO STONE UNTURNED IN FIGHTING THIS PANDEMIC AND SAVING LIVES OF THE PEOPLE OF ODISHA

LONG-DRAWN BATTLE

THE TWO HOSPITALS WERE OPENED AT KANISHI AND PAEDIATRIC WARD OF MKCG MEDICAL COLLEGE OF BERHAMPUR

THESE HOSPITALS WITH 150 BEDS AND 24 ICU BEDS EACH WITH VENTILATORS WILL PROVIDE CRITICAL CARE FOR PATIENTS FROM WITHIN THE DISTRICT ITSELF

said that at least 85 per cent of rural Ganjam is in green zone and the recovery rate in Ganjam is much higher than the national average. Besides, there is a decline in the positivity rate.

"The state government will put all out efforts to protect lives of our citizens and fight this pandemic. Recently, plasma therapy was also started. In the absence

of vaccine or treatment, the only way to effectively fight this pandemic is by using mask, following social distancing norms and other government regulations," he stated. He appealed to everyone to avoid stepping out if it is not required and avoid crowded places and not to allow complacency.

The CM assured that his government will leave no stone un-

turned in fighting this pandemic and saving lives of the people of Odisha.

Among others, Assembly Speaker Surya Narayan Patro, Forest and Environment Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha, local MP, MLAs, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy and Development Commissioner Suresh Mohapatra attended the videoconference.

RESTRICTIONS EASED



Several places in Bhubaneswar including Bapuji Nagar, Kalpana Square and Unit-1 market area witness heavy traffic as shops resumed businesses after the 14-day lockdown over Covid-19, Saturday

BJP slams govt for stopping OSTF

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Saturday hit out at the state government for stopping the Odisha State Treatment Fund (OSTF) meant for the poor.

Party spokesperson Golak Mohapatra Saturday told the media that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Health Minister Naba Kishore Das have backtracked on their own promise of continuing the OSTF scheme for the poor of Odisha.

He said, "The state government should not have made such tall promises of serving the people in need. Naveen Patnaik had promised that he would never stop the scheme meant to provide a handholding support to the poor during medical emergency."

The BJP leader also added, "It was said by the CM before elections. What is the point of such a false promise if you cannot keep it? Similar statements were also made by the health minister in the Assembly."



■ The BJP criticised the discontinuance of OSTF meant for poor at Covid times

■ Party spokesperson Golak Mohapatra Saturday told the media that Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Health Minister Naba Kishore Das have backtracked on their own promise of continuing the OSTF scheme for the poor of Odisha

■ The state government, however, claims that although it has stopped OSTF aid, Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana will continue in the state

The saffron party criticised the discontinuance of the special treatment fund to the poor at Covid times. This comes after the state government, through a notification

and official correspondence, talked about stopping the scheme for the people in the light of Covid-19 pandemic.

Several people from economically weaker sections of the society were earlier able to undertake several critical life-saving surgeries in private and other hospitals with the financial assistance provided by the state government under OSTF.

The state government, however, claims that although it has stopped OSTF aid, Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana will continue in the state. Mohapatra, meanwhile, attacked the state government for not coming on board with the Modi government for the ambitious Ayushman Bharat Yojana which, he said, could have helped scores of people during this health crisis.

BJD leader Debi Prasad Mishra said, "There are other alternatives in place. The state government has now decentralised the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) which the District Collectors can use for the people in need in their districts."

Behavioural change now a must: BMC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Saturday, urged the traders' bodies and citizens to bring in behavioural changes and adhere to Unlock-3 guidelines issued by the state government to contain spread of infection.



Briefing the media after a meeting with the traders' bodies, BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary asked the shopkeepers not to entertain a customer if he or she doesn't obey the rules such as social distance or wearing mask.

"We also urge the citizens of Bhubaneswar to maintain social distancing and follow all Covid related guidelines. People should avoid going to markets regularly. A behavioural change is a must in terms of shopping, and online purchase of essentials should be prioritised. The danger still looms large and the only way of breaking the spread of chain is avoiding physical touch and overcrowding," he added.

Meanwhile, the market association representatives have welcomed the decisions and measures suggested by BMC to ensure strict compliance of Covid-19 guidelines in their respective areas. They also talked about the issues they are facing. "The meeting was really good and extremely important. We have told the shopkeepers to strictly follow the rules as advised by BMC today. We will implement 'no masks, no goods' and 'no social distancing, no goods' in our market," said Gayadhara Swain, president of Unit-1 Market Association.

He also urged the BMC officials to impose heavy penalty on some unruly customers who never follow rules despite repeated warnings.

Youth's body found under flyover

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: The body of a youth was Saturday found under the flyover at Fire Station Square in Khandagiri police limits under mysterious circumstances.

The deceased was identified as Rajesh Kumar Panda whose age is believed to be around 25 years. He was a resident of Niali in Cuttack and staying at Satya Nagar in Kharavela Nagar area here.

Soon after spotting the body, locals informed Khandagiri police who rushed to the spot and recovered the body which was found without any clothes which were recovered from near the spot. The face had severe injuries and was reportedly hit with a heavy object.



Sources in the police claimed that Panda might have committed suicide by jumping off the flyover

However, cops failed to answer why he had removed his clothes before his death

Sources in the police claimed that he might have committed suicide by jumping off the flyover. He also fell on a tree there and subsequently slipped down under the flyover. Some others also claimed that he might have fallen off the bridge in an inebriated condition.

Police started investigating into the incident after sending the body to Capital Hospital for postmortem. However, cops failed to answer

why Panda removed his clothes before his death. Many locals also claimed that blood stains at the spot point towards dragging of the body from near the tree to the place where the body was found.

Moreover, except for the face there was no other injury or scratch mark on Panda's body despite falling on the tree. Police sources said autopsy report will reveal the exact cause of the death.

PRESERVATION PLAN



Carpenters dismantle Darpadalan chariot at the Lions' Gate of Srimandir in Puri, Saturday. The temple administration would preserve the three chariots of this year's Rath Yatra at Sri Jagannath Ballava mutt

WhatsApp number to report violations

Bhubaneswar: Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) of Bhubaneswar Umashankar Dash Saturday released a WhatsApp number through his official twitter handle urging citizens to share with the officials the details of any social distancing norm violation. Denizens can send videos or photos of violation of social distancing norms by individuals or at commercial complexes to the police through the given number-744006709. They can also text the details about the place and violators. Police will soon reach the place and initiate action as per rules. The DCP tweeted, "Fighting Covid-19 is our joint responsibility. Please help us in ensuring implementation of Govt guidelines on social distance. Whatsapp video/text/photos related to social distance violation to 744006709."

Discarded plastic bottles put to best use by Rly man

POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, August 1: Anyone visiting the Siddhamahavir level crossing office here would be forgiven for mistaking the office as a nursery.

It is quite unlikely of any passersby to pass by the level crossing office without giving it a thorough look. And if they are new to the area, they can't help themselves visiting the office premises to have a look at the office decorated with beautifully arranged flower plants.

From a distance, one can see hundreds of plastic bottles with colourful flower and foliage plants growing from them either hanging or tied to the office grilles and aesthetically placed on the office premises. The person responsible for all of this is Kamadev Moharana, a resident of Astarang Badagola area and an employee of the Indian Railways. He works as a gatekeeper at Siddhamahavir level crossing.



Kamadev Moharana decorates the office of Siddhamahavir level crossing in Puri with plants

level crossing. Kamadev says he has been a nature lover since his childhood. "My family members used to say that trees planted by me grow

WASTE TO WEALTH

■ It is quite unlikely of anyone to pass by the level crossing office without giving the mini garden a thorough look

■ From a distance, one can see hundreds of plastic bottles with colourful flower and foliage plants growing from them either hanging or tied to the office grilles

■ The person responsible for all of this is Kamadev Moharana, a resident of Astarang Badagola area and an employee of the Indian Railways

well," he reminisced. The idea of using used plastic bottles to plant trees struck him when he saw passengers throwing single-use plastic bottles out

of the train windows.

There used to be hundreds of bottles lying scattered near the level crossing, reflecting badly on the level crossing office. "Then I started thinking about how these bottles could be put to the best possible use. And the idea of using them for growing flower plants struck me," he said.

"I collected all the bottles. Cut some of them from the top end and some others from the bottom. Then I filled them with soil, cow dung and chips and finally planted some saplings in them. I used some pieces of iron wires to hang these bottles from the office grilles," he added.

There are hanging and potted plants of various varieties of flowers like hibiscus, marigold and

rose. They apart, there are also croton plants. According to Kamadev, "If the discarded materials can be reused suitably they would have a positive impact on the environment. As of now, not many trains are running due to the coronavirus pandemic. So, I am getting much free time to focus on the garden," he added.

Kamadev has also converted his PKRIT quarters into a small garden by planting several varieties of flower and fruit saplings in the open space. He also has a penchant for writing poems. He has participated in many literary seminars and poetry recitation programmes. "Kabi", "Chhai Saha Sabu Dina" and "Coffee Bagicha" are the three books penned by him and have been published.

Record spike in Covid-19 cases, toll mounts to 187

ECoR extends service of special train up to Aug 12

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: The state registered its highest single-day spike of 1,602 Covid-19 cases Saturday pushing the state's tally to 33,479 Saturday and the toll rose to 187 with 10 more deaths, a health department official said.



Apart from the 10 fatalities, another 30-year-old Covid-19 positive male patient of Nayagarh district died due to acute chronic kidney disease and septic shock.

With this, the number of Covid-19 positive patients succumbing to other reasons has gone up to 38 in the state, the official said.

Of the new cases, 993 people were detected positive from quarantine centres, he said adding contact trac-

City tally up to 2,861; 126 new cases

BHUBANESWAR: The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Saturday said that 126 more people have tested positive for Covid-19 in the city in past 24 hours. While 77 of them are quarantine cases, remaining 49 are local contact ones. Meanwhile, 133 persons who earlier tested positive for the disease also recovered.

"Further contact tracing is still continuing. Primary contacts & nearby houses are being quarantined, sanitised and will be under active surveillance," BMC said. It further added that all positive cases

have been shifted to dedicated Covid hospitals. According to a notification issued by the civic body, as of Saturday, 2,861 persons have tested positive for Covid-19 in Bhubaneswar out of which 1,566 have recovered. While there are 1,276 active cases, 17 persons succumbed to the disease. Meanwhile, Odisha registered its highest single-day spike of 1,602 Covid-19 cases, pushing the state's tally to 33,479, while the death toll rose to 187 with 10 more fatalities. Of the new cases, 993 people were detected positive from quarantine centres.

Cuttack records 43 fresh infection cases; tally at 949

CUTTACK: The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) Saturday said that 43 more people have tested positive for Covid-19 in the city in past 24 hours. While five of them were reported from institutional quarantine centres, 27 were home quarantine cases and remaining 11 were local contact ones. "Active surveillance, contact tracing, and sanitization of the concerned areas are underway," CMC said. According to a notification issued by the civic body, as of Saturday, 949 persons have tested positive for Covid-19 in Cuttack out of which 478 have recovered. There are 461 active cases and 10 persons have succumbed to the disease. Meanwhile, Odisha registered its highest single-day spike of 1,602 Covid-19 cases, pushing the state's tally to 33,479, while the death toll rose to 187 with 10 more fatalities. Of the new cases, 993 people were detected positive from quarantine centres.



Representative picture

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: The ECoR has decided to extend the service of Rourkela-Bhubaneswar-Rourkela Special Train up to August 12, 2020. This train will leave from Rourkela at 5:10 am and from Bhubaneswar at 2:10 pm from August 3 to August 12, 2020 except for Saturdays and Sundays.

The train will stop at Rajagangpur, Bamara, Jharsuguda, Rengali, Sambalpur City, Rairakhol, Boinda, Angul, Talcher Road, Dhenkanal and Naraj Marthapur between Rourkela and Bhubaneswar.

Apart from this, services of other two intra-state special trains have also been extend to run up to August

12, 2020 as per the following.

The Bhubaneswar-Bolangir-Bhubaneswar special will leave Bhubaneswar at 06:30 am and from Balangir at 2:45 pm from August 1 to August 12, 2020 except for Saturdays and Sundays (5 days a week). Similarly the Bhubaneswar-Koraput-Bhubaneswar special will run from Bhubaneswar at 6:30 pm Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and from Koraput at 5:30 pm Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays (3 days a week). The tickets will be available at railway reservation counters and also IRCTC website.

Other special trains running from New Delhi to Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar to Mumbai, Bhubaneswar to Howrah will continue to run as notified earlier.

Op theatre of Puri DHH sealed after doc, nurse test +ve

PURI: The operation theatre (OT) of Puri district headquarters hospital (DHH) was sealed Saturday. Acting on the order of the chief district medical officer (CDMO), the DHH authorities have sealed the OT of gynaecology department after a doctor, a staff nurse and an ANM tested positive for coronavirus. The move is to stop the further spread of the virus.



The sudden decision of the DHH authorities has left many patients in a lurch. Many new mothers along

with their infants were seen waiting outside the facility, hoping for resumption of the facility.

However, the DHH authorities

later advised them to go to any hospital in Bhubaneswar or Cuttack. The patients belonging to poor families were seen to be the worst sufferers.

Notably, the district reported 50 new cases of Covid-19 Saturday. With this addition, the district's tally has swelled to 803. Of them, while 421 patients are still undergoing treatment at Covid-19 hospitals, 377 have so far been discharged from hospitals. The Covid-19 toll in the district remains at three.

ing and follow up action have been initiated.

The districts reporting high numbers of fresh cases include Ganjam (308), Khurda (285), Rayagada (164) and Gajapati (108). Odisha now has 12,736 active cases, while 20,518 patients have recovered from the contagion so far, the department said.

Saturday's 1,602 new cases are considered the highest ever single day spike in the state so far as Odisha had reported 1,594 fresh positive cases July 23.

Seven of the state's 30 districts presently have a caseload of more than 1,000. Ganjam tops the list with 10,672 cases followed by Khurda-

2 rakhi outlets among three sealed in Cuttack

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 1: An enforcement team of Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) sealed three shops including two rakhi shops and a rope godown here on charge of violation of Covid-19 norms, Saturday.

The enforcement team with the help of Purighat police sealed two rakhi shops at Keuta Sahi and a rope godown in the city allegedly for assembling heavy crowds outside their establishments in violation of Covid-19 norms, CMC Deputy Commissioner Abinash Rout said.

Similar raids were carried out

in Dargha Bazaar and Chowdhury Bazaar areas in the city.

The business establishments in the city witnessed heavy crowds as soon as the state government relaxed the lockdown restrictions for the first weekend in August. These shops opened Saturday after remaining closed during the 14-day lockdown. People were seen violating Covid-19 norms like social distancing and wearing face masks.

People were unable to buy rakhis due to lockdown and with one day left for the Raksha Bandhan, all rakhi shops and dress stores witnessed large crowds as soon as the shops reopened, Saturday.

NH-53 proves bane of villagers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhuban, August 1: A two-kilometer stretch of National Highway-53 that falls in Gadarnusinghaprasad village under Bhuban block in Dhenkanal district has become a bane of villagers.

The stretch passes bang in the middle of the village, dividing it into two parts. On one side, there are offices of Seva Samabaya Samiti, a primary school, gram panchayat and RI office while on the other side, there are two high schools, one college, one health centre, a veterinary hospital and electricity office.

This apart, labourers and employees working at over 15 mines in Sukinda area depend on this road, making it more crowded. Four-laning work of the NH-53 is going on. At the same time, work on Talcher-Sukinda railway line is also underway. The villagers had requested the district administration to get an underpass or overbridge constructed to solve the traffic problem. They had also sought three drains for release of water from agricultural land, but to no avail. When asked, sub-collector Bishnuprasad Acharya said letters have been sent to both the railway department and NHAI in this regard. "Soon steps will be taken to solve the villagers' problems," he assured.

GOD OF INTELLECT



Ahead of Ganesh Chaturthi, an artisan giving finishing touches to idols at Silpi Kumbhar Sahi in Cuttack, Saturday

OP PHOTO

Dev to handle culture dept

Bhubaneswar: Senior IAS officer and tourism secretary Vishal Dev has been given additional charge of Odia language, literature and culture department. Dev will take charge of the department from August 5 as the five year deputation period of present culture secretary and IRS officer Manoranjan Panigrahy is ending August 4. The state government has relieved Panigrahy from his duties in the state government with effect from August 4.

Section 144 clamped on twin-cities

Bhubaneswar: Twin City Police Commissioner Sudhanshu Sarangi Saturday said Section 144 of CrPc has been imposed in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack to enforce Covid-19 induced lockdown. According to Sarangi, prohibitory orders debar movement of people and vehicles on roads for any kind of non-essential work between 9 pm and 5 am till August 31. "There is an urgent need to avoid danger to human life, health or safety posed by the spread of Covid-19 pandemic," an order issued by Police Commissionerate read.

Elusive rain adds to pandemic woes of farmers

DEBI MOHANTY

Every year, Sanatana Bhoi, 60, a landless share cropper in Anastamala, grows paddy on one acre of land. The return, around 15 bags of paddy (his share) ensures Sanatana's family of three, rice for the year.

This year though, Santana is apprehensive of that luxury. With an erratic monsoon causing insufficient rainfall, so far, Sanatana transplanted paddy seedlings last week after watering the patch of land with the help of a kerosene run pump. He had to shell out Rs 800 for this. However, he is unsure about the harvest.

A few houses away, Harihar Das, 60, another marginal farmer, has spent Rs 4000 on water that he had saved to visit his migrant worker son, who hasn't been able to return home from Kozhikode in Kerala after Covid 19 lockdown was announced in March. Harihar, who has cultivated two acres including his own 4 acre patch, is worried, too.

"Bad monsoon has thrown an extra burden of expenses on our shoulders," Harihar says, adding, "Even, water pumps are not easily available."



Monsoon's whims have left the farmers, small and big, high and dry. Already, beusaning has been delayed

MONSOON DOES A VANISHING ACT

▶ Already pushed to the wall due to the Covid 19, all that the farming community hoped for was a decent monsoon. Left with no option, they blame it on their own destiny

▶ While as many as 23 districts of Odisha have recorded a deficit rainfall ranging from 20-57 per cent in July, Khurda tops the list with a rainfall deficit of 57 per cent

The entire approximately 50 families in Anastamala, a hamlet under Bagalpur village of Turintira panchayat in Khurda district's Balipatna block-a majority of them are scheduled castes-echo Harihar's sentiment. Some of them are landless, the rest own smaller patches; all fall into the category of small and marginal farmers. Primarily dependant on paddy (kharif), they grow mung (green gram) during rabi season. All of them are share croppers. A few hundred metres

away lives Manguli Bhoi (62) with his wife Kusuma in Bagalpur. Both his young sons have died in accidents, the younger, last year. Age and ailments, don't allow the landless, Manguli or his wife to work on daily wages. The 10 bags of paddy they earn from less than an acre of land they cultivate is all that they can hope for survival.

Even, for others, who work as casual, daily wagers during off time in the vicinity, Covid 19 has curtailed such avenues. "We don't know

what to do," says Manguli. It's not difficult to visualize the sense of uncertainty writ large on his face.

Already pushed to the wall due to the Covid 19, all that the farming community hoped for was a decent monsoon. Left with no option, they blame it on their own destiny. "Perhaps it's happening because of our bad luck," thought a farmer and father of three school-going girls, Chandan Bhoi, 36 in Bagalpur. While as many as 23 districts of Odisha have recorded a deficit rainfall ranging from 20-57 per cent in July, Khurda tops the list with a rainfall deficit of 57 per cent. The district has received only 124.9 mm of rain this year against 287.3 mm in a normal monsoon. Puri and Cuttack districts are closely behind with less rainfall of 56 and 51 per cent respectively.

According to experts, July is the most crucial month for paddy cultivation (kharif) as up-rooting and transplanting of paddy seedlings are generally carried out in this month. "Major portion of water required for paddy cultivation is used in the land preparation for transplanting during the soil puddling phase. A minimum level of water is essential not only for the growth of the plants

but also to avert excess of weeds.

Under irrigated paddy cultivation, kharif crops depend on supplementary irrigation. With monsoon already throwing its tantrums, delay in irrigation could well lead to crop damage. Moreover, under minor irrigation command, "scope of getting water has little possibility due to water level being at below dead storage level (DSL)," said a senior officer in the agriculture department.

"Coupled with erratic rainfall, the high temperature experienced this year could cause heat injury to paddy plants and other field crops at younger stage," the officer cautioned. According to experts, excess or deficit rainfall of 19 per cent is normal in the cropping season. Apart from coastal and central districts of Khurda, Puri, Cuttack, Nayagarh, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Balasore, Bhadrak, those in the northern part, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Sundargarh are the worst-hit with a shortfall of over 40 per cent.

Currently, the area under cultivation of paddy, pulses, oil seeds and cotton is about 45 per cent in Odisha. Both farmers and experts, say, the best period to transplant paddy seedling is between 14 and 21

days though it's safe to carry out the process when the seedlings are around 30 days-old. "The younger the seedlings are transplanted, the better the vigour of the plants and production," said an agro expert.

Some amount of standing water in the paddy field after transplanting not only helps the plant to establish itself, it also suppresses weeds' growth. This year, lack of required amount of soil moisture has put a question mark on the survivability of the seedlings.

Monsoon's whims have left the farmers, small and big, high and dry. Already, beusaning has been delayed. Though farmers at different locations have irrigated their land with pumps and carried out transplantation of seedlings, the next few weeks, experts say are crucial and would determine the fate of harvest.

"We are sitting with fingers crossed," viewed Sukanta Pradhan, 54, a farmer in Nimapara block of Puri district. Lack of water has forced Sukanta to reduce paddy cultivation from 7 to 4 acres. "If we don't receive normal rainfall in the next two-three weeks, we wouldn't even have enough rice straw even for the cattle," he added.

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DROUGHT STALKS SONEPUR, JAJPUR

POWER BOOST

Sadeipalli-Bolangir power line dedicated

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bolangir, August 1: The power sector in western Odisha received a major boost after the much-awaited 220 KV line from Bolangir (Sadeipali) sub-station to PGCIL Bolangir substation was commissioned Saturday.

It is one of the major projects of the Orissa Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL). The transmission line will enable an additional 220 KV power for western Odisha districts of Bolangir, Bargarh, Subarnapur, Boudh, Kalahandi and Nuapada, said a release from OPTCL.

These regions faced power cuts due to overloading during peak hours and now have a dedicated alternative source for steady power supply.

Apart from household consumers, these being agrarian districts, the additional line will help in improving the voltage profile of agricultural feeders and allied industry feeders. The press note added that the 220 KV circuit will be a parallel system to the existing line. Thus the load would be easily

The transmission line will enable an additional 220 KV power for Bolangir, Bargarh, Subarnapur, Boudh, Kalahandi and Nuapada

shared. Even during peak demand, both the lines can tolerate the load and help in meeting the increasing demand of the command area.

"We are also mulling further strengthening of the system in western Odisha by laying two more lines i.e. from Balangir PG to Kesinga and Sadeipali to Kesinga," said Dr Saurabh Garg, Chairman, OPTCL.

He also thanked all the team members for delivering a high level of dedication for commissioning of this line. The commissioning of the 220KV line had been pending due to some bottlenecks. After the government and the district administration intervened in the matter, the power line was eventually commissioned.



FILE PHOTO

DEFICIT RAINFALL



"If it does not rain in a day or two, the situation will worsen towards drought. Farming activities have been completely delayed. Paddy saplings and sprouts have dried at many places," lamented some farmers of Sonepur and Birmaharajpur blocks.

The agriculture department has set a target to produce paddy in 1.235 lakh hectares in the district in this kharif season.

With the state witnessing a deficit of around 12% of rainfall, the situation is extremely severe in this region.

It is said Sonepur district received 31 per cent rainfall deficit till date which is far less than its neighbouring districts.

However, Tarabha block had received a little more rainfall than the normal in June and July.

In July, the district is supposed to receive an average of 373.82 mm rainfall, but it was 198.28 mm. The rainfall in July was most important for farming, but there was

The district recorded a deficit rainfall of 46.96 by July 30. In some areas, farmers have been trying to keep the paddy sapling alive by pumping out water from creeks and rivers

As for the situation, district agriculture officer, Prashant Kumar Satpathy, said, "There was deficient rainfall in July. This problem has arisen in non-irrigated Sonepur and Birmaharajpur blocks."

deficit rainfall, farmers rued.

The district recorded a deficit rainfall of 46.96 by July 30.

In some areas, farmers have been trying to keep the paddy sapling alive by pumping out water from creeks and rivers.

In other areas, several hectares of land have been left fallow.

Farmers said, "Covid has already made our situation worse. Deficit rainfall has badly affected paddy cultivation. Without rains, saving paddy plants will be a difficult job. In view of possible drought, the

department should take immediate step to alleviate the situation."

As for the situation, district agriculture officer, Prashant Kumar Satpathy, said, "There was deficient rainfall in July. This problem has arisen in non-irrigated Sonepur and Birmaharajpur blocks."

However, water was released from Hariharajora dam to some parts of Ullunda and Birmaharajpur.

"If the district does not receive good rainfall within seven days, farmers will definitely suffer loss," he admitted.

9 mega lift irrigation projects incomplete

JAJPUR: Farmers here stare at massive crop loss with drought fear looming large in the district due to scant rainfall, a report said.

They are clueless as to how to manage livelihood in the event of no imminent crop loss. A report from the agriculture department said even as monsoon is nearing its end, the district has received only 48.75mm rainfall. Reports said the district has received only 171.09 mm rain by July end - 51 per cent less than the rainfall required.

Kharif work here is dependent on rainfall during June, July and August. This has happened as nine under-construction mega lift irrigation projects are yet to become operational. The project works are going on for the last nine years and are yet to get completed. Reports said nine mega lift irrigation projects are being constructed in the rivers flowing through Barchana, Bari, Dharmasala, Jajpur and Rasulpur blocks to provide irrigation facilities to over 12,800 acres.

Similarly, the condition of farmers in the riparian villages of Brahmani, Kharasrota, Baitarani and Birupa rivers are no less acute due to lack of irrigation facilities. They have left everything to fate by cultivating. The farmers apprehend that they may face sprout blight if rain does not occur within next three to four days.

Industrial areas in the district have been deprived of rain during June and July. Two of the industrial areas Danagadi and Sukinda blocks



have received only 244 mm and 204.60 mm rain respectively during this period.

Environmentalist Aswini Kumar Dhala and former sarpanch Pushpakanta Nayak rejected the report, stating it to be manipulated. They said the administration is allegedly manipulating the rainfall report to divert the attention of people from industrial pollution. They warned they will challenge the rainfall report.

They said the areas received rainfall between 7.6 mm and 34.4 mm for five to six days in July but no heavy rain (74.5-124.4mm) was witnessed during the period. They alleged that many of the farmers in both the areas were yet to start their cultivation due to lack of rain.

When contacted, Sarat Kumar Prusty, deputy director district agriculture department, confirmed the development. He said he has submitted a report to the state government.

Swachh Bharat goes for a toss

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khaira, August 1: Mathanuaagon village of Nandur panchayat under Khaira block in Balasore district has been declared 'open defecation-free' (ODF), but its reality is completely reverse, a report said.

The Centre had set out to achieve open defecation-free (ODF) India by October 2, 2019 under the government's Swachh Bharat Mission. However, several blocks in Balasore district paint a completely different picture.

Balasore rural water supply and sanitation (RWSS) declared the village as ODF July 22. Despite the provision of toilets being made available to local villagers, most families do not have one. Asuria villagers in this block also have the same fate.



A grim picture was revealed during a recent drive in the block to check progress of the ambitious Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM). "Those having the facility prefer defecating in open due to lack of provision for adequate water supply," said a villager requesting anonymity.

"This apart, the amount which is being provided by the government to build latrines is meagre. Central government provides ₹12,000 to a household for constructing a latrine. It is insufficient to meet with the ever-rising prices of construction materials," local villagers fumed.

trine. It is insufficient to meet with the ever-rising prices of construction materials," local villagers fumed.

"A signage put up at village approach roads read, 'An open defecation-free Mathanuaagon village welcomes you'. Local villagers are committed to keeping our respective villages open defecation-free'. Such meaningless signage are no less than a mockery," villagers namely Laxmana Behera, Pradeep Samal, Bidyadhara Parida, Lakshmikanta Mohanty, Parsuram Mohanty and Upendra Parida expressed.

The villagers said the latrine-building has become a money-minting sport for a few unscrupulous block officials as they work hand-in-glove with the local contractors to make some extra bucks.

Youth held for torture leading to suicide of minor girl

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, August 1: Police arrested a person for inflicting physical and mental torture on a minor girl and in a way forcing her to commit suicide at a village under Bhapur outpost of Sadar police limits in Dhenkanal district Friday evening.

Dhenkanal SP Anupama James informed the reporters about the arrest at a presser organised at Sadar police station. She also said that Inspector General of Police (North-Central Range) Narasingha Bhol had suspended former outpost officer SI Prashant Padhiyar on charge of dereliction of duty. ASI Padmanabha Sahu had earlier been suspended on the same ground.

The accused has been identified as Subash Muiduli alias Suba (29).

After the death of the rape-survivor, her family members had lodged an FIR and following which Sadar police had registered a case under Section 306 of IPC (Case No-290/20). In this connection, an unnatural death case (Case No-33/20) had earlier been registered.

Raids were conducted at six to seven places of his relatives in Bhubaneswar, Cuttack and Dhenkanal from Thursday night. Acting on a tip off that he was hiding in Bodhiaberani jungle, the police team gheraoed the jungle and arrested him. Subash then confessed to his crime.

The SP also said that the accused has another rape and murderous attack case (Case No-206/14) pending against him.

POTABLE WATER



Workers sinking a tube well at Baidyanath Chhak in Sambalpur

OP PHOTO

Attack on cops: 2 docs among 8 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, August 1: Two doctors of a private hospital in Kendrapara district were arrested along with six others for allegedly attacking a journalist and police here. The prime accused have been identified as Debashis Sahu and Sibashis Sahu.

Reportedly, all the eight accused have been forwarded to court.

According to available information, a journalist reportedly captured a picture of the hospital while the private hospital was overcrowded



with people.

Spotting the same, the accused duo approached the journalist and allegedly quizzed him before misbehaving with him. Later, the staffers of the hospital started assaulting him after they received

the orders of the same from the accused brothers. The assailants also snatched the journalist's phone and vandalised his motorcycle.

On being informed, Kendrapara Town Police reached the spot. However, the cops also faced opposition and were engaged in a scuffle with the accused. The accused allegedly hit the Police ASI.

Later, acting on the directions of the District Collector, police arrested eight people including the two doctors late Friday night. The accused will be forwarded to court Saturday, sources said.

Swajaldhara a dream for Rayagada villages

TRIBAL PEOPLE OF 10 VILLAGES CONSUME PIT WATER EVEN DURING THE MONSOON

POST NEWS NETWORK

Tikiri, August 1: The government executes the Swajaldhara Yojana to ensure safe drinking water for people in rural areas, but the scheme has been a far cry for some in remote pockets of Shankarada panchayat under Kashipur block of Rayagada.

According to reports, even 73 years after independence, 10 villages under this block were deprived of basic facilities like roads and safe drinking water.

Even in the monsoon, people are found drinking water from pits they have dug out on dry riverbeds. Patients are carried on cots in the absence of good roads. Ambulance fails to enter the villages during emergency times, locals alleged.

This panchayat is 4 km from the block headquarters. Over 200 tribals and some SC families live in 10 villages. These villages are Gobarighati, Nisithal, Atakana, Padakona, Chauli, Sarubali and



Women collecting water from a pit on riverbed

OP PHOTO

Nadana and Dumburipodi. The villagers have to face a lot of difficulties in availing safe drinking water and have to collect water from pits and rivulets. Women gathering around a pit are found routinely

in the area. Electricity has been a dream, even though poles have been installed in some villages.

"We have no safe drinking water in these villages. The block administration spends a lot for drink-

GRIM REALITY

Even in the monsoon, people are found drinking water from pits they have dug out on dry riverbeds. Patients are carried on cots in the absence of good roads. Ambulance fails to enter the villages during emergency times, locals alleged.

Consumption of contaminated water from the pit often causes health hazards for the people, they said. They have demanded immediate step for redress their problems

ing water projects in other villages. We are deprived of this,' the residents alleged.

Consumption of contaminated water from the pit often causes health hazards for the people, they said. They have demanded immediate step for redress their problems.

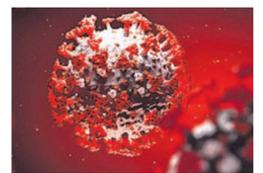
1-day spike: 92 cases in Dhenkanal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, August 1: Dhenkanal district Saturday reported 92 COVID-19 cases with Gandia block alone registering a single-day spike of 84 cases.

Similarly, ward No-11 under Bhuban notified area council (NAC) limits witnessed three, Surapratappur two, Derasingh area under Sadar block one, Balyamba one and Kunjakanta under Dhenkanal civic limits one COVID-19 cases Friday, respectively.

One more patient belonging to



Dhenkanal district who had previously gone to a private hospital at Cuttack for his routine health checkup has tested positive for COVID-19. However, Gandia block which borders Jajpur has come out as a hotspot in the district.

In order to prevent a probable

spread of COVID-19 infection in the days ahead, the district administration has imposed shutdown on Pingua, Dasamanapatana, Nihalaprasad, Khandabandha, Sadangi panchayat areas under Gandia block limits till August 6, Dhenkanal district Collector Bhumesh Chandra Behera informed.

Contact tracing and swab testing activities have been accelerated in these panchayats following the spike in cases. All health, Anganwadi and Asha workers here have been engaged for the purpose.

Two people die in Ganjam

GANJAM: In yet another case of alleged medical negligence, a young businessman of Ganjam who tested Covid positive died while undergoing treatment at Tata COVID hospital Saturday.

The deceased has been identified as Laxinarayan Patra, known by his nickname Nahana. He was also a social activist.

Patra's family members, however, alleged that his death took place as a result of medical negligence.

According to their allegation, Nahana had tested positive for the deadly virus a week ago. He was immediately shifted to Tata COVID hospital. Realising that Nahana's treatment was not up to the mark, they had requested the hospital authorities to allow them to take their patient to Bhubaneswar. But the hospital paid no heed. They blamed the hospital for death. The owner of a medicine store in Digaphandi also died of Covid.

Lack of PE kits: Docs, staff blamed for death

BERHAMPUR: In yet another case of medical negligence in Ganjam district, a patient died Friday allegedly due to the hospital staff not attending to the patient on the pretext of unavailability of PPE kits. Pankaj Behera of Rajiv Nagar area in Berhampur town had been suffering from fever. His family rushed him to City Hospital Friday. The doctors there referred him to Biju Patnaik Homeopathy College COVID Care Centre citing the reason that the patient was in need of oxygen support. At the COVID-19 Care Centre, neither the doctors nor the nurses attended to him citing they did not have PPE kits. They only turned up to treat the patient when the family members bought them the required number of PPE kits from markets. However, by that time, the patient had already breathed his last. Family members have alleged that it is nothing but medical negligence that claimed Pankaj's life. CDMO Umashankar Mishra said an investigation has been initiated into alleged medical negligence.

J'singhpur wins SKOCH award for mgmt

JAGATSIINGHPUR: Jagatsinghpur district has bagged the prestigious 'SKOCH Award' in the 'Silver Category' for effective management of COVID-19 situation. This information was given Friday by District Collector Sangram Keshari Mohapatra. Mohapatra congratulated the administration team for the achievement and thanked Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for his support and guidance. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik also congratulated the district administration for the achievement. Earlier, Jagatsinghpur district had won the 'SKOCH Award' for excellence in e-office governance. To ensure removal of red-tapism and speedy disbursement of pending files, the e-office system had been launched in March 2019. Notably, the 'SKOCH Award', instituted in 2003, recognises people, projects and institutions that go the extra mile to make India a better nation.

The whole world yearns after freedom, yet each creature is in love with his chains; this is the first paradox and inextricable knot of our nature.

SRI AUROBINDO



Majoritarian media

Mainstream media refers to the established houses of journalism, mostly newspapers but to some extent also television. Newer sources of media such as websites or apps that do not have a physical presence in the form of a printed product are not yet thought to be mainstream media even though some of them have quite deep presence. In India, websites like The Wire and Scroll have been around for about a decade or so and have large readerships.

However, these new places do not have the size of reporting resources that mainstream media does. And at least so far they have not been able to fill the space that mainstream media is rapidly giving up.

The media space in India is funded primarily by advertising. The reader or viewer pays very little by way of subscription and our newspapers are the cheapest in the world. But the share of print in the overall advertising pie is shrinking. In 2019, for the first time digital jumped over print in India, and by a lot. Digital got 27 per cent of the advertising money spent in India while print got 22 per cent. TV remained number one at 43 per cent but both TV and print were expected to shrink further in 2020 and give up share to digital. The Covid crisis has accelerated this process.

We should understand that "digital" means essentially two companies, Google and Facebook, which now take more advertising money in India than the Times of India or Hindustan Times or any other large Indian newspaper. This process will continue and newspapers will continue to fade away. This is one trend. It is visible and is happening before our eyes.

There is a second trend that is also visible and has also come before our eyes. It is that the media has taken a majoritarian, Hindutva edge. What is meant by Hindutva or majoritarianism? The idea that one part of society is privileged and entitled to primacy. Conversely, the others must exist on sufferance and have to be tolerated.

Of course this has happened hand in hand with a change in the political language and narrative of the state in India. During the Congress period, whether or not you agreed with the party, the fact is that the tone and tenor was inclusive. It was not trying to divide Indians on the basis of the background they were born into.

The BJP exists precisely because it was successful at mobilising on the basis of division. It has nothing else that is markedly different from any other party except the fact that it is willing to be openly bigoted. This view is today mainstream and acceptable in the media. It is acceptable to blame one religion for spreading a virus that has infected the world. It is fine to look away when members of another religion go ahead with their events despite the same threat of spread.

The media can look away today from the failures of the government at the actual business of governance. The enemy occupies land that 3,000 Indians died fighting to defend in 1962. But we are being regaled with shlokas about the landing of five warplanes. Are they going to be used to kick the invader out? No, the story is merely that they have arrived.

Saturday brought the news that there was 70 per cent more demand for MNREGA work in July 2020 than July 2019. More than 3 crore households had asked for it, meaning that at least 15 crore Indians were dependent on it. Another piece of news was that the government was considering extending the "moratorium" on defaulting loans. Companies have been allowed to skip the EMIs on their term loans and individuals with house and automobile loans have also been given this opportunity to not pay now and pay with more interest later. The finance minister said that it was possible that this facility would be extended because of demand from some sectors that were still, four months after the lockdown began, unable to make their regular payments. Automobile and two wheeler sales in India have been declining year-on-year for 18 of the last 19 months. Commercial vehicle sales have not grown since Modi took office in 2014, meaning that industrial growth has been hammered. But the media is focussed on the suicide of one young man. The misuse by the Prime Minister's Office of the Enforcement Directorate even in this matter is not a problem or issue of concern. The story is that one religion's people have captured the entertainment industry.

A decade ago, even though the sentiment might have been felt in large parts of the media, it was not expressed. There was a reserve and there was a culture that adhered to the principles expressed in the constitution. That we were a diverse and secular nation. That has ended now in politics and it has ended in the media.

WISDOM CORNER

Where is the justice of political power if it executes the murderer and jails the plunderer, and then itself marches upon neighbouring lands, killing thousands and pillaging the very hills? **KAHILIL GIBRAN**

Look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist. Be curious. **STEPHEN HAWKING**

Be content with what you have; rejoice in the way things are. When you realise there is nothing lacking, the whole world belongs to you. **LAO TZU**

WORDSWORTH

Tabnabs

These are well known to crews of British merchant navy ships and North Sea oil rigs. They're pastries or cakes, always baked on board, that are usually served at tea breaks, morning or afternoon. The first known user of the term in print is Malcolm Lowry. In his *Under the Volcano* of 1947 appears: "The tabnabs were delicate and delicious little cakes made by the second cook." It is definitely older. Its provenance is obscure. It may originally have been Royal Navy slang, but every written reference is to merchant shipping. An editor's footnote to *The Collected Poetry of Malcolm Lowry* (1992) says they were "small pasty delicacies, usually reserved for officers and passengers (thus, to be nabbed from the table)." The suggested origin is plausible, but unverified (and probably unverifiable). There certainly seems to have been a class-consciousness about them at one time. Wilfred Granville defined them in his *Sea Slang of the Twentieth Century* (1950) as a steward's term in the merchant navy for "Buns, pastry and confectionery which are reserved for the passengers in a liner and are not for the crew." The term is certainly more democratic than that today, and perhaps always was, away from the stifling conventions of cruise ships and liners.

LOL

SALESMAN

A new vacuum cleaner salesman knocked on the door on the first house of the street. A tall lady answered the door. Before she could speak, the enthusiastic salesman barged into the living room and opened a big black plastic bag and poured all the cow droppings on the carpet. "Madam, if I could not clean this up within five minutes with the



powerful vacuum cleaner, I will eat all this dung!" exclaimed the eager salesman. "Do you need chilli sauce or ketchup with that," asked the lady. The bewildered salesman asked, "Why, madam?" "There's no electricity in the house..." said the lady.

SOME HITS, MANY MISSES

FOCUS EDUCATION POLICY

The New Education Policy announced after 34 years claims to make way for large scale transformational reforms in education on the foundational pillars of access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability. The announcement needs to be welcomed.

The three outstanding features of the NEP are a) recognition of education for children from class 1 to 5 and preferably up to grade 8 in their home language, mother tongue and regional languages, b) recognition and introduction of vocational education from the 6th grade and c) elimination of science, commerce and arts streams in the old system of what is popularly known as the "ten plus two" system, under which the 10th and the 12th class were critical milestones. That is being replaced by a "5+3+3+4". This third aspect will ensure freedom to higher secondary students to pursue the higher education of their choice, desire and aptitude once they are out school. Students with good scores and grades may prefer to go for humanities, social and pure science instead of being pushed to professional "career promising" courses by their parents.

The National Conference on Education held in Marwari School in Wardha in 1997 under Gandhiji's leadership had strongly recommended that we have the mother tongue as the medium for learning in school and education through vocations as an integral part of learning and skill building. It was christened as Buniyadior Nai Talim. The country took 83 years to realise that children learn better in their mother tongues when young and that the development of the brain is positively associated with learning to work with hands.

Vocational education also improves the scope of self employment and employability. The pedagogy for vocational education is left to be developed by NCERT. It has the competence and understanding of Nai Talim and we should hope that Gandhiji and John Dewey's principle of learning by doing will find space in the



The announcement and draft policy document are silent on the structure and finance of school education in the country under the NEP

pedagogy of the new curricula. Here lies the promise for reaping the demographic dividend, a window of opportunity that exists for the next two decades. But it will have to be delivered. A related point is about the pedagogy for teaching about learning language and computational skills in early childhood up to the age of 10. NCERT should be open and learn from dozens of ongoing scientific and innovative experiments in the country. Let us hope that NCERT will ensure that dismal findings from the ASER (Annual Status of Education Report (Rural) 2019) studies will change. The latest 2019 ASER report notes that only 50 per cent of children in grade 5 in rural India could read a grade 2 level text, and only 28 per cent in grade 5 could solve a division problem.

The announcement and the draft policy document are silent on the structure and finance of school education in the country under the NEP. Universal primary education is no new announcement. Access to all is promised but the structures suggested are unclear. In almost all countries that have a good record in school education, the State is fully responsible to finance school education, and the structure promises school admission to any child in a State or local government-run school in the neighbourhood. The system of private fee charging schools has to be restricted severely to those who have ample resources to invest on their children's education. Any child in the country must have the right to

get admitted to a school which is nearest to her place of residence. School education should thus be compulsory and free and accessible in the immediate neighbourhood. The NEP is silent about this vitally important policy issue in school education. The tacit silence may encourage commercialised, profit oriented and greedy institutions, many of which are already in the system and will move in for the kill very fast.

Ram Manohar Lohia needs to be remembered in this context. Rani ho ya mehatrani, sabke liye ek samaan shiksha (Queen or sweeper, everyone should have the same education). Unless the country follows Lohia's adage in letter and spirit, education related Sustainable Development Goals would remain a dream.

Gandhiji would have been in pain to read the provision of introducing Sanskrit only as an optional language at all levels from school to higher education under the heading of promotion of languages. Not that he would have any quarrel with Sanskrit; actually, quite the contrary. In this country where an overwhelming majority understand and speaks Hindi-Hindustani for centuries, ignoring Urdu language is an unpardonable omission. Gujarat Vidyapith, a national university founded by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920 had in its school and higher education curricula the Urdu language. Both Sanskrit and Urdu were taught to all children in the secondary school and undergraduate college.

Unfortunately, it has discontinued in Gandhiji's Vidyapith too. Should we be reminded that Urdu is the language developed in Hindustan and not Persian or Farsi? The enlightened Muslims are strongly recommending that the madarsas should join the mainstream education system. Offering Sanskrit alone as an optional subject would have a negative impact on madarsas being persuaded to join the mainstream. Recognition and introduction of Urdu would give a nudge. Such reform is always possible.

An Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation is a welcome idea. We have lost the opportunity till date to learn from each other in this country with diverse languages and knowledge. Free exchange was hardly possible. There have not been any formal structures to encourage and promote learning from one language and take it to another. The initiative should not be starved for funds and linguists and scholars should keep away from politicising.

Discussing higher education in the NEP would require separate space. However, a few things can be said in this limited space. There is no clarity with respect to the governance structure of higher education. Increasing the gross enrolment ratio to 50 per cent by 2035 will have meaning only if school education settles well and every school graduate has the capability and the skill set to earn a decent livelihood. Higher education should be pursued by those who have the aptitude, the desire and the competence. The government will have to be vigilant that higher education should not become an institution of the rich and elite, by the rich and elite and for the rich and elite. Some poor and deserving may be sneaked in to showcase inclusion. The highlights in the policy announcement point towards such a pattern to emerge, but one should wait for the details to come. The jury is still out.

The writer is a noted Gandhian economist and former VC of Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad.

THE BILLION PRESS

SPECTRUM CONSERVATION

Nature by the numbers

When Cyclone Amphan came barreling up the Bay of Bengal this past May, South Asia's first named storm of the year appeared to pose a massive threat to the people who live on the coastal floodplains and to the animals and plants – including many endangered species – that rely on these sensitive ecosystems. But nature came to the region's rescue.

The Sundarbans, the world's largest mangrove forest, offered better protection than any man-made storm wall could have done. When Amphan's 16-foot storm surge slammed into this 4,000-square-mile national park, the mangroves took the teeth out of it, just as they did with the two other supercharged cyclones, Aila and Sidr, that have made landfall in recent times.

On the other side of the world, natural storm defenses on the lower end of Manhattan have long since been paved over: Real-estate developers have even extended the island into New York Harbor with acres of landfill, neglecting to build up storm surge protections. As a result, when Hurricane Irene and Superstorm Sandy hammered the city in 2011 and 2012, respectively, lower Manhattan, including the city's financial district, was inundated.

City planners have since been working with the US government to plan for the next wave of superstorms. But the price tag of the infrastructure needed – a retractable wall across New York Harbor costing at least \$62 billion – has prevented any plans from being finalised.

As we look to rebuild the global economy following COVID-19, conserving our remaining natural assets must be top priority. If we don't act, we risk losing plants, animals, and microorganisms needed to keep our air clean, our water pure, and our food supplies plentiful – not to mention mangroves and barrier reefs that stand between us and superstorms that are becoming more frequent as a result of climate change.

The world has become less wild as we have built and expanded cities, cut down forests for crops and livestock, drained wetlands for roads, and flooded valleys for dams. The economic cost of this ecological damage goes mostly uncounted. But it is prohibitively high, eroding the value of goods and services that nature produces. One million species are now at risk of extinction.

Fortunately, there is a relatively simple initiative underway to curb some of these losses and solve

our looming conservation crises. Under the heading of "30x30," it aims to protect 30 per cent of our planet's land and oceans by 2030 through effective, permanent measures. Over 20 member states in the UN Convention on Biodiversity have already committed to supporting this target.

According to a new report authored by over 100 scientists and economists from around the world, expanding existing protected areas to 30 per cent of the planet would add \$250 billion to annual global economic output, on average. Moreover, the study finds that protected areas and the nature-based activities they support are among the world's fastest-growing economic sectors, with 4.6 per cent projected annual revenue growth, compared to less than 1 per cent in agriculture, and negative growth in fisheries.

For countries with large areas of forest and mangroves, embracing 30x30 would prevent the loss of an average of \$350 billion (\$170-534 billion) annually in ecosystem services. These costs stem largely from flooding, soil loss, storm surges, and the release of stored carbon that occurs when natural vegetation is destroyed. By protecting India and Bangladesh over the years, the

Sundarbans have provided an extraordinarily valuable service.

Conversely, environmental destruction in the Brazilian portion of the Amazon has resulted in major, far-reaching losses. Even drinking water shortages that afflict São Paulo are directly connected to Amazon deforestation.

As governments contemplate how to re-open their economies after the lockdown, they must accommodate the need for greater conservation and restoration of natural resources.

India and Bangladesh are fortunate to have the Sundarbans. But no country in the world lacks natural areas that are worth conserving or restoring. Not only is it critical for all countries to adopt the 30x30 target, but each should also look for ways to invest more in its natural areas. By doing so now, governments can ensure that nature-based sectors and ecosystem services will recover at the same pace as the rest of the economy. There's no better time to start than before another storm strikes.

The writer is Chair of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. © PROJECT SYNDICATE

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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Whither BYV

Sir, The Biju Yuva Vahini (BYV) sub-scheme was launched by the state government in Odisha with an aim to channelise the vast youth power during the times of emergencies like natural calamities and epidemics, and also in sports, culture, art, and social services. Sadly, since the advent of the coronavirus pandemic, no one has heard of the BYV, putting a question mark on the organisation's existence. With three lakh members, the BYV pampered youths in all blocks and wards with 'My Hero' functions by spending lakhs of rupees. But since last March when elderly people, women, orphans and patients needed help in assisting them during the pandemic and performing the last rites of their near and dear ones, no member of the outfit came to their aid. Several members of the organisation though were found visiting countries like Singapore 'to gain experience of social work.' They were sent to the foreign countries by the organisation by spending huge funds from the corpus. **Janaki Ballav Dash**, MAYURBHANJ

Unfortunate incident

Sir, The arrest of eight persons including two doctors of a private hospital in Kendrapara district for allegedly attacking a journalist and police personnel has set a bad precedent when the state is battling the coronavirus pandemic. The state is witnessing a huge surge in Covid cases with Ganjam, Gajapati, Khurda, Cuttack districts and Rourkela Municipal Corporation becoming hotspots. The state government has named doctors as Covid warriors who work on the frontline risking their lives. Journalists and police also work risking their lives. However, it is unfortunate to see doctors of a private hospital accompanied by their staffers manhandling a scribe who had reportedly captured a picture of the hospital overcrowded with patients in violation of Covid-19 norms. The group also assaulted a cop. The behaviour of the doctors is uncalled for. **Manas Ranjan Kar**, CUTTACK

Right decision

Sir, The Union government's decision to extend the ban on international scheduled flights till August 31 is a step in the right direction. The country has seen a drastic increase in the number of Covid-19 cases in recent weeks and any effort to open up foreign air travel would be a misadventure. But flights operating under the 'Transport Bubble' agreements that India has signed with the US, France, and Germany will continue to operate. The restrictions won't apply also to international all-cargo flights. **NJ Ravi Chander**, BANGALORE

Sisodia writes to Shah after LG blocks unlock 3.0 move

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 1: Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Saturday wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, seeking directions to LG Anil Bajjal to allow hotels and weekly markets in the city.

Sisodia's letter comes a day after Bajjal rejected the Arvind Kejriwal government's decision to allow hotels and weekly markets to reopen in the national capital, saying the COVID-19 situation continues to be "fragile" and the threat is still "far from over".

Bajjal Friday overruled the city government's decision to open hotels and allow weekly bazaars on trial basis as a part of the third phase of easing the lockdown. This came a day after the Arvind Kejriwal government decided to reopen hotels and allow weekly bazaars to function on a trial basis for a week with social distancing and all necessary precautionary measures.

In the letter written in Hindi, the deputy chief minister said that the Delhi government will again send its proposal on reopening of hotels and weekly markets to the lieutenant governor Tuesday.

"I request you to ask LG not to stop



Bajjal Friday overruled the city government's decision to open hotels and allow weekly bazaars on trial basis as a part of the third phase of easing the lockdown

Earlier, Bajjal had reversed the Delhi cabinet's decision to reject the Delhi Police's panel of lawyers for the riots cases in the High Court and the Supreme Court

In his letter, Sisodia said Delhi government will again send its proposal on reopening of hotels and weekly markets to the lieutenant governor

the proposal. If traders start their business, jobs will be generated, and that the condition of economy will improve," Sisodia, who also holds the finance portfolio, said.

Earlier, Bajjal had reversed the Delhi cabinet's decision to reject the Delhi Police's panel of lawyers for the riots cases in the High Court and the Supreme Court. "The decision of the Delhi government's cabinet Tuesday to appoint a panel of lawyers in the Supreme Court and High Court for the Delhi riots has been rejected by Lt. Governor Anil Bajjal. The Lt Governor did this by using exclusive authority from the Constitution. Also, the Home Department of the Government of Delhi has been ordered to approve the panel of Delhi Police," a government statement said.

Fresh sero survey begins in Delhi

THE LAST SERO-PREVALENCE SURVEY HAD FOUND THAT AROUND 23 PER CENT OF THE PEOPLE SURVEYED HAD BEEN EXPOSED TO THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: A fresh sero-prevalence survey began in the national capital Saturday, with the five-day exercise set to cover all districts and various demographic segments.

The exercise is being undertaken for a comprehensive assessment of the COVID-19 situation in Delhi.

The survey has begun and samples will be collected from four districts, including North Delhi and Northwest Delhi, to start with Saturday.

A senior government official said 15,000 samples would be collected from August 1 to 5 as part of the exercise, spanning different areas and age groups. Representative samples will be taken from all the 11 districts.

A sero-prevalence survey involves testing the blood serum of individuals to check for the prevalence of antibodies against infection.

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain July 22 had announced that after analysing the results of the last survey, it was decided that more such exercises would be undertaken every month to formulate better policies for tackling the COVID-19 situation in the city.

The last sero-prevalence survey



'Delhi model' earns Union min's praise

All states in the country need to emulate the "Delhi model" for controlling the spread of the coronavirus, Union Minister of state from Home G Kishan Reddy said Saturday. "I am requesting the state government (Telangana) to focus on testing, tracing and treatment. There is a need to increase the number of tests (in Telangana). The more number of the tests, the faster the containment of the disease. You know, Delhi as a union territory I am personally monitoring. There is 84 per cent recovery rate in Delhi. All the states should emulate the Delhi model," he told reporters in Hyderabad.

was conducted by the Delhi government in association with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) from June 27 to July 10.

The fresh round would follow the same protocol as that was for the last survey, officials said.

The Delhi health department

A sero-prevalence survey involves testing the blood serum of individuals to check for prevalence of antibodies against infection

has prepared a detailed plan under which every district medical officer has been asked to conduct the survey in their respective jurisdictions, they said.

All CDMOs have been tasked with carrying out the survey in their districts. Random people will be tested for antibodies.

The last sero-prevalence survey had found that around 23 per cent of the people surveyed had been exposed to the novel coronavirus, the central government had said.

The previous study had tested 21,387 samples. Prior to that survey, a similar exercise was carried out only in the containment zones of the city.

The Delhi government had decided to conduct more monthly sero surveys to find a greater percentage of such people who had got infected and recovered so as to formulate better policies for tackling COVID-19, Jain had said.

Walls, fences to end man-animal conflict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mandla (MP), August 1: Madhya Pradesh Forest Minister Vijay Shah Saturday said the state government was considering putting up stone boundary walls and solar power fences to permanently end man-animal conflicts.

Speaking to PTI, the minister said the state government was also working to provide land on pattas (lease) to tribals and forest dwellers under the Forest Rights Act.

"The biggest problem right now is that (wild) animals enter fields close to jungles for grazing and de-



fect crops from animals and end man-animal conflicts permanently.

Apart from this, the state government was also working to provide land on pattas (lease) to tribals and forest dwellers under the Forest Rights Act, the minister said.

On the direction of Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, virtual conferences are being held with officials to facilitate land transfers to tribals under the Act, the minister said, adding that the process is being expedited to provide the same before August 15.

Efforts were also underway to

generate employment in the tribal-dominated and forested areas to make the state self-reliant, he said.

Shah further said he was overwhelmed that Madhya Pradesh had regained its tiger state status and praised forest department officials for the feat.

"We have doubled our tiger population to 526 in just eight years instead of the 10-year target that was talked about," he added.

The forest cover of Madhya Pradesh is 77,482.49 sq km, which is 25.14 per cent of the state's total geographical area, a central government report has said.

Women complain of filthy toilet to minister; he cleans it himself

Tomar urged the employees to take responsibility for keeping toilets in government offices clean and asked officers to constantly monitor and regularly get the toilets cleaned



Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar cleaning the toilet.

Gwalior, August 1: Infuriated over the condition of an office toilet used by women employees in a state government office building here, Madhya Pradesh Energy Minister Pradyuman Singh Tomar decided to set an example in public hygiene - or perhaps put officials concerned to shame - and proceeded to clean it.

Tomar had gone to Moti Mahal building Friday to discuss some issues with the Divisional Commissioner. While returning, some women employees complained to Tomar that the toilet reserved for them in the office building was not cleaned regularly and they were thus inconvenienced.

On hearing the complaint, Tomar inspected the toilets on the premises and found them dirty. He or-

dered the officials to bring toilet cleaner and brush etc and proceeded to clean the toilet himself.

Tomar also urged the employees to take responsibility for keeping toilets in government offices clean. The officers too should constantly monitor and regularly get the toilets cleaned, he added.

The minister also asked Revenue Department Joint Commissioner RP Bharti to take special care of public conveniences made available to women staff in government offices and take punitive action against those responsible for dirty toilets on the premises. It is not the first time that Tomar has come forward to clean up the mess. Earlier, he had cleaned a stormwater drain with a shovel and swept a public park with a broom.

Govt servants banned from wearing T-shirt, jeans to office

RECENTLY, THE CHIEF SECRETARY AND THE CHIEF MINISTER EXPRESSED THEIR DISPLEASURE AT A DISTRICT MAGISTRATE WEARING A T-SHIRT DURING A REVIEW MEETING ORGANISED THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Gwalior, August 1: Government officials and employees in Gwalior division of Madhya Pradesh have been instructed to come to office wearing 'decent and dignified' clothes. They have been banned from wearing 'faded jeans' and 'T-shirt' in office.

Divisional commissioner MB Ojha in an order has asked all officials and employees of the division to wear dignified, decent and formal attire while discharging their responsibilities in the office. Disciplinary action would be initiated against those who disobey the order.

He said that during his visit to Ashok Nagar district, senior officials such as an additional collector wearing faded jeans at the meeting was contrary to the dignity of the post of a government servant and as such inappropriate.

In the letter sent by Ojha to all divisional officials and district collectors of the division, he has said that government servants should come to office only



Divisional commissioner MB Ojha in an order has asked all officials and employees of the division to wear dignified, decent and formal attire while discharging their responsibilities in office

in formal clothes. Complaints should be sent to the

competent officer for disciplinary action against employees who disregard these instructions.

The chief secretary and the chief minister expressed their displeasure at the Mandla district magistrate wearing a T-shirt during a review meeting organized through video conferencing under the chairmanship of the chief minister on July 20, 2020.

Delhi's 'Dr Death' may have killed over 100, threw bodies to crocodiles

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

New Delhi, August 1: An ayurvedic doctor jailed for life for murdering truck drivers and feeding their remains to crocodiles has been caught after jumping parole while on release for good behaviour, police said.

Devendra Kumar Sharma, 62, was arrested by Delhi police in the capital late Tuesday. In January he failed to return from a weeks-long parole after serving 16 years behind bars.

Sharma was given a life sentence in 2004 in Rajasthan after being found guilty of several murders between 2002 and 2004, earning him the nickname "Dr Death" in the media.

"(He) was involved in dozens of cases of kidnapping and murder of truck and taxi drivers in Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan," Delhi Police Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Paweriya said in a statement.

Police alleged that Sharma first came to the attention of authorities two decades ago over his involvement in an illegal kidney transplant racket between 1994 and 2004.

Sharma, with help from other doctors and middlemen, allegedly arranged at least 125 transplants in an organ trafficking racket.

Police also accused him of being



part of a gang that hired taxis and trucks before killing their drivers, robbing them and selling the vehicles.

"They used to dump dead bodies in Hazara canal in Uttar Pradesh's Kashganj, which had crocodiles, (and) there was no chance of retrieval of any body," Paweriya said.

Sharma was later convicted of at least six murders, police said, but Paweriya added that he had admitted to carrying out many more.

"He disclosed to have been (the) mastermind of more than 50 such murders," the statement said.

"Media reports of that period show that he had committed more than 100 murders of taxi drivers for which cases were registered in Delhi, UP, Haryana and Rajasthan."

Sharma told police he jumped parole to move to Delhi and had hoped to start a new life.

HOW HE EARNED THE MONIKER

- Devendra Kumar Sharma was given life sentence in 2004 in Rajasthan after being found guilty of several murders between 2002 and 2004, earning him the nickname "Dr Death"
- In January he failed to return from a weeks-long parole after serving 16 years behind bars
- Sharma, with help from other doctors and middlemen, allegedly arranged at least 125 transplants in an organ trafficking racket
- Police also accused him of being part of a gang that hired taxis and trucks before killing their drivers, robbing them and selling the vehicles



It's the responsibility of the government to set its priorities. Giving basic comforts to the needy must top the agenda of every effective administration. Welcome decision of Governor of Goa to keep the new Raj Bhavan project on hold. Economic Revival Plan is (the) need of the hour
DIGAMBAR KAMAT | FORMER GOA CM

CENTRE PERMITS EXPORT OF MADE-IN-INDIA VENTILATORS

The Group of Ministers (GoM) on COVID-19 Saturday agreed to the proposal of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to allow the export of made-in-India ventilators



of the day quote

Lokmanya Tilak united the country against the British while Annabhau Sathe raised issues of the poor and downtrodden sections of society
BALASAHEB THORAT | MINISTER FOR REVENUE IN MAHARASHTRA

The state government should recommend social reformer and folk poet Annabhau Sathe for a posthumous 'Bharat Ratna'
JAYANT PATIL | MAHARASHTRA MINISTER

Greetings to all on the auspicious occasion of Eid al-Adha. May the Almighty bless you and your loved ones
AMARINDER SINGH | PUNJAB CM

Get this drama stopped: Gehlot to PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jaisalmer/Jaipur, August 1: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot Saturday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to get the alleged attempt to topple his government stopped and said he is open to welcoming back the Congress rebels led by Sachin Pilot.

Asked if the dissidents will be forgiven, he said, "It depends on the party high command. If the party high command forgives, I shall embrace them." Since the power tussle between him and Sachin Pilot resurfaced last month, the Congress veteran has used harsh words against his former deputy, once even referring to him as 'nikamma' or useless. But Gehlot said he will do whatever the Congress leadership wants.

He said the party trusted him and he has been a Union minister, AICC general secretary, state unit president and chief minister for a third time. "What else do I want? I am doing this to serve the public," he told reporters in Jaisalmer.



The chief minister was on his way back to Jaipur after an overnight stay at Jaisalmer's Suryagarh resort, where loyalist MLAs have been shifted ahead of the assembly session from August 14. The Congress has accused the BJP of playing a major role in the rebellion by the now sacked deputy chief minister and 18 other Congress MLAs who are threatening his government.

"We have no personal quarrel with anyone. In a democracy, fights happen over ideology, policies and programmes and not for toppling a government. 'Modi should get the drama which is going on in Rajasthan ended,'" the Chief Minister said

Asked if the dissidents will be forgiven, he said, "It depends on the party high command. If the party high command forgives, I shall embrace them"

Since the power tussle between him and Sachin Pilot resurfaced last month, the Congress veteran has used harsh words against his former deputy

"Modi should get the drama which is going on in Rajasthan ended," the Chief Minister said

Rajasthan ended," the chief minister said outside the hotel where the MLAs were shifted Friday.

Gehlot said Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat should resign on moral grounds, claiming that his involvement in a "conspiracy" to topple the Rajasthan government is now known. He said Shekhawat's name also cropped up in a cooperative society scam in which money from poor people was looted.

The chief minister also alleged that some other Union ministers are involved in the "conspiracy" against his government. Gehlot and other Rajasthan ministers are likely to spend most of their time in the state capital as the Congress tries to keep its numbers intact in Jaisalmer.

Including the 19 rebels, the Congress has 107 MLAs in the 200-member assembly. The BJP has 72 MLAs. He claimed that democracy is under threat in the country and the Union Home Ministry is after his government in the state. He repeated the charge that the 'rate' for trying to lure MLAs away has gone up after the announcement of the assembly session.

Back in Jaipur, he said Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati is giving statements "under pressure" and asserted that all six BSP MLAs lawfully merged with the Congress in Rajasthan last year. The BSP recently challenged the merger in the high court, prompting the Congress to charge that the party made the move at the behest of the BJP.

Rhea 'under watch', say Bihar policemen

AGENCIES

Mumbai/New Delhi, August 1: The Bihar police Saturday said actress Rhea Chakraborty was "under watch" in the abatement to suicide case in the death of Bollywood star Sushant Singh Rajput while her plea before the Supreme Court for transfer of the FIR against her from Patna to Mumbai is listed for hearing on August 5.

A four-member Bihar police team is in Mumbai since Wednesday to probe the FIR registered in Patna against Chakraborty, 28, and six others including her family members based on the complaint filed by Rajput's father, Krishna Kumar Singh (74) had lodged the complaint for the alleged abatement to suicide of his son on Tuesday.

As the chorus for a probe by the CBI into the case grew louder, a Bihar minister said Chief Minister Nitish Kumar would definitely act if a demand for the premier investigating agency to step in comes from the family of Rajput. Bihar's Director General of Police (DGP) Guptaeshwar Pandey, meanwhile, said the state police wants the forensic science laboratory reports, inquest report, post-mortem report and relevant CCTV footage in the case to facilitate its probe.

Saturday, the Bihar police team visited the Bandra police station. When asked whether Chakraborty, who was Rajput's girlfriend, would be interrogated, an official of the Bihar police said, "It is not required as of now. But she is under our watch."

Another member of the visiting team said they have sent a notice to Chakraborty under the relevant CrPC sections, asking her to cooperate with the police in the probe. He also said the Mumbai police was cooperating with them in the investigation of the case.

Rajput, 34, was found hanging in his suburban Bandra apartment in Mumbai on June 14.

A Mumbai police official said the visiting team has recorded the statements of six persons as part of the probe.

"Till now, the police team from Bihar has met the late actor's friends, colleagues and relatives. They have recorded the statements of six persons- Rajput's sister, who stays in Versova, former girlfriend Ankita Lokhande, a cook, his friends and colleagues," the official said. The police team is also likely to question the members of Rajput's staff, he said.

SUSHANT DEATH CASE



Sushant's sister writes to PM

Mumbai: Fearing evidence is being tampered with in the ongoing investigation of Sushant Singh Rajput death case, his sister Shweta Singh Kirti has penned an open letter Saturday to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, requesting him to intervene. In her letter, she has also claimed that Sushant did not have a godfather in Bollywood and similarly his family does not have one in life. Shweta posted the letter on her verified Facebook account. She wrote: "I am sister of Sushant Singh Rajput and I request an urgent scan of the whole case. We believe in India's judicial system and expect justice at any cost. @PMOIndia #JusticeForSushant #SatyamevaJayate."

They gathered information about Rajput's various bank accounts and also visited the banks to look into the financial transactions," he said. As per the cause list uploaded on the Supreme Court website, the transfer petition filed by Chakraborty will come up for hearing before a bench of Justice Hrishikesh Roy on Wednesday.

SHORT TAKES

Five workers killed in blast

Nagpur: Five workers were killed in an explosion at a bio-CNG plant in Maharashtra's Nagpur district Saturday afternoon, the police said. The incident took place at a bio-CNG project on the premises of sugar and distillery plant of Manas Agro Industries and Infrastructure Ltd at Bela in Umred tehsil around 2.15 pm. A biogas leakage in the bio-digester during welding work led to the blast, said the company spokesperson Nitin Kulkarni. Sarang Gadkari, son of Union minister Nitin Gadkari, is a director of the company, the spokesperson said. All five workers sustained grievous burn injuries and died on the spot, the police said. Superintendent of Police Rakesh Ola visited the spot following the incident, officials said.

Yedi's son dons new role

Bangalore: B.Y. Vijayandra, second son of Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, has been appointed vice-president of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) state unit. "BJP's state unit president Nalin Kumar Kateel appointed Vijayandra as one of the 10 vice-presidents along with four general secretaries, 10 secretaries, two treasurers and seven heads of morchas (organisations)," a party official said.

Covid patient ends life

Agartala: A 31-year-old COVID-19 patient allegedly died by suicide by jumping off the third floor of a hospital building in Tripura Saturday, police said. The man, a resident of Muhuripur village in South Tripura district, was admitted to the state-run Govind Ballabh Pant Hospital here on Friday after allegedly consuming poison, they said.

Racket busted

English Bazar (WB): An international racket dealing in snake venom was busted in West Bengal's Malda district Friday, and two persons were arrested in a major operation by the state CID and local police, officials said. The sleuths of the CID along with officers of Bamongola police station seized 600 grams of snake venom, estimated to be worth around ₹1 crore, from a car in Pakuahat petrol pump area, they said. Two kinspins of an international racket were arrested in the raid, police said.

Mandya man stabs mother to death

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mandya, August 1: A 21-year-old BBM student stabbed mother to death because she objected to his going out to meet friends, said an official, here Saturday.

"Manu Sharma stabbed his mother to death after a petty fight as she objected to his going out to meet friends and also some other issues," Mandya Superintendent of Police (SP) K. Parasuram said.

Mandya is 100 km southwest of Bangalore. Sharma's mother didn't approve of him going out to meet friends during the lockdown. "She also didn't like him talking to a girl related to the family," he said. Sharma was also said to be depressed as he couldn't make it to the Republic Day parade in New Delhi.

On Wednesday, he wanted to go out to meet his friends. But his mother objected to that and scolded him. "Following a petty quarrel, in a fit of rage, Sharma beat the mother and stabbed her to death. He then fled the spot," Parasuram said.

Covid-19 stings Karnataka minister

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, August 1: Karnataka's Agriculture Minister B.C. Patil and his wife Vanaja have tested COVID-19 positive and are in home quarantine, an official said Saturday.

"As the Minister and his wife are asymptomatic with mild symptoms of the virus, they both are under quarantine at their own home in the city's northeast suburb," Patil's Personal Assistant Keeranna said here.

In a message to his family members and supporters, Patil said they need worry about he being infected as he would recover to get back to work soon. "The Minister's son-in-law was also infected by the virus at Hirekerur in Haveri district, which is his Assembly constituency," Keeranna said. Hirekerur is about 330km northwest of Bangalore in the southern state.

BALANCING ACT



Villagers make a temporary crossing with bamboo above a river after the bridge over it was washed away in flood water following heavy rain, at Jartaluk in Baksa district, Saturday
PTI PHOTO

AMAR SINGH WAS A SKILFUL POLITICIAN, SAY LEADERS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: Leaders across the political spectrum condoled the death of Rajya Sabha MP and former Samajwadi Party (SP) leader Amar Singh Saturday and said he had friends in all parties.

SP president Akhilesh Yadav tweeted a photograph of Singh with his father and party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, and paid homage to the departed soul. Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu conveyed his condolences to Singh's family and associates and prayed to god for the peace of the departed soul.

Paying homage to Singh, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh described him as an energetic leader with a humorous nature and said he had friends in all the political parties. Echoing similar sentiments, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president JP Nadda said Singh was a strategist and a skilled politician with a sociable nature.

Senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel said Singh will always be remembered as a valued colleague and a wonderful human being. Patel's party colleague Raj Babbar paid homage to Singh and said may the almighty bless his soul and give strength to his family to bear the irreparable loss. Singh (64) died in Singapore, where he was undergoing treatment, on Saturday. He had undergone a kidney transplant in 2011 and was not keeping well for a long time.



Contempt Act challenged in SC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 1: Senior journalist N. Ram, former Union Minister Arun Shourie and activist-lawyer Prashant Bhusan have moved the Supreme Court challenging the constitutional validity of Section 2(c)(i) of the Contempt of Courts Act and termed it as a violation of the Articles 19 and 14 of the Constitution.

The petition has been moved days before the apex court is slated to take up two contempt petitions against Bhusan for allegedly making derogatory remarks against the judiciary and bringing it under disrepute.

On July 22, the top court issued notices to Bhusan and Twitter Inc for his tweets allegedly scandalising the judiciary. Two days later, a bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra decided to begin hearing on another contempt case against Bhusan pending since 2009. The two cases will be taken up for hearing on August 4 and 5.

The petitioners argued that this sub-section is unconstitutional, as it is incompatible with preamble



values and basic features of the Constitution, and violates Article 19(1)(a). They claimed the sub-section is unconstitutional and incurably vague, and is manifestly arbitrary. The Section 2(c)(i) of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971, defines 'criminal contempt' as publication of anything - whether by words, spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise of any matter or the doing of any other act whatsoever - which scandalises or tends to scandalise, or lowers or tends to lower the authority of any court.

The petitioners have asked the top court to issue directions declaring Section 2(c)(i) of the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971 as being viola-

tive of Articles 19 and 14 of the Constitution. "The impugned sub-section, despite setting out penal consequences, is incurably vague. It uses vague terminology whose scope and limits are impossible to demarcate. In particular, the phrase 'scandalises or tends to scandalise' invites subjective and greatly differing readings and application which is incapable of being certain and even-handed," said the plea.

The petitioners argued that the sub-section violates the right to free speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) and does not amount to a reasonable restriction under Article 19(2).

"That the impugned sub-section, despite setting out penal consequences, is incurably vague. It uses vague terminology whose scope and limits are impossible to demarcate. In particular, the phrase 'scandalises or tends to scandalise' invites subjective and greatly differing readings and application which is incapable of being certain and even-handed. Thus, the offence violates the Article 14 demands of equal treatment and non-arbitrariness," said the plea.

INDIA CELEBRATES EID AL-ADHA AMID PANDEMIC

PEOPLE AVOIDED HUGGING EACH OTHER AFTER MORNING PRAYERS AT MOSQUES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 1: Eid al-Adha was celebrated Saturday on a subdued note. People offered namaz at mosques as well as homes in the morning and exchanged greetings to mark the festival, following safety guidelines amid Covid-19 pandemic.

The people avoided hugging each other after morning prayers at mosques - a tradition followed on festive occasions - to curb the spread of coronavirus that has infected 16,95,988 people across the country. On Saturday, a record 57,118 cases and 764 deaths were reported for the last 24 hours.

The people restricted themselves to do 'salam'. Citizens above 60 years,

persons with comorbidities or asymptomatic and children below 10 years offered namaz at home as advised. There were no prayers at Eidgahs or in open grounds. Earlier in the day, mosque care-takers disinfected the premises and surroundings before and after namaz. Most mosques saw prayers in two phases to ensure social distancing among the worshippers.

At most mosques, people who offered 'fajr' or pre-dawn prayers stayed back for Namaz-e-Eid, held 30-60 minutes after the sunrise. Eid ul-Adha or Bakrid is the second major Muslim festival celebrated to commemorate the sacrifice by Prophet Ibrahim, who offered to sacrifice his son Ismail on the Allah's



Children greet each other while celebrating Eid al-Adha, during the complete lockdown in the wake of coronavirus pandemic, in Bhopal
PTI PHOTO

command. The almighty, however, replaced Prophet Ismail with a lamb

just as Prophet Ibrahim was about to slit his throat.

Calling upon the devout to imbibe Prophet Ibrahim's spirit of sacrifice, Imams, in their sermons on the occasion, said the Eid's message was that they should always be ready to surrender to the Allah's will. After prayers, Muslims offered sacrifice of 'halal' animals. Sacrificing is obligatory for adults who are 'saheb-e-nisab' or possess wealth equivalent to 87.48 gram gold or 612.35 gram silver.

An individual can sacrifice a sheep or goat or may join six others to sacrifice a big animal. The meat of the sacrificed animal is distributed equally in three parts. The person making the sacrifice keeps one part for his family and distributes two parts among

the relatives and the poor.

This year, the number of people offering sacrifice at homes came down due to Covid-19. To avoid the risk while buying the animal or hiring services of butchers, many either outsourced the job to traders or socio-religious organisations. Many people preferred taking a 'hissa' or share in the cattle with the individuals and groups who organised a 'ijtemai qurbani' or collective sacrifice every year.

Community leaders said many people entrusted the task of distribution of meat among the poor to the groups arranging collective sacrifice. They wanted to avoid visits to relatives, friends and others to distribute meat due to Covid-19.

of the day quote

I have written to you (Yogi Adityanath) earlier highlighting the issue of law and order situation in the state. And now crimes in broad daylight are being committed creating fear psychosis among people

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

With Education placed in the State List, the Centre will assume the remaining rights of the states and take in its control (aspects ranging) from syllabus to university. This is an attack on the federal structure being underscored by the Constitution of India

M K STALIN | DMK PRESIDENT

I am requesting the state government (Telangana) to focus on testing, tracing and treatment. There is a need to increase the number of tests in (Telangana). The more number of the tests, the faster the containment of the disease. You know, Delhi as a union territory I am personally monitoring. There is 84 per cent recovery rate in Delhi. All the states should emulate the Delhi model

G KISHAN REDDY | MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME AFFAIRS

SHORT TAKES

Jawan killed

Jammu: An Indian Army jawan was killed when Pakistan opened heavy fire on forward posts along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district Saturday, a defence spokesperson said. He said the Pakistan Army violated the ceasefire agreement by opening fire along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri sector. "Indian troops responded strongly to the enemy fire," the spokesperson said. In the incident, Sepoy Rohin Kumar was critically injured and he later succumbed to his injuries, he added. Kumar, a resident of Himachal Pradesh, was a brave, highly motivated and a sincere soldier, the spokesperson said.

2 Naxals held

Bijapur: Two Naxals were arrested from separate places in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district Saturday, police said. Mahesh Yadav (32) was nabbed from Tindodi village under Bhairamgarh police station limits and Manku Modyam (32) from Chilnar village under Bijapur police station area, an official said. Yadav was involved in the killing of policeman Somaru Poyam and injuring his parents at their house in Matwada village on July 1, he said.

3 killed in MP

Jabalpur: Three persons were killed and five others injured after a car collided with a mini cargo vehicle in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh, police said Saturday. The accident took place late Friday night near Gosalpur village, around 32 kms from Jabalpur, they said.

Body found

Ballia (UP): A 15-year-old boy was found dead in a pit at a village here, police said Saturday. The body of Raghvendra Singh was found Friday, the police said, adding that they suspect personal enmity behind the killing. On the basis of a complaint filed by the father of the victim, a case of murder has been lodged against Gayaqhat village head Vijay Pratap Singh and four others, Additional Superintendent of Police Sanjay Yadav said.



While taking note of the requisite technical readiness, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Nagaland and Uttarakhand, the Department of Food & Public Distribution has enabled the integration of these four states/UT with existing 20 states/UTs for the national portability

RAM VILAS PASWAN | CABINET MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

PM PAYS TRIBUTE TO TILAK

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday paid tribute to Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, one of the firebrand freedom fighters and the strongest proponent of 'purna swaraj', on his 100th death anniversary



Fatality rate lowest since first lockdown, says Govt

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 1: India continues to maintain the record of registering the lowest COVID-19 mortality rate on the global platform, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said Saturday.

"The Case Fatality Rate stands at 2.15% on Friday, lowest since the 1st lockdown. It has been continuously reducing from around 3.33% in mid-June" the ministry said. The case fatality rate, in epidemiology, is the proportion of people who die from a disease among all individuals diagnosed with it.

The reduction is being attributed to focused, coordinated, pre-emptive, graded and evolving 'Test Track Treat' strategy and the efforts of the Centre along with the state governments. The emphasis on early detection through aggressive testing and effective clinical management of the hospitalized cases has resulted in the continuously falling fatality rate, the ministry officials said, adding that it indicates that India has been able to successfully contain the fatality rate of COVID-19.

On Saturday, India reported a new record surge of 57,118 fresh infections, taking the total number of cases to 16,95,988. The country also witnessed 764 COVID-19



The case fatality rate, in epidemiology, is the proportion of people who die from a disease among all individuals diagnosed with it

The reduction is being attributed to focused, coordinated, pre-emptive, graded and evolving 'Test Track Treat' strategy and the efforts of the Centre along with the state governments

related deaths in the last 24 hours. The total fatalities due to the virus now stand at 36,511.

Meanwhile, the total number of recovered cases is nearly eleven lakh. With 36,569 patients discharged in the last 24 hours, the total recoveries have jumped to 10,94,374. The recovery rate stands at 64.53 per cent amongst COVID-19 patients.

With such a consistent increase in recoveries, the gap between recovered patients and active COVID-19 cases currently stands at 5,29,271. Active cases (5,65,103) are under medical supervision. As on Saturday there were 1488 dedicated COVID

Hospitals with 2,49,358 isolation beds, 31,639 ICU beds, 1,09,119 oxygen supported beds and 16,678 ventilators. 3231 dedicated COVID Health Centres with 2,07,239 isolation beds, 18,613 ICU beds and 74,130 oxygen supported beds and 6,668 ventilators have also been operationalised.

Moreover, 10,755 COVID Care Centres with 10,02,681 beds are now available to combat COVID-19 in the country. The Centre has also provided 273.85 lakh N95 masks and 121.5 lakh Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) and 1083.77 lakh HCQ tablets to the States and Central Institutions.

Freak accident in Bangalore

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, August 1: A freak accident caught on video in the city shows a wire fling a man onto an unsuspecting woman in the opposite direction as she walks down a pavement path unaware, an official said Saturday.

"We have seen the viral video and it happened at TC Palya in Battarahalli, within K.R. Puram police station limits but could not find out who the man and woman were yet," said a police official. Likewise, the official is also clueless as to when the incident occurred.

Already viral for a few days on social media, the video shows how a man who appeared to be an autorickshaw driver was standing beside a three-wheeler was flung a few metres by a thin wire.

With a little portion of the wire perched on the ground between his legs and a major portion also hanging before and after him, the wire was forcibly pulled by something leading to the man being propelled up into the air and falling

right on a woman walking behind.

He was pulled up into the air from between his legs and there was not escape for him. It is not clear in the video if a vehicle or anything else pulled the wire but the pull had sufficient power to fling the man of some 60-70 kg weight far enough.

The unsuspecting woman wearing a pink dress had no idea what happened but took a heavy hit from the flying man and fell flat on the tiled floor. The entire incident unfolded at a place that appeared to be the front portion of a series of shops leading to their entrance.

Following the incident which occurred beside a service road, a tractor and other vehicles paused to figure out what exactly happened as the video ends. "We did not receive any police complaint and I am also not sure when it actually happened," he said. The official said they will try to go to the source of the video or the owner of the CCTV where the footage emerged.



GEARING UP



An artist paints Ram on earthen lamps ahead of the foundation laying ceremony of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya in Bikaner, Saturday

Liquor tragedy toll rises to 86

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, August 1: The death toll in the Punjab spurious liquor tragedy rose to 86 Saturday even as Chief Minister Amarinder Singh suspended seven excise officials and six policemen, officials said.

The government also announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh for each of the families of the deceased, they said. Tarn Taran alone accounted for 63 deaths, followed by 12 in Amritsar and 11 in Gurdaspur's Batala. Till Friday night, the state had reported 39 deaths in the tragedy unfolding since Wednesday night.



According to an official statement, the CM ordered the suspension of seven excise officials, along with six policemen. Among the suspended officials are two deputy superintendents of police and four station house officers.

Strict action will be taken against any public servant or others found complicit in the case, said the chief minister, describing the police and excise department failure to check the manufacturing and sale of spurious liquor as shameful. Nobody will be allowed to get away with feeding poison to our people, he added.

BJP LAUNCHES PROTESTS IN KERALA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Thiruvananthapuram, August 1: The BJP Kerala unit Saturday launched protest demonstrations across the state to demand Pinarayi Vijayan government's resignation in the wake of unearthing of the gold smuggling racket.

BJP national Secretary Bhupender Yadav, who launched the protests online from Delhi, alleged that the CMO was "facilitating" the gold smuggling. These protests will continue till August 18, with all top state BJP leaders observing one-day fast at various places during this period.

On Saturday, lone BJP legislator in Kerala Assembly, O. Rajagopal, began his day-long fast at the state party headquarters here. Yadav said Vijayan will go down in history as the "most corrupt Chief Minister" in the country.

"Vijayan, your time is now up."



You will be forced to tell the truth on how the gold smuggling is taking place, as your own office has direct control over it. Look into those who have been arrested -- they include Swapna Suresh, who despite no qualifications was given a job in the IT Department headed by Vijayan. You will have to answer," the BJP leader said in his speech.

State BJP President K. Surendran, participating in the launch of the protest from his home in Kozhikode, said the situation is grave as allegations have now surfaced that the "smuggling of gold going on with the help of Vijayan's office has terror links too".

BANGALORE POLICE WAGING WAR AGAINST DRUGS

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bangalore, August 1: The City police department is waging a war on narcotics and drug peddlers, busting multiple racketeers of late. Marijuana or ganja has emerged as the most peddled and seized drug in Bangalore in the first six months of 2020.

"We are waging a war against drugs. Trying hard to collect information and pursue further," Central Crime Branch (CCB) Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Kuldeep Jain said. On Wednesday, the crime branch busted a darknet drug racket involving four educated Kerala youngsters, targeting pub hopping youth and seized drugs worth Rs 1.25 crore.

The case assumed such significance that the state Home Minister Basavaraj S. Bommai himself and Police Commissioner Bhaskar Rao attended the press conference.

Last weekend, Bangalore East DCP S. D. Sharanappa conducted a special drive against drugs, arresting 29 people including a Nigerian national, and booking 29 cases in just 48 hours. "Seized MDMA, ganja drugs. Watch also kept on hotels and lodges being misused for narcotics during Covid," said Sharanappa highlighting that the special drive was continuing.

Similarly, Bangalore South DCP Rohini Katoch Sepat had also conducted a weekend drive against drugs, registering 18 cases and ar-



resting 19 persons. Sepat appealed to the people to come forward and fight the drug menace alongside the police, asking for tip-offs on

1908 or 100 police numbers.

To reinforce the police crackdown further, Joint Commissioner of Police Sandeep Patil has invited the general

public to call toll free number 1908 to report on drugs and narcotics. "1908 toll free number to report drugs and narcotics related issues. So far this year, received 18 calls but 18 is a very small number. Request more to come forward, amplify our action against drugs," said Patil. Incidentally, the 18 tip-offs led to raids and cases while Patil promised protecting the informants' identity. Bangalore police social media handles are also reaching out to the public actively, asking for leads in busting the drug rackets.

Bommai warned managements of educational institutions that they will be held liable if banned drugs are found in their institutions' premises. Recently, Andhra Pradesh Director General of Police

Gautam Sawang said drug dealers in Visakhapatnam have links with similar others in Bangalore, after a drug peddling quartet was busted. Sawang said drugs peddlers are sourcing MDMA and LSD from Bangalore and Goa.

On June 26, International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the CCB displayed the total quantity of drugs seized in the city in the first six months of 2020, amounting to 312 kg marijuana and others. "As many as 510 ganja cases have been registered, leading to the seizure of 312 kg of ganja in 2020," said Jain then. Cases and seizures of other drugs paled in comparison to marijuana. Only one case each has been registered for brown sugar, opium and others.



I knew I was going to catch it (COVID-19) someday, as I think unfortunately nearly everyone here (in Brazil) is going to catch it eventually
JAIR BOLSONARO | PRESIDENT, BRAZIL

THOUSANDS PROTEST IN BERLIN

Thousands of protesters against German coronavirus restrictions converged in Berlin for a demonstration proclaiming "the end of the pandemic" has arrived just as authorities' voice increasing concern about an upturn in new infections



of the day quote

Following the completion of clinical trials of a vaccine, we are preparing a mass vaccination campaign against the novel coronavirus by October
MIKHAIL MURASHKO | HEALTH MINISTER, RUSSIA

Indian expats in the UAE can now get their passports renewed in 2 days after submitting their applications. Also, the Consulate in Dubai will accept passport applications from expats living across the UAE, irrespective of their place of residence or the emirate that issued their visas
AMAN PURI | CONSUL GENERAL OF INDIA (DUBAI)

The US-India relationship is broad, deep, and growing - and we discussed how vital the cooperation between our nations is to countering common challenges and aggression in the region and upholding a rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific
CORY GARDNER | US'S REPUBLICAN SENATOR, COLORADO

Xi seeks to boost ties with Nepal

AGENCIES

Beijing, August 1: Chinese President Xi Jinping Saturday said he wants to push for a continued advancement of ties with Nepal amidst Beijing's sustained forays to shore up pro-China Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's grip on power in the backdrop of intra-party feud in the ruling communist party.

In an exchange of congratulatory messages with his Nepalese counterpart Bidhya Devi Bhandari on the 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, Xi asserted that he was ready to work to bring greater benefits to the two peoples of the two neighbouring countries.

The Chinese President said that he attaches great importance to the development of China-Nepal relations and is willing to work with his Nepali counterpart Bhandari to push for the continued advancement of the bilateral relationship.

Xi, also General Secretary of the ruling Communist Party of China, said that since the establishment of the diplomatic ties, the two countries have always respected each other, treated each other as equals, enhanced political mutual trust and deepened mutually beneficial cooperation.

Noting that he and Bhandari exchanged visits last year and elevated the bilateral ties to a strategic partnership of cooperation featuring ever-lasting friendship for development and prosperity, Xi said the two sides have stood together through thick and thin in the fight against the COVID-19 and have written a new chapter of friendship between China and Nepal, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.



Chinese President Xi Jinping with Nepalese counterpart Bidhya Devi Bhandari (REPRESENTATIONAL PIC)

China has always respected Nepal's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence," Nepals Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Nepal's Minister for Foreign Affairs Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, in his message to China's State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi, appreciated Wang's role in strengthening the bilateral ties, it said.

Wang expressed his "willingness to work together with Gyawali to strengthen communication and cooperation, implement the important consensus reached between the leaders and make a positive contribution to the development of China-Nepal Strategic partnership

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of cooperation featuring ever-lasting friendship for development and prosperity", the statement said.

Nepal and China established their diplomatic relations on August 1, 1955. China's political profile in Nepal has been on the rise in the recent years with billions of dollars of investments under Beijing's multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), including the building of the Trans-Himalayan Multi-Dimensional Connectivity Network.

Besides the investments, China's ambassador to Kathmandu Hou Yanqi has made open efforts to garner support for Oli, who faced a massive rebellion in his party headed by co-chair of the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda'.

TRUMP TO BAN TIKTOK IN US

There have been reports of tech-giant Microsoft being in talks to buy the Chinese-owned app

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Washington, August 1: US President Donald Trump has said that he will act to ban TikTok as soon as on Saturday, amidst reports of American technology giant Microsoft being in advanced talks to acquire the popular Chinese-owned video app.

Trump, talking to reporters travelling with him aboard Air Force 1 from Florida on Friday, said he could use the emergency economic powers or an executive order to ban TikTok in the United States.

"As far as TikTok is concerned, we're banning them from the United States," he said.

Referring to the emergency economic powers, the President said: "Well, I have that authority. I can do it with an executive order or that". Trump also made it clear that he was not in favour of a deal to let a US company buy TikTok's American operations.

Trump further told reporters that he planned to take action against the popular video-sharing app as soon as Saturday. Earlier at the White House, Trump said:



"We're looking at TikTok. We may be banning TikTok. We may be doing some other things. There are a couple of options. But a lot of things are happening, so we'll see what happens. But we are looking at a lot of alternatives with respect to TikTok".

India has banned as many as 106 Chinese apps, including TikTok, a move welcomed by both the Trump administration and the US lawmakers. The Wall Street Journal on Friday reported that Microsoft, headed by Indian-American Satya Nadella, is in advanced talks to acquire the US operations of TikTok. The deal could run into billions of dollars.

"A deal could be completed by Monday, according to people familiar with the matter, and the talks involve representatives from Microsoft, ByteDance and the White House. Talks are fluid, and a deal may not come together," the report said.

SHORT TAKES

Indonesia reports 62 nCoV deaths

Jakarta: Indonesia reported 1,560 new coronavirus infections Saturday, bringing the total in the Southeast Asian country to 1,09,936, data from the country's COVID-19 task force showed. It also reported 62 COVID-19 related deaths, taking the death toll to 5,193.

Police arrest five drug traffickers

Melbourne: A small plane which crashed shortly after takeoff on a flight from a remote airstrip in Papua New Guinea (PNG) to Australia last week was overloaded with more than 500 kg of cocaine, police said Saturday. Police from Australia and PNG said they had recovered 28 bags of cocaine worth A\$80 million and arrested five suspected drug traffickers connected to the Cessna which came down shortly after takeoff from Papa Lea Lea, north of Port Moresby, July 26. The five men were members of a Melbourne-based criminal syndicate, the police said.

15 civilians die in border clashes

Kabul/Quetta: Afghanistan has accused Pakistan of killing 15 civilians during clashes at a border crossing where crowds were jostling to cross for the Muslim festival of Eid al-Adha. On Pakistan's side, hospital officials reported seven deaths from the flare-up between the Asian neighbours who are US allies but often trade accusations of backing militants. The governor of Afghanistan's southeastern Kandahar province, Hayatullah Hayat, said shells fell on homes in the border town Spin Boldak, with women and children among 15 dead and 80 hurt, during the clashes between both nations' security forces.

Ryan launches diversity program

Los Angeles: Hollywood star Ryan Reynolds has launched 'The Group Effort Initiative', a self-financed diversity and inclusion program that will give people of colour an opportunity to work and learn on the actor's productions. The "Deadpool" star took to Twitter to announce the initiative.

LIFE GOES ON



A vendor waits for customers behind bags of aquarium fish for sale at a market on the outskirts of Jakarta, Indonesia. The world's most populous Muslim nation is experiencing the highest number of confirmed coronavirus cases in Southeast Asia

Hurricane Isaias lashes Bahamas while Florida battens down

AGENCIES

San Juan, August 1: Hurricane Isaias ripped shingles off roofs and blew over trees as it carved its way through the Bahamas early Saturday and headed toward the Florida coast, where officials in Miami said they were closing beaches, marinas and parks.

Miami Mayor Carlos Gimenez said Friday that 20 evacuation centers were on standby that could be set up with COVID-19 safety measures.

"We still don't think there is a need to open shelters for this storm, but they are ready," he said.

Authorities in North Carolina ordered the evacuation of Ocracoke



Island, which was slammed by last year's Hurricane Dorian, starting Saturday evening. Meanwhile, officials in the Bahamas evacuated people on Abaco island, who have been living in temporary structures since Dorian.

People living in the eastern end of Grand Bahama were also being moved.

Isaias had maximum sustained

winds of 85 mph (135 kph) Saturday morning and some strengthening was possible later Saturday, the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said.

The storm was centered about 50 miles (85 kilometers) south of Nassau in the Bahamas and was moving northwest at 12 mph (19 kph). Forecasters said some decrease in its forward motion was expected.

Paula Miller, Mercy Corps director for the Bahamas, told The Associated Press that while the islands can normally withstand strong hurricanes, some have been destabilized by the coronavirus pandemic and the damage caused by Dorian.

Now, Mexico third in global pandemic deaths

REUTERS

Paris, August 1: Mexico now has the third most COVID-19 deaths in the world, behind the United States and Brazil, while former success story Vietnam is struggling to control an outbreak spreading in its most famous beach resort.

China reported a more than 50% drop in newly confirmed cases in a possible sign that its latest major outbreak in the northwestern region of Xinjiang may have run its course. However, in Hong Kong, infections continue to surge, with more than 100 new cases reported as of Saturday among the population of 7.5 million. Officials have reimposed dining restrictions and mask requirements.

South Korean prosecutors arrested the elderly leader of a secretive religious sect linked to more than 5,200 of the country's 14,336 confirmed cases. He has denied charges of hiding members and underreporting gatherings to avoid broader quarantines. Mexican health officials Friday reported 688 new deaths, pushing the country's total to 46,688. That put Mexico just ahead of the United Kingdom, which has 46,119, according to the tally by Johns Hopkins University.

In Vietnam, a third person died of coronavirus complications, of

ficials said Saturday, a day after it recorded its first-ever death as it struggles with a renewed outbreak after 99 days with no local cases.

All three died in a hospital in Da Nang, a hot spot with more than 100 cases in the past week. Thousands of visitors had been in the city for summer vacation and are now being tested in Hanoi and elsewhere.

Twelve additional cases were confirmed on Saturday, all linked to Da Nang Hospital. The city has tightened security and set up more checkpoints to prevent people from leaving or entering the city, which has been in lockdown since Tuesday.

A makeshift hospital was set up in a sports auditorium and doctors have been mobilised from other cities to help. "I want to be tested so I can stop worrying if I have the virus or not," said Pham Thuy Hoa, a banking official who returned to the capital from Da Nang.

Mexican health officials Friday reported 688 new deaths, pushing the country's total to 46,688. This puts Mexico ahead of the United Kingdom in terms of deaths



KNOWLEDGE A 'TREASURE' FOR ITALY'S OLDEST GRADUATE

REUTERS

Palermo, August 1: At 96, Giuseppe Paterno has faced many tests in life - childhood poverty, war and, more recently, the coronavirus pandemic. Now he has sailed through an exam that makes him Italy's oldest university graduate.

This week, the former railway worker stepped forward to receive his diploma and the traditional laurel wreath awarded to Italian students when they graduate, applauded by his family, teachers and fellow students more than 70 years his junior.

"I am a normal person, like many others," he said, when asked what it felt like to be graduating so late. "In terms of age I have surpassed all the others but I didn't do it for this."

Already in his 90s when he en-

rolled for a degree in History and Philosophy at the University of Palermo, Paterno grew up loving books, but he never had the chance to study.

"I said, 'that's it, now or never,' and so in 2017, I decided to enrol," he told Reuters in his apartment in the Sicilian city of Palermo, which he rarely leaves nowadays due to his frailty. "I understood that it was a little late to get a three-year degree but I said to myself 'let's see if I can do it'."

On Wednesday, he graduated first in his class with top honours, receiving congratulations from the university chancellor Fabrizio Micari.

GREAT DEPRESSION, THEN WAR

Growing up in a poor family in Sicily in the years before the Great Depression, Paterno received only



basic schooling as a child. He joined the navy and served during World War Two before going on to work in the railways as he married and brought up two children.

In a society focused on rebuilding after the war, work and family were the priorities, but Paterno wanted to learn and graduated from high school at the age of 31, always

Growing up in a poor family in Sicily, Paterno received only basic schooling as a child. He joined the navy and served during the World War-II before working in railways

harbouring a desire to go further. "Knowledge is like a suitcase that I carry with me, it is a treasure," he said. As a student, he tapped out his essays on the manual typewriter his mother gave him when he retired from the railways in 1984. He eschewed Google in favour of printed books and was not tempted by the late-night student parties of his 20-year-old classmates, who applauded

him warmly at the graduation ceremony.

"You are an example for younger students," his Sociology professor, Francesca Rizzuto, told him after he passed his final oral examination in June. Paterno confessed to a little unease with the video calls that replaced classroom teaching during the coronavirus shutdown, but said he was not put off by the disease itself after the war and everything else he had been through.

"All of that strengthened us, all of my peer group, all of those who are still alive," he said. "It didn't really scare us that much." As for what he planned to do next, he said he was not about to stop now he had graduated. "My project for the future is to devote myself to writing; I want to revisit all the texts I didn't have a chance to explore further. This is my goal."

business



Banks cannot refuse credit to MSMEs under the emergency credit facility and any refusal should be reported
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN | FINANCE MINISTER

KHADI'S GIFT BOX OF SILK MASKS LAUNCHED

MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari launched a gift box consisting of four handcrafted silk masks developed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission, the MSME Ministry said. The gift box developed by the KVIC contains masks packed in a crafted handmade paper box in black colour with golden embossed printing



of the day quote

History is witness to the fact that the country's farmers and rural economy have never succumbed to any adversity. The slogan given by the Prime Minister 'Vocal for Local' is also deeply connected with rural development

NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR | AGRICULTURE MINISTER

During my over 20-year career of managing large global workforces in companies like UBS, and Credit Suisse, I recognize soft skills as a tremendous driver of a company's culture and overall success. KeeperHR gives organisations the power to leverage those skills

VISHAL AHLUWALIA | CO-FOUNDER & CEO, KEEPERHR

The All-India Index for June 2020 stood at 332 with a rise of two points compared to May. However, rate of annual inflation moderated to 5.06% from 5.10% in the previous month and 8.59% in the month a year before

SANTOSH GANGWAR | LABOUR MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

TVS Motor July sales dip 10%

New Delhi: TVS Motor Company has reported a 10% decline in total sales at 2,52,744 units in July 2020. The company had sold 2,79,465 units in the corresponding month last year, TVS Motor Company said in a statement. Total two-wheeler sales were at 2,43,788 units last month, as compared to 2,65,679 units in July 2019, down 8 per cent, while domestic two-wheeler sales were at 1,89,647 units in the period under review, as against 2,08,489 units in the year-ago month, down 9%.

Signature Global to invest ₹400 cr

New Delhi: Realty firm Signature Global will invest ₹400 crore over the next four years to develop a new affordable housing project in Gurugram, Haryana. The company will build 832 independent floors in this project located at Sohna Road, Gurugram, Haryana, Signature Global said in a statement. This is the company's 22nd real estate project.

BEL gets new dir. of finance

Bangalore: Navratna defence PSU (public sector undertaking) Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) Saturday got a new director (finance). He is Dinesh Kumar Batra. He joined BEL at its Ghaziabad unit in 1984. In a career spanning over three-and-a-half decades, he served the company in various capacities in Delhi, Pune and Bangalore, a statement from the PSU said.

Power consumption slump narrows

New Delhi: The slump in power consumption has narrowed to just 2.64% in July at 113.48 billion units (BU) indicating spurt in economic activity and raised hopes that it would touch normal level this month. Power consumption in July last year was at 116.48 BU, as per power ministry data. The latest data of the power ministry shows that power consumption has improved after government started giving relaxations for economic activities and onset of summer.

GST COLLECTION

State logs 13% growth in July

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: Despite intermittent lockdown and sub-optimal functioning of most of the sectors in the economy due to the ongoing COVID pandemic, Odisha witnessed 13.04% growth in the State GST collection for the first time during the current financial year in the month of July, 2020.

The collection of State GST (OGST) in July 2020 increased to ₹794.02 crore as against ₹702.44 crore made during the corresponding month last year (July, 2019).

This collection came in the backdrop of poor performance during the first quarter of 2020-21 which was due to unprecedented lockdown of the state economy during the months of April and May, 2020. The growth rate of Odisha GST for April to June, 2020 was -61.15%, -25.22% & -5.83% respectively during the corresponding period last year (2019).



This turnaround of positive growth rate in July is primarily due to the regular persuasion & facilitation by the field officers, continuous monitoring and hand holding supported by data analytics by the Commissionerate of CT & GST as well as better performance in the mining sector.

Meanwhile, the return filing position of the State assigned taxpayers for February to April and

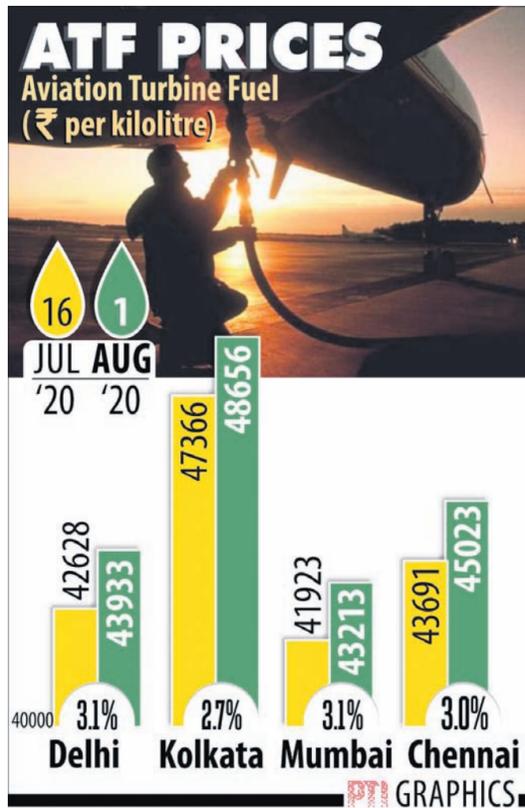
May 2020 reads 92.31%, 81.99%, 74.72% and 60.03% respectively in comparison to 76.24%, 79.67%, 77.66% and 79.88% during the corresponding period last year. Taxpayers have been advised to fulfill their tax compliance liabilities within the prescribed due date.

The collection from one of the non-GST items: petroleum products also showed encouraging signs during July. The collection of July against these items increased to ₹521.47 crore from ₹509.03 crore collected in July 2019 registering a growth rate of 2.5%.

However, in view of setback in the economy due to COVID-19, particularly in the first quarter of 2020-21, the gross GST collection (i.e. OGST + IGST + CGST + Cess) till the end of July is ₹7,540 crore with a negative growth rate of 28% while the cumulative Odisha GST collection till July 2020 is ₹2,354 crore with a negative growth rate of 22%.

July GST collections drop to ₹87,422 cr: FinMin

New Delhi: GST collections in July fell to ₹87,422 crore from ₹90,917 crore in June, according to a Finance Ministry statement. However, July collections are higher than ₹62,009 crore in May and ₹32,294 crore in April. "The gross GST revenue collected in the month of July, 2020 is ₹87,422 crore of which CGST is ₹16,147 crore, SGST is ₹21,418 crore, IGST is ₹42,592 crore (including ₹20,324 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess is ₹7,265 crore," a finance ministry statement said. The revenues for the month are 86 per cent of the GST revenues in the same month last year. The ministry further said although the June collections were higher than that in July, however, it is important to note that during the previous month, a large number of taxpayers also paid taxes pertaining to February, March and April 2020 on account of the relief provided due to COVID-19.



IndianOil grants ₹13,805cr of PX-PTA complex at Paradip

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 1: The Indian Oil Board Saturday gave its go-ahead for the implementation of an Integrated Para-Xylene (PX) and Purified Terephthalic Acid (PTA) complex project at Paradip in the state.

The project is estimated with an investment of ₹13,805 crore. The PX-PTA complex shall be integrated with IndianOil's Paradip Refinery. Chairman of Indian Oil, SM Vaidya said, "This plant, along with the upcoming MEG (Mono-Ethylene Glycol) plant of 357-KTA (kilo tonnes per annum) capacity at Paradip, would be a ready source of feedstock for IndianOil's upcoming 300-KTA textile yarn manufacturing project at Bhadrak in Odisha, and can similarly facilitate other textile and polyester projects in the region."

The PX/PTA project will be completed by early 2024. The petrochemicals complex will have a PX production capacity of 800,000 tonnes per annum, which would be the feedstock for production of



PTA. The production capacity of PTA would be 1,200,000 tonnes per annum. PTA is the raw material for the production of polyester along with MEG. Indian Oil's MEG production facility is already under implementation at Paradip and will become operational towards the end of 2021.

The availability of both PTA and MEG at Paradip will give a boost to polyester manufacturing facilities in the vicinity. Also, 50,000 tonnes per annum of Toluene will be produced. With the commissioning of

both PTA and MEG projects, the Petrochemical Intensity Index of Paradip Refinery will increase to 14.7 from the present level of 4.5.

PTA is a major raw material for manufacture of polyester fibre/yarn, PET bottles and polyester film used in packaging applications. PTA and MEG combined are the main feedstocks for polyester manufacture. The Petroleum, Chemical and Petrochemical Investment Region (PCPIR) of Paradip will have these feedstocks of world-class quality available under one roof.

Auto fuel prices remain unchanged

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 1: A day after a hefty ₹8.38 per litre cut in diesel prices in the national capital due to VAT reduction, the oil marketing companies again went on a pause mode to keep auto fuel prices unchanged across the country Saturday. Accordingly, diesel continues to be priced at ₹73.56 a litre in Delhi while petrol price remains static at ₹80.43 a litre.



Across the metros, petrol and diesel prices are keeping steady for the past five days as pump prices of auto fuels have not been changed.

On Friday, diesel prices fell by a sharp ₹8.38 a litre following Delhi government's decision to reduce VAT on the product from 30% to 16.75%.

The price cut has again made diesel cheaper than petrol in the city after more than a month. In fact, diesel is cheaper than petrol in Delhi by the widest margin among all metros now.

Delhi was the only major city in the country where diesel prices were higher than petrol. Diesel prices first rose above petrol's in Delhi last month, much to the discomfort of the transport sector and the fuel dealers.

The ₹1.5 a litre difference had led to substantial loss of business for pump operators in Delhi as vehicle owners preferred to buy diesel in neighbouring Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

Apple beats Saudi Aramco as world's most valuable co.

AGENCIES

San Francisco, August 1: Riding on strong quarter results despite the pandemic, Apple has surpassed Saudi Aramco to become the world's most valuable company with a market cap of \$1.84 trillion.

The strong earnings report helped Apple shares closed up 10.47% Friday to become the world's most valuable publicly traded company, surpassing the largest oil producer, reports CNBC.

Saudi Aramco now trails at \$1.76 trillion. Despite the pandemic that hit its supply chain and forced the iPhone maker to close retail stores worldwide, Apple shares are up more than 44% this year.

Apple has posted \$59.7 billion in revenue for its fiscal 2020 third quarter that ended June 27, an increase of 11% from the year-ago quarter, as iPhone sales beat the Wall Street estimates.

RATE WOES

Rupee to weaken as further repo cut expected

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 1: A likely cut in repo rate will weaken the Indian rupee, which has lately been supported by healthy fund inflows. Analysts said that the currency will move into a range between 75 and 74.50 as rising forex reserves keep the rupee in check.

The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee is expected to release its resolution on the monetary policy after its meeting on August 4 to 6.

It is widely expected that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to administer another dose of lending rate cut to aid the revival process from the COVID-19 induced economic downturn.

"The RBI is lapping up dollars heavily under 75 and speculators are



supplying. A rate cut may marginally weaken the rupee, but not much as relatively undervalued

rupee and high rate differential with the US can support the currency. A range of 75.25 and 74.70 is on cards," said Anindya Banerjee, DVP, Currency and Rates, Kotak Securities.

Recently, India's foreign exchange reserves increased by \$4.99 billion during the week ended July 24. The reserves grew to \$522.63 billion from \$517.637 billion. India's forex reserves comprise

foreign currency assets (FCAs), gold reserves, special drawing rights (SDRs) and the RBI's position with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

According to Sajal Gupta, Head, Forex and Rates, Edelweiss Securities, "The market shall be watching the RBI commentary on monetary policy. MPC is expected to be dovish and growth supporting. Break below 74.50 would only give further direction to the market."

Last Friday, the rupee marginally appreciated to 74.81 against a greenback.

"We expect a rate cut of at least 25 bps to support the slowing growth," said Rahul Gupta, Head of Research-Currency, Emkay Global Financial Services.

"This may give a boost to risk appetite and weigh on the USD-INR spot. Although the spot has not broken the crucial support of 74.50, unless it falls below that, we expect the spot to remain afloat. The trend for the next week will continue to be sideways with bearish bias between 74.50 and 75.10," Gupta added.

PLI SCHEME

'Mobile cos commit ₹11K cr investment'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 1: Industry body ICEA, which represents top mobile phone makers like Apple, Foxconn, Wistron, Lava, etc, on Saturday said companies have committed investments worth ₹11,000 crore under the PLI scheme and they will surpass manufacturing estimates by 2 to 2.5 times.

Major global players Samsung Wistron, Pegatron, Foxconn and Hon Hai and Indian companies such as Lava, Dixon, Micromax, Padget Electronics, Sojo, UTL and Optimus have applied for benefits under the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme.

According to the estimates of India Cellular and Electronics Association (ICEA), mobile phone companies will increase devices production in the country to around

₹27.5 lakh crore on higher side under the PLI compared to government's announcement of ₹11 lakh crore.

Union telecom and IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has announced that as many as 22 domestic and international

firms have lined up with proposals for mobile phones production worth ₹11 lakh crore, which have potential to create direct and indirect jobs for around 12 lakh people over the next five years.



Parisians complete domestic quadruple with Coupe de la Ligue triumph edging past Olympique Lyonnais 6-5 via penalty shootout



PSG STAMP AUTHORITY

Paris, August 1: Paris St Germain completed their fourth domestic quadruple as they scrapped past Olympique Lyonnais 6-5 on penalties to lift the Coupe de la Ligue Friday with the match ending in a goalless stalemate after regular and extra time.

Second-half substitute Pablo Sarabia scored PSG's final penalty in the shootout after goalkeeper Keylor Navas had saved Bertrand Traore's spot-kick to give the Ligue 1 champions and French Cup winners their ninth Coupe de la Ligue trophy.

It was the last roar for the competition, which was founded in 1995, as the French Professional Football League (LFP) decided in September to scrap it as of next season until further notice.

The LFP had failed to secure a broadcaster for the 2020-2024 period but reserved the right

to relaunch the competition in the future.

Lyon keeper Anthony Lopes made a string of good saves in a cagey contest played in front of 5,000 fans at Stade de France, who were allowed into the stadium in line with coronavirus safety regulations.

Lopes denied Brazilian forward Neymar three times and also kept out shots by Angel Di Maria and Idrissa Gueye, while Navas kept out a Maxwell Cornet free kick at the other end.

Lyon defender Rafael da Silva was sent off in the last minute of extra time for a professional foul on Di Maria and Neymar blazed the free-kick over the bar.

The Brazilian held his nerve to keep PSG alive in the shootout before Navas blocked Traore's penalty and Sarabia calmly slotted his shot past Lopes to spark wild celebrations among his team mates.

PSG, who beat St Etienne 1-0 in the French

Cup final last Friday, will face Italian side Atalanta in the Champions league quarter-finals August 12 in Lisbon.

Their win over Lyon also means that Stade Reims, who finished sixth in the French League, have snapped up a berth in next season's Europa League qualifying.

The last match of the French season got off to a lackluster start, as both teams struggled to create meaningful opportunities. It wasn't until late in the contest that there seemed to be a sense of urgency on either end of the pitch.

PSG had the best chance to break the deadlock, as Neymar's header came close to creeping under the crossbar before it was superbly pushed away by an outstretched Lopes.

The Lyon goalkeeper came up with another important stop in extra time when his diving effort denied Angel Di Maria's powerful shot from the edge of the box.

PSG had a brief scare when Lyon came close

to taking the lead in the second half of extra time. However, a wide-open Maxwell Cornet failed to hit the target from close range with a wild volley off a corner.

The match then went to a shootout, during which the two sides were perfect after five sets of players stepped up to the mark. After coming close on a pair of penalties, Navas finally got his hand on a shot when he denied Traore.

With the match on the line, Sarabia comfortably slotted the ball past Lopes before celebrating with his teammates.

PSG kicked off their charge toward winning the domestic quadruple by winning the Trophée des Champions last summer. They then were crowned champions of Ligue 1 when the season was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic. The club returned to action last week to win the Coupe de France with a 1-0 win over Saint-Etienne.

6th sense a must to be successful striker: Bhutia

New Delhi, August 1: Legendary Indian footballer Bhaichung Bhutia says all strikers need to develop 'sixth sense to smell' the opportune time to strike if they are to score regularly.

In a chat with AIFF TV, Bhutia, the first Indian footballer to have played 100 international matches, said strikers can be successful only when they can read goal-scoring situations well.

"It's all about that sixth sense. You need to smell it as to where it would be coming. The best strikers in the world all have that sense," said Bhutia, who is known as 'Sikkimese Sniper' for his striking prowess during his playing days.

"You need to read situations. Unless you don't develop your sixth sense, you won't be a successful striker," said the 43-year-old former captain who retired in 2011 after scoring 40 goals from 104 international matches.

ing goals was all about life and death for Bhaichung-bhai', Bhutia stressed on the importance of 'making those runs every time you sense it'.

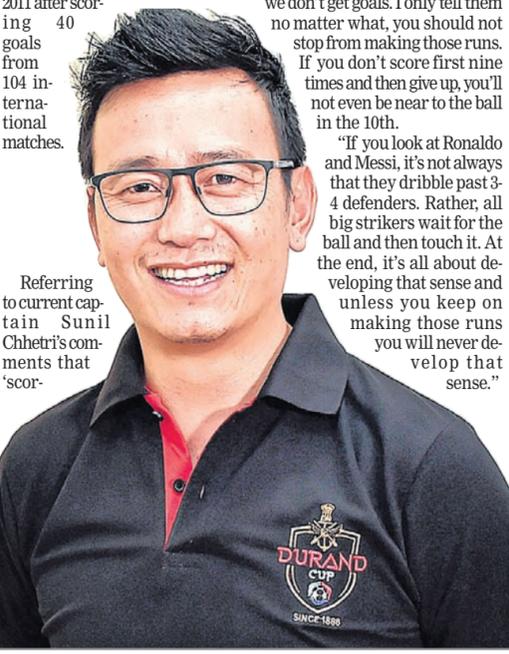
"Those runs are extremely critical for a striker. I used to keep telling Sunil that you need to anticipate and make runs from where you can score. If you go wide, you have to dribble and get past the defender, and by the time you turn and get past him, others will also rush in to block you," he said.

"Only once or twice out of maybe 10 situations you will get the chance to score. But you need to keep on doing it."

Bhutia said top strikers will need 'to develop technically and mentally' because they get only a fraction of a second to put the ball past the goalkeeper into the net.

"Very often strikers come to me to ask what we can do when we don't get goals. I only tell them no matter what, you should not stop from making those runs. If you don't score first nine times and then give up, you'll not even be near to the ball in the 10th."

"If you look at Ronaldo and Messi, it's not always that they dribble past 3-4 defenders. Rather, all big strikers wait for the ball and then touch it. At the end, it's all about developing that sense and unless you keep on making those runs you will never develop that sense."



Referring to current captain Sunil Chhetri's comments that 'scor-

India hockey camps to begin next week

New Delhi, August 1: The Olympics-bound Indian men's and women's hockey teams will return for their respective national camps August 4 at SAI Centre in Bangalore and head straight to a 14-day quarantine in keeping with the COVID-19 protocols.

The decision was taken by the Sports Authority of India after the nodal body received the go-ahead from the Karnataka government that has been battling rising COVID-19 cases in recent times.

"The camp will begin in keeping with all protocols and in strict adherence to the SOPs of SAI and that of the state government.

Athletes, coaches and support staff will also be tested when they arrive in Bangalore to ensure that all campers are at a reduced risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus," SAI said in a statement Saturday.

The players and support staff, who will arrive from various parts of the country and abroad, will undergo a two-week quarantine inside the campus before resuming training. They will be tested on arrival and will be tested again after the quarantine period ends.

Having spent nearly four months in the camp due to the nationwide lockdown, the players headed to their home towns June 19 for a four-week break after the easing of restrictions.

Billings eyeing 2023 WC

Southampton, August 1: Sam Billings believes England ODI side is one of the toughest to break into but said he is banking on his IPL experience to stay in contention for the upcoming two World Cups in India.

Drafted into the team following a back injury to Joe Denly, Billings smashed an unbeaten 67 to guide England to a six-wicket win over Ireland in the opening ODI Thursday.

With India scheduled to host the T20 World Cup in 2021 and the 50-over World Cup in 2023, Billings feels his ability to play spin will hold him in good stead.

"I think that's definitely something that I can potentially offer compared to other players. My game against spin has benefited from all the different franchises I have experienced, particularly the IPL,"



Sam Billings plays a shot during his match-winning innings against Ireland in the first ODI

In ODI format or longer format, the subcontinent is somewhere I think I can do well. The longer format is one I want to push my case in if I get the opportunity

SAM BILLINGS

Billings, who has played for Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals, was quoted as saying by Skysports.

"I have had relative success on turning pitches in Chennai and Delhi. I back my game against spin and I have to continue to work hard. In ODI format or longer format, the subcontinent is somewhere I think I can do well. The longer format is one I want to push my case in if I get the opportunity."

The 29-year-old, who has played 16 ODIs and 26 T20Is, never got a reg-

ENGLISH CRICKETER BANKING ON IPL EXPERIENCE

ular playing time with England since making his debut in 2015 but he grabbed the opportunity with both hands when he was included in the playing XI against Ireland.

"In a nutshell, my career hit a heavy speed bump last year (with the injury) so for me it's about building that momentum back up," said Billings, who missed out of the 2019 World Cup campaign due to a shoulder injury.

"It's been very up down (with England), I suppose, over the last five years. I played five ODIs against New Zealand straight after the last World Cup in 2015 and then 10 since then and July 2018.

"The opportunities have been sporadic but England's ODI side is arguably one of the toughest sports teams to get into at the moment so all I can do is take my opportunities when they arise."

Hamilton takes pole position, Bottas second



Silverstone, August 1: Lewis Hamilton set a new track record at the British Grand Prix and clinched a record-extending 91st pole position Saturday.

He needs five more wins to equal Michael Schumacher's Formula One (F1) record of 91 GP wins. The defending champion is also odds-on to equal the F1 great's record of seven world titles.

He clocked a time of one minute 24.303 seconds at the Silverstone circuit where he was won a record six times. He was 0.313 seconds ahead of Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas and about one second faster than Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

Charles Leclerc gave Ferrari a small boost with fourth ahead of Lando Norris, who could face a grid penalty after failing to slow down under a yellow flag in the second part of qualifying when Hamilton made a rare mistake. He span his car and sent gravel spraying, bringing the session to a brief halt after Bottas had set the quickest time.

Vettel, who had problems with understeering and almost went off the track toward the end of Q3, was only 10th fastest in qualifying.

Red Bull's Alexander Albon finished 12th ahead of Racing Point's last-minute replacement Nico Hulkenberg. He lost his seat in F1 this year, and is driving because Sergio Perez tested positive for a trip back to his native Mexico after his mother had an accident.

Nicolas Latifi's Williams span off the track near the end of Q1, the latest incident in the Canadian driver's difficult start in F1. Kimi Raikkonen and Kevin Magnussen were also among the five drivers eliminated from Q1.

Olympic torch relay began in 1936 at Hitler's Berlin Games

The torch relay was not always a fixture of the modern Olympics, which began in 1896. The relay tradition started at Adolph Hitler's 1936 Berlin Olympics — the Games of the XI Olympiad — and was the brainchild of Carl Diem, who was the head of the organizing committee.

The Tokyo Olympic relay is scheduled to begin its Japan leg March 26 in northeastern Fukushima prefecture. Tony Perrotet, in his 2004 book 'The Naked Olympics' — published to coincide with the 2004 Athens Olympics — captured the paradox of the Nazi regime appropriating the relay.

"Ironically, considering its repellent origins, the torch race has come to symbolize international brotherhood today, and remains a centerpiece of our own pomp-filled Olympic opening ceremonies," Perrotet wrote.

He added: "The Nazis knew a good propaganda symbol when they saw one." Perrotet recounts how the Olympic flame was run from Greece to Germany over 12 days, ending with the lighting of a 'colossal bra-

zier in the Berlin stadium before the Fuhrer's approving gaze'. Each of the torches carried the logo of German arms manufacturer Krupp, Perrotet wrote.

The first person to set off July 20, 1936, was Greek athlete Konstantin Kondylis. The torch meandered through Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Germany with each runner covering a kilometer — or .62 miles.

Perrotet wrote that Hitler admired the images of Greek gods and goddesses and wanted the Olympics to promote his idea of the supremacy, the perfection, of the German nation.

"Hitler took considerable personal interest in the ritual, and pumped funds into its promotion: The Nazi propaganda machine covered the torch relay slavishly, broadcast radio reports from every step of the route, and filled the Games with the iconography of ancient Greek athletics."

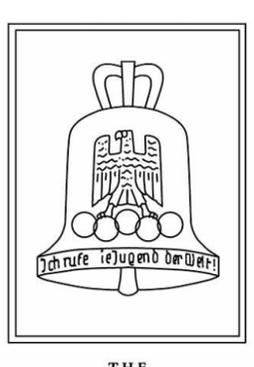
The first Olympic flame appeared at the 1928 Amsterdam Games, and then again in 1932 in Los Angeles. "Very little is known about the 1928 and 1932 flames, but they were lit on



site and not at Olympia." Dr. Bill Mallon, a former president of the International Society of Olympic Historians, said in an email to The Associated Press.

There was no relay until 1936, and it's been continuous since then. The Olympics were canceled during World War II (Tokyo was to hold the 1940 Games) and resumed in London in 1948. There have been modifications along the way.

The flame for the Summer Olympics has always been lit in



Ancient Olympia, Greece, but Winter Olympic torches have not always been lit there. For the 1952 and 1960 Winter Olympics, it was lit in Morgedal, Norway. For the 1956 Winter Games, it was lit in Rome.

More recently, for the 1994 Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway, the torch was lit in Greece and a second torch was lit in Norway. Having two flame origins did not please the tradition-steeped Greeks.

The relay was 'commercialized'

enough of a problem that Peter Ueberroth (chairman of the organizing committee) and Juan Antonio Samaranch (IOC president) actually made contingency plans for the relay in case the Greeks held to their threat. They eventually backed off and the flame was lit in Ancient Olympia in 1984."

The 2008 Beijing Olympic torch relay ran into trouble as well. The Chinese relay, in addition to a domestic route, also circled the globe. It was targeted along the way by anti-China and pro-Tibet protests at half the stops. Taiwan also boycotted the relay when China wanted to include it on its domestic route — implying Chinese sovereignty over the self-governing island.

China's authoritarian government has viewed Taiwan as a renegade province since the two separated in the 1949 civil war. Taiwan, which is also known as the Republic of China, governs itself as an independent state.

The chaos at the time led IOC President Jacques Rogge to say the Olympics and the relay were in 'crisis'. After the Beijing Olympics ended, the IOC did away with the international portion of the relay.