



## NEW PEAK

Dancing sensation and actor Nora Fatehi has garnered a fan following of a whopping 15 million on Instagram

LEISURE

P2



## HINDI DETERRENT

Ex-Karna CM HDK says not knowing Hindi prevented many South Indian leaders from becoming PM of India

TWO STATES

P7



## HK'S TYCOON HELD

HK media tycoon Jimmy Lai becomes the highest-profile person held under a new nat'l security law

INTERNATIONAL

P10

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL



He is such a great leader. You go to him with any problem and he immediately provides a new slogan.

## SHORT TAKES

### Pranab Mukherjee tests Covid-19 +ve

**New Delhi:** Former President Pranab Mukherjee Monday said he has tested positive for COVID-19. The 84-year-old has been admitted to the Army's Research and Referral (R&R) Hospital here. "On a visit to the hospital for a separate procedure, I have tested positive for COVID19 today," Mukherjee tweeted. "I request the people who came in contact with me in the last week, to please self isolate and get tested for COVID-19," the Congress leader, who was the president from 2012-17, said.

### Hacked to death over 'witchcraft'

**Malkangiri:** A 60-year-old man was arrested in Malkangiri district for hacking his neighbour to death on suspicion that he practised witchcraft, a police officer said Monday. Muka Madkani (55) was sleeping in his hutment in Tumsapalli village Saturday night, when the accused, Rama Sodi, barged in and attacked him with a sharp weapon, killing him on the spot, RP Nag, the inspector in-charge of Malkangiri police station, said. The accused, who was apprehended Sunday, confessed to his crime, Nag maintained.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	38182.08 ↑ 141.51
NIFTY	11270.20 ↑ 56.20
DOLLAR	75.09 ↓ ₹0.01
EURO	88.13 ↓ ₹0.85
GOLD	₹55,056 ↑ ₹267
SILVER	₹75,143 ↑ ₹983

WEATHER	
	BHUB CTK
TEMP	34.7°C 33.4°C
MAX	26.4°C 25.0°C
MIN	
Humidity	79% 77%
Rainfall	Nil 3.2mm
	Forecast
	Light rain likely

# Not even a pie on GST count

CASH-STRAPPED STATE GOVT EYES ₹4,200CR GST COMPENSATIONS FROM THE CENTRE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** With the revenue collection of the state having plunged drastically due to Covid-19 pandemic, the government is eagerly awaiting ₹4,200 crore compensations from the Centre under the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The Centre is supposed to compensate states for their loss of revenue after implementation of the GST Act. Under the law, if the states' GST revenues do not grow by at least 14 per cent over the base year (2014-15), the Centre will pay them the difference amount on a bi-monthly basis for the first five years from the implementation of the GST Act.

The state government has estimated a compensation of ₹3,647 crore for the first four months of the current financial year 2020-21. The dues for the first two months were ₹2,443 crore that increased to ₹3,674 crore by the end of July. However, the Centre has not released a single pie as GST compensation for 2020-21 fiscal, official sources said.

Apart from ₹3,674 crore pending as on date for this year, the Centre is yet to clear dues of previous financial years. The ministry of finance has not cleared about ₹230 crore for the financial year 2019-20 and ₹450 crore for the year 2018-19, the source said. The total dues pending with the Centre add up to over ₹4,200 crore.

"As the revenue collection has gone drastically in our state. We will soon write to the Centre again seeking early release of the GST compensations," said an official of the finance department.

## GST

- The Centre is supposed to compensate states for their loss of revenue after implementation of the Goods and Services Tax Act
- The Union finance ministry is not in a position to clear all GST compensations as per current revenue sharing formula

The state GST collection in July 2020 increased to ₹794.02 crore as against ₹702.44 crore achieved in the corresponding month last year. The GST collections for April, May and June dropped by 61.15%, 25.22% & 5.83% respectively.

As per reports, the Union finance ministry is not in a position to clear all GST compensations as per current revenue sharing formula due to a fall in tax collection. The gross Goods and Services Tax revenue of India slid by 14 per cent last month to ₹87,422 crore from ₹1,02,083 crore collected in July 2019, as per data released by the finance ministry.

During last GST Council meeting in June, Finance Minister Niranjan Pujari had demanded that the Centre released the compensations as soon as possible as the state government was facing a fund crunch due to the effect of the pandemic.

The collection from one of the non-GST items – petroleum products, is also showing encouraging trends during July. The collection of July 2020 against this item increased to Rs. 521.47 crore from Rs. 509.03 crore collected in July 2019 registering a growth rate of 2.5%.

# Lockdown blues push auto driver to kill self

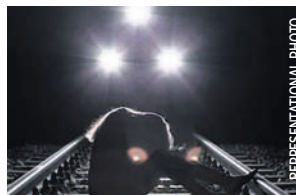
POST NEWS NETWORK

**Berhampur, August 10:** Increasing financial crunch due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown reportedly drove a man to commit suicide at Berhampur. The Government Railway Police (GRP) recovered his body from the rail lines here late Sunday night.

The deceased was identified as Uttam Sahu, 24, son of Lokanath Sahu, of Dasagharaha Sahi in Gosaninuagaon. He was an auto-rickshaw driver. Repeated shutdowns brought him immense miseries as he failed to get passengers.

His body was recovered from the rail lines behind the Saraswati Sishu Mandir in Gosaninuagaon. Preliminary inquiries suggested that Sahu might committed suicide after losing his livelihood due to the Covid-induced lockdown.

The body of the deceased was identified by his brother Amulya Sahu, GRP IIC Jyoti Prakash Nayak said Monday. Police registered a case and handed over the



REPRESENTATIONAL PHOTO

body to his kin after a post-mortem, he said.

Police said Sahu earned his living by working as an auto-rickshaw driver. However, he lost his livelihood after the government imposed repeated lockdowns and shutdowns in the state in view of the pandemic.

Ganjam is a Covid hotspot in the state and due to its increasing caseloads, the administration has doubled down on re-

strictions. This must have increased the distress of Sahu as he always worried over alternative means to earn a living but in vain. The pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns enforced by the government has dried up local income opportunities

for people. Influx of a large number of migrants to state compounded the situations in Ganjam.

He was last seen at his home in the afternoon when he had his lunch and left home. Family members grew apprehensive after he failed to return by 10 pm. They searched for him in nearby locations but to no avail. Later, they learnt about his death from the GRP.

## LAYING A TRAP



Forest officials prepare to install a trap inside the compound of a shut glass company to capture a leopard that was spotted around the area at Andheri (East) in Mumbai Monday

# Cong hints at deal with Pilot

CONGRESS TO FORM 3-MEMBER PANEL TO HEAR PILOT'S GRIEVANCES

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 10:** The Congress will constitute a three-member committee to look after the grievances of sulking Congress leader Sachin Pilot, who met Rahul Gandhi Monday. The party said that the two leaders held a frank, open and conclusive discussion.

In a statement, party general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal said, "Congress President Sonia Gandhi has decided that the AICC constitute a three-member committee to address the issues raised by Sachin Pilot, the aggrieved MLA, and arrive at an appropriate resolution thereof."

"Sachin Pilot has met former Congress President Rahul Gandhi and expressed his grievances in detail. They have had a frank, open and conclusive discussion. Sachin



Pilot has committed to working in the interest of the Congress party and the Congress government in Rajasthan," said the statement.

The Congress had sacked Pilot as Deputy Chief Minister and Rajasthan Congress President. So far, Gehlot has stayed put as the Chief Minister amid claims and counter-claims on attempts to poach MLAs.

The development comes after Rahul Gandhi met Sachin Pilot

Monday. The duo had a meeting in presence of Priyanka Gandhi and then both Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi drove from Rahul Gandhi's residence to 10 Janpath, where all the three, including Sonia Gandhi, discussed the issue.

Sources said that Congress has assured that Pilot's grievances will be addressed regarding Ashok Gehlot and Rajasthan politics. However, the party claims that previous status will be restored and his concerns will be sorted out.

While leaders from the Congress camp claimed that MLAs from the Pilot camp did not want to join the ranks, the negotiations started with the party and Pilot reapproached the senior leadership, including Ahmed Patel and Rahul Gandhi, and was taken into confidence for future action. After Rahul Gandhi said yes, the deal was sealed.

# 15L daily mandays under MGNREGA

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** With an aim to provide livelihood support to the poor, the state government has decided to enhance mandays being created under MGNREGA to 15 lakh per day by the end of this month.

At a meeting Monday, Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy directed officials to enhance the mandays to 15 lakh per day by end of the current month. Mission Director, MGNREGA, RP Patil said at present around 1.5 lakh mandays are being created by line departments. The line departments were asked to create at least 15 lakh man-days per day by the end of this month.

The balance 10 lakh mandays

would be created through the panchayati raj & drinking water department. At present, the department is able to create 8.5 lakh working days. Taking a district wise review of the present status, Tripathy directed the panchayati raj and the drinking water department to complete 7 lakh units of rural housing during the current financial year. A total of one lakh houses were completed in different districts till August 5.

Panchayati raj secretary DK Singh said around 44,000 houses were completed during the same period of last fiscal. Each district was given a target as per their 'house waiting list'. The CS sought completion of houses within the scheduled timeline.

# Patanjali mulls bid for IPL title sponsorship

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 10:** Baba Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved is considering to bid for the title sponsorship of the upcoming Indian Premier League (IPL), according to a company official. The slot of the title sponsorship of IPL was vacated after the Chinese handset maker Vivo decided to exit from it.

The move would help the Haridwar-based firm access a global marketing platform, as Patanjali is focusing on exports for its Ayurveda-based FMCG products. Confirming the development, Patanjali spokesperson SK Tijarawala told PTI: "We are considering this". "This is for Vocal For Local and making one Indian brand as global, this is the right platform. We are considering into that perspective," he said. However, Tijarawala also added that the company is yet to take a final call on the issue.

"We have to take a final decision, whether we would take it or not," Tijarawala added. According to him, the Board of Control for Cricket in India is coming with the expression of interest on Monday and it has to submit its proposal by August 14.

Last week, BCCI and Vivo decided to suspend their partnership for the 2020 IPL beginning on September 19, in the UAE, amid clamour to boycott Chinese products in the wake of the Sino-India border stand-off. The title sponsorship is a significant part of the IPL's commercial revenue, half of which is shared equally by the franchisees. Vivo had won the IPL title sponsorship rights for five years from 2018 to 2022.

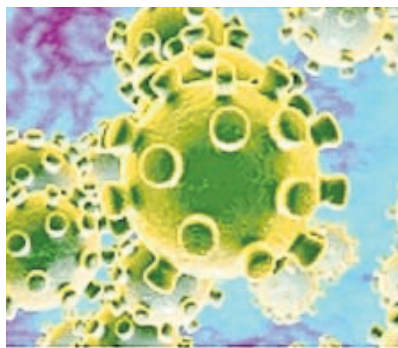
# At 0.6%, state's Covid fatality rate much better than India's

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 10:** As the total coronavirus patients across the country crossed the 22-lakh mark, India's fatality rate dropped to its lowest two per cent in the last 24 hours whereas the recoveries reached a new peak of over 15 lakh so far.

The latest data shared by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) reveals that the current Case Fatality Rate (CFR) is two per cent and is steadily declining.

However, the Covid fatality rate in Odisha is much better compared to national average. As against a total caseload of 47,455 in Odisha, the number of deaths in the state



## FAST RECOVERIES

India's COVID-19 recoveries have crossed the historic peak of 15 lakh Monday, more than twice the active cases

The coronavirus infections still remain concentrated in 10 states that contribute more than 80 per cent of the new cases

was 286, recording a fatality rate of 0.6 per cent. The report came at a time when the country tested a record over 1,000 deaths in a single day, pushing the death toll so far

to 44,386. The central government said the fatality rate is at its lowest and India is among the countries with lowest fatalities.

As per the health ministry, the co-

ordinated efforts of the Centre and states/Union Territories on early detection through aggressive testing and efficient clinical management of hospitalised cases have shown results with continuously decreasing CFR. "Early identification of cases has also led to steep fall in percentage of active cases," it said. Early identification helps to ensure timely and prompt isolation of mild and moderate cases and hospitalisation of severe and critical cases, thereby leading to effective management of cases, the ministry said.

The ministry data further mentions that India's COVID-19 recoveries have crossed the historic peak of 15 lakh Monday, more than twice

the active cases. Recovery of 15,35,743 patients, the ministry said, has been made possible because of the policy of aggressive testing, comprehensive tracking and efficient treatment. Better ambulance services, focus on standard of care and use of non-invasive oxygen had given the desired results, it said. With the highest-ever single-day recoveries of 54,859 patients in the last 24 hours, the recovery rate had scaled another high of almost 70 per cent.

The record recoveries ensured that the actual caseload of the country, namely the active cases, has reduced and currently comprises only 28.66 per cent of the total positive cases.

## RUSSIAN VAX THIS WEEK

As the number of coronavirus cases continues to rise at an alarming rate, scientists and medical experts are making accelerated efforts to develop a vaccine fit for human use. While the vaccine created by Oxford University and drugmaker AstraZeneca is considered one of the frontrunners, Russia is all set to become the first country in the world to launch its coronavirus vaccine. The vaccine candidate developed by Russia's Gamaleya National Research Centre and Russian defence ministry is all set to get registered August 12, 2020, making Russia the first country in the world to register a vaccine to battle the novel coronavirus.

**FORTUNE FORECAST**

**GaneshaSpeaks.com**  
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FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181\*

**ARIES**

Today, you will show everyone what you're capable of. You are likely to come up with great ideas and work strategies, which will prove productive. However, if appreciation doesn't come your way, Ganesha says you must learn to take disappointment in your stride.

**TAURUS**

Today Ganesha sees you overdoing your aggression, domination bit and urges you to keep your assertiveness in check. This day is not a favourable one for new ventures and undertakings. Don't therefore attempt anything new. Talk pleasantly.

**GEMINI**

You are desirous of perfection in everything that you do, and you practice this philosophy in every aspect of your life. You make sure that all of your energies are concentrated on taking forward your efforts in the right direction. You need to replenish your energies and increase your awareness today, to be able to continue your efforts, says Ganesha.

**CANCER**

You will take on new responsibilities, says Ganesha. So you will be busy in your task. You may feel exhausted due to hectic work. So it entails mental tension.

**LEO**

Guides help other people choose the right path in life and to select the correct alternatives. It is a good day for those who are in the teaching or coaching professions. It is also a progressive day for those working in MNC's. Ganesha's blessings are with you.

**VIRGO**

Expenditures will be like oil spills- wasteful and dirty. But cosmic energies and positivity are gathering wind today, and you should do well to make full use of them in your personal and professional life, says Ganesha.

**LIBRA**

Nothing overshadows your love for your children today. And love is precisely what drives you incessantly to give them the best possible of everything. Be it special classes for that extra edge in education, or a visit to a holy place to seek divine blessing, you will do it all today. And spending time with children isn't all — you may end up taking a small but sweet trip in the evening, says Ganesha.

**SCORPIO**

It is more than likely that you will be in high spirits today, says Ganesha. All your energy and exuberance may not yield expected results. That is no reason to lose heart though. Keep up the effort from your end and you will eventually taste success in the days to come.

**SAGITTARIUS**

You will find yourself rubbing shoulders with Lady Luck today. Sharpen your multi-tasking skills as you will keep busy and have only occasional moments of respite. Good will and green print, you might find them both with ease and in abundance, predicts Ganesha.

**CAPRICORN**

After all the drudgery you endured in a bid to reach a certain point in your career, it's time to sit back and enjoy the rewards, says Ganesha. Today, you can expect to get a transfer, a promotion, a pay hike or all the three. But these will be accompanied by added responsibilities and work, leaving you wondering if it really was an achievement or a bait used to trap you.

**AQUARIUS**

It's an uphill struggle today! But the heavens are on your side, and you will be saved from being swindled. Otherwise, it's an eventful day at work. You may initiate big business deals and new projects as well. It will take all your energy, and Ganesha suggests you hit the deck early.

**PISCES**

You could swing both ways today! Fortunately, this alludes to nothing more sinister than the mix of the introvert and the extrovert that you are. So, between a quiet evening out by yourself at a classical music concert, or performing on the dance floor at the local disc — take your pick, says Ganesha.



**SCHWARZENEGGER, PRATT WELCOME FIRST CHILD**

Los Angeles: Author Katherine Schwarzenegger and her husband, actor Chris Pratt, have welcomed their first child. The 30-year-old author's brother, Patrick Schwarzenegger, confirmed the news through a video message, reports *etonline.com*. Unconfirmed sources said the couple has been blessed with a girl.

**GRANT STILL FEELS EXCITED ABOUT HAVING A DAUGHTER**

Actor Richard E Grant, in a joint interview with his daughter Olivia to The Sunday Times magazine, has said her birth felt like a miracle after the couple were 'told not to try' to have children following a series of miscarriages, reports *femalefirst.co.uk*.



**Dharmapada Award presented to seven distinguished artists**



POST NEWS NETWORK

**BHUBANESWAR:** Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi Monday presented Dharmapada Puraskar, the highest honour of the state in painting, sculpture, graphic art and traditional art, to seven eminent artists for outstanding exhibitions in their respective fields.

The awards were conferred on Gokul Bihari Patnaik (posthumously) for 2009, Asim Basu (posthumously) for 2010, Durga Prasad Das for 2011, Sudarshan Sahoo for 2012, Padma Vibhusan Jatin Das for 2013, Dinanath Pathy (posthumously) for 2014 and Padma Vibhusan Raghunath Mahapatra for 2015. Anusuya Devi, wife of Gokul Bihari Patnaik, Gita Basu, wife of Asim Basu and Soubhagya Pathy, son of Dinanath Pathy received the

LIST OF RECIPIENTS	
Gokul Bihari Patnaik (2009)*	
Asim Basu (2010)*	
Durga Prasad Das (2011)	
Sudarshan Sahoo (2012)	
Jatin Das (2013)	
Dinanath Pathy (2014)*	
Raghunath Mahapatra (2015)	
* Posthumously	

awards. Following the Covid guidelines, Minister of Tourism, Odia Language, Literature and Culture Jyoti Prakash Panigrahi visited the residences of the artists to present the awards along with a sum of Rs One lakh each, a memento and an Angavastra. He was accompanied by Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi secretary Gajendra Sahu and Director Culture Bijay Kumar Nayak.

**FIFTH DEATH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ganeswar Mishra's collected works released online**

POST NEWS NETWORK

**BHUBANESWAR:** Children can be empowered through literature. Therefore, it is imperative to write for them keeping in mind their age and needs, said eminent writer Dash Benhur while delivering the fifth Ganeswar Mishra Memorial Lecture here Sunday.

The web session marked the fifth death anniversary of the renowned litterateur. The virtual event was organised by city-based socio-cultural organisation *Sateertha* which was founded by Ganeswar Mishra in the 1990s. Attending the session, Jatindra Kumar Nayak, translator and former English professor of Utkal University, highlighted Mishra's approach towards life and literature.

The fifth volume of Mishra's

collected works *Srujan Samagra V*, a compilation of his travel stories, was unveiled on the occasion. The previous volumes were compilations of his novels, autobiographical writings, short stories and features.

Mishra's youngest son Sandeep Mishra who is also a coordinator for *Sateertha* said efforts are on to bring out the unpublished works of his father even as it has been five years since he passed away. Participating in the digital event, playwright Dayanidhi Tripathy informed that he had adapted Mishra's popular novel *Sakalara Muhan* (Face of the Morning) into a play and works are on to stage it soon.

Noted writer Biraj Mohan Dash gave the welcome address while poet Saroj Bal proposed the vote of thanks.



**Nawazuddin to romance Neha in his next**

**Mumbai:** Actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui will be seen sharing screen space with actress Neha Sharma in his next romantic drama titled *Jogira Sara Ra Ra*.

Announcing the film on Instagram, Nawazuddin wrote: "The romance that will tickle your funny bones! Here's announcing my next film #JogiraSaraRaRa with #NehaSharma."

Nawazuddin also shared photographs of a script-reading session along with Neha.

Kushan Nandy, who directed Nawazuddin in the 2017 release, *Babumoshai Bandookbaaz*, will once again collaborate with the actor on the new film, which is written by Ghalib Asad Bhopali, who had also written the earlier film.

"It celebrates the couple, their fancies and madness, set against the milieu of small town India or what I choose to call - the more glitzy and exuberant India," Kushan said, about the film.

The film is scheduled to go on floors in February, 2021.

IAN S

**Nora hits 15 million followers on Instagram**

**Mumbai:** Dancing sensation and actress Nora Fatehi now has a fan following of whopping 15 million on Instagram.

Nora posted a picture on Instagram where she is seen in a 'desi' avatar, clad in Indian attire that she teams with a 'nath' or nosering.

"Meet me down by the river.. We can dance to the rhythm.. Til the sun is high and the water runs dry.. 15 million," she wrote alongside the image.

Just last month she garnered over 14 million followers on Instagram, and to celebrate she has shared a moment that she believed has changed her life.

Coming up for Nora is the Ajay Devgn-starrer *Bhuj: The Pride Of India*. It tells the tale of Indian Air Force pilot Vijay Karnik. The period drama looks back into the journey of 300 women of Madhapar village in Gujarat's Kutch district, who played a pivotal role in helping India win the 1971 Indo-Pak war. The women came together to rebuild and repair the only runway in Bhuj, which was crucial for the war.

IAN S



**Radhika shares Govinda vibes**

**Mumbai:** A bit of Govinda seems to have brushed off on Radhika Madan, going by her latest social media post.

In a new picture Radhika has posted on Instagram, she is busy with her mobile phone. For a caption to the picture, Radhika wrote the lyrics of the popular song *What is mobile number*, picturised on Govinda and Karisma Kapoor in the 1999 film, *Haseena Maan Jayegi*. "Hello 9821026212 BPL? Shyah! Are 9820026235 max touch? Shyah! Ps- Only Govinda fans will get this," Radhika captioned

the image.

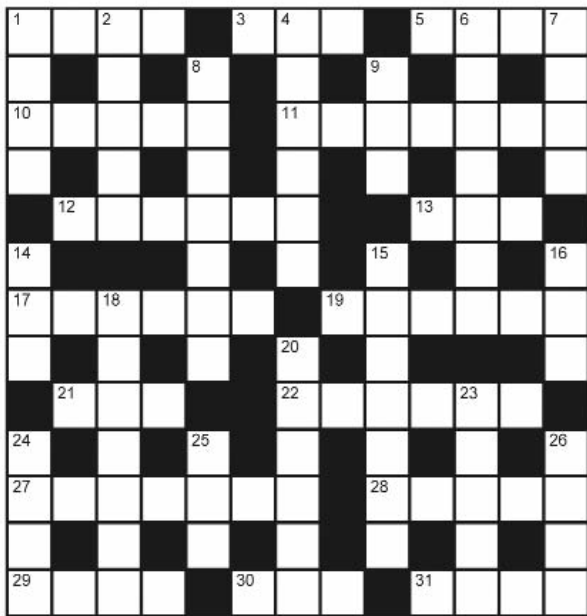
Actor Ranveer Singh dropped a laughing emoji in the comment section. Actor Arjun Kapoor wrote: "Haseena" and "Max touch".

This is not the first time Radhika has taken an inspiration for her caption from a Hindi song. She once borrowed a few lines from the song *Kaun main haan tum* in the 2001 thriller *Ajnadee*. The actress was last seen in *Angrezi Medium*, the last Hindi film release before the lockdown, and also the final film of the late Irrfan Khan.

IAN S

**FUN post**

**CROSSWORD**



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**Across**

- 1 Pea holders
- 3 Decompose
- 5 Urban haze
- 10 Trcnd
- 11 Hot sauce
- 12 Sushi condiment
- 13 Beast of burden
- 17 Apprentice
- 19 Organ stop
- 21 Samovar
- 22 Green tropical American parrot

**Down**

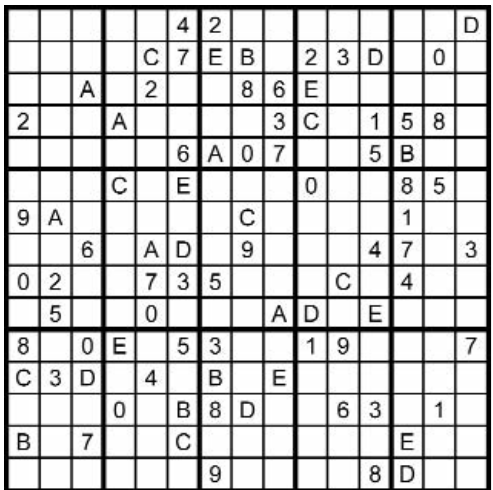
- 1 Do roadwork
- 2 Words to live by
- 4 Clothing ensemble
- 6 War paint
- 7 Radiate
- 8 Auto expense

**9 Kimono tie**

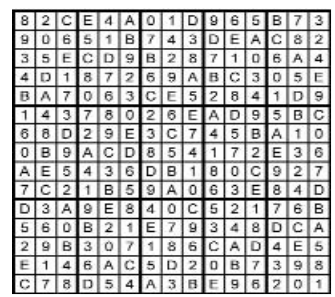
- 14 Subsidy
- 15 Full of fight
- 16 Leaves in a bag
- 18 Despots
- 20 Napoleon locale
- 23 Burger topper
- 24 Japanese wrestling
- 25 Circle segment
- 26 Waistcoat

**SUDOKU**

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



**SOLUTIONS**



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## MORE THAN 56K TEACHERS TO BE PROMOTED

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** More than 56,000 teachers will be promoted by August end, said School and Mass Education Minister Samir Ranjan Dash here Monday.

The pending promotions will be cleared by the end of August, he added. Last year, the state Cabinet had approved the restructuring of Odisha Elementary Education Service Cadre to give more promotional opportunities to the teachers and headmasters working in Elementary Education Service.

The restructuring will provide scope for at least three promotions to the teachers. New posts of Senior Teacher, Graduate Teacher and Senior Headmaster of Primary Schools have been created and the number of posts of Headmasters of Upper Primary Schools has been increased.



# Ensuring no one goes hungry during pandemic: Minister

*The coronavirus outbreak is accelerating reforms in India's food-rationing system. At this critical juncture, the public distribution system (PDS) of the state is being managed by Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain. In an exclusive interview with Manish Kumar of Orissa POST (OP), he throws light on challenges posed by the pandemic and measures undertaken by the state govt. Excerpts:*

**OP: What measures are being undertaken by the Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare department to ensure food security for vulnerable sections during the pandemic?**

■ Keeping in mind the need to

provide food grains to those who need it the most, my department provided three months' ration at one go at the doorstep of beneficiaries. In order to implement it, I fielded a dedicated team both at the department and my residence office which coordinated with officials through technology.

**OP: Have you implemented any specific norms to curb the COVID-19 spread during public distribution of food-grains?**

■ We issued detailed Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) to ensure safety of distributors as well as the beneficiaries. They were instructed to wear masks mandatorily and sanitise not only their hands but also the equipment in use. Most of the field officials used contactless methods to dispense ration. I am happy to inform that none of our COVID warriors contracted the virus during the most crucial, Phase 1 of the lockdown.

**OP: The Centre launched PM Garib Kalyan Yojana**

**recently. How much did it benefit Odisha?**

■ Odisha is a pioneer and was the first to get off the blocks. Within a month of the decision, we covered most of the beneficiaries. However, providing pulses was delayed because we could not receive it on time from the central government. We are now working to provide foodgrains and pulses under PMGKY till next November. Besides, distributing Rs 1000 to more than 90 lakhs beneficiaries, as announced by our CM, fell on our shoulder and our field staff did not disappoint. Even though more than 90 lakh people were provided cash benefits, not a single case of misappropriation has come to our notice.

**OP: There have been reports of starvation deaths in the state during the pandemic. What is your take on that?**

■ Starvation deaths are a thing of the past. We have added about 10

lakh people under SFSA who could not be covered under NFSA. Moreover, during the pandemic, we have added close to 3.5 lakh people under SFSA. However, we still get requests and complaints from people. These issues are addressed immediately. Besides, we take *suo motu* action based on media reports and social media complaints and facilitate to provide



Ranendra Pratap Swain

necessary support.

**OP: Can someone without Aadhaar card in Odisha be deprived of PDS?**

■ Such things have not happened in Odisha. Even though there is a Supreme Court ruling that linking of Aadhaar is mandatory for getting benefits under poverty alleviation schemes, we have taken a liberal view during the pandemic. Whenever any issues arise, our field staffs have been directed to undertake a field report and facilitate distribution within 24 hours. For weeding out corruption and duplication, we strongly advocate linking of Aadhaar and PDS services.

**OP: How are you ensuring stability in prices of food items?**

■ There are some reports of price hikes in case of certain vegetables. However, there is no such information on food-grains because the market is well supplied. We have tried to keep the prices of essential vegetables like onion, potato, tomato

under check successfully. But now we may face difficulty. As you are aware that the Union government has amended the Essential Commodity Act (ECA) which has kept these items out of the purview of ECA except in exceptional cases. States do not have much power to control the prices using the conventional methods. We have to find a way to address the new situation and we will ensure that interests of the consumers are always kept at the top.

**OP: As a minister, do you find it difficult to manage affairs of the department during the ongoing crisis?**

■ I have been using technology including social media for a long time to communicate. I use it to remain connected during the pandemic too. Many close groups have been formed as per the need and necessary instructions are relayed to the stakeholders. My team is working round the clock to ensure seamless service and I don't find any reason for our work to get hampered.

## FEW TAKERS FOR COMPLAINT BOXES AT PSEs

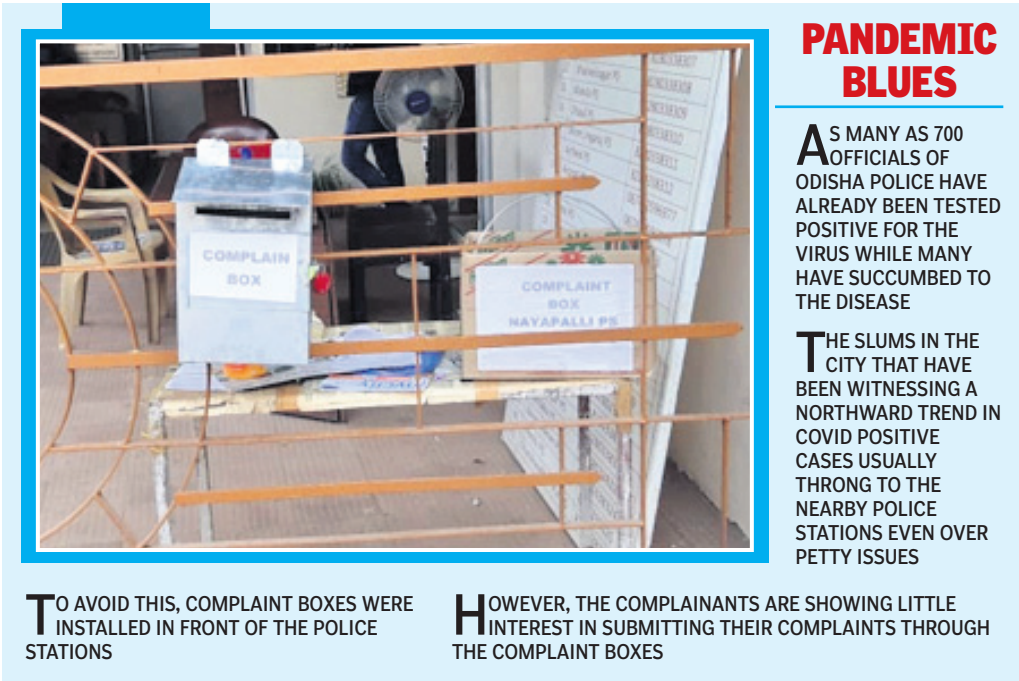
POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** Following a surge in coronavirus cases among the cops, the police stations in the city have placed complaint boxes at the entrances in order to avoid unnecessary contacts with complainants.

As many as 700 officials of Odisha police have already been tested positive for the virus while many have succumbed to the disease. Recently, nine officials of Capital police station, eight of Nayapalli PS and one at GRP police station were tested positive for the virus. Similarly, the residents of slums in the city that have been witnessing a northward trend in Covid positive cases usually throng to the nearby police stations even over petty issues. To avoid this, complaint boxes were installed in front of the police stations.

However, the complainants are showing little interest in submitting their complaints through the complaint boxes hanged outside the police stations barring road accidents, minor altercations or other petty issues. Most of the police stations installed these boxes after DGP Abhay directed the DCP, SDPO and SP Offices to do the same July 27.

Sources revealed that around 22 complaints have been dropped in the complaint box at Mancheswar police station, 50 at Sahid Nagar 32 at Nayapalli, 23 at Kharavela Nagar, 10 at Mahila PS and 28 at



**TO AVOID THIS, COMPLAINT BOXES WERE INSTALLED IN FRONT OF THE POLICE STATIONS**

**HOWEVER, THE COMPLAINANTS ARE SHOWING LITTLE INTEREST IN SUBMITTING THEIR COMPLAINTS THROUGH THE COMPLAINT BOXES**

Chandrasekharpur, 20 at Infocity, 31 at Laxmisagar, 60 in Khandagiri, 24 in Tamando, 38 in Badagada, 27 in Lingaraj, 26 in Airfield 18 in Airport, 28 in Balipatna, 29 in Balianata and 17 in Chandaka police station.

Meanwhile, none of the police stations in the city has publicised its CUG (closed user group) mobile numbers, email addresses, CUG numbers of IICs as instructed by the DGP in his advisory recently. On

the contrary, the landlines in many police stations are not working properly for long. That apart, the IICs of police stations do not have official social media accounts to post the contact details, forcing the people to visits the police stations. Similarly, the complainants are skeptical about police response to their applications dropped in the complaint boxes. Several complainants were found assembling near the police sta-

tions everyday putting the lives of the police officials at risk. An inspector in-charge, on condition of anonymity, revealed that they are collecting the complaints from the boxes in the evening every day. They are also trying to resolve the petty issues over phone while asking others to come to the police station.

DCP Umashankar Dash said that the submission of complaints in boxes has not been made mandatory.

## YELLOW WARNING FOR 4 MORE DAYS

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** Predicting heavy rain in some of the districts in the state, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) Monday issued yellow warning for next four days.

As per weather forecast made by Bhubaneswar Met Centre, heavy rainfall would occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Deogarh and Malkangiri Tuesday while a few places of Angul, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Bhadrak and Jajpur would witness heavy rain the next day.

The Met department has issued yellow warning for Sambalpur, Angul, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Deogarh, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Dhenkanal, Malkangiri, Koraput and Nabarangpur districts as some places of these districts will experience heavy downpour August 13. Besides, heavy rainfall is also likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Nuapada, Bolangir, Sonepur, Bargarh,

Kalahandi, Jharsuguda and Sundargarh, August 14.

At the same time, light to moderate rain will continue to occur in many parts of the state.

Sources in the local Met office said the low pressure area formed over north Odisha and neighbourhood persists over northeast Madhya Pradesh the neighbouring area. The associated cyclonic circulation now extends upto 2.1 km above mean sea level and the system has weakened. Another low pressure area is likely to form over Northwest Bay of Bengal and neighbourhood around August 13, it said.

During past 24 hours, the highest 7 cm rainfall was recorded at Paralakhemundi in Gajapati district, Madhabarida and Belaguntha in Ganjam and Telkoi in Keonjhar district. Bhanjanagar in Ganjam and Lathikata in Sundargarh have recorded 5 cm rain while Kaniha in Angul, Deogarh, Gudari (Rayagada), Rajgangpur (Sundargarh), Keonjhar, Chendipada (Angul), Panposh (Sundargarh), Daringbadi (Kandhamal), G Udayagiri (Kandhamal) and Jamankira (Sambalpur) recorded 4 cm rainfall.



**Heavy rain to lash one or two places in Sundargarh, Deogarh and Malkangiri, Tuesday**



Farmers uproot paddy seedlings at Barang, on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar, Monday

OP PHOTO

## TWO HELD OVER CONTROVERSIAL AUDIO CLIP

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** The Commissionerate Police Monday, arrested two persons in connection with a viral audio clip regarding alleged mismanagement at Covid hospitals here.

The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) authorities of had earlier lodged a complaint in this regard with Capital police. The arrested were identified as Biswajit Mohanty, 47, of Palasuni and Laxmikanta Behera, 46, alias Babuni, of Mancheswar area here.

In a press statement, the Commissionerate Police mentioned that the audio recording was prepared and circulated with an ulterior motive. The accused persons had also allegedly edited the said recording and uploaded it on various social media platforms. The issue came to the fore after it was telecast on a popular regional TV channel.

The police claimed that the spread of the controversial audio clip is against the government guidelines.

"The audio recording has been prepared and circulated, edited, uploaded and propagated, with

malafide and mischievous intention as the clip contains misleading and false information about COVID pandemic. The mischievous conversation is trying to make others believe that there are false corona positive reports and that people are being shifted to hospitals falsely declaring them positive cases in order to meet a target. This goes against the guidelines related to the management of the present disaster and violates many legal provisions, thus attracting criminal action," the press note claimed.

## Miscreants who robbed lady Vig DSP nabbed

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** After a 15-day long probe, the Commissionerate Police Monday arrested three members of a looters' gang who had robbed a lady Deputy Superintendent of Vigilance directorate in front of her residence at Unit-III area here July 26. The cops seized three gold chains

is currently under police custody. The accused were allegedly involved in several snatching incidents in the city and the adjoining areas during the last couple of months. A special team of officers of Kharavela Nagar and Khandagiri police station under the leadership of ACP Special Squad has been created to catch the culprits. Meanwhile, sources revealed



**Cops involved in the operation may undergo self-quarantine as two out of the trio have reportedly been tested positive for Covid-19**

weighing 300 grams, one country-made revolver with three live ammunition, two motorcycles and some sharp weapons from their possession.

The accused were identified as Ashok Behera alias Sangram Pala and Ranjan Pala, 32, of Gandhinagar in Berhampur; Debraj Jena alias Munna, 32, of Kuleswarpatna and Bijaya Kumar Samantray of Dasapatna in Pipili area of Puri.

All the three accused are the associates of one earlier arrested, Santosh Reddy alias Santu, who

that the cops involved in the operation may undergo self-quarantine as two out of the arrested trio have reportedly been tested positive for coronavirus during their antigen tests.

Speaking on the issue, Deputy Commissioner of Police (DCP) Umashankar Dash said that they are yet to receive the test reports which will be declared by the Health and Family Welfare department. A decision in this regard will be taken after the report is received.

The accused were Monday sent to judicial custody.

# State's COVID caseload at 47,455

■ ODISHA REPORTS 1,528 NEW INFECTIONS ■ DEATH TOLL MOUNTS TO 286

POST NEWS NETWORK & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** State registered its highest single-day spike in COVID-19 deaths Monday as 14 patients succumbed to the disease, while 1,528 new infections pushed its caseload to 47,455, an official of Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) department said.

The fresh fatalities have taken Odisha's COVID-19 death toll to 286, said the official.

Ganjam district, Odisha's COVID-19 hotspot, reported six of the 14 fatalities, while Khurda and Nayagarh registered three deaths each and two patients succumbed to the infection in Sundargarh and Rayagada districts, the official said.

Worst-hit Ganjam has so far reported 137 COVID-19 deaths, followed by 38 in Khurda, the official pointed out, adding that two more COVID-19 patients have died due to other ailments, taking the count of such fatalities to 51 in Odisha.

The fresh cases were reported from 29 of the state's 30 districts.

As many as 948 cases were detected in quarantine centres, while 580 people tested positive for the



infection during contact tracing, said the official.

Ganjam reported the highest number of new cases at 233, followed by Khurda (218), Sambalpur (168), Sundargarh (126) and Dhenkanal (107), added the official.

State has so far tested 6,69,266 samples for COVID-19, including 19,083 Sunday, the official added.

The twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack Monday reported 133

and 53 coronavirus cases respectively.

"Of the fresh cases in Bhubaneswar, 96 were quarantine cases and 37 were local contact ones. As many as 200 persons who had earlier tested positive for the viral infection recovered Monday," the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation tweeted.

The Cuttack Municipal

## CSI office remains shut after +ve case

**The Court Sub Inspector (CSI) Office Monday remained closed after one more cop was found to be positive for COVID-19 Sunday.** The district judge had earlier in a letter directed the office to be closed till Monday. Meanwhile, the registrar of the civil courts had also instructed all the offices in court to work from home or with a smaller number of staff on rooster basis. The lawyers and litigants were also asked to avoid coming to court in person and use video conference mode to appear for any case following the positive case August 3.

Corporation, on the other hand, said, "43 cases were quarantine cases while 10 were local contact ones." It added that 98 COVID-19 patients recovered.

While Bhubaneswar has seen 4,062 COVID-19 cases, the Silver City of Cuttack has so far witnessed 1,721 cases.

## BRAINSTORMING SESSION



State Planning Board meeting in progress at Circuit Bhawan in Puri, Monday

OP PHOTO

## Bribery: Veterinary surgeon arrested

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** Vigilance sleuths here Monday claimed to have arrested a veterinary surgeon on charges of bribery.

According to a senior Vigilance official, Subhanshu Sahu, who has been working as an additional veterinary surgeon at Pipli in Puri, was taken into custody when he was receiving Rs 6,000 from Sanatan Behera, the complainant, for passing a bill worth Rs 70,000.

"Behera's poultry farm was damaged in the extremely severe cyclonic storm Fani last year. He had applied for Rs 1 lakh assistance as announced by the state government. In the first instalment, he had received only Rs 30,000. Sahu, however, demanded him Rs 6,000 for clearing the pending Rs 70,000," said the official.

"Behera approached us and accordingly a trap was laid. Sahu was caught red-handed Monday afternoon. A case (21/2020) has been registered in this regard," the official pointed out.

## CLASSIFIED AFFIDAVIT

By virtue an affidavit before the Notary Public, Bhubaneswar, I, Shri Namadipta Dash, S/o. Niranjana Dash have changed my name from Namadipta Dash to Reyhaan Dash.

Henceforth, I shall be known as Reyhaan Dash for all purposes.

# 30 female leaders of BJD are district in-charges

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** Revising its earlier order, ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Monday appointed 30 leaders as district in-charges of its State Women Committee.

As per a press statement issued by BJD general secretary (media affairs) Manas Ranjan Mangaraj, Lopamudra Buxipatra has been appointed as in-charge of Keonjhar district while Geeta Bastia will look after organisational affairs of Ganjam district, Kasturi Mahapatra for Khurda & Bhubaneswar, Urmilata Das for Mayurbhanj, Prabhasini

Sarang for Cuttack, Jyoti Panigrahi for Sundargarh and Snigdha Panigrahi for Rayagada district.

Among others, party leader Rezawana Begum has been given the charge of Jajpur district, Meenati Debta for Sambalpur, Kunjalata Samal for Nayagarh, Puspanjali Rana—Angul, Bharati Singh—Balasore, Sarojini Raj—Bolangir, Sanghamitra Dalei—Kandhamal, Meeta Rout—Kendrapara and Sandhya Biswal for Puri. Earlier, the party had given two districts per leader, which is now revised and there is one leader for one district now.

## Chilika DFO lands in Vigilance net

**Khurda:** Officers from Odisha Vigilance office raided multiple properties of Chilika Wildlife Division Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Alok Ranjan Hota Monday. They are investigating allegations of amassing assets disproportionate to Hota's known sources of income. Acting on a tip-off, the officials carried out raids simultaneously at Hota's office in Balugaon, a house in Dumduma in Khandagiri, a three-storey residence in Chandrasekharpur, an ancestral home at Biridi in Jagatsinghpur and a relative's residence in Padmapur under Balipatna police limits. Reports said verifications of several documents and papers relating to the properties are being carried out at the time of writing this copy. Papers of other properties are also being examined, sources said.

# Lalit Kala Akademi confers highest honour on artists

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi's highest honour, 'Dharmapada Purashkar', will be conferred upon seven eminent artists for as many years Monday.

For the year 2009, late Gokul Bihari Pattanayak will be awarded posthumously.

The award for 2010 will be conferred upon eminent artist, theatre artiste and director, actor, art director, playwright and set designer late Asim Basu.

The recipients for the years 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 are ex-principal, Government College of Art and Craft, Khallikote, Durga Prasad Das, sculptor Padma Shri



Recently, as part of the COVID-19 response to register migrant workers, around 4 lakhs. Migrants, who wanted to return to their homes, have registered online and at gram panchayats. However, more than two lakhs returnees were registered through the TMCs of Balangir, Nuapada, Bargarh, Kalahandi and Subarnapur districts.

"We expect the situation to further aggravate if the pandemic prolongs. Moreover, agriculture related livelihood is hurt by erratic rainfall leading to drought situation. In such cases, these districts will witness large scale distress migration," he said.

To address this issue, we demand that all the migrants should be provided with post-quarantine support of Rs.2000 with immediate effect, he said.

## AMRUT SCHEME

# State tops in implementation

POST NEWS NETWORK & AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** Odisha has retained its top position in implementation of the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme, a state minister said Monday.

The scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2015 to establish an infrastructure that would ensure robust sewage networks and water supply for urban transformation.

According to the ranking of the states released by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Odisha has retained its first position by securing a score of 85.67 per cent, Urban Development Minister Pratap Jena said. Chandigarh and Telangana have secured the second and third positions followed by Gujarat and Karnataka, he said.

Since the inception of the mission, efforts have been made towards universal coverage of water supply, construction of sewage treatment plants and improving green spaces in the nine AMRUT cities of Odisha.

Bhubaneswar, Cuttack,

## URBAN TRANSFORMATION



Out of the total 191 projects grounded in the state, 148 projects have been implemented and the rest are likely to be completed within the deadline of March 2021

Sambalpur, Rourkela, Baripada, Balasore, Bhadrak, Berhampur and Puri are covered under the AMRUT scheme in the coastal state.

Out of the total 191 projects grounded in the state, 148 projects have been implemented and the rest are likely to be completed within the deadline of March 2021, Jena said.

Universal coverage of piped water supply has been completed by laying or replacing 400 kilometres of pipeline till date and all the

The scheme was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2015 to ensure robust sewage networks and water supply

Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Sambalpur, Rourkela, Baripada, Balasore, Bhadrak, Berhampur and Puri are covered under the AMRUT scheme in Odisha

nine AMRUT cities will have 100 per cent network coverage by December this year, the minister said.

Parks with well-conceived landscaping and rejuvenation facilities, open gyms and jogging trails have been developed.

"Through these projects, we are able to provide clean drinking water, avoid contamination, especially in rehabilitation colonies, and increase the number of children-friendly green parks in the city," the minister said.

# DECISION ON REOPENING OF TEMPLES SOON: JENA

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** Law Minister Pratap Jena here Monday informed media persons that the decision on reopening of religious institutions in the state will be taken soon after consideration of the prevailing COVID-19 situation.

He informed that the reopening decision will be applicable to almost all the temples in the state. "We will analyse things from different angles before taking the decision to reopen places of worship. To ensure that the deadly virus does not spread, we will decide the set of guidelines to be followed for reopening of temples," Jena said.

Earlier, hearing a PIL on the



issue, Orissa High Court (HC) stated that the decision to reopen religious institutions will be taken by the state Government. The PIL was filed in the court seeking the court's direction for immediate reopening of all shrines across the state including Puri Srimandir.

It is worth noting that all religious places in the state have remained closed since March following the pandemic.

The coronavirus lockdown had rendered hundreds of priests and sevayats of the district jobless. Priests who used to sustain their families from the donations made by devotees, have been left in the lurch after people stopped visiting temples due to the restrictions.

## Parents' association defers hunger strike

**Bhubaneswar:** Odisha Parents Federation Monday deferred the date of hunger strike to August 17 after the director of Elementary and Secondary Education demanded a week to look into violation of RTE Act by private schools in state.

Basudev Bhatt, chairman, Odisha Parents Federation, said, "We had requested the government and school and mass education department to implement RTE Act during admission process with 25% reservation of seats under DG & EWS groups with SOPs for private English medium schools in Odisha before 9th August 2020. If those are not implemented by Dept of School and Mass Education, Odisha till August 9, OAM will go for hunger strike from August 10 in front of the directorate. The department has now asked for a week to look into the situation. Hence, we have postponed the date of hunger strike to August 17," he added.

## SHUTDOWN LIFTED



Bapuji Nagar market and Unit-I 'haat' (top) in Bhubaneswar witness a heavy rush Monday, a day after the weekend shutdown

OP PHOTOS

**FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS**

**Acharya Nagar-**Dayal Agency-9437135727, **A.P. Tours and Travel,** Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, **Aurobindo Market-**Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, **Airport Road-**Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, **Anish Infotech-** Tankapani Road-9861341488, **Bapuji Vihar-** Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, **Baramunda Rental Colony-**Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, **Baramunda Housing Board Colony-**Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, **Cuttack Road-**Alishan Snacks-8984236754, **District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-**Sai Google Mart-9778056507, **Forest Park-DTDC** Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, **IRC Village-**Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, **Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-**7978646669, **Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-**7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, **Jagannath Mobile Point-** Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, **Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-**8260697560, **Khandagiri-** Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, **KIIT Road-**Jugdip-9338545031, **Laxmi Sagar-**Aditya Mobile-9438191836, **Lewis Road-Spider Web-**7809186415, **Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-**9853621640, **Madhusudan Nagar-**Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, **Maa Santoshi travels-** Jagapati Nagar- 9777675867, **Nayapalli-** The Cake Room- 7873660137, **Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookieman-**9439491273, **Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-**9668284823, **Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate-** Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, **Net Square-** Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, **Priyadarshini Market-** Astro Point-9938134346, **R.N. General Store-**Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, **Sahid Nagar-** Maa Communication- 9437353424, **Sahini General Store-** Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, **Satya Nagar-**Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, **Samantapur-** Download Point-7504557743, **Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-**8093449515, **Saheed Nagar-**Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, **Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-**9777682449, **Sushree fashion-** Jagmara-9938714347, **Shree Vision-** Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, **Unit-3-LIC** of India Premium Point-9337787080, **Unit-7- LIC** Premium Point- 9338227422, **VSS Nagar-**Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, **XIMB Square-LD Books-**9658061373.

# Ganjam on path to Covid recovery

POST NEWS NETWORK

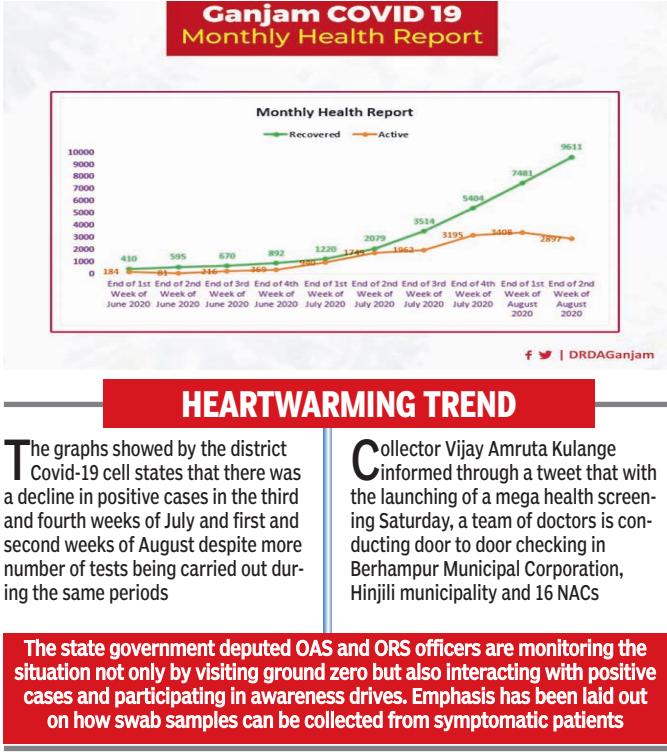
**Chhatrapur, August 10:** The increasing number of Covid positive cases in Ganjam district was once linked to more number of tests. But the district has been reporting fewer number of single-day cases despite more number of tests these days.

Informing journalists through graphs, facts and figures, the district Covid-19 cell Sunday said that last week the district reported less number of positive cases in comparison to the number of tests.

The cell also handed out another set of graphs mentioning the figures of infected and cured patients during every week of June and July and those during the first and second week of August. The graphs show that there was a decline in positive cases in the third and fourth weeks of July and first and second weeks of August despite more number of tests being carried out during the same periods.

Till Sunday, the district reported 12, 855 infected cases and the total recovery cases stood at 10, 171. While 2,553 patients were undergoing treatment, as many 131 patients succumbed to the virus.

District Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange informed through a tweet that with the launching of a mega health screening Saturday a team of doctors is conducting door to door checking in Berhampur Municipal Corporation, Hinjili municipality and 16 NACs.



Each and every member of families has been subjected to thermal screening and pulse reading through oxymetre.

Kulange further informed that the OAS and ORS officers the state government sent to the district have been appointed as officers on special duty (OSD). Each of the officer has been entrusted with the responsibility of either a block or a NAC.

These officers are monitoring the situation not only by visiting ground zeros but also interacting with positive cases. They are also taking part in awareness programmes. Emphasis has been laid out on how swab samples can be collected from symptomatic patients. With panchayat level swab collection underway, Kulange urged the people to come forward if they have symptoms.

# Man hacked to death over sorcery suspicion

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Malkangiri, August 10:** A 60-year-old man was arrested in Tumsapali village under Sadar police limits in this district for hacking his neighbour to death on the suspicion that the latter practised sorcery, police said Monday.

The deceased was identified as Muka Madkami, 55, while the accused was Rama Sodi. Madkami was sleeping in his hutment in Tumsapali Saturday night, when the accused Sodi, barged in and attacked him with a sharp-edged weapon, killing him on the spot, R.P Nag, IIC of Malkangiri police station, said.



**Sodi said that Madkami performed black magic which resulted in the death of his son six months back**

The accused, who was apprehended Sunday, confessed to his crime, Nag maintained. Sodi said that Madkami performed black magic which resulted in the death of his son six months back. He was actually suffering from a disease which could not be identified due to lack of medical treatment. "Sodi also

claimed that the Madkami's sorcery was responsible for his illness," the officer explained, adding that the body has been sent for post-mortem.

According to police, at least four persons were killed in the district over the past two months for allegedly practising witchcraft and sorcery.



## BEAUTIFICATION DRIVE

An artist applying brushstrokes on an awareness wall painting on dowry prohibition near the Mahila Police Station in Sambalpur, Monday. The move is part of a beautification drive carried out by the Sambalpur Municipal Corporation in the area

OP PHOTO

# Why Dhenkanal is a breeding ground for snakes

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Dhenkanal, August 10:** Good news for animal lovers and environmentalists as the population of king cobra and python is increasing in Dhenkanal district.

There are over 300 varieties of snakes in India. Of them, only 52 are categorised as venomous. Similarly, out of the 80 different types of snakes seen in Odisha, 17 are classified as venomous and 10 as highly venomous.

Government reports say that snakebites claimed as many as 128 lives in the last five years. As per snake researchers, most of the deaths occur when any of the snake varieties including cobra, Cobra-de-Capello (locally known as "Tampa"), painted snake (locally known as "Chiti"), printed snake (locally known as "Rana") and sand viper (locally known as "Dhulia Naga") and Russell's Viper (locally known as "Chandan Boda") bite.

Dhenkanal's climate plays a major role in the reptiles' increasing population, according to the researchers. King cobras and pythons are found mostly in Kapilas sanctuary, Phasi Gaon and Kandhara areas under Hindol range and Anantapur forest



reserve under Kankadahada block. Python and king cobra constitute 42 per cent and 35 per cent of the entire snake population in the district respectively. A python prefers a comparatively darker place like a stone cave or a hollow of a tree. Similarly, king cobras prefer dense forest. King cobra generally preys on smaller snakes and rodents. Sometimes, in search of food these snakes slither into human habitations and often end up being killed.

In the last week, three king cobras were rescued from human habitations. Two were believed to have

sneaked from Phasi Gaon jungle and one from Kapilas sanctuary.

The one rescued from Phasi Gaon was 16-foot-long. When it was spotted, it was lying in the area motionlessly after being beaten up by local people. On being informed, members of Banya Foundation rescued and released it in its natural habitat.

Papum Das, a member of the foundation, requests people to not cause any harm to any reptiles as they are nature's gift. Similarly, environmentalist Pradyumna Rath said snakes are the friends of farmers as they

## APT CLIMATE

Dhenkanal's climate plays a major role in the reptiles' increasing population, according to the researchers. King cobras and pythons are found mostly in Kapilas sanctuary, Phasi Gaon and Kandhara areas under Hindol range and Anantapur forest reserve under Kankadahada block

King cobra generally preys on smaller snakes and rodents. Sometimes, in search of food these snakes slither into human habitations and often end up being killed

help them get rid of rodents.

Director, Banya Foundation, Sanjib Behera, said the members have been providing protection to snakes in the district. "We are rescuing these reptiles and with the help of forest department officials releasing them in jungles. People get terrified upon seeing a snake and in most cases they kill it which should not be done. Awareness can only save people's lives from snakebites. Instead of rushing to a snake charmer or any sorcerer, the snakebite victim should instead be taken to hospital," he suggested.

## Man's body lies abandoned for hours over virus scare

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rayagada, August 10:** Coronavirus has brought many good samaritans to the front. It has also showed up the dark side of inhumanity that lies buried deep in our society.

Fearing coronavirus infection, not a single person came forward to shoulder the body of a man. Four hours after lying abandoned, three local youths stepped forward and performed the man's last rites. The incident occurred at Gudari NAC in Rayagada district Sunday.

Baratum Karubu, 60, was a resident of Gudari. He suddenly fell ill and a few moments later breathed his last. His wife and son said he died due to heart attack. But his relatives, friends and neighbours suspected coronavirus to be the reason behind his death and so they chose to maintain a safe distance.

## RARE YELLOW TURTLE RESCUED BY FARMER

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhadrak, August 10:** A rare yellow turtle, most likely reported to be an albino, was rescued by a farmer from his field in Chandbali block of Bhadrak district, Monday morning.

Sources said Nirakar Mohanty was working in his agricultural field when he spotted the turtle. He later brought the turtle to his home and informed villagers. The news spread like wildfire with a huge crowd gathering at Mohanty's house to catch a glimpse of the turtle within moments. The yellow colour of the turtle has caught the attention of denizens who seem to be showering great love on the turtle on several social media platforms. On being informed, Forest Department officials reached the spot and took possession of the rare turtle.

Chandbali forester Subhas Nayak said that the turtle of this species is not seen here as they are located in freshwater.

Earlier a yellowish turtle was spotted in Balasore July 20.

# Mad rush for coal waste leads to face-offs among villagers

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Lakhanpur, August 10:** The high market value of cenosphere has resulted in a mad rush among people for its theft from the ash pond of Ib Thermal Power Project at Banharipali near here in Jharsuguda district, a report said.

The Ib Thermal Power Project is a coal-based thermal power plant at Banharipali. The power plant is operated by the state owned Orissa Power Generation Corporation (OPGC) with the help of the coal sourced from Ib Valley Coalfield in the area.

A cenosphere is a lightweight, inert, hollow sphere made largely of silica and alumina and filled with air or inert gas, typically produced as a coal combustion byproduct at thermal power plants.

The mad rush has given rise to serious confrontations in the area. Observers claimed that if not resolved at earliest then the situation might snowball into a major law and order problem. They demanded the OPGC authorities and the district administration to intervene and resolve the impasse.

OPGC is producing 1780 megawatt of power from the plant by using lakhs of tonnes of coal from its four units which have now become operational. As a result, lakhs of tonnes of ash are produced daily due to heavy coal combustion in the plant.

The OPGC has constructed several ash ponds at Rengali and Tilia to store the ash. The company has declared the areas as prohibitory zones to prevent the entry of locals. Moreover, security personnel also keep round the clock vigil in the areas to prevent any unauthorised entry.

However, despite the all measures hundreds of people from the adjoining villages daily sneak into the ash pond to collect cenosphere. The product is smuggled due to its high market value.

This has given rise to intense competition among the villagers in collecting the coal waste which they sell to traders for Rs 25-30 per kg.

Things have come to such a pass that the villagers have even pitched tents near the ash ponds to steal the



## PRIZED WASTE

OPGC IS PRODUCING 1780 MEGAWATT OF POWER FROM THE PLANT BY USING LAKHS OF TONNES OF COAL FROM ITS FOUR UNITS WHICH HAVE NOW BECAME OPERATIONAL. AS A RESULT, LAKHS OF TONNES OF ASH ARE PRODUCED DAILY DUE TO HEAVY COAL COMBUSTION IN THE PLANT

THINGS HAVE COME TO SUCH A PASS THAT THE VILLAGERS HAVE EVEN PITCHED TENTS NEAR THE ASH PONDS TO STEAL THE CENOSPHERE WITHOUT ABIDING BY CORONAVIRUS SAFETY GUIDELINES. THEY ARE ALSO ENGAGING CHILDREN IN THE WORK AS SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED DUE TO THE LOCKDOWN

**DESPITE ALL THE MEASURES HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE FROM THE ADJOINING VILLAGES DAILY SNEAK INTO THE ASH POND TO COLLECT CENOSPHERE. THE PRODUCT IS SMUGGLED DUE TO ITS HIGH MARKET VALUE**

cenosphere without abiding by coronavirus safety guidelines. They are also engaging children in the work as schools are closed due to the lockdown. The local traders after collecting the coal waste smuggle them outside the district in trucks.

Recently, the OPGC authorities tried to float a tender for collection of the coal waste but later cancelled it for unknown reasons.

Senior officer of OPGC Pradip Kumar Patra said steps will be taken after having a discussion with the district administration.

**ZONAL OFFICE: BHUBANESWAR ZONE**  
Star House, 1/1D, Jayadev Vihar, Nayapalli,  
Bhubaneswar-751015, Tel: 0674 - 2362251/2362246,  
Email: zo.bhubaneswar@bankofindia.co.in

**REQUIREMENT OF PREMISES**

Detailed notification inviting offers for premises for our **Puri Branch**, Dist.: Puri, Odisha are available in our website **www.bankofindia.co.in**. Prescribed format for submission of offer may be obtained upto **5.00 P.M. of 24.08.2020** from our office at above address. Alternatively, the format can be downloaded from our website. Last date for submission of offer is upto **5.00 P.M. on 25.08.2020** at **Zonal Office, Bhubaneswar**.

**Zonal Manager, Bhubaneswar Zone**

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**RURAL WORKS DIVISION No-I, KEONJHAR**  
No. O-225:-  
**"e" Procurement Notice for Road Works**  
**Identification No. Online NCB - 02/2020-21**

1. Name of the Work : As per Annexure in Website.  
2. Total Number of Work : As per Annexure in Website.  
3. Estimated Cost : As per Annexure in Website.  
4. Class of Contractor : As per Annexure in Website.  
5. Period of Completion : As per Annexure in Website..

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding	Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of Tender in O/O the E.E., R.W. Division-I, Keonjhar	Date & Time of Lottery (in case need to be conducted)
1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive Engineer, R.W. Division-I, Keonjhar	Road Works N.C.B. No- 02/2020-21	Dt.12.08.2020 at 11.00 AM	Dt.26.08.2020 up to 5.00 PM at 12.00 P.M.	Dt. 26.08.2020 at 11.00 A.M.	Dt. 31.08.2020 at 11.00 A.M.

Further details can be seen from the Website **www.tenderorissa.gov.in**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division, Keonjhar**  
OIPR-25110/11/0002/2021

No. O-224:-  
**GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS DIVISION-I, MALKANGIRI**  
**NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement**  
**Identification No. Online Tender 07/MKG/2020-21**

1. Name of the work : Road works (Detailed in Annexure)  
2. Total Number of Works : 04 (Four) Number  
3. Tender Cost : Rs. 17.68 Lakhs to Rs. 26.52 Lakhs  
4. Class of Contractor : 'C' & 'B' Class contractors  
5. Period of Completion : (As Per Detailed in Annexure)  
6. Other Details:-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of Works	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding	Last Date & Time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of Tender
1	2	3	4	5	6
Executive Engineer, Rural Works Division-I, Malkangiri	Online Tender/ 07/RWD-I, MKG/ 2020-21	04 (Four) Nos of road works	14.08.2020 from 11.00 AM	25.08.2020 upto 5.00 PM	24.08.2020 upto 5.00 PM

Further details can be seen from the Website **www.tenderorissa.gov.in**

**Sd/- Executive Engineer, R.W. Division-I, Malkangiri**  
OIPR-25058/11/0007/2021

**ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LTD.**  
(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)  
Regd. Office: **ODISHA STATE POLICE HOUSING & WELFARE CORPORATION BUILDING**  
VANIVIHAR CHOUK, JANPATH, BHOINAGAR, BHUBANESWAR - 751022  
Tel: 91 -0674-2542983, 2542802, 2545526, Fax- 2542102, E-mail - ohpc.co@gmail.com  
CIN : U40101OR19955GC003963

**No. OHPC/HQ/TECH/CW/25/ 2019/ 6408 Date: 05.08.2020**  
**E-Procurement Notice No. OHPC/HQ/TECH/CW/02/2020-21**  
**INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)**

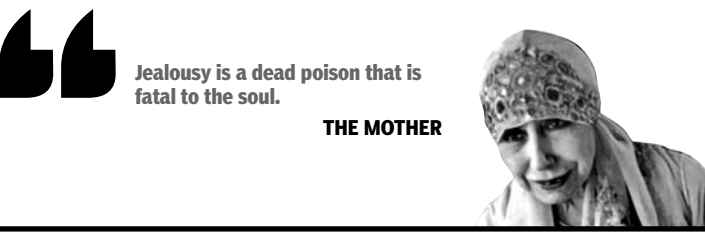
No. CAD-337: OHPC Ltd., Bhubaneswar invites online percentage rate basis bid in double cover system from eligible contractors through e-procurement for the work as mentioned below.

Name of Work	Name of the Office	Estimated cost (in Rs.)	EMD (in Rs.)	Cost of bid documents (in Rs.)	Class of Contractor	Availability of Bids online for Bidders
"Repair and Maintenance of Civil and P H Works of OHPC Quarters at GRIDCO Colony, Bhubaneswar"	Dy. General Manager (Ele.), ODISHA HYDRO POWER CORPORATION LIMITED, ODISHA STATE POLICE HOUSING & WELFARE CORPORATION BUILDING VANIVIHAR CHOUK, JANAPATH, BHUBANESWAR - 751022	Rs.26.42,990/-	Rs.28,500/-	Rs.7080 /- (Rs.6000/- + GST @18% Rs.1080/-)	B & C	From 10:00 AM of 13.08.2020 to 3:00 PM of 27.08.2020

1. Availability of tender on-line for bidding : From 10.00 AM of 13.08.2020 to 3.00 PM of 27.08.2020.  
2. Last date & time seeking tender clarification : 1.00 PM of 20.08.2020.  
3. Date & time of opening of Techno-Commercial Bid : 28.08.2020 at 4PM in the office of the Director (Operation), Corporate office, Bhubaneswar.  
4. Date & time of opening of Financial Bid : To be intimated after evaluation of Techno-commercial Bid.

Further details can be seen from the Website **https://tendersodisha.gov.in**

**Dy. General Manager (Ele.), Corporate Office, OHPC Ltd., BBSR**  
OIPR-04012/11/0004/2021



# EXAMS IN COVID TIMES

The state of chaos and confusion that marks India’s noisy democracy often presents grim situations. So also with the issue of holding of examinations in the season of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is increasingly clear that the virus spread is not going to end soon – and most likely will not disappear in a few months’ time as was foolishly surmised earlier in March this year. No lighting of lamps or beating of pots and pans helped neutralize this deadly disease. The balcony owning crowd in India has not yet comprehended how many people survive homeless in this country. This means readjustments in life styles must be made as the situation is evolving.

Most sectors of public life are learning to live or cope with the new normal until the time a miracle happens in the form of some effective vaccines or drugs. Factories have begun resuming their functions for most part and markets and shopping malls are reopening. Education, however, has taken the worst hit as it involves group activity. That is anathema in times of a virus spread. For the balcony crowd again, online teaching sessions have become the way forward, but this requires new systems, new equipment and a conditioning of the minds of the students and teachers. On the flip side, educationists, planners and administrators have to take into account the huge number of children left out of online teaching because of not having computers, Internet connections, steady power supply and other facilities at home. On one hand, the recently announced New Education Policy goes lot many steps ahead in its realization of the true situation existing at the ground level. Not only Mid-Day Meal, this new policy has proposed introducing a nourishing breakfast at school. The intention is to attract kids from the age of 3 to attend and probably learn something. When the nation acknowledges the fact that bulk of our children are, even today, malnourished and thereby their mental development has been impacted, the talk of Online Classes could seem like a thought emanating from outer space. There is no balance in this country as far as recognizing and addressing true situations are considered.

Returning to exams, a paralysis of sorts has hit the education sector as a whole. Students can wait a while to resume their studies at the cost of one precious year in their lives. Question is, what of the examinations and the rankings, marks, and assessments that take the students from one level to the other.

The confusion was understandable, but the way it was tackled or not tackled effectively by authorities has created a situation in which the matter has ended up in Supreme Court – a time when judiciary as a whole is limping and only supposedly urgent matters, such as Contempt of Court, are taken up for consideration, that too mostly by video-linked remote hearing. The issue of the UGC coming up with a circular to universities to hold annual/terminal/semester examinations irrespective of the presence of the COVID threat has created huge confusion. This is seen to have gone against the new regulations in place for disaster management, which involved social distancing. Examinations are something that cannot be held with strict adherence to present infection related rules, unless, of course, done online. Studies can be done in isolation from homes but it will be impossible to hold exams that way as supervision will not be possible to check malpractices.

The problem was complicated as some states like Maharashtra and Delhi challenged the UGC circular of 6 July and issued executive orders cancelling examinations. The matter ended up in courts, with students and others filing petitions. According to details submitted by the UGC before court, over 600 of the 818 universities have either already conducted their examinations, many of them before the pandemic arrived, or have expressed a willingness to hold the exams. It says nearly 400 universities are ready to hold exams in offline, online, or blend mode this month or the next.

The issue before the apex court, per se, is not whether examinations should be held or not, which is a decision in the realm of the executive, but whether the UGC order contravened the provisions of the Disaster Management Act in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The court that took up the matter on Monday has posted the matter for hearing on August 14, while students are left high and dry, in a state of despair.

Appearing for examinations requires a tuning of the mind and preparations of a high order. Students cannot write exams without preparations. They also cannot prepare today and appear for exams six months later. That kind of exams are not the done thing in India since education is based on a rote learning system.

Question is, why the central authority, namely the Union Ministry of Education, did not discuss the matter with stakeholders in advance and arrive at a decision or facilitate consensus on the matter before announcing it in public. What it displays now is a state of ruthless rudderless attitude, which has come to characterize governance in this country. Nothing seems to move in the right direction any more. The ultimate victim in this particular mismanagement will be the nation’s children.

## WISDOM CORNER

- He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches. **GEORGE BERNARD SHAW**
- Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence. **HELEN KELLER**
- Creativity is the greatest rebellion in existence. **OSHO**

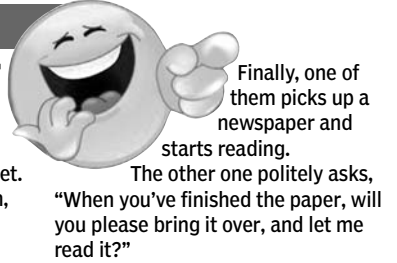
## WORDSWORTH

### Tattoo

The first sense of the term was a signal on a drum or a bugle to call soldiers to their quarters at night. It’s first recorded in 1644, during the early stages of the English Civil War. Colonel John Hutchinson was then the governor of Nottingham Castle and head of the Parliamentary garrison in the city (he was to be later one of the signatories of Charles I’s death warrant). In his standing orders he wrote: “If anyone shall be found tippling or drinkeing in any Taverne, Inne, or Alehouse after the houre of nyne of the clock at night, when the Tap-too beates, hee shall pay 2s. 6d.” (Today that would be about £5.00 or \$8.) By the following century, the usual phrase was to beat tattoo, which makes clear that by then it was usually sounded on a drum, hence one of our modern meanings, a rhythmic tapping or drumming (“He beat a tattoo with his fingers on the table-top.”) And it’s clearly related to taps in the sense of a bugle call for lights to be put out in army quarters (which was originally also sounded on a drum). In the form someone quoted from the website, doe den tap toe, tap is the spigot of a beer barrel. It seems that the Dutch police had a neat way of closing the pubs at night, by making the rounds and instructing innkeepers to shut the taps on their casks. The other sense of tattoo, to mark the skin with pigments, could not be more different. It was brought back from the South Pacific by Captain Cook, and appears in his journal for July 1769: “Both sexes paint their Bodys, Tattow, as it is called in their Language. This is done by inlaying the Colour of Black under their skins, in such a manner as to be indelible.” It could be for any one of several Polynesian languages, such as Tahitian, Samoan, or Tongan.

## LOL ANGRY DRIVERS MEET

In a very small alley two trucks driving in opposite directions meet. As the drivers are equally stubborn, neither of them wants to reverse. They angrily look one at the other.



# TRAUMA OF COVID CHILDBIRTH

## FOCUS HEALTHCARE

‘The baby is dead. We can’t assist you here.’ By the time she heard these devastating words, the pregnant Yasmelis Casanova had endured a long and painful journey, passing through multiple COVID-19 checkpoints, to the hospital in Caracas, Venezuela. She bled for hours without treatment. When doctors at a second hospital finally operated on her, they removed her ovaries without her prior consent. Then, she spent 20 days there almost entirely alone; due to COVID-19 restrictions, visits were banned.

Venezuela’s healthcare infrastructure was crumbling well before the pandemic, but the COVID-19 crisis has pushed it to the point of collapse. Many women experiencing obstetric emergencies now struggle to reach hospitals, let alone gain access to adequate care. Yet such failures can be seen far beyond Venezuela, in rich and poor countries alike.

Last month openDemocracy released the results of a global investigation into the treatment of women in childbirth during the COVID-19 pandemic. Across 45 countries – from Canada to Cameroon, from the United Kingdom to Ecuador – we found what doctors and lawyers describe as ‘shocking’ and ‘unnecessary’ breaches of laws and World Health Organization guidelines intended to protect women and babies during the pandemic.

The WHO’s specific COVID-19 guidelines affirm, for example, that women should be accompanied by a person of their choice while giving birth. Yet, across Eurasia and Latin America – including in at least 15 European countries – women have been forced to give birth without companions.

Likewise, the WHO asserts that procedures like C-sections should be performed only when they are medically necessary or have the woman’s consent. Yet in 11 countries, women reported that they didn’t consent to C-sections, inductions, and episiotomies (the cutting of a woman’s vagina) that were performed on them, or said that they did not believe these procedures were medically necessary.

WHO guidelines also dictate



The WHO’s specific COVID-19 guidelines affirm, for example, that women should be accompanied by a person of their choice while giving birth. Yet, across Eurasia and Latin America – including in at least 15 European countries – women have been forced to give birth without companions

that women receive breastfeeding support and the opportunity for skin-to-skin contact with newborns. Yet mothers have been separated from newborns in at least 15 countries – including at least six European countries – and prevented from breastfeeding in at least seven, even though there is no conclusive evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted through breast milk.

Doctors and health experts agree: none of this is necessary to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Likewise, there have been multiple reports of pregnancy deaths in Africa, after transport and other lockdown restrictions prevented women from reaching hospitals. Many women in developing countries have been forced to give birth in unsanitary and unsafe conditions. Experts now warn that over the course of just six months, COVID-19 restrictions and health-service disruptions could cause up to 56,700 additional maternal deaths in low- and middle-income countries. If this is not enough to expose the flaws in current COVID-19-prevention measures, consider how unevenly they are implemented (and lifted). In some parts of England, women can now take their partners to the pub, but not to antenatal appointments.

This reflects a long history of the ‘postcode lottery’ dictating access to healthcare and other services,

from in vitro fertilisation clinics to domestic violence shelters. And it fits a wider global pattern of downgrading women’s rights and needs, including during childbirth. Just last year, a WHO-led study reported that 42 per cent of the women interviewed by researchers in Ghana, Guinea, Myanmar, and Nigeria said they had experienced physical or verbal abuse, stigma, or discrimination in health facilities during childbirth.

In Latin America, several countries – including Argentina, Ecuador, Mexico, Uruguay, and Venezuela – have passed laws against the performance of medical procedures, such as C-sections, without informed consent. But they are very rarely enforced, and advocates report that authorities and medical staff normalise such obstetric violence.

In fact, before the pandemic, 40 per cent of babies across Latin America were already being delivered by C-section, though this method poses higher risks for mother and baby. The WHO recommends a rate of around 15 per cent, emphasising that C-sections should be carried out only when medically justified.

Furthermore, most African countries were already off track to meet their targets for reducing maternal and infant deaths by 2030, part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. As

Jesca Nsungwa Sabiiti, Uganda’s maternal and child health commissioner, has noted, the pandemic is likely to delay achievement of the targets even further.

But just as the COVID-19 crisis can impede progress, it can also spur change, by forcing governments and civil society to rethink how our health systems, economies, and societies are organised. So far, discussions – especially among policymakers – have tended to be narrow, focused on short-term solutions. If we are to build the ‘equitable, resilient, and sustainable’ post-COVID world that many leaders advocate, we must embrace a much more ambitious vision of what public health really means.

For example, laws protecting the vulnerable need to be enacted and enforced. Health bodies and other agencies must investigate violations and hold medical providers accountable. And governments and donors must allocate far more resources for advocacy in problematic areas such as maternal health, and for implementing a rights-based approach to medical training and service provision across the board.

The issue extends far beyond direct medical care. Today, women can be imprisoned for having miscarriages (as in El Salvador) and detained for non-payment of hospital bills after childbirth (as in Kenya). Structural inequality and discrimination based on gender, race, class, disability, and more still shapes every aspect of our lives, in rich and poor economies alike. All of these failures undermine public health.

Far too many women have felt alone, scared, and traumatised while giving birth during the pandemic. In openDemocracy’s investigation, one woman in Italy expressed her hope that policymakers and medical providers would learn from her suffering, and the suffering of those like her, so that other women wouldn’t have to endure what she did. We owe it to these women to ensure that they do.

*The writer is Editor-in-Chief of openDemocracy, which tracks rights violations of women in childbirth globally.*

@PROJECT SYNDICATE

## SPECTRUM EDUCATION



Dhanada K Mishra

THE NEP-2020 PROVIDES A NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR ODISHA TO TAKE THE LEAD AND IMPLEMENT MANY OF THE IDEAS PROPOSED IN IT

The biggest concern that experts have flagged about the new National Education Policy is the challenges of implementation, going by our record on such matters particularly in crucial areas of health and education. In 2009, the state government had formed the Higher Education Taskforce under the chairmanship of eminent academicians Prof Trilochan Pradhan to come up with a roadmap for development of the sector. This came on the heels of the Knowledge Commission report by Dr. Sam Pitroda.

Now, the central government has released the final draft of the NEP-2020. Interestingly, the roadmap developed by Odisha State Higher Education Task Force covered a period up to 2022 and it may be pertinent to review how far the state government has implemented it and how the same can be further adapted in line with recommendations of NEP to make Odisha an early adaptor and maximise the benefits from it.

The NEP-2020 is ambitious in its scope as it has its vision set on making India a world leader as a knowledge society or a global knowledge super power by 2040. The policy sets out rather ambitious in-

termediate milestones such as ensuring foundational numeracy and literacy skills in primary schools by 2025, cent per gross enrolment ratio (GER) up to 12th Class by 2030, and increasing GER in higher education from current 26 per cent to 50 per cent by 2035. Appropriately, the policy calls for increasing expenditure on education to 6 per cent of GDP. Unfortunately, it has remained at about the same 4.43 per cent of the GDP which makes India the 62nd in the world in terms of expenses per capita in public education.

In the meantime, 50 per cent of school-going children are in private schools and 66.4 per cent of college students are in private institutions. With the world going through rapid change driven by technology, the education system here was in need of a major revamp. The UPA government through the Yashpal Committee and the Sam Pitroda-led Knowledge Commission did manage to introduce important legislation like the Right to Education Act in 2009. The reports of these two committees were also quite ambitious, but unfortunately, many good proposals like the four-year college degree programmes, National Innovation University proposal, and opening

up for foreign universities became contentious and were left aside. Notably, two of the same proposals figured in NEP-2009.

Out of the 16 major recommendations of Odisha Higher Education Task Force, several have been implemented by the state. Those like integration of +2 in school, setting up of Higher Education Regulation Authority, creation of Odisha State Open University, establishment of several unitary universities, upgrading former prominent autonomous colleges such as Ramadevi University, Khallikote University and VSSUT have been implemented. However, many other recommendations such as filling up all vacant posts, establishment of research centres, setting up of education development fund for infrastructure are yet to be attended to.

The NEP-2020 provides a new opportunity for Odisha to take the lead and implement many of the ideas proposed in it. For example, following the recommendation of the NEP which calls for large multidisciplinary universities, many of Odisha’s universities can be merged with locally situated other institutions. As proposed in the HE Task Force report, Utkal University may start a medical college by

using the Capital Hospital. A similar exercise can be undertaken by merging the Bhubanananda Engineering School with Ravenshaw University and upgrading it into a full-fledged engineering college. The proposal for allowing foreign universities to set up campuses in India offers an opportunity for Odisha too. It may invite reputed charitable organisations with incentives such as land to set up campuses in underdeveloped regions of the state.

In line with the recommendation of increasing funding for education, the state may start planning to re-allocate increased resources. However, the recommendations that do not require much additional funds may be taken up on priority.

Odisha must be a forerunner in adopting the new education policy and bring our education system in line with the proposals in NEP. The state must form the Rajya Shiksha Aayog, comprising the best minds available to update the state education policy taking into account the draft policy recommended by Dr. Trilochan Pradhan Committee.

*The writer is a former member of the Odisha Higher Education Task Force.*

# Letters

## TO THE EDITOR

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

**OrissaPOST**  
B-15, Rasulgari Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

## Ailing hospitals

Sir, Many people are dying without proper medical service. State to state, the number of doctors is fewer than the essential requirement. Most people are depending on private clinics and hospitals, spending more money on treatment. In the Covid-19 situation, sadly, other patients are not getting medical attention. Beds are hard to get. Hospitals are more necessary than temples, mosques and church. But politicians pay more attention to the spiritual institutions than in setting up new medical facilities and improving existing medical facilities. Covid-19 shows the problems plaguing the health sector.

**Santosh Kumar Mohanty,**  
Safa, CUTTACK

## Exams, SC

Sir, The entire nation is aware of the conflict between the Centre and the states over the conducting of examinations for the final-year students. One can vividly figure out what is appealing and what’s the appalling. It has been a month since some states announced termination of the final-year examinations in view of the pandemic. Weeks later, UGC unveiled its new guidelines, mandating final-year examinations. Then the Centre and the states seemed to be at loggerheads. Amidst such mayhem among students and parents, the UGC justified its decision to conduct examinations. The students are in dire need of their certificates to carry their studies forward. But, they were not able to decide whether to gear themselves up for the final term or devote their time to other competitive exams. No doubt, UGC was justifying its decision on the egalitarian approach. In this backdrop, the Supreme Court was the last resort.

**Pratiksha Mishra,** SU, SAMBALPUR

## First Test

Sir, After being on the back-foot for a major part of the match, England made Pakistan eat the humble pie in the first Test at Old Trafford. Pakistan collapsed like a pack of cards in the second essay in the face of a five-pronged English pace attack led by Stuart Broad to lose the initiative. Azhar Ali and company looked on course after dismissing five top-order batsmen for just 117, but Jos Buttler and Chris Woakes launched a superb counter-attack in a stand of 139 for the sixth wicket to seal Pakistan’s fate. This was impressive.

**NJ Ravi Chander,**  
BANGALORE

# Not knowing Hindi deterrent ‘to becoming PM’

AGENCIES

**Bangalore, August 10:** Former Karnataka Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy has lambasted ‘Hindi politics’, and cited it as the reason that prevented many South Indian leaders from becoming the Prime Minister of India. Recently, Tamil politician Kanimozhi’s nationality was allegedly questioned for not knowing Hindi.

“Hindi politics has prevented many South Indians from becoming Prime Minister – Karunanidhi and Kamaraj are prominent. Though Deve Gowda was successful in breaking this barrier, there were several incidents of him being criticised and ridiculed for reasons of language,” said Kumaraswamy.

Following a CISF officer allegedly asking Kanimozhi if she was an Indian because she asked the officer to speak to her either in Tamil or English as she did not know Hindi, Kumaraswamy said it is apt now to speak about the lost op-



portunities of southern leaders.

“Kanimozhi has been questioned ‘Are you an Indian?’. I raise my voice against the insult meted to sister Kanimozhi. Now, it is apt to debate how political leaders from the South were snatched of their opportunities by Hindi politics and discrimination,” he asserted.

According to the JD (S) leader,

‘Hindi politics’ forced his father Gowda to deliver an Independence Day speech in Hindi when he was the Prime Minister in the late 90s.

“Gowda finally agreed only because of farmers from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Hindi politics works in this country to this extent,” he pointed out.

Reminiscing about his own ex-

**Hindi politics has prevented many South Indians from becoming Prime Minister – Karunanidhi and Kamaraj are prominent. Though Deve Gowda was successful in breaking this barrier, there were several incidents of him being criticised and ridiculed for reasons of language**

HD KUMARASWAMY | FORMER KARNATAKA CM



periences as a former parliamentarian, Kumaraswamy said the ruling class ignores South India with disdain.

“I have seen from close quarters how Hindi politicians manoeuvre. Most of them don’t respect non-Hindi politicians,” he recollected.

The South Indian leader also highlighted that only English and Hindi are being offered as the language options for writing many public sector exams, citing banking exam IBPS as an example.

“There is no place for Kannada in this year’s notification. Kannadigas are being denied opportunities for getting jobs. This must stop,” he said.

Though the Central government says Hindi is one of the languages, Kumaraswamy has alleged that it is spending crores of rupees in India and overseas to promote and popularise the language.

“This is one of the clandestine programmes. It is possible to fight this only with love and respect for each one’s language,” he added.

# Is this India or *Hindia*, asks DMK chief Stalin



**Tamil politician Kanimozhi’s nationality was allegedly questioned for not knowing Hindi**

AGENCIES

**Chennai, August 10:** DMK president MK Stalin Monday took umbrage over the incident in which his sister and party MP Kanimozhi was asked by a CISF official if “she was an Indian” as she could not speak Hindi. Staling asked if knowing that language was the ‘yardstick’ of being an Indian.

“Is Hindi the yardstick for being an Indian. Is this India or Hindia,” (sic) the DMK chief said in a tweet.

Kanimozhi has alleged a CISF official at Chennai airport had asked her if “she was an Indian”

as the DMK leader could not speak Hindi.

Stalin, whose party, as a policy, is opposed to the ‘imposition’ of Hindi for decades, further said in the tweet that those trying to “bury pluralism” will get “buried.”

Sunday, Kanimozhi had tweeted “today at the airport a CISF officer asked me if ‘I am an Indian’ when I asked her to speak to me in Tamil or English as I did not know Hindi,” prompting the paramilitary force to order an inquiry.

“It is not the policy of CISF to insist upon any particular language,” it said.

# BANGALORE LOGS 20,871 COVID-19 CASES IN TEN DAYS

AGENCIES

**Bangalore, August 10:** As the hotspot of the pandemic in Karnataka, Bangalore has registered 20,871 Covid positive cases in the past 10 days, an official said Monday.

For the last 10 days, the city accounted for 1,948; 2,665; 2,147; 2,554; 1,848; 2,035; 1,497; 2,105; 1,852 and 2,220 infections daily respectively since July 31.

On an average, the city has been accounting for more than 2,000 cases a day.

Of 1.78 lakh cases across the state, the city alone accounts for 17,185, recording positive cases at

cases. June, July and the first nine days of August accounted for 98 per cent of all infections in Karnataka.

Though the total number of cases at present stands at 1.78 lakh in Karnataka, active cases are 80,973.

Incidentally, Karnataka has overtaken Delhi in the number of coronavirus infections, the national capital accounts for 1.45 lakh cases.

Despite 93,908 recoveries, Karnataka currently accounts for the fourth highest number of Covid deaths with 3,198, after Maharashtra (17,367), Tamil Nadu (4,808) and Delhi (4,111).

Among major metropolitan cities in India, Bangalore is the fourth



a rate of 17.9 per cent cases, higher than the state rate of 10.44 per cent. As part of contact tracing in the city, government has identified 3.7 lakh people of whom 1.6 lakh are primary contacts and 2 lakh secondary contacts.

At the state level, though Karnataka has seen only 3,221 cases by the end of May, number of infections shot up to 15,242 by the end of June.

Starting July, the real spike in cases in the southern state had begun, reaching 44,077 in just the first two weeks of the month.

In the next five days, by July 19, infections in the state rose to 71,069 and later spiked to 1.78 lakh by Saturday.

The two months of June and July proved very costly to the state, accounting for the bulk of the

most Covid-affected with 74,185 cases, trailing New Delhi (1.45 lakh), Mumbai (1.22 lakh) and Chennai (1.08 lakh).

Containment Zones (CZ) in Bangalore shot up to 28,716, of which 14,010 are currently active. Reinforcing the health department response capabilities, government has increased the count of ambulances to 665.

“As promised by Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa, 665 ambulances have been deployed across Bangalore city to facilitate the movement of Covid and non-Covid patients to Covid Care Centres (CCC) and hospitals,” said Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar.

Covid testing labs in the state rose to 100 by Sunday, of which 45 are government-run and 55 private labs.



With protective gears, men workout at a gym after it was reopened during Unlock 3.0, in Chennai, Monday PTI PHOTO

# Kudankulam plant 3 reactor vessel now dry shielded

AGENCIES

**Chennai, August 10:** The third 1,000 MW nuclear power plant coming up in Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu reached another milestone with the installation of reactor pressure vessel dry shielding. Russia’s integrated nuclear power company, Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation, informed this.

Rosatom said Indian contractor Larsen & Toubro, under technical support of Russian experts, completed the works on installation

into position of the reactor pressure vessel dry shielding.

Dry shielding is a cylindrical shield in metal cladding filled with serpentine concrete and located around the reactor pressure vessel. This structure serves for the neutron flux attenuation, and facilitates prevention of overheating of the reinforced concrete reactor pit structure.

The equipment was manufactured at Tiazhmash JSC in Syzran town. The cylindrical shield filled with serpentine concrete weighs

140 tons. According to Rosatom works on dry shielding preparation for installation are completed in time as scheduled.

The Russian company said installation of the reactor pressure vessel dry shielding is an essential process operation in the construction of a nuclear power plant.

After its completion, the installation of the reactor support truss and other assembly operations were performed, which were followed by the installation of the reactor pressure vessel into position.

# It’s going to rain cats & dogs in Karna, says IMD



AGENCIES

**Bangalore, August 10:** Heavy to very heavy rainfall alert has been issued for 13 districts in

Karnataka after the state’s coastal districts witnessed heavy downpour, an official said Monday.

“The intensity of rainfall has reduced, but there is an orange

alert for Malnad districts,” an official from the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) told IANS.

The alert has been issued for

Coastal Karnataka districts Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada, Bagalkote, Bidar, Kalaburagi, Raichur and Yadgir in the north of the state, and Chikkamagaluru, Hassan, Kodagu and Shivamogga in the south of the state. In the past 24 hours, Nada gram panchayat of Byndoor taluk in Udupi district has recorded the maximum amount of rainfall at 284 mm. Uttara Kannada, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada were pounded by heavy rainfall between 115 mm and 204 mm.

The Met department has issued

a yellow alert in Coastal Karnataka districts for the next two days.

“The intensity of rainfall in coastal districts is likely to come down from Wednesday. We are expecting rainfall only Monday and Tuesday,” he said.

For Bangalore city, the Met department has forecast a generally cloudy sky with one or two spells of rainfall for the next two days. In the past 24 hours till 8:30 a.m. in the morning on Monday, the city recorded 12.2 mm of rainfall. Until next Sunday, Bangalore is expected to have a generally cloudy sky.

# CM Yedi now Covid-free; discharged from hospital

*The Chief Minister says he will be under self-quarantine*

AGENCIES

**Bangalore, August 10:** Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa was Monday discharged from the hospital after undergoing treatment for Covid-19, an official said.

“Chief Minister Yediyurappa has been discharged from the Manipal Hospital on Monday,” said the official.

The Chief Minister though said that he will be under self-quarantine. Yediyurappa also thanked the doctors, the nurses and the hospital staff who treated him.

He also expressed gratitude to all the citizens who wished him a speedy recovery.

After he got discharged, the Chief Minister could be seen freely walk-

ing out of the hospital wearing a white dress.

Following mild Covid symptoms, Yediyurappa was admitted to the Manipal hospital at 11 pm August 2. The doctors closely monitored his health, which was reported to be stable throughout the course of treatment.

According to the health bulletins shared by his doctors, the 77-year-old leader responded well to the treatment and his vital health indicators were normal during his stay at the hospital.

Despite being in the hospital for more than a week, the Chief Minister was in regular touch with the officials. He also cleared files and gave necessary instructions about the flood relief work in the state.

# NHRC pulls up Karna govt over ‘weird’ ritual

NECK-DEEP BURYING OF KIDS IN COMPOST PITS TO FIND CURE FOR THEIR DEFORMITIES IN PARTS OF KARNATAKA RILES THE RIGHTS BODY

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 10:** The NHRC has sent a notice to the Karnataka government over the alleged practice, in some parts of the state, of neck-deep burying of children in compost pits to find cure for their deformities, officials said Monday.

The Commission has observed that the ritual appears “weird, unethical and cruel towards poor kids, who are being treated with indignity in the name of faith,” the rights’ body said in a statement.

“The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken suo motu cognisance of a media report that children with special needs were buried neck-deep in compost pits in Kalaburgi, Karnataka under the belief that exposure to sharp prays

during a solar eclipse will cure them of their deformities,” it said.

The incidents were reported from three villages in the district – Taj-Sultanpur on the outskirts of Kalaburgi town and Ainolli and Gadi-Lingadalli villages in Chincholi Taluk, it said.

Reportedly, following a tip-off, the district child protection task force had rescued the children and reunited them with their families after a medical examination, the rights panel said.

The Commission has observed that such rituals tantamount to violation of human rights of the victim children. There is a need to sensitise the authorities as well as the parents of such children not to victimise the young ones in the name of blind faith, it added.



Accordingly, the NHRC has issued a notice to the Karnataka government through its Chief Secretary seeking a detailed report.

“The Commission would like to know that whether, apart from

Kalaburgi, this inhuman practice is prevalent in other districts of the state, if so, what action is being taken by the authorities,” the statement said.

The report must include if the

state government has issued any guidelines with regard to the subject and status of its implementation. The response is expected within six weeks. The Chief Secretary of the state is expected to look into the matter personally, the statement said.

Issuing the notice, the Commission has also observed that “due to spread of COVID-19, social distancing is being maintained and it is not advisable to organise awareness camps etc. in the villages but through local authorities, with the help of media and various digital modes like video conferencing etc., the awareness with regard to the ill practice and its impact on the tender minds of the children is required to be created amongst the public at large.”

of the day quote

I have experienced similar taunts from government officers and ordinary citizens who insisted that I speak in Hindi during telephone conversations and sometimes face to face

P CHIDAMBARAM | SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER

The Centre has put an embargo on 101 (military) items, but the question remains whether our indigenous defence sector has the ability to produce those items. If not, what is the Union government doing to enhance its capabilities

SAUGATA ROY | SENIOR TMC LEADER

I urge all Punjabis to come together against Covid-19 for it's a long fight and we'll need to inspire one another and, importantly, keep up our morale

AMARINDER SINGH | PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Shah Faesal to quit politics

**Srinagar:** Shah Faesal, who resigned from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and floated the Jammu and Kashmir People's Movement (JKPM) last year, has resigned as its president, the party said Monday. Faesal had dropped a hint about stepping away from politics on Sunday as he edited his personal details on Twitter, removing the reference to his political affiliations. He could not be contacted for comments. The JKPM's executive committee held an online meeting on Monday to discuss the ongoing political developments in the state, the party said in a statement.

UP lawyer 'shot at, beaten up'

**Prayagraj:** A lawyer in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj was injured last night after he was allegedly shot at and beaten up by some men linked to a gang, police said Monday morning. Abhishek Shukla, the newly-elected joint secretary of Bar Association, was the lawyer who was attacked. According to the police complaint, the accused are "members of criminal Atiq Ahmad's gang". He has been admitted to a hospital. The bullet missed the advocate. Police are searching for them.

Pak troops fire at border posts

**Jammu:** Pakistani troops opened fire on forward posts along the Line of Control (LoC) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir Monday in violation of a ceasefire agreement, a defence spokesman said. The unprovoked firing from across the border started in the Balakote sector around 10.15 am and was given a befitting response by Indian Army personnel guarding the LoC, the spokesman said. However, there was no report of any casualty, the spokesman said.

Woman killed by ex-husband's kin

**Jalna:** A 30-year-old woman was beaten to death allegedly by relatives of her former husband over a property dispute in Jalna district in Maharashtra, police said Monday. The woman, identified as Heena Majid Khan, had remarried but her former husband's relatives and she continued to have a dispute over a property, an official said. Late Sunday night, relatives of Heena's former husband assaulted her and her husband Majid Khan with sticks and rods.

Many BJP workers in J&K resign after militant attacks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Srinagar, August 10:** Nearly a dozen BJP workers in Kashmir have resigned from the party following recent attacks on village-level leaders by militants, which prompted the party to suggest "hostel-type" secure accommodation for its members and their families in each district in the Valley.

Worries have escalated after Abdul Hamid Najar, BJP's OBC 'morchha' district president from Budgam, died at a hospital early Monday, a day after he was shot at in his village.

Admitting that several party workers, most of them lower-rung activists, have resigned over the last few days following the recent attacks on BJP panchayat members and sarpanches, a BJP leader said some were from Budgam district in central Kashmir.

Letters and videos of several BJP workers announcing their resignations or disassociation with the party have been posted on social media platforms.

The BJP leader said three party workers, including two panchayat members and a sarpanch from Kulgam district of south Kashmir, have resigned from the party.

"There is one from Handwara, one from Kupwara and one from Sopore as well," he added.

BJP media in-charge Manzoor Bhat dismissed the resignations as of no consequence. "These all are lower rung workers. This will not affect the party," Bhat said.

However, he said the party has taken serious note of the attacks on its workers and has suggested that secure accommodation be created



Worries have escalated after Abdul Hamid Najar, BJP's OBC 'morchha' district president from Budgam, died at a hospital early Monday, a day after he was shot at in his village

Letters and videos of several BJP workers announcing their resignations or disassociation with the party have been posted on social media platforms

for its members and their families in all districts.

BJP J&K general secretary (organisation) Ashok Koul raised the matter with party's national president JP Nadda and the Union Territory's party unit now believes that something will be done to secure its members, Bhat said.

"We brought the matter to the notice of Nadda and have already sought enhanced security cover for our workers. Some of our workers from places like Kulgam are given accommodation in Srinagar but their family lives in Kulgam so they cannot remain here."

"We have therefore sought secure accommodation for our workers in their respective districts. We believe something is being done on this and it will take shape in the coming few days," the BJP's media in-charge said.

Several BJP leaders and workers have been provided security or individual secure housing but most

have said they have to take care of their family as well and cannot live without them.

"Also, they cannot work by living in another district. So we have suggested that to stop such killings, hostel-type accommodation, like headquarters, be created in every district to accommodate BJP workers and their families," Bhat said.

The hostel-type accommodation can provide a secure environment for hundreds of workers, even from other political parties, he said. Providing individual security to political workers is very difficult, he added. The attack on Najar followed the killings of Wasim Bari, former BJP district president of Bandipora, and his father Bashir Ahmad and brother Umar Bari last month in North Kashmir.

A BJP panch was shot at and injured August 4 while a sarpanch from the party was shot dead two days later in south Kashmir's Kulgam district.



Monsoon clouds hover over a neighbourhood in Ajmer, Monday

PTI PHOTO

Will the Disaster Management Act overrule UGC directive, SC asks UGC

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, August 10:** The Supreme Court Monday sought University Grant Commission's (UGC) response on whether the Disaster Management Act will have an overriding effect on its directives for conducting exams after Delhi and Maharashtra decided to cancel exams amid pandemic COVID-19.

A three-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and MR Shah granted time to the UGC to respond to the decision taken by the Maharashtra and Delhi governments to cancel exams.



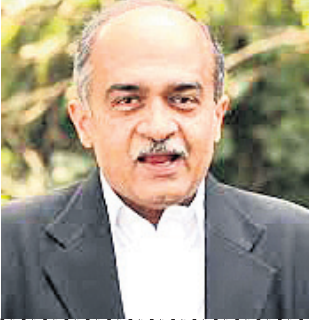
The bench listed the matter for hearing August 14.

"Will the Disaster Management Act have an overriding effect on the UGC directive? You need to reply on this," the bench said.

Earlier, Maharashtra and Delhi had filed affidavits in the Supreme Court stating that they would not hold exams due to pandemic.

SC TO HEAR PRASHANT BHUSHAN'S 2009 CONTEMPT CASE

The SC Monday said that it will hear in detail whether any comment on corruption against judges tantamount to contempt of court or not, adding that it will hear the 2009 contempt case against lawyer Prashant Bhushan



'Conflicts kills over 500 people, 100 elephants every year'

Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said elephant conservation is vital as it balances the ecosystem



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 10:** More than 500 people and 100 elephants die every year due to conflict with each other, officials of the environment ministry said Monday.

Releasing the figures at an event ahead of World Elephant Day August 12, the officials said interactions between humans and elephants have led to the death of both. As per the last census conducted in 2017, India is home to 30,000 elephants. Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said elephant conservation is vital as it balances the ecosystem.

Elephants have to be kept in forests for which fodder and water augmentation programme has been initiated, the minister said, adding that by next year results will start showing. Union Minister of State for Environment Babul Supriyo condemned the May 27 incident in Kerala where a pregnant elephant died after consuming a firecracker-filled pineapple.

"We must protect our elephants.

The Kerala incident was inhuman and such criminal acts will be dealt with. The ministry and states have zero tolerance approach to such activities and I am sure exemplary punishment will be given to the culprit," Supriyo said.

Giving out the figures of deaths due to human-elephant conflict, Additional Director General of Forests (Wildlife) Soumitra Dasgupta said hundreds of elephants migrate and come in contact with human beings.

"More than 500 human and 100 elephant deaths take place each year due to the conflict. In last five years, the ministry has unleashed a series of activities for the conservation of elephants. More elephant corridors have been identified, budget has been increased by 30 per cent and several committees have also been formed," said Dasgupta. During the event, Javadekar also released a booklet on best practices of human-elephant conflict management and launched the national portal of project elephant which will have all the data and details of elephant movements.

Drugs worth ₹1,000cr seized

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, August 10:** In one of the biggest narcotics haul in Mumbai, the Mumbai Customs and Department of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) have seized 191 kg of heroin worth around Rs 1,000 crore from a cargo container at Nhava Sheva Port Trust, officials said here Monday.



The seizure of the drugs, being declared as 'ayurvedic medicine' - believed to have originated from Afghanistan - was made late Saturday.

Two customs clearing house agents who attempted to get it cleared through the customs have been arrested and sent to police custody for 14 days.

The narcotic, stated to be of high-grade quality, was concealed in plastic pipes painted in bamboo colour and sought to be passed off as a traditional common medicine, said the officials.

Further probe is underway into the source of the supply, the modus operandi and whether the same has been tried before to evade the various enforcement agencies.

Bitcoin-crazy rich Indians falling prey to fake crypto wallets

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, August 10:** With the Supreme Court striking down the curb on cryptocurrency trade in India in March this year, there has been a surge in Indians investing in Bitcoin and with this, cybercriminals have started mobile-based fake Blockchain-based crypto wallets to lure and con the rich and the wealthy in the country.

These Blockchain-based wallets offer handsome discounts, before conning people of their hard-earned Bitcoin/cash and then going incommunicado, according to industry watchers.

"I have seen so many wealthy Indian falling into the trap of such

fake cryptocurrency wallets in the recent past. One gentleman just came to me who lost over Rs 37 lakh while dealing with one such fake platform," Manan Shah, Founder and CEO, Avalance Global Solutions, said.

One Indian businessman lost a whopping Rs 28 crore in such crypto wallet scam, Shah informed.

A single Bitcoin currently costs \$11,000 (over Rs 8 lakh) and Indians are now investing in crores aiming for higher returns.

The modus operandi of such fake wallets is simple. They target people via sending them messages on various social media groups, asking them to sell and buy Bitcoin via their apps.



The scamsters trick them to buy and sell Bitcoin via wallets and offer them trade opportunities with other app users across the world. Once they receive Bitcoin into their

systems, they disappear and stop communication altogether.

Most of these transactions are happening via Swift Global Pay (SGP), Insta Global Pay (IGP) and

International Global Pay wallets, informed Shah.

"I do not see any genuinity in this wallet. I purchased virtual cards by paying Rs 3.70 kakh on SGP. It was delivered online July 15. Till now it is not accepted anywhere online. SGP site chat no response," posted a user that goes with the name Kumar Chvks, Managing Director with an Indian firm.

"Email no response. So only the figures are shown on Dashboard. I tried to withdraw my money in the BTC PayPal and bank. None came till now. It is a clear cheating. Expected to be a scam of 7,000 crore to my estimation," he further posted.

According to Sumit Gupta, Co-founder and CEO, CoinDCX which

is India's largest and safest cryptocurrency exchange, as Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies continue to mature and increase in popularity; they expect more cryptocurrency scam apps to appear and other fraudulent activities emerging.

"Scammers and hackers are getting more sophisticated in their techniques. When installing apps, it is important to stick to some basic security principles, especially when virtual currencies are at stake, Gupta said.

The global cryptocurrency market was valued at \$856.36 billion in 2018 and is projected to display robust growth represented by a CAGR of 11.9 per cent during 2019-2024.

of the day quote

Maharashtra needs to boost its Covid-19 testing capacity, as well as increase the number of isolation centres in a big way, in the wake of rising infections and death rate

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | EX-MAHARASHTRA CM

Farmers in the state have already lost benefits of ₹8,200 crore. While farmers all over the country have received Rs 12,000 each, our farmers have been denied this legitimate right on account of insensitivity and confrontational stance of the state government

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | WB GOVERNOR

Messages of sympathy received following the tragic plane crash in Kerala's Kozhikode are deeply appreciated, and they are a source of strength at this difficult time

S JAISHANKAR | EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Abducted UP boy found

**Lucknow:** A five-year-old boy, who was kidnapped from Uttar Pradesh's Moradabad district, was found abandoned in a bus in Ghaziabad. Uttar Pradesh State Roadways Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) driver Vikal and conductor Deepak found the abandoned boy crying in the bus, which was on its way to Moradabad via Ghaziabad from the Greater Noida depot. The boy, when questioned by the driver and conductor, could not tell the address but gave them a phone number of his family member. Vikal and Deepak called the boy's family who then informed the two that the boy had been kidnapped from Moradabad. The kidnappers had reportedly demanded a ransom of ₹30 lakh, but seemed to have changed their plan and abandoned the child in the bus.

Man booked

**Thane:** A 38-year-old man has been booked for allegedly trying to kill his teenage son over a domestic dispute here in Maharashtra, police said Monday. The accused Ejaz Ahmed Abdul Vahil Ansari, a resident of Nalasopara area, and his wife used to quarrel a lot, a Thane district police official said. Ansari's wife had left his house with their son earlier this month and has been staying with her parents. August 8, Ansari forcibly took away his 14-year-old son from his wife and tried to kill him by strangulating him with a stole, the official said.

Teacher arrested

**Raipur:** A 9-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a teacher at her home in Raipur, police said Monday. The incident took place Sunday following which the 25-year-old accused was arrested, they said. The accused, who was a teacher at an educational institution, had been going to the victim's house to teach Arabic to her younger sister for last 15 days. Since Saturday, he was also teaching the victim, Kharnadih police station house officer Mamta Sharma Ali said.

Fine increased

**Gandhinagar:** In a bid to stem the spread of COVID-19, the Gujarat government Monday increased the fine for not wearing mask in public places to ₹1,000 from the present ₹500. The decision came after the Gujarat High Court in its order last month asked the government to collect a minimum fine of ₹1,000 from those found without mask in public places.

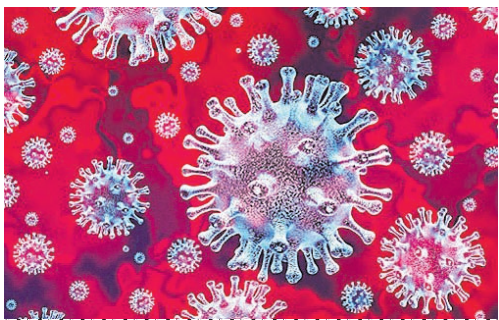


Those raising objections to the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification are the same people who took big decisions without consultations when they were in power

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR | UNION ENVIRONMENT MINISTER

VIRUS ATTACK

As many as 56 inmates of two prisons in Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh have tested positive for coronavirus, officials said Monday



# Modi reviews flood situation

The states that attended the meeting were Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 10:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi Monday underlined the need to have a better coordination between all the central and state agencies to have a permanent system for forecasting of floods.

He also stressed on extensive use of innovative technologies for improving the forecast and warning system. The prime minister made these remarks at a virtual meeting with the chief ministers of six states to review the flood situation in various parts of the country.

The states that attended the meeting, which was convened to review their preparedness to deal with the southwest monsoon and the current flood situation in the country, were Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said at the meeting, Modi highlighted that the investments in localised early warning systems should be increased so that the people of an area can be cautioned on time in case of a threatening situation such as breached river embankments, inundation or lightning.

The meet, which lasted nearly an hour and a half, was also attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai and G Kishan Reddy, and senior officers of the central ministries and organisations concerned.

The prime minister also asserted that in view of the COVID-19 situation, the states must ensure that people follow all health precau-



RAIN FURY

tions such as wearing of face masks, hand sanitisation and maintaining an adequate physical distance with each other while undertaking rescue efforts.

He said the relief material must include provisions for hand washing and sanitising and face masks for the affected people. Special provisions should be made for elderly people, pregnant women and people with co-morbidities, he observed.

Modi said the states should ensure that all development and infrastructure projects are built with resilience to withstand local disasters and help reduce the consequential losses. The prime minister pointed out that over the last few years, forecasting agencies such as the India Meteorological Department (IMD) and the Central Water Commission (CWC) are making concerted efforts to make better and more usable flood forecasts. They are trying to provide not only rainfall and river-level forecasts, but also location-specific forecasts of inundation.

Pilot projects are also underway to use innovative technologies such as artificial intelligence to improve the location-specific forecasts, for which the states should provide the necessary information to these agencies and timely disseminate the warnings to the local communities.

# Rhea moves fresh plea in SC

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi, August 10:** In the Sushant Singh Rajput case, the late actor's girlfriend and actress Rhea Chakraborty has moved a fresh plea in the Supreme Court, complaining that the media was unfairly holding a trial and pronouncing her guilty.

SUSHANT CASE

She also urged the top court to ensure that she is not be made a scapegoat of political agenda in the wake of the Bihar elections scheduled later this year.

For the reasons set out hereinabove, it is submitted that the transfer of investigation to the CBI by the Bihar Police is illegal, the plea said. However, the petitioner reiterated that she had no objection if the court referred the matter to the CBI and even if the CBI probes the matter, the jurisdiction will still be with the courts in Mumbai, and not in Patna.

Rhea argued that actors Ashutosh



Bhakre and Sameer Sharma too had committed suicide like Sushant in the last 30 days, but there was not even a whisper in the media about these two cases.

The hearing on the matter is listed for Tuesday. Earlier, Rhea had moved the top court seeking transfer of the case against her from Patna to Mumbai. "Actors Ashutosh Bhakre (32) and Sameer Sharma (44) also reportedly committed suicide in the last 30 days,

but there isn't even a whisper about the cases in the corridors of power. But in Sushant's case, the Chief Minister of Bihar is reported to be responsible for registering an FIR in Patna," said the additional affidavit filed by Rhea.

She insisted that the sad incident of the death of Sushant, who hailed from Bihar, unfortunately occurred just in the wake of Assembly elections in Bihar. "Due to this, the matter is being blown out of proportion," said the affidavit.

Rhea also said that the issue is being blown out of proportion by the media. "Media channels are examining and cross-examining all the witnesses in the case. The petitioner has already been convicted by the media even before foul play could be established behind Sushant's death. Extreme trauma and infringement of privacy of the rights of the petitioner is being caused due to constant sensationalisation of the case," said the affidavit. Rhea also told the apex court that she should be protected, and not made a scapegoat of political agenda.

# Six-year-old brutally raped

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Hapur (UP), August 10:** A six-year-old girl, who was kidnapped and brutally raped in Hapur district Thursday, remains in a critical condition even as the police continue to hunt for the accused.

The police have released three sketches of the accused on the basis of the statements of the girl's parents and neighbours. The girl was kidnapped from outside her home in the Garh Mukhteshwar area, reportedly by a man on a motorcycle.

The police launched a hunt for the girl after her parents lodged a missing complaint. She was found the next morning, unconscious and soaked in blood, behind bushes not far from her village. The girl was rushed to a specialised hospital in Meerut where the medical examination confirmed rape.

She has already undergone one surgery and doctors say she is stable but not yet out of danger. The doctors said that the girl was brutalised in a manner that is shockingly similar to the Nirbhaya gang rape case of 2012.

Dr S.K. Garg, the principal of the Meerut Medical College where the girl is admitted, said that she will need treatment for a long duration and more surgeries. Hapur SP Sanjeev Suman said that they have not yet been able to record the victim's statement because of her medical condition. He said that six police teams have been formed to arrest the accused. Meanwhile, protests are being held by the Samajwadi Party and Congress over the incident.

USE OF SANITISATION TUNNELS

# Top court issues notice to Centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, August 10:** The Supreme Court Monday issued a notice to the Union government in response to a petition seeking complete ban on the use of sanitisation tunnels across the country to disinfect people visiting public places.

A three-judge bench of the Apex court comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and MR Shah sought Centre's response over the use of sanitisation tunnels.

The petitioner submitted in the court that the sanitisation tunnels are ineffective in containing the spread of the COVID-19 and the tunnels can also be harmful for humans.

The petitioner also contended that the World Health Organisation, Directorate General of Health Services and Ministry of Health & Family Welfare had issued an advisory in April this year against spraying of disinfectants on people.

"WHO and other health experts across the world have said that unchecked and mis-informed usage of such disinfection tunnels can have serious physical and psychological consequences on human beings," the petition states.

The petitioner urged the court to ban use of such sanitisation tunnels involved in spraying of chemical disinfectants to contain spread of COVID-19 across the country.

# Mumbai woman's daring act

Disregarding her own safety or wellbeing, the poor flower-seller, Kanta M. Kalan, 50, forced open a gutter manhole cover on the high-traffic Tulsi Pipe Road in Matunga west August 4

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, August 10:** A Mumbai pavement dweller has become a social media darling after her daring act helped avert potential road tragedy horrors and also enabled flood waters to drain out quickly during last week's monsoon fury.

Disregarding her own safety or wellbeing, the poor flower-seller, Kanta M. Kalan, 50, forced open a gutter manhole cover on the high-traffic Tulsi Pipe Road in Matunga west August 4. This was to prevent further flooding on the road which was already submerged in three feet of water after torrential rains that day, she said.

Unfortunately, the flood waters had washed out Kalan's own tiny shanty and around ₹10,000 savings, but she decided to do something which could clear out the flood waters as heavy rains continued to lash Mumbai on that day.



She took a piece of cloth and tied it to the manhole cover and from a short distance, with the help of a passing motorcyclist, pulled it open to allow the flood waters to gush away directly into the sewerage lines underneath.

As it continued to rain most part of the day, she stood beside the manhole and directed the oncoming traffic to avoid any possible tragedy - from 6 am to lunch time. Later, Kalan had developed fever after her ordeal beside the manhole with rains and gushing flood water around her.

A resident in an adjacent building, Sameer Patekar clicked videos of her and posted them on social media, earning her likes and laudatory comments from people and police personnel. Kalan's husband Maruti was left paralysed after a train accident over a decade ago. She alone supports her two school-going daughters -- Janaki and Tamishree -- with the income from selling flowers.

The money she lost was to pay for the online class fees of her daughters studying in Class 8 and 10, respectively, but her immediate priority was to get a roof on their heads as the rains continued. Besides, Kalan is also worried that if she is unable to arrange the tuition fees, her daughters may be forced to drop out this year. The BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation local Ward officials though declined to comment on the issue.

# 15% students in Delhi govt schools not traceable: Sisodia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 10:** Close to 15 per cent students enrolled in Delhi government schools are not "traceable" since the lockdown was announced and have not been attending the alternative classes conducted online or through phones, according to Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

Sisodia, who is also the Education Minister, said efforts are being made to locate these students either physically or telephonically to get them into the system.

"We are conducting full-fledged teaching learning either online or through phones and teachers have been instructed to ensure personal involvement with each student. So far, there are maximum 15 per cent

LOCKDOWN BLUES



students who are not traceable and are not in contact with their schools and hence not attending the classes," Sisodia said.

"I have been reviewing this per-

sonally and we have been able to trace few students, for others either they are not staying at the same addresses or their phone numbers mentioned in our records are

not traceable. I have asked that School Management Committees (SMCs) should be roped in to track these students. There are certain students who have gone to places like Uttarakhand and Bihar but are still connected with us and are attending the classes and doing assignments," he added.

Asked about a definite number of the students who have not been traced, Sisodia said, "On an average there are 4-5 students in every class who are in this category. Many of them are class 6 students and numbers for other classes are quite low". There are around 15 lakh students enrolled in over 1100 Delhi government schools.

"We started conducting online classes for class 12 students from April 6 and sending e-learning ma-

terial or activities to those enrolled in classes nursery to eighth over WhatsApp or SMS. The government has also provided a subsidy of ₹200 for internet packages to all its class 12 students who had registered for the online classes," a senior Directorate of Education (DoE) official said.

The HRD ministry had last month asked states and union territories to ensure that the names of children of migrant workers who returned home during the COVID-19 pandemic are not struck off their school rolls.

Issuing a set of guidelines, the ministry had also directed the states to prepare a database of children who have left the local area for their homes in other states or other parts of the same state. It also suggested

that the state governments may direct all schools to give admission to any child who recently returned to village without asking for any other documents, except for some identity proof.

Universities and schools across the country have been shut since March 16, when the Centre announced a countrywide classroom shutdown as part of measures to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. A nationwide lockdown was announced on March 24, which came into effect the next day and threw economic activities out of gear, rendering many homeless and penniless and leading to an exodus of migrants to their home states. While the government has largely eased restrictions, schools and colleges continue to remain closed.



**We need to make every effort to avoid elections, stabilize the government, fight the coronavirus health-wise, and fight for the reopening of the economy**  
BENJAMIN NETANYAHU | ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER

## SAY NO TO SMOKING

Each cigarette smoked a day by heavier smokers may increase the risk of contracting diseases such as respiratory disorders, cancers and cardiovascular ailments by more than 30 per cent, according to a study



## of the day quote

Ready to help Pakistan and India within his mandate to resolve their differences on Kashmir issue if requested by both the parties  
VOLKAN BOZKIR | UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT-ELECT



China's Communist party has infringed on the religious rights of the Uyghur community and violated human rights of people of Hong Kong  
PUNEET AHLUWALIA | INDIAN-AMERICAN REPUBLICAN



Today Pakistan is among those few countries that have successfully managed to control the pandemic  
IMRAN KHAN | PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER



## SHORT TAKES

**Spike in Covid deaths in Oz**  
**Melbourne:** Australia Monday reported its highest daily coronavirus deaths with 19 fatalities during the last 24 hours, all in Victoria state, prompting the state premier to acknowledge that the COVID-19 health crisis was the "greatest challenge" faced by the province. The country also registered 322 new cases of confirmed infections during the same period, the lowest daily increase in the last 12 days.

**Lukashenko wins sixth Prez term**  
**Minsk:** Election officials in Belarus say the country's longtime authoritarian leader Alexander Lukashenko has won his sixth consecutive presidential term, taking over 80 per cent of the votes, according to preliminary results of Sunday's election that resulted in mass protests all over Belarus and a violent crackdown on demonstrators.

**China sanctions 11 US politicians**  
**Beijing:** China has announced unspecified sanctions against 11 US politicians and heads of organizations promoting democratic causes, including Senators Marco Rubio and Ted Cruz, who have already been singled out by Beijing. Foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian Monday said the 11 had "performed badly" on issues concerning Hong Kong, where China has cracked down on opposition voices following its imposition of a national security law in the semi-autonomous southern Chinese city last month.

**Deadly storm lashes Greece**  
**Athens:** Greek emergency services were clearing debris and searching for people potentially still trapped by floodwaters Monday after flash floods sparked by a storm on the island of Evia left seven people dead and one missing over the weekend.

**5 killed in Pak blast**  
**Quetta:** At least five people were killed and 10 others injured in a blast that occurred near an under-construction building in Pakistan's Chaman city Monday, police said. According to law enforcement agencies, an improvised explosive device (IED) was fitted on a motorcycle in the city's Mall Road area, reports said.

## Lebanon's cabinet under pressure

*The massive explosion at Beirut port has fuelled public anger and upended politics in the crisis-hit country*



REUTERS

**Beirut, August 10:** Lebanon's cabinet faced rising pressure Monday to step down after a devastating explosion that has stirred public outrage and prompted resignations of several ministers, with the justice minister the latest to go and the finance minister set to quit. The August 4 port warehouse detonation of more than 2,000 tonnes of ammonium nitrate killed at least 163 people, injured over 6,000 and destroyed swathes of the bustling Mediterranean capital, compounding months of political and economic meltdown. The cabinet, formed in January with the backing of the powerful Iranian-backed Hezbollah group and its allies, met Monday, with many ministers wanting to resign, according to ministerial and political sources. The information and environment ministers quit Sunday as well as several lawmakers, and the justice minister followed them out the door Monday. Finance Minister Ghazi Wazni, a key negotiator with the IMF over a rescue plan to help Lebanon exit a financial crisis, prepared his resignation letter and brought it with him to a cabinet meeting, a source close to him and local media said.

The cabinet decided to refer the investigation of the blast to the judicial council, the highest legal authority whose rulings cannot be appealed, a ministerial source and state news agency NNA said. The council usually handles top security cases. Prime Minister Hassan Diab said Saturday he would request early parliamentary elections. Lebanon's president had previously said explosive material was stored unsafely for years at the port. He later said the investigation would consider whether the cause was external interference as well as negligence or an accident. The Lebanese army said on Monday that another five bodies were pulled from the rubble with the help of Russian and French rescue teams, raising the death toll to 163. Beirut's governor said many foreign workers and truck drivers remained missing and were assumed to be among the casualties, complicating efforts to identify the victims. Anti-government protests in the past two days have been the biggest since October, when demonstrators took to the streets over an economic crisis rooted in endemic corruption, waste and mismanagement. Protesters accused the political elite of siphoning off state resources for their own benefit.

## SL'S NEW PARL SESSION TO COMMENCE AUG 20

AGENCIES

**Colombo, August 10:** Sri Lanka's new Parliament will meet for the first time August 20 with strict COVID-19 health protocols and no visitors will be allowed, a senior official said Monday. Sri Lanka, one of the very few countries in Asia to hold a General Election amidst the pandemic, has reported 2,844 coronavirus cases, including 2,579 recoveries and 11 fatalities. The Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) led by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and his younger brother and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, registered a landslide victory in the August 5 general election, securing two-thirds majority in the 225-member Parliament. The SLPP government has 150 members in the House and the combined Opposition strength is limited to 75. Mahinda Rajapaksa was sworn in Sunday as Sri Lanka's new prime minister. "We will have strict health guidelines set in place for all parliamentary sessions," Narendra Fernando, Sergeant-at-arms of

## SCHOOLS REOPEN

All state-owned schools across Sri Lanka re-opened Monday after being shut for over a month amid the COVID-19 pandemic which has infected more than 2,800 people in the island nation. Schools re-opened for all grades under strict health guidelines which included students wearing face masks and maintaining hand hygiene at regular intervals, reports Xinhua news agency.

Parliament, said. The new Parliament session is scheduled on August 20, he said. "There is no one-metre gap between the seats within the Parliament's chamber. So it is difficult to maintain the one-meter social distancing rule. All members of Parliament are advised to wear face masks when they address the chamber," he said. Other health guidelines such as washing of hands and social distancing would be practiced. "Public galleries won't be opened

and no visitors will be allowed," Fernando said. The seating arrangement of the lawmakers will be made according to the seniority of positions they held in the government and the seniority in the number of years as a parliamentarian, Fernando said. However, on the first day there will be no such reservations and lawmakers can sit anywhere. Sri Lanka was one of the very few Asian countries apart from Singapore to hold general elections in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. Sri Lanka's four-time former prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe Monday decided to resign from the United National Party (UNP) leadership after 26 years at the helm following the party's crushing defeat in the August 5 election. The party general secretary Akila Viraj Kariyawasam told reporters that Wickremesinghe, 70, has decided to step down. Kariyawasam named himself and 3 others as possible contenders to the post. Wickremesinghe has been leading the party since December 1994.

## WHO decries 'vast global gap' in funds needed to fight Covid

REUTERS

**Geneva, August 10:** There is a "vast global gap" between funds needed to fight the coronavirus pandemic and funds committed, World Health Organisation chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Monday, and the WHO was only "10% of the way" there. Infections have been reported in more than 210 countries and territories since the first cases were identified in China in December 2019. "The coming three months present a crucial window of opportunity to scale-up the impact of the ACT Accelerator for global impact,"

**MORE THAN 19.92 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE BEEN REPORTED TO BE INFECTED BY THE CORONAVIRUS GLOBALLY AND 729,883 HAVE DIED**  
**"WHO WAS ONLY 10% OF THE WAY TO FUNDING THE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS REQUIRED", TEDROS SAID**



## 'nCoV SEEMS TO LACK SEASONAL PATTERN'

The emergencies chief for the World Health Organisation said that COVID-19 doesn't seem to follow the seasonal patterns that some viruses exhibit, making it harder to control. Unlike other respiratory viruses like influenza that spread mainly in the winter, the coronavirus pandemic is accelerating in the summer. That's despite earlier predictions from some scientists and politicians it would fade in the heat. "This virus has demonstrated no seasonal pattern as such," said Dr Michael Ryan at a press briefing Monday.

Tedros told a briefing in Geneva, referring to the "Access to COVID-19 Tools" initiative. "However to exploit this window, we have to fundamentally scale up the way we are funding the ACT Accelerator and prioritise the use of new tools. There

is a vast global gap between our ambition for the ACT Accelerator, and the amount of funds that have been committed." "For the vaccines alone, over \$100 billion will be needed," Tedros said. This sounds like lot of money and it is. "But it's small in com-

parison to the \$10 trillion that have already been invested by G20 countries in fiscal stimulus to deal with the consequences of the pandemic so far." However, he said he saw "green shoots of hope". "It is never too late to turn the pandemic around," Tedros said. The message is to "suppress, suppress, suppress". Dr Mike Ryan, head of WHO's emergencies programme, said the coronavirus was simple, brutal and cruel. Ryan said that Brazil is registering 50,000-60,000 cases per day. "Brazil is sustaining a very high level of epidemic, the curve is somewhat flattened, but it's not going down and the system is under great deal of pressure.

## HK tycoon Jimmy Lai held under new law

REUTERS

**Hong Kong, August 10:** Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai became the highest-profile person arrested under a new national security law on Monday, detained over suspected collusion with foreign forces as around 200 police searched the offices of his Apple Daily newspaper. Mainland-born Lai, who was smuggled into Hong Kong on a fishing boat when he was a penniless 12-year-old, has been one of the most prominent democracy activists in the Chinese-ruled city and an ardent critic of Beijing. The arrest "bears out the worst fears that Hong Kong's National Security Law would be used to suppress critical pro-democracy opinion and restrict press freedom", said Steven Butler, the Committee to Protect Journalists' Asia programme coordinator. Ryan Law, chief editor of Apple Daily, a staunch anti-government tabloid that also does investigative work, told Reuters the paper would



Lai has been one of the most prominent democracy activists in the Chinese-ruled city and an ardent critic of Beijing  
His arrest comes amid Beijing's crackdown against pro-democracy opposition in the city  
China imposed the sweeping new security law on Hong Kong June 30, drawing condemnation from Western countries

not be intimidated. "Business as usual," he said. The security law punishes anything China considers subversion, secession, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces with up to life in prison. Critics say it crushes freedoms, while supporters say it will bring stability after prolonged pro-democracy protests last year. Beijing said it supported Lai's arrest. A spokesman for China's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office told the official Xinhua news agency Lai was a representative of people who were "anti-China, anti-Hong Kong," and that he planned and instigated "illegal" protests, funded pro-independence forces and used

## SWIMMING TOGETHER



A person swims by a swan in The Serpentine in Hyde Park, London, Britain

REUTERS

## Indonesia volcano eruption 'turned day into night'

*The volcano on Sumatra island has been rumbling since 2010 and saw a deadly eruption in 2016*

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Medan, Indonesia, August 10:** Indonesia's Mount Sinabung erupted Monday, belching a massive column of ash and smoke 5,000 metres (16,400 feet) into the air and plunging local communities into darkness with a thick layer of debris. The volcano on Sumatra island has been rumbling since 2010 and saw a deadly eruption in 2016. Activity had picked up in recent days, including a pair of smaller eruptions at the weekend. There were no reports of injuries or deaths from Monday morning's blast, but authorities warned of possible lava flows and more eruptions. "This is an alert for all of us to avoid red-zone areas near Sinabung," said Armen Putera, a local official with Indonesia's Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation Centre. However, the crater's alert status remained at its second-highest level. No one lives inside a previously announced



no-go zone around the volcano. Small communities nearby were coated in a layer of thick ash as at least one village went from day to night in a matter of minutes. "It was like magic -- when the ash came it went from being very bright to dark as night," said Rencana Sitepu, the head of Namanteran village, adding that some of the community's crops were destroyed by the fallout. "The village went dark for about 20 minutes." The coronavirus pandemic complicated matters as scared residents violated safety rules.

## Chinese jets intrude Taiwan's airspace amid US official visit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Beijing, August 10:** China Monday cried foul and lodged a "stern" diplomatic protest with the US over the visit of Health Service Secretary Alex Azar to Taipei, the first high-ranking American official to visit the self-ruled island in over four decades, while Chinese air force jets intruded into Taiwan's airspace in an apparent show of force. Azar, the highest-ranking Cabinet member to visit Taiwan since the US switched diplomatic recognition to Beijing from Taipei in 1979, kicked off his three-day visit by meeting Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen. China, which considers the estranged island of Taiwan as part of its mainland, vociferously objects to any high-level foreign dignitaries meeting Taiwanese leaders. Azar's visit comes amid an all-time low in US-China relations and it was regarded as the major diplomatic setback for Beijing which asserts that the 'One-China' policy constitutes the core of its foreign policy with all the countries which established diplomatic relations with it. Tsai, a firm proponent of Taiwan's independence from China, said Azar's landmark visit is a "new start" for Taiwan-US relations and she expects more breakthroughs in cooperation between Washington and Taipei. Much on the expected lines, Beijing reacted angrily saying that the visit is the betrayal of the US commitment to the 'One-China' policy. Azar's visit was facilitated by the 2018 passage of the Taiwan Travel Act, which encouraged Washington to send higher-level officials to Taiwan after decades during which such contacts were rare. The Taiwan News reported that ahead of the Tsai-Azar meeting, Chinese fighter jets crossed over the median line of the Taiwan Strait Monday. Taiwan's Air Force Command Headquarters said that Shenyang J-11 and Chengdu J-10 fighter jets belonging to the Chinese Air Force crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, the unofficial airspace boundary between the two sides, for a brief period at 9 a.m., according to the report.

# business

of the day **quote**

**Announcement of ₹52,000 crore for domestic capital procurement coupled with the list of 101 items for import embargo gives a tremendous boost to 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and indigenous defence manufacturing**

**CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE** | DIRECTOR GENERAL, CII

**Weak demand means oil producers must revisit business plans. The goal should be to pump only what generates cash in excess of overhead costs. It's low-cost production mode through the end of 2021 for sure, and in 2022 to the extent there are new development plans being contemplated**

**LEE MAGINNIS** | MD (CONSULTANTS), ALAREZ & MARSA

**In response to the increasing demand for Yokohama tyres in India and keeping in mind the projected market growth, we decided to double our domestic manufacturing capacities**

**ANIL GUPTA** | VICE CHAIRMAN, YOKOHAMA INDIA

## SHORT TAKES

### Prestige group to sell assets

**New Delhi:** Leading realty firm Prestige group is in advance discussion with global investment firm Blackstone to sell its various commercial assets for estimated ₹12,000-13,500 crore as part of its strategy to clear debt and achieve future growth, sources said. The big-ticket deal is likely to be concluded during this quarter. Bangalore-based Prestige Estate proposes to sell around 8 million sq ft of office parks and 9 functional malls comprising 4 million sq ft.

### Union Bank reduces MCLR

**Mumbai:** State-owned Union Bank of India Monday slashed in its marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) by up to 15 basis points across various tenors, effective August 11. The lender has reduced its 1-year MCLR to 7.25% from 7.40%, a release said. Overnight MCLR rate stands at 6.80% while 3-month and 6-month rates have been revised to 6.95% and 7.10%, respectively. This is the fourteenth consecutive rate cut announced by the bank since July 2019, the release said.

### Honda Jazz pre-booking begins

**New Delhi:** Honda Cars India Ltd has started pre-launch bookings of its upcoming refreshed premium hatchback model, Jazz. The new Jazz can be pre-booked with an amount of ₹21,000 at all authorised HCIL dealerships across India or online through 'Honda from Home' platform on HCIL website with an amount of ₹5,000, the company said.

### 'Economy reviving from Covid blow'

**New Delhi:** The country's economy is reviving from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and this is visible from the performance of sectors such as FMCG and agriculture, Food and Public Distribution Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said Monday. He said that FMCG revenues have come back to almost 85 per cent of pre-COVID times, which is an important indicator. "Indian agricultural output, which is roughly about \$264 billion, is leading the recovery from the front," he said at a Ficci webinar.



**We are in July at about 91% export level of July 2019 figures. Imports are still at about 70-71% level of July 2019. So, broadly our BoP this year is going to be very very strong, which is why we feel confident that industry will see growth opportunities for themselves**

**PIYUSH GOYAL** | COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 10:** Over ₹3 lakh crore of debt to retail and small corporate segment is at risk because of the coronavirus pandemic and will benefit from the loan restructuring scheme announced last week by the RBI, according to a report.

The central bank's move will help contain the quantum of sour loans and if not for the recast, the banking system's non-performing assets (NPAs) would have touched a 20-year high of 11.5%, domestic rating agency Crisil said in the report Monday.

Last week, the RBI announced the loan recast package for individuals and entities hit by the pandemic. It formed a committee under former

ICICI Bank chief KV Kamath to come out with detailed rules, and hinted at a case-by-case approach under the contours laid down in



the June 2019 circular on stressed assets to deal with it.

The major beneficiaries will be sub-Rs 500 crore corporate exposures and retail exposures, which were earlier expected to see the highest increase in NPAs in percentage terms, Crisil said.

It estimated the debt at risk —

## MCDONALD'S SUES OUSTED CEO

McDonald's says it's suing Stephen Easterbrook, the CEO it ousted last year over an inappropriate relationship with an employee, alleging Monday that he covered up relationships with other employees and destroyed evidence



loans at risk of slipping into NPAs this fiscal unless restructured by banks — at a "sizeable" ₹3 lakh crore. The agency said large corporate loans are not at such a high risk, as they were in the last NPA cycle after the global financial crisis, because of the de-leveraging efforts of the past few years.

"Last time, the NPAs came primarily from bigger and chunkier accounts, whereas this time, an analysis of the top-100 exposures of our large, rated banks reveals that...these entities are likely to be better-positioned to withstand the current challenges," its Senior Director Krishnan Sitaraman said.

A study of 14,000 companies having exposures of over ₹25 crore, which constitute three-fourths of lending classified as corporate loans

by banks, showed that debt at risk in corporate loan accounts with exposure less than ₹500 crore is ₹2 lakh crore, the agency said.

It added that the ratio of the debt at risk for the sub-Rs 500 crore exposures segment is five times that of larger corporate loans.

The retail segment, which was considered a safe haven for banks in the recent years, is witnessing significant pressure because of the stress being faced by salaried and self-employed borrowers, it said estimating the total debt at risk in this at ₹1 lakh crore. The unsecured loans will be the most at risk, while home loans will be the least because of the psychological attachment of Indians to the homes they live in, and the priority they accord to repaying home loans, it said.

## Loan restructuring to help contain NPAs: Report

**THE CENTRAL BANK'S MOVE WILL HELP CONTAIN THE QUANTUM OF SOUR LOANS AND IF NOT FOR THE RECAST, THE BANKING SYSTEM'S NPAs WOULD HAVE TOUCHED A 20-YEAR HIGH OF 11.5%**

## FM launches online dashboard for NIP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 10:** Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday launched the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) Online Dashboard, a one-stop solution for all stakeholders looking for information on infrastructure projects in the country, an official release said. In the Budget speech of 2019-2020, Sitharaman had announced an outlay of ₹100 lakh crore for infrastructure projects over the next 5 years.

A high-level task force submitted a final report on the National Infrastructure Pipeline with projected infrastructure investment of ₹111 lakh crore during 2020-25.

The online dashboard is being hosted on the India Investment Grid (IIG). IIG is an interactive and dynamic online platform that showcases updated and real-time investment opportunities in the country, the release said.

"NIP will provide a boost to the vision of an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'. The availability of NIP projects on IIG will ensure easy accessibility to updated project information and attract investors for PPP projects," Sitharaman said at the launch



through video conferencing.

"This is a great step in the direction of implementing NIP - giving a fillip to infrastructure development in the country," she added.

Sitharaman asked all concerned department/ministries to immediately update the status of projects on NIP portal and keep it updated in real time.

She also asked all concerned department/ministries to show concrete progress in terms of project

and reforms implementation.

As per the release, NIP is a first-of-its-kind initiative to provide world-class infrastructure across the country and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

It will improve project preparation, attract investments (both do-

mestic and foreign) into infrastructure, and will be crucial for attaining the target of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy by FY2025. NIP covers both economic and social infrastructure projects, based on the updated Harmonized Master List of Infrastructure.

Out of the total expected capital expenditure of ₹111 lakh crore, projects worth ₹44 lakh crore (40 per cent) are under implementation, projects worth ₹33 lakh crore (30 per cent) are at a conceptual stage, projects worth ₹22 lakh crore (20%) are under development (project identified and DPR prepared, but yet to draw-down funds) and the balance projects worth ₹11 lakh crore are unclassified, it said.

The entire gamut of projects will now be hosted on IIG to provide visibility to NIP and attract investments from global and domestic investors, the release added.

**NIP will provide a boost to the vision of an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'. The availability of NIP projects on IIG will ensure easy accessibility to updated project information and attract investors for PPP projects**

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN** | FINANCE MINISTER

## 'Undersea optic fibre link to unlock true potential of 4G, 5G'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, August 10:** Bharti Airtel Monday said the inauguration of undersea optic fibre link between Chennai and Andaman and Nicobar Islands is a game changer, and will unlock the true potential of 4G and, in future, 5G



services in the region. The company said it was the first mobile operator to launch 4G services in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

"The fibre link will be a game changer for the region and unlock the true potential of 4G and even 5G in future for customers," Bharti Airtel Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal said in a statement. Airtel has been serving customers in Andaman and Nicobar since 2005. It was the first private operator to launch mobile services in the islands.

## July retail sales of PVs dip by 28% in Odisha

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** Odisha witnessed a significant decline in retail sales of passenger vehicles (PVs) during the month of July, 2020. According to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), retail sales of PVs went down by 28.24% to 2,998 units as compared to the same month of last year, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It had registered around 4,178 PVs in July 2019.

Similarly, two-wheeler sales also declined 40.74% to 32,405 units in July as against to 54,680 units in the same month of 2019.

The commercial vehicle (CVs) sales also down by 69.31%. CVs sales reached to 854 units as compared to 2,783 units in July of 2019. In other hand, three-wheeler sales also witnessed same outcome. The three-wheeler sale dropped by 72.63% to 511 units last month as compared with 1,867 units in corresponding month last year.

Overall, Odisha witnessed a decline of 40.60% in sales in all categories. The total sales reached 38,730 units last month as com-



pared to 65,200 units in the year-ago month.

In June, 2020, the total sales declined by 33.13% in the state due to the ongoing Covid-induced-lockdown. Around 42,806 units were sold in Odisha across categories in the same month.

Vehicle registrations for July tanked by -36% across the country. On a Y-o-Y basis, 2-wheeler degrowed by -37.47%, 3-wheeler by -74.33%, CV by -72.18%, and PV by -25.19%. However, tractor registration continues its positive momentum showing a growth of 37.24%.

## OMCs OBSERVE 'WORLD BIOFUEL DAY'

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 10:** Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) Monday organised a webinar to observe 'World Biofuel Day' in order to create awareness (among masses) on the importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels.

State Level Coordinator (Oil Marketing Companies) Odisha, Sri Subhajit Ghosh Chief General Manager and State Head, IndianOil conducted the webinar meet. It was discussed that approximately 120-160 million tons/year of surplus agricultural residue can be converted into Bioethanol through new technologies.

It was also said that bioethanol derived from agricultural residues GHG (Green House Gas) emissions by approximately 92% as compared to burning of fossil fuels. The benefits of transformation of fossil fuel to non-fossil (green fuel) will help bring health benefits, employment generation, infrastructural investment in rural areas & cleaner environment with reduced carbon footprint.

## Pandemic may alter consumer behaviour permanently: Survey

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 10:** A survey has said that the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to alter the consumer behaviour permanently and cause lasting structural changes to the consumer goods and retail industries. The demand for local goods and brands is growing as consumers are hesitant to step out of their safety zones to resume previous consumption patterns, according to Accenture COVID-19 Consumer Pulse Research report.

The survey polled 2,500 consumers in India among 45,000 respondents globally between March and June, it said.

"The India leg of the survey found that 90% of consumers are making lasting changes to how they live, work and shop, and there is no going back to the pre-pandemic

world for consumer brands," the report said.

The survey found that the pandemic is causing more people to shop for groceries online.

The demand for local products, digital commerce and omnichannel services such as home delivery, chat features and virtual consultations is surging, and is likely to endure beyond this crisis, it said.

Consumers are now focused on their most basic needs while cutting back on nonessentials, the report said. "They are more mindful of what they are buying, striving to limit food waste, shopping more cost consciously and are making healthier and environmentally sustainable choices," it said.

As many as 85% of the consumers in India said that they are shopping more health-consciously and are focusing more on limiting food



waste.

While, 75% of consumers said they are being more cost-conscious when shopping for products and 71% feel that quality, safety and trust are the most considered brand attributes in purchase decisions.

A majority of respondents are

now focusing on their personal health, it said.

"Staying-at-home and working from home are becoming the norm. The ways in which people spend their leisure time are changing because of the outbreak and related social distancing measures, and

### THE NEW NORMAL

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again, these habits are likely to continue," it said.

Entertainment, learning and DIY (do it yourself) have also seen a rise - this trend is reflected in the types of apps that consumers are downloading and the devices they are purchasing, related to entertain-

ment, news, healthcare and education, the survey said.

Anurag Gupta, MD and Lead - Strategy & Consulting, Accenture in India, said: "The pandemic has taken a toll on brand loyalty and as consumers make more socially and environmentally sustainable and healthy choices, consumer goods companies must tailor their offerings accordingly and refresh their brand promise to meet these new requirements."

Brands will also need to explore ways to rebuild consumer confidence frayed by the pandemic - proof of good hygiene and safety is becoming a key part of brands' ability to retain shoppers' trust.

"Brands also need to look at ways to tap into the opportunities resulting from the demand for local and the emergence of the home as the new hub," he said.



Diego Simeone

# SETBACK FOR ATLETICO

Rojiblanco's Correa, Vrsaljko test positive for coronavirus putting their Champions League quarterfinal encounter with RB Leipzig in disarray

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, August 10: Two members of Atletico Madrid's group set to travel to Portugal for the Champions League quarterfinals tested positive for the coronavirus — the first pandemic-related setback among clubs participating in the final stage of Europe's top club competition.

Angel Correa and Sime Vrsaljko are the players have tested positive for the coronavirus but the rest of the squad have been cleared to make the trip to Portugal for the Champions League quarterfinals.

The last eight is scheduled to begin in Lisbon Wednesday amid tight health safety protocols to prevent a coronavirus outbreak from derailing the competition's finale. The semifinals and August 23 final will also be played in Lisbon.

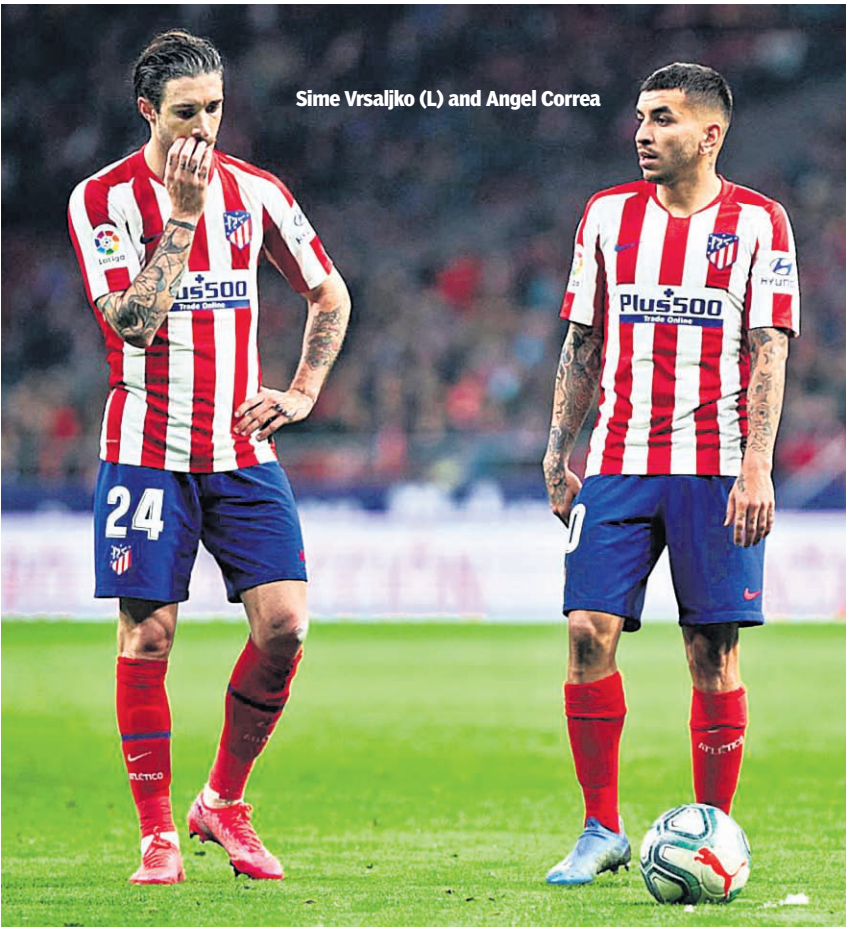
Other clubs involved in the quarterfinals have not reported any positive tests among its players recently. The Spanish club did not name those who tested positive and did not say if a player was involved. It said both people who were infected had been isolated at their homes.

Atletico, who were expected to travel to Lisbon Monday, said it immediately informed health authorities in Spain and Portugal about the positive results, as well as UEFA and other soccer bodies in both countries.

They said in a statement that the entire group those were set to travel will be tested again, and that the team's schedule is being altered to allow the new tests.

Atletico are set to face Leipzig Thursday in the last eight. The quarterfinals start Wednesday with Atalanta facing Paris Saint-Germain. The other one-game series will involve Barcelona and Bayern Munich Friday and Manchester City against Lyon Saturday. The matches will take place at two stadiums in Lisbon.

Earlier this week Atletico had to cancel a friendly of their women's team after a positive test within the group. Atletico said that, after the Spanish league season had ended, the club asked for all Spanish teams still involved in European competitions to keep



Sime Vrsaljko (L) and Angel Correa

voluntarily following the league's health safety protocols.

They said UEFA only required one negative test from each member of the group within 72 hours of the trip to Lisbon, but the team had been testing their members weekly and were still working with the health safety inspector assigned by the Spanish league.

Atletico said a total of 93 people had been tested the day before the squad returned to training

July 26, and the first team and those in close contact with it were tested again last Sunday, with all results coming back negative.

Atletico is seeking their first title in Europe's most lucrative club competition. They lost the 2014 and 2016 Champions League finals to city rival Real Madrid. They were also runner-up in 1974, losing to Bayern Munich. Diego Simeone's team were eliminated by Juventus in the round of 16 last season.

## India govt approves IPL in UAE: Brijesh



Brijesh Patel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 10: The BCCI has received the central government's formal approval to conduct this year's Indian Premier League in the UAE, IPL Chairman Brijesh Patel revealed Monday.

The IPL will be played in the UAE from September 19 to November 10 in three cities — Sharjah, Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The government had last week given an 'in principle' go-ahead to the BCCI to shift the marquee league to the UAE due to rising cases of COVID-19 in the country.

"Yes, we have received all the written approvals," Patel told this agency when asked whether the

permission has come in writing from both the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

When an Indian sports body shifts a domestic tournament abroad, it requires clearance from Home, External and sports ministries respectively.

"Once we had the verbal okay from the government, we had intimated the Emirates Cricket Board. Now we have the papers also, so franchises can be intimated that everything is in order," a veteran BCCI official told this agency on conditions of anonymity.

Most of the franchises will be flying out after August 20 after two mandatory RT-PCR (COVID-19 tests) conducted within 24 hours from their departure base.

The Chennai Super Kings players and staff, who are leaving August 22, will have a small camp at the Chepauk on the insistence of skipper MS Dhoni.

The BCCI is also facing problems on the sponsorship front after calling off the title deal with Chinese mobile phone company Vivo for the current year due to massive public outrage over the Sino-India border stand-off.

It was a ₹440 crore deal and as BCCI looks at potential sponsors, Baba Ramdev's Patanjali has shown interest in becoming the new title sponsor.

## Anderson ignores retirement 'whispers'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Manchester, August 10: Jimmy Anderson recently turned 38, is coming off one of his most frustrating test performances in a decade, and has a slew of young and hungry hopefuls biting at his heels for a place in the England cricket team.

So, is this the end for the country's all-time leading wicket-taker? "No, it's not," a bullish Anderson said Monday. "I want to play as long as I possibly can. (But) if I keep bowling the way I did, the opportunity to retire will be taken out of my hands."

Given his age, speculation about upcoming retirement is something that Anderson will have to get used to. And it has come under sharper focus following England's three-wicket win over Pakistan in the first Test of their series last week.

Anderson said he lost his rhythm and let emotions get the better of him for probably the first time in 10 years while posting figures of 1/63 and 0/34 in a frustrating match for him at Old Trafford.

"It reminded me of when I first started playing," he said, "when you get frustrated and a little bit angry, you try to start bowling quicker and that obviously doesn't help."

There was even a rare no-ball for Anderson, who is fourth on the all-time list of test wicket-takers with 590 — with only spin bowlers Muttiah Muralitharan, Shane Warne and Anil Kumble ahead of him.



He knew there would be 'whispers' — as he described it — about his future at the first sign of any slow-down or regression, especially since England's fast-bowling department is stocked with more talent than perhaps ever.

"Something I have done really well throughout my career is deal with pressure that comes with playing, whether that's the pressure of expectation or the pressure of a match situation," he said. "This week, I felt I didn't deal

with it very well. That is something I need to look at, go away and work on it and try and make sure if I play in the next game or the test after that or the winter, whenever I play next, I am ready to cope with that ... The minute you start thinking about whispers and things like that, it can affect you."

Anderson was rested for the second Test of the three match series England won against the West Indies last month, so being dropped for the match starting in Southampton Thursday would be no real drama or personal crisis. The fact that the three Tests against Pakistan come back to back means it is almost guaranteed he will miss out on one of them.

Anderson said he will chat about his technique with England coach Chris Silverwood — a former pace bowler himself — this week and also take some advice from fellow veteran fast bowler Stuart Broad.

The pair have been virtual ever-presents for England for more than a decade and have pushed each other on and off the field.

"I have never counted my chickens, never thought I was definitely playing the next game," Anderson said. "I have always worked hard whether I was at the peak of my powers or when I first started."

"Having the attitude of working hard in practise, keeping improving and then play well in the game itself. Those are the things I try to do and that doesn't change in the next week, the next year or the next three years, whatever it might be."

## Mandeep tests COVID positive



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 10: Indian hockey team forward Mandeep Singh has tested positive for COVID-19, becoming the sixth national player to contract the dreaded infection, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) said Monday.

The 25-year-old from Jalandhar is asymptomatic and is being treated along with the other five players by doctors in Bangalore, where the national camp is due to start August 20 at the SAI Centre.

"Mandeep Singh, a member of the Indian Men's Hockey team, who was given the COVID test (RT PCR) along with 20 other players at the National Camp at SAI's National Centre of Excellence in Bangalore, has tested COVID positive, but is asymptomatic," the SAI said in a statement. "He is being administered treatment by doctors, along with the other five players who have tested positive."

Indian captain Manpreet Singh and four other players had tested positive for COVID-19 last week after returning to the SAI Centre following a month-long break.

Defender Surender Kumar, Jaskaran Singh, drag-flicker Varun Kumar and goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak are the other four players, who tested positive.

According to the SAI doctors, all the players were showing only 'mild symptoms' and are doing well. They are housed in the National Centre of Excellence in Bangalore.

The players were earlier stranded at the centre for over two months (till June) when a national lockdown was imposed to contain the virus.

After coming back from the break, the players were in mandatory quarantine before resumption of training at the centre.

India's COVID-19 case tally has crossed 22 lakh with the overall death toll nearing the 45,000-mark.

## Formers mourn Manitombi's death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 10: Former India players, including Renedy Singh and Venkatesh Shamugam, mourned the untimely death of their teammate Manitombi Singh and recalled him as a 'fighter' on the pitch and a 'friend' off it.

Manitombi, a former India and Mohun Bagan footballer, died aged 39 at his native village near Imphal in Manipur on Sunday after suffering from a prolonged illness.

He was a part of the Blue Tigers side that famously lifted the LG Cup in Vietnam 18 years ago. The full-back had also represented India in the 2002 Asian Games in Busan.

"I was really shocked to hear of his death. He was such an asset to Indian football," said his former India teammate Venkatesh, who is now the national team assistant coach.

Defender Debjit Ghosh is someone who not only had played alongside Manitombi in the national team, but had also captained the player during their days at Mohun Bagan.

Expressing his surprise at the lat-



ter's untimely demise, Ghosh gave some insight as to the kind of a raw talent the Manipuri was, during his early days in the National Football League.

"I was very surprised to hear that he had passed away. We could all do with some good news this year, and this was certainly not one of them. He was a dear friend off the pitch," said Ghosh.

Venkatesh added, "I had seen him put in some really good performances on the pitch. He was an absolute fighter, but more important was the consistency that he brought in. You know that if he's there on the pitch, he will give you eight out of 10 every time. An absolute com-

mitment player."

The nature of Manitombi's illness was not clear and his family members did not share any details. He is survived by his wife and an eight-year-old son.

Ex-Blue Tigers winger Renedy Singh had also played alongside Manitombi for both country and club under his leadership at Mohun Bagan.

"As a captain, you have to often lead by example. Manitombi was that kind of a captain. He worked hard on the pitch, and that's how he inspired the rest of us."

"When you think of a tough tackler like him, you'd rather have him on your side fighting for every ball, than in the opposition ranks," said Renedy.

In recent years, Manitombi had taken up coaching and was a coach at the Manipur state league champions Anouba Imagi Mangal in the 2015-16 season.

Reminiscing about their playing days, Venkatesh felt that Indian football has lost an asset with Manitombi's death, as he was coaching a number of youngsters in Manipur.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 10: When playing hockey, Indian junior team defender Pratap Lakra watches, learns and takes inspiration from seniors Rupinder Pal Singh's dragflicking abilities and Birendra Lakra's game, but is right now busy doing duty as ticket collector in the railways.

Since his entry into the junior national camp in 2017, Pratap knew only hard work would help him don the senior team jersey.

"Since the senior team also train in Bangalore where we have our national camp, whenever we have a rest day or when the senior team is playing an internal match, we go and watch them," he was quoted as saying in a Hockey India press release.

"I particularly follow Rupinder Pal Singh for his dragflick execution and in terms of defence and game I follow Birendra Lakra," he said.

"Both are very experienced and bring a special skill set to the team and watching them helps me improvise my own game," added Pratap, who works as a ticket collector in the Railways.

Hailing from a small hamlet called



Beldihi in Odisha's Sundergarh district, hockey came naturally to Pratap whose father and sister were already popular in that region for their abilities with the stick.

"For me, hockey was a natural choice. Everyone in my village played the sport. My sister had played for the state and my father was a regular at the Khasi tournaments. I was very young when I picked up the stick and I knew hockey would be my future."

In 2012, Pratap joined the Panposh Sports Hostel where he would often have the opportunity to learn from hockey greats Dilip Tirkey and Lazarus Barla.

"At Panposh, when I started playing, there were a lot of talented players like Amit Rohidas, Stanley Victor Minz among others and our exposure to the game there was excellent with Dilip bhai and Lazarus bhai visiting us regularly and coaching us."