



SISTERLY LOVE

Actor Kriti Sanon says that Nupur is the reason why she never missed having a brother in life

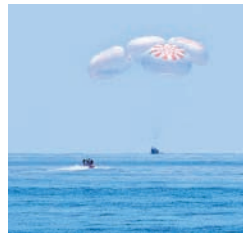
LEISURE | P2



REVIVING COVID-HIT STARTUPS

Telangana's 'Rejig.HydStartups' receives a blockbuster start with 300 applications out of which 100 were picked

TWO STATES | P7



HISTORIC LANDING

Astronauts from NASA and SpaceX returned to Earth in a dramatic, retro-style splashdown

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2/3rds of migrants back in cities or wish to return: Study

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 3: Nearly two-thirds of migrant workers, who had left for home due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown, have either returned to cities or wish to do so in absence of skilled employment in villages, according to a new study that surveyed 4,835 households.

The collaborative study on 'How is the hinterland unlocking' was carried out by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India), Action for Social Advancement, Grameen Sahara, i-Saksham, PRADAN, SAATHI-UP, SeSTA, Seva Mandir and Transform Rural India Foundation.

The study is based on a rapid as-

essment survey of 4,835 households across 11 states in 48 districts carried out in the period of June 24 to July 8. The study found that 29 per cent of migrants, who had left for villages, are now back in cities, while 45 per cent want to return to cities.

"Absence of skilled employment in villages is reflected in the fact that nearly 2/3rd of returned migrants have either migrated again or wish to do so," it said.

The study also found that migrants who returned are engaged mainly in labour work in villages - more than 80 per cent of them - which reflects absence of skilled employment in villages.

"More than one-fourth of the mi-

grant workers are still searching for work in villages," the study found. It also found that one in 4 households is thinking of taking their child out of school (24 per cent).

"Though distress is still considerable, structural changes are not yet visible and the health risk of COVID-19 in rural India is rising," the study warned. The survey found that 43 per cent of households still reported reduction in meals, while 55 per cent said they have reduced the meal items.

"Marked improvement (in comparison to period during the lockdown) in food intake - it is likely that grain availability through PDS (public distribution system) has helped households improve the consumption

as well as reduced the need to buy from the market," the study noted.

The study found that about 6 per cent of households have mortgaged household items, while 15 per cent sold their livestock to cope with financial distress. In sale of productive assets for coping, the study found that 2 per cent of households have sold dry cattle and milk cattle each.

About 2 per cent have mortgaged their land, while one per cent surveyed households have sold their land, the study found. About 10 per cent of households borrowed from extended families, while 7 per cent borrowed from money lenders, the study found.

The survey found that women in households where migrant members

have returned experienced more work load compared to other household members.

On government schemes, the study found that 71 per cent of households have LPG and 85 per cent of those have it through Ujjwala Yojana.

"80 per cent of Ujjwala beneficiaries have received free refills in last month (June 2020), while 90 per cent households are eligible for PM-KISAN and 38 per cent of those have received the transfer of ₹2000," it said.

On changing of plans by the migrants, the study found that 35 per cent of households have postponed a ceremony at home, while 13 per cent have reduced the number of guests without postponing the ceremony.

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FDI from Pak to be accepted in select areas post govt nod

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 3: The Centre Monday clarified that any foreign direct investment (FDI) in commercial coal mining from an entity of a country that shares land border with India will be allowed only after government approval.

"This is with reference to the ongoing auction process of coal mines for commercial coal mining...It is further clarified that any FDI (foreign direct investment) in the commercial coal mining is subject to applicable laws including the Press Note 3 of 2020 issued by the central government....," the coal ministry said in a statement.

According to the Press Note 3 of 2020, 'an entity of a country, which shares land border with India or where the beneficial owner of an investment into India is situated in or is a citizen of any such country, can invest only under the government route,' it added.

Further, a citizen of Pakistan or an entity incorporated in Pakistan can invest only under the government route in sectors/activities other than

defence, space, atomic energy and sectors/activities prohibited for foreign investment, the statement said. A corrigendum to the tender document has also been issued in this regard, it added.

Foreign Direct Investment Policy, 2017 was amended vide the Press Note 4 of 2019, issued by the Centre, to permit 100 per cent FDI under automatic route in coal mining activities, including associated processing infrastructure, for sale of coal, subject to the provisions of Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 and the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and other relevant Acts.

Accordingly, it was stated in the tender document that the Press Note 4 of 2019, issued by the Centre, amended FDI policy 2017, to permit 100 per cent FDI under automatic route in coal mining activities, including associated processing infrastructure subject to the act and other applicable laws, for sale of coal." It is further clarified that any FDI in the commercial coal mining is subject to applicable laws, including the Press Note 3 of 2020, the statement said.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



It's spreading fast! Can't we shift to one of those 150 countries our govt helped in fighting COVID?

Sanat Mohanty Khurda Collector

BHUBANESWAR: Senior OAS officer Sanat Kumar Mohanty has been appointed as Khurda Collector while Sitansu Kumar Rout was transferred and posted as additional commissioner, consolidation & settlement, Berhampur. On completion of Phase-II training, two young IAS officers Keerthi Vasan V and J Sonal have been posted as OSD in Ganjam and Gajapati districts for Covid management duty, respectively. Another two officers Subhankar Mohapatra and Suryawanshi Mayur Vikas have been posted as sub-collectors at Baliguda and Sambalpur respectively.

7 perish by lightning in three districts

BHUBANESWAR: At least seven persons including two siblings were killed in lightning in various parts of Balasore, Bhadrak and Keonjhar districts Monday. Anand Das and Mathura Das were killed while they were working on their farmland in Tihidi and Chandbali. Ramakant Bej was killed while he was buying wood in Chandbali. Nityananda Biswal of Arabandha in Nilagiri was killed while he was manuring his crops. Two cousins Susant Dalei, 15, and Asha Behera, 12, were killed by lightning in Remuna. Chandra Mund, a farmer of Champua was also killed in lightning.

| MARKET WATCH | | | |
|--------------|--------|-----------|----------|
| INDEX | | VARIATION | |
| BOURSES | SENSEX | 36939.60 | ↓ 667.29 |
| | NIFTY | 10891.60 | ↓ 181.90 |
| | DOLLAR | 75.45 | ↑ ₹0.45 |
| | EURO | 88.47 | ↓ ₹0.31 |
| | GOLD | ₹53,651 | ↓ ₹177 |
| CURRENCY | SILVER | ₹65,511 | ↑ ₹527 |

| WEATHER | | | |
|----------------------|-------|--------|--------|
| | | BHUB | CTK |
| TEMP | MAX | 33.6°C | 33.8°C |
| | MIN | 25.8°C | 24.5°C |
| Humidity | 78% | 88% | |
| Rainfall | Trace | 3mm | |
| Forecast | | | |
| Generally cloudy sky | | | |

Probes too many, results zilch

The report card on investigations by the state crime branch does not inspire confidence

GYAN RANJAN MOHAPATRA, OP

Bhubaneswar, August 3: The state crime branch (CB) has been overloaded with cases, but is the premier investigating agency of the state police in a position to deliver the goods? At least the report card of the CB over recent years does not inspire confidence.

According to Odisha Police Manual Rules (PMR), the CB can assume complete control over investigations of any case from the district police. The cases should be of considerable importance and have likely involvement of organized gangs. Various courts can also refer cases to the CB if they find the probe by the local police inadequate.

Recently, DGP Abhay directed the CB to take charge of investigation into the mysterious death of social activist Aditya Das after the Government Railway Police failed to crack the case.

However, more than half the investigations taken up by the Crime Branch are still pending.

An RTI query revealed there are 345 sensitive cases referred to the crime branch between 2007 and 2019 out of

CRIME BRANCH



POOR SHOW

cases referred to CB between 2007 and 2019 out of which **309 cases** came from PSEs while home dept handed over **36 including Kunduli and Pipli gangrape** cases

- The CB submitted charge-sheets in **168 cases** while investigations into **177 cases** are still pending
- A spike in cyber crime in recent years has added to the **burden of the crime branch**

which 309 cases (90 per cent) came from police stations. The state home department also handed over 36 high profile cases to the CB like the Pipli and Kunduli gang rape cases during this period.

The CB sleuths managed to submit charge-sheets in 168 cases while investigations have been pending in 177 cases (51 per cent). Meanwhile, the CB took up investigation of 75 cases (CID-3, Economic Offences Wing-17, Special Task Force-21 and Cyber Cell-34) from June 2019 to July 2020.

The CB submitted charge-sheets in

15 cases including 12 under the NDPS Act in the above period.

Additional Director General of Police (Crime Branch) Saumendra Priyadarshi said, "The crime branch primarily takes up complicated and sensitive cases and its sleuths probe every possible angle in a case. So, it is not possible to solve the cases quickly unlike in the cases investigated by the district police. As per rules, the average period for submission of charge-sheets is normally three years for the cases taken up by the crime branch."

BANKS TO RETURN TO NORMAL TIMING

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 3: After allowing economic activities to resume, the state government Monday allowed banks and other financial institutions to get back to normal working hours.

Director of Institutional Finance, Pragyanismita Sahoo has written to convener of the State Level Bankers Committee and all Collectors in this regard. "All public and private sector banks, regional rural banks, Odisha State Co-operative Banks, small finance bank and insurance companies are allowed to function as per normal banking hours for customers with 50 per cent staff for large branches and full staff for small branches having less than five employees following strict social distancing, use of masks and hand sanitisers," Sahoo said in

her letter. The financial institutions are allowed to function on regular timings with effect from August 1 to August 31 this year. Clearing house, controlling office of banks, Security & Exchange Board of India, controlling heads of insurance companies and RBI are allowed to operate as per normal timing with 50 per cent of staff.

Similarly, cash-in transit companies, ATM maintenance companies and staff of National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) are also instructed to function during normal banking hours.

The government has also allowed postal and bank staff to move to the premises of senior citizens and differently-abled persons, in case they get to deliver cash on phone calls during normal banking hours following all Covid-19 guidelines.

GROUND-BREAKING



Sadhus visiting the Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas workshop ahead of the ground-breaking ceremony of the temple in Ayodhya August 5, Monday

PTI PHOTO

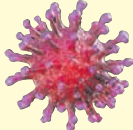
No 'silver bullet' for Covid-19, warns WHO

AGENCIES

Geneva, August 3: The World Health Organization warned Monday that, despite strong hopes for a vaccine, there might never be a "silver bullet" for COVID-19, and the road to normality would be long.

More than 18.14 million people around the world are reported to have been infected with the disease and 688,080 have died, according to a Reuters tally, with some nations that thought they were over the worst experiencing a resurgence.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and WHO emergencies head Mike Ryan ex-



HOPES AND DESPAIR

- WHO exhorts all nations to rigorously enforce health measures such as mask-wearing, social distancing, hand-washing and testing
- WHO says countries with high transmission rates, including Brazil and India, needed to brace for a big battle
- Mothers urged to continue breastfeeding even if they had COVID-19, as the benefits "substantially" outweighed the risks

horted all nations to rigorously enforce health measures such as mask-wearing, social distancing, hand-washing and testing.

"The message to people and governments is clear: 'Do it all,'" Tedros told a virtual news briefing from the U.N. body's headquarters in Geneva. He said face masks should become a symbol of solidarity round the world.

"A number of vaccines are now in phase three clinical trials and we all hope to have a number of effective vaccines that can help prevent people from infection. However, there's no silver bullet at the moment - and there might never be."

Ryan said countries with high

transmission rates, including Brazil and India, needed to brace for a big battle: "The way out is long and requires a sustained commitment."

The WHO officials said an advance investigation team was not yet back from China, where the virus originated.

A larger, WHO-led team of Chinese and international experts is planned next, to study the origins of the virus in the city of Wuhan, although the timing and composition of that is not yet clear.

Tedros urged mothers to continue breastfeeding even if they had COVID-19, as the benefits "substantially" outweighed the risks of infection.

The WHO head said that, while the coronavirus was the biggest global health emergency since the early 20th century, the international hunt for a vaccine was also historic.

"There are many vaccines under trial, a couple in the final stage of clinical trials - and there is hope. It does not mean that we will have the vaccine, but at least the speed with which we reached the level we reached now is unprecedented," he said. "There are concerns that we may not have a vaccine that may work, or its protection could be for just a few months, not more. But until we finish the clinical trials, we will not know."

PIL on Srimandir reopening; govt to take call soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, August 3: A public interest litigation was filed in High Court seeking a direction to the government for immediate opening of Shree Jagannath temple in Puri and other shrines of Odisha for devotees.

In view of Covid-19, the Jagannath temple and other shrines have been closed for devotees. Trilochan Rath, a devotee from Puri, has filed the PIL urging the court to allow devotees into the Jagannath temple.

"Many other states in the country have allowed temples to reopen and the Centre has empowered state governments to take decisions on this issue. We have filed a PIL seeking orders for reopening of Puri temple and other temples in the state," said petitioner's advocate Akshay Pandey.

When the state government has allowed reopening of daily markets, commercial establishments and even liquor shops, why temples cannot be opened for devotees by adhering to social distance and other norms, he asked.

The advocate said the Centre, the state government, Chief Secretary, Endowment Commission, law department and Shree Jagannath Temple Administration have been made respondents in the case. A similar plea has been filed by priests of Kakatpur Maa Mangala temple for reopening of the shrine and seeking financial aid from the government. Law Minister Pratap Jena said, "Considering the current Covid scenario in the state and guidelines issued by the Centre, the state government will take a decision on reopening of temples for devotees soon."

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Sometimes, pressure is a good thing, as it brings out the best in you. You will outshine your colleagues in whatever you choose to do. But your expectations may far exceed the outcome.

TAURUS
It will be an optimistic day with its share of day dreaming, says Ganesha. You will be submissive at work, giving in or blindly following the advice of your peers. Things at work may be tense and cause some trouble today afternoon, but they will be much more to your liking by night.

GEMINI
You had better start sharing your feelings with your family today, says Ganesha. Also, it's time to tell your family about your current financial status. It will help you feel better. Your energy levels will soar and you will approach everything with renewed vigour.

CANCER
You may discuss certain serious issues with your beloved today, predicts Ganesha. Your time till afternoon will be spent in discussions and deliberations about the issue. However, this issue may not be enough in letting you off the hook on the work front. Think twice before you act.

LEO
Some promises are like whispers in the wind — never meant to be realised. Today holds something similar, in that you shall be so close and yet so far from what you desire most.

VIRGO
Today, your ingenuity will breed ideas like rabbits. You have the healer's hands, and so shall you make right many a wrong, predicts Ganesha. You shall be most understanding, and reading people's mind will do wonders for you and your beloved.

LIBRA
Put up that 'Do Not Disturb' sign on the door today. That's because Ganesha feels the tingle in your bones to want to stick to your preferred subject matter. This will help you achieve good progress in your research. Also, expect to be hit by a wave of nostalgia, as loving memories from the past sweeten your heart.

SCORPIO
Better get down to serious business if you want to reap the benefits of your past actions. You are liable to treat subordinates as equals when deciding the best course of actions to achieve your goals. A golden favourable day for you, says Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Dark and gloomy shall be your temperament for most part of the day today. But the afternoon may just see the skies clearing. The apparent mood change, says Ganesha; will mainly be because of good news from abroad and business profits from your partner.

CAPRICORN
Drag yourself out of the house, do some shopping, or better still, appoint an interior designer. You are very likely to move into a new house very soon, foresees Ganesha. This, of course, may also eat into your savings and force you to be thrifty by the end of the day, but you won't regret this once-in-a-while extravagant outing. It's all for a reason, after all.

AQUARIUS
It's a busy day at work, and you're probably involved in some pending project work. It's advisable that you don't get complacent. Keep an eye on your opponents to have an edge over them, suggests Ganesha.

PISCES
Being a graceful loser is just about as important as being a generous winner, for success does not come by every day. Lowering your expectations will help steel you against disappointments today.



HAILEY FEELS JUSTIN HAS CRAZIER EXPERIENCE OF FAME THAN HER

Model Hailey Bieber feels her husband Justin Bieber has had crazier experience of fame than her. In an interview to Vogue, she said she feels her Justin's experience has been crazier than her, of growing up under the shadow of fame, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.

NICOLE KIDMAN MEETS MOM AFTER 8 MONTHS

Actress Nicole Kidman has reunited with her mother Janelle after eight months amid the Covid pandemic. The actress took to Instagram to share two photographs of her reuniting with her 80-year-old mother in Australia, reports *people.com*.



Kriti never missed having a brother

Mumbai: Actress Kriti Sanon has never missed having a brother, thanks to her sister Nupur Sanon. On the occasion of Raksha Bandhan Monday, Kriti took to social media to express her feelings for her sister.

On her verified Instagram page, Kriti has shared a photograph where she can be seen tying a Rakhi on her sister Nupur's wrist. The actress shared that Nupur is the reason why she never missed having a brother.

"Never missed having a brother. Because

I knew I got my best friend for life. I knew you had the ability to make me smile in my lowest moments (and annoy me in seconds too!) Love you Nups!! May you always laugh like a kid! You are my forever favourite and I'll always have your back! No matter what! @nupursanon #HappyRakhi," Kriti wrote on Instagram.

Nupur also took to her verified Instagram account to share a photograph where she can be seen tying a Rakhi on Kriti's wrist.

Natasa shares picture of her 'world'

Mumbai: Serbian dancer-actress Natasa Stankovic has shared a picture of her boys and has called them her world.

Natasa has posted an Instagram picture where she is seen along with her fiancé, Indian cricketer Hardik Pandya. While Hardik cradles their newborn son, Natasa sits in the foreground of the frame



holding a bouquet of red roses.

"My family (heart emoji) my (world emoji) @hardikpandya93 #blessed #grateful #myboys," she wrote alongside the picture, which currently has 567K likes.

The couple welcomed their baby boy July 30. Pandya had announced the news on Twitter with this post: "We are blessed with our baby boy."

Earlier this year, Hardik had announced his engagement to Natasa via social media as well. On January 1, Hardik had shared an image of him proposing to Natasa and had captioned it: "Mai tera, Tu meri jaane, saara Hindustan. 01.01.2020 #engaged." Subsequently, the duo had announced in May that they were expecting a third member in their family.

Soha's wish for Saif confuses netizens

Mumbai: Actress Soha Ali Khan Monday posted an old picture where she poses with brother Saif Ali Khan. However, a large number of users mistook the duo in the photo to be Sara and Ibrahim Ali Khan. Soha's picture was meant to wish Saif on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan.

"There's no denying you are the coolest brother I know. And there's no denying I don't know the first thing about being cool! #happyrakshabandhan bhai #throwback," she wrote on Instagram, along with the vintage picture, where she and Saif pose in front of a car. However the picture caused a tizzy in social media. Many users confused them with Saif's children Sara and Ibrahim.

"I thought that is Ibrahim," a user wrote. "Omg I didn't realise that it's u n said until I saw who has posted it! I thought it was sara n ibrahim," said another. One questioned: "Is that Saif with Sara?"

"Sara and Ibrahim copy paste from you guys..." said a fan.



A throwback image of Soha and Saif Ali Khan

'Don't demonise a community just for an individual'



Several websites have recently been flooded with reports of Bengali women being brutally trolled in social media over actress Rhea Chakraborty's alleged involvement in Sushant Singh Rajput's tragic death

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

Bhubaneswar: Demonising an entire community for alleged involvement of an individual in a tragedy is unwarranted and should be condemned, said some Bengali girls from the state Monday.

The reactions came following the brutal trolling of Bengali women by a section of Internet users over actress Rhea Chakraborty's alleged involvement in Sushant Singh's 'suicide' case recently.

Trolls labelled Bengali women as 'manipulative', 'dominating', 'bish kanya' (poison girl), who 'use their husbands for ATM' and the ones who know 'black magic'.

Speaking to **Orissa POST**, Joyeeta Roy, a media personality from the city said, "It hardly matters whether Rhea is a Bengali or not. She should be punished if found guilty. Therefore, naming certain individual as representative of an entire community is unacceptable."

Urmi Paul, a dancer from Rourkela, said, "Rhea, who is being held responsible for Sushant's death, was not born in West Bengal, neither does she speak Bengali. Moreover, she has grown up in cities like Bangalore, Ambla and Delhi. So, it is humiliating to get abused and brutally trolled for an unconfirmed 'wrongdoing' of an individual who has no connection with Bengal whatsoever."

Bengalis are generally 'broad-minded' and 'literate' but they don't tolerate such nonsense, added Urmi.

Bonny Bhattacharya works as a teacher in Sambalpur. She said, "This is not for the first time that the status of Bengali women has been degraded. Since ages, they have been dubbed as 'difficult', 'hypnotisers', 'profane & promiscuous' and the ones who have expertise in 'breaking families'."

There is a need to look beyond this school of thoughts and the civil society should condemn such hateful comments unequivocally, she demanded.

Popular Odia playback singer Antara Chakraborty, who had earlier paid tribute to the late actor by singing a number from one of his hit movies, termed the attack on Bengali women outrageous.

Such nonsensical comments should not be tolerated when women in society are already facing a lot of troubles in their daily lives, added Antara.



Rhea chakraborty

FUN post

PEANUTS



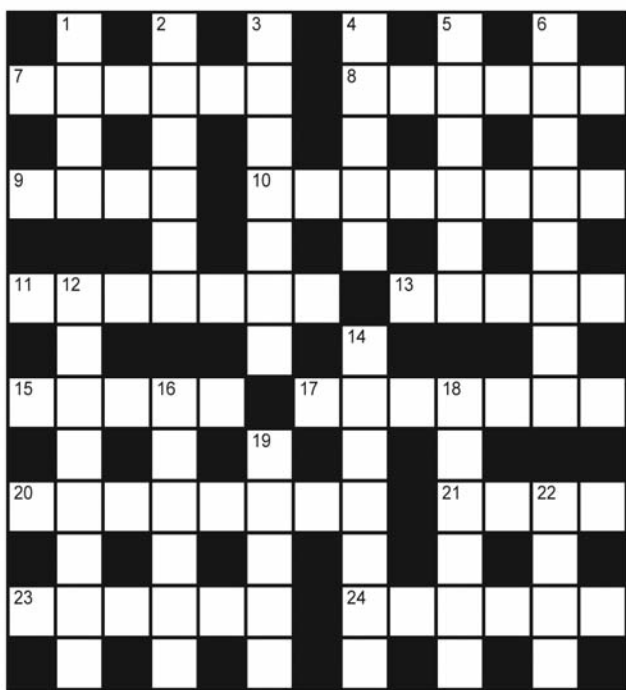
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 7 Showy
 - 8 Spanish capital
 - 9 Parking place
 - 10 Martini ingredient
 - 11 Delivery aid (3,4)
 - 13 Theatre employee
 - 15 Cloaks
 - 17 Rulers
 - 20 Pitiful
 - 21 German automaker
 - 23 Wrote
 - 24 House cat, for example
 - Down**
 - 1 Make a mistake
 - 2 Plan of action
 - 3 Permeate
 - 4 Intelligent
 - 5 Rotten to the core
 - 6 Kick around
 - 12 Remote
 - 14 Type of mat
 - 16 Greek capital
 - 18 Uris novel
 - 19 Opus
 - 22 Biblical plot

SUDOKU

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

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

SOLUTIONS

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

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

CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

1k daily recoveries in state for 1st time

POST NEWS NETWORK/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 3: The state reported its highest number of recoveries on a single-day, with as many as 1,119 COVID-19 patients having been cured or discharged from several COVID care facilities Monday, an official said.

The novel coronavirus disease toll in state, meanwhile, crossed the 200-mark with 10 more fatalities taking the total to 207, an official of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

Altogether 1,384 more people have tested positive for the viral infection, pushing the tally to 36,297, said the official.

Of the new fatalities, three each were reported from Ganjam and Rayagada districts, two from Gajapati and one each from Kalahandi and Khurda districts. "At least six of the 10 deceased had comorbidities," the official said.

Two more coronavirus patients also died in the state, but their deaths were attributed to other ailments, the official pointed out, adding that the number of such fatalities increased to 41.

The fresh cases were reported from 26 districts. Of the 1,384 new cases, 873 were detected from quarantine centres, and 511 in localities. Ganjam district, Odisha's coronavirus hotspot, reported the maximum number of fresh cases (331), followed by Khurda 211 and Koraput 97. Similarly, Sambalpur reported 93 cases, Cuttack 89 and Balasore

79 cases among others.

About the recoveries, the H&FW department took to the Twitter to say, "Odisha achieves another milestone with the recovery of a record 1119 #COVID19 patients today! We salute the dauntless spirit of our Covid Warriors(sic)..."

The recoveries include 354 from Ganjam, 97 from Khurda, 83 from Gajapati and 70 from Jajpur.

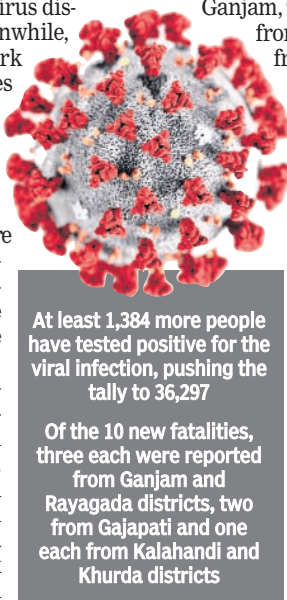
With this, the total recovered cases of Odisha stand at 23,073.

Capital city reports 89 cases

The Capital city reported 89 cases of novel coronavirus Monday, taking the tally to 3,068.

Of the fresh cases, 65 were quarantine cases and 24 were local contact ones. Meanwhile, the Temple City also registered 107 recoveries. The City has so far lost 18 lives to Covid-19.

On the other hand, Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) said that as many as 87 Covid-19 cases of the 89 detected in Cuttack belong to its area. Of the 87 fresh cases, 76 were under home quarantine, one under institutional quarantine, two under paid quarantine and eight were local contacts. On the other hand, 69 persons who had earlier tested positive for the viral infection recovered Monday, the CMC tweeted. With this, the city's Covid-19 tally rose to 1,091. While 580 have so far recovered from the disease, 10 succumbed to the virus.



At least 1,384 more people have tested positive for the viral infection, pushing the tally to 36,297

Of the 10 new fatalities, three each were reported from Ganjam and Rayagada districts, two from Gajapati and one each from Kalahandi and Khurda districts

Heavy rain likely till August 6: MeT

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 3: Heavy rain is likely to lash many areas of Odisha till August 6 due to a low pressure taking shape over the Bay of Bengal, the MeT Centre here said on Monday, advising fishermen to refrain from venturing into deep sea in view of very rough weather.

Under the influence of a cyclonic circulation over Gangetic West Bengal and adjoining Bangladesh and another one over north-east Bay of Bengal and neighbourhood, a low-pressure area is likely to form over north Bay of Bengal on Tuesday, the Meteorological Centre here said.

Under its impact, heavy rainfall is likely to take in several parts of the state till August 6, said H R Biswas, Director of the Meteorological Centre,



Lightning in Puri sky as low pressure forms over Bay of Bengal

Bhubaneswar: Many areas have already received rainfall of varied intensity with heavy to very heavy rainfall at some places in Cuttack district, he said, adding that heavy rainfall has oc-

curred in several places in Angul, Dhenkanal and Malkangiri districts.

The low pressure is likely to trigger heavy to very heavy rainfall in some areas in Ganjam, Balangir, Boudh, Kandhamal and Mayurbhanj, Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapada, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Bargarh and Koraput districts till Tuesday, the MeT Centre said.

Similarly, heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely to lash parts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Mayurbhanj, Jajpur, Angul, Boudh and Dhenkanal districts on Tuesday and Wednesday, it said after issuing an Orange warning for these places for the period requiring the people to remain prepared.

Heavy rainfall is also likely to occur at one or two places in Kalahandi, Balangir, Sonepur,

Sambalpur, Deogarh, Keonjhar and Cuttack for the next two days.

Orange warning was issued for the districts of Bargarh, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Deogarh and Sonepur where some areas will receive heavy to very heavy rainfall Wednesday, it said, adding heavy rainfall will also take place at one or two places in Nuapada, Balangir, Angul and Keonjhar.

Thursday, heavy rainfall is likely to occur at some places in Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Nabarangpur districts, it said.

In view of inclement weather, the MeT Centre advised the fishermen not to venture into the deep sea till August 6 as the surface wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph over the west-central and adjoining north Bay of Bengal will make the sea condition very rough.



Ranihat area in Cuttack witnesses a heavy rush as the state enters Unlock 3.0 Monday

OP PHOTO

FOLLOWING HEAVY RUSH, STATE GOVT RESTRICTS DINE-IN

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 3: Revising its order issued for functioning of commercial establishments for the month of August, state government Monday restricted dining at restaurants.

In its order issued July 31, the state government had not imposed any restriction on operation of restaurants in the state during the current month. "It is observed that there is heavy rush of people in different restaurants, thereby compromising the protocols of physical distancing, which has large potential for spread of Covid-19. Therefore, on further assessment of the situation, the government amended the order," said an order issued by SRC PK Jena.

Now, the restaurants and hotels are permitted to operate for home delivery/ takeaways of food. Dhabas along national and state highways and major roads are also allowed for takeaway only.

Bringing environmental education home

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 3: As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to rage across the country, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has been working to ensure environmental learning does not stop while students remain in home under full or partial lockdown conditions. CSE's Green Schools Programme (GSP) has stepped up with a unique online environmental survey - Audit@Home.

Ranjita Menon, programme director, environment education unit, CSE said, "With schools closed due to the pandemic, it has become increasingly important to keep environment education going. What better way than to engage children to survey their practices at home and realise the impact of their action on available resources."

The survey, which concluded recently, provided students with the opportunity to observe, assess and improve the resource consumption patterns in their households with respect to air, energy, food, biodi-



versity, water, and waste."

More than 47,000 students across 28 states including Odisha participated in the survey and assessed their every-day environmental practices. From Odisha 1421 students participated in it. The highest participation came from Delhi, with close to 8,000 students submitting the survey from government as well

CSE's Green Schools Programme (GSP) has stepped up with a unique online environmental survey - Audit@Home

More than 47,000 students across 28 states including Odisha participated in the survey and assessed their every-day environmental practices

The survey was designed in a manner to make students understand various interconnections that play out and add to climate change

with suggestions to transition to greener practices based on their score in the survey.

The survey results pointed towards some promising aspects: 96 per cent of the students who took the survey had energy-efficient lighting in their homes; 67 per cent repurpose or give away food leftovers; and 51 per cent use sustainable modes of transport like walking and cycling for their every-day activities.

YOUTHS WEAVE NESTS FOR BIRDS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, August 3: Be it evolution of human civilisation or gradual extinction of the animal species, bird nests are a rare sight these days. However, a group of people in Keonjhar district have been extending support to avian species and making artificial nests for birds.

The group comprising of village youths and named as Birsa Munda Eco Saver belongs to Patana block in the district. Jadichatara village youths have been making artificial nests for several years with know-how support from the non-profit making organisation PECUC.

On the other hand, avian species have adopted the artificial nests. After collecting twigs, straws and other materials, the village youths weaved nests and put up those on tree branches in their locality.

"Different species of birds have gradually started thronging to trees

Jadichatara village youths have been making artificial nests for several years with know-how support from the non-profit making organisation PECUC

in the vicinity of Jadichatara village. Chirping sound of the birds creates a melodious note in the area throughout the day. So far, we have already affixed over 235 nests on trees in 25 villages under Patana block," a member of the group Satyanarayan Mohanta gleamed.

In a similar vein, the village youths have taken up a plantation drive in their locality. Ecology matters a lot for survival, Mohanta added.

SAFETY FIRST



Shoppers follow social distancing norms at Esplanade One Mall in Bhubaneswar Monday

OP PHOTO

Cops earn extra bucks during pandemic

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 3: The novel coronavirus pandemic is proving to be boon for some policemen as they are earning big bucks during this time.

An incident that occurred Sunday at Jharpada over-bridge under Laxmisagar police limits threw some light on how they are earning money during these trying times.

The police started their routine checking at Jharpada over-bridge at around 1pm. At 4.30pm Tarsen Darua and Stitapragnya Mishra, both residents of Vani Vihar area, were going towards Laxmisagar on a bike. The cops at the check post stopped them and asked them to cough up fines.

As they did not carry money on them, one of them brought out his ATM card. All of a sudden, an ASI on duty started hurling abuses at them and asked them to pay in cash. It was when they pleaded that



they indeed carried no money, the cop said they did not have POS machine and then gave them a Google pay account number asking them to make the payment online.

The ASI handed over a receipt only when Stitapragnya paid Rs 200 for both of them.

They had hardly travelled a few metres, a question struck to their mind as to why the police took just

Rs 100 from them when fine for not wearing helmet is Rs 1,000.

As they doubted the ASI's act, they inspected the number the ASI had furnished them and were astonished to find that the account number was a personal one and it belonged to one Prabhat Aatty.

It did not take much time for them to understand that the money collected was going to the ASI's

It is illegal to collect fine money in personal Google pay account. We will initiate a probe into the allegation and if the veracity is proved, action will be taken against those involved

UMASHANKAR DASH | BHUBANESWAR DCP

personal account.

They immediately took to Twitter to inform the higher officials of how some cops stoop so low to collect money from people at a time when all are in financial distress due to the pandemic.

When contacted, DCP Umashankar Dash said, "It is illegal to collect fine money in personal Google pay account. We will initiate a probe into the allegation and if the veracity is proved, action will be taken against those involved."

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SEROLOGICAL SURVEY BEGINS IN SILK CITY

THE TEAMS WILL COLLECT BLOOD SAMPLES OF 2,500 RESIDENTS OF THE CITY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 3: As the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to increase in the district, the situation in Ganjam is proving to be worrisome.

For this the district administration has adopted a new strategy to contain the spread of the disease.

The Regional Medical Research Centre (RMRC) in collaboration with the Berhampur Municipal Corporation (BeMC) authorities has started serological surveillance in Berhampur city.

Sources said five teams involving the staff of RMRC and BeMC have been formed by the district administration. The teams have started the survey at 10 high-risk zones in the city.

Following the direction of the state government, the teams will collect blood samples of 2,500 residents of the city. Out of the 2,500 residents, 1,000 residents will be from 10-high risk zone and 1,500 will be from randomly selected areas.

RMRC scientist Jaisen Khatri said, "After Bhubaneswar, the sero survey is now being carried out in Berhampur. The serological surveillance will help us sense the immunity status in the community level against COVID-19. This will also help in assessing the level of exposure to coronavirus and enable us to know when the peak of the disease will come."

A member of a medical team that is conducting the survey at Ward No. 6 of Berhampur city said that the aim of the serological survey is to check for antibodies in the blood samples and figure out the extent of the spread of the infection.

"After collection of the bloods



COMBAT MODE

FIVE TEAMS INVOLVING THE STAFF OF RMRC AND BEMC FORMED BY THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION ARE UNDERTAKING THE SURVEY AT 10 HIGH-RISK ZONES IN SILK CITY

A MEMBER OF A MEDICAL TEAM THAT IS CONDUCTING THE SURVEY AT WARD NO. 6 OF BERHAMPUR CITY SAID THAT THE AIM OF THE SEROLOGICAL SURVEY IS TO CHECK FOR ANTIBODIES IN THE BLOOD SAMPLES AND FIGURE OUT THE EXTENT OF THE SPREAD OF THE INFECTION

MANY PEOPLE HAVE VOLUNTEERED AND REACHED THE CAMPS ACROSS THE CITY FOR THE SERO SURVEY. THE SURVEY WILL BE CARRIED OUT AGAIN AFTER A GAP OF ONE MONTH DURING WHICH 2,500 MORE BLOOD SAMPLES WOULD BE COLLECTED

samples, they will be sent to RMRC for test," said the member.

Many people have volunteered and reached the camps across the city for the sero survey, according to reports. The survey will be carried out again after a gap of one month during which 2,500 more blood samples would be collected.

With 331 fresh COVID-19 cases

detected in Ganjam Monday, the total tally in the district reached 11,323. On the other hand, 3,686 persons are undergoing treatment at different COVID hospitals in the district while 7,524 patients have recovered from the disease. While 106 persons in the district succumbed to COVID-19, seven died due to other illnesses.

Covid suspect treated on MKCG's verandah

IN A DISTRICT WHERE COVID-19 CASES ARE GROWING EXPONENTIALLY, SUCH AN INCIDENT REPORTED FROM THE PREMIER HEALTH INSTITUTION HAS LEFT MANY SHOCKED

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 3: A patient suspected to have contracted the coronavirus was seen being attended to on the verandah of MKCG Medical College and Hospital here Monday.

In a district where COVID-19 cases are growing exponentially, such an incident reported from the premier health institution has left many shocked.

Following the death of a man of Kuthari Temple Sahi under Berhampur Municipality Corporation (BeMC) due to COVID-19 July 28, swab samples of the deceased's brother were collected July 29. He complained of breathing problems Sunday night. His family members immediately rushed him to MKCGMCH. He was admitted to isolation ward. But he

was made to sit on the verandah; and his treatment was started there itself. He had to be put on oxygen support. When asked by the family members, the staff said all the beds were preoccupied.

While the local people expressed their concern over the way a COVID-19 suspect was being treated, the patient's family members alleged that the hospital authorities did not provide even a mask to their patient.

When contacted, MKCGMCH superintendent Dr Santosh Kumar Mishra said the patient has been shifted to the recently inaugurated COVID hospital.

"The isolation ward has 80 beds in total. All of these beds had already been filled up at the time when he was admitted. This is why his treatment was started on the verandah," he clarified.



Virus grips Ganjam juvenile home

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, August 3: Five more juvenile inmates of a correctional facility on Jarada Bungalow Road here tested positive for coronavirus Monday. With this the total number of COVID-19 infected juveniles in the facility has gone up to 50. District child protection officer (DCPO) Subodh Sarangi said 45 inmates had tested positive for the virus August 1. Five more inmates tested positive Monday. These infected inmates have been isolated and are undergoing treatment, he added. Sarangi is learnt to have visited the facility Monday. In another development, a doctor from the office of the chief district medical officer has been deputed to the correctional facility. As a measure



of initial precaution, the inmates have been provided with medicines for five days. However, one of the infected inmates has recovered from the disease, informed Sarangi. What has raised concern is the fact that some employees of the facility have meanwhile developed cold and fever. "Swab samples of the symptomatic employees of the fa-

cility will soon be collected and tested. If they test positive for the disease, future course of action will be decided accordingly," Sarangi added. Meanwhile, superintendent of the facility PK Hara is learnt to have taken the matter up with the Berhampur SP and Ganjam collector requesting for substitute staff for the symptomatic ones.

Body left unattended for 6 hours over Covid stigma

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jagannathprasad, August 3: The widespread panic caused by COVID-19 is gradually killing the human values as people are hesitating to go near the bodies of even their near and dear ones.



The deceased's elder brother Binayak had died four days ago due to cardiac arrest

In such an incident, a retired teachers' body was left unattended for as long as six hours at Panchabhuti Gouda Sahi under Jagannath Prasad block in Ganjam district. Neither close relatives nor neighbours did turn up to be the pallbearers of the bier.

As Ganesh Satapathy complained of fever, his wife rushed him to Jagannath Prasad government hospital at 8 am. But he could not be saved. The deceased's elder brother Binayak had died four days ago due to cardiac arrest.

Fearing, both the siblings died of coronavirus, none of the neighbours stepped forward to help the family with performing his last rites. The body was seen lying in the middle of the village for six hours as villagers seemed to be just bystanders.

However, at the time of filing this report, some Jagannath Prasad block employees and representatives of local sarpanch reached the village to perform the teacher's last rites.

Covid: Sub-collector office shut after staff tests positive

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rourkela, August 3: After an employee tested positive for COVID-19 in Panposh Sub-Collector in Sundargarh district, the district administration has shut the office for two days. The office will be shut for Monday and Tuesday.

The fire brigade has started sanitisation on the office premises. Movement of public and office staff to the office has been banned. Sanitisation drive has also been started at the tehsildar office as the employee who tested positive for the virus had visited the sub-collector's office.

The employees who had come in contact with the COVID-19 positive employee have been directed to observe 14-day home quarantine. The health department staff will collect their swab samples during their home quarantine period. In a move to increase the number of COVID-19 testing in Odisha, the state government Saturday (August 2) issued guidelines for all health-care institutions and laboratories.

FORGOTTEN POET



Even as the state celebrated the birth anniversary of Swabhaba Kabi Gangadhar Meher Monday, the legendary poet seems to have been forgotten in his birthplace with none caring to garland his statue at VSS Town Hall in Sambalpur. Even vendors were found selling vegetables under the statue

OP PHOTO

Run down check dam adds to farmers' woes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koksara, August 3: The dilapidated Behera check dam has failed to propel farming activities on 2,000 hectare of farmlands in Koksara block in Kalahandi district during this Kharif season, a report said.

"Despite running from pillar to post, the department pays no heed to our problems. If this situation persists for another week, it could lead to a draught-like situation", some farmers of Temra fumed.

The check dam is under the state minor irrigation department. It was targeted to irrigate four panchayats namely Dudukathenga, Temra, Kaudola and Mahima. Due to lack of adequate maintenance, most of the irrigation canals, including the Behera check dam have become unusable. This has sparked resentment among local farmers.

Another check dam at Badapodaguda panchayat is in a worse condition. Sporadic and

The check dam is under the state minor irrigation department. It was targeted to irrigate four panchayats namely Dudukathenga, Temra, Kaudola and Mahima

scanty rainfall along with run-down check dams have proved to be a double whammy for farmers in Kalahandi.

On being contacted, engineer of Koksara block Bindu Sagar Panda said, "Departmental grants for repair and maintenance have not come yet. Even though ₹20,00,000 was sanctioned under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), we have not received the fund so far. We have already informed the department higher-ups about shortage of funds."

Sister's 'rakhi' wish prompts Maoist to lay down arms

POST NEWS NETWORK

Korukunda, August 3: Dreaded Maoist Malla's sister forced him to lay down arms and join the mainstream on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan Monday.

Malla belongs to the remote Palnar village in Dantewada district in Chhattisgarh. The village is very close to Malkangiri district.

Malla ran away from his family when he was only 12. He joined the Naxals and soon after became a top Maoist leader in Chhattisgarh. He was not in touch with his family for a long time. Malla however, returned home after 14 years on the occasion of 'Raksha Bandhan' to meet his sister Lingay.

After tying the rakhi on his wrist, Lingay refused to let Malla leave and pleaded with him to surrender before the police. She was worried that her brother would be killed by security forces. So she did not want to let go of Malla. Seeing his sister's persistent pleading, Malla finally surrendered at the Dantewada police station. He expressed his desire to return to normal life.

Malla was a deputy commander



The surrendered Maoist Malla ran away from his family when he was only 12 and soon went on to become a top Maoist leader in Chhattisgarh

After tying the rakhi on his wrist, Lingay refused to let Malla leave and pleaded with him to surrender before the police. She was worried that her brother would be killed by security forces

of the Bhairamgarh area committee of the banned outfit in Chhattisgarh. He is alleged to have been involved in a number incidents including attacks on police personnel that led to loss of lives. He was carrying a reward

of ₹8,00,000 on his head. Abhishek Pallav, SP of Dantewada said, "Malla will be provided monetary assistance as per the surrender and rehabilitation scheme of the Chhattisgarh government.

2 killed as car runs into truck

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, August 3: Two persons were killed and one more sustained critical injuries after the car they were traveling in rammed into a trailer truck on NH-16 near Jagannath Dhaba in Balasure district in the wee hours of Monday.

The deceased were identified as Sheikh Murtaja and Jamal Shah of Mukundpur area in West Bengal. However, the identities of the injured one and the driver are yet to be ascertained.

According to a source, the car carrying three persons from West Bengal was heading towards Cuttack. Near Jagannath Dhaba, the driver lost control on the wheel due to some reason and ran into the truck from the rear.

The injured person was rescued and rushed to Soro government hospital and was later shifted to Balasure district headquarters hospital (DHH).

Later police reached the spot and seized the bodies for autopsy. They also seized the car and detained the driver.



18k kitchen gardens to create livelihood, check malnutrition

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 3: The district administration has planned for creation of 18,000 kitchen gardens in the district under the 'Mo Upakari Bagicha Yojana' (my beneficial garden scheme) aimed at livelihood creation and prevention of malnutrition and anemia, a report said.

The programme will help combat the long-term nutritional challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and reverse migration of labourers.

The programme implemented under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and the Odisha Livelihood Mission will be carried out by involving women on priority basis. However, men interested to get involved in the project will also be included.

The programme will be carried out through participatory management of members of village youth associations, women self-help groups and family members for which training will be provided by the horticulture and agriculture departments, said Sovit Bisi, district project coordinator of MGNREGA.

The district administration is of the view that a well-developed nu-



trition garden is likely to supplement the daily dietary requirement of a vulnerable family, including pregnant women, lactating mothers and children and open earning opportunities for beneficiaries, he said.

He said that plans are afoot to include a total of 18,000 beneficiaries in the scheme for which work has been started in nine blocks of the district by involving over 6,000 families. Bisi said this is a profitable scheme for which one needs to have 4 to 6 decimal of land near their house.

The scheme, aims at encouraging women in the district to grow vegetables and fruits at a minimal cost in their backyards to get fresh vegetables to meet their need and sell the


surplus in the market. The beneficiaries will be provided with saplings of nutritious plants like papaya, banana, lemon, drumstick trees.

Each beneficiary in a block where migrant labourers have returned will receive ₹13,758 (Rs 13,508 under MGNREGA and ₹250 under OLM) under the scheme while the beneficiaries in rest of the blocks will receive ₹10,479. The scheme aims at production of minimum of one kg of vegetable from each garden.

Anybody interested to take up scheme will have to apply for the same in their respective block or panchayat office and financial assistance will be provided under MGNREGS, Bisi added.

“None can reach heaven who has not passed through hell.”

SRI AUROBINDO



TRUMP AND BIDEN

The American presidential polls are only three months away. Republican candidate President Donald Trump and Democratic Party candidate and former Vice President Joe Biden are both on campaign mode. It has been a natural and oft repeated decision for incumbent first term presidents to seek a second term before they walk into retirement. Donald Trump would not leave the scene without a fight anyway. Having been proposed for nomination from the party for a re-run, Trump is struggling to put up a strong fight with his rival, even as his ratings are seen to be dropping consistently. Trump's image has taken a beating over the handling of the Covid-linked health crisis that saw over 1,50,000 Americans losing their lives and millions testing positive. The US economic downturn and subsequent job loss scenario has gravely impacted the country which is steps away from their biggest voting decision.

The election process has been curtailed this time due to the pandemic's sway. Trump's campaign team has been organizing rallies while flouting social distancing norms in a brazen manner even after many positive cases have been detected after the gatherings. It is clear to all, at the very start, that there was clear misjudgment on the part of the President to not take Covid-19 seriously. His attitude has not changed till date. This is visible when he has been insisting on opening of schools by Fall. In fact, his threat to cut funding of schools if they do not open physically in full strength has compelled some teachers to write their Wills. This act proves the threat perception felt by the American public but blatantly disregarded by their President. Trump's insistence on not wearing masks and rejecting all scientific and medical advice have encouraged a whole wave of anti-maskers who not only endanger themselves but create risks for others even as the US continues to remain the global leader in number of Covid cases. The erratic behavior of Trump is not limited to his attitude towards administrative decisions alone. In a recent press conference, Trump lamented the popularity and high rankings of Dr Anthony Fauci who is working as the Director of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in the Trump administration. The President said that he himself had obtained very low rankings compared to Fauci and complained that 'Nobody likes me'.

Covid mishandling apart, Trump's obvious racial bias could jeopardize a portion of his support base. By inflaming the Black Lives Matter (BLM) related movement he might have alienated a certain section of voters. Looking back at the George Floyd incident in Minneapolis, the action against the killer policemen could have been executed sooner. However, the delay incensed the people which resulted in the birth of the BLM movement. Added to the delay in action against the erring policemen were Trump's constant threats to protestors and accusations against Governors and police chiefs of various states who did not bow to his instructions. This led to widespread violence across the US. BLM has not died down neither has it remained confined within the black community.

Joe Biden is much unlike Trump. To an observer, he may give an impression of a softer man who speaks less. Although only a couple of years older to Trump, his aura seems to be of a much older man, which could be detrimental to his image. Interestingly, if Biden wins, he will be the oldest US President ever at age 78. Amongst the few known prominent stands of Biden are his promise to increase minimum wages to \$15 an hour and increase taxation on the affluent class, two years of college free and debt relief program for student loans. In his approach to environmental issues, Biden proposes to tax carbon emission industries that have mostly remained shielded during Trump's term. On Covid front, a mask wearing Biden has mostly dished out practical and sensible advice to US citizens.

Trump may be blamed for polarizing the US in a manner never been done before. It was known as a country with great internal stability. That had enabled the US to play the role of the Global Policeman and bring their brand of hideous justice across the world. The peacemaker also posed as the top protector of freedom and democracy, the role which was backed by a powerful military. Today, that image seems to have been dented to some extent. Allegations of external influence in Trump's first election brought disrepute to that country. However, Trump's international achievements cannot be ignored. Immediately on assuming power, he took upon himself the task of destroying the Islamic State establishment. His success was complete when US military dogs chased and killed al Baghdadi. Trump also seems to have somewhat confused Kim Jong Un of North Korea temporarily. His assertive behavior has helped littoral countries of the South China Sea to find some peace.

Trump tried to explore the possibility of postponing the presidential polls but has not met with success yet. This has been the mindset of many leaders of the present time across the world. While Xi Jinping has managed to get the CCP to vote him President of China for life, Vladimir Putin of Russia has managed his Parliament to sanction his Presidency till 2036. This desire of today's leaders is not limited to the few mentioned above. Trump represents a mindset that is unwilling to accept the democratic process and is diffident to face people for a fresh verdict at regular intervals. If Trump wins, this thinking may get strengthened globally. If Trump loses, the free world could expect major changes.

WISDOM CORNER

- “Have patience awhile; slanders are not long-lived. Truth is the child of time; ere long she shall appear to vindicate thee.”

IMMANUEL KANT
- “If you must play, decide upon three things at the start: the rules of the game, the stakes, and the quitting time.”

CHINESE PROVERB
- “Love in its purest form is a sharing of joy. It asks nothing in return, it expects nothing. Love is a spiritual phenomenon; lust is physical. Ego is psychological; love is spiritual.”

OSHO

WORDSWORTH

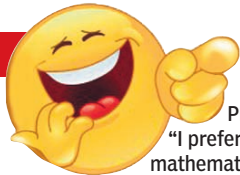
Tagarene

Most readers are unlikely to know this word – variously spelled – unless you come from north-east England, especially the Newcastle area. But it does occasionally pop up in prose that gains a wider audience: “Now help me tidy up, this place looks like a bloody tagarene shop.” A reference to “tagarene shop” described the disorder and chaos that always threatened to overwhelm the house if we didn't clear up. A tagarene shop was a kind of junk shop, sometime specialising in old clothes but often carrying a much wider range of miscellaneous oddments, particularly marine scrap. The tagarene man who ran it did much of his trade with ships: A “tagarene man” has a floating shop which he rows about the tiers of ships, announcing his presence by a bell,” as stated in Northumberland Words, by R O Heslop, 1894. Such collections of bric-a-brac, oddments and general detritus were likely to have made a tagarene shop an excessively untidy place and it's easy to see how the phrase came to refer to a muddle. Nobody knows its origin. The Oxford English Dictionary tentatively suggests it's based on tag. Local people remember tagger in the sense of marine scrap, though the evidence doesn't show whether it's the origin of tagarene or a shortening of it.

LOL

LAWYERS

As the story goes, three doctors are discussing which types of patients they prefer. Doctor Brunton says, “I prefer librarians. All their organs are alphabetised.” Doctor



Philip says, “I prefer mathematicians. All their organs are numbered.” Doctor Ann says, “I prefer lawyers. They're gutless, heartless, brainless, spineless, and their heads and rear ends are interchangeable.”

Shivaji Sarkar

LET US RETHINK, REDO AND CHALK-OUT A RESEARCH STRATEGY SEPARATE FROM AN EDUCATION POLICY

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

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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FOCUS BANKING

AFTER EXIT, SEEING RED



Ajit Ranade

DESPITE MEASURES LIKE EASY LIQUIDITY, MONETARY EASING, AND GENEROUS MORATORIUMS FOR LOAN REPAYMENTS, THE RBI EXPECTS A SURGE IN THE GROSS NPA RATIO

This past week saw the publication of two books by two senior former central bankers. Former RBI Governor Urjit Patel published his book called Overdraft, which is dedicated to the Indian saver. This was much awaited from someone who was otherwise extremely reticent about speaking up while in office. Within a week, it became one of the top-ranking non-fiction books. There was much buzz about its content since Patel had chosen to be silent since he left RBI abruptly in December 2018.

The other book is by former RBI deputy governor Viral Acharya, who left six months later without completing his full tenure. His book is titled Quest for Restoring Financial Stability in India, and is a collection of his writings and speeches, with a long preface. Together, these two were known as hawkish, but determined to clean up the banking system. In many ways, they were doing a job of cleaning up the traditions established by former governor Raghuram Rajan.

Patel had served as Rajan's deputy. The trio had an image of being too academic, strongly intellectual, and outsiders to the system. They were, in my view, “inflexible” and not pragmatic.

Acharya was in the eye of the storm, due to a strongly worded, controversial speech he gave a couple of months before Patel's abrupt departure. In that speech, he emphasised the importance of nurturing the autonomy of the central bank. He concluded his speech with an ominous warning, “Governments that do not respect the central bank's independence will sooner or later incur the wrath of financial markets, ignite economic fire, and rue the day they undermined an important regulatory institution.” In the preface to his new book too, he reiterates that excessive monetary and credit stimulus during the earlier part of this decade had endangered financial stability. Acharya also says that Governor Patel had quit prematurely because of attempts by the government to undermine the autonomy of the RBI.



The solution to restoring financial stability and earning the confidence of savers is spelt out in both Viral Acharya's and Urjit Patel's books

One of the key issues described in some detail in Patel's book is the dilution of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code process that he instituted to tackle the problem of rising bad loans. Rather than depend on a case-by-case approach and negotiations between banker and borrower, wherein both parties had incentives to “ever green” loans, the RBI insisted on transferring bad debt cases to the IBC process, even with a one-day of default. This was the famous February 2018 circular, which created quite a stir.

The strict rule meant that defaulting promoters risked losing control of their companies to new owners or to liquidation. It also put pressure on banks to prevent such cases landing up in the IBC process. The circular was challenged and eventually struck down by the Supreme Court. After this, the banking system is back to a case-by-case approach and this has been a setback to the speedy resolution of non-performing assets (NPA) cases.

This means that if the NPA is not resolved, the provisioning will keep mounting, and more and more capital will get stuck on the balance sheets of banks. Hence, un-

less extra capital is injected into the bank, its capacity to make fresh loans for new borrowers and new projects gets constrained.

Also, a larger NPA ratio means that the bank needs to reap profits from a smaller portion of the loans, which means that it has to charge higher interest rates. Thus, the non-resolution or tardy resolution of NPAs has implications for the banking system as a whole and to its financial stability too.

As if in tandem with the two books by these central bankers, here comes the report by the RBI on financial stability. One of the most sobering conclusions of this report is that the gross NPA ratio in India's banking will rise by a full 4 percentage points from 8.5 in March 2020 to 12.5 percent in March 2021. That means an estimated Rs 4 lakh crore of loans are going to turn bad in this year. Of course, this is the year of the pandemic and recession. Despite measures like easy liquidity, monetary easing, and generous moratoriums for loan repayments, the RBI expects a surge in the gross NPA ratio. If the downturn is more severe, the stress test conducted by RBI officials indicates that the ratio may rise to 14.7 per cent. Such a high

NPA ratio will seriously endanger financial stability.

Since nearly three-fourth of Indian banking is in the public sector, a rise in NPAs will call for the need to recapitalise banks. This has to come from the Centre's fiscal resources which are already stretched owing to falling GST and income tax revenues, and a shrinking base of nominal national income.

There are also other competing demands on the fiscal system, for clearing pending payments to enterprises, tax refunds, direct cash payment to poor households and GST compensation to be paid to states, as per the agreed formula.

As bank balance sheets get stretched, it can make the depositors nervous, and they may form a beeline to banks. This can put severe stress on bank liquidity, and the panic can spread like a contagion. Similarly, non-bank finance companies which also face rising NPAs may find it unable to inject fresh capital, causing the NPA problem to worsen. This can have a domino effect, as was seen in September 2018 with the failure of ILFS.

Systemically, large banks and non-banks need extra vigilance and supervision from the bank regulator; the RBI, to prevent such spill-over alarms. The solution to restoring financial stability and earning the confidence of depositors and savers is spelt out in both Acharya's and Patel's books. The call of the hour, as the books hint, is for instilling market discipline (IBC process for NPA resolution), early recognition and disclosure of defaults, refusal to too much forbearance in diluting treatment of defaulting borrowers, and keeping adequate ammunition in the RBI balance sheet to deal with sudden shocks, abrupt reversals of capital flow, or emergency rescues. The two books and the RBI report are timely and cautionary reminders about paying attention to the financial stability of the Indian economy.

The writer is an economist and senior fellow, Takshashila Institution.

THE BILLION PRESS

SPECTRUM EDUCATION

NEP is old wine in new bottle

The much-awaited New Education Policy has turned out to be old wine in new bottle. It takes us back to the 1960s and not to 2100, with virtual repetition in concepts, approaches and making the whole report cumbersome with an unnecessary four-year degree course that may only help the multinational education lobby.

This has not done much to help even the private sector Indian education system. The concept of 5+3+4+4 is not different from the 1950s' primary, middle, high school and intermediate education. The 1960s tried a failed model of three years of higher secondary education, with examination at Class 11. Many states like UP did not follow it and found they were wiser; as, in a few years, it again was 10+2, to be followed by a two-year and later a three-year degree course.

Now, a vague system of four-year-degree course is being foisted again. It would lead to loss to students of one precious year before entering the job market. There is confusion of having option to complete it in three years – it blocking future career – closing option to improve career later, or do in



four years and then have option for higher education. The thought of giving certificate and diploma would merely add to the confusion.

Another cumbersome part is to have a Class 9 to 12 – four years in a block – that practically becomes difficult to manage for any education system. It does not change the pattern of Lord Macaulay but makes it complicated. The wiser part would have been to reduce the one year of school term. Nobody has studied the loss or benefit of doing away the class 10 or 12 examinations.

And why has it to be 5+3 of primary and middle schooling? Why cannot it be 5+2 = 7 years? Wisely, it can follow a three six-monthly systems in two parts after 5+2 to let the students exit schools in three years, that is 10 years in all. It has some practical administrative problems, so again it can be a 2+2 system. It can be followed by a three-year degree and one-year post graduation,

the four years that the NEP is saying “would be fruitfully utilised.” This would reduce education term to 15 years without any loss in cognitive deliveries; and give more time for students who want to pursue still higher education or other skills. On an average it would prepare students for jobs at the age of 20. Overall, the family expenses per child would reduce.

The NEP is confused about its stress on research. Over the past at least three decades, the nation has wasted resources on “research”, a copy-paste system. It has to realise that research has to be on volition and not compulsion that the UGC has done now. If UGC is proposed to be removed, how its flawed research methodology could continue?

Let the nation redo it. Even teachers should not be forced to do research. It does not add to learning but causes precious loss of years, finances and energy. Let us rethink and chalk-out a research strategy separate from an education policy.

The stress on privatisation of education without government funding is another bane. It has led to many undesirable practices because organisations cannot sustain the system financially. It is

also incomprehensible why so much leeway is proposed for foreign institutions. Any foreign university is interested in profit by making education expensive. Collaborations have to be ensured to be beneficial and viable for the country.

There is less clarity on National Testing Agency (NTA) as centralised testing organisation to conduct entrance examination. There is a fallacy. What about other testing mechanism? The examinations, certificates and degrees at various stages should continue and must have recognition if many do not want to go to NTA. Similarly, the National Higher Education Regulatory Authority is supposed to end regional varieties or state boards. It is fraught with too many risks.

A void is being seen in the early child education. There are confusions and lack of clarity. Education costs the government Rs 99,311 crore a year as per the 2020-21 Budget. Another Rs 1 lakh crore or more is spent by parents through private systems. Still it is less than the required, and that tells on the quality of teachers. The admission to higher education would still remain a tug-of-war. A new inspector or regulatory raj may be a reality.

INFA

Covid, poverty

Sir, It has become extremely tough for numerous households to beat hunger in these Covid times in Western Odisha. They have reduced their food intake and are trying to save the maximum on food for fear that the coming months are unpredictable. They want to survive anyhow in the face of financial hardships due to unemployment. A study conducted by the Odisha Khadya Adhikar Abhijan in 10 migration-prone blocks of Bargarh, Bolangir, Kalahandi and Nuapada districts between July 1 and 15 revealed that around 54 per cent of the households have been content with fewer meals than normal, ever since the coronavirus-linked lockdown started in March last. Some 69 per cent of the families borrowed money from friends or took small loans from relatives or moneylenders to keep the family hearth burning. Around 13 per cent of those surveyed remained hungry for a day or two as they had no money in hand to buy essentials. Around 16 per cent of the households lived on the PDS rice. Around 40 per cent of these families are dependent on agriculture and 11 per cent on their pension, or PDS, for survival. The state government is urged to make PDS coverage universal in the state.

Hitesh Kumar Parida, Panikoli, JAJPUR

Education, standards

Sir, In 2010, the Right to Education (RTE) Act came into being with many hopes and visions. After that, school and classroom structures have changed. A huge amount was spent on MDM, constructions, repairing, teaching-learning materials, and library. Even the appointment of teachers has increased in primary and upper primary levels. But, the overall educational progress of children in primary, upper primary, and secondary levels is not satisfactory. Most of the children have problems in grasping subjects, and teachers are not being of much help. This, even as most states spent heavily on employing qualified teachers. There was less of monitoring and the mechanism of review in our school education system is weak. Teachers are not being serious about their work, at least in government schools. This is the main problem. Spending more money alone will not help improve the education standard or make education universal.

Santosh Kumar Mohanty, Safa, CUTTACK

T’gana reviving Covid-hit startups

THE STATE GOVT’S ‘REJIG.HYDSTARTUPS’ RECEIVES A BLOCKBUSTER START

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, August 3: ‘Rejig.HydStartups’, an initiative by the Telangana State Innovation Cell (TSIC) and T-Incubators & Enablers to support start-ups has commenced with a flying start. The initiative which aims at reimagining and repositioning startups’ business model post-Covid-19 pandemic has received more than 300 applications and 100 start-ups have been selected to be part of the mentoring programme, it was announced Monday.

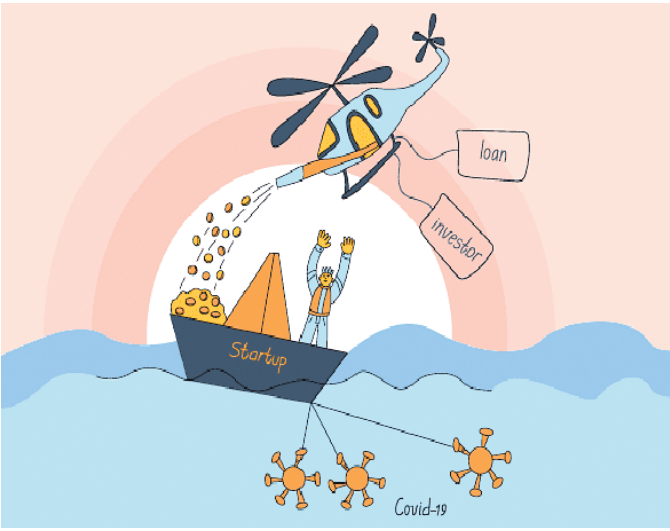
‘Rejig.HydStartups’ is spread out in three-weeks of mentoring to help start-ups connect with investors or gain corporate market access, will see a three-pronged approach – understanding the concerns of the start-up with a completion of leg work assigned by the mentor, understanding the change of strategy, and a revised pitch.

The programme will culminate in a massive pitch day event where the start-ups will be pitching for equity funding, collateral-free debt funding, or corporate market access.

The start-ups selected were from domains like life-sciences, fintech, manufacturing, agriculture, FMCG, emerging technology.

A webinar involving ecosystem catalysts, was organised to understand the impact of the pandemic on the start-ups and expectations from the founders to become resilient.

“Hyderabad will be standing out



The initiative aims at connecting start-ups with investors

Around 300 applications and 100 start-ups are selected to be part of the mentoring programme

The programme will culminate in a massive pitch day event where the start-ups will be pitching for equity funding, collateral-free debt funding and corporate market access

for its city as a whole approach through this important initiative Rejig.HydStartups to support the start-ups in coming weeks to become resilient post-pandemic. Even the applications that we received was a truly relevant mixture of indus-

try sectors that require immediate attention,” said Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, Information Technology, Telangana government. The webinar also saw a panel discussion involving Ravi Narayan, CEO of T-Hub & CIO of TSIC, Sridhar Pinnapureddy, Founder Chairman of CtrIS Datacenters, currently the President of TIE Hyderabad, Sateesh Andra, Managing Director of Endiya Partners, an established VC and investor. Panel was moderated by Deepanwita Chattopadhyay, CEO of IKP Knowledge Park.

The speakers gave their experiential insights and urged the start-ups to relook at their business models and be willing to re-imagine during the toughest crisis.

Some of the steps founders could take range from identifying the alternate market for the existing product or service, rationalising the product or service, smart cost optimisation, to look out for answers by discussing with the customers, mentors, and investors.

One of the important mentions by all the panelists towards betterment was founders’ resilience, the fact that the investments largely are done based on the strength of the business model and quality of the human capital.

Chattopadhyay said that it is a great opportunity not just for start-ups but also for the incubators and enablers to collectively contribute to the start-up ecosystem in the times when mentor access is important for founders to get a sounding board.

With revenues nosediving as much as 90 per cent, several start-ups in India witnessed severe disruption across their core businesses following the Covid-19 outbreak, a survey said.

While revenues took a big hit, the pandemic has propelled many companies to look at new business segments. Gurgaon-based payments firm MobiKwik tapped on the tailwinds around digital payments and insurance to soften the impact of Covid-19 on revenue. With restaurants shut during the Covid-led lockdown, food-aggregator unicorn Swiggy doubled down onto the grocery segment and launched task-management service Genie, and used its idle delivery fleet to deliver orders in this new segment.

HAS THE PANDEMIC PEAKED IN T’GANA?

AFTER MORE THAN A MONTH, THE STATE REPORTS LESS THAN 1K DAILY COVID CASES

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, August 3: For the first time in more than a month, the daily count of Covid-19 cases in Telangana came down below 1,000-mark as the state reported 983 new cases Monday.

With this the Covid-19 tally in the state rose to 67,660. Eleven fresh fatalities pushed the cumulative death toll to 551.

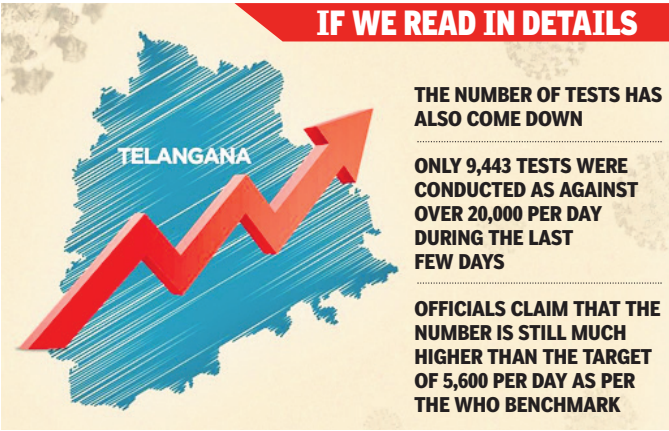
The state had last reported below 1,000 cases June 30 when 945 people had tested positive. Since then there has been a spike in new infections.

According to a medical bulletin issued by the health department Monday, 983 people tested positive during the last 24 hours, ending 8 p.m. Sunday.

In fact more people recovered than the new positive cases in a day. Officials said 1,019 people recovered from Covid-19, taking the total number of recoveries to 48,609.

The number of tests, however, has also come down. Only 9,443 tests were conducted as against over 20,000 per day during the last few days. Officials claim that the number is still much higher than the target of 5,600 per day as per the World Health Organisation (WHO) benchmark.

The state has so far conducted 4,87,238 tests. Test results of 1,414 samples were awaited.



According to the director of public health and family welfare, 16 government and 23 private laboratories conducted RT-PCR, CBNAAT and TRUENAT types of tests while there are 320 centres doing rapid antigen tests.

It was only last month that the state started revealing the number of daily tests. From 3,000-4,000 tests per day, the authorities ramped up the testing to over 20,000 per day. The media bulletin, however, provides no break-up of the types of tests.

The number of daily new cases in Greater Hyderabad slumped to 273. The new infections registered in 32 districts were in double or single digits. Rangareddy and Medchal Malkajigiri districts, bordering Greater Hyderabad, reported 73 and 48 new cases respectively.

August 1, the state saw the highest-ever spike of 2,083 in daily Covid-19 cases but the number of tests conducted was 21,011. These numbers came down to 1,891 and 19,202 respectively August 2.

On the fatality rate, the officials said at 0.81 per cent it was far below the national average of 2.13 per cent. The state also has a high recovery rate of 71.8 per cent against 65.44 per cent at the national level.

The number of active cases stands at 18,500. This includes 11,911 who were in home/institutional isolation. More than 84 per cent of those who are under home isolation are asymptomatic.

19 people on IISc Bangalore campus found Covid-19 +ve

On retesting within a few days of the first test, 12 out of the 15 Covid-19 positive students who stay in the hostels tested -ve

AGENCIES

Bangalore, August 3: As many as 19 people living on the Indian Institute of Science campus here, including students, faculty, staff, and their family members have tested positive for COVID-19.

On retesting within a few days of the first test, 12 out of the 15 COVID-19 positive students who stay in the hostels have tested negative, IISc said in a statement.

Most of them have been found to be asymptomatic and are being treated in a Covid care centre managed by the campus Health Centre doctors.

All measures according to the protocol specified by Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) have been taken and the containment protocol is in place with respect to disinfection and sanitisation of hostels and departments to which the patients belong to, IISc said.

Pensioners and employees who live off-campus have also been affected and about 34 of them have tested positive, the statement added.

Outsourced worker tests positive in IIM-Bangalore

An outsourced horticulture worker has tested Covid positive in premier business school Indian Institute of Management-Bangalore (IIM-B), leading to 50 people being



home quarantined, an official said Monday.

“A member of the agency that handles the outdoor horticulture work on campus tested positive for Covid on Saturday. All 50 primary contacts of the affected person were proactively traced and are in home quarantine for 14 days,” the institute’s spokesperson told IANS.

IIM-B is extending all the help required to the infected person and has assured full salary for the 50 quarantined people.

Meanwhile, public areas in the institute have been sanitized using fogging and mobile mist machines.

“IIM-B is following all the health protocols, suggested by the BBMP, and supervised by the resident medical officer and the chief administrative officer on campus,” said the official.

Second FIR against ‘drone boy’ for violating quarantine norms

Pratap, 24, violates home quarantine rules and is put under institutional quarantine in a four-star hotel

AGENCIES

Bangalore, August 3: The city police have registered a second FIR against N. M. Pratap or ‘drone boy’ for violating the Covid quarantine norms, an official said Monday.

“An FIR has been booked against Pratap for violating quarantine rules,” a police official told IANS.

Pratap, 24, violated home quarantine rules and has been put under institutional quarantine in a four-star hotel.

Just a few days before the end of his quarantine, he violated the norms by meeting his lawyer in the hotel with the whole episode being caught on CCTV.

July 30, Pratap was seen meeting his lawyer for an hour in his room, prompting police to lodge an FIR.

The first FIR was lodged when he violated home quarantine and the second one when he violated in-



Pratap is under scrutiny for claiming that he made 600 drones using parts of discarded appliances and winning awards

stitutional quarantine.

In the second FIR, Pratap was booked under the National Disaster Management Act 51 b, and under IPC 188, 269. Known as the ‘drone boy’, Pratap is under scrutiny for claiming that he made 600 drones using parts of discarded appliances and winning awards.

AGENCIES

Bangalore, August 3: People who recently came in contact with Covid-afflicted Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa have been advised to take the coronavirus test and quarantine themselves as a precaution, according to Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar, here Monday.

“As per health protocols, those who met or came in contact with the Chief Minister last week should give their swab sample for testing and quarantine themselves at home for at least 5 days,” Sudhakar said.

Yediyurappa, 77, and his daughter B. Y. Padmavati tested positive. Though asymptomatic with mild symptoms, they are under treatment at a private hospital (Manipal) in the city’s eastern suburb.

“The Chief Minister is doing fine. He spoke with the hospital staff and also held an informal meeting at breakfast with the team of doctors and nurses treating him and enquired about their work conditions and the pressure they have been under since the pandemic broke out in March,” an official said.

“The Chief Minister has mild cough. His chest and respiratory system are normal,” Sudhakar, also a medical practitioner, said.

As the Minister has been meeting Yediyurappa regularly in connection with the Covid crisis management, he gave his swab sample for the test and will be in home



There is nothing to worry about. I will be discharged soon and start work. I have been in touch with all officials since Sunday to ensure that the government works are not affected. I also spoke to senior officials earlier in the day

BS YEDIYURAPPA | CM, KARNATAKA

Karna Guv Vajubhai Vala tests negative for coronavirus, three days after meeting CM Yediyurappa

The CM’s youngest daughter BY Padmavati has been infected with the disease

quarantine. Sudhakar had tested negative after his father, wife and daughter tested positive June 22-23 and isolated himself for over a week at home.

As Yediyurappa met Governor Vajubhai Vala along with Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai at Raj Bhavan July 31, the Minister said they should also quarantine themselves as they were the primary contacts.

Though the Chief Minister was at home since Friday due to three holidays till Sunday, national education policy (NEP) draft committee chairman K. Kasturirangan called on him July 31.

Yediyurappa, however, drove to the Electronics City in the south-

ern suburb July 31 to open the new building of the Karnataka State Electronics Development Corporation (Keonics) for housing incubation, warehousing and start-ups, where he came in contact with many people though he wore mask and maintained physical distance.

State Deputy Chief Minister C.N. Ashwath Narayan and other officials had accompanied him to the function. July 30, the Chief Minister flagged off the tunnel boring machine for the second phase of the Metro project, where several people were present.

Meanwhile, ‘Get well soon’ wishes poured from all over the country for the Chief Minister’s recovery. Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda and Congress leader Siddaramaiah wished Yediyurappa speedy recovery.

Union Finance Minister Nirmal Sitharaman, Railway Minister Piyush Goel, Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister C.N. Ashwath Narayan, Bangalore Mayor M. Goutham Kumar and others also wished Yediyurappa early recovery.

Telugu states celebrate a low-key Raksha Bandhan

ALONG WITH RAKHIS, SISTERS GIFT MASKS AND SANITISERS TO THEIR BROTHERS

AGENCIES

Hyderabad, August 3: The Raksha Bandhan was celebrated in both the Telugu states of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh Monday amid the Covid-19 pandemic. People were seen taking precautions while celebrating the festival, which signifies the bond between sisters and brothers.

Highlighting the importance of coronavirus precautions, Telangana Congress MLA Danasari Anasuya gifted a mask and sanitiser to party MP A. Revanth Reddy after tying rakhi on his hand. “Happy Raksha Bandha to my brother MP Revanth Reddy. Gifted him a mask and sanitiser with rakhi,” she tweeted.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao’s daughter and former Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) MP K. Kavitha tied a traditional rakhi on brother and Cabinet Minister K.T. Rama Rao’s



hand. The siblings were seen wearing masks during the celebration at Pragati Bhavan, the Chief Minister’s official residence. Kavitha applied ‘tilak’ on the foreheads of his brother

and sister-in-law and after tying rakhi touched his brother’s feet. He gave his blessings.

“The sibling bond is the most beautiful of all. Wishing you all a very happy Raksha Bandhan,”

Kavitha tweeted.

Union Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy visited his two sisters in Hyderabad on the occasion. “This festival gives every brother and sister countless memories to cherish forever,” he said.

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan greeted people on the occasion. “It (Raksha Bandhan) symbolises the great Indian tradition of the eternal bond between brothers and sisters. I wish the thread of love will bind the hearts and lives of all brothers and sisters and make their immortal bond of togetherness stronger. All the brothers shall shower their sisters with lots of affection, care and protection on this auspicious occasion of Raksha Bandhan,” she said in her message.

She called for celebrating Raksha Bandhan in the true spirit of ‘Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao’ mission.

“Celebrate the festival in safe

and secure environments by staying at home. Let us all take a vow on this auspicious occasion to follow the precautionary guidelines to defeat Covid-19,” the Governor said.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao also greeted people on the occasion. He said the festival symbolised the thread of love and affection between brothers and sisters. “It also denotes the commitment to secure honour and respect for women,” he said and reiterated his government’s commitment to the safety and dignity of women.

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said Raksha Bandhan celebrated the eternal bond of love between siblings. “To protect one another has taken a different meaning this year amidst pandemic but the festive spirit remains the same. Greetings and lots of love to all my dear sisters across AP,” he tweeted.



Wearing head-to-toe PPE, Inamdar and his colleagues distribute the birthday cake in paper plates to the Covid patients lying in beds

them up a little bit in the hospital.

“So I just wanted to reduce their stress a little bit by making them feel more involved. It was my birthday also, so I thought I will distribute cake and celebrate with them that they might feel involved and encouraged a little bit,” he said. Wearing head-to-toe personal protective equipment (PPE), Inamdar and his colleagues distributed the birthday cake in paper plates to the Covid patients lying in beds.

A few patients sat up to receive the cake and also struck a conversation with the doctors in the isolated Covid ward.

Dr Inamdar was overwhelmed by the positive response his celebratory gesture had generated in the 32 patients he was taking care of.

What I felt was that the patients are very stressed out as they are isolated. There are not many caretakers also, they are feeling very lonely and left out

DR SOHAIL SAIFUDDIN INAMDAR

of the day quote

The outbreak of COVID-19 in Ayodhya and surrounding areas is a matter of concern. Uttar Pradesh's minister Kamal Rani (Varun) lost life (due to the disease), while three other ministers are infected

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA LEADER

There was need for a permanent dedicated hospital in the state for infectious diseases

UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

The only way Bengal can get back to entrepreneurship is hard work and steadfastness

TATHAGATA ROY | MEHALAYA GOVERNOR

SHORT TAKES

Soldier abducted

Srinagar: An Indian Army soldier was abducted by suspected militants late Sunday in J&K's Kulgam district, police said. Police sources said that the soldier, identified as Shakir Manzoor, was abducted from his home in Rambhama village of Kulgam. Reports said the militants also torched Manzoor's private vehicle. Security forces have started searches to trace the soldier. No militant group has so far owned responsibility for this abduction.

Quake hits Gujarat

Ahmedabad: An earthquake of magnitude 3.3 shook parts of south Gujarat Monday evening, but no casualty or damage to property was reported from the region, officials said. The earthquake's epicentre was in Bharuch district, around 200km from here, they said. The earthquake of magnitude 3.3 was recorded with its epicentre 7 kilometres east-south-east from Bharuch city, an official of the Gandhinagar-based Institute of Seismological Research (ISR) said. The mild tremor occurred at 5:19 pm, he said.

Girl dies

Tura: A 13-year-old girl in Meghalaya died after falling into a river while trying to help her friend who was slipping into a waterfall, police said Monday. The incident took place at 2:30 pm on Sunday when the girl along with three of her friends went to the waterfall at the Daram Gurukul stream near Rongkuchong village, they said.

127 booked

Indore: Police have registered a case against 127 persons on charges of cheating people by putting up fraudulent classified advertisements for selling goods at cheap rates on a popular online platform, an official said Monday. The fraudsters, members of different gangs spread across states, posed as defence personnel while talking to potential buyers over the phone, he said.

Man killed

Jammu: A man was killed here allegedly by three persons after an altercation over playing popular online game PUBG, officials said Monday. Raj Kumar, Bikram Jeet and Rohit Kumar were playing the online game, when Daleep Raj objected and asked them not to make noise, they said. Later, Daleep was allegedly attacked by the three men with a log of wood and he died on the spot, the officials said.



Heartly congratulations to all countrymen on the pious festival of Raksha Bandhan symbolising affection of brother-sister and Indian Sanskaras
ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

FLOOD FURY

As many as 820 villages in 15 districts of Uttar Pradesh have been hit by floods and the district administrations have started all-out relief operations, a minister said Monday



SUSHANT HAD BIPOLAR DISORDER: MUMBAI POLICE CHIEF

The issue resonated in the two Houses of Bihar legislature, with lawmakers across the political divide demanding a CBI probe into the death of the Patna-born actor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai/Patna, August 3: Actor Sushant Singh Rajput was suffering from bipolar disorder; a mental condition characterised by extreme mood swings, at the time of his death, Mumbai police chief Parambir Singh said Monday amid clamour by Bihar politicians for a CBI probe.

An IPS officer from Bihar, who had landed in Mumbai Sunday for leading the SIT investigating in the case, was, meanwhile, quarantined under the COVID-19 regulations in force in the city, a development Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar called "inappropriate and forcible". The issue resonated in the two Houses of Bihar legislature, with lawmakers across the political divide demanding a CBI investigation into the death of the 34-year-old Patna-born actor. Both Mumbai and Patna police are probing the case.

Rajput, who impressed his audience with his performances during his short but promising career, was found hanging in his rented apartment in Mumbai's Bandra on June 14. "It was found that the actor had bipolar disorder; and was undergoing treatment and taking med-



icines for it. What circumstances led to his death is the subject of our investigation," Mumbai police commissioner Singh told a press conference.

Singh also said no politician's name has come up during the investigation by Mumbai police. There

is no question of non-cooperation with the Bihar police team which is in the city in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput death case, Singh said, adding Mumbai police are seeking legal opinion on the matter.

Bihar DGP Gupteshwar Pandey had claimed that Vinay Tiwari, the IPS officer from Patna, who is in Mumbai to probe the case after Rajput's father lodged an FIR, has been "forcibly quarantined" by civic authorities in the metropolis.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday voiced strong disapproval of the "forcible" quarantine of the officer. "Whatever has been done to him is inappropriate," Kumar said in Patna. Patna police has registered a case of abetment to suicide against actor Rhea Chakraborty, who was in a rela-

tionship with Rajput, on the basis of a complaint lodged by his father K K Singh.

Kumar also said the matter has been taken up with the authorities in Maharashtra by DGP Gupteshwar Pandey. "He (Pandey) will himself speak to the authorities concerned," Kumar said.

When asked about whether he would himself have a word with his Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray, the Bihar chief minister said, "It is not a political matter. The issue at hand is a legal obligation of the Bihar police. We will make all possible efforts to fulfill the same."

He, however, ducked queries about recommending a CBI inquiry into the matter, the demand for which has been raised by at least two of the deceased actor's sisters.

VENTING ANGER



Kerala Public Service Commission rank holders (in PPE) being detained for staging a protest seeking appointments in the police department, in Thiruvananthapuram, Monday

PTI PHOTO

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati, August 3: In a shocking incident, three COVID-19 patients were allegedly shifted to a hospital in a garbage vehicle in Andhra Pradesh's Vizianagaram district. A video, which shows three persons boarding the trolley in Nellimarla town, has gone viral on social media, prompting the authorities to order a probe. The incident reportedly occurred Saturday when an ambulance did not reach to shift three members of a family to the hospital.

They had undergone COVID-19 tests on Wednesday and it was on Friday that they were found positive. Locals alerted 108 ambulance and requested that they be shifted to hospital. However, the ambulance did not reach the location,

The incident reportedly occurred Saturday when an ambulance did not reach to shift three members of a family to the hospital

forcing the residents to arrange a trolley from Nellimarla Nagar Panchayat.

Local officials ordered a probe into the incident. Primary Health Centre medical officer Gayatri Devi said the ambulance was sent immediately after learning about the patients from volunteers but before the vehicle could reach there the local residents mobilized a trolley from the municipal body.

Nellimarla Nagar Panchayat

Commissioner J. R. Appala Naidu said the vehicle was being used to carry Sodium Hypochlorite and other items for burying the COVID-19 victims. Vizianagaram District Medical and Health Officer Dr Ramana Kumari said she had ordered a probe into the incident.

Former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said he was appalled over the treatment meted out to the patients. "Appalling! Three Covid-19 patients in BC Colony, Jarjapupeta in Vizianagaram Dist were taken to the hospital in a garbage vehicle," the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief tweeted. "Don't know about coronavirus, but the helpless patients might contract other dangerous diseases. Why are they not being treated like humans?," Naidu asked.

CURFEW IN ASSAM TOWN

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Silchar (Assam), August 3: Indefinite curfew has been clamped in certain areas of southern Assam's Silchar town Monday after incidents of stone pelting between two religious groups, officials said.

A district administration official said that Cachar District Magistrate Keerthi Jalli apprehending breach of peace and tranquility, promulgated curfew in the areas under Malugram police outpost of Silchar town prohibiting the movement of individuals with immediate effect.

An official release said that the two groups indulged in pelting stones at each other at Ghoniwala areas of Silchar town on Sunday evening. Assam Police, CRPF and other security personnel rushed to the trouble-torn spots and brought the situation under control.

"As simmering tension prevails and there is every likelihood of breach of peace and public tranquillity, the district administration has clamped curfew in the areas falling under Malugram police outpost," the release said.

However, the order exempts magistrates on duty, police, military and para military forces and health functionaries.

Reopening of gyms: Norms issued

All yoga institutes and gymnasiums in containment zones shall remain closed and only those outside such zones will be allowed to open, the 'Guidelines on Preventive Measures to Contain Spread of COVID-19 in Yoga Institutes & Gymnasiums' stated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 3: Ahead of the reopening of yoga institutes and gymnasiums, the health ministry Monday issued COVID-19-appropriate protocols to be followed at such facilities like allowing only asymptomatic people, maintaining social distancing, disinfecting equipment and wearing of visor while exercising as far as possible.

All yoga institutes and gymnasiums in containment zones shall remain closed and only those outside such zones will be allowed to open, the 'Guidelines on Preventive Measures to Contain Spread of COVID-19 in Yoga Institutes & Gymnasiums' stated.

"Spas, sauna, steam bath and swimming pools (wherever applicable) shall remain closed," the document said. The guidelines lay down the processes and premises redesigning, including proper placement of equipment, that need to be followed before reopening such establishments. Yoga institutes and gymnasiums have been asked to plan the floor area based on four metres squared per person.

Persons above 65 years of age,



persons with comorbidities, pregnant women and children below the age of 10 years are advised not to use gyms in closed spaces, the guidelines said.

For the first time since the coronavirus lockdown came into force on March 25, the government has allowed opening of yoga institutes and gymnasiums from August 5 as part of the 'Unlock 3' phase.

"Yoga and physical activity being important for health & well-being, it has been decided to open yoga institutes and gymnasiums from August 5," the guidelines said.

The document outlined various generic precautionary measures to be adopted in addition to specific measures to be taken at yoga institutes and gymnasiums to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The

guidelines state that at the entry point at all such facilities, it is mandatory to have hand hygiene (sanitiser dispenser) and thermal screening provisions.

"Only asymptomatic persons (including staff) be allowed in the premises. All persons to be allowed entry only if using face cover/masks," it said. "All members, visitors and staff may consider using Aarogya Setu application for risk identification at all times inside the yoga institute/gymnasiums," the guidelines stated.

It also stated that prior to exercising in gymnasiums using equipment for cardio, strength training, etc. middle finger be sanitised with alcohol swab and oxygen saturation be checked using pulse oximeter. Those having oxygen saturation below 95 per cent should not be allowed to exercise, it said. Call central/state helpline/ ambulance and refer such persons to the nearest health facility, the document added.

It calls for ensuring minimum distance of six feet at all times in queues and proper crowd management in parking lots, corridors and in elevators - duly following social distancing norms.

Get rakhi tied by woman you molested: MP HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, August 3: The Madhya Pradesh High Court has asked a married 26-year-old man, accused of molesting a woman, to get a "rakhi" tied by her on the day of Raksha Bandhan being celebrated on Monday.

The court also asked the man to give ₹11,000 to the woman as part of a customary offering made by brothers to sisters on the occasion and seek her blessings. The single bench of Justice Rohit Arya passed the order on July 30 while giving conditional bail to the accused, Vikram Bagri.

In the order, the court said, "The applicant, along with his wife, shall visit the house of the complainant with rakhi

thread/band on August 3 at 11 am with a box of sweets and request the complainant to tie the rakhi band to him with the promise to protect her to the best of his ability for all times to come."

Bagri is accused of entering the 30-year-old woman's house in Ujjain, around 55 kms from here, on April 20, and was charged under section 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) of the IPC.

"Bagri would tender ₹11,000 to the complainant as a customary ritual usually offered by brothers to sisters on the occasion and shall also seek her blessings," the court said. Bagri has also been ordered to give ₹5,000 to the complainant's son to buy clothes and sweets.



A year after Art 370 abrogation, security net still tight

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 3: A year after the special status of Jammu & Kashmir was scrapped, the government claims that peace and normalcy has returned along with development and an additional deployment of at least 20,000 security personnel and officers has been retained.

Before August 5, 2019, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) - the leading internal security force of the country - had deployed 300 companies each comprising 100 men. In the run up of the abrogation of Article 370 another 200 companies were rushed. The additional 200 companies, which the CRPF pulled from Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, and North East, who were countering Left-

wing extremism and militancy respectively, leaving holes in the security grid.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had told the Parliament on November 20 explaining how the abrogation of special status had helped usher in peace. He had asserted that normalcy has been restored in Kashmir Valley following the abrogation of Article 370. Shah had said that security concerns have to be factored in before restoring internet connectivity in the region. The minister said that a decision on restoration of the internet will be taken based on an assessment of the situation by the local administration.

About 4,000 men alone were shifted from areas affected by Left Wing Extremism, whereas at least



3,000 men countering guerrillas in the jungles of northeastern states

along with the Indian Army and local police.

The CRPF has had to cut short training, cut back sending replacements and even cut short leaves in some cases as it was stretched between commitments across India - Jammu & Kashmir, Left Wing Extremism, and counter terror operations in the northeast, senior government officials said.

It is been a year yet the extra forces deployed in the valley have not been pulled back. A senior IPS officer stated that as per assessment, the threat in the valley from Pakistan-based terrorists is very high. When approached, the Ministry of Home Affairs refused to comment over the withdrawal of extra forces from the valley. The ministry also refused to comment on whether normalcy has been restored in the valley or not. Further

the ministry also refused to comment on the prevailing threat in the valley that has compelled the government to keep the extra deployment of security forces.

The figures state that there has been significant decline in terror activities in the valley. This year till July, a total 120 terror-related cases have been reported and last year during the same period - between January and July - a total of 188 cases were reported. Similarly, this year till July, 35 security personnel lost their lives in line of duty and last year during same period 75 security personnel had lost their lives fighting terrorists.

But the government has decided to keep extra deployment of forces in the valley for reasons still unknown.

of the day quote

Nurses have been performing the role of frontline COVID warriors and their commitment to duty earns respect



RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT

Himachal Pradesh will be stray cattle-free by 2021 and it would be a pioneer state in the country in this field



JAI RAM THAKUR | HIMACHAL CM

Many greetings to all citizens on the festival of Raksha Bandhan



NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Another Dubey aide arrested

Kanpur: The Uttar Pradesh Special Task Forces (STF) have arrested another aide of slain gangster Vikas Dubey, who had fired at the police team and tried to set the bodies ablaze after the Bikru ambush on July 3. ASP, STF, Vishal Vikram Singh said the aide, Ram Singh Yadav, carried a reward of Rs 50,000 and was present during the ambush as per electronic evidence and statements of those arrested. "Yadav is the gram pradhan of Madaripurwa and owns a double barrel gun which was used in the Bikru carnage," said the ASP.

UP minister contracts corona

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Jal Shakti Minister Mahendra Singh has tested positive for COVID-19, hours after the state BJP President Swatantra Dev Singh and two other legislators were confirmed to have contracted the virus. Apart from Mahendra Singh, eight other state ministers -- Yogendra Upadhaya, Devendra Pratap Singh, Rajendra Pratap Singh, Dharam Singh Saini, Chetan Chauhan, Upendra Tiwari, Raghuraj Singh and Jai Pratap Singh -- have tested positive and are undergoing treatment.

Jilted lover kills woman

Aligarh: A jilted lover allegedly shot dead a married woman Sunday after she had married another man in accordance with her family's wishes. The accused and the girl belonged to different castes and this was the reason for the girl's family's objection to the relationship. The 20-year-old woman had come to her parent's house to celebrate Raksha Bandhan, for the first time after her wedding that was held on July 3. She was sleeping on her terrace, when the accused Kaushal, 22, shot in her head. He has been absconding since then. Police said the duo had been in a relationship earlier and were neighbours.

Goat thief dies

Shivpuri: A goat thief lodged in a sub jail died under mysterious circumstances in Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri district on Sunday, police officials said. Police, however, said that the undertrial was injured while trying to escape from the 'Dial 100' vehicle. Chandrabhan Singh Gurjar, a resident of Rajpur, was taken into custody on Sunday along with another accomplice in a goat theft case from the house of Pappu Parihar. Police arrested him and brought him to the police station. Meanwhile, Chandrabhan died under suspicious circumstances.



The TMC is trying to spread canards against the state unit (of the BJP) to create confusion among the cadres and malign the image of the party

DILIP GHOSH | BJP LEADER

TN slams doors on NEP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chennai, August 3: Strongly backing Tamil Nadu's decade old two-language policy the ruling AIADMK in the state Monday rejected the Centre's three-language formula proposed in the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and said there will be no deviation from the existing system.

"The three-language formula in the NEP is painful and saddening. Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) should reconsider the three-language policy," Palaniswami said. Taking strong exception to the proposal, he said in a statement the state has been following the two-language policy for several decades and that there will be no change in it.

His assertion came amidst opposition demand, including from DMK, that the government should reject the three-language formula proposed in NEP and stick to its two-language policy. Incidentally, ahead of Monday's meeting he convened to discuss the matter with his senior cabinet colleagues, the Opposition bloc led by DMK wrote to the chief minister, asking him to adopt a Cabinet resolution against the new NEP.

"Tamil Nadu will never allow the Centre's three-language formula. The state will continue with its dual language policy (of Tamil and English)," Palaniswami said. He discussed the matter with his colleagues--Deputy CMO Panneerselvam, Ministers for higher education and school education, K P Anbalagan and K A Sengottaiyan, respectively and others.

The Centre should allow the states to implement their own policy on the subject, he said, adding there will be no change in the two-language formula which the state had adopted decades ago. Teaching up to class 5 in mother tongue or regional language and lowering the stakes of board exams are part of the sweeping reforms in the new NEP unveiled last week by the Centre.

However, the proposals have found resistance from the DMK-led opposition in the state, with the Leader of Opposition in the



"The three-language formula in the NEP is painful and saddening. Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) should reconsider the three-language policy," Palaniswami said

The Centre should allow the states to implement their own policy on the subject, he said, adding there will be no change in the two-language formula

Assembly, MK Stalin, dubbing it as an attempt to "impose" Hindi and Sanskrit.

The anti-Hindi movement of the 1960s taken forward by the DMK had struck an instant chord among the Tamil masses then and is believed to be one of the key reasons for the Dravidian party storming to power in the 1967 elections under the late CN Annadurai, unseating a Congress government in the state for the first time in post-independent India.

Palaniswami further said the state has been maintaining a consistent stand and that for about 80 years, the people of Tamil Nadu had been firm on two language policy. Late chief ministers Annadurai, MG Ramachandran and J Jayalalithaa were firmly against 'imposition' of Hindi.

He also recalled the historic resolution brought in the Tamil Nadu Assembly by late Annadurai on January 23, 1968, which proposed to abolish the three language policy in all schools in the state, removing Hindi from the State syllabus but allowing only Tamil and English.

PRASAD OPTS FOR HOME QUARANTINE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 3: IT and Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad Monday said he has gone into self-isolation for a few days as per protocol, since he had met Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday evening.

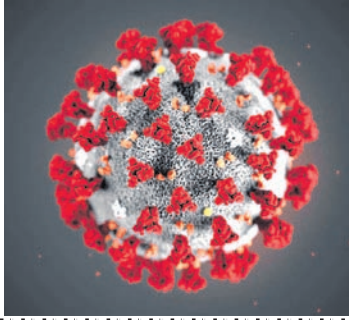
Shah, on Sunday, had said he had tested positive for coronavirus and was getting admitted to a hospital following the advice of doctors. Prasad, who is also the Law Minister, tweeted on Monday that he has isolated himself at home for a few days, as per protocol.

"Friends! I'm absolutely fine. To follow protocol I hv isolated myself at home for few days as I had met Amit Shah Ji on Saturday evening for n official meeting. I'm working from home & following daily routine including Yoga & exercise. Also reading books & enjoying classical music," Prasad tweeted.

A source said Prasad does not have any symptoms. Home Minister Amit Shah was admitted to a private hospital in Gurugram Sunday.

DOCTORS TO TAKE CALL

Aiming to free up private hospital beds for COVID-19 patients requiring emergency treatment, the West Bengal Clinical Establishment Regulatory Commission in an advisory said that only the doctor will decide on admission or discharge



SOME TIES ARE SPECIAL



Women tie rakhis to firemen on Raksha Bandhan festival, during Unlock 3 in Pune, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Uma Bharti to skip Ayodhya ceremony

AGENCIES

Ayodhya, August 3: Senior Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Uma Bharti has asked the senior officials of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to remove her name from the list of invitees for the 'bhumi puja' ceremony of the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya on August 5.

Taking to Twitter, Uma Bharti said that she is concerned about the health of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and others who will be attending the mega event at Ayodhya, amid the Corona pandemic. She wrote that she is concerned after getting the news of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and few others from the party having also tested positive for Covid-19.



"There is a possibility that I might come in contact with an infected person. In such a situation, I have decided to maintain a distance from Prime Minister Modi and other attendees. I will offer prayers to Ram Lalla once the event is over," she tweeted in Hindi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to reach Ayodhya at

Babri plaintiff invited

Lucknow: Iqbal Ansari, the plaintiff in the Babri mosque title suit, is excited and grateful for having received an invitation to the momentous 'bhumi puja' ceremony of the grand Ram temple from the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra trust. "Yes, I have got the invitation for the 'bhumi puja' and I will definitely attend the event. I am very happy to be a part of the event," he said Monday. Iqbal's father, Hashim Ansari, was the oldest plaintiff in the Babri title suit and after his demise in 2016, his son Iqbal became the plaintiff in the case.

around 11 a.m. on August 5 and he is likely to stay there for around three hours. Modi will first offer prayers at Hanuman Garhi and then visit the pre-fabricated temple at Manas Bhawan where the idol of Lord Ram is presently kept.

He will then proceed to the Ram Janmabhoomi site for the 'bhumi puja'. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Rashtriya

Swyamsewak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat will also share the stage with the Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, tight security arrangements have been made in Ayodhya for the event. The local administration has been asked to implement strict safety protocols. A priest and 16 police officers on duty in Ayodhya have already tested positive for the Corona virus recently.

Covid patients give wrong info

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, August 3: In a shocking development, it has been found that as many as 2,290 patients, who tested positive for COVID-19 in the past nine days, have submitted false information including name, address and contact number to the Lucknow administration.

These patients were examined between July 23 and 31. The issue came to light when administration authorities tried to contact the patients to inform them about their COVID-19 reports. The district administration has now sought the help of the surveillance division of the state police after which 1,171 people were traced and admitted to the hospital.

However, 1,119 patients are still untraceable and efforts are on to locate them. Legal action is also to be taken against these people for providing wrong information to the administration. Sujit Pandey, Commissioner of Police Lucknow, said: "Thousands of tests were done to break the chain of the coronavirus infection.

"People were tested at camps set up at several places in Lucknow. During this, some people submitted their wrong name, address and contact numbers. When a probe was initiated, the names and addresses were found to be wrong. We have traced down 1,171



The district administration has now sought the help of the surveillance division of the state police after which 1,171 people were traced and admitted to the hospital

The issue came to light when administration authorities tried to contact the patients to inform them about their COVID-19 reports

till date, while efforts are on to trace down the remaining patients.

"All the hospitals and labs conducting tests are now directed to verify the details of the patients at their end before taking their samples." Lucknow reported 391

fresh COVID-19 cases, with 14 deaths on Sunday.

As per the data issued by the Uttar Pradesh Health Department, 3,953 new cases were reported in the state on Sunday, taking the total tally to 92,921. The total number of deaths has reached 1,730.

Customer finds lizard in sambar, FIR lodged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 3: A customer reportedly found a dead lizard in a bowl of 'sambar' at a popular South Indian restaurant in Connaught Place here, police said Monday.

The incident took place Saturday night, they said. According to the police, Pankaj Agarwal, a resident of Fatehpuri area in Chandni Chowk, visited the restaurant along with his two friends. They ordered 'dosa' and 'sambar' for dinner.

When Agarwal started eating, he found a dead lizard in his bowl of 'sambar'. He captured the sight in his mobile phone and questioned the restaurant staff following which the

manager assured him that it will not happen in future, they said. However, Agarwal informed the police about the incident.

"Based on the complaint, we have registered an FIR against

the restaurant under IPC section 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and section 336 (act endangering life or personal safety of others). The matter is under investigation."

Deputy Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Eish Singhal said. The police have asked for CCTV footage from the restaurant along with details of the cook and ingredients used in making the food item (sambar) as well as the restaurant license, the officer added.



KARTI TESTS COVID POSITIVE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chennai, August 3: Congress MP from Tamil Nadu, Karti Chidambaram is the latest political personality to be infected with Covid-19. The son of former union minister P. Chidambaram took to social media on Monday to announce that he has tested positive for the virus.

He stated that he is presently in home quarantine as his symptoms are mild. He however advised people who had come in contact with him over the past few days to follow prescribed Covid protocols.

"I have just tested positive for #Covid. My symptoms are mild and as per medical advice I am under home quarantine. I would urge all those who have recently been in contact with me to follow medical protocol," he tweeted.

Karti Chidambaram represents the Sivaganga Lok Sabha constituency. He is the latest among political personalities to get infected with the coronavirus.



Muted Raksha Bandhan celebrations amid raging pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 3: Raksha Bandhan celebrations remained subdued this year as the rampaging coronavirus pandemic cast a shadow over the festivities that celebrate the brother-sister bond, with people mostly preferring to stay at home.

People relied on homemade sweets and some rituals moved online, with siblings ordering rakhis and e-gifts for each other and meeting through video calls. "This is the first time that it has happened, but this is the need of the hour," said Rahul Bhardwaj, a resident of the

national capital, who could not meet his sister who lives in a different city. "We need to keep ourselves safe and our loved ones safe too."

"The festival was a bit different this year. I got homemade barfi for my brothers and did not buy anything from outside. We are also not going anywhere and just spending time with our family," said Shivani Rawat of Delhi.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders greeted the people on the occasion.

But as people remained at home,



with the fears of contracting the virus running deeper than ever, in-

dustrial sources estimated severe losses to shopkeepers.

"Sweets worth around Rs 10,000 crore were sold across the country on Raksha Bandhan last year. This figure is expected to come down to around Rs 5,000 crore this time," the director of the Federation of Sweets and Namkeen Manufacturers, Feroz H. Naqvi, had said Sunday. Samir Saha, a roadside vendor in West Bengal's Shyambazar, said, "Last year, I had earned Rs 5,000 selling rakhis. This time, I managed to earn just Rs 1,000. The pandemic has hit us hard." Some people, however, celebrated the festival in symbolically unique ways. Animal lovers tied 'rakhis' to two

elephants in Jalpaiguri district and vowed to protect them "as many of them are dying in man-animal conflict".

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar tied a 'rakhi' around a tree at a park, while women Congress MLAs in Rajasthan celebrated the festival by tying rakhis on the wrist of CM Ashok Gehlot.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who is undergoing treatment for COVID-19 at a Bhopal hospital, shared on Twitter a picture of a rakhi tied on his wrist by nurse Saroj who is attending to him in the isolation ward.

of the day quote

For some time, the US, with ideological prejudice, keeps monitoring, harassing and willfully detaining Chinese students and researchers, and making presumptions of guilt against Chinese researchers

WANG WENBIN | US FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON



Today I gain a new badge of honor: sanctioned by Iran for coordinating @realDonaldTrump's maximum pressure campaign

RICHARD GOLDBERG | US NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR



We're concerned about it here in New York. We don't think we'll have hurricane force winds, but we could have significant winds and significant downfall

ANDREW CUOMO | NEW YORK GOVERNOR



SHORT TAKES

UK to launch 90 min Covid tests

London: UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock announced that the country will launch two new tests which can detect the novel coronavirus in 90 minutes in hospitals, care homes and laboratories, it was reported Monday. The Department of Health said Sunday that the swab and DNA tests will help deal with the virus in winter, enabling clinicians and NHS Test and Trace to differentiate between COVID-19, which requires sufferers to undergo specific self-isolation, and other seasonal illnesses, reports the Metro newspaper.

Pak PM appoints new health min

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday appointed his focal person on COVID-19 as the new health minister, the third in less than two years, amidst the ongoing fight against the coronavirus that has claimed nearly 6,000 lives and infected over 280,000 people in the country. Dr Faisal Sultan has been appointed as Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) with the status of a federal minister. He is the chief executive officer of Shaukat Khanum Cancer Hospital, Khan's charity hospital.

Ex-Pope Benedict seriously ill

Vatican City: Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI is reportedly seriously ill with shingles after returning to the Vatican from a trip to Germany where he was visiting his dying brother, media reports said on Monday. Benedict, aged 93, is said to have become very frail and his voice is barely audible, the UK's Sun newspaper said in a report. He came to his native Bavaria in June to pay his ailing brother Georg Ratzinger a final visit.

Masks mandatory

Colombo: In an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19, Sri Lanka's health authorities said Monday that face masks will be mandatory in the new Parliament following Wednesday's general elections. A 21-page operation guideline report was handed over by Director General of Health Services Anil Jasinghe to Secretary General of Parliament Dhammika Dasanayake, which includes many of the general health regulations pertaining to COVID-19.



The state of Victoria was at war with the pandemic as it continued to be the worst-hit with the number of confirmed cases increasing at an alarming rate

JOSH FRYDENBERG | AUSTRALIAN TREASURER

IRISH NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNER JOHN HUME DIES

Former Irish politician and Nobel Peace Prize winner John Hume died Monday at the age of 83, his family said. He was a founding member of the Social Democratic and Labour Party in 1970 and led the party from 1979 until 2001



29 killed in IS Afghan prison attack

AGENCIES

Jalalabad (Afghanistan), August 3: Afghan security forces laid siege to a prison seized by Islamic State fighters in the eastern city of Jalalabad Monday, with at least 29 people killed after the militants' overnight assault led to a mass jailbreak.

"The rest are missing," he said. After detonating a car bomb at the entrance Sunday evening, IS gunmen overran the prison where many IS militants captured during a campaign in the past month were being held, along with Taliban fighters and common criminals.

Mohammad Idres, one of the prisoners trapped inside and contacted by cellphone, said he could see could around four bodies on the ground outside. "We are very hungry, it's very hot and we don't have water," he said.

"Sometimes it is quiet and then firing starts," he said. "The security forces cannot seem to advance because the attackers hold strategic points, including the watchtowers."

IS claimed responsibility for the attack, which came a day after the Afghan intelligence agency said



special forces had killed a senior IS commander near Jalalabad, the provincial capital of Nangarhar.

Officials said Afghan Chief of Army Staff Lt. Gen Yasin Zia arrived on Monday to oversee the operation, involving special forces, to clear the IS fighters holed up inside the prison. Khugyani said civilians, prisoners and members of security forces were among the 29 dead and more than 50 wounded.

"Eight gunmen were killed as some areas, where the attackers had taken positions, were cleared," he said. As the siege dragged through the day, the

normally bustling city was placed under a curfew. "Jalalabad is completely empty," Qaderi said. Some 130 km (80 miles) east of Kabul, Jalalabad lies on the highway leading to the Khyber Pass and the Pakistani city of Peshawar.

A United Nations report last month estimated there are around 2,200 IS members in Afghanistan, and that while the group has lost territory and its leadership has been depleted, it remains capable of carrying out high-profile attacks.

The Taliban had declared a three-day cease-fire starting last Friday for the major Muslim holiday of

Eid al-Adha. The cease-fire expired at 12 am Monday, though it wasn't immediately clear if it would be extended as the US pushes for an early start to intra-Afghan negotiations that have repeatedly been delayed since Washington signed the peace deal with the Taliban.

"We have a cease-fire and are not involved in any of these attacks anywhere in the country," Taliban's political spokesman, Suhail Shaheen said. The Taliban also had denied being involved in a suicide bombing in eastern Logar province late Thursday that killed at least nine people and wounded 40.

- The prison is believed to be holding hundreds of IS members
- The attack highlighted the challenges ahead for Afghanistan, even as US and NATO forces begin to withdraw following America striking a peace deal with the Taliban
- Of the 1,793 prisoners, more than 1,025 had tried to escape and been recaptured and 430 had remained inside
- Afghanistan has seen a recent spike in violence, with most attacks claimed by the local IS affiliate

Pak HC allows India to appoint lawyer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Islamabad, August 3: The Islamabad High Court Monday ordered the Pakistan government to give "another chance" to India to appoint a lawyer for death-row prisoner Kulbhushan Jadhav, Pakistani media reports said.

Jadhav, the 50-year-old retired Indian Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017. India approached the International Court of Justice against Pakistan for denial of consular access to Jadhav and challenging the death sentence.

The Hague-based ICJ ruled in July 2019 that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav and also to grant consular access to India without further delay. On Monday, a two-member bench comprising IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard a petition filed by the Pakistan government to appoint a lawyer for Jadhav.

JADHAV CASE



The Pakistan government, in the petition, asked the IHC to appoint a legal representative for Jadhav so that it can fulfil its responsibility to see to the implementation of the ICJ's decision. It also claimed that Jadhav refused to file a review petition or an application to reconsider the verdict against him by the military court.

"Now that the matter is in the high court, why not give India another chance," Justice Minallah was quoted as saying by Geo News.

The judge said that the Indian government or Jadhav may reconsider their decision pertaining to the review petition.

Firefighters battle to contain massive California wildfire



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

San Francisco, August 3: More than 1,300 firefighters, backed by helicopters and water-dumping planes, were battling a massive wildfire in Southern California that has forced thousands of people from their homes east of Los Angeles.

Dubbed 'Apple Fire', the state's first major wildfire of the year began July 31 as two adjacent blazes in Cherry Valley, an area near the city of Beaumont in Riverside

County, reports the BBC. It has since stretched out to 20,516 acres, San Bernadino National Forest said in a tweet on Sunday. Parts of the blaze are on steep, rugged hillsides, making it hard for fire engines to reach. Around 8,000 residents have been asked to evacuate the area.

Images show flumes of smoke filling the sky over the mountainous region. In a tweet, the National Weather Service said some smoke had blown east to Phoenix, Arizona

- nearly 482 km away. The government body said the blaze had been fuelled by high temperatures, low humidity and dry vegetation in the area. The US Forest Service told the *Riverside Press-Enterprise*, a local newspaper, that because the fire was on rugged terrain, it was dangerous for firefighters to try and surround it. "We don't want to put firefighters in a dangerous situation," said spokesperson Lisa Cox.

"It's burning in a straight line up a mountain." California Governor Gavin Newsom announced Sunday that the state has secured a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help ensure the availability of resources to fight the wildfire, reports the *Los Angeles Times*.

The grant will also assist local and state agencies responding to the fire to apply for reimbursements for up to 75% of fire suppression costs.

'Key advantage in battleground states could re-elect Trump'

AGENCIES

Washington, August 3: US President Donald Trump has a key advantage in the battleground states that could re-elect him in November, his eldest son Donald Trump Jr has said, citing an op-ed which claims that 50 per cent of Indian-American voters in these states are moving away from the opposition Democratic Party towards his father.

Seeking re-election for his second consecutive term, Trump, 74, is pitted against Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, 77, in the November 3 presidential elections. Most of the

opinion polls show that Biden is several points ahead of Trump. Trump Jr, who is leading his father's 2020 re-election campaign, played a key role in the outreach to the Indian-American community in 2016, which he has continued during the last three-and-a-half years.

"A Key Advantage in Battleground States Could Secure 2020 for Trump," he tweeted Sunday, along with an op-ed written by an ardent Trump supporter Al Mason in the latest issue of American Greatness news website. According to the article, Trump, a Republican, could find himself the recipient of tens of thousands of Indian-American votes across the United States.



Cooling of earth caused by volcanic eruptions

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New York, August 3: Analysis of sediment found in a central Texas cave in the US shows volcanic eruptions responsible for the cooling of the Earth around 13,000 years ago, say researchers.

Some researchers believed the event - which cooled the Earth by about 3 degrees Centigrade, a huge amount - was caused by an extraterrestrial impact with the Earth, such as a meteor collision. But the current study, published in the journal *Science Advances*, shows the evidence left in layers of sediment in Hall's Cave was almost certainly the result of volcanic eruptions.

According to the research team, Hall's Cave, located in the Texas hill country, has a sediment record extending over 20,000 years and they



first began researching the cave in 2017. "One big question was, did an extraterrestrial impact occur near the end of the last ice age, about 13,000 years ago as the ice sheets

covering Canada were melting, and cause an abrupt cooling that thrust the northern hemisphere back into the ice age for an extra 1,200 years?" said study researcher Michael Waters from the Texas A&M University in the US.

The research team took every avenue they could to come up with an alternative explanation, or even avoid this conclusion. A volcanic eruption had been considered one possible explanation but was generally dismissed because there was no associated geochemical fingerprint, the researchers said. After a volcano erupts, the global spread of aerosols reflects incoming solar radiation away from Earth and may lead to global cooling post-eruption for one to five years, depending on the size and timescales of the eruption, they added.



A scarecrow is pictured outside a house during the Scarecrow Competition in Betley, Britain

REUTERS

CHEF VIKAS KHANNA TO HELP INDIA'S STREET VENDORS

AGENCIES

New York, August 3: Michelin-star chef Vikas Khanna, who will soon reach the milestone of having distributed 25 million meals across India amid COVID-19, is now aiming to provide essential rations and supplies to 10 million street vendors and their families facing hardships due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The 48-year-old world-renowned chef and author has coordinated a massive food distribution drive from his home in Manhattan since the coronavirus pandemic gripped India, unleashing economic hardships for millions as a nationwide lockdown was implemented in March.

SpaceX capsule with NASA astronauts returns to earth

AGENCIES

Cape Canaveral (US), August 3: Two NASA astronauts returned to Earth Sunday in a dramatic, retro-style splashdown, their capsule parachuting into the Gulf of Mexico to close out an unprecedented test flight by Elon Musk's SpaceX company.

It was the first splashdown by US astronauts in 45 years, with the first commercially built and operated spacecraft to carry people to and from orbit. The return clears the way for another SpaceX crew launch as early as next month and possible tourist flights next year.

Test pilots Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken arrived back on Earth in their SpaceX Dragon capsule named

Endeavour, less than a day after departing the International Space Station and two months after blasting off from Florida. The capsule parachuted into the calm gulf waters about 40 miles off the coast of Pensacola, hundreds of miles from Tropical Storm Isaias pounding Florida's Atlantic coast.

"Welcome back to planet Earth and thanks for flying SpaceX," said Mission Control from SpaceX headquarters. "It's a little bit overwhelming to see everybody here considering the things that have gone on the last few months since we've been off planet," Hurley said after arriving back home in Houston Sunday evening where they were greeted by a small masked-gathering of family and officials, in-



The SpaceX Crew Dragon Endeavour spacecraft is seen as it lands in the Gulf of Mexico off the coast of Pensacola, Florida

cluding Musk. Musk had rushed to Houston from SpaceX headquar-

ters in Hawthorne, California, to welcome them. He was clearly

moved — and relieved — while addressing the group. "I'm not very religious, but I prayed for this one," he said.

The astronauts' ride back to Earth was fast, bumpy and hot, at least on the outside. Within a half-hour of splashdown, the scorched and blistered 15-foot capsule was hoisted aboard a SpaceX recovery ship with a staff of more than 40, including doctors and nurses. To keep the returning astronauts safe in the pandemic, the recovery crew quarantined for two weeks and were tested for the coronavirus.

The opening of the hatch was held up briefly by extra checks for toxic rocket fumes outside the capsule. After medical checkups, the astronauts were flown by helicop-

ter to Pensacola and then to Houston. There was one unexpected problem that could have endangered the operation: Once the capsule was in the water, private boats "just made a beeline for it," and got too close, said NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine, promising to do better next time at keeping sightseers on pleasure boats safely away.

NASA video showed one vessel flying a large campaign flag for President Donald Trump. The Coast Guard in Pensacola said it had deployed two vessels to keep the public at least 10 miles away from the capsule. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence, who both attended the launch, congratulated the SpaceX and NASA teams.

of the day quote

With some of the macroeconomic indicators showing marginal improvement, the stakeholders have shown improved sentiments compared to the previous quarter

SHISHIR BAJAL |
CHAIRMAN & MD, KNIGHT FRANK INDIA

We are proud to be collaborating with the UK government to make vaccines available and the arrangement brings in a huge sense of purpose and pride

HABIL KHORAKIWALA |
FOUNDER CHAIRMAN, WOCKHARDT

Although momentum has slowed down, stock specific action is still happening, dependent mainly on the earnings results and commentary

VINOD NAIR | HEAD OF RESEARCH, GEOJIT FINANCIAL SERVICES

SHORT TAKES

Over 40 crore PMJDY accounts

New Delhi: Six years after the launch of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), there are over 40 crore beneficiaries of the scheme, according to government data. The financial inclusion programme launched in 2014 has a total of 40.05 crore accounts under it as of July 22 with total deposits of over ₹1.30 lakh crore, according to the PMJDY website. In a tweet Monday, the Department of Financial Services (DFS) said: "Another milestone achieved under world's largest financial inclusion initiative."

Gold futures trade higher

Mumbai: Bull run in domestic gold futures continued on Monday as prices in the international market surged to new highs. The active October contract on the Multi-Commodity Exchange (MCX) touched a high of ₹53,670 per 10 gram, while the August contract, which is due to end on Wednesday, touched a high of ₹54,199 per 10 gram. The October contract is currently trading at ₹53,637, higher by ₹192 or 0.36 per cent from its previous close.

ICICI Bank cuts MCLR by 10 bps

Mumbai: ICICI Bank has reduced its marginal cost of funds-based lending rates (MCLR) by 10 basis points across tenors with effect from August 1. Post the cut, EMIs on the loans linked to MCLR will come down giving relief to the borrowers. With the reduction in rates, ICICI Bank's one year MCLR is 7.45 per cent, and six month MCLR is 7.40 per cent. The MCLR for overnight and one month tenure is 7.20 per cent and that for three month is 7.25 per cent.

Tata Motors shares jump

New Delhi: Shares of Tata Motors Monday jumped over 8 per cent after the company's first quarter earnings were better than estimates. The stock rose by 8.30 per cent to ₹113.40 on the BSE. On the NSE, it jumped 8.45 per cent to ₹113.50. The results were subdued, but better than estimates. Standalone Q1 EBITDA was also better than expected, Emkay Global Financial Services said. "Tata Motors continues to outperform on balance sheet as well as cost control initiatives," according to a report by Edelweiss Research.

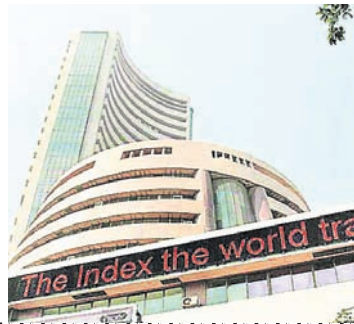


A tremendous deal of transformation stemming from COVID-19 is expected in mobility segment over the next two years as consumers move to slow travel

N CHANDRASEKARAN |
CHAIRMAN, TATA MOTORS

SENSEX, NIFTY SLIDE AS BANKS, RELIANCE FALL

Indian shares fell Monday as banking stocks slid amid mixed expectations for an upcoming interest rate decision, while a relentless surge in domestic coronavirus cases added to investor worries.



RBI likely to cut rates despite inflation risk

THE RBI'S RECENT POLICIES HAVE FOCUSED ON FINANCIAL STABILITY AND THE NEED TO SUPPORT GROWTH

REUTERS

Mumbai, August 3: India's worsening economic outlook as coronavirus cases soar has raised the chance the central bank will cut interest rates at its policy review Thursday, in spite of inflationary pressures.

Around two-thirds of economists in a Reuters poll expect the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to cut the repo rate by another 25 basis points (bps) on Aug. 6 to a record low of 3.50%, and once more next quarter.

"High inflation has added confusion to the Reserve Bank's policy outlook, but given the state of ag-

gregate demand, we forecast the RBI will continue easing," said Rahul Bajoria, economist at Barclays who expects a 25-bp cut.

Annual retail inflation rose in June to 6.09% from 5.84% in March, remaining above the RBI's medium-term target range of 2%-6%.

The RBI's recent policies have focused on financial stability and the need to support growth despite the price target.

The country was placed under one of the strictest lockdowns in the world in late March for over two months to halt the spread of the coronavirus. The government gradually eased restrictions in June al-



though infections continue to rise.

The poll showed most analysts expect the economy to contract 20% in the June quarter versus the April forecast of a 5.2% fall and remain in negative terrain until the December quarter.

For the full year 2020/21, the econ-

omy is likely to shrink 5.1%, which would be its weakest performance since 1979, a sharp contrast to the 1.5% expansion forecast in April.

Apart from rate cuts, Upasna Bhavadwaj, economist at Kotak Mahindra Bank, expects liquidity and regulatory measures from the RBI to address demand shocks and financial market dislocations.

"RBI may look to widen the policy corridor to 75 bps by easing reverse repo by a higher quantum," she said, adding that though they expect a 25-bp rate cut, it may not be effective in the current environment.

The RBI has already reduced the

repo rate by a total of 115 basis points since February, on top of the 135 basis points in an easing cycle last year, from 6.50%, responding to slowing growth.

Some economists, however, feel it may be prudent for the RBI to pause in August before resuming its rate-cutting cycle once inflation has stabilised.

Weakness in growth versus above-target inflation, improving indicators and concerns over inflation expectations will put the RBI in a tough spot, said DBS economist Radhika Rao.

"It will be a close call, but we see slightly higher odds for a pause."

Factory output contracts at sharper pace in July

REUTERS

Bangalore, August 3: India's factory slump deepened in July as renewed lockdown measures to contain surging coronavirus cases weighed on demand and output, raising the chances of a sharper economic contraction, a private business survey showed Monday.

Asia's third-largest economy, which has the third-highest coronavirus caseload globally, is expected to shrink at its sharpest pace since 1979 this fiscal year, a Reuters poll found last week.

Reinforcing that grim outlook, the Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by IHS Markit, fell to 46.0 last month from 47.2 in June, below the 50-level separating growth from expansion for a fourth straight month and marking its longest spell of contraction since March 2009.

"The survey results showed a re-acceleration of declines in the key indices of output and new orders, undermining the trend towards stabilisation seen over the past two months," noted Eliot Kerr, an economist at IHS Markit.

"Anecdotal evidence indicated



WEAK DEMAND

- A further decline in new orders and output signalled weakness in overall demand despite factories again cutting their prices
- A persistent decline in both input and output prices raises the chance that overall inflation would ease, after spiking above the upper bound of RBI's target
- That might give the RBI more room to ease policy further, after having cut its repo rate by 115 basis points (bps) since March

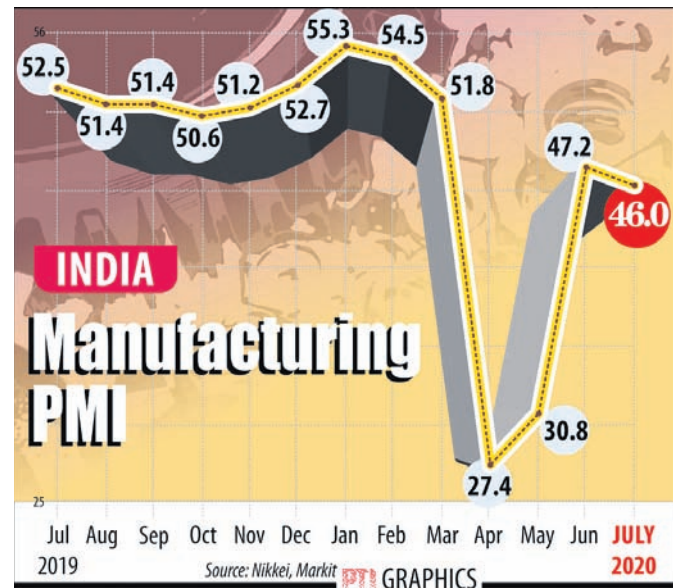
that firms were struggling to obtain work, with some of their clients remaining in lockdown, suggesting that we won't see a pick-up in activity until infection rates are quelled and restrictions can be further removed."

A further decline in new orders and output signalled weakness in overall demand despite factories again cutting their prices, leading firms to reduce their workforces for a fourth month in a row.

A persistent decline in both input and output prices raises the chance that overall inflation would ease,

after spiking above the upper bound of the Reserve Bank of India's medium-term target of 2-6% in June. That might give the RBI more room to ease policy further, after having cut its repo rate by 115 basis points (bps) since March to mitigate the economic impact of the pandemic.

The central bank was forecast to cut its key interest rate by another 50 bps by year-end, according to a Reuters poll. With more monetary stimulus expected, business optimism about the coming 12 months hit a five-month high in July, the PMI showed.



ESPLANADE ONE OPENS WITH SAFETY MEASURES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 3: Shopping mall authorities across the capital city breathed a sigh of relief as the state government allowed malls to be opened with stringent restrictions. Authorities of the mall Monday said that the mall will take every step to curb COVID-19 spread.

Centre Director of Esplanade One Parth Nayak said, "We are strictly adhering to the SOPs cir-

culated by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Shopping Centre Association of India (SCAI). All the customers, retailers, and staff members are being continuously monitored to ensure they adhere to the hygiene norms heightened at every touch point inside the mall premises. We are completely dedicated to providing a healthy shopping experience to our patrons and will ensure that we deliver this promise flawlessly."

MCL produces 105L tonnes coal in June

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 3: Amid the crisis of COVID-19 outbreak, a major coal producer Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) produced 105.601 lakh tonne in the month of June, 2020.

The produced coal is not equivalent to the set target for the same month. The subsidiary of Coal India Limited had targeted to produce 124.403 lakh tonne in the month of June, 2020.

According to data available at MCL website, MCL produced 0.528 lakh tonne of coal from underground mining while the company produced around 105.073 lakh tonne from open cast mining.

On the other hand, MCL also fell short of achieving its monthly target in May of current fiscal. In May, MCL produced around 112.150 lakh tonne, thereby falling behind its monthly target which was 124.703. The company majorly produced from opencast mining which

was 111.770 lakh tonne.

The coal producer set a target to produce 173 million tonne of coal during the financial year of 2020-21 in Odisha. Authorities of the company expect to extract around 5 lakh tonne of coal per day and 15 MT coal per month.

MCL produced 1403.576 lakh tonne of coal from all its projects in Odisha during previous financial year. Last fiscal, the company targeted to achieve 1600 lakh tonne but several local demonstrations obstructed to achieve the target.

The company official claimed that MCL produced 4 lakh tonne per day in all its projects in April.



BIZ BUZZ

Microsoft confirms talks to acquire TikTok



SAN FRANCISCO: Microsoft has officially confirmed it is in talks to acquire the operations of video-sharing platform TikTok in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand markets following a conversation between Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella and President Donald Trump. "Microsoft is prepared to continue discussions to explore a purchase of TikTok in the United States," the tech giant said in a blog post late on Monday. "Microsoft fully appreciates the importance of addressing the President's concerns. It is committed to acquiring TikTok subject to a complete security review and providing proper economic benefits to the United States, including the United States Treasury," the company said. According to a report in The Wall Street Journal, a sale was thought close to agreement "but was put in doubt after the US president's warning".

BHEL grapples with uncertainty over normal biz ops

New Delhi: State-run engineering major BHEL Monday said it is still grappling with uncertainties with regard to resumption of normal business operations as rising coronavirus infection cases have led to labour shortage and supply chain disruptions. The country went into a complete lockdown in March-end to check the spread of coronavirus and the government started giving relaxations in lockdown guidelines towards the April-end by gradually opening up economic activities. However, with COVID-19 cases still surging in various parts of the country, BHEL struggled to get back to its normal operational capacity. Meanwhile, India's COVID-19 tally has crossed the 18-lakh mark and the death toll has climbed to 38,135, official data showed on Monday.

GMR Infra to divest large part of assets

NEW DELHI: GMR Infrastructure is working on disinvestment of non-core assets including land and hopes to yield "significant value" even from 50 per cent of land monetization, according to a document. The airport-to-port conglomerate in an investor presentation said land at strategic industrial locations will benefit from the possible manufacturing dislocation from China. "Plan is to divest large part of other assets identified as non-core divestment initiative," the document said and noted that it has 10,500 acres of port and industrial land and "even 50 per cent land monetization" could yield significant value. About its Kakinada Special Investment Region (SIR) in Andhra Pradesh, the group said that it is in discussion with a large number of clients for monetization of land.



Global economy may lose over \$100bn of remittances

MIGRANT WORKERS ARE AMONG THE HARDEST HIT GROUPS, WITH MANY FACING SCANT JOB SECURITY AND LIMITED SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 3: As the world goes through an unprecedented recession amid the pan-

demic, global remittances may fall by \$108.6 billion in 2020 if the economic impact of Covid-19 persists throughout the year, says a report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The report published Monday noted that the pandemic continues to weigh heavily on economic systems and employment around the world. Migrant workers are among the hardest hit groups, with many facing scant job security and limited access to social assistance, it said.

Large-scale unemployment and wage reduction among migrant workers also threaten the wellbe-

ing of many households in Asia and the Pacific who depend on remittances to meet their daily needs, said the ADB report.

"Based on our worst-case scenario, where the Covid-19 economic impact persists throughout the year and dissipates halfway in the last three months of the outbreak, global remittances will fall by \$108.6 billion in 2020," it said.

This is equivalent to an 18.3 per cent decline from what would have been expected without the impact of Covid-19.

Remittance receipts in Asia and the Pacific would fall by \$54.3 bil-



lion, equivalent to 19.8 per cent of remittances in 2018.

Remittances in South Asia are expected to fall the most, by \$28.6 billion, 24.7 per cent of 2018 receipts, followed by remittances to Central Asia (\$3.4 billion), Southeast Asia (\$11.7 billion).

The ADB research showed that the majority of the decline in remittance flows to the region is explained by a \$22.5 billion fall in remittances from the Middle East, which accounts for 41.4 per cent of the total remittance loss in Asia.

This is followed by a \$20.5 billion slump in remittances from the US -- 37.9 per cent of the total.

AGE FUDGING: ADMIT, OR ELSE GET BANNED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 3: The BCCI Monday said it will grant amnesty to registered players who voluntarily declare any age fraud but those found to be in breach of the unusual scheme could be slapped with a two-year suspension.

The measures will be applicable to all cricketers participating in the board's age-group tournaments from the 2020-21 season onwards.

"Under this scheme, players who voluntarily declare that they have manipulated their date of birth by submitting fake/tampered documents in the past will not be suspended and allowed to participate in the appropriate age group level if they disclose their actual date of birth (DOB)," the BCCI said in a release.

"Players have to submit a signed letter/email along with supporting documents to BCCI Age Verification Dept. revealing their actual DOB before 15th September 2020."

The apex body also made it clear that if the players don't accept it now and are later found to be guilty of age fraud then they will be heavily sanctioned.

"However, if registered players do not disclose the facts and are found to have submitted fake/tampered DOB proof documents by BCCI, then they will be banned for two years, and after completion of two-year suspension, they will not be allowed to participate in age group tournaments of BCCI, as well as, age group tournaments organized by the State Units."

The BCCI also said that 'all cricketers committing Domicile fraud, including senior men & women, will be banned for two years' and 'voluntary disclosure scheme does not apply for cricketers who have committed domicile fraud'.

Both BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and his former India teammate Rahul Dravid, who is now the NCA head, had emphasised on sternly dealing with the issue of age fraud.

Among other measures, the governing body said for the U-16 age group tournament 'only players



who are between 14-16 years old will be permitted to register'.

"In the U-19 age group, if a player's birth is found to be registered more than two years after birth, as mentioned in the birth certificate, then there will be restrictions on the number of years allowed to participate in the BCCI



U-19 tournaments."

Ganguly said that the board is committed to ensure a level playing field for competitive participation of players in its age-group tournaments.

"The BCCI has been taking steps to counter age fraud and are now introducing even stricter meas-

ures from the upcoming domestic season. Those who do not voluntarily disclose their misdemeanour will be punished heavily and will be banned for two years."

The BCCI has a dedicated 24x7 helpline for anyone to report age fraud. "BCCI has a zero-tolerance approach towards age fraud in cricket. Not only have we dedicated a 24/7 helpline to counter this menace, but the Board also has a system in place that thoroughly examines, and cross-verifies documents submitted by its registered players," said BCCI secretary Jay Shah.

"The Voluntary Disclosure Scheme will provide those who have committed the fraud a chance to come forward and admit their offence."

Former India captain Dravid urged players to come forward and follow the board's directives. "Age fraud is a serious matter and is detrimental to the health of the sport. Many youngsters who are supposed to be playing in a particular age group fail to make it owing to age fraud," he said.

"With the BCCI taking stern actions to curb this, it is only advisable for the players to come forward and abide by the directives issued by the Board."

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 3: The BCCI's Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for state associations bars 60-plus individuals from taking part in the training camp, potentially affecting Arun Lal and Australian Dav Whatmore, who are coaches of Bengal and Baroda respectively.

Whatmore, 66, was appointed in April while Lal, 65, guided Bengal to the Ranji Trophy final in March. "Individuals who are over the age of 60 years, viz support staff, umpires, ground staff and those individuals with underlying medical conditions such as diabetes, weakened immunity, should be considered vulnerable and are believed to have higher risk of severe COVID-19," read one of the guidelines from BCCI's 100-page SOP, which is in possession of this agency.

"All such individuals should be



discouraged from participating in camp activities unless suitable guidelines are issued by the government," it stated. Both Lal and Whatmore won't be able to join the pre-season training camp.

CAB president Avishek Dalmiya was unavailable for a comment but a senior BCCI official said, "This is SOP. It will be very difficult for any team to breach the protocols. It is unfortunate that someone like Lal ji or Whatmore might have to miss out," the official said.

Dravid to be part of virus Task force

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 3: The BCCI is forming a COVID-19 task force and it will include, among others, former captain and National Cricket Academy (NCA) chief Rahul Dravid, the apex body said in its SOP to state associations.

Players will have to sign a consent form before resuming training at their respective centres as per the standard operating procedure, which bars anyone above 60 years of age and individuals with underlying medical conditions from being part of the camp.

For resumption of training at the NCA in Bangalore, the COVID task force will include Dravid, a medical officer, a hygiene officer and BCCI AGM, Cricket Operations.

Their responsibilities will include communicating 'clearly and regularly with the players, explaining measures being taken to manage risk, and the advice being given to individuals to follow the same and update of COVID19 cases to relevant higher management'.

According to its 100-page-long SOP the players will have to sign the form acknowledging the risks involved with resumption of training.

FIRST TEST AGAINST ENGLAND IN MANCHESTER

2 spinners still in Misbah's plans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Karachi, August 3: Pakistan's head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq has not ruled out the possibility of playing two spinners in the first Test against England which begins from Wednesday at Old Trafford.

"We have looked at the West Indies series and we have seen that at Manchester and Southampton conditions are different and we are seeing some dry conditions and help for spinners and reverse swing," Misbah said during a media interaction Monday.

Misbah also felt that the top order of both teams would play a decisive role in the series as bowling of both teams was top class.

"England's batting has struggled in these conditions. It will be a match between how the top order of both the teams perform. If you can cross 300 in the first innings your chances of winning are around 75 per cent."

Misbah said that not playing at Lord's and Oval, the two happy hunting grounds for Pakistan on previous tours, would not really matter as the pitches and conditions in Manchester and Southampton could help the visitors.

BCCI invites bids for kit sponsors

NEW DELHI: The Indian cricket board Monday invited bids for the team's kit sponsor and official merchandising partner rights through a tender process to replace outgoing sponsor Nike.

The team's current apparel sponsorship right holders Nike's contract is set to expire next month. The sports apparel giant had a four-year deal with the BCCI for 370 crore with a royalty of 30 crore.

Under the Invitation to Tender (ITT), the winning bidder will be granted the right to be the kit sponsor and/or the official merchandising partner and various other associated rights (as defined in the ITT).

"The terms and conditions governing the submission and evaluation of bids including eligibility requirements and performance obligations are contained in the ITT which will be available from August 3, 2020 on receipt of payment of the tender fee of ₹1 lakh," a BCCI release said.

The ITT will remain for purchase till August 26. "The BCCI reserves the right at its discretion to cancel or amend the bidding process at any stage without providing any reason. Merely buying the ITT does not entitle the purchaser to bid, but to bid the purchaser must buy the ITT in the name of the person/entity desiring to bid," the release stated.



He conceded that playing the right combination in the Test would be a decisive and important factor in the first match.

"I think I am pretty much satisfied with the preparations, we assembled after three months and started from zero. It has been a wonderful experience, we require such camps before a major series."

"This period was important for team bonding and preparations, creating match scenarios and good thing is the team is in good shape

and looking forward to the series."

Misbah also made it clear that he and batting coach, Younis Khan, expect Babar Azam to play a pivotal role in the series. "We have high expectations from Babar and then Azhar (Ali) and Asad (Shafiq) as they are senior players and their contributions are very important."

He said the series could be a ground-breaking one for Babar and other youngsters like Naseem Shah, Shaheen Shah Afridi etc.

AFC red-flags six Goa Pro League games

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 3: The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has red-flagged six matches of last year's Goa Professional League for possible 'match manipulation' but the state association Monday said there was not enough evidence.

The AFC had written to the integrity officer of AIFF, Javed Siraj, in March informing about 'suspicious betting patterns indicative of match manipulation' in six matches played between October 16 and November 19 last year.

Goa Football Association secretary Jovito Lopes said his organisation had conducted an investigation and also caught hold of one person - Gabriel Fernandes - who was giving ball-by-ball commentary of Goa League matches but said match-fixing could not be proved due to a lack of evidence.

The matches involved local teams Calangute Association, Panjim Footballers, Guardian Angel Sports Club, FC Goa II and former I-League sides Dempo SC, Salgaocar and Sporting Clube de Goa.

He went on to claim that the suspected person was caught red-handed while he was giving the commentary during an I-League match at Margao March 8 this year between Churchill Brothers and Gokulam Kerala FC.

"We have investigated after getting the letter but we can't conclude that there was match fixing. We don't have hard evidence. The AIFF can only give us evidence and conduct a thorough investigation," Lopes told this agency from Goa.

"We have sent our report to Mr. Siraj after our investigation March 9 and we are yet to hear from the AIFF after that."

In his reply to the AIFF letter, Lopes said the suspected person carried an I-Card issued by the AIFF as the valid reporter of Genius Group.

Lopes said there was no complaint lodged in Goa regarding possible match-fixing.

Wishes pour in as Chhetri turns 36

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 3: India cricket captain Virat Kohli was among those who flooded social media to wish football team captain and icon Sunil Chhetri as he turned 36 Monday.

"Happy b'day skip. Have a great one and God Bless you," Kohli said in his Instagram story with a photo of him with Chhetri, who is India's all-time leading goalscorer.

"Happy Birthday @chetrisunil11. hope you continue to take Indian football to even greater heights with your legendary goals and leadership. have a wonderful day today. Wishing you great success always," tweeted former India cricketer



Yuvraj Singh.

India goalkeeper and Chhetri's clubmate at Bengaluru FC Gurpreet Singh Sandhu tweeted: "Happy

Birthday Legend @chetrisunil11."

The All India Football Federation official Twitter handle shared a rare photo of one-year old Chhetri, saying: "Captain, Leader, Legend, 35 years ago at the age of 'one'."

The AIFF's handle also shared some of Chhetri's goals in a national team shirt. Chhetri is the second active footballer to have scored most international goals, having netted 72 times from 115 outings, while Cristiano Ronaldo has 99 goals to his credit from 164 outings. Lionel Messi is behind Chhetri with 70 (138). Having donned the blue stripes for a record 115 times, Chhetri is also the most capped footballer of the country.

"115 appearances, 72 goals (for

India), 182 appearances, 92 goals (for Bengaluru FC). One Sunil Chhetri," Bengaluru FC said in a tweet, also sharing a video of a packed Sree Kanteerava Stadium chanting Chhetri's name.

The ISL also shared one of Chhetri's amazing goals on their Twitter handle with a caption saying: "Cool as you ice. #GoaloftheDay feat. @chetrisunil11." ISL, earlier in the day, had tweeted with a photo of Chhetri, "Records, like age, is just another number!"

"Join us in wishing Captain Fantastic & #AsianCup2019 fan favourite player @chetrisunil11a very Happy 36th Birthday." Asian Cup's official Twitter handle said in a tweet.

Jaguars & underpants: When Olympic torch relays went wrong

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

From a jaguar on the loose to an elaborate hoax involving burning underwear, the Olympic torch relay has had its fair share of mishaps.

As Japan downscals the 2020 relay due to concerns over the new coronavirus, AFP looks back at some of the trials and tribulations of the event, first run ahead of the Berlin Olympics in 1936.

FLAMING UNDERPANTS

Probably the most memorable stunt surrounding the torch relay came in 1956 when an Australian student named Barry Larkin fooled crowds with a homemade torch topped by burning underpants.

Larkin managed to get his torch - a wooden chair leg crowned with a metal pudding container holding the fiery underwear - up the stairs of Sydney's Town Hall and deliver it to city mayor Pat Hills, cheered on by tens of thousands.

The university student even arranged his own fake motorcycle escort but when he started to run out from the crowd, he found himself flanked by genuine police outriders as the crowd closed in around him.

The mayor sensed nothing wrong

as he took the flame from Larkin, giving the first part of his prepared remarks before realising something was amiss.

JAGUAR ON THE RUN

A 17-year-old jaguar named Juma was lined up for photos as the torch passed through the Amazon in northern Brazil during the relay for the Rio Olympics in 2016. But Juma escaped its handlers and four tranquilliser darts fired at the animal failed to slow it down.

After it threatened a bet, soldiers opened fire on the jaguar - in dan-

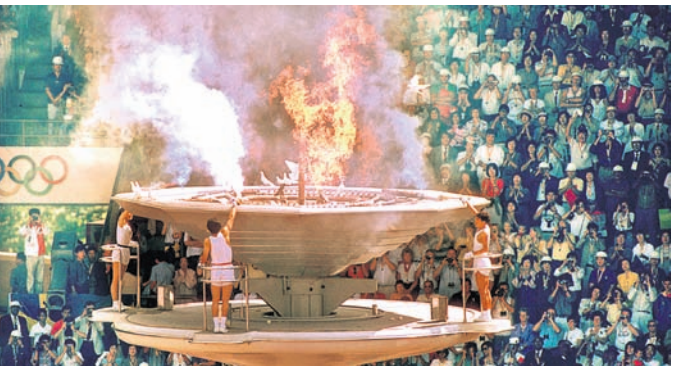


ger of extinction and the symbol of the Amazon - and shot it dead.

FRIED DOVES

The climax of the relay - the lighting of the Olympic cauldron - has provided some unforgettable moments such as Mohammad Ali trembling to light it as he suffered from Parkinson's disease and an archer firing a flame into it in Barcelona.

But things have not always gone smoothly. The most grisly blunder came in Seoul in 1988 when dozens of doves released earlier in the opening ceremony alighted on the cauldron.



When the flame was lit, several of the birds were incinerated to the horror of watching spectators.

Legendary Australian athlete Cathy Freeman was also left hanging at the Sydney opening ceremony when a platform supposed to rise after the lighting of the flame got stuck for around three minutes.

"We've got a slight technical hitch. Nothing that can't be fixed," said one reassuring voice in her earpiece.

PROTESTS APLENTY

The torch relay has been the target of several protests, most notably during the run-up to the Beijing Olympics as demonstrators took China to task over its Tibet policy. Protests started even when the

flame was lit in ancient Olympia and dogged the relay throughout its journey to China, notably as it passed through London, Paris and San Francisco.

In Japan, monks at an ancient Buddhist temple pulled out of hosting a torch ceremony because of the Chinese crackdown in Tibet.

The relay ahead of Sydney 2000 also suffered from isolated protests. One spectator wrestled it out of the hands of former world surfing champion Tom Carroll as he travelled along the New South Wales south coast and tried to hurl it into Kiama harbour before being wrestled to the ground. A high-school student also tried to put out the torch

with a fire extinguisher.

LIGHTING HICCUPS

Although the Olympic flame is supposed to be eternal, problems with the lighting mechanism have caused it to go out several times.

In 2012, officials had to hastily relight the flame from a stand-by 'mother flame' when it vanished from the side of Paralympic badminton star David Follitt's wheelchair in blustery weather in southwest England.

Olympic torches made by a well-known Russian missile manufacturer for the Sochi Winter Games in 2014 were dogged with problems, going out several times and discretely relit by secret service officers.

INAUSPICIOUS START

The Olympic torch has been in space, deep underwater and even scaled Mount Everest. As the Olympic museum website puts it: "Over the last 80 years, the Olympic torch has been carried by hundreds of thousands of people and travelled on every imaginable form of transport, though mostly by foot."

The flame made its first appearance in modern times at Amsterdam 1928. But the first relay took place in Berlin 1936, forever known for the heroics of sprinter Jesse Owens but also tainted by its hosting by Nazi Germany.