



READY TO EXPERIMENT

Actor Vaani Kapoor says Kalpana Chawla is a huge role model and she wants to play her on-screen

LEISURE

P2



COVID CURRY & MASK NAANS

A restaurant in Raj hopes to win back customers during the pandemic with a special 'Covid curry' and 'mask naans'

TWO STATES

P7



TOLL REACHES 100

Estimates say 100 people are killed and 4,000 critically injured in two explosions in Beirut

INTERNATIONAL

P10

At last, Ram Mandir

PM MODI LAYS THE FOUNDATION STONE FOR A TEMPLE AT AYODHYA

AGENCIES & PNN

Ayodhya, August 5: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday launched the construction of a 'Ram temple' on a site that has been contested by Muslims for decades in a dispute that has sparked some of India's bloodiest communal violence.

The Supreme Court ruled last year that Hindus, who believe the site in Ayodhya is the birthplace of Lord Ram, a physical incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, be allowed to build a temple there, ending years of litigation.

The PM unveiled a plaque at the site in an elaborate ceremony to inaugurate construction.

"The whole country is thrilled, the wait of centuries is ending," Modi said in a speech, after taking off a white mask that he wore as a novel coronavirus precaution. Hindus say the site was holy for them long before the Muslim Mughals, India's most prominent Islamic rulers, built the Babri Mosque there in 1528. Hindu protesters demolished the mosque in 1992, triggering riots in which about 2,000 people, most of them Muslim, were killed.

Many Muslims in Ayodhya have welcomed construction of the temple in the hope that it would end years of acrimony with Hindus and help bring economic growth but an influential



PM Modi and UP CM Yogi Adityanath with a statue of Lord Ram at Ayodhya, Wednesday

Muslim group spoke out against it.

"Usurpation of the land by an unjust, oppressive, shameful and majority-appealing judgment can't change its status," the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board said on Twitter. "No need to be heartbroken. Situations don't last forever." Many members of India's Muslim minority saw last year's court ruling awarding the site to Hindus as part of a pattern by the Hindu-nationalist government aimed at sidelining Muslims.

The government denies that.

Before the launch of construction of the temple, Modi took part in Hindu rituals that included the chanting of Vedic mantras by saffron-clad priests to bless the site.

Security was tight in Ayodhya, 687 km southeast of the capital, New Delhi, as the sound of prayers filled its streets as devotees and monks thronged its ancient temples in celebration. While only a few shops were open and police barricades stopped people well before the ceremony area, crowds gathered on rooftops with social distancing making way for heavy jostling among people to get a glimpse of what many described as a historic moment for Ayodhya, a Sanskrit word that means 'unconquerable' and has long been known as birthplace of Lord Ram.



India is a secular country. Prime Minister has violated the oath of the office by laying the foundation stone of

Ram Mandir. This is the day of the defeat of democracy and secularism and success of Hindutva

ASADUDDIN OWAISSI | CHIEF, AIMIM



Hindu-Muslim-Sikh-Isaai aapas mein hain Bhai Bhai! Mera Bharat Mahaan, Mahaan Hamara Hindustan. Our country has always upheld the age-old legacy of unity in diversity, and we must preserve this to our last breath!

MAMATA BANERJEE | CHIEF MINISTER, WB (TWEETED)



See the amazing power of Lord Ram. Buildings were destroyed, there was a lot of effort to eradicate his existence, but Ram remains in our mind even today

NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER



With the construction of sacred Sri Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, may the Lord fulfil our cherished aspirations for establishment of 'Rama-Rajya'. This is our humble prayer

DIBYASINGHA DEB | GAJAPATI, PURI

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State MSMEs get 'emergency' loan of ₹1,462 crores

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5:

The Central government has claimed that the banks have disbursed Rs1,462 crore to the MSMEs in Odisha under Emergency Credit Line Guarantee (ECLG) scheme during this pandemic.

In a webinar, Wednesday, DG of PIB India Rajesh Malhotra said, "As on August 3, 2020, under 100 per cent ECLG scheme, PSBs have sanctioned ₹2,105 crore of which ₹1,462 crore has been disbursed to MSMEs in Odisha."

Malhotra mentioned that public and private sector banks have sanctioned ₹1,37,586 crore under ECLG scheme to MSMEs across the country. In total, public and private banks have disbursed around ₹92,000 crore, out of which ₹50,000 crore is dispatched to MSMEs by public sector banks across the country.

In other hand, director in-charge of MSME development Institute, SK Sahoo, claimed that financial institutions are not pro active in disbursing loans under the scheme. "About 1.50 lakh MSME accounts have been sanctioned for the loan but only 71,031 accounts have been disbursed loans in



PSBs and pvt banks sanction ₹1,37,586 crore under ECLG to MSMEs across the country

The banks have disbursed around ₹92,000 crore, of which ₹50,000 crore is dispatched to MSMEs by PSBs

Odisha. The disbursement rate is only 47.28 per cent in the state while in the country it is 57.12 per cent," Sahoo said. He urged for a speedy disbursement.

MSME-DI has taken the matter to the SLBC and RBI so that the process of loan disbursements can go fast.

In this regard, the state government is inspecting and consulting with the banks to be active in lending loans under the 'Atmanirbhar' scheme. Additional director of state industries department Saroj Kumar Hota said, "We are talking with all bank GMs. We have also asked the entrepreneurs that they can talk to the respective Collectors if they face difficulty in getting loans under the scheme." Industries department stated that MSMEs have ₹80 crore dues pending with different state PSUs and central PSUs.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



What if the public now start expecting Ram Rajya from us?

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	37663.33 ↓ 24.58
NIFTY	11101.70 ↑ 6.40
DOLLAR	75.01 ↓ ₹0.26
EURO	88.97 ↑ ₹0.39
GOLD	₹55,317 ↑ ₹766
SILVER	₹72,127 ↑ ₹2330

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP	29.4°C	29.4°C
MAX	29.4°C	29.4°C
MIN	24.2°C	22.5°C
Humidity	93%	85%
Rainfall	3.8mm	4.2mm
Forecast	Generally cloudy sky	

Centre for CBI probe into Sushant's death

THE TOP COURT GIVES THREE DAYS TO ALL PARTIES TO PUT ON RECORD THEIR RESPECTIVE STANDS

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 5: Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the Supreme Court that the Union of India has in principle accepted the recommendation by Bihar government to order a CBI inquiry into actor Sushant Singh's death case.

Wednesday, Mehta, appearing for the Centre, submitted before Justice Hrishikesh Roy that the notification for the Central Bureau of Investigation will be issued soon, preferably by the end of the day. The top court, in its order, gave three days to all parties to put on record their respective stand.

It also noted that the Mumbai Police must submit its records of investigations done so far.

Hearing on the matter is scheduled for next week.

"We want to know what Mumbai



police have done so far," said Justice Roy. The counsel for the Maharashtra government opposed the CBI probe and argued that it is the Mumbai Police that is authorised to investigate under the CrPC.

The Maharashtra government counsel also said that the Bihar Police's actions are "politically motivated" and insisted that under the CrPC, it is only the Mumbai Police that has "duty, power and function to register the case."

Meanwhile, Shweta Singh Kirti is happy that the CBI has finally been allowed to investigate the death of her brother. "CBI It Is!!" wrote Shweta on Instagram, using hashtag #Rakshabandhan gift, #justiceforsushantsinghraput, and #cbienquiryforsushant. (sic) Along with her post, she also shared the snapshot of a news channel screen flashing the information.

IN EVERY 15 SECONDS, COVID-19 IS CLAIMING ONE LIFE: REUTERS

AGENCIES

New York, August 5: The global death toll from the coronavirus surpassed 7,00,000 Wednesday, according to a Reuters tally, with the United States, Brazil, India and Mexico leading the rise in fatalities.

Nearly 5,900 people are dying every 24 hours from COVID-19 on average, according to Reuters calculations based on data from the past two weeks.

That equates to 247 people per hour, or one person every 15 seconds.

State has lost 25 COVID warriors

PNN & AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 5: As many as 25 corona warriors have died in Odisha while performing COVID-19 related duties, a senior official said Wednesday.

The frontline warriors who have succumbed to the viral infection were deployed in dedicated hospitals, COVID care centres, temporary medical camps and COVID care homes, he added. The 25 deaths account for 11.11 per cent of the state's coronavirus death toll which stands at 225, the official said.

Asking people to observe silent prayer in memory of the COVID warriors, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik said, "These people had been working for more than 150 days, without any rest, since the outbreak of the pandemic in the state."



CM Naveen Patnaik leads a silent prayer and oath taking to pay homage to the sacrifice of COVID warriors through video conferencing

The state had registered its first COVID-19 positive case March 15 and the first fatality April 6.

"While saving us, 25 of them (frontline workers) have laid down their lives," Additional Chief Secretary-cum- Special Relief Commissioner PK Jena said in his twitter post. Most of them hailed from Ganjam district, the state's coronavirus hotspot district, which

has so far reported 117 fatalities and a caseload of 11,812, sources said.

The deceased COVID warriors included health workers, police personnel, anganwadi and ASHA workers, teachers and panchayati raj institution (PRI) functionaries.

CM inaugurates two more plasma banks

CM Naveen Patnaik Wednesday inaugurated two more plasma banks in the state to encourage plasma donation from COVID-cured persons.

The CM through videoconferencing launched the centres: one in Ganjam district and the other in Sambalpur district. The MKCG Medical College at Berhampur and the VIMSAR, Burla, after inauguration, started offering the specialised service.

Heavy rains to lash state till August 8: IMD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5: Heavy rains triggered by a low pressure area formed over the Bay of Bengal, battered many parts of the state. The weather office Wednesday forecast that rainfall in the state will persist till Sunday.

The low pressure area, which has turned well marked, now lies over northwest Bay of Bengal adjoining north Odisha and West Bengal coast. It is causing rainfall in most places in north and south coastal Odisha and in the south interior region, the meteorological centre here said.

The rainfall activity may continue for a few more days as a fresh low pressure area is likely to form over west central part adjoining north Bay of Bengal around August 9, it said.

In view of this, the state government has asked all district administrations to closely monitor the situation.

"The district administrations should remain in readiness to meet any eventuality. Advice for fishermen should be strictly followed," Special Relief Commissioner PK Jena said in an advisory to the district Collectors.

Bhubaneswar recorded 149.4 mm rainfall in 24 hours since Tuesday till 9am Wednesday. Several low-lying areas like Acharya Vihar, Jaydev Vihar, Rasulgah, Bomikhal, Nayapalli and Laxmisagar experienced waterlogging.

Kashmir celebrates Art 370 removal in curfew

AGENCIES

Srinagar, August 5: With a heavy deployment of troops and curbs on public movement, authorities kept a tight lid on potential protests in Kashmir Wednesday, the first anniversary of the revocation of its semi-autonomy.

Local politicians were not permitted outside their homes, most likely to prevent them from calling street demonstrations or even from holding meetings, in the strictest lockdown seen in months.

One year later the authorities are still too afraid to allow us to meet, much less carry out any normal political activity. This fear speaks volumes about the true situation on the ground in Kashmir

— OMAR ABDULLAH | FORMER CM OF J&K



"One year later the authorities are still too afraid to allow us to meet, much less carry out any normal political activity," former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir state

Omar Abdullah said on Twitter: "This fear speaks volumes about the true situation on the ground in Kashmir."

Modi's move last year was accompanied by a total communication blackout and mass detentions. Some rights groups have been critical of the government's handling of Kashmir, particularly ongoing internet curbs.

"This has been compounded by a censored media, continuing detention of political leaders, arbitrary restrictions due to the pandemic with little to no redressal," Amnesty International said in a statement Wednesday.

New Delhi has long accused Pakistan of assisting militant groups in Kashmir - a charge that Islamabad denies, saying it only provides moral and diplomatic backing to Kashmiris seeking self-determination.

Wednesday, militants hurled

grenades at security forces in south Kashmir's Shopian in two separate attacks, police said. There were no casualties.

Lieutenant General BS Raju, the top Indian military commander in the Kashmir valley, said the situation had been largely normal for most of the past year.

"If you look back, you will realise that it was not easy but the security forces have done well to avoid loss of civilian lives under trying conditions in last one year," Raju told Reuters. Raju said his troops had also kept the heat on militant groups who have been fighting Indian rule in its part of Kashmir since 1989, in a conflict that has killed at least 50,000 according to official figures.

FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES

Today, you may be stumped by some mysterious and wonderful event. That, or you may encounter an unexpected yet advantageous incident. It may not exactly be path-breaking, but it is sure to make you take stock of things.

TAURUS

You will not lose your cool today despite the overwhelming odds, feels Ganesha. Rationale and reason will be the rhyme of your attitude as you diagnose the problems and uproot them successfully. Success beckons and you are ready to reach out and grab it by hook or by crook.

GEMINI

You will ponder over religious and cultural values and issues today. You will indulge in a fair amount of discussion with your family members over the issue and present your thoughts and feelings on the subject.

CANCER

Ganesha predicts an excellent and exceptional day for you at work. You are likely to need all your business acumen while negotiating deals. Your leadership skills are likely to come to the fore during the final stage of a deadline, be it about completing an order or launching new products and marketing them, says Ganesha.

LEO

A mixed bag of fortunes, a bittersweet pill, call it what you will, but today brings with it a lot of things packed within its 24-hour period. Ganesha foresees a hectic morning, and an even more frantic afternoon.

VIRGO

Ganesha feels that today may be an important turning point in your life. You will look to secure the money much required for your bright future. Relationship matters will top your priorities during the afternoon today.

LIBRA

Today is an important day for you, and you will learn a lot from your life partner. Even on the work front, business partners will extend their best possible cooperation to you. Your chances of winning in cut-throat competitions are very bright today, predicts Ganesha.

SCORPIO

You are likely to get overboard with your ambitions and be loud-mouthed, says Ganesha. But do not be too forceful or severe lest you end up tarnishing your image. It is best to stay clear of conflicts in the larger scheme of things, advises Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS

Unnecessary expenditure might clog your bill today, feels Ganesha. Organising and detailing will be a time-sink as you will spend hapless hours trying to discipline things. The vibrant evening will be a contrast to your hectic day as you kick back and relax while socialising.

CAPRICORN

After running about helter-skelter for getting your work done, you will sit back and spend the day planning the course of future action. Sudden and unexpected profits are on the cards, but you will need to be mindful of how best you utilise it.

AQUARIUS

Finally, you've decided to clean up the mess! And you will do a fine job, whether it's your workspace, your bills, your finances, or even your closet. And now that you're inspired, you might as well sort out your mental clutter too, chuckles Ganesha.

PISCES

Your business associates will marvel at your business acumen, and will respect the insights you provide for them to work with. Meanwhile, you will be busy spending quality time with your family and showing them how much they mean to you today, says Ganesha.



MULAN TO OPEN ON OTT

The much-delayed live action remake of *Mulan* will be skipping traditional theatrical window to release on a streaming platform, but for a price. *Mulan* will go straight to Disney Plus, which has over 60.5 million paying subscribers, reports *variety.com*.

D'ARCY KEEN TO HELM MCU FILM

Actor James D'Arcy says he would like to call the shots on a film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe(MCU) some day. In an interview with FandomWire, D'Arcy spoke about his interest in the Marvel films, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.



Urvashi goes desi to make a statement

Mumbai: Actress and former beauty queen Urvashi Rautela goes desi in order to make a scorching statement, in her new Instagram post.

In her new picture on the social media app, Urvashi sports a sparkling purple saree paired with a blouse that accentuates her oomph. She completes her look with diamond danglers and her hair done in a ponytail.

"Crispy saree vibes tbh," she wrote as the caption. The picture currently has 432K likes on social media.

Urvashi was recently seen in the film *Virgin Bhanupriya* for which she had gain nearly seven kilos.

"For the character of Bhanupriya I gained 15.432 pounds, and I would say preparation is as much as an actor's job as a performance itself, because Bhanupriya's physicality, speech or persona are vastly different from my own. As an actor my challenge was primarily physical, mental, emotional and even vocal," Urvashi said.

The film also featured Gautam Gulati, Archana Puran Singh, Delnaaz Irani, Rajiv Gupta and Brijendra Kala, Niki Aneja Walia and Rumana Molla.



Vaani Kapoor wants to play Kalpana Chawla

Mumbai: Actress Vaani Kapoor would love to do a biopic and says it would be an absolute honour for her to play astronaut Kalpana Chawala on screen.

"Kalpana Chawla is a huge role model for women around the world and for anyone who has ever dreamt of being an astronaut. I would really really want to play her on-screen. It'll be an absolute honour," she said.

Vaani feels she would love to take risks as an artist and try her hand at doing the biopic and also experiment with several other genres.

"I've tried to pick the best from what came my way and it feels amazing to have worked with some of the best in the industry. I have been able to get opportunities for roles so distinctive. From the small town girl Tara in *Shudh Desi Romance* to a girl who is French in *Befikre*, to an independent single mother in *War*. It's been pretty good," she said.

ANS



Kartik suits up for breakfast

Mumbai: Actor Kartik Aaryan showed his fans what he has for breakfast, but with a twist. Kartik took to Instagram and put up a picture where he is seen having a watermelon. He is seen all suited up and is sporting sunglasses.

"Aaj breakfast mein Sabr ka Phal (watermelon emoji) khaya Aap logon ne kya khaya (what did you have)?" he wrote.

Social media users found his caption quite funny.

Actress Sophie Choudry wrote: "Caption", to which he replied: "You forgot king".

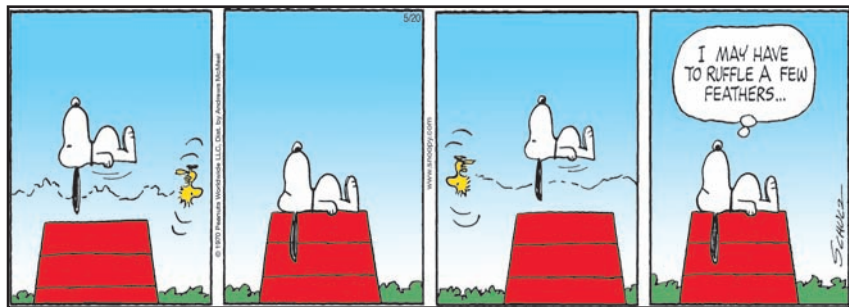
A user said: "This is called amiri (richness). Breakfast bhi suit mai (Breakfast in a suit)."

Kartik quipped, in reply: "Bhade ka hai dost (It's rented, my friend)."

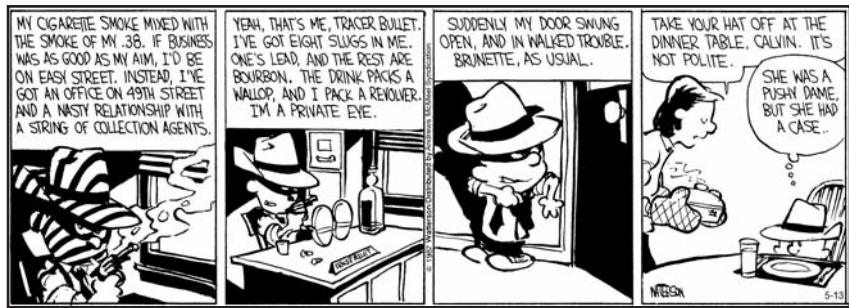
A fan praised his caption, to which Kartik replied: "Oscar should start a Best Caption Category." Kartik has *Dostana 2* and *Bhoolaiyaa 2* coming up.

ANS

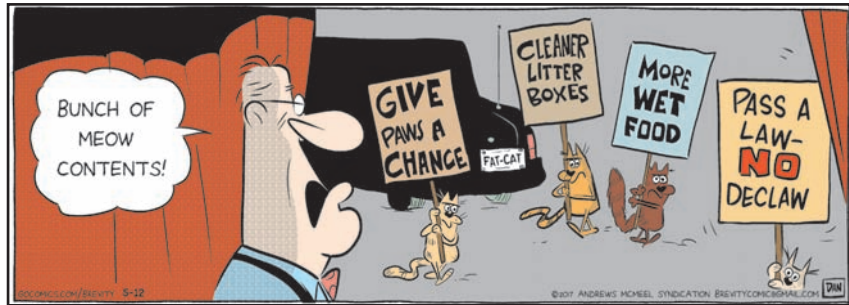
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

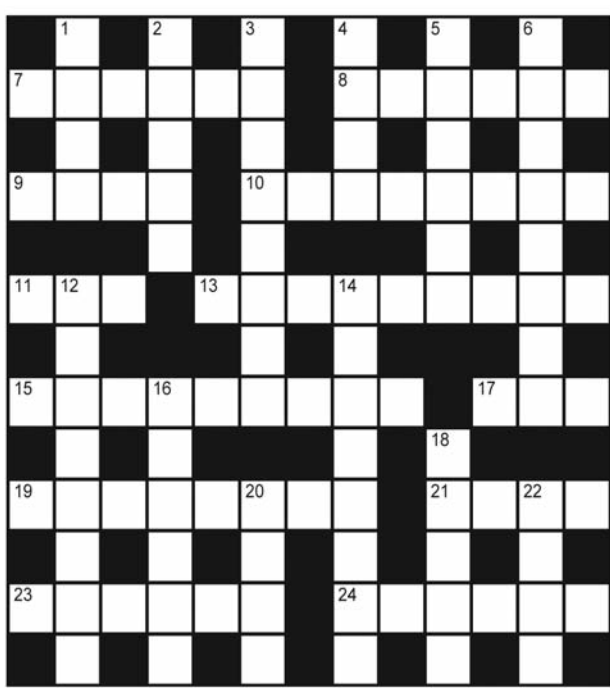


BREVITY



FUN post

CROSSWORD

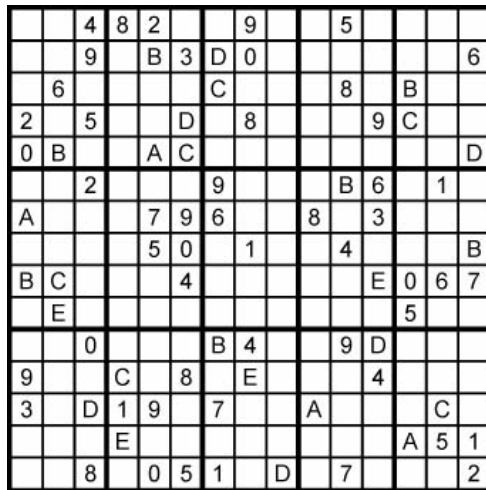


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- Across
- 7 Zephyr
 - 8 Proverbs
 - 9 Chigger
 - 10 Links play (4,4)
 - 11 Boxer's target
 - 13 Not lined up (3-6)
 - 15 Lute relatives
 - 17 Recipe word
 - 19 Aperitif wine brand
 - 21 Barbecue entree
 - 23 It keeps the bugs out
 - 24 Light-footed
 - 5 Conan Doyle character
 - 6 Consumed
 - 12 Mexican resort
 - 14 Everlasting
 - 16 Stingless male bees
 - 18 Leftover
 - 20 Women in habits
 - 22 Round sound
- Down
- 1 Seed coat
 - 2 Tooth trouble
 - 3 Serene
 - 4 Island near Java

SUDOKU

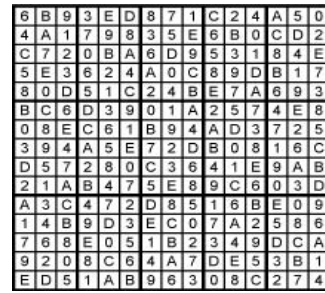
To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 0 to 9 and the letters A to E.



SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

SUDOKU

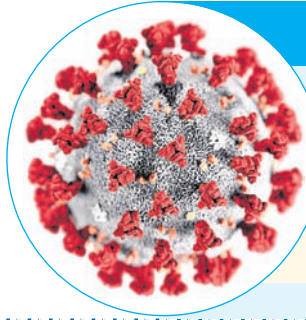


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



WINNING LAURELS

Bhubaneswar North MLA Susant Kumar Rout Wednesday felicitates Kumar Biswaranjan of Niladri Vihar for qualifying the civil service examinations conducted by the UPSC



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	1,88,06,230	1,19,77,394	7,06,457
India	19,06,616	12,81,660	39,820
Odisha	39,018	25,738	225



Governor Ganeshi Lal observes silent prayer at Raj Bhawan

State observes 1-min silence for Covid warriors

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5: Following the appeal made by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, people from different walks of life Wednesday offered a minute's silent prayer for the Covid warriors, who have sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

Naveen himself led the prayer and administered oath to the people of Odisha.

"It has been five months to the fight against Covid-19. Today, the number of Covid recovered pa-

tients in the state reached 25,000. It is due to the sacrifices of the Covid warriors," Naveen said.

In Odisha, 25 Covid warriors have sacrificed their lives in the service to mankind. Their supreme sacrifice for humanity will be remembered; it is unmatched, he said.

Naveen paid deep condolences to the departed Covid warriors by observing one-minute silent prayer at 6pm. He administered oath to pay respect and support to Covid warriors, and join the battle in compliance with Covid guidelines.

People across the state includ-

ing political leaders, employees of various offices and institutions joined him in this prayer. Ministers, MLAs and senior government officers including Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy joined the prayer at Convention Centre at Lok Seva Bhawan.

DGP Abhay, Police Commissioner Sudhanshu Sarangi and police officials also held condolence meetings in various parts across the state. BJD leaders led by Sanjay Das Burma and other party leaders joined the prayer at the party office here.



Kalinga Stadium



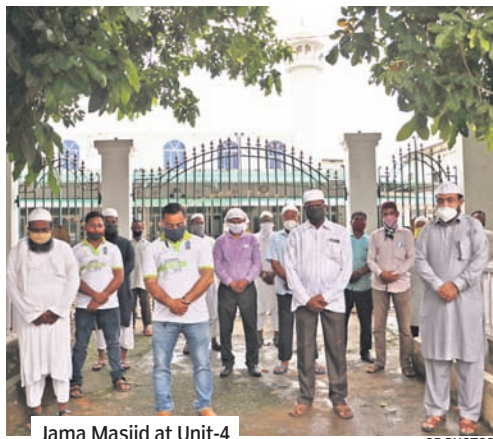
Odisha Assembly



Odisha police headquarters, Cuttack



BJD office, Bhubaneswar



Jama Masjid at Unit-4

OP PHOTOS

Heavy rain to lash state from August 9

FRESH LOW PRESSURE AREA LIKELY TO FORM OVER WEST CENTRAL ADJOINING NORTH BAY OF BENGAL AUGUST 9

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5: Heavy rain triggered by a low pressure area formed over the Bay of Bengal battered many parts of the state while the local weather office Wednesday forecast that rainfall in the state will persist till Sunday.

The well-marked low pressure area over northwest Bay of Bengal off north Odisha-West Bengal coasts now lies over Northwest Bay of Bengal adjoining north Odisha and West Bengal coasts. It has caused heavy rainfall in most places in north and south coastal Odisha and in the south interior region, Bhubaneswar meteorological centre here said.

Under its impact, normal to heavy rainfall will continue for another day at a few places of Sundargarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts.

"The southwest monsoon has now become active in Odisha. Rainfall activity—light to moderate—will continue in many parts of the state for at least a week," said Bhubaneswar Met Centre director HR Biswas.

The rainfall activity will again increase from August 8 as a fresh low pressure area is likely to form over west central part adjoining north Bay of Bengal around August 9, he said.

Some places of Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Kalahandi, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara will witness heavy downpour, August 8.

Heavy to very heavy rainfall may occur at isolated places over the districts of Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Rayagada, Nuapada,



LOPAR IMPACT

The low pressure area, which has turned well marked, now lies over northwest Bay of Bengal adjoining north Odisha and West Bengal coast

The district administrations have been asked to remain in readiness to meet any eventuality

Bhubaneswar recorded 149.4 mm rainfall in 24 hours since Tuesday till 9am Wednesday

Bolangir; Ganjam, Sonepur, Boudh and Sambalpur, Sunday.

In view of the rough weather conditions, fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea during the period.

Meanwhile, the state government has asked all district administrations to closely monitor the situation.

"The district administrations should remain in readiness to meet any eventuality. Advice for fishermen should be strictly followed," Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena said in an advisory to the district collectors.

Bhubaneswar recorded 149.4 mm rainfall in 24 hours since Tuesday till 9am Wednesday. Several low-lying areas like Acharya Vihar, Jaidev Vihar, Rasulgurh, Bomikhal, Nayapalli and Laxmisagar experienced water logging.

Sonepur recorded the maximum 170 mm rain during the period, while Talcher recorded 108 mm, Chandbali 92 mm, Sambalpur 91.3 mm, Boudh 75.2 mm, Paradip 71.8 mm and Cuttack 63.2 mm, the Met centre said.

Rainfall of varied intensity or thundershower is likely to occur in most parts of the state till Sunday, which may cause water-logging in low-lying areas, the weathermen said.

Fund crunch mars Mo Sarkar projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5: Even though the state government has announced many projects to boost healthcare infrastructure under Mo Sarkar, funds crunch has thrown spanner on many such projects.

Sources said at least 57 infrastructure projects have been approved for critical medical institutions in districts like Koraput, Malkangiri, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi, Boudh, Phulbani, Nayagarh, Samalpur, Deogarh and Angul. Out of these, only two projects have been completed. Remaining 55 will be taken up after receiving fund from the Health department, sources said.



Only 2 out of 57 projects have been completed while the remaining will be taken up after the Health department sanctions funds

The Works department has estimated that ₹1187.16 crore will be required in three years starting 2020-21 FY to execute the projects. Out of the estimated ₹1187.16 crore, ₹149.28 crore will be required for the current year while ₹481.11 crore has been earmarked for 2021-22 and

₹556.77 crore for 2022-23, the sources said.

Works department chief engineer had written a letter to Health department additional chief secretary PK Mohapatra in this regard a month ago. As it yielded no result, Works department special sec-

retary Hemanta Kumar Padhi has urged Health department to release ₹149.28 crore for early implementation of the projects.

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti last year, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had launched his government's new governance initiative 'Mo Sarkar'. As part of this programme, senior government officers including Chief Secretary, Development Commissioner and secretaries visited hospitals in various districts and made necessary recommendations before the CM to improve the healthcare facility in the area. However, the progress made so far on healthcare infrastructure front is far from impressive.

TELE-CONSULTATION FOR 10K AT AIIMS

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5: The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Bhubaneswar has provided tele-consultations to 10,416 persons through phone and 'Swasthya App' during July.

As per the premier healthcare facility sources, the OPD unit of the AIIMS has been closed down in view of Covid-19. The institute has conducted 64 deliveries including four Covid positive women during the month. It has also conducted 269 major surgeries and 98 emergency surgeries. As many as 2,576 patients have visited trauma & emergency unit of the hospital. While 5,938 RT-PCR tests were conducted at the AIIMS, 4,374 patients were screened at Covid screening clinic and 257 Covid patients admitted to the institute in July.



DISMANTLING CHARIOT



Carpenters remove the wheels of Darpadalan chariot from the axles by using a crane near the Lions' Gate of Srimandir, Wednesday. As per a decision taken by the Srimandir administration, the three chariots of this year's Rath Yatra would be preserved at Sri Jagannath Ballav mutt in Puri

OP PHOTO

Tourists can stay in Puri hotels sans nCoV report

POST NEWS NETWORK

NORMS EASED

Puri, August 5: Puri Collector Balwant Singh Wednesday declared that the tourists are no longer required to produce a Covid-19 negative report for staying in hotels.

According to sources, amidst Covid-19 crisis, tourists and visitors travelling from one district to another are facing major difficulties in hotel accommodation under increased pressure from hotel owners to furnish a Covid-19 negative report in fear of the police personnel.

However, the Puri Collector said, "They (tourists) can stay at the hotels by producing their reservation ticket of the hotel only."

An order issued by Puri district administration read, "It is hereby

clarified that any person coming from another district/state to stay in hotels located in Puri Municipality area is required to produce the reservation ticket of the hotel at NAKA points instead of Covid-19 negative report."

In the order, the District Collector directed all tehsildars-cum-incident commanders along with the IICs of the respective police stations to ensure strict implementation of the order.

The Collector took the move following an allegation by some police personnel stopping tourists from entering the town if they didn't furnish Covid-19 negative report.

Cong targets govt over school fee

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5: The Odisha Congress, Wednesday, accused the state government of failing to monitor the fees charged by private schools during Covid-19 pandemic that has broken the financial back-bone of many.

Addressing a presser here, Wednesday, Congress leaders Manas Choudhury and Satya Prakash Nayak attacked the state government and the alleged unregulated private schools.

"Several private schools are imposing boarding charges and bus charges while both the services stand suspended during the pan-

demic. Many schools are not returning the fees paid by the students for entrance tests in case they do not take admissions," Choudhury said.

He also said that many private schools have decided to hike the fees. "Owners of many such private schools with good rapport with the Third Floor think they can do whatever they want during Covid times," Choudhury added.

Nayak, on the other hand, said that in Odisha, the government has a committee to monitor the fees of private schools but the schools continue to make their own rules.

I want to know what stops the CM to issue directives to desist the private schools from imposing fees on students like transportation charges

SATYA PRAKASH NAYAK I CONG SPOKESPERSON

PLEA FOR AID TO LAWYERS

SC ISSUES NOTICE TO STATE BAR COUNCIL

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 5: The Supreme Court, Wednesday, issued notice to the Bar Council of India and Odisha State Bar Council while hearing a petition seeking directions to the Bar Council to provide financial assistance to needy advocates.

A three-judge bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde and comprising Justices R Subhash Reddy and BR Gavai heard the petition filed by Kiran Bala Maharana and issued notice. Significantly, the petitioner

pleaded the court to direct the respondents to provide immediate financial assistance to the petitioner and other applicants under the Odisha State Bar Council Emergency Financial Assistance

Rules, 2020 approved by the Bar Council of India in view of unprecedented crisis faced by a large section of legal practitioners in Covid times.

The appellant said in the petition that she is suffering financially, mentally and emotionally and each and everyday is a struggle for her existence.



COVID-19 TESTING

Real-time results for City now

BMC ORDERS TESTING DATA TO BE UPLOADED ON THE INDIAN COUNCIL OF MEDICAL RESEARCH PORTAL

POST NEWS NETWORK/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, August 5: The COVID-19 test results coming from various testing centres across Bhubaneswar will be uploaded on the ICMR portal in a real-time basis for quick contact tracing, an official said.

Instruction in this regard has been issued by Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary, the official said.

Chairing a meeting of all the city-based COVID testing agencies Tuesday for smooth testing and reporting, the BMC Commissioner ordered that the data be uploaded on the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) portal—cvanalytics.icmr.org.in/login.php—timely in a phase-wise manner from Thursday.

While nearly 1,600 COVID tests are currently being done at different testing centres across the state Capital, getting reports on time and tracing the contacts have become the need of the hour. Representatives of 11 testing centres were present at the meeting, an official statement said.

Among others, the meeting also discussed issues pertaining to compulsory registration (Control and Regulation Act-1990), trained technicians, pricing of tests and uploading to ICMR portal.

All cases testing positive from



TIMELY MANAGEMENT

Given the nature of COVID-19 infection, timely management of cases is very crucial to contain the infection

Therefore, timely intimation of all such cases is very important. 1,600 COVID tests are currently being done at different testing centres across Bhubaneswar

city-based health-care institutions, but from other districts, will be uploaded in the ICMR portal, but against the respective districts so that such cases are not missed out.

Given the nature of COVID-19 infection, timely management of cases is very crucial to contain the infection. Therefore, timely intimation of all such cases is very important. For reporting of these cases the data in the prescribed format as used for updating in ICMR portal, may also be sent to BMC di-

rectly, it said.

Abstract of all kinds of samples tested - RT-PCR, Antigen and True-NAAT - should be given in pre-scribed format by 7 pm, it said.

Without the availability of sample referral form (SRF) no test samples should be processed, stand-alone testing laboratories may be tagged with some hospitals/samples collection centres for generating SRFs. However, testing should be strictly subjected to availability of the SRFs only.

Recoveries cross 25,000-mark

State's novel coronavirus recoveries crossed the 25,000-mark with another 1,255 persons recovering from the viral infection Wednesday, an official of the Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

The recoveries include 485 from Ganjam, 125 from Khurda, 122 from Sundargarh, 107 from Sambalpur, 75 from Puri, 43 from Mayurbhanj and 40 from Cuttack. The total recovered cases in Odisha now stand at 25,737, the H&FW department said.

On the other hand, Odisha's COVID-19 caseload crossed the 39,000-mark with the detection of 1,337 fresh infections, while nine more fatalities pushed its coronavirus death toll to 225 Wednesday, the H&FW department said.

The fresh infections reported in 28 districts took Odisha's tally to 39,018, said the official.

As many as 815 new cases were reported from quarantine centres, while 522 people tested positive for

the infection during contact tracing exercise, added the official.

Ganjam district, Odisha's COVID-19 hotspot, reported the highest number of new cases at 201, followed by Khurda (196), Cuttack (168), Sundargarh (83), Keonjhar (80), Gajapati (75), Puri (72) and Nayagarh (60). Twenty other districts reported less than 60 cases each, the official pointed out, adding that Ganjam reported five of the nine fresh fatalities, while Gajapati, Keonjhar, Khurda and Sundargarh districts registered one death each.

The fresh fatalities have taken Ganjam district's COVID-19 death toll to 117, while 31 deaths have been registered in Khurda so far, 14 in Gajapati and 11 each in Cuttack and Sundargarh, said the official.

The official added that two more COVID-19 patients in Malkangiri and Cuttack districts have died due to other ailments, taking the count of such fatalities to 44 in the state.

‘Ensure timely delivery of agricultural inputs’

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5: Agriculture minister Arun Sahoo Wednesday directed concerned officials to send essential fertilizer and other agricultural inputs to farmers of the state during the pandemic. He also said that the department had asked the central government to send more fertilizer to the state.



Around 9.20 lakh farmers have been added to a WhatsApp group created by the state government to share important information related to agriculture

During a virtual review meeting about progress of kharif crops with officials of the agriculture department, Sahoo said that the department must give priority to the farmers during this pandemic and must ensure that all the farmers get all the fertilizer and agriculture inputs at affordable and market rate.

He also reviewed the heavy rainfall in different parts of the state and also discussed various programmes such as Mo Pokhari scheme for fish farmers with fisheries department officials.

Earlier, minister Sahoo said that

free helpline number Ama Krushi was also created in which around 8.75 lakh farmers were added.

The department also sent update and message through its official twitter account and through mKisan, a SMS Portal for farmers, which enables all Central and State government organizations in agriculture and allied sectors to give information/services/advvisories to farmers by SMS in their language, preference of agricultural practices and location.

This apart, we have plans to add 200 farmers from every panchayats in the WhatAspp group.

Crorepati ACF lands in Vigilance net



POST NEWS NETWORK

Puri, August 5: Vigilance sleuths Wednesday carried out simultaneous raids at the residence and office of the assistant conservator of forests (ACF) of the wildlife division here on charges of amassing disproportionate assets.

Separate teams of the Bhubaneswar division anti-corruption wing of the state police raided the office and rented accommodation of ACF Prashant Kumar Swain in Puri in the morning. The sleuths also searched Swain's residential house at Mahabhoi Sasan in Bhubaneswar, paternal house at Sisilo village under Balianata police limits in Khurda and his in law's house at Station Bazar in Dhenkanal among other places, said an official statement.

The teams claimed to have traced Swain's of more than Rs 1,16,27,938.

CLASSIFIED

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit Notary, Angul, I Smt. Sanghamitra Sahu, aged about 28 years, W/o. Sipan Kumar Sahu of Vill/P.O.-Inkarabandha, P.S./Dist.-Angul. My name Sangha Mitra Sahu has been wrongly mentioned in my husband's service record instead of Sanghamitra Sahu. Sanghamitra Sahu will written in all document.

By virtue of an affidavit Notary, Angul, I Anurag Sahu, S/o. Sipan Kumar Sahu of Vill/P.O.-Inkarabandha, P.S./Dist.-Angul. My name Mr. Anurag Sahu has been wrongly mentioned in my father's service record instead of Anurag Sahu. Anurag Sahu will written in all official document.

RSP units register best July output

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, August 5: Amid the challenges thrown by COVID-19 crisis, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP) has registered an all-time best July production in several of its units including blast furnaces and hot strip mill, a statement issued by the company said.

Blast Furnace-1 made 70,075 tonne of hot metal during the month, while Blast Furnace-5 clocked 2,39,578 tonne of production in July 2020, the statement said.

Similarly, the 60-year old Hot Strip Mill-1 rolled out 1,51,848 tonne of HR Coil (Total) thereby surpassing the previous best recorded in July 2017 while the New Plate Mill made 73,639 tonne of plates, bettering its previous best July performance registered in 2018, it said.

The Hot Strip Mill-1 added another feather to its cap by dispatching 1,23,378 tonne of HR Coils and Plates, which is an all time best performance.

Besides, all the major units - Coke Ovens, both the Sinter Plants, Blast Furnaces, Steel Melting Shop-2, both the Plate Mills and both the Pipe Plants achieved more than 100 per cent of their targets, it said.

The month was also remarkable for RSP, a unit of public sector SAIL, as it established several benchmarks in different fields of endeavour. RSP created a national record by making 48 blows from a

RSP created a national record by making 48 blows from a single converter of SMS-2 on a single day

single converter of SMS-2 on a single day—July 2.

This feat has been appreciated by the entire steel firmament of the country. A new benchmark of 2,338 cycles was also set in torpedo lining life. The achievements hold a special significance, as the employees have made this success possible, while facing the challenges of COVID-19 simultaneously, the statement said.

In a message to the employees of RSP, Dipak Chattaraj, CEO has urged them to keep themselves as well as their family members safe from COVID-19 by strictly adhering to all the safety protocols.

"The market is responding positively and the demand for flat products has increased. We have got a glorious opportunity in our hands to usher in a turnaround of the plant, which eventually means a better and brighter future for all of us. Believe me, if each one of us is alert, aware and careful, we can make our city and our steel plant Corona free and simultaneously usher in a new future for ourselves and our plant," he emphasised.

More medicos roped in for COVID care in state

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5: The state health and family welfare department Wednesday said that it has planned to rope in the services of Post Graduate in-service doctors and other PG doctors for health care delivery in the state.

This comes after the COVID outbreak has thrown new challenges to the government and healthcare institutions. With the requisition of these doctors a total of 477 such doctors would now be added for the services.



"A total of 225 in-service PG Doctors and 252 PG doctors from different Medical Colleges

and Hospitals in the State have been requisitioned and placed with the various districts CDMOs for Covid-19 duty. This will further strengthen the manpower in the hospital to fight against Covid," a statement from the department said.

Many such students from SCB Medical College-Cuttack, VIM-SAR-Burla, MKCG-Berhampur, High Tech Medical College have now been roped in for their services in different areas to ensure that the lack of doctors do not affect the treatment and management of COVID 19 patients.

FOCUS: BREAKING THE CHAIN



Cuttack Youth Congress activists Wednesday urge the CMC Commissioner to sanitise the city amid rising COVID-19 cases in the Millennium City

OP PHOTO

IN MEMORIAM



Assembly Speaker SN Patro pays tribute to social reformer Nilakantha Das on his birth anniversary on the premises of Odisha Legislative Assembly in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

Scale up ecosystem for research: CS to IIT

IIT, Bhubaneswar achieves 91% placement in 2019-20

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5: In an attempt to make Bhubaneswar-based International Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) a centre of excellence, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy advised the authorities concerned to scale up research programmes in the institute.

Chairing the Board of Governors (BoG) meeting of the institute, Tripathy directed the institute to work out the 'way forward' for scaling up research and specialisation ecosystem in the institute. The way forward should be short-term, medium-term and long-term objectives with broad timelines, he said.

The IIIT established by state government in 2006 has achieved 91 per cent placement in 2019-20. The institute has maintained a placement record of 90 to 94 per cent during the last five years, sources said.

As many as 26 companies in-

cluding Microsoft, McKinsey, Visa, Dell, Turtlement and Amazon have visited the IIIT campus during the year 2019-20 for campus recruitment. The pass-outs have been offered appointment on an average salary of Rs 4.85 lakh per annum. The maximum salary offer from the companies has been Rs 41 lakh per annum.

IIIT director Gopal Nayak said the institute is successfully running the innovative methodologies like self learning course, self development course and coding competition. A self-learning course is introduced in each semester. The students pick a subject, study on their own and write a personal learning paper.

Institute's Registrar Ajit Kumar Das said a team of IIIT students secured top rank in Google online marketing challenge of the current year. Presently, IIIT is providing consultancy to government in nine different projects.

Local outfits protest against grand Ram Temple ceremony

POST NEW NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5: A group of local outfits under the banner Save Constitution, Save Country Wednesday sent a memorandum to the Governor of Odisha and President of India protesting against the union government's decision of organising a grand foundation stone laying ceremony at Ayodhya for Lord Rama temple.

Kailash Mishra, a participant in the protest near Raj Bhawan, said that the pandemic is turning more dangerous day by day. "Till Wednesday, daily cases in India reached more than 50,000 and death toll was more than 800. It seems by the end of August, active cases will be more than that of Brazil," he said.

"In such a difficult scenario, the central government's decision to have a grand foundation stone laying ceremony at Ayodhya for Lord Rama temple is against the value and culture of the country," he added.

He further said, "It would have been prudent to have a modest Bhumi puja by the NYASA instead of Prime Minister. The Prime minister is working under the oath of our constitution. His involvement in this ceremony has demolished the basic character of our constitution."

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‘RAJA BAKHRI’ WALLOWS IN MONUMENTAL NEGLECT

SAMBALPUR KING’S PALACE STANDS TESTIMONY TO MANY HISTORICAL MILESTONES

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, August 5: Sambalpur town houses historically famous Dasamahavidya Mahal, also known as Raja Bakhri (king’s palace). This monument stands testimony to several historical events in the town of western Odisha. However, Raja Bakhri is left in a sorry state. Walls and ceilings lying broken and creepers running wild all over them speak volumes about the monumental neglect to the place. Over years, the government has not taken note of its maintenance and preservation. Raja Bakhri is spread over 0.93 decimal of land near Kunjelpada Chhak. The old palace consists of 30 chambers while one is known as Rani Uas (queen’s place) complete with a verandah and a yard. The ceiling of one of the chambers is safe and its Sukla paintings are intact. Sadly, major parts of the palace are tottering on the brinks. Many residents observed that if the king’s place is restored, olden artifacts can be conserved. The place can be de-



veloped into a tourism centre with the facility of a park, they added. As the sun sets down, anti-social elements throng here. Besides, many people have encroached upon parts of Raja Bakhri. In the early parts of 17th century, Maharaj Chhatra Sai had got the two-storied Dasamahavidya Mahal built. By 1852, the place had been abandoned as the Sambalpur royals had no inheritor to look after the kingdom.

The place could be developed as a tourist site. Unfortunately, nothing has been done to preserve and protect the historical monument,’ some locals lamented. They demanded that urgent measures were needed to preserve the monument while a park is needed to attract people and highlight the palace. They pointed out that people from across the state come to Sambalpur to visit Samaleswari temple, Ghanteswari Pitha, Huma temple and Hirakud dam. If this



historical monument is renovated, tourists will get an opportunity to know about the history of this old city. The local municipality or the Sambalpur Development Authority should take the responsibility to preserve the structures, others said.

- In the early parts of 17th century, Maharaj Chhatra Sai had got the two-storied Dasamahavidya Mahal built
- By 1852, the place had been abandoned as the Sambalpur royals had no inheritor to look after the kingdom
- Later, the royal properties were entangled in disputes after small kings, landlords and some gontias of Sonepur, Barpali and Jharsuguda staked their claims on the royal property

palace was left to wallow in neglect and reduced to ruins. Valuable assets and articles were stolen. According to history, Veer Surendra Sai and his brother Udant Sai had escaped from Hajaribag jail and reached

Sambalpur. He and his brother stayed in this palace for a few days. Sai came to Sambalpur October 7, 1857 with 1500 supporters and the British government did not dare to stop him. He stayed at Raja Bakhri during that period. Freedom fighters had waved the national flag from the Raja Bakhri here during the freedom movement. While the Quit India Movement was at its peak, freedom fighters waived flags at the façade of the place in August 1942, giving an open challenge to the British government. Raja Bakhri is witness to many historical events. Considering its glorious history, the state archeological department carried out some restoration work of the place at cost of Rs 1 lakh in 2001. However, no follow-up work was taken up. Later, Sambalpur Press Club and some other cultural outfits cleaned the palace. In 2016, a technical team – Intach conservation head Jive Gupta, Intach state head Mallika Mitra, Amiya Bhusan Tripathy – took stock of the possible conservation measures, restoration of old paintings and peripheral development. Rs 7 lakh was spent on restoration of a ceiling of one chamber. Intach had prepared a DPR for its restoration with an estimated cost of Rs 3 crore. The tourism department carried out restoration of Rani Bakhri at Kamali Bazar at a cost of Rs 1 crore. But the Raja Bakhri has been left in ruins, locals rued.

Diesel price spiral takes toll on farm sector

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhawanipatna, August 5: Farming has undergone changes with an increasing number of farmers adopting modern agricultural practices in the face of labour shortage and to save time and money, a report said. The farmers in Kalahandi, a predominantly agricultural district, have adapted themselves to changes. Most farmers use diesel-powered tractors and power tillers in the face of a severe shortage of farmhands. Their dependency on these tractor and power tillers has grown more due to shortage of farmhands following Covid-19 pandemic. However, many do not have their own tractors or power tillers and use them on rent. The diesel price determines the size of the rent of tractors and power tillers. In last farming season, a farmer paid Rs 900 for hiring a tractor for one hour while this year he has to pay Rs 12,000 for the same duration. Moreover, farmers having their own tractors need seven litres of diesel to plough for one hour. However, a Rs12 increase in diesel price during last 14 days has hit the farmers hard as they have to spend more on cultivation. The current price of diesel has crossed Rs 81/per litre and this has come at a

TOUGH TIMES FOR KALAHANDI FARMERS



time when farm works have been hit hard by the Covid-19 induced lockdown. They are now preparing for transplantation of paddy saplings on their farmlands but are finding it difficult to meet the increasing cost of cultivation due to price rise of diesel. Farmers apprehend that this year they have to spend more on cultivation than the previous year which has now become true. The rise in diesel price has dealt a heavy blow to farmers who are already reeling under a host of problems like natural calamities and lack of proper

marketing. Batakrushna Sahu, a farmer of Bondopola village, said farmhands of other states and district are not interested to visit Kalahandi district due to Covid1-9 induced lockdown and fear of being quarantined. As a result, they have to hire tractors and other equipment. This apart, they also use motor pumps where there is no irrigation facilities. However, they find it difficult to hire these equipment due to a sharp rise in diesel price. Farmers have

demand the state government intervene and supply them diesel at a subsidized rate. This year the government has made a nominal increase of Rs 53 to the minimum support price (MSP) of paddy while they faced a sharp reduction in weights of their paddy stocks while selling them in mandis during rabi season.

Strict patrolling for Satkosia

TWO BOATS PUT INTO SERVICE WHILE A JETTY WAS SET UP IN SANCTUARY



Bantala, August 5: The Satkosia sanctuary in Angul district got two ten-seat patrolling boats and a jetty worth over ₹20,00,000 Tuesday to ensure effective patrolling of the area. One boat will be used at Kataranga Ghat and the other near Baladamara

sanctuary. Later, acting on chief conservator of forest’s (CCF’s) proposal, four boats were brought to the sanctuary. As one boat was provided to Jilinda forest range and two were kept for movement of tourists, an additional one is being used by the forest department personnel for patrolling purposes at Satkosia Sanctuary. Further eight boats and two jetties were proposed by Satkosia divisional forest officer (DFO) to departmental higher-ups. Out of the proposed numbers of boats, two boats and a jetty have reached. On the other hand, visitors and tourists have been disallowed entry into crocodile reproduction and conservation centre at Tikarpada Wildlife Sanctuary, keeping in mind the fast spreading COVID-19 infection in Angul district, Satkosia DFO Ramaswamy P expressed.

Keonjhar men weave nests for birds

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, August 5: Be it the evolution of human civilisation or a gradual extinction of 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 are making artificial nests for birds.

The group comprising village youths under the name of Birs Munda Eco Saver belongs to Patana block. Jadichatara village youths have been making artificial nests for several years with support coming from PECUC, a non-profit



making organisation. On the other hand, avian species have adapted to the artificial nests. After collecting twigs, straws and

other materials, the youths weaved nests and put up those on tree branches in their locality. “Different bird species have started thronging to the trees in the vicinity of Jadichatara village. Chirping sound of birds creates a melodious note in the area throughout the day. So far, we have 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 youths have taken up a plantation drive in their locality. Ecology matters a lot for survival, Mohanta added.

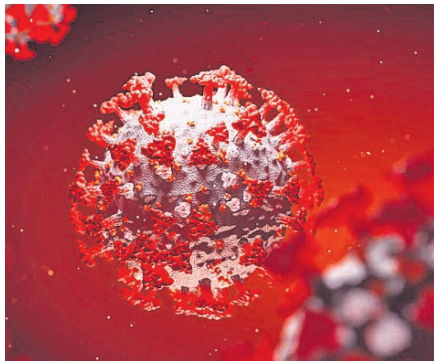
Covid tally tops 1K in Koraput

POST NEWS NETWORK

Koraput, August 5: The total number of coronavirus cases has reached 1,001 in Koraput district with an addition of 31 cases Wednesday. One of the infected persons was detected as a ‘repeat positive’ case. However, one such case was found earlier in the district, Koraput Collector Madhusudan Mishra informed. Notably, out of the total positive cases detected Wednesday, 16 are males and 15 are females including the repeat positive case. The latest additions have four COVID-19 warriors of which three are health workers and one is a policeman. Koraput district administration has started contact tracing of the repeat positive person. The administration has not elaborated further. Of the new cases, 29 are direct contacts of previous patients. Moreover, 20 among them were detected in different containment zones. One case was reported from a quarantine facility in the district.

3 warriors lose fight in Ganjam

BERHAMPUR: Three more COVID warriors of Ganjam district have lost lives to the deadly coronavirus. They included police ASI Siba Ram Dash, executive officer of Aska NAC Ashok Kumar Panda and section officer of Jagannathprasad Block Office Arun Kumar Behera. Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange expressed deepest sympathies to the bereaved family members. He praised the dedication of the three departed COVID warriors to their service for mankind. In a Tweet, the Collector wrote: “We lost our Covid warriors. Entire district administration is with their families. We request all people in Ganjam to follow social distancing norms. By doing this you will help our Covid warriors in fighting this war.”



4-day shutdown in Gondia

DHENKANAL: After over hundred persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Gondia block of Dhenkanal district in last couple of days, the district administration announced four days shutdown in the block, informed Collector Bhumesh Chandra Behera, Tuesday. The shutdown will be in force from August 4 to August 7. “Contacts of the confirmed and suspected cases will be line-listed, tracked and kept under surveillance at home for 14 days,” said the official letter. The district administration is on its toes to strictly implement the shutdown in order to prevent possible spread of COVID-19 infection in the block. Police patrolling as well as deployment has been escalated at different squares, main roads and national highways of the shutdown areas. During the shutdown, hospitals, nursing homes, medicine stores, petrol pumps and shops selling

fruits, vegetables, grocery and milk shall remain open. All other shops, private and government offices will remain closed. However, fire station, electricity office and emergency section at collector’s office will remain open. Any person violating the above shall be liable to be proceeded against as per the provisions of Section 51 to 60 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, besides legal action under section 188 of the IPC and other legal provisions as applicable. It may be mentioned here that with 51 new positive cases reported Tuesday, the total number of COVID-19 positive cases in the district has increased to 420. On the other hand, 234 patients are undergoing treatment in the COVID-19 hospitals while 186 patients have recovered from the disease. No COVID-19 patient has so far succumbed to the virus in the district.

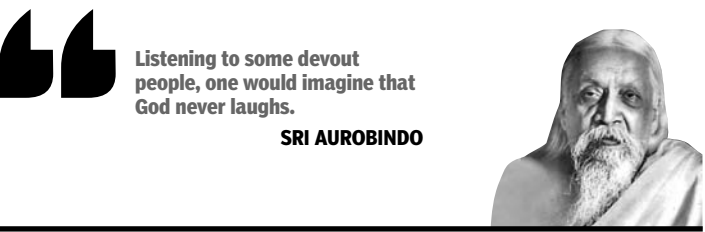


BSF jawan shoots self

Malkangiri: Police recovered the body of a BSF Jawan of 9th Battalion in Malkangiri district Wednesday. According to police, the jawan died by suicide after shooting himself with his service revolver in the early hours of Wednesday. The deceased has been identified as Sessa Karna, a native of Rajasthan. He was posted at the BSF camp at Chitrakonda in the cutoff area of the district. Police reached the spot after being informed and have launched a probe into the mysterious death. Earlier, Personal Security Officer (PSO) of CP(M) MLA Laxman Munda of Bonai constituency in Sundargarh district died by suicide by shooting himself with his service revolver. However, the cause of his death is yet to be ascertained. The deceased was identified as Dambarudhar Sahoo.

SURYO FOODS & INDUSTRIES LIMITED
CIN: L05004OR1989PLC002264
Regd. Office: Dinalipi Bhawan, Plot No. A-54/1 & A-55/1, Nayapalli, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar-751003, Odisha
Email: suryofoods.industries@gmail.com, website: www.suryofoods.com

NOTICE
Pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements), Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that Meeting of Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Thursday, 13th August, 2020 at 11:30 A.M. at Regd. Office: Dinalipi Bhawan, Plot No. A-54/1 & A-55/1, Nayapalli, Baramunda, Bhubaneswar-751003, Odisha, inter-alia to consider and approve the Unaudited Financial results of the Company for the quarter ended 30th June, 2020.
For Suryo Foods & Industries Limited
Sd./- Manisha Satapathy
Date: 05.08.2020
Place: Bhubaneswar Company Secretary and Compliance Officer



Rescues PFA is doing

Some weeks ago, I made a WhatsApp group for People for Animals unit heads. There are about 200 of them. Now I see their work every day. They rescue the most-wounded, terrified creatures. Animals that have huge cancerous growth on their horns, legs run over by cars, heads and throats eaten by maggots. PFA teams pick them up fearlessly, climb trees and go down wells, go into collapsed buildings to pick up cages of lovebirds and into swamps to rescue stranded cattle. I am full of admiration for these selfless amazing heroes.

During this time, the maximum number of rescues that PFA is doing is of maggot cases. Mainly dogs; but also a lot of donkeys and cows. This is common in the warm summer months when flies are laying their eggs and are more prominent in hot, humid environments. Dogs with festering wounds, skin problems, or mobility impairment issues are more likely to develop this disease. Those who live on this hard unforgiving, hostile road, or who are weak and debilitated, are particularly susceptible. Any type of wound, or moist coat soaked with faeces or urine, can become the perfect spot for flies to lay their eggs. Within a few hours the eggs hatch into tiny pale worms called maggots that start eating the flesh. At first, the maggots will feed on dead skin or debris. But when that food source runs out, they release an enzyme in their saliva that starts digesting healthy skin. The enzyme causes small holes in the skin, and then the maggots burrow underneath the skin. They will eat the animal alive.

The maggots release toxins that can make the animal sick very quickly, leading to fever, lethargy and shock. Blood samples taken from such cases usually show extremely high white blood cell counts. Blood loss leads to severe anaemia. The dog will develop a foul, decaying smell as the maggots secrete an enzyme that necrotizes healthy skin tissues. This is the most potent indicator. The animal is in such pain that he starts behaving erratically, drooling, leading people to believe that he has rabies. So, they stone or hit him till he dies. Many years ago I had to pick up a dog who was being chased by people like this shouting 'paagal paagal'. His head had been half eaten. I put him in my car. We treated him that night, took out hundreds of wriggly creatures. He lived in my house for two years before he died peacefully.

The screwworm fly is the most dangerous. It is attracted to fresh wounds. Due to itchy skin, fights and injuries, animals often have little cuts on their body. Even a pinhead-sized wound is enough to attract a fly. Eggs are laid within minutes. A cluster of fly eggs looks like a tiny white scrap of paper, or flattened rice. In areas the animal can reach with his tongue, they are usually licked off. What remains are the ears, anywhere on the head and neck, eyes and mouth and the anus. The maggots deepen and enlarge the wound. A tiny barely visible cut becomes a huge, life-threatening wound in a very short span of time. The hardest to detect are when the opening in the skin remains the size of a pinhole, merely showing a lump on the skin. The maggots tunnel downwards, forming a huge invisible pocket.

However, maggots are surprisingly simple to get rid of, once you've learnt how. Except for very serious cases, the dog doesn't even need to be hospitalised. Even first aid volunteers can do it without needing the intervention of a vet.

If you are an animal carer/feeder this is what you need to have in your first aid box. I am taking everything written below from Welfare of Stray Animals run by Abodh Aras who has been doing a wonderful job in Mumbai for many years. A muzzle; forceps; Himax; Acrilin or Lorexane; chloroform; iodine tincture; Nebasulf; clean cotton wool; turpentine; neem oil; Topicure spray; Betadine. The dog must be muzzled for every dressing, as he may bite because of the pain. If you can, cut the hair away from the area around the wound. The hair contains bacteria and can keep on re-infecting the wound. In wounds, other than those on the head, pour about 10 – 15 drops of chloroform directly into the hole. Leave it for a while. This will kill the maggots. Plug the wound with cotton wool so the maggots suffocate. The chloroform will cause pain to the dog so make sure he is tied, or he will run.

Do not use chloroform on head wounds. Good substitutes are medicinal turpentine oil, neem oil. Do NOT use painters turpentine oil, kerosene, petrol, phenyl or hydrogen peroxide. These will kill the animal. Check the wound to see if maggots show signs of life. If they do, you can pour a few more drops of chloroform and again plug with cotton wool for a few minutes. Once you think they are dead, wipe your forceps/tweezers with Dettol or Savlon and start removing them. If the wound is deep seated and the only thing you see is a hole outside, then take turpentine oil into an empty plastic syringe (without needle) and push it into the 'hole'. Let it act over next 6-8 hours. As medicine takes effect, you will either see the maggots popping out of the wound on the floor or large chunks of glued insects/dissolved and held together like blobs of pus coming out of the wound.

Inspect the inside of the wound thoroughly with a torch. Maggots often create tiny tunnels leading from the main wound deeper into the body of the dog. One giveaway is that the bloody fluid in the hole/holes will appear to be moving, literally "breathing," if you watch carefully for a few minutes. A common error is not waiting long enough to observe this movement. As a precaution, even when you think you have removed all the maggots, spray the inside of the wound with the veterinary spray Topicure. The pungent eucalyptus oil smell will irritate the maggots and they will start emerging from the tunnel. Once the wound is cleared of maggots, pour iodine tincture directly into the wound to disinfect it. You can use Betadine or Wokadine solution. Let the iodine drain out. Then apply lots of Nebasulf, Negasunt or Gotbac powder in the wound. This will help to dry it.

Apply Acrilin or Lorexane cream. Fill up the hole with this. The final and most important layer is the ayurvedic fly repellent cream Himax. Smear it liberally on the surface: the strong smell will prevent other flies from laying eggs on the wound and re-infesting it all over again. However, the effect will last only for a day. Examine the wounds daily to make sure they haven't been reinfested. Sometimes there may be pus in the wound. Flush it out thoroughly with Iodine/Betadine/Wokadine before proceeding with the Nebasulf powder. If the dog is so weak that she can hardly move, do not leave her on the road. Make sure she gets shelter or is in your house. She is going to need antibiotics (Augmentin 625, vitamins, iron tonic and good food). Check the dog for the next few days in case any remaining larvae mature.

Even simpler is to pour some oil (coconut oil, neem oil) on maggots. This deprives them of oxygen, and they will come running out. Then pick them off using tweezers, tissue or gauze. Then flush the affected area with water, which will help to remove any unhatched eggs. Then you can put some turmeric on the affected area. Or you can use an antibiotic cream/ointment. Some people apply a pyrethrin- or pyrethroid-containing spray (dogs only) to lesions to kill remaining maggots. This should only be done under veterinary advice as it could kill a debilitated animal. Alternatively, ivermectin 0.2 to 0.4 mg/kg SC once is effective against maggots. You can apply two drops of ivomec+tt oil and few drops of pyodyne. The maggots will die within 15 minutes. Prevention is better than cure. If you see that your neighbourhood street dog/cat/cow/donkey has an open wound, clean the wound site with cotton dipped in weak tincture iodine solution or Betadine, Cipladine or Wokadine. Put Nebasulf or Neosporin powder on the wound site. To prevent flies from sitting and laying eggs on this wound site, put Lorexane and then paste a layer of Himax, an ayurvedic veterinary fly/insect repellent, on top of the wound. Other veterinary powders with wound healing and maggot-cidal properties are Gotbac powder or Negasunt powder that can be directly applied on an animal/dog's open wound. Get these sprays D-Mag spray or Topicure spray, both of which help kill maggots as well as promote wound healing.

In a few days, fresh skin will start appearing. Your effort and investment have saved a life. Maggot infestations don't go away or cure or heal on their own, human intervention is essential. Remember to keep repeating the above steps with a periodicity of 12-24 hours at the start of the treatment and then every other day till the wound heals and seals itself.

To join the animal welfare movement contact gandhim@nic.in, www.peopleforanimalsindia.org



Jagdish Rattanan

IS IT THE END OF A BATTLE OR MERELY A MILESTONE, ALBEIT AN IMPORTANT ONE, IN A BATTLE THAT CONTINUES TO RAGE IN THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF MANY CITIZENS?

A 22-kilogram silver brick marks the symbolic laying of the foundations of what is promised to be a grand temple to Lord Ram at the spot in Ayodhya where the disputed Babri Masjid once stood. There are those who see this as the culmination of a long battle to reclaim the site or protect it. One side lost, the other won. There are also many who say that both sides, and all those in between, lost. Such have been the wages of using religion to divide the people. Those from the winning side are led by the Prime Minister in Ayodhya. But is it the end of a battle or merely a milestone, albeit an important one, in a battle that continues to rage in the hearts and minds of many citizens?

"Since man is a moment in astronomical time, a transient guest of the earth...a composite of body, character and mind..." as the historians Will and Ariel Durant wrote, we must ask not only of the celebrations or frustrations of today but equally of how the act of today might stand in the light of a latter-day assessment. That will of course depend on who makes that latter-day assessment, or when it is made, and that may well depend on which way India goes from here. This is significant because the events of today carry the colour of a conquest, not the mark of conciliation or cooperation. It is not insignificant (though it may well be a coincidence) that August 5 also marks the first anniversary of the removal of Article 370 in the troubled state of J&K. There are barricades across J&K and a curfew for two days. There are laddus being distributed in Ayodhya. The imagery is just too stark to be missed. But what we do tend to miss is that in the midst of all this, China has crossed the line.

The Prime Minister's party can now say they met the electoral promise as outlined in the 2019 manifesto: "We reiterate our stand to explore all possibilities within the framework of the Constitution to facilitate the construction of a Ram Temple in Ayodhya." Now that the electorate gave the BJP a mandate, and a robust one to boot



How do we look at the rich heritage of Indian thought that has enlightened the path for so many for so long? Will militant Hindutva, marked as it is by violence, pushed by power, and driven as an agenda at the cost of goodwill and togetherness, make for a nation that modern-day Indians would want?

for a second time running, the story had to be drawn to a close. The long-running serial had to end. And for the BJP, it's in good time as well. This is as close to the important Assembly elections in Bihar as it could get. The inauguration of the temple itself is set for a time that will be close to the next national elections.

In the longer term, the dynamic that the colour of a conquest unleashes cannot be easily fathomed. To understand this, we can look back to ask how and why is it that the Indian cultural ethos, the belief systems, the philosophical base of the most fundamental of inquiries into the nature of the universe – all of this has taken birth, grown root, flowered, survived, even thrived through millennia without any hint of a conquest from the side generating this mighty body of knowledge? This is the knowledge that has informed generations on the path to good living. So, do we now need militant Hindutva to "protect" what the most-violent of invaders could not destroy? Or will this variety of "protection", mixed with a generous amount of naked political

self-interest and a lot of prejudice, be the exact kind of attack that will undermine this heritage?

It is well said that "no civilization anywhere in the world, with the probable exception of China, has been as continuous as that of India. While the civilizations of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria have disappeared, the ideas emanating from the Vedic times continue to be a living force in India." That comes from the official Indian Gazetteer recordings on Hinduism, which also notes: "Receptivity and all-comprehensiveness, it has been aptly stated, are the main characteristics of Hinduism. Since it has no difficulty in bringing diverse faiths within its ever-widening fold, it has something to offer to almost all minds."

The strength of Hinduism, said Monier-Williams, lies in its "infinite adaptability to the infinite diversity of human character and human tendencies." He wrote: "It has its highly spiritual and abstract side suited to the philosopher; its practical and concrete side congenial to the man of the world; its aesthetic and ceremonial side attuned to the man of poetic feel-

ing and imagination; and its quiet, contemplative aspect that has its appeal for the man of peace and the lover of seclusion." There is peace, not violence; poetry, not militancy. That is the way the story has often been told, and offers a sense of pride, and is celebrated. That is also the secret of long-haul survival and growth in an everlasting inquiry into the human condition.

Who should understand this better than the RSS, not only at the top but across the line with some of the acclaimed professionals and high achievers who are among its ranks – officially as members or the many who offer unofficial support from the outside? A story helps illustrate this well. This is from the time the RSS was banned by the PV Narasimha Rao government after the 1992 demolition of the Babri Masjid. In Nagpur, in an interview around those days with this writer, a functionary of the RSS was completely unperturbed. He said it did not matter that the RSS was banned; the organisation could well take another name and continue with its work. What he understood quite correctly was that an organisation is not about outward structures and forms, which can be banned, but about the thought that cannot be banned. It is the thinking that will continue to exert and generate its own energy and action.

The question therefore is what are we thinking today? How do we look at the rich heritage of Indian thought that has enlightened the path for so many for so long? Will militant Hindutva, marked as it is by violence, pushed by power, and driven as an agenda at the cost of goodwill and togetherness, make for a nation that modern-day Indians would want?

Some will say that today is probably not the best day to ask these questions. Or maybe it is! And if we do ask them, the answers might tell us that August 5 may not be the greatest day in the history of India.

The writer is a journalist and a faculty member at SPJIMR. THE BILLION PRESS

SPECTRUM EDUCATION

Shift from job-seekers to job-creators

Prime Minister Modi has said that the new National Education Policy (NEP) will mark a shift from "the burden of school bag" to "experiential learning" with focus on "job creators" instead of "job seekers." The NEP seems to usher in a mini revolution in education system, leaving no aspect of it untouched.

A thorough overhaul of the public education system at all levels is now proposed, keeping in mind our commitments to education for all and for reaching the Sustainable Development Goal No. 4, -i.e., "to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. Concentration is now placed on school and college education at all stages to prepare coming generations to new responsibilities and tasks. It will address two big challenges in education - equity and quality.

The NEP is based on the pillars of "access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability." The policy sets a fairly long time-frame to transform education in the next two decades. Action plans are many and will be introduced gradually providing time for the switchover.

Mention must be made of the National Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission expected to be launched by this year and

which will come into full operation in five years. Elementary education in many states has come under criticism where most students fail to show expected standard of literacy and arithmetic. Cent per cent enrolment and prevention of drop-out are not the only aims of universal education. Learning is the principal objective of school education.

Education hitherto viewed as a passport for jobs will now aim at "enhancing the creative potential of humankind." Among the salient changes envisaged are removal of strict separation of arts and science courses and the barrier between academic and vocational streams. Former is necessary for holistic education, but likely to be resented by students who want to choose their line according to their liking and take no interest in other lines as if work and life consist of water tight compartments. The latter is required for changing the common perception of vocational learning as being inferior to mainstream education.

So also, curricular and non-curricular activities are not strictly demarcated. Thus, many cultural, sports, and economic activities get their base in education expanding the contents of learning. This will also lead to removing existing barriers between school/college edu-

cation and other types of learning – all of which are necessary to enrich human life. The NEP is designed to encourage different talents in students and does not stop with textbook learning and examinations.

The policy expands the age-group of 6-14 for mandatory schooling to 3-18 and brings 3-6 age-group under school curriculum. The existing 10+2 schooling is to be replaced by 5+3+3+4 corresponding to foundational course (3-8), preparatory (8-11), middle (11-14), and secondary (14-18). It means 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi/pre-schooling. It is doubtful whether all states are ready to bring the 3-6 year age-group under an all-India pattern of schooling.

Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until Class V and preferably until Class VIII is to be the mother-tongue or regional/local language. Children will be exposed to various languages with particular emphasis on mother-tongue. Policy is firm on continuing the three language formula, but assures that no language will be imposed on any state. Two out of the three languages should be native to India. Option is given to study one classical language of India and also one foreign language.

Examination will be to test "core competencies" and board exams

will be conducted twice a year. They will be redesigned and a National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (performance assessment, review, and analysis of knowledge for holistic development) will be set up as a standard-setting body.

Digital infrastructure will be built for use of technology in imparting education. Online education becoming common throughout the world, India cannot lag behind. Progress will depend on the strength of infrastructure.

A major change is provision for multiple entry and exit points at the undergraduate level which will facilitate a large number of students to get education in their speed and according to their personal convenience. It is to be welcomed by both slow and fast learners. It will be of great help to students unable to pursue the courses at a stretch and help drop-outs to pick up again.

A Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be set up for regulation as an umbrella institution along with four independent bodies for Regulation, Accreditation, Funding, and Academic Standard Setting. These regulatory bodies will ensure implementation of the changes envisaged in the policy.

The writer is former Director, ISSCR, New Delhi. INFA

Letters

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

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Courts, delay

Sir, The well-known proverb 'Justice delayed is justice denied' has special relevance in the Indian context, where cases are piling up in courts for decades without disposal. Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu has expressed his concern on the pendency of cases from the Supreme Court to the lower courts when he was addressing a law college event some time ago. People believe in the judiciary, but they want justice delivered without undue delay. When crores of cases are piling up in courts without serious efforts at disposal, justice-delivery is seriously compromised. The number of undertrial prisoners waiting for justice for long is huge across Indian jails. No one is bothered about them and the resultant sufferings of their families. Land and property-related disputes take decades to settle, by which time the complainant might already be dead and gone. Lawyers fleece the petitioners to the maximum. The need of the hour is to make the delivery of justice speedier and affordable. Fast-track courts, timely police investigation without political pressure, and online hearing will help in faster disposal of cases. India needs comprehensive judicial reforms.

Amit Singh Kushwaha, SATNA

Peace, pleasure

Sir, Once, a disciple asked his Guru: "What is the difference between peace and pleasure?" The Guru gave an example to explain this. "Pleasure is the momentary joy that we get while eating delicious food. The satisfaction we get from feeding a poor hungry person is peace." Luxuries in life give us pleasure but that is fleeting, because it is linked to the existence of that object. If the object goes away, the pleasure that comes from it also ends. Nothing in this world is permanent. In addition, excessive enjoyment often leads to grief. Material happiness often leads to arrogance. Pursuing material happiness is the reason for human sufferings. But the self-satisfaction that we get through philanthropy and good deeds also gives us peace that never ends. Human life needs peace more than happiness. Without peace of mind, all happiness becomes meaningless. So, human life needs more peace than pleasure. What is the easiest way to achieve peace? If we use our time to do good for others, we have peace in our lives.

Loknath Mohapatra, BERPAMPUR

Can Pilot's silence, BSP's plea see a new CM in Raj?

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, August 5: Amid the ongoing political crisis in Rajasthan, there are whispers that the state may get a new Chief Minister as both the AICC and state Congress leaders are going soft on rebel Sachin Pilot and his loyalists who have maintained a stoic silence all these days.

Pilot's silence, Gehlot's loquaciousness and the party's confusion over having the magical number for a majority will definitely be a game changer in Rajasthan politics, said a Congress leader. He added that Gehlot however will settle his pending issues in Rajasthan, appoint his people in key positions and then might go to Delhi to lead the Congress to reform and rebuild the oldest political organisation.

Added to this is the Bahujan Samaj Party's move to file a plea before the double bench of the Rajasthan High Court demanding a stay on the Speaker's decision which permitted the merger of BSP MLAs with the Congress. The Rajasthan High Court Wednesday issued notice to Assembly Speaker CP Joshi on petitions filed by BSP national Secretary Satish Mishra

and BJP MLA Madan Dilawar challenging the merger of 6 BSP MLAs with the Congress. A division bench of Chief Justice Inderjit Mahanti and Justice Prakash Gupta issued notice after taking up the pleas in which the BSP and the BJP MLA sought cancellation of the merger.

Meanwhile, Gehlot and senior party leaders have apparently gone soft on the Pilot camp and have repeated many times that if the high command forgives them, they shall be embraced in the party. Monday, Gehlot said that he is like a disciplined soldier who accepts all decisions taken by the party high command. Gehlot was responding to a media query that the Pilot camp has issued a statement that they shall be attending the assembly session which will start from August 14.

Do you think they are changing their minds? Answering this question, Gehlot said, "They know what they want to do. I am clueless whether they are in contact with someone or not. We don't take a decision on our own. I have been accepting whatever the high command decides like a disciplined soldier."

IANs contacted many Congress leaders who themselves were unsure



MORE TWISTS TO TALE

■ IT'S AN INTERESTING FIGHT WHICH THE CONGRESS DOESN'T WANT TO LOSE AT ANY COST

■ THE PARTY LEADERSHIP IS TRYING FOR A PATCH UP FORMULA WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH THE GEHLOT AND PILOT CAMPS

■ THIS CAN BE TO BRING A NEW CM FACE AS PILOT AND HIS GROUP HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY ARE NOT AGAINST THE PARTY BUT AGAINST THE LEADERSHIP

of the fact if the magical figure to prove its majority is with the Gehlot camp or not.

However, one thing is sure that the number flaunted during the first CLP meeting at the residence of the Chief Minister which was said to be 109 was untrue, said a Congress worker who is a Pilot supporter.

A total of 92 MLAs went to Jaisalmer while 7 were in Jaipur which makes it 99. One of the CPM MLAs supporting the government has announced to stay away during floor test, while another CPM MLA has been suspended for voting in favour of the Congress during the Rajya Sabha polls.

Two BTP MLAs had initially decided to stay away. However, later, a video went viral which showed BTP MLAs being beaten by the police. A few days later, they announced their support to the Congress but their support seems to be doubtful, said a party leader.

Out of 13 Independents, three have joined the Pilot camp.

So with all these numbers, the Congress had 125 MLAs with its individual tally at 100. However, now with 19 MLAs gone, it has 106 MLAs and minus 3 Independent MLAs, this number comes down to 103. One MLA Bhanwarlal Sharma is unwell, and hence the effective figure is 102. If the six BSP MLAs

get a stay order, this number gets reduced to 96 which will result in the fall of the Gehlot government.

The BJP with 75 MLAs (including 3 RLP MLAs) can extend outside support to the Pilot group (19 MLAs) and 3 Independents which takes their score to 97.

It's an interesting fight which the Congress doesn't want to lose at any cost. So, the party leadership is trying for a patch up formula which is acceptable to both the Gehlot and Pilot camps. This can be to bring a new CM face as Pilot and his group have made it clear that they are not against the party but against the leadership, said a party loyalist.

Pvt schools can collect tuition fees, says Guj HC

Not allowing schools to collect fees will force many smaller schools to close down permanently while not providing education to students for long will impact their cognitive and social development, the HC said

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, August 5: The Gujarat High Court has quashed a government order which prohibited private schools from collecting tuition fees until they reopened, saying such a fiat will force smaller schools to shut down.

In a decision July 31, uploaded on its website Wednesday, the court set aside three clauses of a government resolution (GR) issued July 16 amid the coronavirus pandemic. A "balance has to be struck between providing children a reasonable education and allowing the schools to stay afloat," a division bench of Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice J B Pardilwala said. Not allowing schools to collect fees will force many smaller schools to close down permanently while not providing education to students for long will impact their cognitive and social development, the court said.

Parents should realise that on-line education is not a futile effort on the part of the schools, the judges said. At the same time, schools should be aware of the economic instability being faced by parents, the bench said.

Quashing the relevant clauses in the GR, the court asked the government to "make all possible en-

deavour to strike a balance so as to protect the interest of the parents as well as the management of the private unaided schools".

"The adverse impacts of the situation created by the pandemic need to be shouldered by all stakeholders, and the community as a whole needs to be united in its fight. The resolution and the actions of the state have the effect of dividing sections of the society," the court said. If smaller private schools close down, parents of students in these schools will be forced to cough up higher fees at bigger schools, the court pointed out.

The GR barred collection of tuition fees even when schools were offering online classes. Unions of private schools had challenged the government's order.



The high court said schools can charge tuition fees which will cover expenditure on salary, establishment and curricular activities and maintenance.

"Why does the state not take steps to waive collection of tuition fees by colleges," the court asked.

"Teaching is a noble and charitable cause" and hence private schools should not collect tuition fees as long as they remain closed, the GR had said.

'Covid curry', 'mask naans' on this restaurant's menu

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Jodhpur, August 5: A restaurant in Rajasthan is hoping to win back customers who are afraid of eating out during the pandemic with a special "Covid curry" and "mask naans".

"This has been a really tough time for us and for our entire sector," Yash Solanki, owner of the vegetarian Vedic eatery in Jodhpur, told AFP.

The fried vegetable balls have been shaped to look like the "crowned" coronavirus, while the breads look like surgical masks.

Solanki said that they had also added, and advertised, that their Covid curry had extra herbs and spices that are good for people's health.

"Even with recently relaxed curbs, the fear still dominates. People are still very reluctant to eat out," Solanki said.

Almost 800 people are dying daily from coronavirus in India, with around 50,000 new infections reported every 24 hours.

India has had 1.8 million cases, the third-highest in the world behind the United States and Brazil, and more than 38,000 deaths.



'Horse-trading': Sedition charges dropped against Congress MLAs

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Jaipur, August 5: Scrapping the sedition charges clamped on Congress MLAs accused of alleged horse-trading to topple the state government in Rajasthan, the special operations group (SOG) of Rajasthan Police Tuesday transferred the case to the Anti-Corruption Bureau.

Reacting to the development, Rajasthan BJP president Satish Poonia said "the intention of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and the state government has now been exposed as it's clear that they hatched a conspiracy against their own MLAs to intimidate the Independents and small party MLAs, in the name of SOG and ACB". It needs to be mentioned here that rebel Congress leader Sachin Pilot was also summoned under Sections 124 A (under sedition charges) and 120 B which



We had said earlier that 124A is a case of treason, it was ... imposed on Mahatma Gandhi by the British government and same law was imposed on freedom fighter Lokmanya Balgangadhar Tilak.... How instability within the party can be put under the treason was questionable

SATISH POONIA | STATE BJP CHIEF

left the former deputy Chief Minister aggrieved and tormented. The SOG registered the first FIR July 10 under sections 124A and 120B of the IPC and arrested two accused in this regard. Thereafter, July 17, on the complaint of the government chief whip Mahesh Joshi, two more FIRs were registered in similar sections. On the same day, one Sanjay Jain, an agent allegedly mediating for horse-trading, was arrested and after being presented in the court, was taken into police remand.

The case is related to the alleged audio tapes which surfaced last

month in which Sanjay Jain can be heard talking to Congress MLAs Bhanwarlal Sharma and Gajendra Singh planning to topple the government through horse-trading.

Poonia said: "We had said earlier that 124A is a case of treason, it was a law declared in 1870 during the British era which was imposed on Mahatma Gandhi by the British government and same law was imposed on freedom fighter Lokmanya Balgangadhar Tilak for writing articles in a magazine. How instability within the party can be put under the treason was questionable. The withdrawal of the sedition case makes it clear that the government was wrong and mistaken in this case. Withdrawing the sedition case is a moral defeat of the government."

Kin of Godhra 'kar sevaks' recall 'sacrifice' for cause

Fifty-nine 'kar sevaks' returning from Ayodhya were killed in the Godhra train burning incident February 27, 2002, triggering the worst communal riots in the history of Gujarat in which over 1,000 people, mostly belonging to a minority community, were killed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ahmedabad, August 5: For relatives of many kar sevaks who were killed in the Sabarmati Express coach fire incident in Gujarat's Godhra in 2002, the 'bhoomi puja' for a Ram temple in Ayodhya Wednesday brought a sense of closure to the pains of losing their near and dear ones for the cause of the temple.

"All I can say is that their sacrifice will not go in vain," said Bipin Thakkar, who had lost his father-in-law and brother-in-law in the Godhra incident.

Thakkar, who lives in Ahmedabad with his wife, says many people had sacrificed their lives for the cause of building the temple of Lord Ram at his birthplace in Ayodhya.

"It is a matter of great delight that the temple is finally coming up," he said referring to the bhoomi puja performed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Ayodhya earlier in the day. Fifty-nine 'kar sevaks' returning from Ayodhya were killed in the Godhra train burning incident February 27, 2002, triggering the worst communal riots in the his-

tory of Gujarat in which over 1,000 people, mostly belonging to a minority community, were killed.

A kar sevak is someone who offers services for free to a religious cause. Thousands of kar sevaks had participated in the Ram Jannabhoomi movement and the Rathayatra in the year 1990.

"Construction of a grand temple of Ram Lalla at Ayodhya is the solemn vow taken by all Hindus, which is realised now. Lord Ram is adored by all Hindus," says Ashok Prajapati, whose father Javer Prajapati was charred to death in the S-6 coach of the Ahmedabad-

bound train on the fateful day.

Mahesh Shah, who was part of a group of kar sevaks on that train, recalled his escape from the burning coach, the images of which still continue to haunt him.

"19 of 90 kar sevaks from Ahmedabad had lost their lives in the incident," Shah said.

Shah, an officer-bearer of 'Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad' floated by former Vishwa Hindu Parishad chief Pravin Togadia, said he survived because he jumped out of a window of the burning coach.

"We had taken a pledge for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya. It's a matter of great happiness that the dream is coming true. It's sad that the matter was politicised, but we are committed to work for the community," he said. The way for the construction of the temple in Ayodhya on the site where Babri Masjid once stood was cleared by the supreme court last year, after decades of protracted legal battle over the title suit.



Plea in SC against Gujarat order for longer working hrs



'PATENTLY ILLEGAL'

Gujarat Labour and Employment Department's notification granted exemptions to all factories in the state from provisions of the Factories Act, 1948

The plea, filed by Gujarat Mazdoor Sabha, a registered trade union, and others, through advocate Aparna Bhat, contended that April 17 notification "is patently illegal, violative and unnaturally unjust of various fundamental rights, statutory rights and labour laws"

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 5: The Supreme Court Tuesday issued notice challenging the notification of the Gujarat Labour and Employment Department, granting exemptions to all factories in the state from provisions of the Factories Act, 1948, relating to daily working hours, weekly working hours, intervals for rest, and even from the duty to pay overtime wages at double rate as fixed under the Act's Section 59.

The plea, filed by Gujarat Mazdoor Sabha, a registered trade union, and others, through advocate Aparna Bhat, contended that April 17 notification "is patently illegal, violative and unnaturally unjust of various fundamental rights, statutory rights and labour laws."

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and KM Joseph took up the plea, through video conferencing, and issued notice after a hearing.

The plea contended that the notification, granting exemption from the provisions of the Act for the period from April 20 to July 19, mandates that for the period, workers in Gujarat could be made to work 12 hours in a day, 72 hours in a week with a 30 minutes break after six hours. However, the Factories Act, 1948, provides that workers can only be made to work nine hours in a day - but 48 hours in a week, with one weekly off - thus coming to 8 hours in a day, with a 30 minutes break after five hours. The notification further pro-

vides that no women workers will be allowed to work between 7 pm and 6 am.

"Most disturbingly, the impugned notification prescribes that no overtime at double rate will be paid for the extra four hours worked per day, but rather that overtime work will merely be compensated at the usual hourly rate," said the plea.

The petitioner argued that the notification expressly states that wages for the extra hours will be paid "in proportion to the existing wage (e.g., if wages for eight hours is Rs 80, then proportionate wages for twelve hours will be Rs 120)". "This is blatantly against section 59 of the Act which mandates that wages must be paid at double the ordinary rate for hours worked in excess of 9 hours in a day (including one hour break) and 48 hours in a week," added the plea.

The plea submitted that this notification states that the workers will be not only be grossly overworked, but the fact that the direction for no payment of overtime rate for overtime worked "just adds a sordid element of cruelty to a blatantly illegal notification, all in respect of the workers who are quite literally risking their lives to ensure the sustenance of the economy."

The petitioners argued that "the shocking extension of working hours is being directed at a time when the most basic medical and scientific advice to avoid contracting the deadly Covid-19 is to take rest and stay as healthy as possible" as they urged the apex court to issue directions to stay this notification.

Surat reporting more cases than Ahmedabad



AGENCIES

Ahmedabad, August 5: With 1,073 new coronavirus positive cases, Gujarat's COVID-19 tally crossed the 66,000-mark Wednesday, the state health department said.

The case count in the state is 66,777 now, it said. With the death of 23 COVID-19 patients during the day, the number of deceased went up to 2,557, the department said.

As many as 1,046 patients were discharged Wednesday, which took the tally of recovered cases to 49,405.

Surat continued to report the highest number of cases in the state with the addition of 237 ones on Wednesday that took the district count to 14,902.

Ahmedabad followed Surat with 161 new cases, which pushed its tally to 27,283.

Among other districts, Vadodara reported 115 new cases, Rajkot 80, Bhavnagar 47, Jamnagar 46, Amreli 30, Kutch and Gandhinagar 27 each,

Junagadh 25, Mehsana and Morbi 24 each, Surendranagar 22, Bharuch and Bhavnagar 21 each, Dahod

and Panchmahal 18 each, Porbandar 17, Botad and Kheda 14 each, and Banaskantha 13. Surat reported six more deaths due to the virus, followed by Ahmedabad and Rajkot at five each, Junagadh and Vadodara two each, and Gandhinagar, Jamnagar and Patan at one each.

Surat's death toll rose to 649, while that of Ahmedabad to 1,617. As per the state-wise comparative tally shared by the state health department, Gujarat stood at the 14th position in the country in terms of the single-day COVID-19 cases reported Wednesday.

Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, Telangana, Rajasthan, Odisha and Kerala reported more number of new cases than Gujarat, it said.

A TRYST WITH HISTORY AMID HYMNS, HOMAGE

A DAY TO REMEMBER

Ayodhya: From blowing of conch shells and ringing of bells to ceaseless chants of 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Siyavar Ramchandra Ki Jai', streets of this temple town got immersed in a religious fervour Wednesday as the foundation-laying ceremony for a Ram Temple got underway here.

Some jewellery shops in the famous Shrigaara Haat area turned into places for community television spots as passers-by and even some security personnel and mediapersons joined shopkeepers to watch the live telecast of *bhoomi pujan* by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the temple and his speech.

Many recalled that these scenes were similar to ones quite common in late 1980s when 'Ramayan' serial was telecast on Doordarshan and people used to gather at few houses and shops having TV sets.

Rooftops of buildings in the area, close to Hanumangarhi Temple, became hubs and vantage points for video journalists and photographers, while roadside trees provided the much-needed shade to security forces deployed for the occasion.

Some shopkeepers were also seen distributing sweets, while saffron flags with pictures of Lord Ram and Lord Hanuman were seen on many balconies, verandahs and rooftops.

While only a few shops were open and police barricades stopped people well before the ceremony area, crowds gathered on rooftops with social distancing making way for heavy jostling among people to get a glimpse of what many described as a historic moment for Ayodhya, a Sanskrit word that means 'unconquerable' and has long been known as birthplace of Lord Ram.

Chants of *Jai Shri Ram*, blowing of conch shells and ringing of bells reached a crescendo the

moment the word got around about Modi's arrival at the main venue, where access was highly restricted due to safeguard measures in place to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another round of chants began when the Prime Minister began his speech with *Jai Siya Ram* and crowds in front of TV sets also responded loudly to Modi's Siyavar Ramchandra ki Jai slogan.

Wearing a green-coloured mask, 60-year-old Shanti, who was glued to a TV set at a jewellery shop, said, "I feel extremely overwhelmed to experience this glorious and historic moment. I feel happy that now the Ram temple will be built."

Mahendra Yadav, seated next to Shanti, said, "It is a very important moment in my life, and I am going to cherish it to the hilt. If possible, I will tell stories about this day to my grandchildren." Many were also seen reciting couplets of Ramcharit Manas quoted by Modi in his speech.

Nagraj said, "Though, I am sitting at Shringaar Haat, I feel like sitting at the site of Bhoomi Pujan." Shiv Dayal Soni, a third-generation jeweller, said, "It was a different type of footfall at my shop today. I did not get any customers today and instead devotees came here and watched the live telecast of Bhoomi puja and the speech of Prime Minister Modi." Glued to TV at the same place, along with many passers-by and some security personnel, Savitri Soni said, "I feel proud to witness this momentous occasion. People coming here at the shop and watching this event on television gives me immense satisfaction. Today's scene reminds me of the first 'Ramayan' serial, when people used to gather at the house of a person having a television, and 'Ramayan' was collectively viewed."



PM Narendra Modi offers prayers while attending the foundation-stone laying ceremony for the construction of the Ram temple, in Ayodhya

The wait of centuries finally ended with India creating a golden chapter in Ayodhya as Prime Minister Narendra Modi performed the bhoomi puja of a Ram temple. Ayodhya witnessed a grand ground-breaking ceremony that was attended by prominent people from all walks of life. The Supreme Court ruled last year that Hindus, who believe the site in Ayodhya is the birthplace of Lord Ram, be allowed to build a temple there, ending years of litigation. Security was tight in Ayodhya as the sound of prayers filled its streets as devotees and monks thronged its ancient temples to celebrate the occasion

Felicitations to all for the foundation-laying of Ram temple in Ayodhya. Being built in tune with law, it defines India's spirit of social harmony and people's zeal. It will be a testimony to ideals of Ram Rajya and a symbol of modern India

RAM NATH KOVIND | PRESIDENT

The construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya is much more than a religious affair and the structure will stand as a tribute to the best of timeless human values

M VENKAIAH NAIDU | INDIA'S VICE-PRESIDENT

Congratulations to the entire country on the occasion of *bhoomi puja*. May the blessings of Lord Rama be with us. With his blessings, our country will get rid of hunger, illiteracy and poverty and make India the most powerful nation in the world. May India give direction to the world in times to come

ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CM

Today is a historic and proud day for India. The consecration of the grand Ram temple by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Lord Ram's birthplace has written a golden chapter in the history of great Indian culture and civilisation and heralded the beginning of a new era

AMIT SHAH | HOME MINISTER

Modi, Bhagwat share stage for the first time since 2014

The Shri Ram Temple 'Bhoomi Pujan' ceremony in Ayodhya Wednesday was special in many ways. This is the first time since the formation of the BJP-led government at the Centre in 2014, that RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and Prime Minister Narendra Modi shared a stage.

Since 2014, Prime Minister Modi and the RSS chief did not get a chance to participate in any event or programme together. After Modi took oath as Prime Minister in May 2014, he has maintained a distance from the RSS chief.

But it was Wednesday that both came together at the

bhoomi puja for the first time in six years. The Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra trust had also extended an invite to RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat as a special guest at the 'Bhoomi Pujan' programme in Ayodhya which was performed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Others who were present at the event were UP Governor Anandiben Patel and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

A total of 135 seers, belonging to 36 spiritual traditions, were invited by the Trust for the 'Bhoomi Pujan' which was conducted by priests from Varanasi and Ayodhya.



UP CM Yogi Adityanath being greeted by BJP leader Uma Bharti during the function ahead of the inception of *bhoomi puja* for the construction of Ram temple, in Ayodhya

PM SETS THREE RECORDS IN A DAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi reached Ayodhya Wednesday after a gap of 28 years. With this, he made three records together in a day. Modi is the first-ever Prime Minister to visit Ram Janmabhoomi. Also, this is the first instance, when a Prime Minister has visited Hanuman Garhi to seek Lord Hanuman's blessings. And, Modi has become the first Prime Minister to participate in the *bhoomi puja* program of a temple that is a symbol of preservation of the cultural heritage of the country. Modi had visited Ayodhya in 1992 and had also addressed a gathering along with Murli Manohar Joshi at the GIC ground in Faizabad (Ayodhya). Thereafter, they had also visited Ram Lalla. Modi was the convener for the 'Tiranga Yatra' led by the then BJP President Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi which had begun in December 1991 and reached Ayodhya on January 18, 1992. This Yatra was organised to demand the abrogation of Article 370.

THE JOURNEY

The following is the chronology of events related to the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute

1528: Babri Masjid built by Mir Baqi, commander of Mughal emperor Babur.
1885: Mahant Raghubir Das files plea in Faizabad district court seeking permission to build a canopy outside the disputed structure. Court rejects the plea.
1949: Idols of Ram Lalla placed under central dome outside the disputed structure.
1950: Gopal Simla Visharad files suit in Faizabad district court for rights to worship the idols of Ram Lalla.
■ Paramahansa Ramachandra Das files suit for continuation of worship and keeping the idols.
1959: Nirmohi Akhara files suit seeking possession of the site.
1961: UP Sunni Central Waqf Board files suit for possession of the site.
FEB 1, 1986: Local court orders the government to open the site for Hindu worshippers.
AUGUST 14, 1989: Allahabad HC orders status quo in respect of the disputed structure.
DEC 6, 1992: Babri Masjid demolished.
APRIL 3, 1993: 'Acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Act' passed for acquiring land by Centre in the disputed area.
■ Various writ petitions, including one by Ismail Faruqi, filed in Allahabad HC challenging various aspects of the Act.
■ SC exercising its jurisdiction under Article 139A transfers the writ petitions, which were pending in the High Court.

OCT 24, 1994: SC says in historic Ismail Faruqi case mosque was not integral to Islam.
APRIL, 2002: HC begins hearing on determining who owns the disputed site.
MARCH 13, 2003: SC says, in the Aslam alias Bhure case, no religious activity of any nature be allowed at the acquired land.
SEPT 30, 2010: HC, in a 2:1 majority, rules three-way division of disputed area between Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla.
MAY 9, 2011: SC stays HC verdict on Ayodhya land dispute.
MARCH 21, 2017: CJI JS Khehar suggests out-of-court settlement among rival parties.
AUGUST 7: SC constitutes three-judge bench to hear pleas challenging 1994 verdict of the Allahabad HC.
FEB 8, 2018: SC starts hearing the civil appeals.
JULY 20: SC reserves verdict.
SEPT 27: SC declines to refer the case to a five-judge Constitution bench. Case to be heard by a newly constituted three-judge bench on October 29.
OCT 29: SC fixes the case for the first week of January before an appropriate bench, which decides the schedule of hearing.
DEC 24: SC decides to take up petitions on case for hearing on January 4, 2019.
JAN 4, 2019: SC says an appropriate bench constituted by it will pass an order on January

10 for fixing the date of hearing in the title case.
JAN 8: SC sets up a five-judge Constitution Bench to hear the case headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and comprising justices S A Bobde, N V Ramana, U U Lalit and D Y Chandrachud.
JAN 10: Justice U U Lalit recuses himself prompting SC to reschedule the hearing for January 29 before a new bench.
JAN 25: SC reconstitutes 5-member Constitution Bench to hear the case. The new bench comprises Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S A Bobde, D Y Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S A Nazeer.
JAN 29: Centre moves SC seeking permission to return the 67-acre acquired land around the disputed site to original owners.
FEB 26: SC favours mediation, fixes March 5 for order on whether to refer matter to court-appointed mediator.
MARCH 8: SC refers the dispute for mediation by a panel headed by former apex court judge F M I Kallifulla.
APRIL 9: Nirmohi Akhara opposes in SC Centre's plea to return acquired land around Ayodhya site to owners.
MAY 9: 3-member mediation committee submits interim report in SC.

MAY 10: SC extends time till August 15 to complete mediation process.
JULY 11: SC seeks report on "progress of mediation".
JULY 18: SC allows mediation process to continue, seeks outcome report by August 1.
AUGUST 1: Report of mediation submitted in sealed cover to SC.
AUGUST 2: SC decides to conduct day-to-day hearing from August 6 as mediation fails.
AUGUST 6: SC commences day-to-day hearing on the land dispute.
OCT 4: SC says it will wrap up hearing on October 17, judgment by Nov 17.
■ SC directs UP govt to provide security to state Waqf Board Chairperson.
OCT 16: SC concludes hearing; reserves order.
NOV 9: SC grants entire 2.77 acre of disputed land in Ayodhya to deity Ram Lalla, possession of land will remain with central government receiver. SC also directs Centre and UP govt to allot 5 acre land to the Muslims at a prominent place for building mosque.
FEB 5, 2020: PM announces in Parliament 15-Member Trust for Ram Temple in Ayodhya.
FEB 19: Ram Mandir Trust appoints office bearers.
AUGUST 5: PM Modi conducts *bhoomi puja* at Ayodhya for initiation of temple construction, lays foundation stone.



of the day quote

What has Aaditya Thackeray got to do with the Sushant Singh Rajput case? It seems the Opposition still cannot digest that the Shiv Sena-led government has come to power in the state (Maharashtra)

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA LEADER

The implementation of panchayati raj system is our biggest target now. We are going to do it. It is our mission. Empowering this setup is our biggest dream. We will ensure its implementation

GIRISH CHANDER MURMU |

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF J&K

GI tagging of MP basmati would negatively impact Punjab's agriculture and also India's basmati exports

AMARINDER SINGH | PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Patil-Nilangekar cremated

Latur (Maharashtra): Veteran Congressman and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Shivajirao Patil-Nilangekar died due to age-related issues in Pune Wednesday, family sources said here. He was 90 and is survived by four sons - Dilip, Ashok, Vijay, Sharad, and a daughter Chandrakala Dawle, besides grandchildren including two who are Bharatiya Janata Party politicians. Last month, Patil-Nilangekar tested Covid-19 positive and had fully recovered from it.

Lalu shifted to RIMS director's house

Ranchi: Jailed former Bihar Chief Minister and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) president Lalu Prasad was shifted from the paying ward of the Rajendra Institute of Medical Science (RIMS) to its director's residence, here Wednesday, to protect him from Covid-19 infection. Shifting has been done on the direction of the jail administration after the security guards and some medical employees of the RIMS paying ward tested Covid-19 positive.

Shivraj Singh discharged

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan was discharged from a private hospital here Wednesday after recovering from coronavirus infection, an official said. Doctors have advised Chouhan, who was in the hospital for 11 days, to stay in home-quarantine and monitor his health for a week, the official added. Chouhan, 61, tested positive for coronavirus July 25. He tweeted Sunday that he did not have any symptoms of the infection and would be discharged if he tested negative in the latest test.

5 labourers die in wall collapse

Silvassa: Five labourers died and two were injured when a newly constructed wall of a factory collapsed due to heavy rains near Silvassa city in the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, police said Wednesday. The incident took place at Surangi village, around 16 km from headquarters Silvassa. Tuesday night, inspector Harish Rathod of Khanvel police station said.



A transformation is underway in Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh
S JAISHANKAR |
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

ED summons Rhea to appear on Aug 7

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 5: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned actor Rhea Chakraborty for questioning Friday in a money laundering probe stemming from a complaint filed by Sushant Singh Rajput's father with the Bihar Police in connection with his death, officials said on Wednesday.

They said Chakraborty, 28, has been asked to depose before the investigating officer of the case August 7. Once she appears, the actor is expected to be questioned about her friendship with Rajput, possible business dealings and the developments that took place over the last few years between them. Her statement will be recorded by the agency under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The summons are linked to a money laundering case that was registered by the ED July 31 on the basis of a Bihar Police FIR in which Sushant Singh Rajput's 74-year-old father K K Singh had accused actress Rhea Chakraborty and her family of abetting the Bollywood actor's suicide. Rajput, 34, was found hanging in his apartment in Mumbai's Bandra area June 14.

The central probe agency also questioned Sushant's house manager in Mumbai Wednesday in this case. It had grilled the deceased actor's Chartered Accountant (CA) Sandeep Shridhar August 3. Under the ED's scanner are at least two companies linked to Rajput and some financial deals involving Chakraborty and her brother Showik.

The ED case, registered July 31, has been filed against the accused named in the Bihar Police FIR that includes Chakraborty, her family and six others. Rajput's father has accused Chakraborty, purported



ED HAD LODGED A MONEY LAUNDERING CASE AGAINST RHEA CHAKRABORTY AND HER FAMILY MEMBERS

SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT'S FAMILY HAD ACCUSED RHEA OF TAKING RS 15 CRORE FROM THE LATE ACTOR

girlfriend of Rajput, of having befriended his son in May 2019 with the intention of furthering her own career. The father also wanted a police investigation to ascertain where the Rs 15 crore, which he claimed was deposited in a bank account held by Rajput, had been transferred. Chakraborty had released a video statement soon after the ED case was filed.

"I have immense faith in god and the judiciary. I believe that I will get justice. Even though a lot of horrible things are being said about me on the electronic media, I refrain from commenting on the advice of my lawyers as the matter is sub-judice. Satyamev Jayate, the truth shall prevail," she had said in the message.

The Supreme Court, while hearing Chakraborty's plea for transferring the Bihar Police FIR to the Mumbai Police, Wednesday said that truth behind the "unfortunate" death of a "gifted and talented artist" (Rajput) should come out even as the Centre apprised it of having accepted the Bihar government's recommendation for a CBI probe in the matter.

Book hooch tragedy accused for murder: Amarinder

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh, August 5: Even as Punjab is mulling a stringent law to tackle organised crime like manufacture and smuggling of illicit liquor, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh Wednesday directed DGP Dinkar Gupta that those directly involved in the hooch tragedy in the state be booked for murder.

During a Cabinet meeting here, the Chief Minister also mooted stricter punishment for those involved in the manufacture and smuggling of spurious and illicit liquor under the Excise Act.



As several Ministers agreed to the suggestion of Advocate General Atul Nanda that a strict law like PCOCA was needed to combat organised crime like smuggling of illicit liquor, the Chief Minister asked a sub-Committee led by Minister Brahm Mohindra to examine the provisions of the new law and submit its report at the earliest.

He also assured of justice for the bereaved families and survivors in the case, in which at least 111 persons have died in three districts of Punjab. As many as 40 persons have so far been arrested.

Military bands to perform across India for I-Day

The bands of the army, navy and police have performed at Porbandar, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Raipur, Amritsar, Guwahati, Allahabad and Kolkata so far

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 5: In a first, military bands will perform for a fortnight across the country ahead of the Independence Day celebrations August 15, officials said Wednesday.

The bands of the army, navy and police have performed at Porbandar, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Raipur, Amritsar, Guwahati, Allahabad and Kolkata so far, they said.

"The performances are intended as gestures of gratitude and appreciation of the nation towards the corona warriors who have been steadfastly fighting to stop the spread of the coronavirus in the country even at the risk of their lives," the Defence Ministry said in a statement. The military bands are, for the first time, celebrating



Independence Day by displaying their performances across the country, during the fortnight beginning August 1, it said.

On August 7, military bands are scheduled to perform in Srinagar and Kolkata. The tri-services band will be giving three performances in Delhi, one each at Red Fort, Rajpath and the India Gate August 8, 9 and 12 respectively. "Military and police bands will also perform in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Shimla and Almora August 8; in Chennai, Nasirabad, ANC (Andaman & Nicobar Command) Flag Point and Dandi August 9 and in Imphal, Bhopal and Jhansi August 12," the statement said. The final performances in the series will be held August 13 in Lucknow, Faizabad, Shillong, Madurai and Champaran, it said.

So far, 18 rhinos, 135 other animals dead in flooded Kaziranga

AGENCIES

Guwahati, August 5: Even as the flood situation in Assam improved significantly since July 24, 50 per cent of the world-famous Kaziranga National Park is still inundated, with 18 rhinos and 135 wild animals dying due to the deluge till date, officials said Wednesday.

Kaziranga Park Director Karmashree P. Sivakumar said that 172 wild animals have been rescued so far from floodwater, even though over 95 per cent of the park remained inundated until July 23.

"Last year, 263 animals, including many endangered rhinos, were killed in flood while 169 animals

were rescued all-out efforts are being made to take care of the animals in the entire Kaziranga National Park," Sivakumar said in a statement. The animals that perished this year include 18 rhinos, 107 hog deer, 12 wild boars, six wild buffaloes, four porcupines and three swamp deer.

Meanwhile, Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate have expressed deep concern over the devastation by flood in Assam for over a month that killed 111 men, women and children in 22 districts, while 26 others were killed in landslides since May 22. The British royals, known formally as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, in a letter

to Sivakumar have expressed their distress over the huge damage to the park sprawled over 884 sq km and its precious wildlife. The couple, who had visited the park in April 2016 to learn about conservation and anti-poaching efforts, said in their letter: "The deaths of so many animals, including one-horned rhinos, are deeply upsetting."

"The loss of life and livelihood in Assam as a result of the flooding, coming on top of the Covid-19 pandemic, is deeply distressing." Forest officials said that not only the Kaziranga National Park, located on the edge of the eastern Himalayan biodiversity hotspots of Golaghat and Nagaon districts, but the Manas,

MOBILE COVID-19 LAB

Karnataka Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar Wednesday inaugurated a mobile laboratory for coronavirus testing that can be deployed in COVID-19 hotspots across the state and help in promoting last-mile testing



India records highest 1-day nCoV recoveries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 5: A total of 51,706 patients have recuperated from COVID-19 in India in a span of 24 hours, the highest in a day, pushing the recovery rate to 67.19 per cent on Wednesday while the case fatality rate has further dropped to 2.09 per cent, the Union health ministry said.

The recoveries have surged to 12,82,215 and are more than twice the active cases of the coronavirus infection, it said. Due to the record highest daily recoveries, the active cases have reduced to 5,86,244 and comprise 30.72 per cent of the total COVID-19 caseload.



"With an increasing number of COVID-19 patients recovering, there has been a 63.8 per cent increase in the recovered cases in the last 14 days, indicating that the COVID-19 response and management driven by the Centre's 'test, track, treat, strategy is yielding the desired results," the ministry said in the statement. Coordinated implementation of the strategy by the Union and state and Union Territories governments has also ensured that the COVID-19 case fatality rate has been low when compared to the global scenario. The aggressive testing along with ramped up hospital infrastructure by collective efforts of the public and private sectors has ensured the increasing recovery rate, which has improved from 63 to 67 per cent in the last 14 days, it said.



A man struggles to walk in the water as waves lash the shore during high tide, at Dadar Chowpatty

BIHAR FLOOD SITUATION WORSENS

Patna: The flood situation in Bihar deteriorated on Wednesday as waters from overflowing rivers originating in Nepal inundated fresh areas and the number of affected people rose to 66.60 lakh across 16 districts, a government bulletin said. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar made an aerial survey of the affected areas of north Bihar and visited a village in Darbhanga district, which has been hit by the calamity. According to the disaster management departments bulletin, the death toll in flood related incidents remained at 19 as no fresh casualty was reported. The size of the flood-affected populace, however, grew by nearly three lakh since Tuesday and the number of panchayats hit by the calamity was 1,165, a rise of 13. The number of people evacuated from badly affected areas, till date, was 4.80 lakh, the bulletin said. Meanwhile, the chief minister set off for an aerial survey of various embankments situated along the rivers in spate which continued for an hour and a half before his aircraft landed at Darbhanga airport.

the Eastern Express Highway and the Western Express Highway.

With thousands of commuters getting stranded, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Wednesday evening said that it had made arrangements for people at the nearest civic schools outside the major railway stations.

Heavy rains also lashed the adjoining coastal districts of Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg since the past 24 hours. In Ratnagiri and Raigad, more than 25 villages in two sub-dis-

tricts remained cut-off, while in Mahad town in Ratnagiri, rubber boats were deployed by disaster agencies to rescue several families stranded in at least four feet water.

Rains pounded Palghar and Thane causing waterlogging in many towns like Mira Road, Bhiwandi, Kalyan, Ulhasnagar, Naigaon, Vasai, Virar and Dahanu, hitting people in a big way. The IMD has forecast heavy to extremely heavy spells of rain in Mumbai and the coastal Konkan area in the next 24 hours.



A sculptor resumes work on a sculpture at a workshop, during unlock 3.0, in the heritage town of Mamallapuram

India hits out at China over comments on J&K

AGENCIES

New Delhi, August 5: India Wednesday hit out at China for calling reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir as "illegal and invalid" and asserted that Beijing does not have any locus standi on the matter.

External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said China is advised not to com-

ment on the internal affairs of other nations. "We have noted the comments of the Chinese MFA spokesperson on the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The Chinese side has no locus standi whatsoever on this matter and is advised not to comment on the internal affairs of other nations," he said. India's reaction came hours after a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said in Beijing that

any unilateral change to status quo of Jammu and Kashmir is illegal and invalid.

The Chinese spokesperson made the comments following a question by a Pakistani correspondent on the completion of one year of the revocation of special status to Jammu and Kashmir and its bifurcation into two union territories-Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.



RG Orang and Tinsukia national parks, and the Pabitora and Tinsukia wildlife sanctuaries were also affected by floodwater that

led to death of many wild animals there. Of the 223 camps of forest personnel guarding the park, three were still inundated as of

Wednesday despite receding floodwater. Around 1.43 lakh people in 270 villages in 15 districts are still in distress even as the situation in Assam has improved hugely in the past two weeks due to a let-up in the monsoon.

According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) officials, of the 1.43 lakh affected people in 15 of the 33 districts, 1.35 lakh are in the state's eight districts - Goalpara (86,515), Morigaon (16,042), Bongaigaon (8,239), Dhemaji (6,495), Baksa (5,000), Nagaon (4,500), Kokrajhar (4,272) and Kamrup-Metro (4,142). Crops on 21,476 hectares of land in 11 districts are still inundated.

of the day quote

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused global uncertainty which has had a direct, detrimental effect on so many people across the UK and around the world. Job security has been rocked while there is an increased threat to many people's health

HANNAH RETTIE | LEAD AUTHOR, UNIVERSITY OF BATH

We have to take an optimistic attitude but not an unrealistic one. We've got to set out and wed ourselves to the prevailing objectives and that is not the suppression or containment of any one state, it's about the productive and strategic balance that can be achieved

SCOTT MORRISON | PM, AUSTRALIA

Younger people also need to take on board that they have a responsibility. Ask yourself the question: do I really need to attend a party?

MIKE RYAN | EXEC DIR, HEALTH EMERGENCIES PROG, WHO

SHORT TAKES

Heavy rains pound N Korea

Seoul: Torrential rains are lashing North Korea, prompting authorities to take steps to minimize damage, state media said. The North's official Korean Central News Agency reported Tuesday that the heavy rain is expected to continue in most of the country until Thursday. It said authorities handling economic and agricultural affairs are taking measures to prevent damage. The places hit by heavy rain include North and South Hwanghae provinces, a major agricultural region, KCNA said.

Miner strikes it rich again

Nairobi: A small-scale miner in Tanzania who had become an overnight millionaire over a month ago when he unearthed two of the biggest rough tanzanite gemstones ever found has struck it rich again, digging up a third stone weighing 6 kg (13 pounds) with an estimated value of \$2 million. The three stones were discovered by Saniniu Laizer. The first two stones have an estimated value of \$3.4 million. Tanzanite, is considered to be one of the rarest gemstones on earth.

17 killed as boat capsizes in B'desh

Dhaka: A passenger boat carrying about 50 people, including madrasa students and teachers, capsized Wednesday in northern Bangladesh, killing at least 17 people, according to a media report. The incident happened in Netrokona district's Madan upazila, the Dhaka Tribune reported. A total of 48 people, including madrasa students and teachers, from Mymensingh, boarded the boat for a cruise.

Egypt suspend talks with Ethiopia

Cairo: Egypt and Sudan suspended talks with Ethiopia after it proposed linking a deal on its newly constructed reservoir and giant hydroelectric dam to a broader agreement about the Blue Nile waters that would replace a colonial-era accord with Britain. The African Union-led talks among the three key Nile basin countries are trying to resolve a years-long dispute over Ethiopia's construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile.



Our position is consistent and clear on Kashmir. It is an issue left over from history between Pakistan and India. That is an objective fact established by UN Charter, Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements between Pakistan and India

WANG WENBIN | FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESMAN, CHINA

'WILL CONTINUE TO RAISE KASHMIR ISSUE'

Addressing PoK's legislative assembly on the first anniversary of India's decision to revoke the special status of J&K, Pakistan PM Imran Khan reiterated that his country would continue to raise the matter at all international forums



100 killed, nearly 4K injured in Beirut blasts

AGENCIES

Beirut, August 5: As many as 100 people were killed and nearly 4,000 injured in two huge explosions that rocked downtown Beirut, the Lebanese Red Cross said Wednesday. The blasts took place Tuesday evening (around 6.10 pm local time), shaking buildings all over the city while also causing severe damage and casualties, Xinhua reported. President Michel Aoun said that 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate, used in fertilisers and bombs, had been stored for six years at the port without safety measures. He said that was "unacceptable". Officials did not say what caused the blaze that set off the blast. A security source and media said it was caused by welding work being carried out on a hole in the warehouse. "It's like a war zone. I'm speechless," Beirut's Mayor Jamal Itani



RAGING INFERNO

told the media while inspecting the damage Wednesday that he estimated would lead to losses in the billions of dollars. "This is a catastrophe for Beirut and Lebanon." Many countries in the region ex-

pressed solidarity and sympathy with Lebanon over the explosions that have dealt a further blow to the country already plagued by the Covid-19 pandemic and an economic crisis. Iranian Foreign Minister

CAUSE OF EXPLOSION

Beirut: Fireworks and ammonium nitrate appear to have been the fuel that ignited a massive explosion that rocked the Lebanese capital of Beirut, experts and videos of the blast suggest. The scale of the damage, from the epicentre of the explosion at the port of Beirut, to the windows blown out miles away, resembles blasts involving the chemical compound commonly used as an agricultural fertiliser. But the compound itself typically does not detonate on its own and requires another ignition source. That likely came from a fire that engulfed what initially appeared to be fireworks that were stored at the port. Online videos of the disaster's initial moments show sparks and lights inside the smoke rising from the blaze, just prior to the massive blast.

'UP TO 3,00,000 LEFT HOMELESS'

Beirut: A huge blast in Beirut has left 300,000 people homeless and caused damage across half of the city estimated to cost more than \$3 billion, its governor said Wednesday. "I think there are between 250,000 and 300,000 people who are now without homes," said Marwan Aboud, adding that the estimated cost of the damage from Tuesday's explosion was between \$3.0 billion and \$5.0 billion dollars. Engineers and technical teams have yet to conduct an official assessment, he said, adding that damage from the blast in the port area seems to have extended over half of the city.

Mohammad Javad Zarif said Tuesday that Iran is ready to offer help to Lebanon after the huge blasts caused massive casualties and damage in Beirut. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the great and resilient people of Lebanon," Zarif tweeted. "As always, Iran is fully prepared to render assistance in any way necessary," he said. "Stay strong,

Lebanon," he added. Turkey Tuesday expressed sorrow over the huge number of casualties and damage caused by the explosions. Two Turkish citizens sustained minor injuries in the blasts, said the Turkish Foreign Ministry in a statement. Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi extended his condolences to Lebanon over the deadly explosions and loss of life.

MACRON TO VISIT LEBANON

Paris: French President Emmanuel Macron is travelling to Lebanon Thursday to offer support for the troubled country after a massive, deadly explosion that has drawn global pledges of medical and humanitarian aid. Macron's office told The Associated Press on Wednesday that the French leader will meet with Lebanese political leaders. It provided no further details. Lebanon is a former French protectorate and the countries retain close political and economic ties. France is also sending several tons of aid and emergency workers after Tuesday's explosion in Beirut, which killed at least 100 people and injured thousands. It was unclear what caused the blast, which appeared to have been triggered by a fire and struck with the force of an earthquake. It was the most powerful explosion ever seen in the city. Several other countries across the Middle East and Europe are sending aid.

COVID-19 DEATH TOLL

Latin America surpasses Europe



REUTERS

Latin America surpassed Europe Tuesday to become the region with the highest coronavirus death toll worldwide, according to a Reuters tally. The region has now recorded more than 206,000 deaths, approximately 30% of the global total. Brazil, the Latin American coun-

try most affected by the novel coronavirus, has now recorded a total of 95,819 deaths as of Tuesday. Mexico, the second-most affected country in the region, has 48,869 deaths. The spread of the pandemic has also accelerated in Colombia, Peru, Argentina and Bolivia. Last week Latin America became the most-affected region by the number of cases. On Monday, its number of infections surpassed 5 million, according to a Reuters tally based on government data. The number of cases increased after authorities relaxed lockdown measures in order to stimulate economic growth. The virus has infected more than 18.4 million people worldwide. The global death toll is 698,000.

BRAVING THE STORM



A man walks into heavy wind and rain along the waterfront of the Hudson River in front of the New York City skyline during Tropical Storm Isaias in Weehawken, New Jersey, August 4

REUTERS

TikTok to fight plagiarism by Facebook, US bullying

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Beijing, August 5: Facing threats of a US ban and smears by rival Facebook, popular video-sharing app TikTok has been compelled to respond to what observers describe as an effort to rip up the Chinese-owned firm and reap their own commercial, political benefits and monopolize the tech economy. ByteDance, owner of the video platform, said in the course of becoming a global firm, it has "faced all kinds of complex and unimaginable difficulties, including the tense international political environment, collision and conflict of different cultures and plagiarism and smears from competitor Facebook." The company vows to strive for its vision of globalization, strictly abide by local laws,



ByteDance, Tiktok's owner, said in the course of becoming a global firm, it has faced all kinds of complex and unimaginable difficulties

In November last year, Facebook launched Instagram Reels, which also bears highly identical features as TikTok

and actively safeguards its legitimate interests and rights, reports Xinhua. ByteDance's allegations of plagiarism against Facebook have two aspects, according to Zhang Xiaorong, an internet market analyst in Beijing. Facebook launched a knockoff app named Lasso in 2018, but it

soon failed. In November last year, Facebook launched Instagram Reels, which also bears highly identical features as TikTok, and is spending hugely to promote the app in several countries. Facebook has promoted the new app in Brazil, France, Germany and more recently in India. TikTok CEO Kevin

Mayer mentioned the two copycat products in an article on the company website last week. "At TikTok we welcome competition. We think fair competition makes all of us better. To those who wish to launch competitive products, we say bring it on. Facebook is even launching another copycat product, Reels (tied to Instagram), after their other copycat Lasso failed quickly," Mayer wrote. Mayer slammed Facebook's "maligning attacks" disguised as patriotism to drive TikTok out of the United States. He added the company is willing to take all necessary steps to ensure its long-term availability and success. "Facebook has fared rather poorly in the field of short videos, and it then launched the two apps which resemble TikTok. The logic and facts speak volumes of copying."

COVID IN WUHAN

'90% of recovered patients suffering from lungs damage'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, August 5: 90% of a sample group of coronavirus-recovered patients from a prominent hospital in China's Wuhan city where the pandemic broke out have reported lung damage and five per cent of them are again in quarantine after testing positive for the virus, according to a media report Wednesday. A team at the Zhongnan Hospital of Wuhan University led by Peng Zhiyong, director of the hospital's Intensive Care Unit, has been conducting follow-up visits with '100 recovered patients' since April. The first phase of this one-year programme finished in July. The average age of the patients in the study is 59. According to the first phase re-

It was found that patients' lungs are still in a damaged state, which means its ventilation and gas exchange functions have not recovered to the level of healthy people

sults, 90% of the patients' lungs are still in a damaged state, which means their lungs ventilation and gas exchange functions have not recovered to the level of healthy people, state-run Global Times reported. Peng's team conducted a six-minute walking test with the patients. They found that the recovered patients could only walk 400



metres in six minutes while their healthy peers could walk 500 metres in the same period. Some recovered patients have to

rely on oxygen machines even three months after being discharged from the hospital, Liang Tengxiao, a doctor from the Dongzhimen Hospital,

Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, was quoted as saying by the report. Liang's team is also conducting follow-up visits with recovered patients aged above 65. The results also showed that antibodies against the novel coronavirus in 10% of the 100 patients have disappeared. 5% of them received negative results in COVID-19 nucleic acid tests but positive results in Immunoglobulin M (IgM) tests, and thus have to be quarantined again, the report said. IgM is usually the first antibody produced by the immune system when a virus attacks. A positive result in an IgM test usually means that a person has just been infected by the virus. It is still unclear if this means these people have been

infected again. The 100 patients' immune systems have not fully recovered as they showed a low level of B cells -- a primary force for killing viruses in the human body -- but a high level of T cells which only recognise viral antigens outside infected cells. "The results revealed that the patients' immune systems are still recovering," Peng said. The patients also suffered depression and a sense of stigma. Most of the recovered patients told the team that their families were not willing to have dinner with them at the same table, the report said. Less than half of the recovered patients have returned to work, it said. The findings are significant as the coronavirus first emerged in Wuhan city.

Markle wins plea to keep friends anonymous in court

AGENCIES

London, August 5: Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, Wednesday won an attempt to keep five of her friends anonymous in her ongoing High Court legal action in London over breach of privacy against 'The Mail on Sunday' newspaper owners Associated Newspaper Limited (ANL). Lawyers for Markle, who turned 39 Tuesday, had argued for the friends who gave an interview to 'People' magazine to remain anonymous in reports of the proceedings. The legal team for ANL, which denies all allegations, had resisted the application.



"I have concluded that for the time being at least the court should grant the claimant the orders she seeks, the effect of which will be to confer protection on the sources' identities," said Justice Mark Warby in a ruling at the Royal Courts of Justice. "That is confidential information, the protection of which at this stage is necessary in the interests of the administration of justice. This is an interim decision," he noted. The 'People' article referenced in court involved the former actress' friends speaking out against her alleged bullying and they have so far only been identified in confidential court documents, according to 'The Daily Telegraph'.

Hindu community celebrates Raksha Bandhan in Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Peshawar, August 5: Members of the minority Hindu community in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province have celebrated the festival of Raksha Bandhan with simplicity amidst restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A small group of people attended a programme held at Peshawar cantonment's Kali Bari temple where women tied the Rakhi around the wrist of their brothers in the presence of Wilson Wazir, a Christian Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA). The majority of people celebrated the festival at their homes due to the coronavirus fear. Wazir, the first member of the minority community from the tribal districts in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, said that all the festivals will be celebrated with enthusiasm once the coronavirus pandemic is over. The coronavirus has killed at least 6,014 people and infected 281,136 others in Pakistan. At least 254,286 people have fully recovered while 872 are in critical condition.

of the day quote

States across the country should come forward and highlight their tourist attractions along with the COVID-19-safe measures taken by them. The Centre and state governments should work towards systematic tourism promotion campaigns

PP KHANNA | PRESIDENT, ADOI

An immediate review of the India-ASEAN Trade agreement and the effective utilisation of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement will contribute to the realisation of our 2020 trade target of \$200 billion set by both parties

HARDEEP SINGH PURI | MOS FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

The benefits of the loan restructuring should reach all sectors of the economy, as the COVID-19 has spared none and the damage is widely evident

DEEPAK SOOD | SECRETARY GENERAL, ASSOCHAM

SHORT TAKES

SRL appoints Anand K as CEO

New Delhi: Diagnostic company SRL Ltd Wednesday announced the appointment of Anand K as its new chief executive officer. This is pursuant to the resignation of Arindam Halder, the former CEO, who has decided to pursue opportunities outside the company after leading it over the last four years, SRL said in a statement. Anand has over 25 years of experience in the healthcare industry in India and international markets. Prior to joining, he was with Apollo Group, based in Hyderabad, it added.

SEBI: Tyagi gets 18-mnth extension

New Delhi: Ajay Tyagi was Wednesday given an 18-month extension, till February 2022, as the chairman of markets regulator SEBI, according to a Personnel Ministry order. This is the second extension given to Tyagi. It comes at a time when the economy and capital markets are staring at uncertainties due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved extension of Tyagi's term for 18 months, with effect from September 1, 2020 up to February 28, 2022, the order said.

IDBI launches gold loan

Mumbai: LIC-owned IDBI Bank Wednesday said it has launched four specialised gold loan branches: three in Bangalore and one in Hyderabad. These gold branches, known as IDBI Swarna Kalash, have been launched by remodelling the lender's existing branches.

'Normalcy to return post-FY20'

New Delhi: With coronavirus pandemic impacting its operations, United Breweries Ltd (UBL) Wednesday said it expects normalcy to be achieved only after the current financial year. In a regulatory filing, disclosing the impact of the pandemic on its operations, the company said it expects sales and demand of its main brands to be under pressure due to closure of key consumption points, including bars, and increased duties and taxes.



The Indian economy may recover relatively faster from the Covid-induced downturn, as it did from the global financial crisis

KENICHI AYUKAWA | MD & CEO, MARUTI SUZUKI

RIL RANKED NO 2 BRAND GLOBALLY

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's oil-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries has been ranked second biggest brand after Apple on the FutureBrand Index 2020. "This year's highest entrant at number two, Reliance Industries excels on every attribute," FutureBrand said, releasing its 2020 Index



'Services activity contracted for 5th straight month in July'

REUTERS

Bangalore, August 5: India's dominant services industry, a key driver of economic growth, shrank for a fifth straight month in July as restraining measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus hurt business activity and led to record job cuts, a survey showed.

India has recorded the third highest number of coronavirus cases globally, behind only the United States and Brazil, with over 1.8 million confirmed infections and more than 38,000 deaths, according to a Reuters tally.

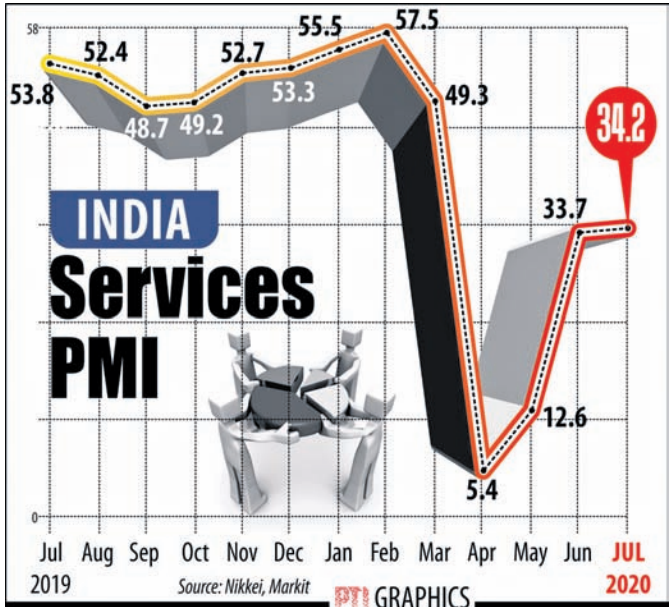
That has forced state and central governments to impose strict lockdown measures to curb the spread of the virus, keeping people at home and businesses closed, stifling demand and cementing fears of a deep recession.

The Nikkei/IHS Services Purchasing Managers' Index INPMIS=ECI increased to 34.2 in July from 33.7 in June, however, it was still well below the 50-mark separating growth from contraction.

July was the fifth straight month the index was sub-50, the longest such stretch since a 10-month run to April 2014.

"The coronavirus pandemic and subsequent introduction of lockdown measures continued to weigh heavily on the Indian service sector in July. Business activity and new orders dropped again, with the rates of decline remaining rapid overall," Lewis Cooper, an economist at IHS Markit, said in a release.

"Panellists frequently reported temporary company closures and



THE NIKKEI/IHS SERVICES PURCHASING MANAGERS' INDEX INPMIS=ECI INCREASED TO 34.2 IN JULY FROM 33.7 IN JUNE

JULY WAS THE FIFTH STRAIGHT MONTH THE INDEX WAS SUB-50, THE LONGEST SUCH STRETCH SINCE A 10-MONTH RUN TO APRIL 2014

and cut jobs at the fastest pace on record.

"With such a prolonged and significant downturn, any substantial recovery will take many months, if not years," IHS Markit's Cooper added.

A composite PMI, which includes manufacturing and services, suggested an ongoing deep contraction in Asia's third-largest economy, falling to 37.2 from June's 37.8. A Reuters poll shows analysts expect the economy would shrink 5.1% in the fiscal year 2020-21 - the biggest decline since 1979.

India's worsening economic outlook has likely raised the chances the Reserve Bank of India will cut interest rates at its policy meeting Thursday.

weak demand as a result of the pandemic."

Although slightly improved from June, sub-indices tracking domestic and foreign demand remained firmly in contraction territory even though firms cut prices despite an uptick in input costs.

Meanwhile, firms remained pessimistic about the next 12 months

AAI urges govt to continue MEIS scheme for aluminium sector

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, August 5: Aluminium Association of India (AAI) urged the Finance Minister and Commerce Minister to continue with the processing of MEIS (Merchandise Exports from India Scheme) applications through DGFT MEIS Portal and continuation of MEIS scheme with enhanced rate from 2% to 5% for all aluminium products to survive the current economic situation.

AAI sent a letter in this regard in wake of the Government envisaging cutting the funds outlay for MEIS (Merchandise Exports from India Scheme) from around ₹45,000 crore in FY 2019-20 to ₹9,000 Crore for April-December 2020 and diverting these funds for other purposes.

The DGFT has also blocked the MEIS module from 23rd July from accepting new applications to limit the issuance of any more scrips. This has created an extremely precarious situation for the Indian Aluminium exports which have declined by 11% from \$5.7 billion in FY-19 to \$5 billion in FY-20.

The aluminium body also demanded inclusion of aluminium in Product Linked Incentive Scheme and implementation of Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Products (RoDTEP) scheme on pri-



Aluminium exports from India are struggling to remain globally competitive due high incidence of unrebated Central & State taxes and duties

ority for aluminium industry to make India's aluminium exports competitive and create a level playing field for Indian exporters vis-à-vis global players in international markets.

AAI said, "All the Indian Aluminium smelters are operating in the country at around 90% capacity. The slump in domestic

demand is hurting the domestic Aluminium industry and it will take substantial time for the domestic demand to pick up. The only option left for the industry to sustain is to export the Aluminium products to survive the current situation due to COVID-10 pandemic, but the prices are expected to continue to be weak due to demand slump globally."

Aluminium exports from India are struggling to remain globally competitive due high incidence of unrebated Central & State taxes and duties, constituting 15% of Aluminium production cost which is amongst the highest in the world. This is adversely impacting the sustainability & competitiveness of the Aluminium industry."

PMGKAY

'Up to 75 cr beneficiaries got free grains'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 5: Union Food Ministry Wednesday said free foodgrains under PMGKAY were distributed via ration shops to up to 75 crore beneficiaries during April-June period.

In March, the government had announced distribution of 5 kg of foodgrains for free under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) to ration card holders for three months as part of the ₹20 lakh crore economic package in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Besides foodgrains, 1 kg pulses per beneficiary family were also to be distributed. This was over and above the subsidised grains given under the National Food Security Act.

The PMGKAY scheme has now been extended till November.

"About 37.5 lakh tonnes of foodgrains were distributed in the months of April and May covering about 75 crore beneficiaries in each month and 36.54 lakh tonnes foodgrains in June covering about 73 crore beneficiaries," the Food Ministry said in a statement.



States and union territories (UTs) had lifted 118 lakh tonnes of foodgrains from the Food Corporation of India (FCI), it said.

They have reported distribution of 111.52 lakh tonnes (93.5 per cent) of allocated foodgrains in April-June, the statement added.

Under PMGKAY, a total of about 81 crore ration card holders are to be covered, including beneficiaries of Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and Priority Householders.

RBI may go for status quo, announce measures to boost virus-hit growth



THE SIX-MEMBER MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE, HEADED BY THE RBI GOVERNOR, IS SCHEDULED TO ANNOUNCE ITS DECISION TODAY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 5: The RBI may refrain from cutting the benchmark lending rate today but can announce other measures like restructuring of loans amid the urgency to revive the coronavirus-hit economy, experts said.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), headed by the RBI Governor, is scheduled to announce its decision August 6. This is the 24th meeting of the MPC.

Although opinions are divided on the rate cut, experts believe loan restructuring is more essential at this juncture to combat the impact of COVID-19.

"The focus is on restructuring. Finance ministry is actively engaged with RBI on this. In principle, the idea that there may be a restructuring required, is well taken," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said last week.

Besides, the central bank is expected to issue directions regarding the loan moratorium which is coming to an end on August 31 amid bankers opposing further extension of this facility on concerns

over its misuse.

The fast-changing macroeconomic environment and the deteriorating growth outlook necessitated off-cycle meetings of the MPC - first in March and then again in May 2020.

The MPC has cumulatively cut the repo rate by 115 basis points over these two meetings, resulting in total policy rate reduction of 250 basis points since February 2019, with an aim to boost economic growth. The central bank has been taking steps proactively to limit the damage to the economy caused by the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

As per a research report by SBI, banks have cut rates on fresh loans by 72 basis points, the fastest transmission ever recorded.

SBI has cut by an equivalent 115 basis points on its repo-linked retail loan portfolio.

Shanti Ekambaram, group president- consumer banking, Kotak Mahindra Bank, said the interest rate cuts have had little impact on demand stimulation or growth.

The COVID-19 pandemic is hurting both businesses and consumers alike and the uncertainty around when things will normalise has led to muted demand and supply disruptions, she said.

"Having frontloaded the rate cuts and with inflation still above the 6 per cent mark, the MPC may decide to wait and watch and take a pause in August to monitor India's progress in its fight against the virus both from a health and economic point of view," Ekambaram said.

BIZ BUZZ

JMG rolls out Hero Xtreme 160R

Bhubaneswar: JMG Automobiles one of the Largest Hero Two-wheeler Dealer in Cuttack introduced the Hero Xtreme 160R. Setting the bar for sportiness and real-world performance, the new Xtreme 160R comes with a 160cc air-cooled BS-VI Compliant engine that is powered by the XSENS technology and advanced Programmed-Fuel-Injection. The Engine delivers an impressive power output of 15 BHP @ 8500 RPM. Joining the fast lane with a class leading acceleration - 0-60 km/h in 4.7 seconds - the motorcycle has one of the best power-to-weight ratios in its class, thanks to the low kerb-weight of 138.5kg. Pradeep Agarwal (Managing Partner) of JMG Automobiles said, "This premium two wheeler will do Fantastic in the Market and the Initial lot has been sold off & have a waiting period of One Month for Future."



Central Bank gets new regional head

Bhubaneswar: Pradeep Kumar Samantaray joined as the Senior Regional Manager of Central Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Regional Office. Prior to this, Samantaray was working as the Regional Manager at Ambikapur Region of Chhattisgarh. He started his banking career in the year 1995 and worked in various capacities in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Odisha, West Bengal, UP, Chhattisgarh & Maharashtra. Out of his total banking experience he is having 19 years exposure in Branch level by serving the Customers directly. Recently after being promoted as the DGM he has been posted as the SRM of Bhubaneswar Region. During his tenure he is likely to give emphasis for providing financial support to the MSME & Agriculture sector as per the guidelines fixed by RBI & Ministry of Finance.



PRADEEP KUMAR SAMANTARAY

Will '\$' remain the king of currencies

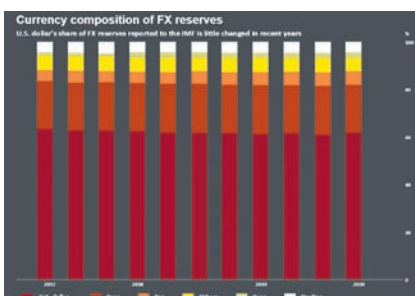
THE USD STANDS 9 PC BELOW ITS HIGH OF THE YEAR AND NOTCHED ITS WORST MONTHLY PERFORMANCE IN A DECADE IN JULY

AGENCIES

New York, August 5: Investors are worried that the US response to the pandemic is dealing a bloody blow to the Dollar, potentially accelerating what has so far been slow erosion in the greenback's status as the world's dominant reserve currency.

Investors and analysts, including billionaire hedge fund manager Ray Dalio and Goldman Sachs Group strategists, are among those who have warned that massive US government spending in recent months could hurt the dollar. At the same time, rock-bottom US interest rates for the foreseeable future and concerns over a potential rise in inflation are denting the Dollar's appeal.

These factors are already weighing on the Dollar, which stands nine per cent below its high of the year and notched its worst monthly



performance in a decade in July. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said last month that the Dollar's status as the world's reserve currency is in the US interest and the administration wants to maintain it.

The Treasury declined to comment further. The Dollar's dominance endows the US with many benefits, ranging from an out-

sized influence over the world's financial system to giving it the power to flex its muscle abroad by punishing rivals and bringing errant foreign players to heel.

For the world's central bankers, the Dollar remains the reserve currency of choice by far. The Dollar's share of global central bank reserves stood at around 62 per cent in the first quarter, compared with about 20 per cent for the Euro and 1.9 per cent for the Yuan, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Foreign holdings of US Treasuries, considered among the world's safest investments, rose to \$6.86 trillion in May.

Past concerns about the Dollar's top-dog status, including those that cropped up after Standard & Poor's, in 2011, downgraded its credit rating of the United States, have proven short-lived, due in part to the lack of a credible replacement. The main challenger, the

HURDLES FOR THE DOLLAR

- Inflation worries in the US
- Rock-bottom US interest rates for the foreseeable future

Changes that may affect the Dollar's reserve currency status have historically been glacial. Lately, they have been speeding up

ALAN RUSKIN | CHIEF INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIST, DEUTSCHE BANK AG

Euro, has struggled in the face of existential crises and years of subpar growth in the euro zone. Indeed, during the throes of the coronavirus panic in March, the Dollar's dominance was on full display.

Bajaj Allianz GIC announces premium installment options

New Delhi: Private sector Bajaj Allianz General Insurance (GIC) has announced premium installment facility for its health insurance product Health Guard. Health Guard - which is available to both individuals and family on floater basis - will now have the premium installment option on a monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and annual basis as per the customer's requirements. Bajaj Allianz General Insurance said in a statement. Customers having a net premium of ₹12,000 or more would be able to opt for the monthly installment option, it said. Similarly, customers with the net premium of ₹6,000 or more can opt for the quarterly & half-yearly installment options, it said, adding, annual installment option will also be available for long-term policies.

Sterling, Balbirnie tons power Ireland to a memorable win over England as Morgan century goes in vain

Compensation at its best



PAUL STERLING

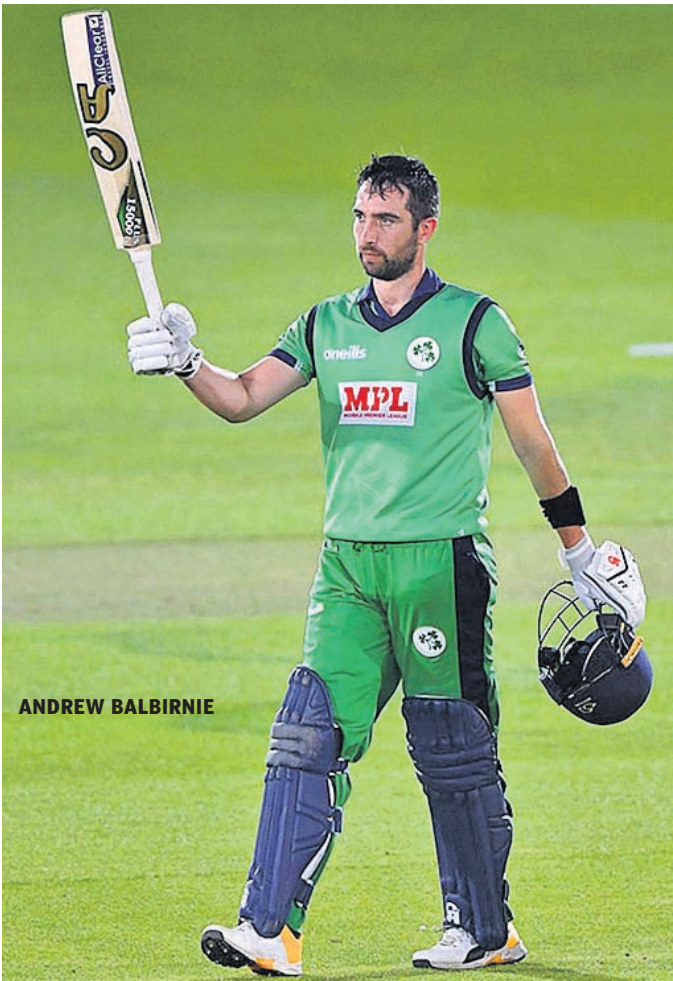
Southampton, August 5: Brilliant centuries by Paul Sterling (142, 128b, 9x4, 6x6) and captain Andrew Balbirnie (113, 112b, 12x4) helped Ireland comprehensively beat World Champions England by seven wicket in the final ODI of the three-match series.

In a match full of twist and turns at the Ageas Bowl, the visitors, who had already lost the series, Tuesday chased down the target of 329 in the final over to grab 10 crucial points in the ICC World Cup Super League.

Electing to field for the first time in the series, Balbirnie would have been initially pleased as Jason Roy, Jonny Bairstow and James Vince were all dismissed before the score had reached 50.

However, England skipper Eoin Morgan (106, 84b, 15x4, 4x6) and Tom Banton (58, 51b, 6x4, 1x6) put together a 146-run stand to put the hosts back on top. Morgan was particularly belligerent.

But then came an Irish resur-



ANDREW BALBIRNIE

gence, as they picked up four wickets in quick succession. England's lower order fought back, however, with David Willey (51, 42b, 3x4, 3x6) using his brawn in a 42-ball 51, while Tom Curran finished unbeaten on 38 as England were bowled out for 328 with a ball to spare in the 50th over of their innings.

Ireland started off steadily in pursuit of what would be their biggest-ever chase in ODIs, edging

out their famous victory over England at the 2011 World Cup where they had chased down a target of 328, thanks to a 50-ball century from Kevin O'Brien. Stirling and Gareth Deland stitched together a 50-run opening partnership, with the former contributing 36 of the runs as Ireland were able to build a platform that had been missing in the previous two ODIs.

QUOTES

BALBIRNIE SAYS...

Satisfying chase: We didn't perform with the bat at all in the first two ODIs. To come back in the field and to chase down such a total against a good England team is very satisfying

Praising Sterling: I tried to be positive whenever I could, obviously it's a different positive the way Paul (Sterling) bats. We created a big partnership which essentially went a long way to winning the game

MORGAN SAYS...

Completely outplayed: I think Ireland outplayed us today, we had an average day. Being three down early, then rebuilding and the guys rescuing later. We have more than enough wicket-takers in our group. Stirling had a good day, but we missed out on the opportunities

Cashing in on opportunities: We are learning more and more about the players who are coming in and getting opportunities. Billings with two fifties, Banton with a fifty today. Willey the way he's playing - it seems he has a point to prove



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 5: Selflessness defines a leader in Rohit Sharma's captaincy rulebook and that's why he has no hesitation in calling himself the 'least important person' in the Mumbai Indians team, the most successful franchise in IPL's history.

The man, who led Mumbai Indians to four titles, knows that as captain, it will not just be about him getting back into the groove after a forced seven-month break.

"I believe in a theory that when you are captain, you are the least important person. Others become more important in the larger scheme of things. It works differently for different leaders but as far as I am concerned, this theory works for me," Rohit told this agency in an exclusive interview.

Suresh Raina recently compared his cool quotient to that of MS Dhoni. He prefers to play down the comparison but there is one undeniable similarity between the two - Rohit can also remain as unfazed as the former India captain in the most difficult of situations.

"Not showing anger is not a conscious effort," he laughs. "That's a natural instinct that you have and you don't try and be someone that you are not. Try and be yourself all the time," he said.

"You do get angry, lose temper at times but it's important not to show it to your teammates. Hiding your emotions is the most crucial part."

The Indian vice-captain believes that there is 'enough time' before the IPL starts and he would slowly build on his strength, stamina and skills during the next one month

I probably understood the importance of family more than ever before. It was icing on the cake because my daughter (Samaira) is just growing up. It's these years of her life that I don't want to miss. The first step that she takes, the first words spoken. Spending so much time with her, playing with her, putting her to sleep, it was pure joy

ROHIT SHARMA

after the long lay-off.

"Hopefully, the gym will open this week and I can start my indoor (strength training) sessions. Right now, due to Mumbai monsoons, you can't train outdoor. I am planning to write a letter to MCA (on using indoor facilities)," he said.

Having won an Asia Cup in Dubai in 2018, he has a fair idea about what awaits his team next month in terms of conditions. Rohit said the plan is to build up slowly after being away from his bat for the longest he can remember.

"We have lot of time in our hands...I will be taking it slow. Luckily, I don't think there is any rush that I need to show. We have enough time. I will work on getting back to the ground slowly because the temperature in Dubai is 40 degrees. It's not easy," he said.

"It's the longest gap that I have ever had in my career without holding a bat. It will be a bit challenging. Unless I play, I will not know where I am and how I feel but body is completely fine. I feel physically more strong than ever because of the last four months," Rohit said.

MORGAN SURPASSES DHONI

Southampton: England skipper Eoin Morgan has broken MS Dhoni's record for most sixes as a captain in international cricket. He achieved the feat during the third and final ODI against Ireland which England lost by seven wickets. Morgan hit four sixes en route to his 84-ball 106-run knock at the Ageas Bowl. The left-handed batsman now has 328 international sixes to his name. As captain, he has hit 212 sixes and has gone past Dhoni's tally of 211. Ricky Ponting comes third on the list with 171 sixes as captain and is followed by New Zealand's Brendon McCullum (170). Dhoni is, however, still ahead of Morgan in terms career sixes in all three formats combined. Dhoni has hit a total of 359 sixes while Morgan has 328 maximums to his name. Overall, Chris Gayle holds the record for maximum sixes in international cricket. He has so far hit 534 sixes and is followed by Shahid Afridi (476), Rohit Sharma (423) and McCullum (398).



ENGLAND PICK 20 POINTS

Southampton: England have earned 20 points and Ireland 10 after the opening series of the World Cup Super League finished with a 2-1 score-line in favour of the home side despite Ireland winning the final ODI at the Ageas Bowl. Introduced to bring context to ODI cricket, the Super League is being played to determine qualification for the 2023 World Cup to be played in India. Featuring 13 teams, the 12 ICC Full Members and the Netherlands, who qualified by winning the ICC Super League 2015-17, the tournament is slated to see each side play four home and four away three-match series. Teams are awarded 10 points for a win, five for a tie, no-result or abandoned match and none for a loss in the Super League. India and seven other teams will make it directly from the league with the remaining two getting a second chance through a Qualifier.

Kohli, Rohit hold top two spots in ODI batters' list

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, August 5: India captain Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma retained the top two positions in the ICC ODI rankings for batsmen, while pacer Jasprit Bumrah held on to the No.2 spot among bowlers in the latest list issued Wednesday.

Kohli holds the numero uno status with 871 points, followed by Rohit (855) and Pakistan's Babar Azam (829), while with 719 points Bumrah continued to be steady at the second spot in the bowler's list, which is being headed by New Zealand's Trent Boult.

The batting chart saw some movement with Ireland captain Andrew Balbirnie improving four places to 42nd spot after his 113-run innings against England in the final match at Southampton, while his deputy Paul Stirling's 142 lifted him one slot to 26th.

Rookie Curtis Campher's impressive first series, which saw him score half centuries both times he batted, has helped him make a noteworthy entry into the batsmen's list at the 191st position.

In the bowling chart, Ireland fast bowler Craig Young's six wickets in the series has lifted him 40 places to a career-best 89th position, while Mark Adair (up six places to 138th) and Joshua Little (up 38 places to 146th) are the others to move up after the rubber, which ended 2-1 in England's favour.

England captain Eoin Morgan, who also scored a century in the final ODI, has gained one place and is ranked 22nd, while Jonny Bairstow has moved up a slot to 13th position, thanks to his knock of 82 in the second match. Sam Billings has re-entered the rankings at 146nd position after aggregating 132 runs.

DYBALA VOTED SERIE A MVP AHEAD OF RONALDO



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Turin, August 5: Juventus forward Paulo Dybala has been voted as Serie A's Most Valuable Player (MVP) following a strong campaign with the Italian giants.

Dybala played an important role in helping Juventus secure their ninth successive Serie A title this term. He was rather prolific in front of the goal as he netted 17 times across competitions (11 in league).

The MVP award to Dybala was interesting in the sense that teammate Cristiano Ronaldo had a better personal campaign than the Argentine this term.

Ronaldo ended up being the second-highest goalscorer in the Italian top-division as he scored 31 goals to star in Juventus' title-winning campaign. His form post coronavirus stoppage helped the team remain at the top of the pile till the end of the season.

Meanwhile, European golden boot winner Ciro Immobile was voted as best striker in the league while Juventus custodian Wojciech Szczesny won the best goalkeeper award.

Inter centre-back Stefan de Vrij was voted as best defender while Atalanta's Alejandro Gomez was named as the best midfielder in the top-division.

All the winners will have special badges printed on their respective jerseys for next season.

Defending champ Rafa to miss US Open

ASSOCIATED PRESS

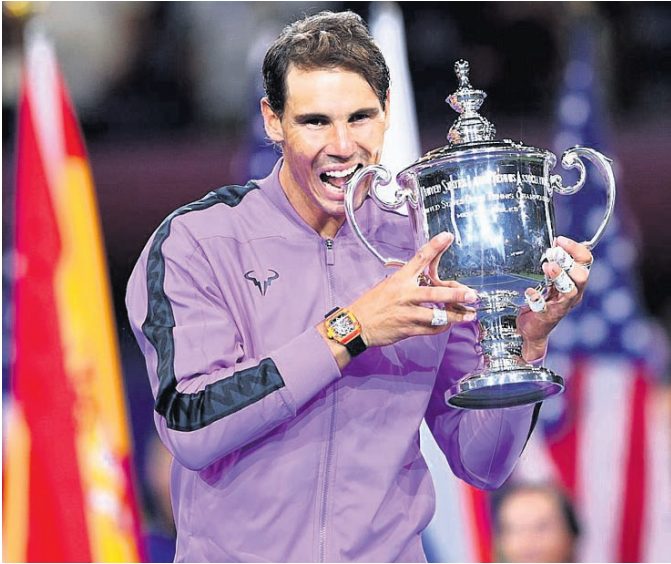
Madrid, August 5: Defending champion Rafael Nadal will skip the U.S. Open because of the coronavirus pandemic, putting on hold his bid to equal Roger Federer's men's record for Grand Slam titles.

Nadal explained his decision in a series of tweets sent in Spanish and English Tuesday. "The situation is very complicated worldwide, the COVID-19 cases are increasing, it looks like we still don't have control of it," Nadal wrote.

The 34-year-old Spaniard called sitting out the tournament scheduled to begin August 31 in New York "a decision I never wanted to take," but added that he would "rather not travel."

"Rafa is one of the greatest champions in our sport and we support his decision," US Open tournament director Stacey Allaster said.

The current No.1-ranked woman, Ash Barty, already had announced she would be missing the US Open.



The US Tennis Association's entry list announcements Tuesday noted that 2019 women's champion Bianca Andreescu is in the field - at least for now; players can withdraw until

the start of play - but made no mention of Nadal.

The professional tennis tours have been on hiatus since March because of the COVID-19 outbreak,

with play resuming for women Monday in Palermo, Italy. The first men's event on the main tour is scheduled to be played later this month.

Nadal's plan to skip the US Open came shortly after the Madrid Open, scheduled for September, was canceled because of the pandemic. "We know that the reduced tennis calendar is barbaric this year after 4 months stopped with no play," Nadal wrote on Twitter. "I understand and thank for the efforts they are putting in to make it happen."

Federer, who has a record 20 Grand Slams to his name - one more than Nadal, will be absent from the US Open, too, but because of two operations on his right knee this year.

The last Grand Slam tournament contested without either Federer or Nadal was the 1999 US Open - four years before Nadal made his debut at one of the sport's four most prestigious events.

Babar, Masood hold fort for Pakistan after early hiccups

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Manchester, August 5: Early tea was taken on Day 1 of the first Test between England and Pakistan at Old Trafford Wednesday, thus putting a halt on Babar Azam's (52 batting, 71b, 9x4) charge.

Pakistan's No.4 was on 52 at tea in his partnership of 78 runs with opener Shan Masood (45 batting, 134b, 7x4) swinging the momentum the visitors' way in the second session.

Pakistan came into the post-lunch session having lost Masood's opening partner Abid Ali and captain Azhar Ali in the first session. Babar got off the mark in the second session with a four off the first ball he faced from James Anderson.



Shan Masood (L) works the ball to the off side; Babar Azam raises his bat after reaching fifty



PHOTOS: ESPNCRICINFO

Babar hardly ever looked fussed throughout his free flowing innings in the second session.

Two overs later, Babar got to his half century in just 70 balls. Only one ball could be bowled by Jofra Archer in the over after that before the umpires called the players off due to bad light. Rain soon followed and early tea was called.

Earlier, Archer and Chris Woakes bowled with venom and snared two wickets to disturb Pakistan's watchful start as they reached 53/2 at lunch.

BRIEF SCORES (AT TEA): Pakistan 121/2 (Babar Azam 52 batting, Shan Masood 45 batting; Chris Woakes 1/14, Jofra Archer 1/22) vs England. Match to continue.

TV umpire to call front foot no balls

Dubai: Front foot no balls will be decided by the TV umpire and not the on-field officials for the first time in Test cricket with the series between England and Pakistan, the ICC announced, Wednesday. The ICC added that the front foot no-ball technology will be assessed before any decisions are taken regarding its use in future games. "Front foot no-ball technology to be used in ICC World Test Championship series featuring England and Pakistan, with the support of both teams," the ICC tweeted. "Performance of the technology in these Tests will be reviewed before any decisions taken on its future use in Test cricket," it added.