



IN LOVE WITH INDIA

Actor Evelyn Sharma says she has been trying different looks but Indian attires are one of her favourites

LEISURE P2



TUSSLE OVER PORTFOLIOS

After the second expansion of MP Cabinet, pulls and pressures are on over allocation of portfolios

TWO STATES P7



OLI-PRACHANDA TALKS FAIL

The talks between embattled PM K P Sharma Oli and the NCP's executive chairman Prachanda failed

INTERNATIONAL P10

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Fate of Maharaja’s art collection hangs in balance

AGENCIES

Mumbai, July 5: While the Modi government wants to make a 100 per cent divestment in Air India (AI), which has a combined debt of ₹60,074 crore, there is no decision on what it will do with the 8,000 pieces of priceless art collection housed in the iconic AI building in Mumbai.

The art collection includes paintings by MF Hussain, VS Gaitonde, KH Ara and Kishen Khanna. The artifacts there include approximately 2,500 modern and traditional sculptures, by artists such as B Vithal, Pillo Pochkhanwala and P Janakitan.

In fact, AI was considered a significant patron of the Progressive Artists Group in the 1950’s which comprised world famous artists. AI, in its tax payer-funded treasure chest, has a col-

lection of exquisite and antique textiles in different fabrics - including the famous “Shringar” collection of costumes, which has been displayed both in India and abroad to high acclaim.

Even as the national carrier is out on the block one would reckon that such a magnificent collection of around 8,000 pieces of priceless art would be part of the asset evaluation of AI for its bidders. Wrong. The art collection has disappeared mysteriously from the evaluation.

A journalist had filed a Right to Information (RTI) application in February this year seeking to know from the Ministry of Aviation the following: ‘When was the last valuation of the art works carried out?; ‘What is the valuation?; ‘Has this valuation been included in the sales prospectus of AI?’ and ‘Has the art catalogue of the AI collection been included in the

assets for sale or is it going to be sold separately?

The RTI respnse confirmed that the major art collection possessed by AI has never been valued. This is shocking as this art collection was paid for

by tax payers’ money and, hence, the collection should have been appraised by experts and valued every year.

The RTI response further said that the art catalogue was not going to be part of the assets for sale of the airline. This is strange as the airline is bleeding tax payers’ money and something that would add rare value to the sale should have been included.

The RTI was categorical that the AI art collection is not part of the sale prospectus of AI. This inevitably leads to the question that once AI is sold what will happen to the AI’s art collection. The RTI response claims that since the collection has never been catalogued or valued how it will be disposed.

Sources say in-house valuations based on the prices the artists command in the open market the collection could be worth ₹500 crore or more.

Four Maoists gunned down in Kandhamal

POST NEWS NETWORK

Phulbani, July 5: Four Maoists with cash rewards on their heads were killed in an encounter with police in southern Odisha’s Kandhamal district Sunday morning.

Sources said that acting on a tip-off, District Voluntary Force (DVF) and Special Operation Group (SOG) personnel launched a joint combing operation in Sirla village under Tumudibandh police limits at around 7 am.

During the operation, the Maoists opened fire at the security personnel who immediately retaliated. However, after an hour-long encounter, the Left-wing extremists stopped firing and managed to escape from the spot.

Later, the security personnel found the bodies of four Maoists, including that of a woman, at the spot. All four of them are suspected to be members of the Bansadhara-Nagavali-Ghumusar division of the banned CPI (Maoist), the DGP Abay said.

“There was an exchange of fire between Maoists and SOG, DVF at Tumudibandha, Kandhamal. Security forces were fired upon and they retaliated in self-defence. There are four casualties on Maoists side. Some of them are injured. Combing operations are on in the area. The SP is also at the spot,” tweeted Odisha Police.

Huge cache of arms and ammunition has also been seized from the spot.

Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy congratulated the officers and jawans for the successful operation.

“Congrats to Officers & Jawans of Odisha Police on successful ops in Kandhamal. Their brave action is much appreciated. Death of four Maoists confirmed. This strengthens our resolve to free our state from extremism and spur all round development in the state,” tweeted the Chief Secretary.

Combing operations are underway in the forest in the presence of Kandhamal SP Prateek Singh. Police sources said that all the four Maoists belonged to Bansadhara-Ghumusara-Nagavali (BGN) division of the outlawed CPI-Maoist outfit.

Wait a minute! Seems like somebody has already informed the gangster about the raid!

Three test COVID +ve at BMC office

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 5: Following detection of three positive cases, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Saturday sealed the engineering section on its premises for 48 hours. The staff has been asked to go under home quarantine. According to the BMC Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary, an executive engineer, an assistant engineer and a driver had gone on leave to attend a wedding in Sambalpur, June 26. They underwent COVID-19 test after returning to Bhubaneswar and following which they tested positive. “Both the engineers on their return were asked to undergo home quarantine. Only when one of them complained of fever Tuesday we tested their blood samples. Some staff members might have come in contact with the two engineers,” Chaudhary stated. Questions have now been raised against the handling of the pandemic by the BMC.

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP		
MAX	30.1°C	31.0°C
MIN	26.0°C	24.4°C
Humidity	98%	91%
Rainfall	27.0mm	2.0mm
Forecast	Cloudy weather mainly	

COVID-19 TALLY CROSSES 9K-MARK IN STATE, 36 DEAD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 5: The state’s COVID-19 tally Sunday crossed the 9,000 mark with 469 fresh cases, while two more fatalities due to the infection pushed the death toll to 36, a health department official said.

The number of coronavirus patients in the state rose to 9,070.

Two men succumbed to the disease while undergoing treatment at hospitals, he said.

Bargarh and Angul, he said.

The official said 469 more people, including four National Disaster Response Force personnel tested positive for coronavirus.

The NDRF personnel were placed under institutional quarantine after their return from West Bengal, where they had gone for restoration work in the wake of cyclone Amphan, the official said.

Taking the four into account, the number of disaster response per-

How the numbers galloped		
April 25	100	
May 6	200	
May 9	300	
May 11	400	
May 12	500	
May 19	1,000	
July 4	9,000	

“Regret to inform the demise of a 40-year-old COVID positive patient from Gajapati district and a 64-year-old man from Sundergarh district, who was also suffering from diabetes,” the official said.

A 45-year-old woman from Balasore district, who tested positive for COVID-19, died but her death was due to “massive haemorrhagic exudative pleural effusion,” he said.

With this, the number of coronavirus patients who died due to “non-COVID reasons” increased to 10 in Odisha.

Of the 36 deaths so far in the state, Ganjam, the worst-hit district, accounts for 20, followed by seven in Khurda, four in Cuttack, and one each in Gajapati, Sundergarh, Puri,

sonnel testing positive for the virus has increased to 299.

Of the fresh 469 cases, 317 were detected in quarantine centres and 152 were found as an outcome of the contact-tracing exercises, the official said.

The new cases were reported from 20 districts. Ganjam registered 116 fresh cases, followed by Cuttack (94) and Sundergarh (66).

The state now has 3,090 active cases, while 5,934 patients have recovered from the disease.

The Health Department conducted tests of 5,317 samples in the past 24 hours.

Meanwhile, the aggravating situation has called for imposing fresh shut-downs in various districts of the state, including Cuttack, Ganjam and places in Sundergarh. **P3**

Fourth of July fireworks explode over the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument and the US Capitol along the National Mall in Washington

Kerala extends COVID regulations till July 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Thiruvananthapuram, July 5: In a bid to cut the chain of transmission of the novel coronavirus and to minimise the potential of its spread, Kerala Sunday amended the state Epidemic Disease Ordinance, putting the COVID-control regulations in the state in place for the next one year.

With coronavirus cases gradually increasing in Kerala, the state government has issued new guidelines to act as preventive measures against the pandemic. The new regulations known as ‘Kerala Epidemic Disease Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) Additional Regulations, 2020’, will be in force for a year – till – July 2021, or till further government direction.

This means, people will have to wear masks, maintain social distancing and avoid large gatherings till July 2021. The District Collectors have been instructed to ensure due compliance of the regulations.

IT dept amends TDS form

AS PER THE AMENDED FORM, BANKS WILL HAVE TO REPORT TDS FOR CASH WITHDRAWALS ABOVE ₹1 CRORE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 5: The Income Tax department has amended the TDS form, making it more comprehensive and mandating deductors to state reasons for non-deduction of tax.

As per the amended form, banks will also have to report Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) for cash withdrawals above ₹1 crore.

Through a notification, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has amended Income Tax Rules to include TDS on e-commerce operators, dividend distributed by mutual funds and business trusts, cash withdrawals, professional fees and interest.

Nangia & Co LLP Partner Shailesh Kumar said with this notification, the government has revised the format of forms 26Q and 27Q, where details of TDS amount deducted and deposited on various resident and non-resident pay-

ments are required to be filled.

Form 26Q is used for quarterly filing of TDS returns on any payment other than salary to Indian residents by the government or corporates operating in India.

Form 27Q is used for quarterly filing of TDS returns electronically on any payment other than salary to non-residents, including NRIs and foreigners. Except for government deductors, it is manda-

tory for all other deductors to mention their PAN in the form.

Kumar said, “The new forms are more comprehensive and require payers to report not only those cases where TDS is deducted, but also cases where TDS is not deducted for any reason. Separate codes have been provided to cover different situations of deduction of TDS at lower rate/non-deduction of TDS.”

The revised forms and rules also seek to incorporate reporting for new sections of TDS inserted in the Income Tax Act, such as Section 194N for cash withdrawals, Section 197A permitting non-deduction of TDS in various situations, among others.

In the 2019-20 Budget, the government had introduced a TDS levy of 2 per cent on cash withdrawals of more than Rs1 crore from a bank account in one financial year to discourage business payments in cash.

WHO halts HCQ, HIV drugs in COVID trials

REUTERS

Geneva, July 5: The World Health Organization (WHO) said Saturday that it was discontinuing its trials of the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine and combination HIV drug lopinavir/ritonavir in hospitalised patients with COVID-19 after they failed to reduce mortality.

The setback came as the WHO also reported more than 200,000 new cases globally of the disease for the first time in a single day. The United States accounted for 53,213 of the total 212,326 new cases recorded on Friday, the WHO said.

“These interim trial results show that hydroxychloroquine and

lopinavir/ritonavir produce little or no reduction in the mortality of hospitalised COVID-19 patients when compared to standard of care. Solidarity trial investigators will interrupt the trials with immediate effect,” the WHO said in a statement, referring to large multi-country trials that the agency is leading.

The UN agency said the decision, taken on the recommendation of the trial’s international steering committee, does not affect other studies where those drugs are used for non-hospitalised patients or as a prophylaxis.

Another branch of the WHO-led trial is looking at the potential effect of Gilead’s antiviral drug remdesivir on COVID-19.

Kanye announces US presidential bid on Twitter

TESLA CEO ELON MUSK EXTENDS SUPPORT TO THE RAPPER’S BID TWEETING, “YOU HAVE MY FULL SUPPORT!”

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Washington, July 5: Kanye West, the entertainment mogul who urges listeners in one song to “reach for the stars, so if you fall, you land on a cloud,” claimed Saturday he is challenging Donald Trump for the US presidency in 2020.

“We must now realize the promise of America by trusting God, unifying our vision and building our future. I am running for president of the United States! #2020VISION,” the born-again billionaire rapper tweeted as Americans marked Independence Day.

West offered no further details on his supposed campaign, four months before the November election, and

it is unclear if he has officially registered to run for office.

Hundreds of thousands of Twitter users reacted to the star’s announcement and “Kanye” shot to become the top trending term on the platform, although many questioned whether the volatile rapper would go through with his plan and others claimed it was a publicity stunt.

His wife, reality star Kim Kardashian, replied with a US flag emoji, while Tesla CEO Elon Musk wrote: “You have my full support!”

The 43-year-old has mentioned running for President several times and he said last year he would run for President in 2024.

West long ago broke ranks with most of the left-leaning entertain-

ment industry to loudly voice his support for Trump.

In 2018, they met in the Oval Office – a surreal tete-a-tete that included a hug from the rapper as well as an on-camera rant featuring an expletive not often repeated for the White House press corps.

That year, West also delivered a lengthy soliloquy to a president who many deem racist, telling him he loved him – to the dismay of many Democrats and fellow artists.

But in 2019, during an interview with Zane Lowe of Apple Music’s Beats 1 show, he said his support for Trump had been a way to razz Democrats – and announced his own presidential ambitions.

“There will be a time when I will

be the President of the US, and I will remember... any founder that didn’t have the capacity to understand culturally what we were doing.”

It was unclear to whom the artist was referring.

The announcement came days after West, who has taken a very public turn towards Christianity in recent years, released a new song, “Wash Us In the Blood,” along with an accompanying video including imagery from recent anti-racism protests.

For weeks now Trump, criticized for his response both to the coronavirus pandemic and to anti-racism protests, has been lagging in the polls behind his Democratic rival, Joe Biden.

FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshSpeaks.com
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ARIES

At times it is a good thing to be under pressure, because it brings out your potential to the fullest. You will outsmart all your colleagues in the work you do. However, results may not match your expectations.

TAURUS

This day, you can't afford to take chances with your health, says Ganesh. If there is the least sign or symptom of illness, go consult a doctor straight away. As you are going to be unusually prone to injuries and infections, it is advisable that you stay at home.

GEMINI

You will spend your time figuring out other people and their motivations today. You will probably spend time discussing issues of security and finance with your family members today. You will gain love and appreciation from people owing to your caring nature, says Ganesh.

CANCER

You may get a gift from your life partner. Ties with business partners will be good and you will get a good news from them. Time to make new plans for the future with spouse. You will feel greater companionship with spouse, giving you joy.

LEO

Your day will be one of mixed results. On one hand you will be dissatisfied with your spouse or business partner, on the other hand you will make fantastic returns on your speculations. You will be able to maintain a balance owing to the advise of some friend, says Ganesh.

VIRGO

Today you will find yourself overflowing with ideas. You have a soothing touch, the hands of a healer, and so you will be able to help many people, says Ganesh. You will be very considerate, and your mind-reading abilities will work wonders both for you and your loved ones.

LIBRA

Ganesh says today is a good day for government related work. Those of you who are government employees will be able to get good results for their work. Your work will be rewarded and your performance and efficiency will be praised.

SCORPIO

Free your mind from negative thoughts. You need to be in high spirits to work with your team and delegate equal responsibilities to your team mates. Know their calibre and designate accordingly.

SAGITTARIUS

Dark and gloomy, that's what how you feel today, foresees Ganesh. However, the cloud to worries is likely to burst during the latter half of the day. Good news from abroad or a phone call from a friend is likely to cheer you up.

CAPRICORN

You will want to expand the horizon of your business. But, you will be confused about the path to take for the expansion. You want to reach to the sky, but such a dilemma will keep you in a double mind. Listen to what your heart says, as it will guide you to the right direction, feels Ganesh.

AQUARIUS

It is your lucky day today! Whatever you will wish for, it will fall into your lap, be it name, fame, money or love. During the second half of the day, you will keep yourself occupied with your hobbies like reading, writing, playing active role in discussion groups or research, says Ganesh.

PISCES

You will find yourself ecstatic now that certain important projects you have been slaving over are nearing completion. You will implement new strategies and will hope that everything goes according to plan. You will experience intimate moments with your partner.

DAUGHTER COMPLETELY CHANGED WAHLBERG

Actor Mark Wahlberg credits daughter Ella, his firstborn, for changing him saying he's now more respectful towards women. Wahlberg has three more children - Michael, 14, Brendan, 11, and Frace, 10 - with his wife Rhea Durham.

THERON FINDS HOMESCHOOLING HER KIDS 'INCREDIBLY STRESSFUL'

Actress Charlize Theron says her biggest challenge has been homeschooling her children. The Oscar winner has joked about homeschooling her two daughters amid the coronavirus pandemic, reports usmagazine.com.

Evelyn finds Indian wear classy

Mumbai: German-Indian actress Evelyn Sharma loves Indian wear. She has been painting the social media with various colours, and in one of the throwback photos she is seen sporting a desi look in yellow.

"There isn't much to do now. I have been trying different looks, and Indian attires are one of my favourites. They are just so classy. As actors we need to experiment with our looks and it always helps. Also, they provide some good feed for social media and the Instagram family," she said.

Talking about the desi look, she said: "While I was in Canada, I had tried that look and I think it suits me."

Evelyn made her Hindi film debut in the 2012 film *From Sydney With Love*. She was then seen in films like *Nautanki Saala*, *Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani*, *Yaariyan* and *Saaho*.

PARIDHI TURNS MAKE-UP ARTIST, CHEF

Mumbai: Actress Paridhi Sharma is happy to get back to work and shoot for the show *Jag Jaanani Maa Vaishno Devi - Kahani Mata Rani Ki*, but is also taking all the possible precautions to keep her safe in times of the coronavirus pandemic.

She has been carrying her own home-made food with her and is using her sanitisers regularly. She has been doing her make-up too.

"A big sigh of relief came when we came to know that our shoot location, which is at Naigaon, is under green zone. The crew members too travel from the green zone area," she said.

"As a precautionary measure, I carry my own food, water, etc. I also use sanitisers at regular interval and follow social distancing norms on set. The make-up artists are fully covered with their proper PPE kits. Though to avoid any risk, I have started doing my own make-up," she added.

When Sabyasachi missed out on working with SRK, Aamir

Mumbai: Veteran Bengali actor Sabyasachi Chakrabarty has acted in Hindi films like *Dil Se*, *Parineeta* and *Khakee*, besides a brush with international cinema in Mira Nair's *The Namesake*. The actor who has been popular as *Feluda* among Bengali film buffs, shares he missed out on working with superstars Aamir Khan and Shah Rukh Khan while in Mumbai.

"Most of the time I had to say 'no' to an opportunity because the role came to me at the last minute - when the casting director calls me and asks for dates within 15 days. At times they say that they have outdoor shooting abroad that I have to be a part of. Since I always have schedules for at least two months in hand, I couldn't say no to all those I had already committed because of one offer that comes at the very last moment," explained the 63-year-old actor.

"Aamir thought of a character for me in *Lagaan* while Shah Rukh wanted me in *Ashoka*. There were many such offers I couldn't take," shared the actor who recently appeared in web series *Laalbaaz*.

Tribal weavers optimistic about revival of fortunes



CHAITALI SHOME, OP

Bhubaneswar: Documentary film *Kotpad Weaving: The Story of a Race Against Time*, made in 2018 by Biswanath Rath, is the first Odia non-fiction which is currently streaming in the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, and other English-speaking territories of Amazon Prime. The feature tells the rich and fascinating story of a unique, timeless textile tradition practiced in the tribal region of Koraput district in Odisha. It also highlights the plight of Kotpad weavers, mostly from Mirgan community, who have been spinning an amazing fabric adorned with nature-inspired tribal motifs. Needless to say, the craft and its artisans have never got the recognition and patronage they deserve.

Even as the film, released a couple of years back, had bagged a few awards at several international film festivals, it didn't have much of an impact on the living condition of the weavers. But this time, after the film's streaming on OTT platform, the artisans are quite optimistic about a revival in their fortunes.

Kapilash and Sudha, a weaver couple from Kotpad, says, "There is little awareness among people about the unique weaving technique of this fabric. In fact, at many textile expos we often have to explain the customers about the intricacies of Kotpad designs. But with the online streaming of the documentary film, we will certainly get global exposure. Who knows, it may attract international buyers also."

Gobardhan Panika, a master weaver of Kotpad handloom, who has been honoured with a Padma Shri for his contribution to the art of weaving, credits his wife for whatever he has achieved.

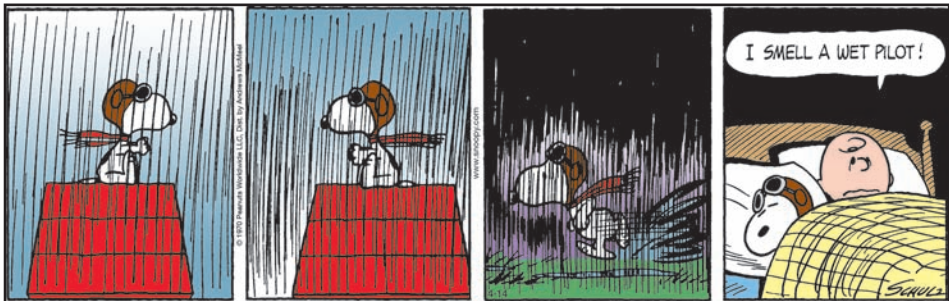
tensive. These days, I am getting more calls from the buyers who have watched the documentary film online. At the moment, I am sensing that the fate of artisans will take a turn for the better," says an excited Panika.

Although Kotpad handloom fabrics got the GI tag back in 2005, it has not been in demand the way it should have been, says Sweta Singh, a city-based designer. "The design needs global promotion ahead of fabrics such as linen, viscose and other popular textile material. The artisans are leading a pitiable life in Koraput which is why it is time the state government should promote the craft aggressively to help out the tribal weaver community," adds Singh.

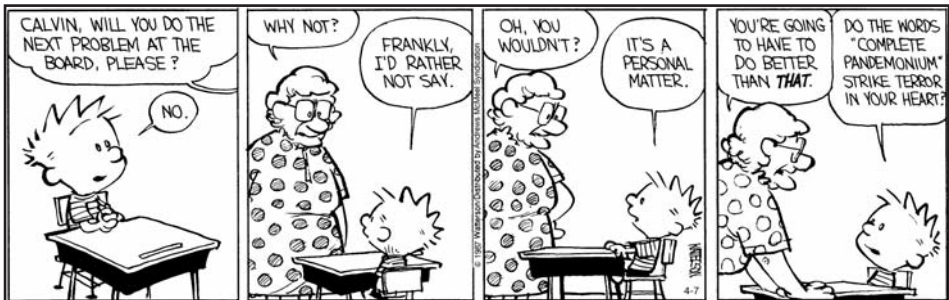
On the other hand, filmmaker Rath who has been instrumental in highlighting the plight of the weavers, recalls, "I came to know about Kotpad handloom only in October 2016. So, I decided to make a bid to revive this near-extinct tradition through my film. *Kotpad Weaving* ... is a humble attempt to recognise the weavers' issues and suggest a few possible solutions. I am overwhelmed that Amazon Prime is now streaming my documentary for the global audience. I am quite hopeful of a change in fate of the weavers."



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

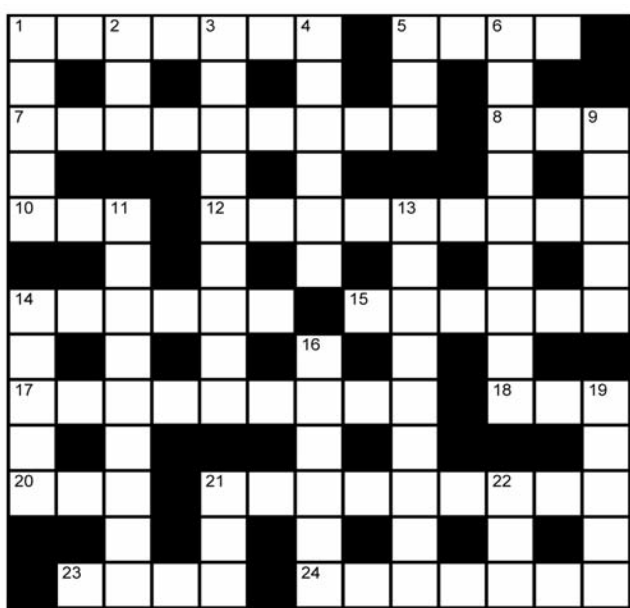


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Influential person (3,4)
 - 5 Shoe part
 - 7 Figures of speech
 - 8 Wrath
 - 10 Thumbs-up vote
 - 12 Daughter of Zeus
 - 14 Countless
 - 15 Frugality
 - 17 Took the scenic route
 - 18 World view
 - 20 Japanese sash
 - 21 Australian marsupial (5,4)
 - 23 Host's request
 - 24 Spouse
 - 3 Hit-or-miss
 - 4 Loving cup
 - 5 Commercial
 - 6 Reproval
 - 9 Boot out
 - 11 Trapeze acrobat
 - 13 Serpents
 - 14 Latin dance
 - 16 Sermonise
 - 19 Skinned
 - 21 Lock opener
 - 22 Historic time
- Down**
- 1 Like some roads
 - 2 Perceive

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

A	V	O	N		Z	I	P		E	B	B
S		L		C	O	N		A	O		
S	A	I	L	O	R	S		V	O	W	E
E		V		V	E			I		T	
T	H	E	M	E		C	A	D	D	I	E
				R		T			E		
R	A	R	I	T			P	L	A	S	M
I		U				O		I			
M	U	F	F	L	E	R		Q	U	O	T
		F	I		A		U	B			
A	B	I	D	E		T	R	O	W	E	L
U		A		S	O		R	S			
K	I	N	G		O	R	T		B	E	V

SUDOKU

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

State details Covid relief measures to SC

THE ODISHA GOVERNMENT TELLS THE COURT THAT NO WILLING MIGRANT WORKER IS STRANDED IN THE STATE AS OF THE CURRENT DATE

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, July 5: As many as 17,690 migrant workers were allotted 171,690 MT of rice and 1,743 migrant families were given 3.486 MT channa under Atma Nirbhar Bharat (ANB) scheme, the state government has informed the Supreme Court.

In an affidavit filed by the state counsel Sibo Sankar Mishra in the apex court Sunday, it has been stated that several initiatives have been taken by the state government to tackle migrant crisis in compliance with the order of the Supreme Court.

The state government has informed the court that no willing migrant worker is stranded in Odisha as of the current date. It further said that advertisements have been published in media asking the migrant workers to register themselves through the helpline number to enable the state government to facilitate their return to their home states. The state has submitted that as many as 1,428 willing migrant workers were sent back to their home states.

The state has introduced Urban Wage Employment Initiative to provide employment opportunities to urban poor working at informal sector with a budgetary allocation of Rs 100 crore. It has also taken steps to provide employment under MGN-

REGA to unskilled migrant workers.

The Odisha government informed the court that it has established helping centres at block and district levels for providing necessary information to the migrant workers regarding the employment schemes. The state has also maintained the details of migrant workers village-wise and district-wise as per the order of the Supreme Court.

The state government has extended supplementary nutrition plan to 4,038 pregnant women and 17,131 lactating mothers. The state has also given financial assistance of Rs 1,500 to 17,84,780 construction workers registered under the Odisha Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board.

The state informed the court that 24 cases under section 51 of Disaster Management Act, 2005 have been registered against migrant workers; out of which, 21 cases have been chargesheeted.

It is to be mentioned here that the Supreme Court had June 6 passed an order in suo motu petition directing the state governments to take necessary steps for transporting the migrant workers to their home states and also asked the states to provide employment opportunities to the migrants affected by the national-wide lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic.

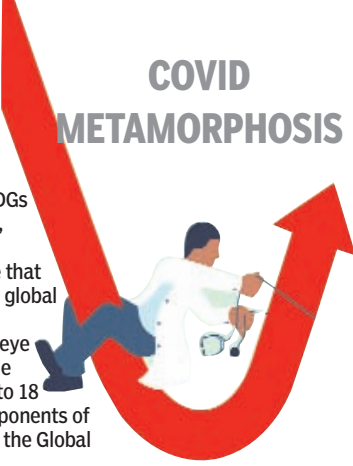


IN NUMBERS	
17,690 migrant workers allotted	171,690 MT rice
1,743 migrant families given 3.486 MT channa	
1,428 willing migrant workers sent to their home states	
24 cases registered against migrants for violating lockdown rules	
Supplementary nutrition plan extended to 4,038 pregnant women and 17,131 lactating mothers	

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OF ₹1,500 GIVEN TO EACH OF 17,84,780 WORKERS

From health issue to socio-economic crisis

The UN's Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to the COVID-19 crisis warns that "the COVID-19 pandemic is far more than a health crisis: it is affecting societies and economies at their core. While the impact of the pandemic will vary from country to country, it will most likely increase poverty and inequalities at a global scale, making achievement of SDGs even more urgent." Assessing the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on societies, economies and vulnerable groups is fundamental to inform and tailor the responses of governments and partners to recover from the crisis and ensure that no one is left behind in this effort. Without urgent socio-economic responses, global suffering will escalate, jeopardizing lives and livelihoods for years to come. Immediate development responses in this crisis must be undertaken with an eye to the future. Development trajectories in the long-term will be affected by the choices countries make now and the support they receive." Over the next 12 to 18 months, the socio-economic response will be one of one of three critical components of the UN's COVID-19 response, alongside the health response, led by WHO, and the Global Humanitarian Response Plan.



OHRC comes to differently-abled woman's rescue

The Commission directs Bolangir Collector to ensure immediate transfer of the specially-abled anganwadi worker

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 5: The Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has directed the Bolangir Collector to ensure transfer of a differently-abled anganwadi worker to a centre near her residence with immediate effect.

The directive came in response to a petition filed by the anganwadi worker, Mamatarani Panda. According to the petition, a differently-abled Panda used to commute to the Chudapali anganwadi centre (C), which was about two kilometres away from her residence, with her brother. However, things turned upside down as her brother died November 20, 2015.

On the other hand, she was given the additional charge of Chudapali



anganwadi centre (B), which is located just few meters away from her residence, after the worker in-charge of the centre died January 24, 2017.

As Chudapali centre was nearby, Panda applied for a regular engagement at the centre when the authorities released an advertisement for the vacant position at the centre.

"She also requested the authorities to consider her plight. Without paying heed to her request, the authorities, however, appointed another person at the Chudapali centre November 14, 2019," said a source quoting Panda's plea.

With no relief in sight, Panda approached the OHRC. She had even applied for mutual transfer between the incumbent worker in-

The District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) has also reportedly approved the mutual transfer. But it was stopped due to the orders by the sub-collector

charge of anganwadi centre and herself. The District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) has also reportedly approved the mutual transfer. But it was stopped due to the orders by the sub-collector.

The OHRC asked the DSWO and sub-collector to submit a report in this regard by August 7.

SANITISATION AT HC



The Orissa High Court in Cuttack being thoroughly sanitised, Sunday, after one of its employees was tested positive for Covid-19

Politicians fume over BMC's 'undemocratic' ban on rallies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, July 5: With the civic authority clamping down on public congregations and gatherings in the City amidst soaring Covid-19 cases, political leaders here have called bans on rallies and demonstrations as undemocratic.

The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Friday, initiated FIR against five political outfits and civil organisations who were involved in protests and rallies. Citing gross violation of Covid-19 guidelines, the civic authority, Saturday, ordered complete ban on rallies and

demonstrations in the city until further notice. "This is very undemocratic and violates the constitutional rights to protest. Those who violate the Covid guidelines should be taken care by the law. This does not mean all should be held accountable for the mistakes of few. Thus, the BMC should withdraw its order immediately," said Samajwadi Party Odisha unit's president, Rabindra Nath Behera.

However, citing clauses 4(a) (iv) and 8 (e) of recently issued Odisha Government guidelines, the BMC in its order stated that these activities are temporarily restricted.

CIVIC WOES



People travelling on a waterlogged Bomikhal road in Bhubaneswar soon after the Capital city witnessed heavy rain, Sunday

NO BOL BOM

An empty Gadagadia ghat in Mahanadi

THE GHAT IS THE MOST POPULAR SPOT FOR BOL BOM DEVOTEES OF SEVERAL DISTTS TO COLLECT THE HOLY WATER

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, July 5: Gadagadia ghat of Mahanadi in the Silver City here will remain empty in the Hindu month of Shravan (July/August) as the state government has banned this year's Bol Bom Yatra due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Gadagadia ghat of Mahanadi is the most popular spot for Bol Bom devotees of several districts to collect the holy water. Every year, thousands of devotees gather at Gadagadia ghat to collect water from Mahanadi and begin their journey to various Shiva temples in several districts including Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Puri, Khurda, Nayagarh and Jagatsinghpur.

The Bol Bom devotees usually collect the holy water Friday and Saturday in the month of July and August and they pour the water on Shiva lings at various temples Monday morning.

Dhabaleshwari shrine near Cuttack city, Kapilash temple in Dhenkanal, Lingaraj temple in Bhubaneswar, Srilokanath temple in Puri, Ladubaba Peeth in Nayagarh and Grameshwar temple in Jagatsinghpur district are some of the most popular Shaivite shrines for the Bol Bom devotees.

"Thousands of Bol Bom devotees usually congregate at the



File photo of devotees collecting holy water from the Gadagadia ghat of Mahanadi in Cuttack

Gadagadia ghat to collect holy water from Mahanadi. Members of many voluntary and religious outfits also gather at the ghat to provide food and service to the devotees. The entire atmosphere is filled with devotion. This year, Gadagadia ghat will remain empty due to the ban on Bol Bom Yatra," said a local.

According to the locals, many

roadside vending stalls usually come up in the Cuttack city to sell specially-designed pots, dress materials and water-carrying sticks to the Bol Bom devotees. "This year, no vending stall has come up to deal in items for Bol Bom devotees," they said. Devotees lament but understand the gravity of the situation.

"I have been undertaking Bol Bom Yatra and pouring holy water

on Shiva Lings for last 30 years. Lord Shiva has been kind to my family. The novel coronavirus outbreak has hindered this year's yatra," said Hadibandhu Pradhan, a devotee.

"I have been working outside Odisha for last several years. But, I usually return to Odisha in the month of Shravan every year to undertake Bol Bom Yatra. This

I have been undertaking Bol Bom Yatra and pouring holy water on Shiva Lings for last 30 years. Lord Shiva has been kind to my family. The novel coronavirus outbreak has hindered this year's yatra

HADIBANDHU PRADHAN | DEVOTEE

This year, I am unable to return to Odisha for the yatra in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak. Now, I have heard that the state government has banned this year's yatra due to the pandemic. I will try to pour holy water on the Shiva Ling at a shrine close to my work place

TUKUNA BEHERA | DEVOTEE

year, I am unable to return to Odisha for the yatra in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak. Now, I have heard that the state government has banned this year's yatra due to the pandemic. I will try to pour holy water on the Shiva Ling at a shrine close to my work place," said Tukuna Behera, another devotee.

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Thousands of trees felled for highway expansion, no compensatory plantation

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, July 5: The expansion works of two National Highways - NH 20 and 49, which pass through Keonjhar district, were undertaken at the cost of thousands of trees of great ecological importance. But nothing discernible has so far been done to replenish the lost greenery. Expressing their concern, people of Keonjhar town have accused the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) of not taking any steps for compensatory plantation. The two National Highways cross each other at the heart of the town. Earlier, there used to be thousands of umbrageous trees on the either sides of these NHs, providing natural shade and canopy to commuters. These trees along NH-20 from Panikoili to Rajamunda and NH-49 from Turumunga to Binjhbahal were sacrificed on the pretext of development. Besides many fruit bearing trees, sal, piasal, neem and



ECOCIDE ON RISE

- NH-20 and NH-49 cross each other at the heart of Keonjhar town
- Earlier, there used to be thousands of umbrageous trees on the either sides of these NHs, providing natural shade and canopy to commuters
- The expansion works of two highways were undertaken at the cost of thousands of trees of great ecological importance
- People of Keonjhar have accused the National Highway Authority of India of not taking any steps for compensatory plantation

teak trees were felled.

According to the information available at the forest department, during the four-laning work of NH-20, 46,495 trees from forested lands and about 50,000 trees from non-forested and private lands were felled. Similarly, a whopping 65,298 trees from forested lands and about 60,000 trees from non-forested lands were cut down during the expansion

of NH-49. The pictures of these two NHs have now been completely changed, with hardly any tree by the roadside. Commuters are hardly getting any tree shade to take rest during their journey. It affects mostly those road side villagers who cover short distances on these NHs on foot on a daily basis. Apart from losing the shade along these roads, people are also

complaining of the air pollution levels in the district that has increased to a great extent in addition to soaring temperatures. The local people said it should be the imperative of the government to strike a balance between development and environment preservation. They urged the government to take steps for roadside plantation.

Truck carrying HSC answer sheets overturns in Boudh



POST NEWS NETWORK

Boudh, July 5: A truck carrying answer sheets of the annual HSC examination conducted by the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) overturned on National Highway-57 near Khajuripada in this district Sunday. Reports said the evaluated answer sheets were being carried in a truck from Titlagarh in Bolangir district to the BSE's office in Cuttack. The answer sheets were reportedly damaged in the incident while the Boudh police reached the spot and launched an investigation. The incident occurred when the driver lost control over the wheels. As a result, the truck skidded off the road and overturned. The driver suffered critical injuries in the mishap and was rushed in an ambulance to the Boudh district headquarters hospital.

Social security goes for toss in Kalahandi

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kesinga, July 5: Hundreds of deserving beneficiaries do not get old age as well as widow allowances in Kantesira panchayat in Kesinga block of Kalahandi district. It has been learnt that over a hundred widows and ninety elderly persons have been passing through tough times amid the coronavirus-induced lockdown restrictions. Allegedly genuine beneficiaries of Kurlupada, Kantesira, Tahasira, Gethipada and Harijanpada villages have had applied for allowances more than five times, under ambitious social security programme of the state government. Despite running from pillar to post and submitting all necessary documents for the purpose, below poverty line (BPL), scheduled caste and scheduled tribe beneficiaries here have not been granted the allowances. The local administration has been in limbo for the past two years, the beneficiaries allege. During FY 2018-19, only 30 beneficiaries of this area were sanctioned allowances under the Peoples



Empowerment Enabling Transparency and Accountability (PEETHA) programme of the state government. Over hundred local villagers of Kantesira panchayat have died over the past two years. On being contacted, Kantesira panchayat executive officer (PEO) Abhimanyu Naik said, "I have already submitted documents of all the applicants to block authorities." Giving his views, local sarpanch Jitendranath Brahma said, "In fact, there are a number of genuine beneficiaries in this region. Some applicants have been suffering like anything for the past two years."

1 killed, 6 injured in group clash

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khallikote, July 5: A man was killed and six others were rendered critical in a group clash at Pathara village under Khallikote block of Ganjam district Friday night. The warring groups clashed over liquor trade in the area. According to a source, one group was attacked by another which was supported by the local liquor mafia. Five young men were sitting at a community centre at Majhi Sahi Chhak when they were attacked by some miscreants led by rival group's Dhanu Palei and Tophan Palei - both from Odia Sahi. The injured youths including the deceased, Pintu Das (Pinku), were immediately rushed to MKCG Medical College and Hospital Berhampur, where Pintu succumbed to injuries. The injured youths are Ranjan Bhanga, Dhruva Tahala, Suman Subudhi and Sanjaya Subudhi, who were later shifted to other hospitals. The group clash triggered tension in the area and villagers of Khatia Sahi blocked the village main road, demanding arrest of the accused. They also ransacked some roadside shops. Palpable tension prevailed in the area. Police, meanwhile, detained two persons after registering a case. Police suspect past enmity behind the incident. There had been tussles between the two groups over production of country made liquor and bootlegging.

Sorcerer thrashed by villagers

POST NEWS NETWORK

Mahakalapada, July 5: A sorcerer who was hired by a villager to rectify his bad planetary effects eventually ended up being beaten up severely by the villagers. The incident was reported from Kharinasi village under Mahakalapada block in Kendrapara district. According to a source, Biswanath Mandal from Kharinasi village under Jambo marine police limits had a prolonged enmity with his neighbour Manoranjan Mandal over some issues. Believing whatever mental sufferings he had been undergoing was owing to his bad planetary position, he employed a sorcerer named Balai Ghadei from Paradip area to conduct some specific 'graha shanti' rituals aimed at fixing the planetary effects. While the sorcerer was performing the rituals at Biswanath's house Saturday night, his neighbour Manoranjan got a sense of it. He let the entire village know about the rituals following which the villagers assembled in front of Biswanath's house and later nabbed sorcerer Ghada, tied his hands and took him out of the house along with all puja articles. They also informed the police about the entire episode. While Biswanath's family members are not coming out of their house fearing the wrath of villagers, the cops were yet to reach the village at the time of filing of this report.

BATTLE AGAINST COVID



POST NEWS NETWORK

Chhatrapur, July 5: Considering the seriousness of the COVID-19 situation in Ganjam district, which is the worst hit in the state, DGP Abhay deputed four DSPs and four platoons of force to the district. The DSPs are Himanshu Sekhar Behera, Tapan Kumar Mahananda, Gunanidhi Mallick and Ritesh Kumar Mohapatra and they have been given charges of Aska, Bhanjanagar, Chhatrapur and Purusottampur sub-divisions respectively. Reports of COVID-19 guidelines being flouted are continuously flowing in from different parts of the district in spite of fines being collected from the violators.

14-year-old girl kills self over Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide



POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, July 5: Stressed over the suicide of Hindi film actor Sushant Singh Rajput, a 14-year-old female fan of the actor committed suicide by hanging in Ganjam district, Sunday. The deceased, CH Mamata, a na-

tive of Mahisanpur village under Chikiti block in Ganjam district hanged herself with her scarf, June 18. Family members rushed her to the Chikiti community health centre and subsequently shifted her to the MKCG Medical College and Hospital in Berhampur where she succumbed while undergoing treatment, Sunday morning. Police registered a case and sent the body for post-mortem. The deceased, a student of Class-IX and daughter of CH Sashi and CH Narsingha, was depressed ever since the popular cine actor committed suicide at his Mumbai residence. In the wake of the shocking incident, the girl had asked various questions to her mother, sister and friends enquiring about the actor's death.

7-day complete shutdown in Barbil

KEONJHAR: After 11 fresh COVID-19 positive cases emerged Sunday from Barbil, the district administration decided to enforce a complete shutdown of seven days in the town beginning Monday. This information was given Sunday by District Collector Ashish Thakare who said that the step is necessary to prevent the spread of the virus. Briefing reporters, Thakare said, "Keonjhar district has reported 25 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours. Out of them 11 are local contacts and are from Barbil town. As chance of community spread of the deadly disease is high, we have declared shutdown of seven days in the town beginning Monday. The shutdown restrictions will help us carry out active surveillance and contact tracing activities in Barbil." Sources said the remaining 14 positive cases have travel history to other states. Thirteen of these cases have been detected from TMCs and one was under home quarantine. The patients are from Harichandanpur, Ghatagaon, Patana, Keonjhar block and Hatadihi. Reports said the 11 new cases in Barbil town had come in contact with COVID-19 patients. They had also attended some meetings and public gatherings. "Necessary action will be taken against the people responsible for spread of the disease after their recovery," the Collector said. With the fresh cases, the COVID-19 tally in Keonjhar district has gone up to 182. Among them 81 are still active while 101 persons have recovered.



Amid shutdown, police checking violation of Covid guidelines on a street in Sambalpur

STRICT VIGIL

MAFIA STRIPS HILL OF GREENERY IN SUNDARGARH

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kuanrmunda, July 5: At a time when the administrative machinery is busy dealing with unprecedented Covid-19 situation in the state, the stone mafia has been on a looting spree in Patratoli hill under Biramitrapur tehsil in Sundargarh district. The area was once rich with greenery, but sadly the hilly terrain is fast losing its flora and fauna due to rampant stone mining, a report said. Apart from stone, other minor minerals like sand and murrum are also looted with impunity in the same area for the last one year. On the other hand, the govern-

ment is losing revenue worth crores of rupees owing to the illegal activity. Granite stone quarrying is going on just 2 km from the tehsil office, but forest and revenue departments are doing nothing to check the illegal activity, despite repeated complaints, locals alleged. The hill is increasingly losing its existence due to the stone mining. Locals, environmentalists and wildlife activists voiced their concern over the increasing threat to the hill. The mafia has been carrying out explosions in the hill while scores of excavators and heavy vehicles are being engaged day and



night. The nearby residents have lost their sleep over explosions

while their houses have reportedly developed cracks owing to

ear-shattering explosions. Houses of Mukut Lagun (a BSF jawan), Anthony Lagun and Nelson Lagun have developed cracks, it was alleged. Locals alleged that the mafia has been supplying stone to some stone crushing units at Biramitrapur, Bijabahal and other areas every day. Due to plying of the heavy vehicles, the rural roads are getting damaged, they lamented. The expanding stone quarry has left an adverse impact on the ecology with a number of trees being felled on a daily basis. When all such illegal activities are taking place in broad daylight, the forest and revenue departments pretend to be not

aware of this fact, raising many eyebrows. Upset over illegal stone mining, villagers of Dhangrinacha approached the tehsildar and apprised him of various problems due to stone mining. They demanded immediate halt to the illegal mining. Acting upon the complaint, the tehsildar visited Dhangrinacha village and inspected the cracks in the houses, but did not take any action against the mafia. The locals warned of agitation if the tehsil administration fails to act against the illegal stone mining. They urged the district administration to take step against stone mining in the area.



know what
'honest'
meant. In
Western Europe they
didn't know what
'shortage' meant. In China they didn't
know what 'opinion' meant. In the
Middle East they didn't know what
'solution' meant. In South America
they didn't know what 'please' meant.
And in the USA, they didn't know what
'the rest of the world' meant.

Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

TUSSLE OVER PORTFOLIOS ON

Chouhan could visit Delhi again to take up the issue of portfolio allocation with the central leadership

With ‘Covid-19 War Room’, Delhi to monitor its fight against virus

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhopal, July 5: Even as the second expansion of the Shivraj Singh Chouhan Cabinet in Madhya Pradesh has been finally done after hiccups over shortlisting of prospective ministers, pulls and pressures are still going on regarding the allocation of portfolios to the new inductees.

On July 2, 28 new ministers were inducted in the council of ministers, including 12 from BJP MP Jyotiraditya Scindia's camp. Of the 22 Congress MLAs who resigned from the Congress to join the BJP, 14 are now in the expanded ministry.

The sources said that the issue of portfolio was being discussed both by the central BJP leadership and the state unit. The five ministers who were earlier sworn in during the first expansion have been looking after more than one departments. The sources revealed that Chouhan could visit Delhi again to take up the issue of portfolio allocation with the central leadership. The total strength of Scindia's camp in the ministry is now 14, as two former MLAs were already in the council of minis-



PULLS AND PRESSURES

THE TOTAL STRENGTH OF SCINDIA'S CAMP IN THE MINISTRY IS NOW 14, AS TWO FORMER MLAS WERE ALREADY IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

WHILE THE NEW INDUCTEES ARE MAKING EFFORTS TO BAG COVETED DEPARTMENTS, THOSE IN CHARGE OF MORE THAN ONE PORTFOLIO ARE TRYING TO RETAIN THEIR FAVOURITE ONES

ters. Among those inducted on Thursday, 20 are of cabinet rank and eight are ministers of state. So, while the new inductees are making efforts to bag coveted departments, those in charge of more than one portfolio are trying to retain their favourite ones.

Those included in the ministry from the BJP are Gopal Bhargava, Vijay Shah, Jagdish Devda, Yashodhara Raje Scindia, Bhupendra Singh, Brajendra Pratap Singh and Vishwas Sarang.

From the Scindia camp, Bisahulal Singh, Aidal Singh Kansana, Imarti Devi, Prabhuram Choudhary, Mahendra Singh Sisodia, Pradyuman Singh Tomar, Hardeep

Singh Dang, Rajwardhan Singh Dattigaon have been taken as cabinet ministers. While Brajendra Singh Yadav, Girraj Dandotia, Suresh Dhakad and OPS Bhadoria from Scindia camp were inducted as ministers of state.

The sources said that the Scindia camp was interested in bagging departments which were in direct contact with the masses, including rural development, panchayats, women and child welfare, home, irrigation, transport, public relations, and food supplies.

From BJP Prem Singh Patel, Om Prakash Saklecha, Usha Thakur, Arvind Bhadoria and Mohan Yadav were also inducted

as cabinet ministers. Bharat Singh Kushwaha, Inder Singh Parmar, Ramkhelavan Patel and Ram Kishore Kavre took oath as ministers of state. Those inducted from Scindia camp had resigned as legislators in March which led to the toppling of 15-month-old Kamal Nath Government. All of them will contest by-polls likely to be held in the state soon. Twenty-four Assembly seats are vacant at present.

The initial "mini" expansion of the Chouhan cabinet took place on April 21 with the induction of five ministers, including two former Congress MLAs close to Scindia - Tulsi Silawat and Govind Singh Rajput.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 5: The Delhi government will set up a 'COVID-19 War Room', which will 24x7 monitor the city's fight against the novel coronavirus, and suggest measures to effectively deal with the prevailing situation, officials said Sunday.

The 'COVID-19 War Room', which is being set up at the Delhi Secretariat, will be manned by around 25 experts. It is expected to become operational in the next few days.

According to the plan, the new strategic facility will cover all aspects such as testing, bed strength, medical equipment, ambulance infrastructure and containment zones.

It will represent a snapshot of the city's position when it comes to tackling the COVID-19 situation, the officials said, adding that Chief Secretary Vijay Dev has directed officials to set up the same as soon as possible.

Officials said that the 'COVID-19 War Room' will also flag discrepancies in those areas wherein authorities can take steps to prepare a robust system.

The 'COVID-19 War Room' will closely monitor measures being taken by the authorities. It will

LG inaugurates world's largest virus facility

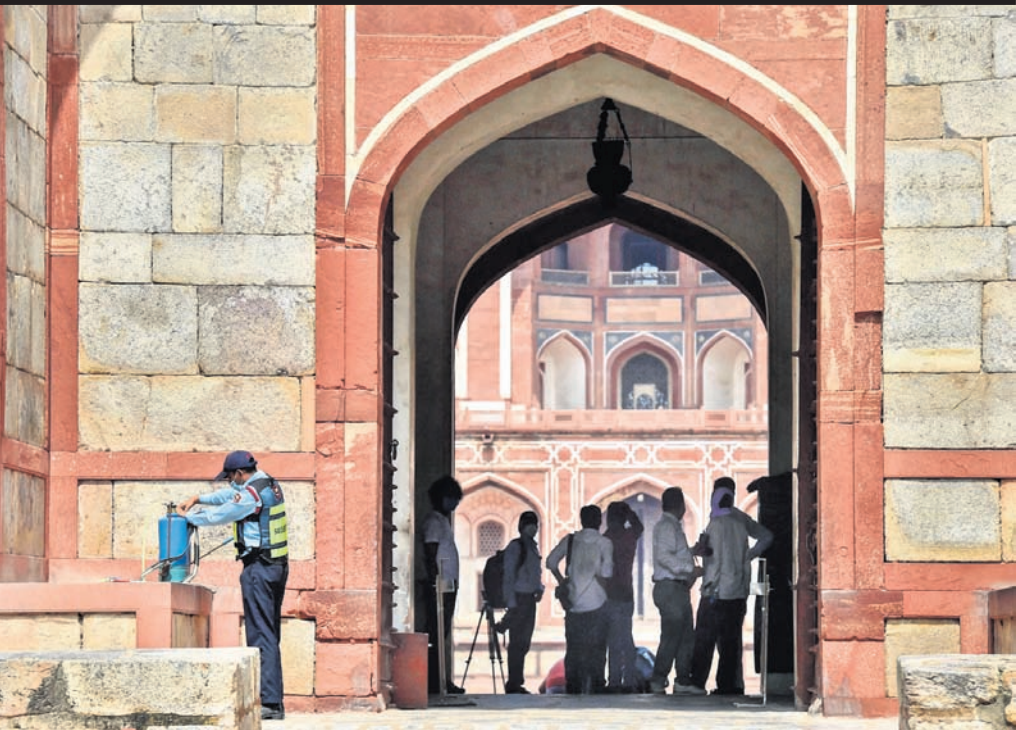
Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal inaugurated the 10,000-bed Sardar Patel COVID care centre, the "largest" of its kind in the world, at the Radha Soami Satsang Beas here Sunday. The centre has been set up in Chhatrapur for treating mild and asymptomatic coronavirus patients. It will also serve as a treatment centre for those who are asymptomatic but cannot afford home isolation. The centre is 1,700 feet long, 700 feet wide -- roughly the size of 20 football fields -- and has 200 enclosures with 50 beds each. Authorities say it is the largest of its kind in the world. While the Delhi government has provided administrative support, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) will be the nodal agency operating the centre. Volunteers from the religious sect of Radha Soami Beas will also help run the centre.



also project the future requirements of medical infrastructure to deal with surging coronavirus cases. For instance, if there is shortage of ambulance in the city, it will inform authorities about it, he said. Another official noted that the district administration has been taking steps in their respective areas,

and that the war room will operate in a centralised manner for better coordination among the districts. An IAS officer has been given the charge of this war room for better coordination with higher authorities in the government. The COVID-19 War Room will have 20-25 experts who will work round-the-clock, official said.

UNLOCK 2.0



A worker prepares to sanitise Humayun Tomb premises, during Unlock 2.0, in New Delhi, Sunday. The tomb will reopen for tourists from Monday

PTI PHOTO

Paddling her way to excellence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhind, July 5: A 15-year-old girl's determination to pursue her studies by cycling 24 km every day to and from her school in a Madhya Pradesh village has paid off as she has secured 98.75 per cent marks in her Class 10 exams.

Roshani Bhadoriya, encouraged by her marks, now aims higher and wants to pursue a career in civil services.

The girl's father, a farmer, said

GIRLS OUTSHINE BOYS

The Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education (MPBSE) declared results for Class X exams, with girls outshining boys in the overall pass percentage. The overall pass percentage is 62.84 per cent among regular students and 16.95 among private students, said MPBSE officials. "Girls have recorded a pass percentage of 65.87 per cent against 60.09 per cent for boys among regular students. This year, a total of 8.93 lakh regular and 2.04 lakh private students appeared for the exams," an official said. "A total of 360 candidates were in the merit list, comprising 191 girls and 169 boys. The number of students securing first class also increased. This year, 3.45 lakh candidates secured first place, which is 5,540 more than last year," he added.

he is proud of her achievement and would now arrange a transport facility for her to go to school.

The teenager, a resident of Ajnol village in Bhind district of Chambal region, secured 98.75 per cent marks and 8th rank in the merit list of the Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education's Class 10 exams, the results of which were declared on Saturday.

Her father Purushottam Bhadoriya told PTI that till Class 8 his daughter studied in another

school where bus facility was available.

But after that, she shifted to a government school in Mehgaon, located around 12 km from Ajnol, where transport facility was not available, he said.

Since Roshani got enrolled in Class 9 of Mehgaons Government Girls' School two years back, she had to cycle to reach school on several days due to unavailability of other modes of transport like taxis, he said.

Bhadoriya said he will now make some other transport arrangement for her to go to school.

The farmer, who also has two sons, said everybody in Ajnol is happy with her daughter's feat as none from the village attained such academic success.

When asked about her school journey experience, Roshani said, It was difficult to go to school on a bicycle. Though I didn't count, I cycled for about 60 to 70 days a



Roshani Bhadoriya

year to reach the school. My father also took me to school on his motorcycle whenever he had time.

‘Cycle Yatra’ against fuel price hike

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 5: Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar Chaudhary Sunday undertook a "Cycle Yatra" from Connaught Place to the residences of all 10 MPs of Delhi, to hand over letters against fuel price hike.

Delhi has 7 Lok Sabha MPs, all from the BJP and 3 Rajya Sabha MPs all from the Aam Aadmi Party.

The letter requested the MPs to intervene with their respective governments, to reduce the excise duty and VAT on petrol and diesel, to give relief to the citizens of Delhi.

But only Manoj Tiwari of the BJP and Sanjay Singh of the AAP personally took the memorandum from the Delhi Congress Chief.

Anil Kumar said that his "Cycle



Yatra" was to highlight the insensitivity of both the BJP and the AAP governments with regard to the increase in the fuel prices, disregarding the plight of the people.

Lashing out at the MPs, Delhi Congress Chief said, "It was unfortunate that barring BJP MP Manoj Tiwari and AAP MP Sanjay Singh, none of the other Members

of Parliament came out of their houses to receive the letters."

He said, Congress was doing this on behalf of the people of Delhi, and it was indeed very sad that these MPs who got elected by the votes of the citizens of Delhi, did not deem it fit to personally receive the letter.

The Congress has been regularly demanding to reduce the taxes on

petrol and diesel but without getting any response. The party hoped that its latest campaign will be an eye-opener for the BJP and the AAP, who would rise above narrow political considerations to take up the matter with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, to serve the common interest of the people of Delhi.

The Congress also mounted an aggressive social media campaign - "Munafakhori_Band_Karo" as the continued hikes in the oil prices for 23 days in June have made the life of the people miserable. The Congress leaders and workers strictly followed the social distancing norms even during their cycle yatra to the residences of the MPs, said the Congress statement.

AGENCIES

Bhopal, July 5: The Madhya Pradesh government Saturday sanctioned Rs 781 crore for an expressway through Chambal, a region which along with Gwalior accounts for 16 of the 24 seats for which by-polls are needed.

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the sanctioning of money for the project in a virtual meeting with Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, an MP public relations officer told PTI.

The virtual meet was also attended by Union Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar



and BJP Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia, he added.

"The proposed expressway will have a length of 309 kilometres in MP and will be a connector to Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh," Chouhan said.

Incidentally, the money has been sanctioned two days after a cabinet expansion in the state in which 10 leaders from Chambal and Gwalior got berths.

The region now has 11 ministers, including powerful state BJP leader Narottam Mishra.

"So 11 MP ministers will be from Gwalior and Chambal regions," said political analyst Keshav Pandey.

Twenty-two Congress MLAs, including 16 from Gwalior-Chambal, had resigned from the Assembly in March, bringing down the Kamal Nath dispensation and paving the way for Chouhan to become CM for a fourth time. Two seats are vacant due to death of legislators.

Centenarian who was child during Spanish Flu survives nCoV

SPANISH FLU PANDEMIC HIT THE WORLD 102 YEARS AGO AND AFFECTED NEARLY ONE-THIRD OF THE GLOBAL POPULATION

TALE OF SURVIVAL



He is the first reported case of COVID-19 in Delhi who also went through the dreaded Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918

He not only recovered from COVID-19, he recovered faster than his son, who is also very old, a senior doctor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 5: A centenarian man from Delhi, who was four years old during the 1918 Spanish Flu, has survived COVID-19 and recovered faster than his son, in his 70s, at a dedicated coronavirus facility here, doctors said.

The 106-year-old patient was discharged from the Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital (RGSSH) recently after recovering, where his wife, son and another family member also recuperated after contracting the novel coronavirus infection, they said.

Perhaps, he is the first reported case of COVID-19 in Delhi who also went through the dreaded Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918 which like COVID-19 had also ravaged the world. And, he not only recovered from

COVID-19, he recovered faster than his son, who is also very old, a senior doctor.

Spanish Flu was a pandemic which hit the world 102 years ago, and affected nearly one-third of the global population at that time.

The 1918 influenza pandemic was the most severe pandemic in recent history. It was caused by an H1N1 virus with genes of avian origin. Although there is not universal consensus regarding where the virus originated, it spread worldwide during 1918-1919, according to the Centre for Diseases Control (CDC) in the US.

In the US, it was first identified in military personnel in spring 1918. It is estimated that about 6,75,000 deaths occurred in America, it said.

According to a World Health

Organisation (WHO) report, the pandemic of 1918-1919 called the Spanish Flu was particularly virulent, and killed an estimated 40 million people worldwide.

In India, the disease is believed to have been brought in by the soldiers returning from World War I conflicts.

The first cases of Spanish Flu were reported in areas which are major ports of entry, such as Mumbai (then Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta), Delhi and Chennai (Madras), where a large number of people returned from abroad.

The casualty count in India from the Spanish Flu is believed to be nearly one-fifth of the entire fatalities in the world, though the statistics for mortality in India are too wide-ranging and debatable.

Doctors at the RGSSH, a dedicated COVID-19 facility were amazed to see the recovery of this centenarian patient from the novel coronavirus, even though he was highly vulnerable to the infection.

We don't know whether he was affected by the Spanish Flu or not. We haven't seen much documentation on the situation back then as far as Delhi is concerned, but very few hospitals were there at that time. It is amazing this 106-year-old showed the will power to survive, a senior doctor, who monitored his situation, said.

But, what is more interesting is that he recovered faster than his son, who is in his 70s. So, he lived through the Spanish Flu and now survived COVID-19, hence, he lived through two pandemics, he said.

of the day quote

Pondicherry has recorded a COVID-19 recovery rate of more than 56 per cent

V NARAYANASAMY | PONDICHERRY CM



Thiruvananthapuram district is 'sitting on an active volcano' with rising number of COVID-19 cases and there is no guarantee that there would be no community spread

KADAKAMPALLY SURENDRAN | KERALA MINISTER



Be it poverty, deprivation, hunger or inequality, education has the answer to each of these problems

ANAND KUMAR | SUPER 30 FOUNDER AND MATHEMATICIAN



SHORT TAKES

26 inmates test Covid positive

Chandigarh: Twenty-six inmates of Punjab's Ludhiana Central Jail tested Covid-19 positive on Sunday, officials said. They were asymptomatic. They had been kept in a separate barrack of the jail, Chief Medical Officer Rajesh Kumar Bagga said. Thirty-two inmates had been shifted from Borstal Jail -- a special jail for coronavirus patients -- after testing negative to the Central Jail.

Hoarding removed

Lucknow: A PETA hoarding with a photograph of a goat, asking people not to slaughter it, was removed from the Uttar Pradesh capital following the objection by a senior Sunni cleric. President of the Islamic Centre of India, Maulana Khalid Rashid Firangi Mahali sent an email to the Lucknow Police Commissioner demanding removal of the controversial hoarding. The Maulana objected to the hoarding by placing a photo of the goat before the festival of Bakrid. "Bakrid is expected to be celebrated on July 31. Why such a hoarding is being put up just ahead of the festival?" the cleric queried. Two complaints were also lodged with the Kaiserbagh police demanding the removal.

Tiger dies

Hyderabad: A Royal Bengal tiger at Nehru Zoological Park (NZP) here has died of heart failure, officials said Sunday. The 11-year-old male tiger named Kadamba died Saturday night. As per the post-mortem report, the cause of death of the animal was shock due to congestive heart failure. NZP Director N. Kshitija said Kadamba did not show any apparent signs of illness, but was off feed frequently, for the last few days, for which it was under observation of the Zoo veterinarians. Kadamba was brought to the Zoo from Pilukula Biological Park, Mangaluru in 2014 via animal exchange programme.

Man duped

Mumbai: A history-sheeter has been arrested for allegedly posing as a "COVID officer" and robbing a man of ₹54,000 in Chembur area of Mumbai, police said Sunday. Abdul Sheikh was on his way to Chembur railway station on June 30 when Sohan Waghmare (23) and an accomplice accosted him and introduced themselves as "COVID officers", an official said. "Waghmare and his accomplice searched Sheikh's bag, took out an ATM card from it, managed to get its PIN number, went to an ATM and withdrew ₹54,000. A search was mounted for the duo after Sheikh filed a complaint," said the Chembur police station official.



In the last one week 50 murders took place in UP. But in the Chief Minister's publicity drive UP is 'crime free'. In reality, UP is on top in few crimes. It's enough. Who is accountable?

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, July 5: As the gnawing fears of Covid-19 recedes from Dharavi, the local trade, business and commercial activities have woken up from their four-month long hibernation and are now raring to go at full steam for the kill, major players said.

The development comes on the heels of the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) effecting a gradual withdrawal from Dharavi as Corona deaths and patients were on the verge of complete control by June-end.

Besides notoriety as Asia's largest slum spread over 2.25 sq.kms, Dharavi also enjoys global fame for some of its local products, especially leather goods, high-end or bridal garments, jew-



ellery, certain handicrafts, and domestically for plastic recycling, metal fabrication, household stuff, etc.

While the leather industry is among the mega-money spinners contributing around ₹300-crore, the total estimated annual turnover from the tiny Dharavi

PM MEETS PRESIDENT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday called on President Ram Nath Kovind and the two leaders discussed issues of national and international importance, Rashtrapati Bhavan officials said



is estimated to be around ₹7,000 crore.

"We have around 650 leather manufacturers, over 500 retailers and 2,500 others directly collaborating with usa Overall, there are more than 20,000 big-medium-small industries thriving here," Dharavi Leather Goods Manufacturing Association (LIGMA) Working President Rajesh Sonawane told IANS.

Started as a workers' settlement 135 years ago on the outskirts of the then Bombay, Dharavi -- literally meaning 'quick sand' -- covers just 2.25 sq. km housing over 200,000 families, living in congested squalid settings -- proving a sitting duck for the Coronavirus and almost pushing it to the brink in April-May

"Since the past week, work has started in spurts as there is labour shortage...

Most of our migrant labourers were shifted out in the past four months, we are trying to bring them back... We hope to resume full-scale by September," Dharavi Garments Manufacturers Association President Haji Babbu Khan said.

A Congress BMC Corporator, Khan said akin to leather, the garment industry also has clientele worldwide for its printed raw materials, ladies garments, world-class zari apparels which are used for bridal attires in many countries.

"We generate around Rs.1000-crore business annually, support lakhs of allied industries and workers' families, we will start as soon as possible maintaining full Covid protocols," Khan assured.

'Dubey was tipped off about police action'



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Kanpur, July 5: Daya Shankar Agnihotri, an accomplice of gangster Vikas Dubey, who was arrested Sunday morning after a brief encounter in Kalyanpur area has admitted that Vikas Dubey had received a call that a police team would preparing to raid his house.

Daya Shankar Agnihotri, who was inside Vikas Dubey's house during the encounter, worked as a cook in Dubey's house and his wife worked as a maid. He said that he did not know how to operate a gun and was sleeping when the firing began.

He has also said that he was locked inside the house when Vikas

SOURCES SAID THAT THE PHONES OF VIKAS DUBEY HAD BEEN SWITCHED OFF A FEW HOURS AFTER HE FLED

STATION OFFICER BITHOOR POLICE STATION, KAUSHALENDRA PRATAP SINGH, WHO WAS INJURED IN THE FRIDAY INCIDENT AND IS UNDERGOING TREATMENT AT THE REGENCY HOSPITAL, SAID SUNDAY THAT THEY WERE NOT PREPARED FOR AN ENCOUNTER AND MOST OF THE POLICEMEN WERE UNARMED

Dubey and his men attacked the police personnel. "I saw nothing," Daya Shankar Agnihotri said. Call

details of phones used by Vikas Dubey have revealed that he was in regular touch with the suspended station house officer of Chaubeypur, Vinay Tiwari, one police constable and a home guard.

A senior STF official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said that Vinay Tiwari was being interrogated and further investigations in the matter were on. Tiwari was suspended on Saturday for his alleged connivance in tipping-off the notorious local criminal Vikas Dubey.

The STF official refused to divulge further details saying that it would affect investigations. Sources said that the phones of Vikas Dubey had been switched off a few hours after he fled. The phones of his friends, relatives, associated had been put on surveillance but Dubey had not contacted any of them so far.

Station officer Bithoor police station, Kaushalendra Pratap Singh, who was injured in the Friday incident and is undergoing treatment at the Regency hospital, said Sunday that they were not prepared for an encounter and most of the policemen were unarmed.

He said that as soon as the police team reached the spot where the earthmover had been strategically positioned, firing began. "There was no street light and we could not see properly. Some of the policemen saved themselves by running behind the earthmover. We could not see who was firing because of darkness all around," he said.

INDIA FOILS SFJ'S BID

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 5: India has blocked the Russian portal which was used by banned pro-Khalistan group Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) for online voter registration for 'Referendum 2020' to demand Khalistan, which seeks a separate homeland for the Sikhs.

Agencies say that the government's move and heavy security arrangements in Punjab turned the much publicised anti-India campaign 'Referendum 2020' a futile exercise. However, the SFJ claimed to have distributed 10,000 voter registration forms throughout the state in a day

Soon after inputs received that the SFJ launched the 'Referendum 2020' voter registration through the Russian website www.punjabfreer.ru, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) with the help of concerned departments blocked the site.

40 WEBSITES BLOCKED

New Delhi: As many as 40 websites belonging to the Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), an outlawed organisation, have been blocked by the government for supporting secessionist activities, the Home Ministry said on Sunday. The US-based Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) is a pro-Khalistan group. "Sikhs For Justice (SFJ), an unlawful organisation under the UAPA, 1967, launched a campaign for registering supporters for its cause. On recommendation of MHA, MEITY has issued orders under Sec. 69 A of the I.T. Act, 2000, for blocking 40 websites of SFJ," a home ministry spokesperson said.

While launching the voter registration, the SFJ had appealed to the people in Punjab to register their votes for participation in the non-governmental Punjab Independence campaign. The group appealed to Punjab residents aged 18 or above from any religion as well as the Sikhs living anywhere else in India to register their votes for participation in the Referendum.

The SFJ chose July 4 to launch the campaign in memory of Sikhs killed during the 1955 attack at Darbar Sahib. The secessionist group failed to get sup-

port for its anti-India effort through the voter registration for Referendum as police vehicles in large numbers and policemen in plain clothes were deployed in Golden Plaza and other areas to foil any attempt disturbing the country's peace and violating law and order, an official said.

In a statement, the secessionist group said its July 4 voter registration received an overwhelming response from people of Punjab forcing the Indian government to block access to the Russian portal in a desperate attempt to stop the registration of votes.



bility in the global spread of COVID-19 to the threat his authoritarian regime poses to international security, the professor of strategic studies at the Centre for Policy Research said.

"Xi's ambition, coupled with the concentration camps he has set up

TAJ MAHAL SET TO REOPEN

REUTERS

New Delhi, July 5: Visitors to the Taj Mahal will have to wear masks at all times, keep their distance and not touch its glistening marble surfaces when India's 17th-century monument to love reopens on Monday after a three-month COVID-19 shutdown.

Only 5,000 tourists will be allowed in a day, split into two groups, a far cry from peak levels of 80,000 a day who would swarm the mausoleum built in the northern city of Agra by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan for his wife, in a 22-year effort.

"All centrally protected monuments & sites shall be bound by the protocols like sanitization, social distancing & other health protocols," the federal tourism ministry said in a tweet.



Authorities are reopening the Taj and other monuments, such as New Delhi's historic Red Fort, just as India's coronavirus infections are rising at the fastest pace in three months.

Agra, one of India's first big clusters of the virus, remains the worst-affected city in Uttar Pradesh, the country's most populous state.

"All around the Taj are containment zones," said a local district administration official, requesting anonymity, ahead of the monument's planned reopening.

PM's Ladakh visit shows India's resolve: Expert

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Ladakh underscored India's resolve to beat back Chinese aggression and he delivered a clear message there to the neighbouring country with his reference to "expansionism", strategic affairs expert Brahma Chellaney said Sunday.

Modi's visit and the speech were morale boosters for the troops and his reference to "expansionism" echoed the mounting international concern over China's "imperial overreach under Xi Jinping, who has simultaneously opened multiple fronts", he said.

"Modi's visit to the Ladakh front underscored India's resolve to beat back China's aggression and en-

croachments," Chellaney said.

"After weeks of concerted government effort to downplay the Himalayan border confrontation and obscure China's encroachments, Modi's visit to Ladakh helped shine a spotlight on the war-like situation India confronts," the strategic affairs expert said.

Asserting that China has sought to take advantage of the world's preoccupation with the COVID-19 pandemic, Chellaney said Xi has been pushing the limits, be it breaking Beijing's binding commitment to Hong Kong's autonomy, attempting to police the waters off the Japanese-controlled Senkaku Islands or picking up a border fight with India by encroaching on its territory.

President Xi's actions are shifting attention from China's culpa-

and the cult of personality around him, has led some to compare him with other expansionist despots of modern history. US National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien recently said that 'Xi sees himself as Joseph Stalin's successor', Chellaney said.

"Some, however, have compared Xi with Adolf Hitler: Like Hitler's expansionism, Xi has opened multiple fronts. And, what Xi's regime is doing to the Muslims of Xinjiang appears to be a reprise of what the Nazis did to the Jews. In fact, Xi has earned the social-media nickname of 'Xitler'," he said.

Chellaney said without naming China, Modi delivered a clear message to the country and this was apparent from Beijing's reaction to the prime minister's speech. "If a

message can be conveyed without naming the country, is there any need to mention the country by name?" he asked.

Two weeks before he went to Ladakh, Modi had created confusion with a speech at an all-party meeting, but with his remarks in Ladakh, Modi has made amends for the June 19 speech, the strategic affairs expert said.

Modi made a surprise visit to Ladakh on Friday during which he said the era of expansionism is over and that the history is proof that "expansionists" have either lost or perished, in comments seen as a clear message to China. The Indian and Chinese armies are locked in a bitter standoff in multiple locations in eastern Ladakh for the last seven weeks.

of the day quote

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is fully committed to help the Delhi residents amid the challenging times due to coronavirus crisis



AMIT SHAH | UNION HOME MINISTER

Just like a venomous snake kills a human being, people of the country are dying one by one owing to Nirmala Sitharaman who has shattered the country's economy



KALYAN BANERJEE | TMC MP

Cartoons and games children watch and play for hours on mobile phones, laptops and other gadgets must be made "meaningful" so that they could impart lessons in "culture, discipline and religion



BHUPENDRASINH CHUDASAMA | GUJARAT EDUCATION MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Man held for praising Dubey

Kanpur: Kilkil Sachan, who runs a coaching institute in Kakadeo area in Kanpur, has been arrested from his apartment in Keshavpuram area of the city in connection with objectionable posts on social media. Sachan had made a post on the social media applauding and glorifying criminal, Vikas Dubey, as a 'lion' for killing eight policemen in Bikru village of the district on Friday. The tweets have now been deleted. Police are carrying our searches for another accused, identified as Rita Pandey.

UP ministers test Covid positive

Lucknow: Two senior ministers in the Yogi Adityanath government have tested positive for the novel coronavirus in the past few hours. Uttar Pradesh Minister for Rural Development Rajendra Pratap Singh, popularly known as Moti Singh, his wife, son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren have all tested positive for the virus. Narendra Agarwal, CMO Lucknow, said: "After a re-confirmatory test, the Minister and his family were admitted to the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS). Contact tracing is being done." The second Minister to test positive is Dharam Singh Saini, who heads the Ayush Ministry.

Trooper injured

Srinagar: A Central Reserve Police Force convoy was once again targeted by militants in J&K's Pulwama area on Sunday, in which a trooper was injured. "A low intensity #IED blast occurred at #Pulwama. #One CRPF personnel suffered #injuries in his hands and is stable. Senior officers are on the spot. Further details shall follow," the J&K police tweeted. The low intensity blast of the Improvised Explosive Device was carried out by the suspected terrorists moments after a CRPF convoy passed through Gangoo village in South Kashmir.

Girl ends life

Mumbai: A 16-year-old girl allegedly committed suicide in Kurla East area of Mumbai and a suicide note found from the spot stated she was taking the step due to depression, police said Sunday. The incident took place Friday night in Khachadwadi area, a Chunabhatti police station official said.



We should innovate, not just imitate. Innovation is the watchword for the 21st Century. We have all the ingredients for success. We have pioneers who have built global brands in various sectors

M. VENKAIAH NAIDU | VICE-PRESIDENT

Covid: Hot weather theory falls flat

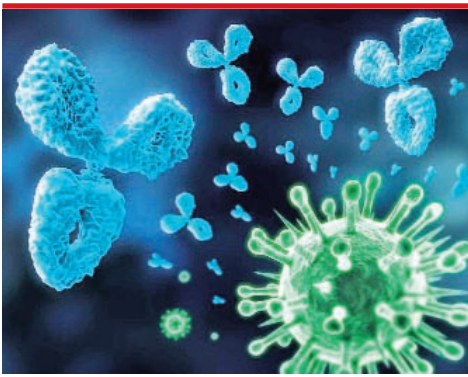
INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 5: The deadly coronavirus that entered India while there was still nip in the air has beaten rising mercury, humid conditions, unique Indian genome and has entered monsoon season with more potency as fresh cases are only breaking all records in the country.

India recorded a single-day spike of record 24,850 new coronavirus cases Sunday, taking its total tally to 6.73 lakh corona-positive cases. Top Indian microbiologists were hopeful in March that after the 21-day lockdown, as summer approaches, the rise in temperature would play an important role in preventing the drastic spread of Covid-19 virus in India.

Several virologists hinted that by June this year, the impact of Covid-19 would be less than what it appeared in March-April. The claims have fallen flat as the virus is mutating fast, becoming more potent than ever.

According to experts, the novel coronavirus is a new virus whose seasonality and response to hot



Several virologists hinted that by June this year, the impact of Covid-19 would be less than what it appeared in March-April. The claims have fallen flat as the virus is mutating fast, becoming more potent than ever

humid weather was never fully understood. "The theory was based on the fact that high temperatures can kill the virus as in sterilisation techniques used in healthcare. But these are controlled environment conditions. There are many other factors besides temperature, humidity which influence the transmission rate among humans," Dr Anu Gupta, Head, Microbiologist and Infection Control, Fortis Escorts

Heart Institute, said.

There is no built-up immunity to Covid-19 in humans. "Also, asymptomatic people might be passing it to many others unknowingly. New viruses tend not to follow the seasonal trend in their first year," Gupta emphasized.

Globally, as several countries are now experiencing hot weather, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported a record hike in the num-

ber of coronavirus cases, with the total rising by 2,12,326 in 24 hours in the highest single-day increase since Covid-19 broke out.

So far over 11 million people worldwide have tested positive for the disease which has led to over 5,25,000 deaths, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. The US remained the worst-hit country with over 28 lakh cases, followed by Brazil with 15.8 lakh.

According to Sandeep Nayar, Senior Consultant and HOD, Respiratory Medicine, Allergy & Sleep Disorders, BLK Super Speciality Hospital in New Delhi, whether temperature plays a role in Covid-19 infection is highly debated. One school of thought said in the tropical regions of South Asia, the virus might not thrive longer.

"On the other hand, another school of thought has found that novel Coronavirus can survive in a hot and humid environment and tropical climate does not make a difference to the virus. According to them, this is what distinguishes the novel coronavirus from other common viruses, which usually wane in hot weather," stressed Nayar.

TRAFFICKING DURING CORONA

BSF sounds alert

The force has noticed some innovative methods to push the poor and vulnerable from across the border by luring them with job opportunities in cities like Kolkata, Guwahati, some other towns in north-east India and as far as Delhi and Mumbai, a senior officer of the BSF said



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Kolkata, July 5: The Border Security Force (BSF) has sounded an alert all along the 4,096 km long India-Bangladesh front to check cross-border human trafficking instances that may witness a spurt in wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and the linked lockdown, officials said on Sunday.

The force has noticed some innovative methods to push the poor and vulnerable from across the border by luring them with job opportunities in cities like Kolkata, Guwahati, some other towns in north-east India and as far as Delhi and Mumbai, a senior officer of the BSF said.

At least five Bangladeshi nationals were apprehended by the BSF in less than two weeks, between June 19-29, from railway wagons that entered India via Petrapole in the North 24 Parganas district of West Bengal. The wagons either contained bags of chilli or were empty, the officer said.

The age group of the five males ranged between 12-25 years and their preliminary questioning by the force personnel revealed that they were trafficked by touts from the other side with help from local trafficking syndicates on this side, the officer said. It is understood that job loss due to the COVID-19 lockdown and less work opportunities due to the ongoing pandemic were the reasons that these gullible people got lured and trafficked across the border, they said.

While the border front under

the 913 kms long south Bengal front of the BSF is prone to maximum instances of trans-border crimes, human trafficking and smuggling of cattle and narcotics, attempts to illegally push humans have been noticed at few other locations of this border since the outbreak of coronavirus, they said.

The force has, therefore, alerted all its border posts to keep an enhanced vigil against human trafficking instances that, as per multiple intelligence inputs, is expected to witness a spurt owing to the loss of job opportunities and lockdown imposed in both the countries to contain the spread of the coronavirus infection, they said.

"We are coordinating with our counterparts BGB (Border Guard Bangladesh) on these issues and it is our joint effort to ensure that the sanctity of the border is intact and crimes are checked effectively," a BSF officer said in Delhi.

He said the force has initiated joint patrolling with the BGB troops in vulnerable and crime-prone patches of this entire border and they are sharing intelligence inputs and information with their counterparts. "The BSF and BGB have the best of relations at present. The two countries have a shared history and we are working to make the relations better," the officer said.

The force has also asked its border units to mount additional surveillance on cattle smuggling crimes which is expected to rise in view of Eid celebrations at the end of this month.

OVER 300 INDIANS RETURN HOME

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nagpur, July 5: Over 300 Indians stranded in Qatar due to the coronavirus-induced restrictions have returned in two chartered flights to Nagpur and Mumbai.

These flights were not part of the government's 'Vande Bharat Mission', but were arranged by representatives of the Indian Cultural Centre in Doha, an apex body of Indian expatriates there, and the Maharashtra Mandal in Qatar, a community organisation.

One of these flights carrying 172 passengers arrived in Nagpur Friday and the other with 165 Indians onboard landed in Mumbai on Saturday, Indian Cultural Centre's vice president Vinod Nair said. The passengers in the Nagpur-bound flight included 86 from Chhattisgarh, 34 from Madhya Pradesh and 52 from the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra. They paid Rs 24,000 each as the ticket fare, he said.

Passengers of the Mumbai-bound flight paid Rs 20,000 each for their return, he said.

Two Hyd jewellers' deaths create panic

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Hyderabad, July 5: The death of two city jewellers due to coronavirus within five days has led to panic among around 150 people from various walks of life who attended a birthday party thrown by one of them in Hyderabad a few days.

A 63-year-old diamond jeweller who had organised the party for his relatives and friends two weeks ago succumbed Friday. One of his guests, another city jeweller, had died earlier.

A leading politician from the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) and 11 others who attended the party have since tested positive and are undergoing treatment

at different hospitals.

As many as 150 people had attended the birthday bash hosted by the jeweller who owns a shop in Himayatnagar area. Many leading jewellers, politicians and prominent people from various walks of life were among the attendees.

Since many important personalities attended the party, the incident was kept a closely guarded secret.

According to sources in the Telangana Health Department, three

days after the party, a jeweller, who was among the guests, developed COVID-19 symptoms and was admitted to a private hospital, where he tested positive. He succumbed on Monday.

A 63-year-old diamond jeweller who had organised the party for his relatives and friends two weeks ago died Friday. One of his guests, another city jeweller, had died earlier

LOCKDOWN IMPACT

65% children now device addictive: Study

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, July 5: Around 65% children have become device addictive in recent months and are unable to stay away from the device even for half an hour. Children are expressing anger, crying, not listening to parents, showing irritable behaviour when asked to leave the device.

These facts have come to light in a sample survey carried out by physicians at JK Lone Hospital in Jaipur on 203 children to study the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on child health.

The survey says that a total of 65.2 per cent of students have reported physical problems, 23.40% have gained weight, 26.90% have suffered headache/ irritability

and 22.40% had reported eye pain and itching.

In fact, 70.70% students with high screen exposure during the lockdown days have behavioural



problems, 23.90% skipped their daily routines, 20.90 per cent became careless, 36.80 per cent became stubborn and 17.40% reported a reduced attention span.

The study was conceived by Dr Ashok Gupta, Medical Superintendent & Senior Professor, Department of Pediatrics. Under

his direction, this study was carried out by Dr Ramesh Chaudhary, Dr Dhan Raj Bagri, Dr Kamlesh Agarwal, Dr Vivek Athwani and Dr Anil Sharma. In view of the prevailing lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, data was gathered on electronic platforms and social media for the study in which the latest and standard questionnaires were used to collect the data. After obtaining consent, questionnaires were sent to the parents.

The information pertaining to around 55% boys and 45% girls was shared by parents residing in the major cities of Rajasthan.

The survey said that children used mobiles, laptops, computers and tablets available at home out of which mobiles was the most used tool.

100 PARKS FOR ELDERLY

The Himachal Pradesh government has started the process to set up 100 'panchvati' parks and gardens for creating recreational space for the elderly in all 78 blocks of the rural areas of the state, officials said Sunday



RAIN JOY



A boy wades through a waterlogged street during rain at Sion in Mumbai, Sunday

PTI PHOTO



PM's aim

In its determination to create India's own Zoom Video Conference network, the Modi government has taken many steps. If it has asked a dozen-odd private sector companies to come out with a proto-type of Indian version of Zoom by giving them initial funding, it has also asked state-owned Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) to create India's own Zoom fast. BEL had earlier developed a similar set up for the Defence network. Since Zoom is a Chinese-

American owned US company whose servers are based in China, the government wants to provide its citizens and institutions a homemade fully secured and protected Indian variety of Zoom. The government presently uses the National Informatics Centre (NIC) network for VCs. But its capacity is limited and not available to non-government bodies.

Monsoon session

Setting aside all such speculations, the government will now hold the Monsoon session in August-September rather than July-August. The session has to be held before September 22 as Budget session was curtailed on March 23 as per provisions of the Constitution. The precise dates are being worked taking into account the pandemic which may peak out by July 10-15 and the curve starts flattening. The government hopes border crisis with China heads towards some solution which will also help in fixing precise date. However, a

couple of decisions have been taken. There will be no Lok Sabha session in the Central Hall of Parliament and Rajya Sabha MPs won't be shifted to the Lok Sabha chambers. A proposal to hold LS session at Vigyan Bhawan did not find favour either. It has also been decided that "virtual Parliament session" is not feasible at least during 2020 as no IT infrastructure is in place to provide lease lines to all the Members of Parliament as their respective places and officers.

Chasm widens

After the gulf between some of the senior leaders of the Congress party surfaced with others at the June 23 meeting of its Working Committee, Sonia Gandhi swung into action to do the damage control. She is understood to have called up deputy leader of the Congress in Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma to pacify him. Though the differences between Rahul Gandhi's line of thinking on attacking Modi bitterly going to

the extent of calling him "surrender Modi" had widely been reported. It was also reported that how Rahul Gandhi's own trusted lieutenant RPN Singh dared to suggest that the party should avoid personal criticism of Modi. But Rahul Gandhi's another loyalist Rajiv Satav batted strongly for what his leader had been doing and took those going soft on Modi to task. Now it is authoritatively learnt that Anand Sharma stood his ground saying he was the only one in Rajya Sabha who was attacking Modi inside the House. Modi was so upset with his bitter attacks that he even refused to come to the House or leave the house when his turn came to speak.

China violated Geneva Convention

When the Chinese soldiers suddenly attacked Col. B Santosh Babu and others, they certainly violated Geneva Conventions by using medieval torture

instruments. The past pacts signed between India and China prevented the soldiers on both sides from "opening fire and blast operations within the 2 kms of the Line of Actual Control (LAC)". The Chinese attacked the Indian patrol team with "nail-studded rods and heavy stones wrapped with barbed wire, clubs with metal spikes. The Indian government has officially not commented on the use of these medieval torture clubs and other specific details. But these sources say that the India side is weighing the options as this attack tantamount to barbarity and violation of international laws and should it be reported widely to the international community. India is well aware of the folly of a former Prime Minister taking the Kashmir issue to the UN. But using "medieval torture clubs" is a different matter altogether. India has now become a non-permanent Member of the UN Security Council and some do feel that India must create global opinion about the Chinese brutalities.

of the day quote

The fifth column of the Russian federation are now playing a very important role in Ukraine

VOLODYMYR ZELENKY | UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT

America is blessed to have you" Prime Minister Narendra Modi and "India as our valued friend. America and India - the two largest democracies in the world! God's blessings to you as you lead India

MARY MILBEN | POPULAR AFRICAN-AMERICAN SINGER

We wanted to continue and open the economy as much as possible but with the amount of infections, which appeared like a very high cliff, it forced us at this point to get involved more aggressively

BENNY GANTZ | ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Man in famous 9/11 photo dies of nCoV

Delray Beach (US): A man photographed fleeing smoke and debris as the south tower of the World Trade Centre crumbled just a block away on Sept. 11, 2001, has died from coronavirus, his family said. The Palm Beach Post reported that Stephen Cooper, an electrical engineer from New York who lived part-time in the Delray Beach, Florida area, died March 28 at Delray Medical Centre due to COVID-19. He was 78.

34 dead in Japan floods

Tokyo: Deep floodwaters and the risk of more mudslides that left at least 34 people confirmed or presumed dead hampered search and rescue operations Sunday in southern Japan, including at elderly home facilities where more than a dozen died and scores were still stranded. Helicopters and boats rescued more people from their homes in the Kumamoto region.

China braces for more storms

Beijing: A wide swath of southern China braced Sunday for more seasonal rains and flooding that state media said has already left more than 120 people dead or missing this year. The National Meteorological Center raised the weather alert to yellow Sunday morning, the third highest of four levels, for more than half a dozen provinces and the cities of Shanghai and Chongqing.

Schools to reopen in Lanka

Colombo: Sri Lanka will reopen its schools in a phased manner from Monday after keeping them closed for 115 days due to the lockdown imposed in the country to contain the spread of the coronavirus, the Ministry of Education said Sunday.

Ethiopia unrest toll jumps to 156

Addis Ababa: The number of people killed in protests in Ethiopia following the slaying of a popular singer has jumped to 156 from the initial tally of 80, a senior regional security official told Reuters Sunday. The protests were sparked by the assassination of musician Haacaaluu Hundeessaa on Monday night and spread from Addis Ababa to the surrounding Oromia region.



Greeks have matured a lot. And we want to do our own reforms
KYRIAKOS MITSOTAKIS | PRIME MINISTER OF GREECE

WANT TO LOSE SOME WEIGHT?

Researchers have found that the consumption of dietary fibre from oat and rye brans increased the growth of beneficial microbes in the intestines. In addition, diets enriched with oat or rye bran were shown to attenuate weight gain



Crunch, crunch: Africa's locust outbreak is far from over

THE WORLD BANK EARLIER THIS YEAR ANNOUNCED A \$500 MILLION PROGRAMME FOR COUNTRIES AFFECTED BY THE HISTORIC DESERT LOCUST SWARMS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Nairobi, July 5: The crunch of young locusts comes with nearly every step. The worst outbreak of the voracious insects in Kenya in 70 years is far from over, and their newest generation is now finding its wings for proper flight. The livelihoods of millions of already vulnerable people in East Africa are at stake, and people like

Boris Polo are working to limit the damage. The logistician with a helicopter firm is on contract with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation, helping to find and mark locust swarms for the targeted pesticide spraying that has been called the only effective control. For months, a large part of East Africa has been caught in a cycle with no end in sight as millions of



locusts became billions, nibbling away the leaves of both crops and the brush that sustains the livestock so important to many families. For now, the young yellow locusts cover the ground and tree trunks like a twitching carpet, sometimes drifting over the dust like giant grains of sand. Once airborne, the locusts will be harder to contain, flying up to 200 kilometers (124 miles) a day.

Since "more extreme climate variability could increase the likelihood of pest outbreaks and spread," they called for a better early warning system for the region and urged developing countries to help. The World Bank earlier this year announced a \$500 million program for countries affected by the historic desert locust swarms, while the FAO has sought more than \$300 million.

Trump again accuses China of spreading nCoV

AGENCIES

Washington, July 5: China must be held fully accountable for its "secrecy, deception and cover-up" that allowed it to spread the coronavirus all over the world, US President Donald Trump has said, upping the ante on Beijing over its handling of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Addressing the nation for a second time in as many days on the occasion of 244th Independence Day on Saturday, President Trump touted the country's "progress" against the COVID-19 disease despite a nationwide spike in the number of coronavirus cases.

"China's secrecy, deception, and cover-up allowed it to spread all over the world, 189 countries and China must be held fully accountable," he said, once again accusing Beijing of covering up the outbreak of the pandemic.

Praising America's "scientific brilliance", Trump said Saturday that the US will likely have a therapeutic and/or vaccine solution



long before the end of the year.

China has denied US' claim of "covering up" the extent of its coronavirus outbreak and has accused the US of attempting to divert public attention by insinuating that the virus originated from a virology laboratory in Wuhan.

"China was the first country to report the COVID-19 to the World Health Organisation (WHO), (and) that doesn't mean the virus originated from Wuhan.

There has never been any concealment, and we'll never allow any concealment," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said in April.

'America loves India'

President Donald Trump has said that America loves India, as he thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for greeting him and the people of the country on the occasion of the 244th Independence Day of the United States The Fourth of July -- also known as the Independence Day -- is a federal holiday in the US commemorating the publication of the declaration of independence from Great Britain in 1776. Prime Minister Modi on Saturday congratulated President Trump and the people of the US on the country's 244th Independence Day, saying as the world's largest democracies "we cherish freedom and human enterprise that this day celebrates". Meanwhile, Trump vowed to defeat the "radical left," in an Independence Day speech at the White House that condemned recent protests against monuments to historical figures as attempts to destroy the United States.

Rocket fired toward US Embassy in Iraq injures child

AGENCIES

Baghdad, July 5: The Iraqi military said Sunday that a rocket aimed at Baghdad's fortified Green Zone, home of the US Embassy, struck a residential house and injured a child.

Iraqi officials said the embassy's recently installed C-RAM air defense system may have attempted to intercept the rocket as the system was operational late Saturday. A recent spate of rocket attacks have struck close to the US Embassy and targeted American troops in Iraqi bases. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations. The rocket was launched from the Ali Al-Saleh area of Baghdad. A child suffered head injuries and the house was damaged.



Children play in a wading pool in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

UNI PHOTO

Oli-Prachanda power-sharing talks fail

AGENCIES

Kathmandu, July 5: The crucial talks between embattled Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli and the ruling Nepal Communist Party's executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on the issue of power-sharing failed Sunday, but they agreed to meet again Monday to sort out their differences ahead of the party's powerful Standing Committee meeting.

The Prachanda faction, backed by senior leaders including Madhav Nepal and Jhalanath Khanal, has been demanding that Oli step down both as party chair and Prime Minister.

The two leaders failed to reach any agreement.

As both the leaders stick to their respective stands, the talk could not bear any fruit, said a source close to Prime Minister Oli. However, they have agreed to sit again for

dialogue on Monday ahead of the scheduled Standing Committee meeting to sort out differences, a senior minister told PTI.

The twice postponed powerful Standing Committee meeting of the party Monday is expected to decide on the political future of 68-year-old Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, Oli has said that the ruling communist party is facing a grave crisis, indicating that it may split soon.

Democracy books disappear from Hong Kong libraries

Hong Kong has some of Asia's best universities and a campus culture where topics that would be taboo on the mainland are still discussed and written about

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Hong Kong, July 5: Books written by prominent Hong Kong democracy activists have started to disappear from the city's libraries, online records show, days after Beijing imposed a draconian national security law on the finance hub.

Among the authors whose titles are no longer available are Joshua Wong, one of the city's most prominent young activists, and Tanya Chan, a well known pro-democracy lawmaker.

Beijing's new national security law was imposed Tuesday and is the most radical shift in how the semi-autonomous city is run since it was handed back to China by Britain in 1997.

China's authoritarian leaders say the powers will restore stability after a year of pro-democracy protests, will not stifle freedoms and will only target a "very small minority".

But it has already sent fear coursing through a city used to speaking openly, with police arresting people for possessing slogans pushing independence or greater autonomy and businesses scrambling to remove protest displays.



Wong said he believed the removal of the books was sparked by the security law.

"White terror continues to spread, the national security law is fundamentally a tool to incriminate speech," he wrote on Facebook, using a phrase that refers to political persecution.

Searches on the public library website showed at least three titles by Wong, Chan and local scholar Chin Wan are no longer available for lending at any of dozens of outlets across the city.

Hong Kong has some of Asia's best universities and a campus culture where topics that would be taboo on the mainland are still discussed and written about.

But Beijing has made clear it wants education in the city to become more "patriotic" especially after a year of huge, often violent and largely youth-led pro-democracy protests.

CLOTHING FACTORY IN UK FACES MODERN SLAVERY PROBE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, July 5: A clothing factory named Jaswal Fashions based in the eastern England city of Leicester faces a modern slavery investigation after an undercover reporter alleged sweatshop-like conditions and below minimum wage payments to its workers, many of them from India.

According to 'The Sunday Times', its undercover reporter found that workers were being paid as little as 3.50 pounds an hour as against the UK's legal minimum wage of 8.72

pounds an hour and was also operating last week during the localised coronavirus lockdown imposed on the city.

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel described the allegations as "truly appalling" and commended the undercover investigation for its role in "uncovering such abhorrent practices".

"I will not tolerate sick criminals forcing innocent people into slave labour and a life of exploitation," said Patel. "Let this be a warning to those who are exploiting people in sweatshops like these for their own

commercial gain. This is just the start. What you are doing is illegal, it will not be tolerated and we are coming after you," she said.

Last week, the senior Cabinet minister had directed the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) to investigate modern slavery allegations in Leicester's clothing factories after alarm was raised that they were a key source of the spike in coronavirus infections in the region, which led to England's first localised COVID-19 lockdown for the city. The UK's Modern Slavery Act was passed in 2015, making it a



crime to exploit labour and not pay the minimum wage.

The newspaper's undercover reporter spent two days at Jaswal

Fashions, a factory which supplies garments to one of Britain's fastest-growing online retailer Boohoo, which owns labels such as Nasty Gal,

PrettyLittleThing, MissPap, BoohooMAN, Karen Millen and Coast. A statement from Nasty Gal said the company would investigate the newspaper's claims, but insisted that Jaswal Fashions was not a "direct supplier".

"Nasty Gal does not allow any of its suppliers to pay less than the minimum wage and has a zero-tolerance approach to incidences of modern slavery," said Nasty Gal in a statement. The boxes packed at the factory displayed the name Morefray Limited, another Leicester-based clothing manufacturer.



The coming year will be extremely challenging for the Indian automotive sector on account of slow economic growth and dull consumer sentiment

SULAJJA FIRODIA MOTWANI | FOUNDER AND CEO, KINETIC GREEN

TATA SMARTFOODZ TO SCALE UP BIZ

Notwithstanding the COVID-19 challenge, Tata Group's ready-to-eat food biz is readying plans to scale up operations and enhance product portfolio to reach tier-I cities in the country. Tata SmartFoodz, a part of Tata Industries, commercially launched the ready-to-eat brand "Tata Q" in November 2019



of the day quote

Changes for making manufacturing highly competitive may take some time. Meanwhile, component manufacturers need to be attracted to invest in India and export a substantial part of their production



We will not give permission for import from Prior Reference countries. We are affected. There could be malware or trojan horse in those (imports from China) which they can activate remotely (to cripple our power systems)



Our ability to consistently deliver industry-leading growth while maintaining profitability and balance sheet strength, combined with our business sense and thrift, makes us resilient to disruptive challenges



SHORT TAKES

Southern Railway sets up biz unit

Chennai: A business development unit (BDU) has been set up here by the Southern Railway to strengthen its ties with trade and industry besides an increase in freight traffic. As per the directions of the Railway Board, the Southern Railway Sunday said BDUs were established at zonal and divisional levels of the railways with focus on bringing it closer to industry and trade.

4.27 cr e-way bills valued at ₹12L cr

New Delhi: An average of 14.26 lakh e-way bills, which are required for transportation of goods valued at over Rs 50,000, were generated each day in the month of June, which is 77% of the average number of bills generated per day in the pre-lockdown phase, GST Network said Sunday. In total 4.27 crore e-way bills valued at over Rs 12.40 lakh crore were generated by businesses and transporters in June, higher than 4 crore bills worth Rs 11.43 lakh crore generated in March, reflecting an uptick in economic activity.

Trade unions to mobilise people

Kolkata: Five trade unions in the coal sector have planned to mobilise people in mine areas to generate public opinion against the government's decision to start commercial mining, after their three-day nationwide strike could not budge the Centre from its stand, officials said Sunday. The unions, including RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), of Coal India have also decided to go for a day's strike August 18, the last date for submitting bids for the auctioning of 41 blocks.

SAIL Chairman resumes office

New Delhi: SAIL Chairman Anil Kumar Chaudhary has rejoined office after tested negative for COVID-19 virus, an official said. Chaudhary had gone into a three-week institutional quarantine after he tested positive for coronavirus. "Our chairman has tested negative in the test conducted after his three-week quarantine. He has joined his office also. He joined some time back," the official said. The official also informed that no fresh cases have been reported in SAIL office at Lodhi Road since June-mid.

SELF-RELIANT INDIA

'India should focus on 15 items of imports'



These items include electronics, coal, iron-steel, non-ferrous metals and vegetable oils, among others

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 5: Industry body Assocham has identified 15 large import items for ramping up the country's domestic capacity to achieve the objective of Aatmanirbhar Bharat or self-reliant India in 2-3 years.

These items include electronics, coal, iron-steel, non-ferrous metals and vegetable oils, among others. The analysis based on the latest data, shows that the electronics goods are the largest non-oil import segment.

Despite the country being under partial lockdown, India imported electronic goods worth \$2.8 billion only in May, 2020.

"In the circumstance of the industry operating in a normal way, these imports are near about \$5 billion a month - a huge drain on the forex which needs to be curtailed," Assocham said in a note.

The chamber's Secretary General Deepak Sood said the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's recent scheme of production-linked incentives and encouraging champions can be a game-changer if pursued vigorously. Both domestic and foreign direct investment should be encouraged in the endeavour.

The Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) for Large Scale Electronics offers incentives to boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in mobile phone production and specified electronic components, including assembly, testing, marking and packaging (ATMP) units.

The items of non-oil, non-gold imports with significant foreign exchange drain identified by the chamber include electronic goods, electrical and non-electrical machinery, iron and steel, inorganic and organic chemicals, coal-coke & briquettes, and non-ferrous metals, artificial resins & plastic, transport equipment, medicinal and pharmaceuticals.

The other items in the list are vegetable oil, fertiliser, dyeing, tanning and colouring material, professional instruments and opticals, fruits and vegetables.

Telecom tariff hike inevitable, 2 rounds likely in 12-18 months: EY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 5: Tariff hike in the telecom sector is "inevitable" as the current structure does not allow reasonable returns for operators, although a lot would depend on the timing given the "unprecedented" scale of the COVID-19 pandemic and resultant affordability crisis, according to EY.

Acknowledging that an immediate tariff increase may not be feasible in the current setting, Prashant Singhal, emerging markets Technology, Media & Entertainment and Telecommunications (TMT) Leader at EY said two rounds of tariff hikes can be expected in the next 12-18 months, including one in the next six months.

"Tariff hike is necessary. Telecom as spend for consumers is fairly low, and tariff hikes should likely happen over next 6 months, I am not saying it must, but sooner the better.."

The industry is talking of ARPUs going up anywhere from 60% to 80% in next two-three years, which can happen by tariff increase asserts Singhal

"One has to keep in mind the economic situation and affordability factor...but over 12-18 months, you have to have two rounds of tar-



Whether such a hike comes through regulatory intervention or industry action remains to be seen, but the financial health of the operators necessitates revision in tariffs

PRASHANT SINGHAL | TMT EMERGING MARKETS LEADER, EY

iff hikes, including one in the next six months, to ensure sustainability in the market," Singhal told PTI.

Whether such a hike comes through regulatory intervention or industry action remains to be seen, but the financial health of the operators necessitates revision in tariffs, he said.

"Fundamentally, if the sector has to do well, what you require is fair price for service which is being offered by companies.

"There has been one revision of tariffs in December, and if one or two rounds of upward revision happen to make it at least at par

with other emerging markets, in a way that consumers don't feel the pinch, that is where the revival of the sector will happen," Singhal said.

The industry is talking of Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) going up anywhere from 60% to 80% over next two-three years, and that can happen by way of tariff increase, and moving away from fixed price plans to data based on usage or consumption.

Tariff hike is inevitable, and the issue is one of timing, he asserted.

"If we did not have the pandemic, we may have seen a hike in June itself. Now because of the pandemic, which is unprecedented and extraordinary, we may see a tariff hike in next six months but it is inevitable, as current structures don't allow companies to have reasonable return on capital employed," Singhal added.

Admitting that now may not be a suitable time for initiating tariff increases, given the "affordability crisis", Singhal said that things are speeding-up and several measures have been taken by the government to ensure that the economy is back on track.

BIZ BUZZ

Reliance plans to up aviation fuel stations by 50%

New Delhi: Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) plans to increase its network of aviation fuel stations by 50% as it looks to capture greater market share in the business currently controlled by public sector oil retailing firms. In its latest annual report, RIL said the double-digit growth observed over 52 consecutive months might have been stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but India continues to be one of the fastest growing aviation markets in the world for the fifth consecutive year. RIL, which operates the world's largest single location oil refining complex, plans to capture this opportunity through increased presence at airports to refuel airplanes. Air-passenger traffic in India rose 9% even in February after the Indian carriers recouped to full capacity that was lowered following the closure of a major domestic carrier in the first few months of financial year 2019-20.

CARE lowers NCDs, FDs of PNB Housing

Mumbai: CARE Ratings has downgraded the credit rating of PNB Housing Finance's bank borrowings, non-convertible debentures (NCDs), and fixed deposits (FDs) to 'CARE AA' from 'CARE AA+'. The rating agency has also revised its outlook to stable from negative. In a statement, CARE said that the revision in the ratings of the NBFC can be attributed to deteriorating asset quality of the company with a rise in absolute gross NPAs. "The revision in the ratings of PNBHFL factor in deteriorating asset quality of the company with rise in absolute Gross NPAs to Rs 1,856 crore, translating in GNPA of 2.75% on loan assets as on March 2020, up from 1.75% as on December 2019," it said.

COVID IMPACT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 5: The COVID-19 pandemic has made an unprecedented impact on the Indian businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and startups. According to a joint survey by FICCI and Indian Angel Network (IAN), the pandemic has hit the businesses of around 70% startups.

With uncertainty in the business environment and an unexpected shift in priorities of the government as well as corporates, many startups are struggling to survive, it says.

In a nationwide survey on the 'Impact of COVID-19 on Indian Startups' involving 250 startups, 70% participants said their businesses had been impacted by COVID-19 and around 12% had shut operations.

The survey shows only 22% startups have cash reserves to meet the

70% startups affected, 12% shut: Survey



fixed cost expenses over the next 3-6 months, and 68 per cent are reducing operational and administrative expenses.

Around 30% of the companies said they would retrench employees if the lockdown was extended too long. The 43% startups have al-

ready started 20-40% salary cuts over April-June.

Over 33% startups said investors had put the investment decision on hold and 10% said the deals had been scrapped. Only 8% startups had received funds as per

the deals signed before COVID-19 outbreak, the survey revealed.

The reduced funding has forced startups to put a hold on business development and manufacturing activities, which has resulted in loss of projected orders.

The survey highlights the need of an urgent relief package for startups, including possible purchase orders from the government, tax relief and swifter tax refunds, and immediate fiscal support measures, including grants, soft loans and payroll grants.

Besides 250 startups, 61 incubators and investors also participated in the survey.

The startup sector is stressed for survival at the moment. The investment sentiment is also subdued and is expected to remain so in coming months. Lack of working capital and cash flows may lead to major layoffs in next 3-6 months

DILIP CHENY | SECRETARY GENERAL, FICCI

While 96% of investors accepted that their investments in startups had been impacted by COVID-19, 92% said their investments in startups would continue to be low over the next six months.

Around 59% investors said they would prefer to work with the existing portfolio firms in the coming months. Only 41 per cent said they would consider new deals.

"A comparison of priority investment sectors before and during COVID-19 shows 35 per cent investors are now looking at investments in healthcare startups, followed by EdTech, AI/Deep Tech, FinTech and Agri," said the survey.

Around 44% incubators surveyed said their day-to-day operations had been considerably hit by Covid-19. Most incubators are now supporting their portfolio firms by providing them virtual platforms to interact with mentors, investors and industries.

Indian drug firms recall products in US market

AGENCIES

New Delhi, July 5: Indian drug firms like Lupin, Marksans Pharma, Aurobindo Pharma and Alembic Pharmaceuticals are recalling products in the US market, as per the latest enforcement report by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA).

While Lupin and Marksans Pharma are recalling diabetes drug, Aurobindo and Alembic are recalling psychiatric medication in the US market.

As per the latest enforcement report, the US based-arm of Lupin is recalling 6,540 bottles of Metformin Hydrochloride extended-release tablets USP, 500 mg, due to CGMP (Current Good Manufacturing Practice) deviations.

The drug has been manufactured at Lupin's Goa-based manufacturing plant.

Similarly, Marksans Pharma is recalling 11,279 bottles of the diabetes drug Metformin Hydrochloride extended-release tablets, which it had supplied to US-based Time-Cap Labs, Inc. The US health regulator said it detected N-Nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA) impurity above the acceptable intake level in product of both the companies.

JSPL lends helping hand in fight against coronavirus

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar/Angul, July 5: With an objective to support the district administration, government and the local community to fight against COVID-19, Jindal Steel & Power Ltd (JSPL) has been involved in undertaking multi-dimensional activities in past four months.

Through its CSR arm-JSPL Foundation, led by its Chairperson Shallu Jindal, the company has been closely collaborating with the District Administration as well as the locals to defeat the drudgery of the pandemic.

JSPL Foundation has been providing food and ration to the needy and vulnerable, distributing masks, sanitisers and soaps among communities as well as creating awareness among rural communities about various prevention measures to contain the spread of coronavirus.

The steel firm has launched 'Mission Zero Hunger' programme to support the poor and vulnerable and provided cooked and dry foods to the needy.

As a preventive measure, for better protection of local communities, the company has distributed more than 1,10,000 UV treated/sterilized mask made by SHG members promoted by JSPL Foundation. Also, all the 1,654 Anganwadi centres in the district have been provided with face cover masks.

Ex-RBI Guv pens book on NPAs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 5: Urjit Patel, whose stint as the head of the central bank was one of the most tumultuous in recent times that ended with the rare event of an RBI Governor resigning, will be releasing a book later this month, his publishers have said.

Titled 'Overdraft: Saving the Indian Saver', the book focuses on the non-performing assets (NPAs) issue that has afflicted Indian banking in recent years, its causes and Patel's efforts as the RBI Governor in dealing with it.

"Urjit Patel invests his thirty years of macro-economic experience in building strategies to protect our banks from unscrupulous racketeers, ultimately aimed at saving our savings..." publisher HarperCollins India tweeted.



SHORT TAKES

Happy birthday

New Delhi: Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju was among those who wished badminton World Champion PV Sindhu on her birthday. Sindhu turned 25 Sunday. "Birthday greetings to India's first World Badminton Champion and Olympic Medallist @Pvsindhu1. I wish her a good health, long life and happiness forever. Keep shining and making India proud!" said Rijiju in a tweet. Sindhu later replied: "Thanks a lot sir". Former cricketer Yuvraj Singh also wished the ace badminton player. Tennis star Sania Mirza wished Sindhu on Instagram, posting a photo of Sindhu with her son Ishaan on her story. Among the shuttlers who wished her were Jwala Gutta, N Sikki Reddy and Ashwini Ponnappa.

De Kock's day

Johannesburg: White-ball skipper Quinton de Kock was named Sunday the men's 'Cricketer of the Year' at Cricket South Africa's (CSA) annual awards ceremony. It was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 27-year-old also bagged the 'Test Cricketer of the Year' while young opener Laura Wolvaardt took home the 'Women's Cricketer of the Year' and 'ODI Cricketer of the Year' awards. Pacer Lungi Ngidi was named 'ODI and T20 Player of the Year' while David Miller was voted the fans' 'Favourite Player'. This is the second time De Kock has won the men's 'Cricketer of the Year', having claimed the accolade in 2017.

Sachin's gurus

New Delhi: Batting great Sachin Tendulkar paid tribute Sunday to 'three people' who according to him played integral roles in his life as far as his illustrious cricket career is concerned. In a video that he posted on his social media handle on the occasion of 'Guru Purnima', Tendulkar can be seen talking while holding a bat. In the monologue, Tendulkar pays tribute to his brother Ajit, coach Ramakant Achrekar and father Ramesh Tendulkar. "Without the three, I wouldn't have been where I am today," Tendulkar said. "My father always told me don't take shortcuts. Prepare yourself properly and above all don't ever lower your values," he added.

'Absolute ripper'

Melbourne: Australia head coach Justin Langer called David Warner an 'absolute ripper'. Langer said that the senior batsman has been a fantastic addition to the side since he made a comeback after the ball-tampering incident. "I don't think he'll (Warner) be a captain of Australia again because of where we're at, but I love having him in the team. He's an absolute ripper," Langer told Channel Nine television's 'Sports Sunday'. Langer also likened Warner to unbeaten boxing great Floyd Mayweather. "Look, I support him. Having David Warner in the team is like having Floyd Mayweather in the team," Langer said.

Closer to title

Madrid: Sergio Ramos scored his fifth goal since the season resumed as Real Madrid beat Athletic Bilbao 1-0 Sunday to move closer to their first Spanish league title in three years. Ramos converted a 73rd-minute penalty kick to give Madrid their seventh straight league victory and open a seven-point lead over second-place Barcelona, who visit fifth-place Villarreal later Sunday. Madrid remained the only team with a perfect record after the coronavirus break. Eighth-place Athletic was coming off two straight victories and had won three of its last four matches, with the only setback a loss at Barcelona. Madrid were without forward Eden Hazard and defender Raphael Varane because of minor injuries.

AGENCIES

BAVARIAN GIANTS VICTORIOUS IN BUNDESLIGA AND CUP FOR 13TH TIME

Bayern bag German double

AGENCIES

Berlin, July 5: Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich kept their hopes of a treble alive after beating Bayer Leverkusen 4-2 at the Olympiastadion here Saturday to win the German Cup for the 20th time.

David Alaba gave Bayern the lead with a free-kick in the 16th minute after Robert Lewandowski was fouled at the edge of the box, with the defender's effort sailing over the wall and beating the outstretched arm of Lukas Hradecky under the Leverkusen bar.

Bayern doubled the lead when Joshua Kimmich released Serge Gnabry down the right channel and the winger's uncontested shot nestled into the bottom corner for the 24-year-old's 20th goal of the season in all competitions.

Lewandowski made it 3-0 when he let fly a thunderous strike from range straight at Hradecky and the Finnish goalkeeper fumbled, allowing the ball to creep over the line to give the Polish striker his 50th goal of the season.

Leverkusen opened their account four minutes later when Sven Bender headed home at the far post from a corner kick but it was too little, too late as Lewandowski grabbed a second with a chip over the keeper in the 89th minute.

There was late drama when VAR spotted a handball in the box in added on time to award Leverkusen a penalty. Kai Havertz's consolation strike into the top corner proved to be the final kick of



GREAT FEELING: Bayern Munich footballers celebrate with the German Cup after winning the final, Saturday

the game as Bayern defended their title. However, Bayern Munich players could celebrate in front of

13th time that Bayern Munich have won the Bundesliga and German Cup
2nd consecutive League and Cup double
Robert Lewandowski has scored 51 goals for Bayern in double title campaign

empty stands only. "It's a bit sad when the fans are missing for such a cup final in such a great stadium," Bayern forward Thomas Müller said. "I was thinking about it during the award ceremony. It hurts a bit." Bayern had already won their eighth straight Bundesliga title

Robert Lewandowski emerged the super hero for Bayern Munich with 51 goals

BARKLEY BRILLIANCE FASHIONS BLUES WIN



CLEAN STRIKE: Ross Barkley (in blue) about to score Chelsea's third goal against Watford

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, July 5: Ross Barkley set up the opening goal Saturday before scoring himself late in the game as Chelsea eased past relegation-threatened Watford in a 3-0 win to consolidate fourth place in the Premier League.

In another game played on the day, Wolverhampton's pursuit of a first-ever qualification for the Champions League received a setback after a 0-2 loss to Arsenal.

England midfielder Barkley played in Olivier Giroud to score in the 28th minute and put Chelsea ahead at a virtually empty Stamford Bridge. Willian converted a penalty in the 43rd minute after Christian Pulisic was fouled to make it 2-0, before Barkley finished off a flowing team move involving Pulisic and Cesar Azpilicueta with a rasping finish high into the net in second half added on time.

BUFFON SETS SERIE A RECORD

Ronaldo finds his scoring boots again

AGENCIES

Milan, July 5: Cristiano Ronaldo finally scored with a free-kick Saturday since the resumption of the Serie A. The effort helped Juventus beat Torino 4-1 in a match which also saw Gianluigi Buffon set the Serie A appearance record.

Ronaldo scored Juve's third goal to take his tally to 25 league goals this season, four behind Lazio forward Ciro Immobile who leads the Serie A scoring charts. It was the 46th club goal Ronaldo had scored in his career, direct from a free-kick but his first in nearly two seasons with Juventus and on his 43rd attempt. "I needed to score from a free-kick to get some confidence back," the 35-year-old Ronaldo said.

Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri revealed that Ronaldo told him 'finally' as

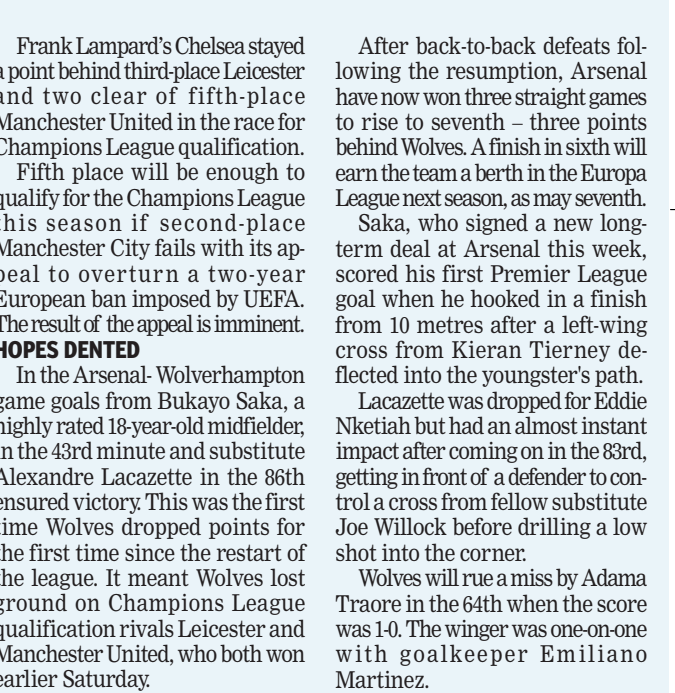
he walked off the field at the end of the match. Paulo Dybala and Juan Cuadrado had scored in the first half before Andrea Belotti's penalty kick reduced the deficit.

Torino defender Koffi Djidji netted an own-goal late on. Juventus continued their march towards a record-extending 10th

straight title as they moved seven points clear of second-place Lazio, who lost 0-3 at home to AC Milan. The Turin derby was Buffon's 648th appearance in Italy's top flight, moving the 42-year-old 'keeper one ahead of AC Milan great Paolo Maldini, who set the record in 2009. Buffon matched this record December 18 against Sampdoria.

Juventus took the lead in the third minute when Cuadrado threaded the ball through for Dybala, who beat two defenders before curling in his fifth goal. Juve doubled their advantage in the 28th when Ronaldo ran from well inside his own half to the penalty area and rolled the ball across for Cuadrado to fire into the bottom left corner.

And Ronaldo got on the scoresheet himself in the 61st, floating the free-kick over the wall and into the top left corner.



Cristiano Ronaldo

After back-to-back defeats following the resumption, Arsenal have now won three straight games to rise to seventh – three points behind Wolves. A finish in sixth will earn the team a berth in the Europa League next season, as may seventh.

Saka, who signed a new long-term deal at Arsenal this week, scored his first Premier League goal when he hooked in a finish from 10 metres after a left-wing cross from Kieran Tierney deflected into the youngster's path.

Lacazette was dropped for Eddie Nketiah but had an almost instant impact after coming on in the 83rd, getting in front of a defender to control a cross from fellow substitute Joe Willock before drilling a low shot into the corner.

Wolves will rue a miss by Adama Traore in the 64th when the score was 1-0. The winger was one-on-one with goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez.

6 FAIL TO TAKE THE KNEE AS F1 REMEMBERS GEORGE FLOYD Drivers wear 'End Racism' t-shirts



Some F1 drivers including Lewis Hamilton (R) took to the knee to protest against the killing of George Floyd

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Spielberg, July 5: Formula One (F1) drivers all wore a black T-shirt with 'End Racism' written on it before the start of the season-opening Austrian Grand Prix here Sunday, but six of the 20 drivers did not take the knee. They were Kimi Raikkonen, Max Verstappen, Charles Leclerc, Daniil Kvyat, Antonio Giovinazzi and Carlos Sainz (Jr).

World champion Lewis Hamilton, the only black driver in F1, wore a T-shirt with 'Black Lives Matter' on the front and 'End Racism' on the

back. Hamilton, who knelt alongside Sebastian Vettel, at one point bowed his head pensively while Kvyat pointed to the anti-racism message on his T-shirt.

Hamilton has spoken widely about racism in recent weeks following the death in Minneapolis of George Floyd. F1 drivers discussed what they should do during a drivers' briefing Friday evening to protest against the death of Floyd.

Leclerc and Verstappen wrote on Twitter before the race why they chose not to kneel. "I believe that what matters are facts and behaviours

in our daily life rather than formal gestures that could be seen as controversial in some countries," Leclerc said. "I will not take the knee but this does not mean at all that I am less committed than others in the fight against racism," he added.

Verstappen explained his choice. "I am very committed to equality and the fight against racism. But I believe everyone has the right to express themselves at a time and in a way that suits them," the Dutch driver said. "I will not take the knee today (Sunday) but respect and support the personal choices.