



## FROM OLD SCHOOL

Actor Rakul Preet Singh says she believes in love and the institution of marriage

LEISURE P2



## VIJAYAN IN SOUP

With the Centre looking into gold-smuggling case, coming days will reveal, if Vijayan will end up like Karunakaran and Chandy

TWO STATES P7



## WHO'S COVID PANEL

The WHO is setting up an independent panel to review its handling of pandemic

INTERNATIONAL P10

# No community transmission yet: Govt

The Union Health Ministry says that there is no community transmission of COVID-19 in the country but a "localised outbreak"

## Vineel Krishna tasked with COVID-19 mgmt

**BHUBANESWAR:** With the COVID-19 cases crossed 10,000 mark, the state government Thursday appointed 2005-batch IAS officer R Vineel Krishna as OSD in Chief Minister's Office (CMO) in addition to his duties and responsibilities. He will look after COVID-19 management in the CMO, official sources said. The IAS officer will continue to discharge his responsibilities as Managing Director of Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC), Director of Sports and Youth Services and Managing Director of Odisha Mineral Exploration Corporation Limited (OMECL). Krishna's appointment was crucial as Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has brought Covid management under Mo Sarkar ambit. The government further appointed OAS officer Lala Manoj Kumar Ray as joint secretary in the CMO while another officer Subhanshu Mishra posted as deputy secretary in the office.

PNN & AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 9:** The Union Health Ministry Thursday said that there is no community transmission of COVID-19 in the country but a "localised outbreak" in some geographical areas.

"After the GoM meeting today (Thursday), Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said that India has not arrived at the community transmission stage. There is a localised outbreak in some geographical areas. 49 districts alone account for 80 per cent of COVID-19 cases. In such a situation, the question of community transmission does not arise," Rajesh Bhushan, Officer on Special in the Health Ministry, said at a press conference.

The WHO has not issued any standard definition of community transmission or localised outbreak but has given the right to member states to assess the situation and report accordingly on it, he added.

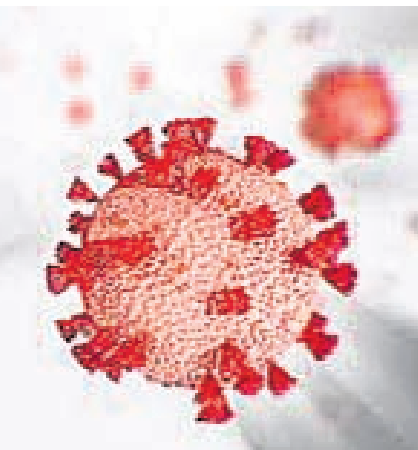
The Health Ministry also painted a bright picture of its handling of the coronavirus cases, asserting that India's deaths and cases per million in the country are amongst the lowest in the world.

"Cases per million people in some countries are at least 16-17 times more than what it is in India. We have 15

## SHUTDOWN IN STATE

■ Ganjam district administration has imposed complete shutdown in all urban areas and five block headquarters for five days beginning from Thursday

■ In view of the rising COVID-19 cases, the district administration has decided to impose a two-day shutdown in Burla area of Sambalpur city from July 9



deaths per million people whereas there are countries where it is 40 times as much," said Bhushan.

He emphasised that despite being the second most populated country in the world, India has managed the pandemic relatively well.

Bhushan said that the gap between the active and recovered cases is widening progressively day by day.

"People who have recovered are twice the active ones. The caseload tells us that at the end of the day, we have managed the situation and our health infrastructure is not creaking because of the pressure," he added.

According to the ministry's daily bulletin, out of total 7,67,296 cases, 4,76,377 have recovered while 2,69,789 remain active in the country. With more COVID-19 patients recovering, the gap between the number of recovered cases and active cases has increased by two lakh.

Besides this, he said that the recovery rate now stands at 62.09 per cent and is increasing. The rate of increase of recovery is appreciable, the official added.

Bhushan, however, warned that the people between the age of 45-75 are most affected by the deadly disease and asked the Central and state government to

## State reports highest single-day spike

**BHUBANESWAR:** Odisha Thursday reported its highest single-day spike of 577 COVID-19 cases, taking the tally in the state to 11,201, while four more deaths pushed the toll to 52, a health department official said. Ganjam district reported three deaths and Bhadrak one, he said. "Regret to inform the demise of four COVID positive patients while under treatment in hospitals," the health department said in a statement. "Two other COVID-19 patients have died due to other ailments, taking the number of such deaths in the state to 15," the statement said. Of the 52 deaths reported in the state so far, Ganjam was the worst-hit district with 30 fatalities, followed by eight in Khurda, five in Cuttack and one each in Sundergarh, Rayagada, Puri, Kendrapara, Jajpur, Gajapati, Bargarh, Angul and Bhadrak districts.

give special care to them.

The Indian Council of Medical Research said that the number of tests has increased, and, on an average, more than 2.6 lakh tests are being done every day. "We hope to follow the approach of test, track and treat."



# Police arrest Ayush director

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** The Commissionerate Police Thursday arrested senior OAS officer, Bibhu Prasad Sarangi who was accused of sexual misconduct against a woman colleague at the Directorate of Ayush under the state Health and Family Welfare department here. He had come to the Mahila Police station for interrogation following a notice sent to him by the police.

Earlier, a woman employee of the directorate had Monday lodged a case (34/20) with Mahila Police in this regard. The 25-year-old lady from Kendrapara is engaged as a contractual worker on an outsourcing basis at the directorate. She alleged that

also verbally abused her and threatened her with dire consequences when she blocked Sarangi on WhatsApp. Sarangi allegedly also threatened to dismiss her from service when she objected to the advances made by Sarangi, who repeatedly sent her vulgar videos and messages.

Left with no option, the victim sought the help of police to save her from the 'advances' made by Sarangi.

Meanwhile, Sarangi has also lodged a counter complaint at Capital



**A WOMAN EMPLOYEE OF THE DIRECTORATE HAD MONDAY LODGED A CASE (34/20) WITH MAHILA POLICE ACCUSING THE DIRECTOR OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

plotted to malign him. Sarangi rubbished the allegations and claimed that the obscene materials were not sent from his mobile number. He also urged the police to send the vulgar materials along with the voice call recordings to the forensic lab for examination.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Good news! The dreaded gangster has been caught alive and he is willing to talk

## ICSE, ISC results today

**New Delhi:** The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CICSE) will announce Class 10 and 12 board results Friday, Board Secretary Gerry Arathoon said. "The results of the Class 10 (ICSE) and Class 12 (ISC) year 2020 examinations will be declared Friday, July 10 at 3 pm. The results will be made available through the board website and SMS facility," Arathoon said Thursday. The board had last week announced an alternate assessment scheme for the two Classes after the pending exams were cancelled in view of a spike in COVID-19 cases. As per the scheme, candidates will be assessed based on best three percentage marks obtained in subjects for which board exams have been conducted and the marks of their internal assessment as well as project work will be taken into account.

MARKET WATCH			
INDEX			VIATION
SENSEX	36737.69	▲	408.68
NIFTY	10813.50	▲	107.70
DOLLAR	75.11	▼	₹0.08
EURO	85.04	▲	₹0.22
GOLD	₹49,081	▼	₹78
SILVER	₹51,618	▲	₹236

WEATHER			
	BHUB	CTK	
TEMP	33.2°C	34.4°C	
MAX	33.2°C	34.4°C	
MIN	24.4°C	23.4°C	
Humidity	97%	88%	
Rainfall	Trace	Nil	
Forecast			
Generally cloudy sky			

## AFTER GALWAN, HOT SPRINGS

# Chinese troops pull back from Gogra post

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) Thursday completed moving back its troops from the face-off sites in Gogra and Hot Springs in eastern Ladakh in line with the understanding reached with the Indian Army, and the two sides are set to hold high-level military talks to further de-escalate tension in the region, people familiar with the development said.

They said both sides have completed creation of a buffer zone of three kilometres in the three friction points of Galwan Valley, Gogra and Hot Springs as part of a temporary measure aimed at reducing the possibility of any confrontation.

On Thursday, the PLA has totally pulled back its troops from Gogra (patrolling point 17), and with this, both sides have implemented the first phase of disengagement to avoid any friction, the people cited above said.

They said the entire focus now shifts to Pangong Tso area where there has been thinning out of troops from Finger area 4. India has been insisting that China must withdraw its forces from areas between Finger 4 and 8.



They said the fourth round of corps commander-level talks between the two sides is likely to take place in the next two-three days.

The two armies will also carry out a joint verification in the next few days to assess the implementation of the disengagement process.

The formal disengagement process began Monday morning after a nearly two-hour telephonic conversation between National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi Sunday. In the talks, the two sides agreed on an expeditious withdrawal of troops from all the standoff points to bring back peace and tranquillity in the region. Doval and Wang are Special Representatives for the boundary talks. Following the talks, a mutual disengagement process began in Galwan Valley, Hot Springs, Gogra and Finger areas in Pangong Tso.

## IN ECHO OF MAO ERA

# AS SCHOOLS REOPEN IN CHINA AFTER THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK, THEY HAVE THROWN THEMSELVES INTO A NATIONWIDE EXERCISE TO REMOVE BOOKS DEEMED POLITICALLY INCORRECT

REUTERS

**Beijing, July 9:** As schools reopened in China after the COVID-19 outbreak, they have thrown themselves into a nationwide exercise to remove books deemed politically incorrect, deepening Chinese President Xi Jinping's push to instil patriotism and ideological purity in the education system.

A directive from the Ministry of Education last October called on elementary and middle schools to clear out books from their libraries including "illegal" and "inappropriate" works. Now teachers have removed books from schools in at least 30 of mainland China's 33 provinces and municipalities, according to a review of social media posts, publicly available school and

local government documents, and interviews with teachers.

From western Gansu province to Shanghai, the review of publicly announced measures pointed to books being cleared by the hundreds of thousands.

Censorship in China has been intensifying under Xi, but analysts say this is the first national campaign aimed at libraries in decades. It comes as government employees in Hong Kong last week removed books by pro-democracy activists from public libraries to see whether they violate a new national security law.

"This is the first movement targeted at libraries since the Cultural Revolution," said Wu Qiang, a political analyst based in Beijing and former political science lecturer at Tsinghua University. In the late 1960s, zealous



teenagers driven by Mao Zedong carried out a nationwide campaign targeting libraries and destroying or burning what they could get their hands on, as part of a wider destruction of traditional culture.

This campaign is more selective,

and directed from the top, with schools putting groups of teachers in charge of interpreting the order. The books removed have mainly been out-of-date, shabby or pirated texts, but the drive has also covered those which, while they may

# Nepal's Communist party faces split

## OLI, PRACHANDA TALKS FAIL TO YIELD POSITIVE OUTCOME

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kathmandu, July 9:** Nepal's ruling communist party has failed to address the intra-party rifts as Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and NCP executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' have failed to reach a consensus despite holding over half-a-dozen meetings in a week, a media report said Thursday.

On Wednesday, a crucial meeting of the NCP's 45-member Standing Committee was postponed till Friday. The meeting was deferred for the fourth consecutive time in a bid to provide enough time for the two chairmen of the party to sort out their differences amidst the heightened intra-party rift.

The political future of 68-year-old Oli is expected to be decided Friday during the Standing Committee meeting, amidst the growing involvement of Hou Yanqui, the Chinese ambassador to Nepal, to save his chair.

The Prachanda faction, backed

by senior leaders and former Prime Ministers Madhav Kumar Nepal and Jhulanath Khanal, has been demanding Oli's resignation, saying his recent anti-India remarks were "neither politically correct nor diplomatically appropriate."

The differences between the two factions of the Nepal Communist Party – one led by Oli and the other by 'Prachanda' on the issue of power-sharing – has recently intensified after the Prime minister unilaterally decided to prorogue the Budget session of Parliament and over to the government's lackluster response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

# UP COP KILLER VIKAS DUBEY ARRESTED



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhopal/Lucknow, July 9:** Alleged gangster Vikas Dubey was arrested outside a temple in the pilgrimage city of Ujjain Thursday after purchasing prasad and an entry ticket to the shrine, ending a six-day manhunt for the man accused of masterminding a deadly ambush on a police party outside his home in Kanpur.

MP Home Minister Narottam Mishra said two of Dubey's associates were also arrested.

"We have arrested Dubey and he is in our custody," Mishra said. "Dubey arrived at the (Mahakal) temple in his car. A police constable identified him first, after which three others (security personnel) were alerted and he was taken aside for questioning and later arrested," Mishra said.

However, temple sources gave a slightly different account. They said Dubey reached the temple gate in the morning and purchased ₹250 ticket from a counter near the police post. When he went to a nearby shop to buy prasad for the deity, the shop owner identified him and alerted police, they added.

It is not clear if he was arrested immediately, before he could enter the temple, or later.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Today, you want to do something for the environment. Ganesha says plant a tree, clean up your neighbourhood, ask for a paper bag. You wish to lead the world into a better place? Do it by all means, but one step at a time.

TAURUS

You may feel suspicious about the people around you, feels Ganesha. You are also likely to emerge victorious in visa matters. You will take time to let your loved ones know how much you care for them. Have a positive attitude and it will win many hearts for you, advises Ganesha.

GEMINI

If you are embroiled in a legal dispute, an out-of-court settlement is likely, predicts Ganesha. You are a courageous person and you'll need a lot of it today. Don't back down from your decisions. You may have to be stern with a few people. Your resilience will pay off.

CANCER

Today, you will be at the centre of all your plans. Your responsibilities at home are likely to be unnecessary digressions for you, with your help-yourself-only attitude. However, you may feel that you are not getting enough returns of your hard work.

LEO

Today may not be the best time to mess with you, considering the aura of invincibility that you possess. Be it a game, a competition, or an argument, you will have the edge over others in every sphere, says Ganesha. Also, you may come across people with whom you will have personal differences, and those who will try to change your fortunes.

VIRGO

A renewed zest for life will bring in a transformation in you. It is a good time to let people know how important and intelligent - yes, you can be both - are. Your eminence will be obvious as you show how things are meant to be done.

LIBRA

Good news! You will be a people's person today. Close friends, relatives and family - you seem to want to spend your time with all of them today, says Ganesha. Better news? Your romantic brilliance will be at its peak today as your fancy takes wings and creativity flows freely in manners that seem irresistible.

SCORPIO

You may face the music from bosses today, forecasts Ganesha. Your colleagues too may not warm up to you and offer half-hearted support. Novices knocking on the doors of career may look forward to belated success in interviews and final selection.

SAGITTARIUS

A day full of cheer and joy is in store. You will probably enrol in a part-time course and sharpen your skills. But for those in police and legal professions, you will be the lions of the jungle! Roar and stamp your authority, says Ganesha.

CAPRICORN

Your grand orchestration may not come to fruition, and even your best-laid plans may go awry, says Ganesha. Squabbles with people over petty issues will add to your growing vexation; keep calm and you'll handle all of it just fine.

AQUARIUS

Today is an important day in the larger scheme of things. You may finally decide to buy a home, change your job, or marry! Sudden and unexpected profits are on the cards too. Reputation and rewards are all yours today. This acknowledgement helps you remain committed, says Ganesha.

PISCES

Financially, you have bright prospects awaiting you today. You will be able to deal with the mind-numbing financial jugglery required to take stock of your monetary matters with precision. You might be dealing with people who secretly have an axe to grind against you.



LESLIE TO PLAY BATWOMAN

Actress Javicia Leslie has been cast as the new Batwoman in the superhero series, becoming the first Black actress to portray the superhero in a television or film production. "I am extremely proud to play the iconic role of Batwoman on television," said Leslie.

COVID-19 EFFECT

Women's career dreams hit hard as pandemic rages

DEBI MOHANTY

**BHUBANESWAR:** It has been a month since Priyanka Samal, 21, who worked with a city-based coaching institute, was told that her services were no more required. Despite that she expected a call from the authorities asking her to rejoin given past performances. But that didn't happen. Now, after exhausting whatever little she had saved, Priyanka had no choice but to pack her bags at a working women's hostel in Nayapalli which had been her second home since she landed in the city. She is getting ready for a return to her village in Jagatsinghpur district.

"Even after cyclone Fani hit the city last year, I stayed back despite a week-long power and water supply crisis," Priyanka recalls.

"Covid is far worse than the deadliest of cyclones. It has shattered dreams," Priyanka says as she waves her hands at a fellow inmate leaving for office.

Globally, COVID-19 has claimed over half a million lives and hammered livelihoods of countless people but its side effects have crushed hopes of men and women from different age groups. The situation, particularly for career women in the Twin City - Cuttack and Bhubaneswar - is no different, either. Priyanka is only one of them.

While those living in their own houses or with family in these cities are considered fortunate, others, managing in rented accommodations or hostels have been the worst hit.

"Situation was never so grim before. For years, the office which you thought, was part of your life, is not the same any more. You could be asked to take a walk any moment," puts, activist, Madhumita Samal.

Working from her rented accommodation in Bhubaneswar's Patia area, Nisha Mukherjee, 28, a senior programmer with a software major, echoes Samal's words. "There is uncertainty everywhere. I know I am safe today, but can't guarantee about tomorrow," thinks Nisha.

Uncertainty apart, there are other issues, that worry the women professionals, as well.

Take the case of Aditi Mishra, 24. Post her diploma in interior designing, Aditi used to commute between home (in Cuttack) and office in Bhubaneswar's Jayadev Vihar locality, in public transport. With the bus services yet to be streamlined due to lack of passengers, she is now entirely dependent on her diabetic father's bike for her home-office-home journey. On June 1, the day

*In private sector, annual performance appraisals are done during March and the employees enjoy the increment in April's salary. But this year, the pandemic has upset all equations, puts activist Madhumita Samal*



Photo only for representation

her office reopened, Aditi had to wait for over an hour to board a bus at Link Road Square but in vain. Finally, she requested her dad to drop her at office.

With her mother suffering from spondylitis and thyroid disorders, Aditi often feels guilty to burden her father. However, she can't afford to quit her job as she realises the financial need of the family. But she has managed to halve her father's workload. Her dad now drops and picks her from office for the first three days of a week. For the other three days, she takes help of her uncle. For that, she shifts herself to her ancestral village in Pipili where her uncle lives.

Often criticised and branded selfish by other members in the joint family, Aditi says she also wants to give up job fearing infection. "But I don't know what to do, I'm at the crossroads," she adds.

There are others who don't face such issues. Like Susmita Rout, 32, a relationship manager of a leading private bank in Cuttack. "Fortunately, none of us have been fired so far," Susmita says. However, she concedes that achieving the monthly target set by her bank is literally not possible during Covid times. "Therefore, people like me are on tenterhooks," she adds.

The condition is such that even those offered a choice of whether or not to continue with a 25-30 per cent pay cut, think they are blessed. "There is absolutely no option. So, when I was asked if it's okay for me to work at 30 per cent lesser salary till next December, I politely replied in the affirmative," admits, Anita Patnaik, 37, an architect working with a city-based firm.

"We can't be unhappy or grudge," puts 29-year-old Malini De, a staff nurse from Mayurbhanj district

employed with a leading corporate hospital in Bhubaneswar. In Covid times, with lesser inflow of patients, the mandatory one day off that she availed after four consecutive night shifts, has become a thing of the past. "May be things will change for the better in future," she hopes.

Perhaps, the longing for a better future, seems to have provided the succor to Padmini Mishra, 22, a project associate with an NGO, working at AIIMS, Bhubaneswar, to carry on against, what she describes as an 'emotionally back breaking' phase.

She stays in a hostel which is nearly six km from her workplace and certainly not a walking distance. But she often had to walk about 12 km (to and fro) a day to reach office during the lockdown period. Needless to say, it is physically taxing for any human being. But what made her nervous were the lewd remarks and ugly gestures of some bikers.

On one occasion, she even couldn't be with her parents who were hospitalised following a road mishap. Reason: With public transport off roads, had she hired a car, it would have warranted her to stay in a quarantine facility. This apart, she was yet to complete the mandatory one year probation period and asking for extra leave during a pandemic that too from hospital duty would possibly cost the job, says Padmini.

According to Samal, the pandemic arrived at a wrong time. In private sector, annual performance appraisals are done during March and the employees enjoy the increment in April's salary. But this year, the pandemic has upset all equations, she states.

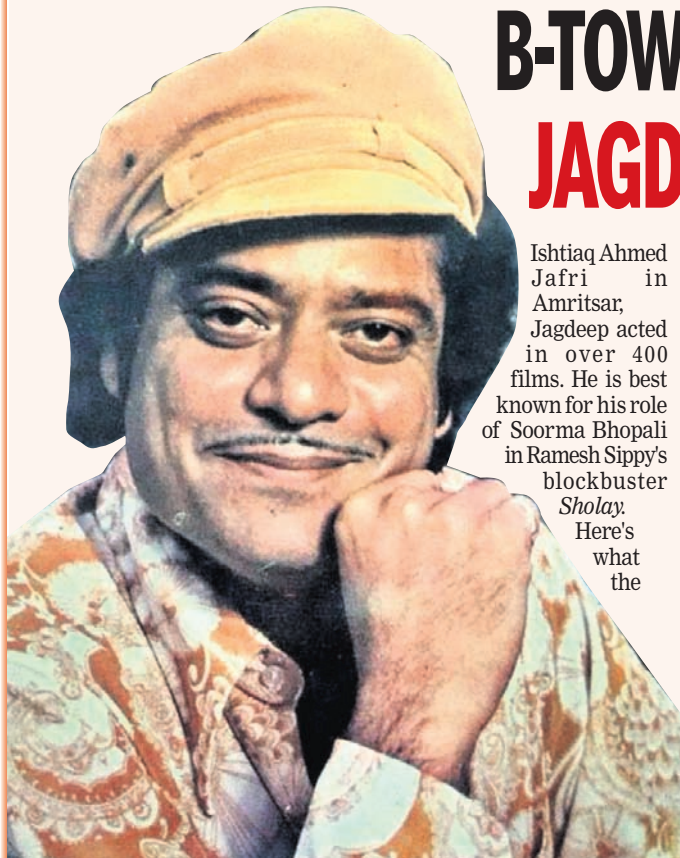
**Note: Some names have been changed on request**

GLEE STAR RIVERA GOES MISSING

Former *Glee* star Naya Rivera is missing after a swimming accident at Lake Piru in California. The Ventura County sheriff's department Wednesday shared that they are investigating a possible drowning victim at Lake Piru. A dive team was dispatched to the area, reports *variety.com*.



B-TOWN MOURNS JAGDEEP'S EXIT



Ishtiaq Ahmed Jafri in Amritsar, Jagdeep acted in over 400 films. He is best known for his role of Soorma Bhopali in Ramesh Sippy's blockbuster *Sholay*. Here's what the

**Ajay Devgn:** "Heard the sad news of Jagdeep Saab's demise. Always enjoyed watching him on screen. He brought so much joy to the audience. My deepest condolences to Jaaved and all members of the family."

**Anil Kapoor:** "Jagdeep Saab was one of the greatest actors of India...I was his huge fan and was lucky enough to have worked with him in *Ek Baar Kahoo* and many more films..."

**Ayushmann Khurrana:** "RIP #Jagdeep sir! Your contribution to the industry will always be remembered."

**Shabana Azmi:** "Deepest condolences to @jaavedjaafari @NavedJafri\_BOO and the entire family on the passing away of #JagdeepSaab."

**Javed Akhtar:** "As a young man he played highly emotional & dramatic roles in films like *Bhabi*, *patang*. Comedy was his second successful inning. Great talent, underused. Good bye sir."

**John Abraham:** "Always made us smile. Rest In Peace. #Jagdeep"

**Randeep Hooda:** "Rest in peace #Jagdeep saab .. thank you for all the entertainment." IANS

**Mumbai:** Cine celebrities including Amitabh Bachchan, Ajay Devgn, Anil Kapoor and Shabana Azmi mourned the death of 81-year-old veteran comedian Jagdeep, who passed away Wednesday due to age-related health problems. Born on March 29, 1939 as Syed

celebrities have written on their social media accounts:

**Amitabh Bachchan:** "Jagdeep... an actor of exceptional comedic repertoire, passed away. He had crafted a unique individual style of his own and I had the honour of working with him in several films."

Rakul believes in institution of marriage



**Mumbai:** Actress Rakul Preet Singh believes in love and the institution of marriage, and says that she doesn't understand how people think of it as 'some sort of pressure'.

Opening up about her personal life, she said: "I have changed as a person. What I was isn't what I am, and for me the meaning of love is what I see in my parents. I totally believe in the institution of marriage and love, and I think it is beautiful. I don't understand how people think of this as some sort of pressure."

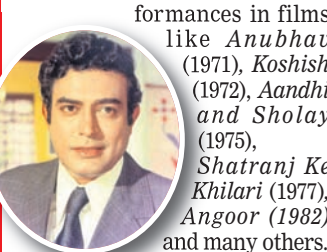
She also stated the qualities that she looks out for in a guy.

"Most important is that the guy has to be tall. Even in heels, I should still be able to look up to my man. The second-most important quality is that he should have an intellect, and lastly some purpose in life," said the actress. IANS

Fans remember Sanjeev Kumar on his 82nd birth anniversary

**Mumbai:** The legendary Sanjeev Kumar would have been 82 today had he been around. He was only 48 when he passed away November 6, 1965.

The late actor won the National Award twice, for his roles in *Dastak* and *Koshish*. Born July 9, 1938 as Harihar Jethalal Jariwala, Sanjeev Kumar forayed into industry with the film *Hum Hindustani* in 1960. He has delivered memorable performances in films like *Anubhav* (1971), *Koshish* (1972), *Aandhi* and *Sholay* (1975), *Shatranj Ke Khilari* (1977), *Angoor* (1982) and many others.



Throughout Thursday, Twitter was buzz with netizens paying tribute to the legendary actor, who won the hearts of millions with his acting skills, warm smile and expressive eyes.

"Birth anniversary of a legend.. Sanjeev Kumar; the most versatile actor. His charm, his elegance, the eyes... gold!" shared a user.

"Happy birthday Sanjeev Kumar. An actor who could act merely through his eyes..." expressed another. IANS

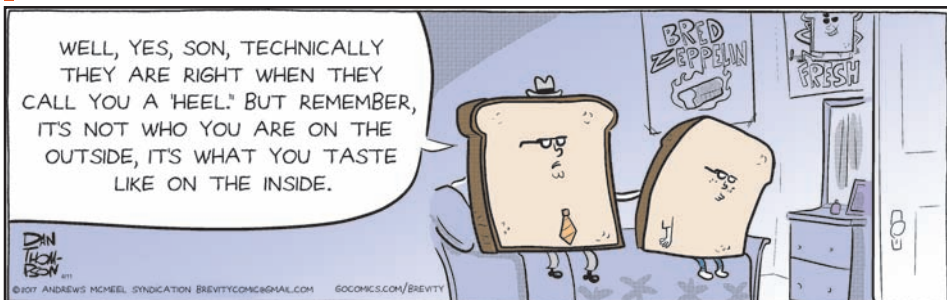
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBES

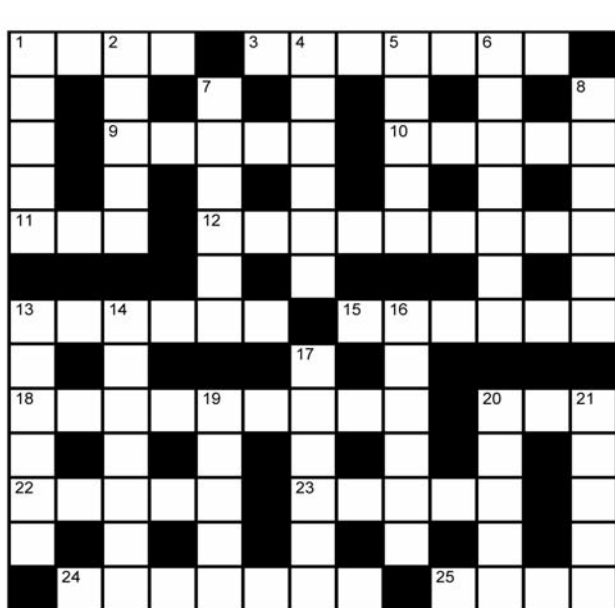


BREVITY



FUN post

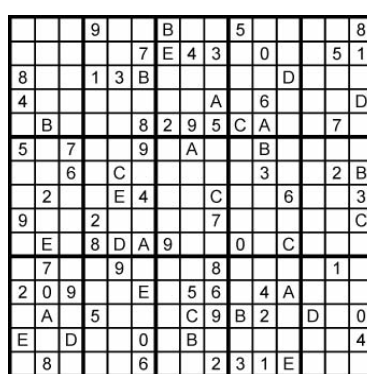
CROSSWORD



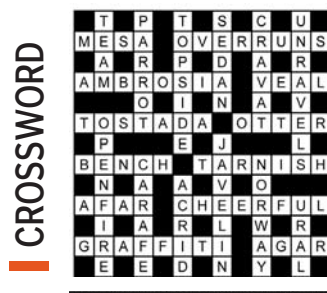
- Across**
- 1 Shipshape
  - 3 Sound systems
  - 9 Long-tailed parrot
  - 10 Preface
  - 11 It's made in Japan
  - 12 Floor covering
  - 13 Young swan
  - 15 Deadly
  - 18 Loath
  - 20 Maid's cloth
  - 22 Soft leather
  - 23 Prepare to propose
  - 24 Let in
  - 25 Jejeune
  - 7 Winter hanger
  - 8 Golden Horde member
  - 13 Red shade
  - 14 Sailing ship of yore
  - 16 Menu item
  - 17 Woofed
  - 19 Angler's basket
  - 20 King or queen
  - 21 Wild pumpkin, e.g.
- Down**
- 1 Toothsome
  - 2 Fiend
  - 4 Foil
  - 5 Poker ploy
  - 6 African flightless bird

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW





## WINNING LAURELS

Researcher Aftab Hussain being felicitated at a workshop on Jagannath culture at Sivananda Centenary Boys' High School in Bhubaneswar, Thursday

## BOVINE CARE

A traffic cop helps a cow in quenching its thirst in CDA area of Cuttack amid the shutdown over Covid-19, Thursday



# State's tax collection dips 23%

CHIEF SECY DIRECTS OFFICIALS TO CONTINUE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** The state's revenue collection from both tax and non-tax sources has fallen by 22.94 per cent till June of financial year (FY) 2020-21 as compared to the corresponding period of the previous FY due to Covid.

This was revealed at the all-secretary level meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy here through video-conferencing. The monthly meeting could not be held during the last three months due to the pandemic.

Finance secretary Ashok Meena presented the state's fiscal status before the meeting. The total revenue collection from both own-tax and non-tax sources during April, May

and June of FY 2020-21 was ₹8,204 crore whereas it stood at ₹10,645 crore during first three months of last fiscal.

State's own tax collection has decreased by 35 per cent up to June. However, the non-tax revenue till June has increased by around 3 per cent.

The total non-tax revenue in first quarter of FY 2019-20 was ₹3,506 crore which rose to ₹3,609 crore till June 2020.

The programme expenditure of the state government during the period has also reduced by 5.06 per cent as compared to the previous FY. The total programme expenditure up to June of the current fiscal was ₹8,923 crore against the last FY's ₹9,399 crore.

The social sector spending has increased considerably. The state has spent ₹5,281 crore in first three months of FY 2020-21 whereas the last years' expenditure was ₹4,225 crore.

Similarly, current FY's first quarter expenditure on food security programmes has increased to ₹1,607 crore from ₹305 crore.

Lauding the performance of the departments in delivery of online services under 5T charter, the Chief Secretary directed the departments associated with Covid management to be more sharp and vigilant on containment of Covid. The district observers, CDMOs and collectors of the hotspot districts were directed to ensure supply of life saving drugs in their respective hospitals.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** In order to rationalise the rate of alcoholic beverages in Odisha comparing to neighboring states, the state government Thursday reduced the special Covid fee imposed on the liquor by 35 per cent.

The special Covid fee on alcoholic beverages has been reduced from 50 per cent to 15 per cent with effect from Friday, official sources in the Excise department.

The MRP of liquor in the neighbouring states is less than the prevailing rate in Odisha. Therefore, there were chances that no non-duty paid liquor from outside the state would enter Odisha due to the price differential. Keeping this in mind, the government has revised the special Covid fees of the alcoholic beverages, the source said.

Odisha State Beverage

## BOOSTING SALES



**THE SPECIAL COVID FEE IMPOSED ON LIQUOR HAS BEEN REDUCED TO 15% FROM EXISTING 50%**

**THERE WERE CHANCES THAT NO NON-DUTY PAID LIQUOR FROM OUTSIDE THE STATE WOULD ENTER ODISHA DUE TO THE PRICE DIFFERENTIAL**

**THE MRP OF LIQUOR IN THE NEIGHBOURING STATES IS LESS THAN THE PREVAILING RATE IN ODISHA**

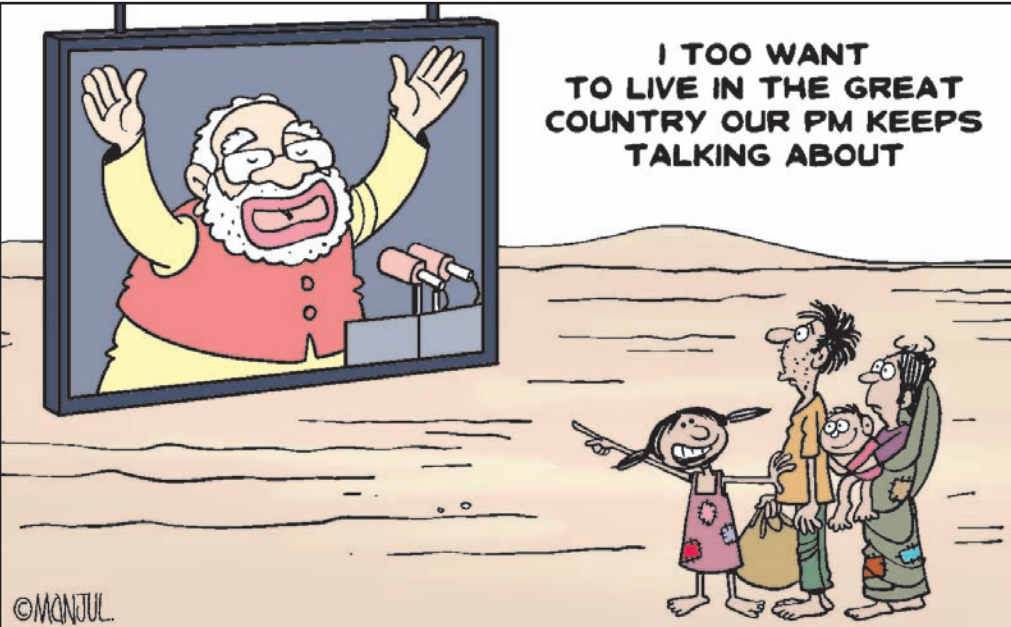
**THE GOVERNMENT HAS COLLECTED AROUND ₹200 CRORE AS SPECIAL COVID FEE SO FAR**

Corporation Ltd (OSBCL) has been asked to notify the revised rate of all alcoholic products and upload it in its website.

The special fee was imposed on liquor in May this year over and above tax rates of 2020-21, resulting in an in-

crease of MRP by approximately 50 per cent for most of the alcoholic beverages (IMFL & Beer) compared to 2019-20. The government has collected around ₹200 crore as special Covid fee so far, the source added.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# ADITYA'S DEATH: MURDER ANGLE BEING PROBED

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** The autopsy report of social activist and motivational speaker Aditya Dash, Thursday, revealed that severe traumatic brain injury caused his death. Sources said that he sustained severe head injury due to the collision with the speeding train.

In another development, the members of Aditya's organisation 'People for Seva' have lodged a complaint with

the GRP late Wednesday night alleging that the activist's death was not suicide but a planned murder.

Police have also started investigation into the murder angle by registering a case (81/20) under sections 302 and 34 of the IPC.

Meanwhile, the cops seized a hand-written suicide note from Aditya's diary Wednesday. Dash was found dead on the tracks near Lingaraj Road railway station here July 7.

# JSPL Joins the Fight Against COVID-19 in Odisha

## On Ground Service by JSPL in Odisha

In the wake of COVID-19 outbreak in India, Jindal Steel & Power Ltd (JSPL), through its CSR arm JSPL Foundation, has been making various efforts to join its hand with the Government and community especially around its operational areas in three districts i.e. Angul, Keonjhar and Sundargarh to fight the spread of Coronavirus. With the guidance of Chairman of JSPL Mr Naveen Jindal and leadership of JSPL Foundation Mrs Shailu Jindal, the company started its on ground services, especially aimed at helping the poor and the vulnerable, immediately after the announcement of COVID-19 lockdown in the state.



## Mission Zero Hunger

Pursuant to the vision of JSPL's Chairman Mr Naveen Jindal, the JSPL Foundation under the thought leadership and close mentoring of its Chairperson Ms Shailu Jindal has also launched 'Mission Zero Hunger' programme in Odisha along with JSPL's other operational states.



Under this programme cooked food or dry ration are being provided to the poor and needy people like truck drivers, migrant labourers stranded at different sites and other vulnerable communities across the country to ensure food security and basic nutrition care of such vulnerable people.

The Foundation also has been supporting institutions like old age homes, child care home, shelter homes and

Homes for special children with dry food materials such as rice, dal, oil, jaggery/sugar, chiwda/poha, potatoes, onions, soyabean and black peas, soaps, salt etc. Till date the Foundation has provided more than 50,000 meals to such needy people in Odisha. The Foundation also distributed dry ration items for 10 days to 65 leprosy affected families.

More than 250 vegetable and dairy farmers who are being supported by JSPL Foundation for enhancing agriculture production and productivities are making regular supply of their farm produces in the township and colonies of JSPL getting a fair price; hence insulated from distressed sale.

## Distribution of Face Masks & Other Essentials



JSPL Foundation has been supporting manufacturing and distribution of face cover masks, Hand-wash liquid and phenyls. The Women SHGs promoted by JSPL Foundation has so far manufactured more than 1.7 lakh UV treated washable masks and 0.30 lakhs



disposable masks. The face cover masks have been provided to communities, health workers and other corona warriors.

On account of making of masks, hand wash and phenyle, for which they have certified license, the Women SHG members are having daily cash income during this wage crunch period. More than 250 trained women are working to make these masks.

## Community Sensitisation & Awareness



JSPL Foundation has left no stone unturned in creating awareness on prevention of COVID-19 pandemic in rural and tribal villages in their mother tongue using AVs, social media, pamphlets, audio jingles & radio. The community, which has high constituents of tribal and rural families in these three districts of Odisha, are being sensitised on social distancing, hand washing and hygiene, need for staying at home, following lockdown rules etc. JSPL Foundation has conducted 117 awareness sessions across three districts of Odisha.



The Foundation is also disseminating awareness programmes on preventive measures through pamphlets, hoardings, social media and radio.

## Home Based Therapy for Children With Special Needs

Asha the Hope has been providing rehabilitation and support services to persons with disabilities and children with special

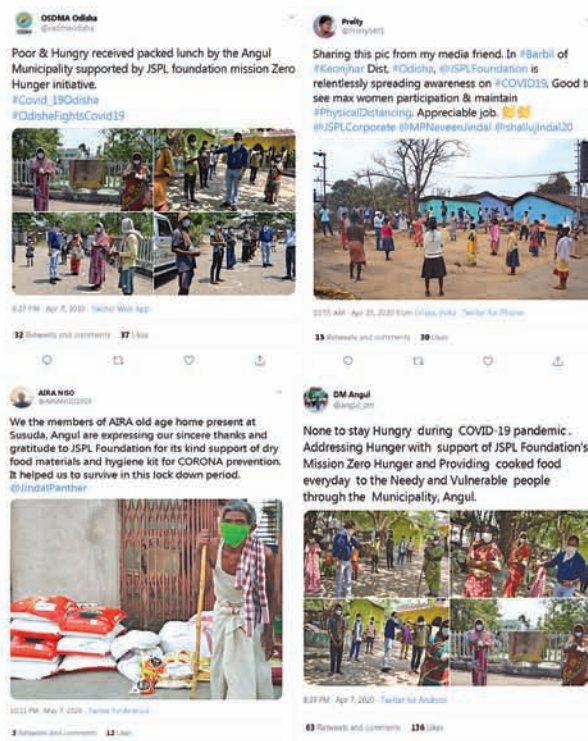


needs in Angul, Odisha. Since it is a continuous process and unplanned break in the services may lead to loss of acquired knowledge and skills of the persons and children, the centre continued to extend the service through electronic and telecommunication methods. Video sessions were conducted to guide parents to continue the service. Wherever possible the therapists of Asha the Hope visited their homes to guide them to practice 'home exercise protocol', therapeutic skills, pre-vocational learning activities and educational activities. The centre could continue home based therapy for 64 children with special needs in Angul.

Besides Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, hot cooked meals to the migrant workforce and socially vulnerable were provided in Bhubaneswar and Delhi. At Delhi, more than 41,000 meals have been so far served under JSPL Foundation's 'Mission Zero Hunger'.

- 170,000 meals served to underprivileged and vulnerable – more than one lakh in Odisha
- 200,000 face cover masks stitched & distributed
- 50,000 families provided hand wash, sanitizers, phenyl and soaps
- 500 vegetable and dairy farmers insulated from distress sale

## Feedback on Twitter





# 30% cut in syllabi on the cards

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** Following the lead by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) that eased the syllabus for Class IX to XII by up to 30 per cent amid the COVID-19 outbreak, the state government Thursday hinted at modifying the syllabus on similar lines.

Addressing a presser, School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash said that the state government will give the CBSE's move to ease the exam pattern of students for the year 2020-21 a serious consideration and decide accordingly in the interest of students.

"In the interest of students the syllabus might be reduced up to 30 per cent or more than that," Dash added.

The minister further clarified that the situation is very crucial owing to COVID-19 pandemic. "It will be too early to say anything regarding the reduction in school syllabus. That said, the final decision regarding the syllabus reduction will be revealed after resumption of schools and colleges," he added.

Regarding reopening of schools, the minister said that a decision will be taken after August 31.

Meanwhile, Odisha Secondary School Teachers' Association (OSSTA) urged the Board of Secondary Education (BSE) and Odisha government to take similar action in syllabus reduction after the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announcement.

Prakash Chandra Mohanty, secretary, OSSTA, said, "Due to the pandemic, schools are closed until August last. Students have lost many months of classes which will put pressure on them."



**In the interest of students, the syllabus of Std IX-XII might be reduced up to 30 per cent or more than that**

**SAMIR RANJAN DASH**  
MINISTER, SCHOOL & MASS EDUCATION



## Huge respite for diploma students

With no clear end to COVID-19 situation at sight, the State Council for Technical Education & Vocational Training (SCTE&VT) in Odisha Thursday said that Diploma students of the state can appear for their Semester-VI examinations using smartphones. "Considering the present COVID-19 scenario and to discourage unwanted movement, it is decided that the students who do not have laptop or desktop computers can also appear for the online exams using Android-based smartphones from their house," a notification said. "The students who do not have any facility of laptop/ desktop computer or Android mobile phones or have internet connectivity problem may only avail the option of visiting nearby designated examination centre of their district to appear in the exams," the notification added.

## Reconsider revised UGC guidelines: Min

Higher Education minister Arun Sahoo Thursday wrote a letter to Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal requesting him to reconsider the revised guidelines of UGC and not to make conduct of UG and PG final semester exams mandatory. MHRD has been requested to allow state government to adhere to its decision of cancellation of these exams.

In the letter, Sahoo said that at present it is very risky to conduct exam with more than 2 lakh students in the classrooms. "Hence, we request the union minister to review the decision," he wrote.

Earlier, the Ministry of Home Affairs in a letter to Union Higher Education Secretary allowed conducting of examinations by universities and colleges. In the letter, it is said that the final semester examinations are to be conducted mandatorily as per the UGC guidelines and as per the SOPs approved by the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

## BPUT announces new exam dates

The Biju Patnaik University of Technology (BPUT) Thursday released a revised schedule for its online final semester examination for 2019-20 examination session. According to a notification issued by BPUT, the examination which was to start from July 11 has been rescheduled to July 13. Similarly, the examination scheduled July 18 has been shifted to July 29. The examination of July 25 has been shifted to July 30 amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The detailed schedule of final semester examinations of various courses is available on the BPUT website.

# Aadhaar must to avail Banishree scholarship

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** The State Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) department has issued a notification asking students receiving Banishree Scholarship to obtain Aadhaar cards by July 31 and inform the government on the same.

The department has mandated that the students availing the scholarship should inform the government about possession of Aadhaar cards.

The department said, "An individual registered under Banishree Scholarship scheme is hereby required to furnish proof of possession of Aadhaar or undergo Aadhaar authentication," the department said in the notification.

It also added that any individual registered under Banishree Scholarship scheme but yet not enrolled for Aadhaar shall have to apply for Aadhaar enrolment by July 31, 2020.

The department, however, said that if the enrolment facilities are not available in their area, the department can help in facilitating the same for early enrolment and compliance.

"..in case there are no Aadhaar enrolment centres located within the respective block/tehsil, the SSEPD department may provide enrolment facilities through Collectors of the districts at convenient locations," the department said.

The department has also de-



**The SSEPD department has mandated that students availing the scholarship should inform the government about possession of Aadhaar cards**

cided to create wide publicity on the issue.

The notification said, "Wide publicity through media and individual notices shall be undertaken to make the beneficiaries aware of Aadhaar requirement in the Banishree Scholarship scheme."

"The applicants or beneficiaries may be requested to register their request for enrolment by giving their names with other details, such as: address, bank account details, mobile number on the portal and such requests may also be registered with the block office," the department said.

## State to conduct film festival after nCoV subsides

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** The state government will organise a film festival in the state after the COVID-19 pandemic is controlled, informed tourism minister Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi.

The announcement came after a virtual meeting with Odisha Film Development Corporation (OFDC) and other officials Thursday.

The film industry suffered majorly due to the COVID-induced lockdown which stopped all kinds of film shooting in the state and country.

The online meeting was conducted to devise ways of overcoming the situation. OFDC Managing Director Nitin Jawale said, "After the pandemic subsides, our focus will be to attract filmmakers from outside the state to commence shooting. This will popularize Odia culture in the world."

The group also urged the government to include the Odia cinema industry as a category in the upcoming Make in Odisha conclave's third edition.

# Docs reattach severed hand of Bengal driver

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** Doctors in the city performed a rare surgery successfully by reattaching the severed hand of a 24-year-old West Bengal driver who met with a road mishap here recently.

The team of doctors who operated upon him claimed that this was a rare surgery with a very low success rate.

"This was a very rare case as the patient arrived after the golden hour (6 hours-8 hours) and his amputated forearm was also not preserved well. Studies say that under such circumstances, the success rate is close to 3 per cent. However we were able to conduct the surgery successfully," said Dr Akshaya Rout Senior Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery who con-

ducted the surgery.

Rout was joined by orthopedic surgeon Dr Gayadhar Behera. The team is now planning to publish the rare surgery in reputed national and international journals. The team said that the patient is now doing well and the x-ray reports suggest good improvement.

"Within 6-8 weeks, we will get a better picture of union of the bones. If required, we will conduct another surgery for better cohesion of the broken bones after four months in such cases," Dr Behera said. The surgery was done by the medical team at Kalinga Hospital here.

Meanwhile, the patient thanked the doctors for preventing the life-long trauma he would have faced in case of amputation.



## Fake account in top cop's name

**Bhubaneswar:** Unknown cyber frauds here have allegedly asked money from netizens by creating a fake account in the name of senior IPS officer Pranabinidu Acharya on popular social media platform Facebook. Acharya has reportedly lodged a complaint with the crime branch in this regard. The frauds who used the photo of the top cop in the fake account have been sending friend requests to various persons. Later, they have been asking money from them as well. He urged the public to be aware and not fall for it. Acharya currently holds the post of Additional Director General of Police, Government Railway Police and Coastal Security.

# Neutralised Reds carried ₹34L bounty

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** Odisha Police Thursday said the five Maoists who were gunned down in two back-to-back police encounters July 5 and July 6 together carried a huge reward of Rs 34 lakhs on their heads.

The two encounters were the first incidents in state where rebels carrying such high rewards on them have been shot down, said the Odisha Police in a press statement.

"There have been instances of more than five Maoists being killed on a single day in the past, but deaths of the Maoists carrying Rs 34 lakh reward on a single day is so far the highest in state. A few years ago, some Maoists carrying a reward of Rs 25 lakh were killed on Angul-



Deogarh border," a senior police official said.

Among the deceased Maoists, Sukru Kosa Sodhi was a senior state committee member of the banned CPI(Maoist) outfit carrying a reward of Rs 20 lakh, a divisional committee member carrying

## SCBMCH, Sishu Bhawan sanitised

POST NEWS NETWORK

**CUTTACK:** In the wake of rising novel coronavirus cases in state-run health-care facilities in the Silver City here, the district administration Thursday sanitised several premier



hospitals in the city. SCB Medical College and Hospital,

City Hospital, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Post Graduate Institute of Paediatrics (Sishu Bhawan) and Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer were among those facilities which were sanitised under the supervision of assistant

fire officer Abani Kumar Swain.

Around six fire tenders were used and more than 25 Fire Services personnel were engaged in the drive, said a source, adding that it would go a long way to curb spread of the virus.

## CLASSIFIED

### LOST

Sworn before the Notary Public, Bargarh I Anil Kumar Sharma, Proprietor of M/s. Sharma Fly Ash Bricks, S/o. Late Brajamohan Sharma, At/P.O.- Bargarh, W.N. 05, P.S./Dist.- Bargarh do hereby declare that WESCO, Bargarh, Consumer No. 512001111041 (Com-BCH-1054) in the name of M/s. Sharma Fly Ash Bricks. That the Original Money Receipt of WESCO, Bargarh has been lost somewhere and not traceable.

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# Overcoming barriers in developing nCoV vaccine

The race to develop a vaccine against COVID-19 has openly shown how important the procedure is in preventing devastating outbreaks of various diseases. So far, 40 nations and donors have pledged \$8 billion to fund research and development of a safe and effective vaccine or treatment for the novel coronavirus. Actually, vaccines have been around for a long time now. The



Currently, more than 100 Covid-19 vaccines are in different stages of development across the world

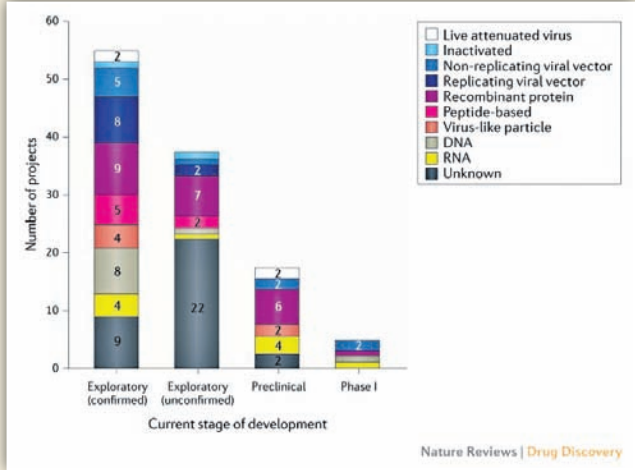
While the situation may appear to be unbelievable to many, anti-vaccine sentiment has been building for decades

first one is usually credited to Edward Jenner, an English doctor who injected pus from a cowpox pustule into an incision on the arm of an eight-year-old May 14, 1796. Subsequently, the boy proved to be immune to smallpox, one of the deadliest diseases at that time. Data available from the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention has shown the importance of effective vaccination in eradicating major diseases in the United States. For instance, on an average, smallpox was responsible for 29,000 cases annually in the 20th century and not a single case was recorded in 2019 – a 100 per cent decrease. Although the measles resurged to some extent in recent years owing to anti-vaccine decision making and its morbid-

ity (case count), it is nowhere near average annual highs seen in the 20th century when about half a million people were infected. Its prevalence has fallen by more than 99 per cent due to vaccinations, along with a whole host of other diseases such as pertussis (whooping cough), mumps, rubella, polio and diphtheria.

In fact, immunisation programmes across the world have helped people protect against some

## The race for Covid-19 vaccine



Currently, more than 100 Covid-19 vaccines are in different stages of development across the world. While a European pharmaceutical company has claimed that the vaccine being developed by it would be ready for production worldwide as early as September, many others are in different stages of trials.

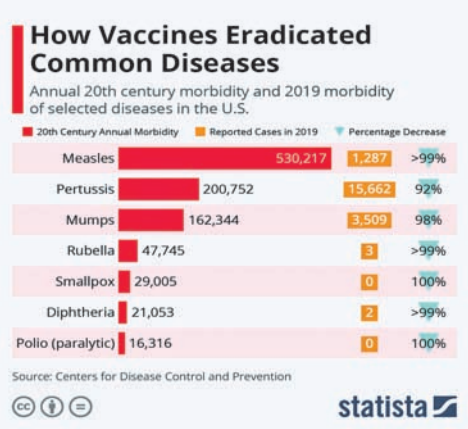
China, where the Covid-19 outbreak was first reported in Wuhan city, has five vaccines that are being

tested on humans. According to a Chinese government body, at least one of these may be ready for mass immunisation by the end of this year. The Indian government has also announced that its first indigenously developed Covid-19 vaccine will soon go for human trials. Latest available data shows that 91 vaccines are in the exploratory stage (discovery and research), 28 in the preclinical stage and five are in Phase I stage.

## VACCINES ARE INDISPENSABLE

Vaccines are an indispensable part of our life because they protect us from various communicable diseases. In fact, immunisation is one of the best ways to protect yourself, your children and future generations from infectious diseases. Simply speaking, if you vaccinate, you help wipe out diseases that could spread now and into the future.

According to WHO, immunisation is certainly among the cheapest as well as the most effective ways to prevent diseases. The more people are vaccinated; the fewer people will be infected, thereby preventing the spread of disease. Until the 1950s, thousands of children died every year from diseases such as tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough. Thanks to vaccines, today such cases are unheard of in many places of the globe. Therefore, it is natural that more than 140 world leaders have called for a Covid-19 vaccine to be made available free to everyone.



## Anti-vaccine movement

Contrary to the fact that vaccines have played a vital role in preventing deaths during a disease outbreak, the WHO lists vaccine hesitancy among the major threats to global health. While the situation may appear to be unbelievable to many, anti-vaccine sentiment has been building for decades. It is said to be a consequence of an Internet humming with rumour and misinformation and the backlash

against Big Pharma. Add to this, obsession with some celebrities that gives special authority to the anti-immunisation statements from actors like Jenny McCarthy, Jim Carrey, and Alicia Silverstone, the rapper Kevin Gates and Robert F Kennedy Jr. The Trump administration's anti-science rhetoric has made the situation worse.

People who belong to the

so-called vaccine-resistant section of the society actually come from disparate groups and include anti-government libertarians, apostles of the all-natural and parents. They are of the firm belief that doctors should not dictate medical decisions about children. According to WHO, there are several complex reasons why people resist vaccination. Some of the underlying

factors include the absence of confidence, difficulty in accessing vaccines and, to some extent, even complacency. A survey undertaken by Gallup poll reveals that people in France are most resistant to vaccines, as they have little trust in immunisation. This makes it all the more important to help healthcare workers to provide correct information regarding vaccines. Only this can help to counter the anti-vaccination movement.

## Why vaccines are not universal

Although many vaccines have been developed since 1796 when the English doctor Edward Jenner, considered the founder of vaccinology in the West, invented a method to protect against smallpox, none of them have become available to all. According to the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), a humanitarian medical organisation, aside from the high cost of vaccines, problems related to delivering them to the remotest corners of the world and storing them properly have prevented many needy from being immunised. In addition, the conflict zones in the world make it difficult for health organisations and volunteers to undertake vaccination programmes in those affected areas. What is worse, this is the reason why even when disease outbreaks, it is not possible to treat the patients.

As a result, roughly 3 million children die every year of vaccine-preventable diseases and a significant number of these children live in developing countries, reports the US National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI). Interestingly, even Doctors Without Borders is accusing the World Health Organisation of restricting the availability of Ebola vaccine in the Democratic Republic of Congo. They accuse the WHO of rationing vaccines and calling for an independent committee to ensure "more transparent management" of the situation.

(Courtesy: World Economic Forum)

# 590 homoeopathic hospitals locked up

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nayagarh, July 9:** Nearly 590 homeopathic hospitals in Odisha have shut down over the past three months after the state government sent homeopathic doctors, who are working under Ayush directorate, on COVID-19 duty.

This has rendered the patients in rural areas helpless. It is alleged that even as Ayush doctors have been engaged at different public health centres (PHCs) and community health centres (CHCs) across the state, it is improper to assign COVID-19 duty to rural doctors.

There are 590 homeopathic and 620 ayurvedic hospitals in the state, 95 per cent of which are located in rural areas. The Ayush doctors



were looking after healthcare of rural patients.

As per orders of the state government, they all joined COVID-19 duty at different district headquarters hospitals (DHHs) in the state April 7. Following which, a total of 1,210 homeopathic and ayurvedic hospitals were shut down.

A downfall of healthcare facilities was brought to the knowledge of the Director of Homeopathic Medicine (DHM) by homeopathic doctors. On the other hand, Ayurvedic doctors resorted to the court of law vide case (No.-WPC11587/2020) and got relief following Orissa High Court's verdict

June 30. Acting on the court's directive, several ayurvedic doctors have returned to their respective places. In the meanwhile, homeopathic doctors have resorted to the court of law, next date of hearing of which has been scheduled for July 13.

Some homeopathic doctors namely Sura Pradhan of Dasapalla, Sudam Pradhan of Gania and Madhab Sahoo of Nuagaon areas said, "The state government should assign COVID-19 duty to homeopathic doctors working at PHCs and CHCs instead and not assign COVID-19 duty to doctors working in rural areas."

The state government should be proactive and take immediate steps in this regard, the doctors added.

## Lady teacher hacked in Jajpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Jajpur, July 9:** A lady teacher was hacked to death by a miscreant in broad daylight at Khandahata Square under Jajpur Road police limits Thursday afternoon. Another teacher accompanying her was also injured. The deceased was identified as Jogmaya Jena. The injured teacher, identified as Mohani Jena, was rescued by police and rushed to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack. The two teachers were returning from Daniabar school at 2pm when the miscreant wielding a sharp weapon attacked Jogmaya. They shouted for help and the accused fled. A case was lodged in this regard.

# Bimlagarh-Talcher rail route hits land hurdle

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, July 9:** Fate of the Talcher-Bimlagarh rail route project looks doomed due to delay in land acquisition, a report said.

As a result, the rail route project, scheduled to get completed by December 2022 is moving at a snail's pace. The way the project work is moving has sparked uncertainty over its completion in near future.

This has disappointed the residents who were expecting that the construction of the rail route would bring in development in remote regions of Sundargarh, Angul and Deogarh districts.

Notably, the project received government sanction 17 years back but it is yet to get completed. This has happened as the administration has failed to expedite the acquisition of private, government and forest land for the project.

Moreover, the project has been held up due to various reasons in Angul, Deogarh and Sundargarh districts. The respective district administrations have failed to relocate the electricity poles and water supply pipelines on and near the project site. This apart, construction of bridges and culverts for the rail route is equally disappointing. Sources said initially it was expected that the project work would move faster from the Bimlagarh end of Sundargarh district. However, the slow pace of work has frustrated all hopes of its early completion. Surprisingly, work from the Talcher end has failed to make progress despite sanction of funds by the Union government.

Land acquisition in Talcher is also plagued by similar problems. The district administration in



Angul is yet to settle the problems plaguing the acquisition of private land and construction of railway over-bridge for which the project has got delayed.

The inception of the project dates back to 60s when various outfits and public representatives demanded construction of a rail route from Talcher to Bimlagarh in Sundargarh district as it would foster the relation between the Western Odisha and East Odisha by effectively connecting the two regions. Moreover, the railways department would also earn more revenue once the project gets completed and train starts plying on the route. This apart, the rail route would also prove beneficial for development of mines and industries in the state.

Meanwhile, Sundargarh MP Jual Oram has submitted a memorandum to the Centre and drawn the attention of railway minister in the Lok Sabha, February 2020 demanding fast completion of the project. Oram had also written to the Chief Minister in this regard, March 2017. Recently Oram met the state revenue minister Sudam Marandi and urged him to intervene in the project. Meanwhile, the railways department has received environmental clearance for acquisition of 439 acre of land but the matter is caught in legal hurdles. This has impacted the handover of 421 acre of land acquired by the state government.

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, July 9:** Amid increasing cases of Covid infections in Keonjhar, local cases are also rapidly being detected in some areas, which have become a major concern for people and the administration. Fears of community spread have left the people on edge in those areas, a report said.

The district saw a sudden spike in Covid cases Thursday with 48 cases Thursday, taking the district's tally to 246.

Of Thursday's positive cases, 10 were detected from quarantine centres while 36 are local infections. Besides, two Covid warriors were found infected in the district. The district administration is worried over the trend in local infection cases. Barbil municipality is the worst affected in the district. The



civic body area is allegedly heading towards community spread. Barbil also accounts for 34 local infections Thursday.

Barbil has already been in shutdown while the administration has been conducting a house-to-house survey to detect suspected cases. Contact tracing of the infected people are being carried out in Barbil municipality area.

Meanwhile, two of the locally infected persons were admitted to a hospital in Bhubaneswar. Local infection cases are also in-

## No entry of buses from hotspot dists in Rayagada

**RAYAGADA:** With COVID-19 positive cases rapidly rising across Odisha, the Rayagada district administration has suspended both private and public bus services to and from COVID hotspot districts like Ganjam, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. It also banned the entry of travelers and returnees from Ganjam district. However, transportation of essential services from the above

creasing in Patana, Ghasipura, Jhumpura and Sadar blocks.

What is worrying for the administration is that when Covid cases are rapidly rising, people violate Covid safety norms.

"Till date, the administration has collected Rs 16 lakh as fine from people for not wearing masks," said Collector Ashish Thakre.

three hotspot districts are allowed. If any person wants to visit Rayagada district from Ganjam can enter the district after seeking approval of Gunpur or Rayagada SDMOs.

Anyone flouting the order will be put into institutional quarantine for minimum seven days. However, the violator will be provided seven-days paid quarantine facility.

Owing to Covid norm violations, all routes to Kabitra village (under Sadar block) and Jhumpura village (under Jhumpura block) were sealed. After two Covid warriors engaged in the district headquarters hospital were found infected with the deadly virus, the gynecology and obstetrics ward was sealed and sanitized Thursday.

## 5 docs, 2 nurses put under quarantine

**BURLA:** With COVID-19 positive cases rapidly rising in Burla area, Sambalpur Municipal Corporation has enforced a two-day shutdown in Burla NAC areas starting from Thursday. However, no shutdown will be enforced in the VIMSAR campus. Meanwhile, ten nurses and five doctors of VIMSAR were asked to be in 14-day home quarantine as they had come in contact with two Covid patients during treatment, who had visited VIMSAR for some other treatment. Later they found COVID-19 positive. Their family members have also been advised to stay in home quarantine. Health department officials have collected swab samples of the doctors and nurses and sent those for testing.





Beauty you are my way to the Divine.

THE MOTHER

## Social collateral

The state government has rolled out a credit plan for the state's landless farmers. Christened as Balam, a sibling of Lord KALIA, the scheme is touted to be a one of its kind in the country. On its face, the product looks novel, for this all cash loans will be collateral free. Loans will be disbursed to five-member groups named Joint Liability Groups (JLG) who will act as 'social collateral' against the loans disbursed to members. In a way, each member of the group will be accountable if one of their co-members defaults on loan repayment. Each bank has been given a dis-bursal target based on the number of branches they operate in the state. Each lender has a target to disburse loans to at least 10 JLGs in a year. The government has identified 7 lakh farmers to benefit from the scheme to be spread over two years. Banks and primary agricultural credit cooperative societies (PACS) have been asked to extend the loans to farmers. That there are 7,000 banking outlets in Odisha, each banking unit will extend finance to 10 JLGs. Every JLG will have five members and they will get Rs 1.6 lakh each. The target is to cover around seven lakh landless cultivators through 1.40 lakh JLGs in two years. A corpus of Rs 1,040 crore has been earmarked for this purpose. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) will underwrite the scheme in the state. The Institute of Management of Agricultural Extension (IMAGE) and the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) will be the nodal agencies at the state and the district levels respectively for implementation of the scheme. Balam is different from KALIA in the sense that the former is crop loans while the disbursals under the latter were simple freebies. While, KALIA had benefited people with land parcels, Balam aims at benefitting landless farmers who were not able to avail farm credit earlier. To ensure its seamless implementation at the field level, the government has roped in village agriculture workers (VLWs). Also, the government has instituted an incentive mechanism for effective execution of the scheme.

The timing and the nature of the scheme could not have come at a better time. At present, farmhands in villages are a harried lot due to COVID-19. A huge influx of migrant workers to rural areas has increased the density of workers in rural pockets. What they need is availability of cheap loans to them. It would help them if the government allows these workers to use this money for smalltime entrepreneurial adventures based on their skills and experiences. Agriculture is a priority sector lending for banks and Balam will help banks to meet their target under the priority sector lending. However, it is common knowledge that commercial banks show little interest in providing loans to farmers, let alone landless farmers. That is why there are skeptics on the success of this scheme. Banks may not be too keen to take exposure unless the government brings in more clarity on how this social collateral mechanism will work at the ground level. It would be better if the government could stand guarantee for such loans. This would have given the much needed assurance to banks on the security of these loans. In the absence of this, it is still anybody's guess how Balam will work. Since Balam is normal crop loans, banks need constant follow-up and monitoring to disburse such credit to the beneficiaries. Officers at the state level and at the district level must not only be roped in but brought under an incentive scheme linked to targets for eventual success of this scheme.

### WISDOM CORNER

- “Dharma is law in its widest sense—spiritual, moral, ethical and temporal. Every individual, whether the ruler or the ruled, is governed by his or her own dharma. To the extent that society respected dharma, society protected itself; to the extent society offended it, society is undermined.”  
KAUTILYA
- “It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness.”  
LEO TOLSTOY
- “The greatest fear in the world is the opinion of others. The moment you are unafraid of the crowd, you are no longer a sheep, you become a lion. A great roar arises in your heart, the roar of freedom.”  
OSHO

### WORDSWORTH

#### Stultiloquy

William Venator brought this word, meaning foolish babbling, back from oblivion in his self-published 2003 satire, *Wither This Land*, which told of political upheavals following the opposition by saboteurs to fox hunting in Britain: “The day had proceeded well at Stanthorpe but Downing Street was fuming. Cramp, caught unawares, had given an excellent stultiloquy, much to the press's amusement, on the need for “action, containment for flaunting the law, overweening disapproval, community and tolerance needed.” It's a pity it's so rare, as there are quite a number of current political figures to whom it could be applied (no names, no pack drill). The only other modern writer who has used it, seems, it is John Steinbeck. It appears in his fictional portrayal of the life of the buccaneer Henry Morgan, *Cup of Gold* (1929): “In all the mad incongruity, the turgid stultiloquy of life, I felt, at last, securely anchored to myself.” We might instead prefer the even rarer stultiloquence, whose adjectival form is in Christopher Fry's *The Lady's Not For Burning*, in which Justice Tappercoom says “The whole thing's a lot of amphigourious, stultiloquential fiddle-faddle.” Both are from Latin *stultiloquus*, speaking foolishly, which come in turn from *stultus*, foolish, plus *loquus*, that speaks.

#### Stylite

One of the most remarkable examples of religious self-denial, the stylites were a group of early Christian ascetics who spent long periods of time sitting or standing on top of narrow pillars. The word comes from the Greek *stylos* for a column. The best known of these pillar hermits, pillar saints or pillar monks was the first, St Simeon Stylites, who sat for thirty years from AD423 onwards on top of a column some 40 cubits high (a cubit was an ancient measure of length, approximately the length of a forearm, say 18 inches or 44 cm). He was followed by several others, including his disciple St Daniel Stylites and Simeon the Younger. The stylite sometimes allowed himself a roof or a small hut for protection against the weather, but was otherwise exposed. Many remained standing day and night, only prevented from falling by a guard rail; some even stood on one leg. The record for stylitic behaviour is probably held by the 6th-Century St Alypius, who is reputed to have remained on his pillar for 67 years without a break, for the last 14 of them lying down because his feet could no longer support him. The practice died out shortly after the turn of the last millennium.

### LOL HIDE AND SEEK

Newton, Pascal and Archimedes are playing hide and seek. Archimedes starts to count, Pascal hides in a bush, and Newton draws a square on the ground and steps into

it. Archimedes finds Newton first, of course, but Newton replies, “Nope. One Newton on one square meter is equal to one Pascal.”

### FOCUS ASIA

# ADVANTAGE IN ADVERSITY



Devesh Kapur

THE CPC'S RECENT AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS INDIA MIMICS THAT OF CHINA'S FORMER IMPERIAL MASTERS – AND WILL LIKELY HAVE SIMILAR CONSEQUENCES

The standoff between Chinese and Indian forces along the disputed Himalayan border resulted in the first troop casualties there in decades, with some Indian soldiers killed in particularly brutal fashion. Moreover, the intensity of China's multiple cross-border incursions suggests approval from the highest levels of the Chinese government.

Satellite pictures confirm that Chinese forces have occupied at least 60 sq km (23.2 sq miles) of territory that India claims as its own. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has downplayed this uncomfortable reality perhaps out of concern that publicly acknowledging the truth would inflame domestic public opinion and fuel a highly undesirable escalation of tensions. A less benign interpretation, however, is that the government is embarrassed, because its claim to be more muscular than its predecessor in confronting external aggression has been proven hollow.

But China's recent saber-rattling may paradoxically benefit India by jolting it out of one of its periodic stupors. After its disastrous 1962 war with China, for example, India undertook a sweeping modernization of its military and subsequently won a decisive victory in the 1971 Indo-Pakistani War. Similarly, after its own misguided economic policies raised the specter of mass starvation in 1966-67, India launched the "Green Revolution," and today has nearly 100 million tons of grain stocks. And, following its massive balance-of-payments crisis in 1989-91, India initiated a historic economic liberalization programme that ushered in a quarter-century of unprecedentedly rapid growth.

In each case, a crisis served as a kick in the pants. China has now delivered another: The Communist Party of China has been adept at leveraging the country's humiliation at the hands of foreign powers in the 19th Century to drive domestic change while preserving its own political monopoly. But the CPC's recent aggressive behaviour towards India mimics that of China's former imperial masters – and will likely have sim-



With salaries and pensions accounting for nearly three-fifths of Indian defence spending, there is little left to invest in modernisation. Whereas China spends more than two-fifths of its defence budget on modernisation, and Pakistan more than one-third, the share in India's case is barely one-fourth. With salaries and pensions accounting for nearly three-fifths of Indian defence spending, there is little left to invest in modernisation

ilar consequences.

First, China's show of force will set back its relations with India by decades. Since the turn of the century, Indian policymakers have wrung their hands over how to handle China's extraordinary rise. They are well aware of how China has sought to stymie India, whether by offering neighbouring Pakistan carte blanche regarding cross-border terrorism, blocking India in different international fora, or making strategic inroads in its neighborhood. But Indian governments, recognizing their country's weakness, have been loath to poke the dragon with which it shares a border more than 4,000-km long.

India will now be less inhibited about deepening ties with the other three members of the so-called "Quad" (Australia, Japan, and the United States) and more forcefully embracing the "Indo-Pacific" concept. Furthermore, it will be increasingly wary of participating in Chinese-led multilateral fora, and, where possible, will seek to hinder China's efforts to establish

a Sinosphere.

Second, it has become abundantly clear that India's military inferiority to China reflects a widening economic gap. The previous Indian government, under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, raised the economy to new heights in its first term, and lowered it to new depths in its second. But, under Modi, India's economy has been spinning its wheels, and reform has now become an existential necessity for national security.

Third, India will now accelerate military changes. Although Modi's government loves to talk tough, military expenditures have declined from 2.9 per cent of the GDP in 2009 to 2.4 per cent last year.

Moreover, the government's populist policy of sharply raising army pensions has meant that India's defence budget this year allocated more money to military retirement benefits than to army salaries. Indeed, defense pensions as a share of non-pension defense spending has quadrupled, from less than 10 per cent in the late 1980s to over 40 per cent this year.

And with salaries and pensions accounting for nearly three-fifths of Indian defense spending, there is little left to invest in modernization. Whereas China spends more than two-fifths of its defense budget on modernization, and Pakistan more than one-third, the share in India's case is barely one-quarter.

Finally, while Modi's ruling party has polarised Indian society around religion, China has now inadvertently supplied the glue to bind Indians together – if only in shared hostility. Chinese President Xi Jinping seems to have a unique ability in that regard. For example, Australians' trust in China has fallen to its lowest ever level. Australia, as much as any Western country, had previously sought strong ties with China. But when the Australian government called earlier this year for an independent inquiry into the origins of Covid-19, China retaliated by blocking Australian imports, underscoring the degree to which it is now using economic coercion against its critics.

Likewise, a Pew Research Center survey in March found that a record 66 per cent of Americans had an unfavorable view of China. And China's aggressive stance toward Hong Kong ensured that incumbent Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen comfortably won reelection in January, after the opposition Kuomintang had seemed poised to win on a platform of closer economic links with China.

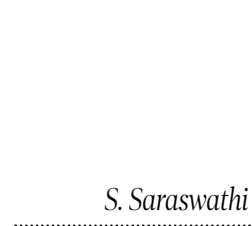
Of course, India being India, there will be no seismic changes. But the country's foreign policy and the direction of its economic and military reforms will increasingly reflect the challenge posed by China, which Indians now regard as their principal enemy. Ironically, as India seeks to escape China's shadow, it will have its powerful neighbour to thank for finally triggering changes that should have happened long ago.

The writer is Director of Asia Programs and Professor of South Asian Studies at Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies.

PROJECT SYNDICATE

### SPECTRUM SOCIETY

# Women as worst sufferers in lockdown



S. Saraswathi

LIVING CONDITIONS AT HOME MAKE “STAY AT HOME” A PUNISHMENT FOR MOST PEOPLE, AGGRAVATING ANGER AND FRUSTRATION, AND CAUSING VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

A survey conducted by the Tamil Nadu Women's Collective in 62 villages in 18 districts in the state found that 81 per cent of families reported some kind of domestic violence during the lockdown period. Of these families, 25 per cent were also facing acute hunger. Stories of conflicts in families and also abuse of children and the elderly appear in newspapers, adding substantially to the global trend in an increase of domestic conflict under healthcare restrictions on movements. Complaints made to the National Commission for Women (NCW) and some NGOs working for women have increased manifold.

Life at home is no more the same as in pre-pandemic days. Household members compelled to stay at home experience among themselves more conversation, more interaction, and more sharing. The consequence in many cases is not better understanding and bonding, but enormous increase in verbal and physical clashes. “Stay at home, stay safe” seems to have become a self-contradictory dictum wherever home life is full of domestic conflicts of varied types and on different scale.



The new wave of domestic violence is making news as a “gift” of lockdown meant to drive away Covid-19 infection. Neither the workplace nor the home seems to be a safe place for women. The NCW has registered an increase by at least 2.5 times of domestic violence complaints since the nationwide lockdown. Between March 25 and May 31, it received 1,477 complaints whereas in these months last year, only 607 complaints were received.

In India, domestic violence is silenced by victims themselves and their supporters who accept them as part of ordinary family life. A study by UNICEF shows that children are exposed to at least 30 different forms of physical, verbal, and emotional violence and abuse in their homes and that the burden of

household chores, and day-to-day restrictions are imposed solely on girls. UNICEF has cautioned that if early childhood development is not prioritized in Covid-19 responses, young children would face disproportionate risk and irreparable loss. A girl child suffers more than a boy inside the house.

Three months ago, UN Secretary-General called for a domestic violence “ceasefire” amid a “horrifying global surge.” He stated that, “for many women and girls, the threat looms largest where they should be safest...in their homes” and asserted that, “...lockdown and quarantines are essential to suppressing Covid-19. But, they can trap women with abusive partners”. This is what many do not want to admit or speak about.

Lockdown certainly has no in-built condition to promote domestic violence. It has only aggravated the reality. If reports and statistics suggest a link between lockdown and domestic violence, lockdown is often blamed for restricting movements and normal activities which create psychological problems. But, the malady lies in gender relations prevalent in a society which in-

cludes sharing of work and responsibility in the household, mutual respect and regard among the members, acknowledgement of each one's role and contributions in running and managing the household. Understanding and accommodating oneself to economic and other conditions of the family are missing in many families. That home is a joint enterprise is hardly acknowledged.

The UN Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women has already noted that domestic violence is one of the greatest human rights violations. Several nations have initiated action to deal with this problem as a social-psychological one. The Commonwealth Secretariat is working in collaboration with partner organisations to check growth of domestic violence during the pandemic.

As national and international efforts to contain domestic violence amidst Covid-19 are on, India should also activate its machineries to implement legal rights and protection for women already in place.

The writer is a former director of ICSSR, New Delhi

INFA

### Covid, Odisha

Sir, The state government has given three mantras such as sacrifice, restraint, and discipline to win the battle against the pandemic and keep it at bay. Odisha is faring well in the corona virus war. Though this is not among the richest states, it still is showing resourcefulness and good result in tackling the pandemic spread. A dedicated telemedicine helpline (14410) is working with 300 doctors to give voluntary services. As many as 36 dedicated hospitals are functioning for treatment of Covid-19 patients, these having a total bed capacity of 6,000. The fatality rate in Odisha is the lowest in the country. The recovery rate is also highest at 48.25 per cent while the national average is of 2.87 per cent. The state took steps for the smooth return of the migrant workers and the Sarapanchas were delegated district collector's power to handle the Covid-19 situation. The state made arrangements for keeping migrant returnees in quarantine centres and temporary medical centres. It has also planned to boost job creation for migrant workers. An approximate target has been fixed to create 20 lakh mandays per day under MGNREGS. A financial package of Rs. 2200 crore has been announced for the welfare of the weaker sections. All these are helping the state very much. The need now is to ably maintain the alert

Hitesh Kumar Parida, JAJPUR

### Amul, DMS

Sir, Amul is known for introduction of innovative and traditional milk-products which gained higher popularity during the lockdown-period because of its massive advertisement-campaigns. Exclusive sale-outlets of Amul milk-products in Delhi are negligible in comparison to Mother Dairy. Amul had caught up with Mother Dairy to take over Delhi Milk Scheme (DMS) that was running in heavy losses at an annual lease of Rs42.30 crore against Rs 42.20 crore offered by Mother Dairy for 30 years in the bid opened in November, 2018. However, the lease has not been affected yet. DMS that started in 1959 has already piled up losses of Rs 900 crore. A probe must be ordered as to how DMS ended up with such a huge loss. Amul shows the way. The Centre must urgently lease out DMS to Amul as per bid-terms. This is one way that can help Amul to strengthen its market leadership. Hopefully, the Centre would look into the issue more seriously.

Madhu Agarwal, EMAIL

## Letters

### TO THE EDITOR

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

OrissaPOST  
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## of the day quote

I will write to the heads of registered political parties to seek cooperation in checking large gatherings

AMARINDER SINGH | PUNJAB CM

The public is waiting for the Uttar Pradesh government to ensure strict punishment at the earliest to all the government and political patrons and conspirators connected with Vikas Dubey in his heinous crimes

MAYAWATI | BSP PRESIDENT

Goa was in a health, finance and law & order emergency and no one could say what will happen in the state over the next 15 days

DIGAMBAR KAMAT | FORMER GOA CM

## SHORT TAKES

### Naxals surrender

**Dantewada:** As many as 27 Naxals, four of them carrying cash rewards on their heads, have surrendered at two places in Dantewada district of Chhattisgarh, a senior official said Thursday. They surrendered saying they were impressed by a rehabilitation campaign being run by the police here, the official said. While 25 cadres, including four women, turned themselves in before senior administration, police and CRPF officials at Kuakonda police station on Thursday, a Maoist couple surrendered in Dantewada town on Wednesday. Dantewada Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava said.

### Soldier injured

**Srinagar:** A soldier and a woman were injured when terrorists fired upon an Army quick reaction team (QRT) convoy in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir Thursday, a defence spokesperson said. "An ambulance in the QRT convoy moving from Khrew was fired upon by terrorists from near a mosque at Laddoo Mor, Lethpora, Awantipora, at 6 PM," Col Rajesh Kalia said. He said one soldier was injured in the firing and he has been evacuated to the Army's 92 base hospital here and is stated to be stable. "One civil lady received injuries in the crossfire," the spokesman said, adding her condition is stable. The woman has been identified as Rafeeqa Bano, a resident of Ladoo area. The area is being searched, Col Kalia said.

### Quake jolts Mizoram again

**Aizawl:** With a fresh moderate earthquake of 4.3 on the Richter scale Thursday, mountainous Mizoram continues to be hit by mild and moderate tremors since June 22, officials said. India Meteorological Department (IMD) said that the quake hit eastern Mizoram's Champhai district on Thursday afternoon, the eighth tremor to jolt the northeastern state in 18 days.

### Special drive to protect dolphins

**Kolkata:** In its effort to protect and conserve the endangered Gangetic dolphin, the West Bengal forest department has set up an awareness centre at the riverside town of Katwa in East Burdwan, where the freshwater mammal is often sighted. Chief Wildlife Warden Ravikant Sinha said "the awareness centre will launch campaigns against dolphin poaching, and involve local people in the conservation drive".



It would be difficult for the film industry to go to foreign destinations at this time, so we have suggested that they could go to the Northeast states

PRAHLAD PATEL | CULTURE AND TOURISM MINISTER

## PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE

The Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan has finally allowed teachers working in its schools across the country to work from home till July 31 in view of the Covid-19 pandemic



# Infra boost: 6 bridges unveiled in J&K

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 9:** Six major bridges in Jammu and Kashmir constructed by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) at a cost of Rs 43 crore were thrown open for the people Thursday. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated these bridges and said that these bridges would facilitate movement of the Armed Forces in strategically important sectors and also contribute towards the overall economic growth of remote border areas.

He inaugurated the six bridges constructed by the BRO through video conferencing Thursday from Delhi. Singh said, "I congratulate all ranks of BRO for completing these bridges in the record time. These projects are the lifelines in far-flung areas close to the border."

The minister also said that the government is regularly monitoring the progress of all BRO projects and adequate funds are being given for their timely execution. Singh said that these bridges would 'connect people', at a time when the world is insisting on keeping dis-



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated these bridges and said that these bridges would facilitate movement of the Armed Forces in strategically important sectors and also contribute towards the overall economic growth of remote border areas

He inaugurated the six bridges constructed by the BRO through video conferencing Thursday from Delhi

tance, being isolated from each other. "I would like to congratulate the Border Roads Organization on completing this important task with great skill," said Singh adding that BRO has been at the forefront of building infrastructure in far-flung areas.

They were constructed through segmental technique of construc-

tion and it would be an alternate route to NH 44 from Pathankot to Jammu benefiting four lakh people in 217 villages. Complementing BRO, Singh said, "Continued construction of roads and bridges in the border areas of the country with total commitment by BRO would help in realisation of the efforts of the Government to reach to the re-

motest areas. Roads are the lifeline of any nation."

Roads in the border areas are not only strategic strengths, but also act to connect remote areas with the mainstream. In this way, be it a strategic necessity of the Armed Forces or other development work related to health, education, trade, all these are possible

# 'LeT behind BJP leader's murder'



THE IG SPOKE AFTER VISITING THE HOME OF THE SLAIN LEADER IN BANDIPORE ALONG WITH SENIOR POLICE OFFICIALS

"AFTER WATCHING THE CCTV FOOTAGE IT LOOKS THAT THIS IS A PRE-PLANNED ATTACK," HE SAID

AGENCIES

**Srinagar, July 9:** The proscribed terror outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) is behind the killing of a BJP leader and two of his family members in North Kashmir's Bandipore district Wednesday night, Inspector General (IG) Kashmir Vijay Kumar said Thursday.

The IG spoke after visiting the home of the slain leader in Bandipore along with senior police

officials. "After watching the CCTV footage it looks that this is a pre planned attack," he said.

He said Waseem Bari had returned home after meeting with a relative on Wednesday evening. His PSOs (Personal Security Officers) went to their room. He went to his shop where his brother and father were present.

"A militant fired at a close range at them, the three took bullets in vital part, in the head, they were

taken to the hospital, they died on the way," he said. The IG said the terrorists responsible for the incident have been identified. "It is a group of two LeT militants. One of them is a Pakistani militant and a second one is a local, whose name is Abid. Very soon the police, CRPF and the army will neutralise this militant," he said.

Meanwhile, all eight security guards deployed in the protection of BJP leader, Sheikh Wasim Bari have been arrested in Jammu and Kashmir's Bandipora district. Police said all the eight personal security guards (PSOs) deployed for the protection of former BJP district president, Sheikh Wasim Bari have been arrested for questioning.

"Yes, all the PSOs detailed in the security of the slain BJP leader, Wasim Bari, have been arrested during the investigations started into the murder of Bari, his father and brother by militants yesterday in Bandipora district", police said.

# CENTRE BATS FOR PM-CARES IN SC

*The affidavit filed by the Ministry of Home Affairs said "It is submitted there exists a fund stipulated under section of the DMA (Disaster Management Act) which is called NDR fund. However, mere existence of a statutory fund would not prohibit in creation of a different fund like PM-CARES fund which provides for voluntary donations"*

PNN/AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 9:** The Centre has informed the Supreme Court that there are several funds which were either established earlier or now for carrying out various relief works, and PM-CARES is one such fund with voluntary donations.

The affidavit filed by the Ministry of Home Affairs said "It is submitted there exists a fund stipulated under section of the DMA (Disaster Management Act) which is called NDR fund. However, mere existence of a statutory fund would not prohibit in creation of a different fund like PM-CARES fund which provides for voluntary donations."

The Centre contended that the petition seeking a direction that the funds received by PM-CARES to be credited to NDRF (National Disaster Response Fund) is neither maintainable on merits nor is main-



tainable under Article 32 as all funds other than the funds stipulated under section 46 of Disaster Management Act, 2005 are separate, different and distinct, created separately under separate provisions. On June 17, the apex court issued notice to the Centre on a PIL seeking to transfer funds from PM-CARES to National Disaster

Response Fund (NDRF).

A bench comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan, Sanjay Kishan Kaul and M R Shah asked the Centre to file a response within four weeks. Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPIL), in the plea claimed that in the backdrop of Covid-19 pandemic, NDRF is not being utilised by the authorities,

and establishing the PM-CARES fund is outside the scope of the Disaster Management Act.

The petitioner argued that the entire funds collected in PM-CARES till date may be directed to be transferred to the NDRF. "Centre may be directed to utilise National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for the purpose of providing assistance in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic in compliance with Section 46 of the DM Act, all the contributions/grants from individuals and institutions shall be credited to the NDRF in terms of Section 46(1)(b) rather than to PM-CARES fund and all the funds collected in the PM-Cares till date may be directed to be transferred to the NDRF", said the PIL.

The petition argued that there is need to put in place a broader and well thought out national plan outlining inter alia a detailed coordination mechanism between the Centre and states.

# India again rejects China's Galwan claim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** India has once again rejected China's claim over Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh even as both sides are expected to hold another round of diplomatic talks on the border row Friday to thrash out modalities for further de-escalation of tension along the Line of Actual Control.

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said India remained convinced of the need for maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas and resolution of differences through dialogue, but at the same time asserted that the country is committed to ensuring its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

At an online media briefing, he said the Line of Actual Control (LAC) must be strictly respected and observed as it is the basis for peace and tranquility in border

areas. Srivastava said National Security Advisor Ajit Doval categorically conveyed to Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Sunday India's position on the recent developments along the LAC including in the Galwan valley area.

Doval and Wang, the special representatives for border talks, held a telephonic conversation following which armies of the two countries began disengagement of troops from friction points in eastern Ladakh.

"The NSA emphasised in this context that the Indian troops had always taken a very responsible approach towards border management and at the same time, our forces were deeply committed to ensuring India's sovereignty and security," Srivastava said. In the meantime, people familiar with the development said the two sides will hold another online meeting Friday on the border row.

# Rising temperature a challenge for meeting climate goals

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 9:** The annual mean global temperature is likely to be at least one degree Celsius above the levels it was before the industrial era in each of the ensuing five years and there is a chance that it may exceed 1.5 degrees in at least one year, according to an analysis published by the World Meteorological Organization.

The new assessment, carried out by the UK's Met Office for the World Meteorological Organization, showed that the earth's average temperature is already over one degree Celsius above the pre-industrial period, which spans 1850-

1900. The last five years have been the warmest years on record.

According to WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas, the analysis underlines the enormous challenge in meeting the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change target of keeping the global temperature rise in this century below two degrees Celsius.

The prediction showed that there is a 70 per cent chance that one or more months during the next five years will be at least 1.5 degrees warmer than pre-industrial levels. There is, however, a 20 per cent chance that one of the next five years will be at least 1.5 degrees warmer than pre-indus-



## NEW ASSESSMENT

trial levels, with the chances increasing over time.

In 2020, the Arctic is likely to

have warmed by more than twice as much as the global mean, prediction by the WMO said. Southern

Africa and Australia, where bushfires last year razed millions of acres, will be dryer than usual through 2024. Over 2020-2024, sea-level pressure anomalies suggest that the northern North Atlantic region could have stronger westerly winds leading to more storms in western Europe. By the next five years, almost all regions, except parts of the southern oceans, are likely to be warmer than the recent past, the predictions showed. The assessment takes into account natural variations as well as human influence on the climate to forecast temperature, rainfall, and wind patterns over the next five years.

It, however, does not take into

consideration changes in emissions of greenhouse gases and aerosols as a result of the coronavirus lockdown. "Due to the very long lifetime of CO2 in the atmosphere, the impact of the drop in emissions this year is not expected to lead to a reduction of CO2 atmospheric concentrations which are driving global temperature increases," said Professor Taalas.

He added that even though COVID-19 caused a severe international health and economic crisis, failure to tackle climate change may threaten human wellbeing, ecosystems, and economies for centuries and hence governments should use the opportunity to embrace climate action.



of the day quote

Scindia has a tall stature in the state's politics, and senior leaders of the party hold him in high regard. He should seriously consider it if he is the reason behind the delay in allocation of portfolios. People want to see a good government at work under Chouhan



GANESH SINGH | BJP LEADER

All cities in the state should set up 'corona vigilance committees', to involve participation of citizens in the fight against COVID-19 and help the local administration in monitoring the ground situation



UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CM

40,000 tests should be conducted in the state per day to trace the spread of coronavirus



YOGI ADITYANATH | UP CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Cop succumbs to coronavirus

**New Delhi:** A Delhi Police ASI Thursday succumbed to Covid-19, a senior police officer said. Jeevan Singh was posted in special branch attached with MT store. He was tested positive for coronavirus on June 21 and subsequently admitted at IBS Iajpat Nagar on June 23. "Later on June 27 he was shifted to Gangaram hospital. On Thursday, at around 4.30 a.m. he breathed his last in the hospital," the officer said. So far, a total of 12 Delhi police personnel have succumbed to coronavirus while more than 2,000 have been infected with the virus and over 1,300 have successfully recovered.

Two jawans test Covid positive

**Aizawl:** Two BSF jawans have tested positive for COVID-19 in Mizoram's Serchhip district in the last 24 hours, pushing the tally in the state to 203, an official said Thursday. The jawans had recently returned from Dholcherra in neighbouring Assam. The two personnel were initially placed under quarantine at Vanhne camp in Lunglei district upon their arrival on June 25. A week later, they were shifted to their place of deployment at Dawngzawl in Serchhip district. There, too, the jawans were put in isolation.

FIR against BJP MLA, kin

**Aurangabad:** An FIR has been registered against Jalna BJP MLA Narayan Kuche, his brother and a woman on charges of criminal intimidation, police said Thursday. The complainant, Deepak Dongre, a resident of Badnapur in Maharashtra's Jalna district, alleged that Narayan Kuche's brother gave his mobile number to a woman who worked in a college belonging to the MLA, an official from Chandanzira police station said. Dongre alleged that the woman sent him "obscene messages and videos", he said.

Girl ends life

**Jaipur:** The ugly face of mobile phone addiction once again came to fore when a 16-year-old girl committed suicide in Jhunjhunu town of Rajasthan after scuffle with brother over phone. The mother, who intervened in the brother-sister fight, warned that she will not recharge the phone which irked the girl so much that she hanged herself, said police officials Thursday.



The Uttar Pradesh government has completely failed in acting with alacrity in the ghastly Kanpur massacre. Despite an alert, the gangster reaching Ujjain exposes the chinks in security and points to collusion

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS LEADER

KIRAN BEDI TESTS NEGATIVE FOR CORONA

Pondicherry Lt Governor Kiran Bedi tested negative for coronavirus Thursday, a day after an employee of the Raj Nivas here was found to be infected with the virus



Congress may go solo in Bihar polls

Though no Congress leader has openly said anything so far, the party has become active in Bihar after the virtual meeting of the leaders with former Congress president Rahul Gandhi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Patna, July 9:** While the Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM), a fringe party in Bihar, has expressed its unhappiness over the non-formation of a coordination panel in the grand alliance of opposition parties for the upcoming Assembly elections, the Congress is contemplating its own course of fighting the elections separately.

Though no Congress leader has openly said anything so far, the party has become active in Bihar after the virtual meeting of the leaders with former Congress President Rahul Gandhi. The party seems to be working on the principle of 'Ekla Chalo Re' (walk alone) or moving towards the strategy to contest the elections on its own.

The party's Bihar in-charge, Shakti Singh Gohil, met with party leaders in Patna on Wednesday and discussed the strategy with the members of the election campaign committee. Besides, several senior Congress leaders, including Gohil and Campaign Committee Chairman



and Rajya Sabha MP Akhilesh Singh, met Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav and former Chief Minister Rabri Devi late on Wednesday evening.

Congress sources said that the party hoped a joint meeting will be called to discuss election strategy within the first fortnight of July, but it has not happened yet.

Till now, neither the Congress has been given any indication regarding the meeting, nor has any official information been given

about the meeting in near future. Most of the Congressmen are unhappy with this attitude of the RJD, the sources added.

A Congress leader, on the condition of anonymity, said that the party does not want a repeat of the situation which had arisen due to the delay in seat-sharing in the Lok Sabha elections in 2019. The Congress sources said that the party wants consensus on all issues with its allies.

Sources further said that the resentment with the RJD was palpa-

ble even in the Congress Election Committee meeting. Most of the Congress members accused the RJD of cheating when it came to seat sharing at the time of elections.

Akhilesh Singh said that all parties are busy making their own strategies, and the Congress is also doing the same. He said it is too early to say anything. However, he also said that the Grand Alliance is united and everything will be decided in a fortnight's time.

Meanwhile, Lallan Kumar, a member of the Election Campaign Committee, and former President of Bihar Pradesh Youth Congress, said, "The Congress is in favour of jointly contesting the elections to remove the BJP-JDU government in Bihar."

He said there is democracy in the Congress and all the people speak openly at the party forum. The same happened at the meeting with Rahul Gandhi, where everyone put forward their views.

He also said that the party has already started preparing for the elections following instructions by the Congress high command.

JOY OF TOGETHERNESS



Pigeons fly in the sky in Jaipur, Thursday

PTI PHOTO

70 fall sick after consuming beef

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Visakhapatnam, July 9:** At least 70 people in an Andhra Pradesh village have reported sick of whom six at least are battling for their lives after allegedly consuming cooked beef from a cow that went missing and was later discovered dead.

The incident occurred Wednesday night in Magatapalem village. Around 70 members of a tribal community, who fell sick, are being treated at the public health centre while the critically ill have been admitted to the Paderu district hospital.

According to locals, a villager's cow missing on Monday. It was found dead the next day. The dead cow was brought to the village and its flesh was cooked and consumed by the villagers. Some villagers had also allegedly stored the flesh and consumed it on Wednesday too. Many people, who consumed the beef, began to experience food poisoning symptoms such as vomiting and diarrhoea.

The district authorities, who were alerted of the situation later, shifted the sick to the local hospital on Wednesday night. MLA K. Bhagyalakshmi visited the hospital to inquire about their health.

Army bans 89 apps

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 9:** The Indian Army has asked all its personnel and soldiers to remove 89 apps by July 15 owing to the national security risks.

The list not only have Chinese apps that have already been banned by the government like TikTok but also carries US-based platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Zoom, Truecaller, Reddit and more. The 89 apps have social media accounts, content sharing apps, short video making apps, e-commerce and dating sites like songs.pk, WeChat, Hike, Likee, Shareit, PUBG and Tinder, etc.

MIGRANTS' ISSUE

SC PULLS UP MAHA GOVT



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** The Supreme Court Thursday pulled up the Maharashtra government on the migrant workers issue and refused to accept its claim that there was no problem in the state on this front, saying it is its duty to find out the lapses and act on them.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, S K Kaul and M R Shah asked the state to file a fresh affidavit listing the steps taken to mitigate the problems of migrant workers wanting to return to their native places amid the COVID-19 crisis. It is not an adversarial litigation, the bench said, posting the matter for further hearing on July 17.

During the hearing of the case taken up suo motu (on its own) by the top court on the miseries of migrant workers during the COVID-19 lockdown, the bench said: "What is happening in Maharashtra? Large number of migrant workers are still in the state."

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the state, said that the latest affidavit has been filed on July 6 in compliance with the apex court's order. He said that a list was provided to the Centre with regard to migrant workers, who have been sent to their native places by the state.

Mehta said the crux of the affi-

The bench said it is the responsibility of the state to find out which group of migrants are getting food, transport and other facilities or not getting them

A Bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, S K Kaul and M R Shah asked the state to file a fresh affidavit listing the steps taken to mitigate the problems of migrant workers wanting to return to their native places

davit was that the migrants who wanted to leave earlier have now decided to stay back as the state opened up employment opportunities and since May 1, around 3,50,000 workers came back to work in Maharashtra again. The bench said it is the responsibility of the state to find out which group of migrants are getting food, transport and other facilities or not getting them. Mehta said that whoever wanted to shift has been shifted and those who went back may not be getting jobs as per their skills, like a carpenter cannot work as a labourer in an agricultural field. "Your affidavit is not up to the mark... We cannot accept the State's claim that there is no problem in the State of Maharashtra. They have treated this as an adversarial litigation. You (Mehta) must advise them to file a proper affidavit by next date of hearing," the bench said.

CBSE SYLLABUS ROW

False narrative: HRD minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' Thursday said there has been an "uninformed commentary" on the exclusion of certain topics from the CBSE syllabus to portray a false narrative.

The comments by the minister came following a controversy over the reduction of syllabus by the CBSE due to the COVID-19 situation, with the Opposition alleging that chapters on India's democracy and plurality are being "dropped" to propagate a particular ideology.

"There has been a lot of uninformed commentary on the exclusion of some topics from the CBSE syllabus. The problem with these comments is that they resort to sensationalism by connecting topics selectively to portray a false narrative.



The comments by the minister came following a controversy over the reduction of syllabus by the CBSE due to the COVID-19 situation

"While it is easy to misconstrue exclusion of three to four topics like nationalism, local government, federalism, etc and build a concocted narrative, a wider perusal of different subjects will show that

this exclusion is happening across subjects," Nishank said in a series of tweets.

The minister reiterated that the exclusions from the syllabus are a one-time measure taken in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. "As the CBSE has clarified, schools have been advised to follow the NCERT Alternate Academic Calendar, and all the topics mentioned have been covered under the same. The exclusions are merely a one-time measure for exams, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The only aim is to relax the stress on students by reducing the syllabus by 30 per cent. This exercise has been carried out following the advice and recommendations of various experts and considering the suggestions received from educationists through our Syllabus For Students 2020 campaign," he said.

COVID INNOVATION

Engineer develops device to ensure social distancing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** Amid the coronavirus pandemic, a Southern Railway Signal & Telecommunication engineer has developed a device to remind people to maintain at least a three metre distance from each other.

The device can fit into a pocket or a small purse, can be attached with ID cards and can also be used along with a wristwatch. It weighs around 30 grams and uses radio frequency to detect the presence of human beings if they are wearing the same device.

"It is designed with special consideration to the safety of on-duty railway employees," said R Dinesh

IRSSE, Senior Divisional Signal and Telecommunication Engineer, Southern Railway, Trivandrum Division, who coordinated the development of the device by his Junior Engineer, R Nidheej.

"If two or more people wearing Social Distancing Ensuring Device happen to come within a distance of 2-3 metres, it would warn them with an alarm sound. It would continue to produce the alarm sound until they keep a range above 3 meters between them. Thus, the device will help us in ensuring social distancing," he explained.

While social distancing norms are one of the most essential methods to control the pandemic, it is often forgotten in daily life, the official said,



emphasising on the need for such a device. The device can be recharged with the help of a charger. Once it is charged, it will be active for more

than twelve hours.

"We have developed a prototype and it has been tested successfully. We are also ready to transfer the tech-

nology to other zonal railways or railways workshops for making it on a large scale," Dinesh said.

The device is the latest innovation from Nidheej, who has also developed a robot, RailMitra, which has the ability to distribute essentials like medicines, food and water to COVID-19 patients and will collect used plates, bottles, masks, from them to avoid spread of the disease among caregivers.

RailMitra can also be used for disinfecting floors with the help of UV lights and by using its targeted spraying system. It is also provided with an IP camera through which communication can be established remotely with a patient. The technology has been transferred to S&T

Workshop at Podanur and they are making it for Railway Hospitals. Nidheej also developed a sanitiser dispenser which uses ultrasound sensors and microcontrollers to dispense sanitiser automatically for 0.75 second when someone places his or her hands under it.

This sanitiser dispensing device can be recharged with the help of a mobile phone charger. Once it is charged, it will be active for more than one week. Also Signal & Telecommunication Department of Trivandrum Division has developed a contactless body temperature measurement device which can be used for measuring body temperature without making any physical contact.



of the day quote

Lying, accusations and spreading hatred are key elements of America's foreign policy, especially in the current regime



ABBAS MOUSAVI | IRAN'S FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN

It is our responsibility to merge the Taliban in the structure of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan hich will happen hopefully



ASHRAF GHANI | PRESIDENT OF AFGHANISTAN

I am absolutely anxious about the state of the economy. We are, as I've said before, entering into a very significant recession. We know that that is happening



RISHI SUNAK | BRITISH FINANCE MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Nirav judicial remand extended

**London:** Fugitive diamantaire Nirav Modi, who is fighting extradition to India, was Thursday further remanded in custody until August 6 after he appeared at a regular remand hearing before a UK court on charges over the nearly \$ 2 billion Punjab National Bank fraud and money laundering case.

Seoul mayor reported missing

**Seoul:** The mayor of South Korean capital Seoul has been reported missing and police are searching for him Thursday. Police officers said they are looking for Mayor Park Won-soon at Seoul's Sungbuk neighborhood where his mobile phone signal was last detected. They said Park's mobile phone was currently turned off.

Singaporeans to vote today

**Singapore:** Singaporeans will vote Friday in the region's first general election since the COVID-19 outbreak that will test Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's handling of the unprecedented health crisis that has pushed the city-state's economy towards the worst-ever recession in nearly two decades.

UK resumes arms sales to Saudi

**London:** The UK government has decided to resume arms sales to Saudi Arabia despite concerns that the arms could be used to commit human rights abuses and war crimes in Yemen. The government has said that possible war crimes committed by Saudi Arabia are "isolated incidents".

Melania statue set on fire

**Rozno, Slovenia:** A wooden sculpture of US first lady Melania Trump was torched near her hometown of Sevnica, Slovenia, on the night of July Fourth, as Americans celebrated US Independence Day, said the artist who commissioned the sculpture. Brad Downey, a Berlin-based American artist, told Reuters he had the life-sized blackened, disfigured sculpture removed as soon as police informed him on July 5th of the incident.

Floods in Nepal

**Kathmandu:** At least two people were killed and 18 others reported missing due to floods in Nepal's Sindhupalchowk district, police confirmed Thursday.



Coal has no place in COVID-19 recovery plans

ANTONIO GUTERRES | UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

FIRST-EVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES HOSP IN PAK

Prime Minister Imran Khan inaugurated Pakistan's first-ever specialised hospital for infectious diseases Thursday to meet the increasing challenges posed by the coronavirus that has claimed nearly 5,000 lives and infected over 240,000 people in the country



WHO sets up panel to review handling of pandemic

AGENCIES

**Geneva/Zurich, July 9:** The World Health Organisation (WHO) said Thursday it was setting up an independent panel to review its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the response by governments worldwide.

The announcement follows strong criticism by U.S. President Donald Trump's administration, which accused the WHO of being "China-centric", and U.S. formal notification on Tuesday that it was withdrawing from the U.N. agency in a year's time.

Former New Zealand prime min-

ister Helen Clark and former Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf have agreed to head the panel, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

"The magnitude of this pandemic, which has touched virtually everyone in the world, clearly deserves a commensurate evaluation, an honest evaluation," Tedros told a virtual meeting with representatives of WHO's 194 member states. The co-chairs will select the other panel members, he said. The panel will then provide an interim report to an annual meeting of health ministers in November and present a "substantive report" next May.



"This is not a standard report that ticks a box and is then put on a shelf to gather dust. This is something we take seriously," Tedros said. In May, WHO's member states adopted unanimously a resolution proposed by the European Union calling for an evaluation of the global response to the pandemic. Addressing Thursday's meeting, Clark said the assignment would be "exceptionally challenging".

Johnson-Sirleaf, whose country was ravaged by West Africa's Ebola outbreak, the world's worst, in 2014-2016, said she looked forward "to doing all we can to respond" to the pandemic's challenges. More than 12 million people are reported to have been infected by the novel coronavirus worldwide and 548,429 have died, according to a Reuters tally. Ilona Kickbusch, a global health expert and former WHO head of

Global cases top 12mn

Global coronavirus cases exceeded 12 million Wednesday, according to a Reuters tally, as evidence mounts of the airborne spread of the disease that has killed more than half a million people in seven months. The number of cases is triple that of severe influenza illnesses recorded annually, according to the World Health Organisation.

Oz suspends HK extradition treaty



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Canberra, July 9:** Australia has suspended its extradition treaty with Hong Kong in response to fears over a new national security law imposed by China, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Thursday.

Addressing the media here, Morrison said that the new law, which came into effect on June 30, undermined "Hong Kong's own basic law" and the territory's current level of autonomy from Beijing, the BBC reported.

Australia planned to extend visas for Hong Kong residents and encourage businesses there to relocate, he said, adding his government,

along with others had been "very consistent in expressing our concerns about the imposition of the national security law on Hong Kong". Previously, Australia and Hong Kong could both seek the extradition of any person within their jurisdiction who was wanted for prosecution or a criminal sentence.

This process has happened just twice in the past 10 years, said the BBC report. As the extent of the law's reach was still uncertain, critics have said it could also lead to foreign nationals being arbitrarily detained in Hong Kong. This has led Australia and other nations to issue new warnings to their citizens in Hong Kong. "You may be at increased risk of detention on vaguely

defined national security grounds. You could break the law without intending to. If you're concerned about the new law, reconsider your need to remain in Hong Kong," said Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Meanwhile, China criticised Australia's move as "gross interference" in its domestic affairs.

"We urge the Australian side to immediately stop meddling... Otherwise it will lead to nothing but lifting a rock only to hit its own feet," the BBC quoted a statement by the Chinese embassy in Australia as saying Thursday.

Also Thursday, New Zealand's government said that it would review the country's relationship with Hong Kong. Foreign Minister Winston Peters said New Zealand was "deeply concerned" about the national security law.

Since the law that targets acts of secession, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces, with punishments of up to life in prison for the most serious offences, was enacted last week, Canada has also suspended its extradition treaty, while the UK has offered citizenship options to Hong Kong residents.

SLOW THE SPREAD



A child from the indigenous Yanomami ethnic group wearing a protective face mask, amid the spread of pandemic in the municipality of Alto Alegre, state of Roraima, Brazil

REUTERS

New US visa regulations to cause difficulties for Indians

AGENCIES

**Washington, July 9:** The new visa regulations requiring international students in the US with an F-1 visa to take at least one in-person course or face the prospect of deportation is likely to "cause uncertainties and difficulties" for some students, the Indian Embassy here has said.

"These new modifications at a time when many of the US universities and colleges are yet to announce their plans for the new academic year are likely to cause uncertainties and difficulties for some Indian students wishing to pursue their studies in the US," said a spokesperson of the Indian Embassy.

Responding to media queries, the spokesperson said the Indian



government has taken up the matter with concerned US officials. At the India-US Foreign Office Consultations held on July 7, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla conveyed India's concerns on the matter to Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs David Hale.

According to a recent report of Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP), there were 1,94,556 Indian students enrolled in vari-

ous academic institutions of the US in January this year. Of these 1,26,132 were males and 68,405 were females. Noting that partnership in higher education is a key component of the strong people-to-people ties between India and the US, the spokesperson said in the last two decades Indian students in American universities and colleges have been the harbingers of a strong partnership between technology and innovation sectors between the two countries.

The spokesperson hoped that the US authorities would provide adequate flexibility in their visa rule, keeping in mind the extraordinary circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic for the Indian students community.

Heavy rain hits central Japan



ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Tokyo, July 9:** Flooding and mudslides have stranded hundreds of people in scenic hot springs and hiking areas in central Japan, while rescue workers searched Thursday for more people missing in rain-related disasters that have already killed more than 60 people.

Parts of Nagano and Gifu, including areas known for scenic mountain trails and hot springs, have been flooded by massive downpours that have lasted for nearly a week.

More than 300 people, including hotel employees and visitors, were trapped in Kamikochi, as floods and mudslides hit a main road connecting the town to Matsumoto, another tourist destination in Nagano. All of the stranded people were safe, prefectural officials said. In neighboring Gifu, hundreds were also isolated in the hot spring towns of Gero and Ontake.

SC rulings keep Trump financial records private for now

AGENCIES

**Washington, July 9:** The Supreme Court issued a mixed verdict Thursday on demands for President Donald Trump's financial records that will keep his tax returns, banking and other documents out of the public eye for the time being.

By 7-2 votes, the justices upheld the Manhattan district attorney's demand for Trump's tax returns, but kept a hold on Trump's financial records that Congress has been seeking for more than a year. But Trump, who has strenuously sought to keep his financial records private, didn't immediately regard the outcome as a victory.

"The Supreme Court sends case back to Lower Court, arguments to continue. This is all a political prosecution," Trump wrote in a series of angry tweets that followed the court rulings.

The justices rejected arguments by Trump's lawyers and the Justice Department that the president is immune from investigation while he holds office or that a prosecutor must show a greater need than normal to obtain the records. The tax returns are being sought as part of a grand-jury investigation. Because the grand jury process is confidential, the rulings make it likely that none of Trump's financial records will become public soon.

Trump's two high court appointees, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, joined the majority in both cases along with Chief Justice John Roberts and the four liberal justices. Roberts wrote both opinions. "Congressional subpoenas for information from the President, however, implicate special concerns regarding the separation of powers."

25 years on, Srebrenica dead still being identified, buried

Over 8,000 Bosnian Muslims perished in 10 days of slaughter after the town was overrun by Bosnian Serb forces in the closing months of the country's 1992-95 fratricidal war

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Srebrenica, Bosnia-Herzegovina, July 9:** A quarter of a century after they were killed in Europe's worst massacre since World War II, eight Bosnian men and boys will be laid to rest Saturday in a cemetery just outside of Srebrenica — their marble gravestones joining thousands more, each with the same month and year of death.

Over 8,000 Bosnian Muslims perished in 10 days of slaughter after the town was overrun by Bosnian Serb forces in the closing months of the country's 1992-95 fratricidal war. Their executioners tried to ensure they would never get the sort of memorial Srebrenica holds every year. Their bodies were plowed into hastily made mass graves and then later dug up with bulldozers and scattered among other burial sites to hide the evidence of the crime.

But, since 1996, Bosnian and international scientists have slowly unlocked what was once described as the "biggest forensic puzzle anywhere in the world," unearthing the bones from those gruesome death pits and connecting them with the names of the people they belonged to.

When the remains are identified, they are returned to their relatives and reburied in the Potocari memorial cemetery. And each year on July 11, the anniversary of the day the killing began in 1995, relatives gather for a funeral of the recently identified. Most of the dead were men and boys, so most of the mourners are women — mothers and sisters, daughters and wives.

Massacre survivor Fazila Efendic will attend the collective funeral this year to witness her sisters in grief bury a handful of bones, as she once did.



Having a grave to visit will bring them some relief, Efendic says. Her husband, Hamed, and her only son, Fejzo, were killed in the massacre.

For years, every time a new mass grave was found, she rushed to the site hoping to see something she would recognize as having belonged

to her loved ones.

"There are no words to describe the sorrow you feel when you are looking for (your loved ones) bone by bone," Efendic said. "I visited every newfound mass grave; I've seen the inside of every one of them."

All of Hamed's remains were

found in two mass graves, one unearthed in 1998 and the other in 2000. Fejzo — or rather two of his leg bones — was found in another one several years later. Efendic buried her husband at Potocari after his remains were found but waited years before finally deciding to do the same with Fejzo's partial remains.

Typically, thousands of visitors from various countries attend the July 11 service, but this year — because of the coronavirus pandemic — only a relatively small number of survivors will be allowed at the cemetery.

Instead, many speakers will attend "virtually," explained Emir Suljagic, the director of the Srebrenica Memorial Center at Potocari.

That the massacre survivors are able to visit their dead at all is a testament to the forensic scientists at the International Commission

on Missing Persons. Set up in 1996 at the urging of then-U.S. President Bill Clinton, the commission designed a DNA-based system to find and identify the remains of some 40,000 people — the vast majority of them from Bosnia — who had been reported as missing as a result of the 1990s conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

In 2014, the commission became a permanent global body, expanded its mission to other conflicts and natural disasters, and moved its headquarters to The Hague. But not before helping to identify more than 70% of all the missing victims of the 1990s Balkan wars, including close to 7,000 of those killed in Srebrenica.

Damir Marjanovic, an early member of the then Bosnia-based commission, said the team's work has greatly increased scientists' ability to pull DNA profiles from skeletal remains.



## of the day quote

In fiscal 2021, a sharp decline in vehicle sales volume and ancillary income will lead to a 50-100 bps moderation in operating profitability because of sub-optimal coverage of fixed costs. This drop is substantial, considering the thin operating margin of 3-4% of dealers

**GAUTAM SHAHI** | DIRECTOR, CRISIL RATINGS

With each passing day, the cost of owning a diesel PV is getting unviable. Retail diesel prices have been increased regularly in doses every month since January 2013 which has significantly narrowed down the retail price gap between petrol and diesel fuels

**ASHISH MODANI** | VP AND CO-HEAD (CORPORATE RATINGS), ICRA

Reducing interest rates, gradual unlocking of economic activity with expected return to normalcy has seen renewed buoyancy in markets leading to mutual funds AUM crossing ₹25 lakh crore mark

**NS VENKATESH** | CEO, AMFI

## SHORT TAKES

### Flipkart Group invests ₹260 cr

**Bangalore:** The Flipkart Group Thursday announced it has invested ₹260 crore to purchase a significant minority stake in Arvind Youth Brands, a subsidiary of Arvind Fashions. Arvind Youth Brands owns the popular Flying Machine denim brand that has been retailing on Flipkart and Myntra for more than six years. With this investment, the Flipkart Group and Arvind Fashions will work collaboratively to identify opportunities and synergies to innovate and develop products with strong value propositions at attractive price points.

### 'Digital Choupal' to be conducted

**Mumbai:** The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) Thursday said it will conduct its first 'Digital Choupal' via video conferencing with participants of various projects initiated by it, to share their experiences about the projects they are involved in. Nabard is organising Digital Choupal on July 13 to mark its 39th foundation day.

### Spinny logs 80% rise in H1 sales

**Mumbai:** Online used car retailing platform Spinny Thursday said it has registered a sales growth of 80 per cent to around 2,700 cars in the first half of this year, despite the coronavirus-induced lockdown that stalled all business and economic activities. The company, which had sold over 1,500 cars in the January-June period of 2019, has also seen "considerable growth" in queries from prospective women buyers in the past one month, it said.

### BASF India gets ₹46 cr tax notice

**New Delhi:** Chemicals maker BASF India Ltd Thursday said it has received a tax demand notice of ₹46 crore from the Karnataka government. The company said that it had earlier got demand notices from the Commercial Tax Department, Karnataka, aggregating to ₹620.93 crore (including interest and penalty) for the periods 2006-2007 to 2014-2015 by treating the stock transfers of the company's Mangalore plant as interstate sales to dealers.



We are now using both monetary and fiscal weapons of our armour in a much proper combination giving proper emphasis to growth, re-emphasising growth a little bit more than inflation right now

**DK SRIVASTAVA** | CHIEF POLICY ADVISOR, EY INDIA

## INFLATION LIKELY SLOWED IN JUNE

India's consumer price inflation likely eased in June from March, a poll predicted, as loosened nCoV-led restrictions in the country drove a slight recovery in economic activity and helped reduce a supply crunch. The July 3-8 poll median showed retail inflation in June moderated to 5.30%



## THREAT OF US SANCTIONS

# Chinese banks prepare contingency plans

REUTERS

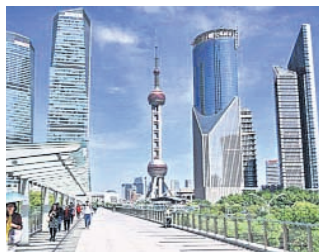
**Beijing/Hong Kong/Shanghai, July 9:** Chinese state lenders are revamping contingency plans in anticipation of US legislation that could penalise banks for serving officials who implement the new national security law for Hong Kong, sources at five state financial institutions said.

In worst-case scenarios under consideration by the Bank of China and Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, the lenders are looking at the possibility of being cut off from US dollars or losing access to US dollar settlements, two sources said.

The dollar is the dominant global currency for international payments and central bank reserves. "We are hoping for the best, but preparing for the worst. You never know how things will turn out," one of the sources said.

Reflecting concern over the erosion of the former British colony's autonomy, the US House and Senate unanimously passed the bill last week. It has yet to be signed into law by President Donald Trump.

The bill calls for sanctions on Chinese officials and others who help violate Hong Kong's autonomy and on financial institutions that do business with them. But it does not spell out what the sanctions would look like.



"There are sanctions in this bill which could be interpreted to prevent a bank from clearing some dollar transactions via US institutions, but unlike other congressional sanctions bills there are not specific provisions mandating it," said Nick Turner, a lawyer specialising in sanctions and anti-money laundering at Steptoe & Johnson in Hong Kong.

He said it remained to be seen whether the law would be used in such a way.

In a milder scenario being looked at by the Agricultural Bank of China, lenders would need to find ways to address the problem of clients blacklisted by the United States, especially those who might face a sudden loss of liquidity, a third source said.

The sources all declined to be named as the planning is confidential. Bank of China, ICBC and AgBank did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for comment.

# PM woos global firms with favourable biz environment

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** Wooing global companies, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday said his government's self-reliant India campaign is not about being closed to the world and Asia's third-largest economy continues to be one of the most open in the world that offers investment-friendly and competitive business environment.

Speaking at the India Global Week 2020, he said Aatmanirbhar Bharat, or self-reliant India, is "not about being self-contained or being closed to the world."

"It is about being self-sustaining and self-generating. We will pursue policies that promote efficiency, equity and resilience," he said.

In response to the biggest economic crisis since 1979 triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown - one of the harshest in the world, the government announced a ₹20.97 lakh crore fiscal relief package that encompassed free ration and cash to poor and structural reforms with a call to boost domestic capabilities so as to cut imports.

"India remains one of the most open economies in the world. We are laying a red carpet for all global companies to come and establish their presence in India.



## INVESTMENT-FRIENDLY MEASURES

**S**peaking at the India Global Week 2020, PM Modi said Aatmanirbhar Bharat is not about being self-contained or being closed to the world

**S**ectors such as agriculture, defence, and space have been opened up for investments

**PM ALSO SAID THAT THE INDIAN ECONOMY HAS STARTED SEEING "GREEN SHOOTS" OF RECOVERY**

Very few countries will offer the kind of opportunities India does today," Modi said in his address through video link.

Sectors such as agriculture, defence, and space have been opened up for investments.

"We are making the economy more productive, investment-friendly and competitive," he said citing deep structural reforms undertaken during the pandemic.

# VEDANTA'S INITIATIVES HELP KALAHANDI THRIVE

**A REPORT CLAIMED THAT VEDANTA'S PLANT IN THE DISTRICT CREATED 5,000 JOBS IN ALUMINIUM AND VALUE CHAIN INDUSTRIES**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 9:** An NGO PRAHAR (Public Response Against Helplessness and Action for Redressal), Wednesday called for a comprehensive national strategy targeting accelerated industrial growth in remote regions of India to bring relief to workforce which has receded there because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The NGO highlighted during a webinar.

PRAHAR made a comprehensive research on Lanjigarh of the 'Odisha case study' by Sattva Consulting, an independent social impact strategy consulting and implementation firm.

Abhay Raj Mishra, President and National Convenor, PRAHAR said, "We conducted a ground-research in Kalahandi district which revealed significant socio-economic transformation in the region after Vedanta commissioned its alumina refinery and captive power plant in Lanjigarh in 2003."

"Till the year 2000, the Kalahandi district (part of KBK) used to be one of the most poverty-stricken regions of Odisha as well as the country. With support from the government things started to change after the Vedanta plant was commissioned in the district in 2003," Mishra added.

PRAHAR's report claimed that Vedanta's plant created 5,000 jobs in aluminium and value chain in-



**We conducted a research in Kalahandi which revealed significant socio-economic transformation in the region after Vedanta commissioned its alumina refinery and captive power plant in 2003**

**ABHAY RAJ MISHRA** | PRESIDENT & NATIONAL CONVENOR, PRAHAR

dustries which include 60 fly ash brick industries and 100 downstream industries.

"The plant also created 10,000 vendors which in turn supported 1 lakh direct and indirect jobs. Also, 600 new MSMEs created over 6,000 jobs in the region," Mishra said.

Also, the district witnessed a rise in literacy levels in Kalahandi from 38.4% in 2001 to 50.9% in 2011, the PRAHAR president said.

The district also witnesses shift

in preference for formal healthcare from home-remedies among local communities with the improvement in healthcare services in the region. Vedanta is also investing ₹100 crore to set up a 500-bed hospital in the region besides developing 400 Nandghars (Anganwadis) for Child Development & Women Empowerment.

Kalahandi also saw improvement in hygiene and overall environmental impact. Vedanta is utilising 100% of fly ash for brick manufacturing and construction.

The study involved data collection through survey of 420 households covering blocks of Kalahandi-Lanjigarh, Bhawanipatna, Thumamul Rampur, Narla, Kesinga, Golamunda.

# WhatsApp Business hits 50mn users globally

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, July 9:** With the COVID-19 disruptions bringing more businesses online, WhatsApp Business has reached a new milestone of 50 million monthly users globally with almost a third of them being in India, the Facebook-owned platform said Thursday.

In India, there are more than 15 million monthly WhatsApp Business app users.

The platform Thursday also introduced new features to start a chat with a business on WhatsApp like starting a chat with a business using QR codes.

Scanning a QR code will open a chat with an optional pre-populated message created by the business to start the conversation, WhatsApp Business said in a blog post. With the app's messaging tools, businesses can quickly send information such as their catalog to get the conversation going.

QR codes are available for businesses around the world using the WhatsApp Business app or WhatsApp Business API starting



Thursday, the company said.

WhatsApp Business said that more than 40 million people view a business catalog on the platform each month, while more than three million users in India do so each month.

"To make it easier for people to discover products, we're making catalogs and individual items available to be shared as links on websites, Facebook, Instagram and elsewhere," said the blog post. "If people want to share a catalog or item they find with friends or family, they can simply copy the link and send it on WhatsApp or other places as well," it added.

# Mastercard to invest ₹250 cr to reboot SMEs

AGENCIES

**Mumbai, July 9:** Global cards major Mastercard Thursday announced an additional ₹250-crore investment to help small businesses in the country, amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The investment, which is over and

above the \$1 billion committed for the Indian market till 2025, will be focussed on helping small businesses go digital, making access to credit easier and also supporting women entrepreneurs, its division president for South Asia Porush Singh said. He said the company is making the investment as part of

a global commitment of \$250 million (roughly ₹1,875 crore) following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Singh said the company has a target to equip 1 crore merchants in India with digital payment acceptance capabilities. It will help the small stores in getting access to credit through a tie-up with consumer brands, he said.

# 58 Indian-origin biz leaders employ over 3.6mn globally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Washington, July 9:** A group of 58 Indian-origin executives heading companies across 11 countries, including the US, Canada and Singapore, collectively employ more than 3.6 million people and account for a combined \$1 trillion in revenue, according to a US-based top Indian diaspora organisation.

Indian-origin business leaders are reaching the pinnacle of corporate success in greater numbers than ever, many use their platforms for social change advocacy, said Indiaspora, a nonprofit organisation of global Indian diaspora leaders from various backgrounds and professions.

The Indiaspora Business Leaders List of 58 executives head companies headquartered across 11 different countries, including the US, Canada,

England, and Singapore and these companies have delivered annualised returns of 23% during the tenure of these executives, outperforming the S&P 500 by 10%.

These companies collectively employ more than 3.6 million worldwide and account for a combined \$1 trillion in revenue and \$4 trillion in market capitalisation.

"We wanted to capture this incredible feat that our community is achieving with increasing numbers," said Indiaspora founder MR Rangaswami, a Silicon Valley-based entrepreneur and investor.

The stereotype of the Indian CEO is someone who represents the tech sector, but this list of 58 CEOs dispels that myth, he said, adding that these leaders represent many different sectors, including banking, electronics, consumer goods, and consulting. The list of Indian-ori-



**INDIAN CEOs HAVE BEEN RULING THE ROOST IN SILICON VALLEY**

gin CEOs includes immigrants from India as well as professionals born in countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia, England, and the US.

"It's inspiring to see so many leaders of Indian heritage playing a significant role in business and in society," said Ajay Banga, President

and CEO of Mastercard.

"Our culture and our values are a common starting point. But it's what we do with the opportunities presented to us that make a difference. When we lean into our diverse experiences to deal with challenges like the pandemic or racial

**The Indiaspora Business Leaders List of 58 executives head companies headquartered across 11 different countries, including the US, Canada, England, and Singapore**

injustice, we can have an even greater impact on the lives of those around us," he said.

Indiaspora said that many of these diaspora executives have led their companies in advancing social change by addressing racial injustice, climate and sustainability justice, and the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 through policy and

financial commitments. Tech industry leader Sundar Pichai, CEO of Alphabet, has announced new goals for racial equity, including improving leadership representation of underrepresented groups at Google, and an "economic opportunity package" for the Black community. Many of the leaders' companies have created or contributed funds in response to COVID-19, with monetary and humanitarian aid totalling more than USD 400 million, Indiaspora said.

The Indiaspora Business Leaders List also calls attention to the presence of a glass ceiling that women, including Indian women, still face. Out of 1,000 companies represented on the Fortune 500 list, only 61 have women CEOs; the Indiaspora List has a marginally higher percentage of women, yet includes only five women out of the 58 leaders.



# Catalans should rejoice or grieve!



Catalan derby sees two sent offs as Barcelona keep title hopes alive, while the loss relegates Espanyol for the first time in nearly three decades

ASSOCIATED PRESS

**Barcelona, July 9:** It must be strange feeling for the Catalans Wednesday night as they would be thinking what should they do as one of their teams keeping pace for the title while the other has been assured of relegation. It's like one gets a good news and a bad news in the same time.

Barcelona kept their title hopes alive with a 1-0 win in the Catalan derby against Espanyol in the Spanish league (La Liga), sealing the rival's relegation for the first time in nearly three decades.

Luis Suarez scored the winning goal early in the second half on Wednesday to move Barcelona within a point of leader Real Madrid and send Espanyol to the second division after 26 straight seasons in the top flight.

Real Madrid can reclaim a four-point lead with three rounds left with a home win against relegation-threatened Alaves Friday. Madrid, seeking their first league title in three years, has a perfect record since the league resumed following the coronavirus break.

"We knew it would be a difficult match because of Espanyol's situation," Suarez said. "We are going to keep trying to win our matches and see if Madrid falters."

Only a win in the city derby could have kept last-place Espanyol with a chance of staying in the top tier. The club owned by Chinese businessman Chen Yansheng hasn't played in the second division since the 1993-1994 season. It had been among the teams with most consecutive seasons in the top flight, along with Barcelona, Real Madrid and Athletic Bilbao.

"We have to apologise to our fans for what we have made them go through," Espanyol captain Javi Lopez said. "This is a difficult moment. Nothing went right for us this season. We are committed to coming back stronger."

It was the sixth straight loss for Espanyol, and their 11th consecutive league defeat away to Barcelona at the Camp Nou. They have 24 points from 35 matches — 11 points from safety.

Both teams went a man down to a straight red card early in the second half. Barcelona forward Ansu Fati was sent off after a hard foul on Fernando Calero in the 51st, and Espanyol midfielder Pol Lozano



was ejected after a tough foul on Gerard Pique in the 54th.

It didn't take long for Barcelona to take advantage of the extra space, and Suarez broke the deadlock from close range in the 56th after an exchange between Antoine Griezmann and Lionel Messi inside the area.

Griezmann, a starter for the second consecutive match after a lengthy period without getting many minutes, had already successfully teamed up with Messi in the team's 4-1 win at Villarreal in the previous round.

Barcelona was in control from the start but Espanyol had some significant chances to open the scoring in the first half, hitting the post once and forcing goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen to make a tough save.

Barcelona, a two-time defending champion, will next visit Real Valladolid Saturday.

In the other match, Villarreal kept alive their chances of qualifying for the Champions League with a 3-1 win at Getafe, moving within three points of fourth-place Sevilla.

Santi Cazorla scored penalties in the 66th and 86th minutes for Villarreal, which opened a four-point gap to sixth-place Getafe. Getafe loudly complained of the referring and players from both teams got into an altercation after the final whistle.

Real Betis secured their stay in the first division with a comfortable 3-0 win over midtable Osasuna, ending a three-match winless streak.

The goal against Espanyol was Luis Suarez's 195th goal for Barcea, moving him past Ladislao Kubala to become the club's third all-time highest scorer, behind Cesar Rodriguez (232) & Lionel Messi (630)

# Shami wary of rhythm in lockdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 9:** The COVID-19 lockdown is a double-edged sword for India's craftiest pacer Mohammed Shami. While it gives an exhausted body enough time to 'heal' and get stronger, he fears the prolonged break can also have ruinous implications on rhythm.

In an exclusive interview with PTI, the 29-year-old Shami said that he certainly enjoys an 'advantage' over other Indian players living in metros, having constantly trained inside his sprawling ancestral home in Sahaspur, which comprises a mini-cricket ground with full facility for net practice.

"There are two ways to look at it. The Indian team always has a packed schedule and it was a good break which allowed a tired body to heal," Shami said.

"While on one side, you gain physically, become fitter and stronger with a lot of training but not playing the sport means that at the same time the rhythm is not there. Obviously, it's something where you will find the difference. So there are pros and cons and it's about managing your body," added the

man with 180 wickets from 49 Tests.

As and when the BCCI starts a camp, Shami believed that he will have an advantage. "Obviously I will have an advantage as I have been training quite regularly. This is different from an injury-induced break. I have been in good rhythm, and luckily, I don't feel any stiffness while bowling full tilt.

"This is a phase when you always know that you are there and it's a matter of time to get that rhythm back. It bolsters your confidence." While he has started bowling full tilt at the nets with his brother facing him, Shami said he still can't gauge how an old red ball will behave without the application of saliva.

Did you try with an old ball at the nets? "No, I haven't," said the man with maximum variations among the current group of fast bowlers. "If you don't get proper conditions, you can't try bowling with old ball. I will tell you why..." he said before going on to elaborate.

"In the nets, the old ball that you use is the one that's kept in a box for a few days, it will behave differently from a ball that's getting old after continuous use in a match

People are asking me this question (whether the ball will be reversing or not without saliva), but honestly, I have no answer. Because, it's a habit and a theory we have all believed and practised since our starting years. So, once we start trying, we will know better

MOHAMMED SHAMI



situation. Because a ball that gets old in a match situation is maintained throughout the course of the innings," he explained.

It has got a lot to do with the condition of the leather, he continued. "The old ball that you suddenly bring out for practice will have a softer feel of the leather and that creates a difference. So, if you are looking at answers, you will only get it in a match simulation.

# SALAH BRACE KEEPS LIVERPOOL ON TRACK FOR PREMIER LEAGUE POINTS' RECORD

## REDS EIGHT SHY OF CENTURY

REUTERS

**Brighton, July 9:** Mohamed Salah scored twice as champions Liverpool moved on to 92 points with a 3-1 win at Brighton and Hove Albion in the Premier League Wednesday.

The victory kept Liverpool on target to secure a record Premier League points tally, with Juergen Klopp's side needing nine from their remaining four games to beat the mark set by Manchester City, who amassed 100 points in 2017-18.

Liverpool were 2-0 up within eight minutes after Brighton paid heavily for sloppy work in their attempt to play the ball out from the back.

Naby Keita robbed Davy Propper and slipped the ball to Salah who confidently drove home to open the scoring in the sixth minute.

Two minutes later and Brighton were caught out again by Liverpool's pressing, this time Salah setting up Jordan Henderson who finished with a perfect drive.

Graham Potter's 15th-placed team pulled a goal back on the stroke of halftime with Leandro Trossard sweeping home a first-time shot after a pinpoint cross from Tariq Lamptey.

Brighton, who recovered well from their poor start, should have drawn level on the hour when the ball fell to an unattended Dan Burn at the back post but he failed to test Alisson with a poor connection.

Egyptian Salah wrapped up the win, Liverpool's 30th in their 34th game of the season, with a superbly angled near post header from an inswinging Andy Robertson corner.

Klopp had given a first league start to 19-year-old Neco Williams at left back but replaced him at the break after he picked up a yellow card. The only negative for Liverpool was the loss of Henderson to a knee injury 10 minutes from the end.

Salah now has 19 goals, three behind Leicester City's Jamie Vardy in the race for the "Golden Boot".



Liverpool teammates congratulate Mo Salah (2nd from left) after one of his goals against Brighton

It's (PL points' record) not important for me, I'm not interested in any of this but I want to win football games. For sports people in general it might be important. We are champions and it could be softening but it is not - the boys go with everything. We now have 92 points and last season we had 97! We got five points more than this last season - that's unbelievable, I have no idea how we did that

JURGEN KLOPP

## City light too flashy for Magpies

**Manchester:** Manchester City put their defeat to Southampton behind them with a comprehensive 5-0 home victory over Newcastle United Wednesday. The 0-1 loss at St Mary's Stadium was City's ninth of the Premier League season and left them a demoralising 23 points behind new champions Liverpool at the top. Pep Guardiola's side brushed aside Magpies through goals from Gabriel Jesus, Riyad Mahrez, David Silva, Raheem Sterling and a Federico Fernandez own goal. City became the first team to have five players hit 10 goals each in a single Premier League season and there should have been another when Jonjo Shelvey gave up possession but Phil Foden shot wide.



# Holder, Gabriel floor England

AGENCIES

**Southampton, July 9:** West Indies dominated the second morning of the first Test against England Thursday as Jason Holder (6/42) and Shannon Gabriel (4/62) took full advantage of bowler-friendly conditions to wrap up the hosts for a paltry 204 all out.

England began the day on 35 for one after only 17 overs were completed at the Ageas Bowl Wednesday, but their top order crumbled under murky skies as experienced pace-man Gabriel struck twice in the first hour.

Gabriel had bowled Dom Sibley the other day and produced a similar 90mph delivery that nipped back in to splatter Joe Denly's off stump in the sixth over of the day.

In his next over the 32-year-old Gabriel trapped opener Rory Burns (30) in front of his stumps with a full delivery and while the umpire turned down his vociferous lbw appeal, West Indies successfully reviewed to leave England struggling on 51/3.

That brought Ben Stokes (43) to the crease and he got off the mark in his first match as England captain, in the absence of Joe Root, by pulling Gabriel to the boundary



Jason Holder celebrates a wicket

PHOTO: ESPNCRICINFO

At the other end, Zak Crawley (10) and Olly Pope (12) couldn't do much as Holder got rid of the duo to reduce the hosts to 87/5. England went into the lunch break with 106/5 on the board.

Post lunch, Stokes and Jos Buttler (35) held their nerves playing watchful cricket. Holder broke the 67-run sixth wicket stand dismissing the opposition skipper. From then, wickets kept on falling as the hosts were reduced to 174/9. However, a 30-run stand between Dom Bess

(31 n o) and James Anderson (10), helped them get past 200.

International cricket returned after a 117-day absence Wednesday, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The match is being played without fans in a "bio-secure environment" with daily health checks for everyone in the ground, home umpires and a ban on shining the ball with saliva.

**BRIEF SCORES:** England 204 all out (Ben Stokes 43, Jos Buttler 35, Dom Bess 31 n o; Jason Holder 6/42, Shannon Gabriel 4/62). Match to continue.

## FIH PRO LEAGUE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

# India's campaign to resume in April 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Lausanne, July 9:** The Indian men's team will resume their FIH Pro League campaign in April next year with an away tie against Argentina, according to a revised fixtures announced by the International Hockey Federation (FIH), Thursday. The first match in both the men's and women's division will see Germany hosting Belgium September 22 and 23.

The FIH was forced to make a new schedule because of the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected all sporting events across the world.

As per the original schedule, India's campaign was supposed to conclude June 14 after their tie in Spain. Before the suspension of the tournament March 19, India were scheduled to play Germany in Berlin April 25 and April 26 before taking on Great Britain in London May 2 and May 3.

They were then scheduled to host New Zealand May 23 and May

## FIXTURE

- INDIA VS ARGENTINA (Away) April 10 & 11
- INDIA VS GREAT BRITAIN (Away) May 8 & 9
- INDIA VS SPAIN (Away) May 12 & 13
- INDIA VS GERMANY (Away) May 18 & 19
- INDIA VS NEW ZEALAND (Home) May 29 & 30

24 before travelling to Tucuman, Argentina, for matches June 5 & 6.

"All hockey fans have been eagerly waiting for the day where the world's best teams would play again," said FIH President Narinder Batra in a statement.

All 11 countries were consulted before the revised calendar for the season was confirmed.

# NZ refutes IPL reports, terms it rumours

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Wellington, July 9:** New Zealand Cricket (NZC) has refuted reports that it has offered to host the now-postponed Indian Premier League this year, terming them as 'inaccurate' while affirming its commitment to the Future Tours programme.

NZC spokesperson Richard Book said the cricket board has not expressed its interest to host the IPL, which was to be held in March this year but was postponed indefinitely because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This rumour is inaccurate. New Zealand would not be in a position to host the IPL - even if we were asked, which we haven't been. The dates, and NZC's commitment to honouring its Future Tours programme, means the timing would not allow this to happen," Book told PTI.

Book's statement came after a BCCI official stated that New Zealand have also joined along with UAE and Sri Lanka the race to host this year's IPL if it is shifted out of India because of the pandemic.

The BCCI is eyeing the September-November window to host the event in place of the World T20 in Australia, which is certain to be postponed because of the growing cases of the deadly virus.

Only once in the 12-year history of the IPL has the entire tournament been shifted out of India. In 2009, it was held in South Africa as the dates clashed with the general elections in the country.

## Asia Cup delayed until June 2021

**New Delhi:** The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Thursday postponed the Asia Cup tournament, scheduled for September this year, until June 2021 owing to an upsurge in COVID-19 cases in the region. The decision further clears the way for the IPL, which the organisers are trying to hold from September to November. Pakistan was to originally host the Asia Cup this time but due to security reasons, the tournament was supposed to be played in Sri Lanka after the country's board expressed its willingness to organise the same.