



## UNUSUAL DEMAND

Actor Kangana Ranaut urges the government to take back filmmaker Karan Johar's Padma honour

LEISURE P2



## VIOLENCE-HIT VARSITY

Visa Bharati authorities will seek PM's intervention for deployment of central security forces on its premises

TWO STATES P7



## UYGHUR PERSECUTION ON

China builds toilet on Xinjiang mosque site, orders forcible abortion of Uyghur Muslim women

INTERNATIONAL P10

### IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Nobody wants to watch us. Nowadays they watch news debates.

### SHORT TAKES

#### ■ Petrol prices flare up

**New Delhi:** Petrol prices have risen again in the country improving its gap with diesel as global oil market flipped turning the cycle of price rise in favour of gasoline. In the national capital, petrol prices rose for third consecutive day Tuesday by 17 paise to ₹80.90 a litre. Pump prices of petrol rose by 14 paise a litre on Sunday breaking a 47-day pause since June 29. This was even as diesel prices, which maintained a regular increase since late June, was now holding on to the retail price line for the last two weeks. Sources in oil marketing companies said that international petrol prices were on a boil now resulting in revision on its prices while diesel remained steady.

#### ■ Lavasa resigns as EC

**New Delhi:** Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa, who was next in the line to head the poll panel Tuesday resigned from his post to take charge as Vice-President of the Asian Development Bank next month. As EC, Lavasa grabbed headlines when he registered his dissent on the poll panel's clean hit to PM Narendra Modi and then BJP President Amit Shah on alleged violation of the model code of conduct during 2019 LS elections. His resignation comes a month after the ADB appointed him as Vice-President for Private Sector Operations and Public-Private Partnership.

#### ■ MP govt jobs for locals

**Bhopal:** Government jobs in Madhya Pradesh will be reserved for the people of the state, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said Tuesday, announcing a decision that could be controversial at a time thousands across the country are facing a job crisis during the coronavirus pandemic. The law will soon be changed to enforce this, he said. "The Madhya Pradesh government has taken an important decision today. We will be taking necessary legal steps so that government jobs in Madhya Pradesh are only given to the state's youth. P8

# 2,062 road fatalities in state from Jan to June

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** Over 2,000 people perished in road accidents across the state between January and June of 2020 registering a 31 per cent decline in the rate of fatalities.

According to data from the transport department, road mishaps claimed 2,062 lives in the state between January and June of 2020 while 3,013 deaths had been recorded during the same period last year. Similarly, the number of road accidents sharply dropped in the state from 5,802 last year to 4,404 during the same period this year.

However, the state witnessed 1,523 road mishaps and 709 deaths between April and June even though lockdown was enforced during this period to contain Covid-19 pandemic.

As many as 2,881 road accidents and 1,353 deaths occurred in the state during the first three months of this year while 3,058 road mishaps and 1,580 deaths had been recorded during the same period last year, the data shows.

MONTHS	FATALITIES	ROAD MISHAPS
Jan to March 2020	1,353	2,881
April to June 2020	709	1,523
Jan to March 2019	1,580	3,058
April to June 2019	1,433	2,744

The fatality rate in the state is very high compared to the national average. In 2019, 11,064 accidents had occurred which had claimed 5,333 persons and left 11,177 persons injured. At least 5,315 people died in road accidents in the state in 2018.

Over last 10 years, more than 43,000 people were killed in the state. Most of the victims are young but economically active. The Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety, which is closely monitoring the situation, expressed displeasure over the state government's failure to control the rising fatalities.

Various districts have been asked to reduce the fatality rate by 10 per cent, 15 per cent and 18 per cent during this year, officials said.

Meanwhile, State Transport Commissioner Sanjeeb Panda has fixed e-challan targets for detection of road safety related MV offences for all regional transport officers (RTOs).

"While enforcing the motor vehicle laws the major focus should be given to Road Safety i.e. to prevent accidents and reduce fatalities. The statistics shows that more than 90 per cent of the accidents are occurring due to the fault of drivers. Therefore enforcement plays a crucial role in reducing road accidents and fatalities thereof," Panda wrote to all RTOs.

The RTOs were asked to ensure that 100 per cent of DLs of offending drivers are suspended for the offences as per the direction of the SC Committee.

The state has finalised a strategy for highway patrol, use of technology for licensing and removal of black spots to control road mishaps.

## No summons to CEOs in 1st case of GST evasion

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 18:** The Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has issued guidelines, which seek to soften the impact of investigations and ensure that no excesses are committed that include minimal personal summons, no repeated summons and generally not issuing summons to CEOs and CFOs of large companies in the first instance for GST evasion.

In a circular issued last week, the Directorate said, "As an enforcement agency, it is imperative for the DGGI to maintain a balance wherein investigations should proceed strictly, as per law, while simultaneously ensuring that no excesses are meted out to the taxpayers and their sensibilities are respected."



The officers have been asked to ensure that a summons for personal appearance is issued only when specifically required. This would imply that the personal presence of an individual is minimised.

In addition, summons should not be issued repeatedly and as far as practicable, a comprehensive statement should be recorded in the first instance itself. The implication of this measure is that any harassment is avoided with repeated summons, personal appearances and whatever needs to be recorded is done at the first instance.

The DGGI has also prescribed that summons for calling for information should also not be issued in piecemeal manner and as far as possible all relevant information should be gathered in one go.

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## CM wants specific strategies in 4 dists

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday directed officials to adopt location-specific strategies in high casualty districts such as Khurda, Cuttack, Sundargarh and Rayagada to reduce the positivity rate.

Naveen said this while reviewing the situation and anti-Covid strategy in the state at a high-level meeting. Odisha ranks high in the country in terms of number of tests per number of people. It achieved a milestone of conducting 1096 tests per every 10 lakh population.

In addition, the number

of daily tests has increased to 50,000 during the week. Expressing satisfaction over the performance, the Chief Minister thanked the health department, all district magistrates and their teams and all doctors and advised them to continue their good work.

So far five plasma therapy units have been set up in the state. As plasma therapy has been shown to be an effective treatment for Covid patients, he sought setting up of another plasma bank at Koraput Medical College in a week.

Naveen discussed with officials on the current flood like situation, agricultural activities, livelihood programmes and operation of MSME units.

## MBA student arrested for peddling drugs

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** The Special Task Force (STF) of the state crime branch arrested an MBA student on charge of drug peddling, from Balasore. The sleuths also seized 1.3 kg of brown sugar worth over ₹1 crore from his possession in the intervening night of August 17 and August 18.

The accused was identified as SK Riyazuddin, a resident of Banka Khajuri area in the district. He is a 3rd year MBA student at a management college in the Capital.

Upon receipt of credible intelligence about the deal, the STF team in plain clothes waited for the accused at Balasore bus stand late Monday night. They nabbed him while he was delivering the brown sugar packets concealed in books.

During the raid, the STF personnel found 1.320 kg brown sugar from his possession. Subsequently, a case was registered by STF in this connection. The accused was forwarded to court Tuesday.

It may be mentioned here that brown sugar trade is on rise in the state. In major crackdowns against drug peddling, STF has seized 16 kg and 711 grams of brown sugar and detected 21 cases against the drug peddlers in the district. So far, as many as 41 drug peddlers have been arrested in the district.

## OMC gives ₹250cr to CMRF

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** The state-owned Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC) has contributed ₹250 crore to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) for supporting the state government's efforts to control the Covid-19 pandemic. OMC chairman Sanjeev Chopra handed over the cheque to Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy here in presence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik (over VC) at Lok Seva Bhawan Tuesday.

OMC had earlier donated ₹500 crore to the CMRF in March 2020 and ₹100 crore in February for Covid management related expenses. The state-owned entity had also transferred ₹250 crore as interim divi-



dend for the financial year 2019-20. The corporation is also funding 10 stand-alone Covid hospitals in eight districts across the state.

The OMC has established Covid Care Homes (CCHs) at Bhubaneswar and in three regions at South Kaliapani, Gandhamardan and Daitari in first phase. Each CCH has 20-bedded isolation facilities to accommodate Covid-19 suspect or positive cases.

## WATER LET LOOSE



People watch as Bargi Dam opens its 13 gates to control the water level following heavy rains in Jabalpur, Tuesday

# Vivo out, Dream11 wins IPL sponsorship at ₹222 cr

## DESI SUITOR

**Vivo and BCCI suspended a ₹440 cr per year deal owing to the border stand-off between India and China**

**The IPL starts September 19 in the UAE, moved out of India due to the COVID-19 pandemic this year**

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 18:** Fantasy gaming platform Dream11 Tuesday won the IPL title sponsorship rights with a bid of ₹222 crore, replacing Chinese mobile phone company Vivo for a four and a half month deal. Dream11 has been one of the IPL sponsors for a couple of years now. "Dream11 has won the rights with

a bid of ₹222 crore," IPL chairman Brijesh Patel told media. It is learnt that multinational conglomerate Tata group didn't place a final bid while two education technology companies - BYJU's (201 crore) and Unacademy (170 crore) - came second and third respectively.

Vivo and the BCCI suspended a ₹440 crore per year deal for this season owing to the border stand-off between India and China. The IPL starts September 19 in the UAE, moved out of India due to the COVID-19 pandemic this year.

There are certain questions about Chinese company Tencent's investment in Dream11 but one of the BCCI insiders privy to the development said that it is less than 10 per cent. Dream11 is an Indian company founded by Harsh Jain



and Bhavit Sheth.

"Dream11 stakeholders, including its founders plus all 400 plus employees, are Indian," a BCCI source said. "Their Indian investors are Kalaari Capital and Multiples Equity Even Dream11's product is available exclusively for use only by Indians. Only a single-digit percentage minority stake is held by Tencent," the official added.

However, as recently as last

FanCode are part of Dream Sports group. While the BCCI managed a title sponsor at a short time but the money coming in is less than what it was getting from Vivo.

"...that was always going to be the case. Those who were expecting that Vivo's bid will be matched were unaware about current economic climate. The Tatas may have had filed Expression of Interest but they were never interested in bidding.

"BCCI wanted Tata as their presence adds a lot of credibility," an industry insider said. BCCI insiders feel that Dream11 deal, along with the official sponsorship amount coming from UnAcademy and payment app Cred -- the two companies that have come on board in Central sponsorship pool -- will cover the losses to a considerable degree.

## No need for CAG to audit PM-CARES: SC

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 18:** The Supreme Court said Tuesday that the National Disaster Response Fund and PM-CARES are two entirely different funds with different objectives and purposes. A bench comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and M R Shah said this while hearing a petition filed by the Centre for Public Interest Litigation (CPL).

Senior Advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for the petitioner, submitted that he is not questioning the bonafides of the constitution of the PM-CARES fund, but his submission was that the NDRF is audited by the CAG but the PM-CARES fund is not.

Rather, he contended, the audit is done by a private chartered accountant. The court replied: "The guidelines issued under the Act of 2005 (Disaster Management Act) with regard to NDRF specifically provides for audit of NDRF by the CAG, whereas for public charitable trust there is no occasion for CAG audit." The bench noted that the contributions made by individuals and institutions in the PM-CARES fund are to be released for public purposes to fulfil the objective of the trust. The PM-CARES fund is a charitable trust registered under the Registration Act, 1908 at New Delhi March 27.

"The PM-CARES fund is a public charitable trust and is not a government fund. The trust does not receive any budgetary support or any government money. It is not open for the petitioner to question the wisdom of the trustees to create PM-CARES fund, which was constituted with an objective to extend assistance in the wake of public health emergency that is COVID-19 pandemic," the court said.

MARKET WATCH	
INDEX	VARIATION
SENSEX	38528.32 ↑ 477.54
NIFTY	11385.40 ↑ 138.30
DOLLAR	74.74 ↓ ₹0.20
EURO	88.90 ↑ ₹0.16
GOLD	₹53,334 ↑ ₹59
SILVER	₹68,999 ↓ ₹156

WEATHER		
	BHUB	CTK
TEMP. MAX	32.7°C	33.0°C
TEMP. MIN	27.0°C	25.0°C
Humidity	95%	89%
Rainfall	Trace	5mm
Forecast: Generally cloudy sky		

# leisure



## WHOOPI WANTS TO STAR IN SISTER ACT SEQUEL

Veteran actor-comic Whoopi Goldberg says she is game for another sequel of her *Sister Act* film series. The 64-year-old actor played the role of Deloris Wilson, a lounge singer in first two series of the film and said she would love to reprise the role for one more time.

## I WOULD LOVE TO DO SOME ACTING AGAIN: FINNEAS

Grammy-winning songwriter-producer FINNEAS has been part of hit shows like *Modern Family* and *Glee*, and he would like to add more to his acting credit list. "I would love to do some acting again. I really enjoyed it," said the singer-songwriter.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
You will focus your attention today on your beloved. You will feel very energetic, but your commitment to work will falter. So don't be surprised if your superiors are annoyed. However, Ganesh says today is a day for romantic pursuits.

**TAURUS**  
Professionals in all spheres of work are due for a field day today. The day will be particularly outstanding for Administrators and executives are likely to get richer by the end of the day. Even if you are engaged in some other work, you will stand out and get noticed for your overall excellence.

**GEMINI**  
A hectic and busy day awaits you, which will probably leave you feeling bored and listless. Find creative ways to beat the boredom, or take a break and do things which appeal to you today, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You will be involved in a team effort and associated with work like inspection and examination. You will base your opinions on your friends' choices. So select good friends, says Ganesh.

**LEO**  
It is an important day for you. Everyone in the office will accept your capabilities and will praise you. You may incur expenses on entertainment and luxuries. Your financial difficulties will now be solved. It is better to have an eye on long term gains.

**VIRGO**  
Today will be a pleasant day full of surprises and unforeseen changes. You may go for a long drive with your beloved. The trip will be very interesting and will calm your frayed nerves. All in all, Ganesh says, it is an optimistic and happy day, so go ahead and get the best out of it.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says you will be able to improve your relations abroad. There will be good news coming from friends or relatives living abroad. Your working ability and efficiency will make you popular in the office today. In the day today you shall have a variety of good and bad experiences

**SCORPIO**  
An electric wire of 440 volts is apt to describe you today. According to Ganesh, you are in a bel-ligerent mood today and can burst like a fireball. Meditation and yoga is likely to improve the situation. Remember, treat others the way you want to be treated by them.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
Work is likely to keep you on toes. At work place, you and your opinions will be in demand. Those who are associated with stock exchange and shares will be happy to gain profits during the afternoon. Wait and watch the end result in the evening.

**CAPRICORN**  
Your interests are guarded by the Almighty, so don't worry about them. Not that you are not ambitious, but you are satisfied with what you have and gained. You have set some realistic goals for yourself and you are making sincere efforts to achieve them. You are a simple person and you like your life to be uncomplicated.

**AQUARIUS**  
You are close to your family, and now is the time to enjoy the company of your loved ones at home. You will take them out for shopping, go with them on picnics and pamper them in every possible way, says Ganesh.

**PISCES**  
Ganesh asks you not to undertake any new project or business venture due to the alignment of the planets being unfavorable. You will do well in tasks that do not require too much creativity and innovation.

## Kangana urges Centre to take back KJo's Padma honour

**Mumbai:** Actress Kangana Ranaut Tuesday requested the government to take back the Padma Shri honour that has been conferred on filmmaker Karan Johar.

On the actress's verified account, she re-shared a post related to Johar's latest production *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*. The tweet was in reference to Flight Lieutenant Srividya Rajan, who was Gunjan Saxena's course-mate at the Udampur Airforce base. In the tweet, it was also mentioned that it was not Saxena but Rajan who was the first woman to fly to Kargil, and said that a scene -- where a female IAF trainee pilot is asked to arm-wrestle with her male counterpart to prove that she is fit for Air Force -- is false. The tweet also mentioned the film had twisted facts.

Sharing the tweet, Kangana's team wrote on twitter: "I request government of India to take KJO's Padma Shri back, he conspired to sabotage Sushanth's career, he supported Pakistan during Uri battle and now antinational film against our Army."

It's not just Kangana, but several others have also attacked the film. A hashtag claiming Karan has insulted the Indian Air Force was trending on Twitter Thursday. IANS



## Nidhhi's productive lockdown

**Mumbai:** Actress Nidhhi Agerwal says she has been extra careful about staying fit through the lockdown months.

"It's been a productive lockdown for me. I have learnt a lot of fitness-related things. I started doing yoga, and have done some detoxing too. I feel all these things have helped me develop beautiful changes in my body," Nidhhi said.

The actress, who turned 27 Monday, says it felt great to be able to spend the whole day on her birthday with family, for a change.

"I stayed at home, cut cakes and spent quality time with family members. Spending quality time with my closed ones is always on my wish list. I also want to open a charitable organisation," she added, sharing her birthday wish list.

Nidhhi, who is best known for *Munna Michael* and *iShankar*, has four films coming up. IANS



## Connecting fans to their favourite celebs



**myFanPark is a platform which allows fans to request and purchase personalised, video-recorded messages from some of India's most popular personalities**

**New Delhi:** Just when you thought celebrations were getting a tad bit predictable, international celebrity engagement giant myFanPark arrives in India to spice up the party.

Imagine surprising your loved ones with specially recorded video messages from their favourite stars. That's exactly what myFanPark, the South African start-up that connects fans to their favourite celebrities has in store as it launches in India.

Actors, musicians, sportsmen, and women, social media influencers, and celebrities across the country will now be just a click away.

The myFanPark was awarded one of the top five start-ups of South Africa in 2019, having experienced massive success with personalised video messages of motivation, inspiration, hope, and joy. These messages from famous sports stars and entertainment icons are becoming a new way for people to surprise, and treat one another. From birthday, wedding anniversaries, motivating a rising

star in the family to work hard, or sending well wishes to someone you care about - myFanPark has the answer.

In India, the celebrities who are already on board myFanPark include actors like Esha Gupta, Prateik Babbar, Sophie Choudry, Jay Bhanushali, Ashmit Patel, Delnaaz Irani, cricketer Manan Vohra, actor Shafaq Naaz, and players from the Indian Super League, among a host of other names across entertainment and sports fraternities.

Singer, actor and host **Sophie Choudry** excitedly said: "This is going to be fun! myFanPark gives the opportunity to connect with my fans to create content and experiences."

"My fans have always been the best part of my journey as an actor and I can't wait to connect with them on myFanPark and create unique experiences with them," popular actor **Jay Bhanushali** said.

Cricketer **Manan Vohra** said: "I'm always thankful and grateful to my fans for their unconditional love and support. I'm really excited to connect with them on myFanPark and create experiences."

Entertainment, sports, and brand guru, Shailendra Singh, the man behind bringing myFanPark to India said: "As an entrepreneur, I look at myFanPark as a phenomenal opportunity to spread happiness and create memories of a lifetime." IANS



## 'Art felicitates what political conflicts cannot'



**Mumbai:** Pakistani film director Asim Abbasi, who made his digital debut with the web series *Churails* on an Indian OTT platform for the first time, says such exchange in the field of entertainment, can felicitate unity between India and Pakistan despite the political bitterness between the two countries.

"Art should felicitate something that political conflicts are unable to do, and that is building bridges. For the last few days that is exactly what I am doing. I have been speaking to several Indian journalists, sitting here in the UK but I am a Pakistani. We are connecting through

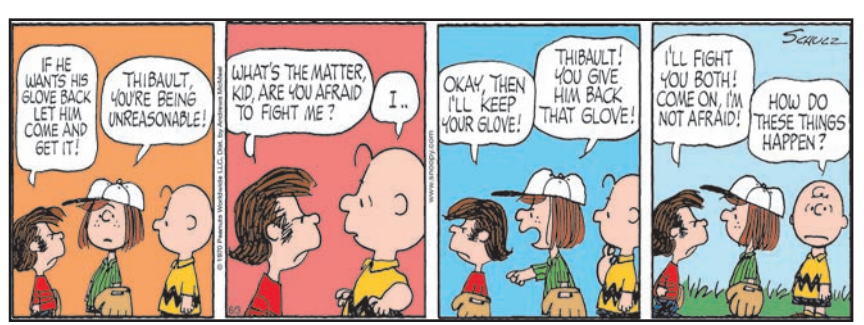
the medium of storytelling, which is one of the oldest forms of entertainment," Asim said.

The web series featuring Nimra Bucha, Sarwat Gilani, Yasra Rizvi, Meher Bano, and Pakistani superstar Mahira Khan in a special appearance.

"Our agenda is different than that of politics, we are not infuriating hate, our stories only bring us together," mentioned the filmmaker who made his debut with the 2018 film *Cake*, which was Pakistan's entry at the Oscars.

Asim's 10-episode web series is streaming on the OTT platform Zee5. IANS

### PEANUTS



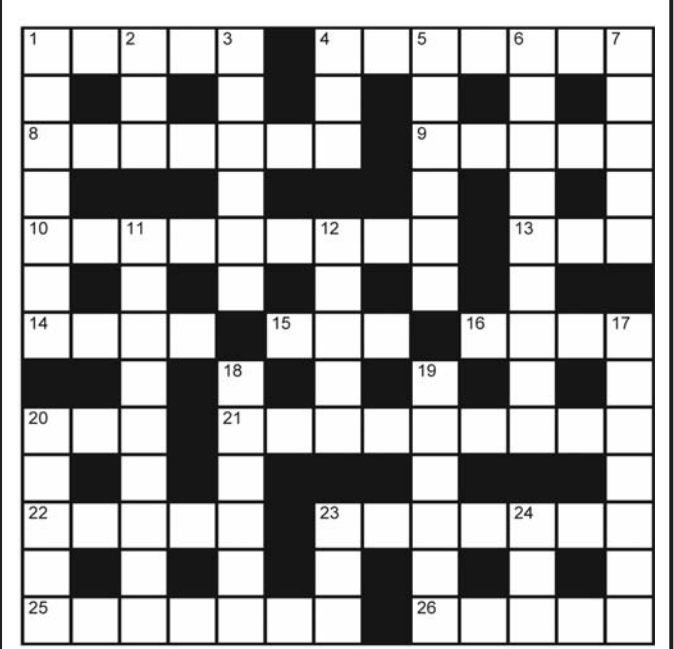
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### BREVITY



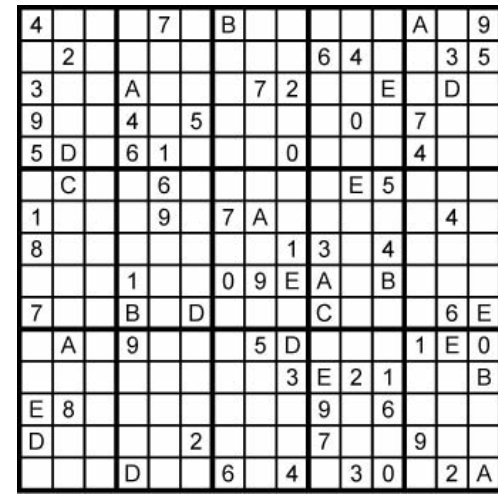
### FUN post CROSSWORD



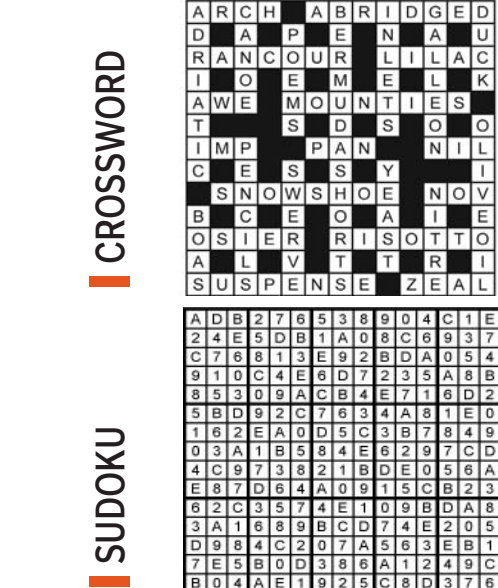
- Copyright ©2020 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 More than bad
  - 4 Corrupted
  - 8 Ladies' man of myth (3,4)
  - 9 Capital of Bolivia (2,3)
  - 10 Denounce
  - 13 Sci-fi killer
  - 14 Compos mentis
  - 15 Trawler's catch
  - 16 Tailor's line
  - 20 Tam
  - 21 All-day suckers
  - 22 Tubular pasta
  - 23 Bower
  - 25 Deodorant
  - 26 Knight's need
  - Down**
  - 1 Deal with
  - 2 Summer cooler
  - 3 Paris museum
  - 4 Lion's home
  - 5 Theatre presentation
  - 6 Batman or Spiderman, e.g.
  - 7 Light-headed
  - 11 Kitchen gadget (3,6)
  - 12 Reef ring
  - 17 Condiment
  - 18 Martians and such
  - 19 Wine bottle units
  - 20 Dried coconut meat
  - 23 Sidekick
  - 24 Have a tab

### SUDOKU

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



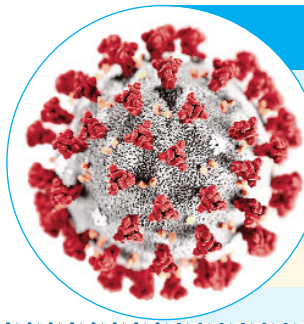
### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



**UP FOR SALE**  
Dolls put up for sale by a vendor alongside a road near the Raj Bhawan in Bhubaneswar, Tuesday



## COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	2,21,22,436	1,48,54,808	7,78,921
India	27,03,517	19,78,436	51,936
Odisha	64,533	45,315	362

# CURTAINS MAY COME DOWN ON 50% CINEMAS BY YEAREND

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** Although the government has allowed shopping malls and gyms to operate in strict compliance with Covid-19 guidelines after several months of lockdowns, cinema halls in the state are yet to get the green signal to resume shows.

The big screens have remained shut since March this year when the first lockdown was imposed. The financial burden on City theatres is getting heavier each passing day as maintenance and equipment costs, salary bills and other expenditure keep piling up, without any income.

Meanwhile, the over-the-top (OTT) platforms releasing new movies has emerged as an additional headache for the cinema halls.

Speaking to **Orissa POST**, Maharaja Cinema Hall owner Biswajit Mohapatra said, "Before Lockdown-1 was announced in March, we had renovated the theatre with new seats and furnished the entire picture palace. We were disinfecting the theatre space everyday as a precautionary measure. However, despite all the precautions, the government has again declared a lockdown for cinema halls."

Frequent lockdowns have hampered the maintenance of film equipment and machines which may go out of order if they remain non-functional, he mentioned. "We are feeling the pinch of maintenance costs as expenditures don't stop though halls are closed," Mohapatra added.

"We had requested the government to stop sending us power bills as there is no business at all. However, we are getting bills of Rs 50,000 every month. We have incurred a loss of around Rs 20-30 lakh as release of films on big screens has stopped," he added.



Maharaja Cinema Hall

He also said it would take more than a year for them to recover the losses because no producer will be ready to release movies even if the restrictions are removed.

"We had written to both the state and Union governments in this regard but are yet to get any assurance," said Mohapatra.

Owner of Sriya-Swati-Stutee Cine Complex Bijendra Mohanty said, "Gone are the days when people treat a movie ticket as a prize catch. Emergence of television channels, pirated CDs and OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime has put a dent on our business."

He said that half of around 90 cinema halls in the state would see closure by yearend, if Covid-19 pandemic does not subside soon.

Mohanty, who is also president of All Odisha Cinema Hall Owners' Association, said that they had written to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik urging him to exempt minimum demand charges on electricity bills.

Odisha Film Development Corporation (OFDC) chairman Kuna Tripathy said that there is no decision yet on reopening of cinema halls either by the Centre or by the state government.

"The cinema halls might be allowed to reopen in September with

## COVID IMPACT ON SHOWBIZ

The big screens have remained shut since March this year when the first lockdown was imposed

The financial burden on City theatres is getting heavier each passing day as maintenance and equipment costs, salary bills and other expenditure keep piling up

Maharaja Cinema Hall has reportedly incurred a loss of around Rs 20-30 lakh as release of films on big screens has stopped

Earlier this year, Jayashree talkies, a leading single-screen cinema hall in Cuttack, has stopped screening movies for good

50 per cent occupancy rule but that again depends on the situation during the coming month. We know the plight of cinema halls. We are in talks with the government and will hold a meeting with the cinema hall owners' association and producers by the last week of August."

Filmmaker Nila Madhab Panda said that even if cinema halls resume operations in adherence to Covid SOPs, viewers would still not feel safe to enter the theatres. "Therefore, it will be a challenging task to bring the audience back to cinema halls soon," Panda said.

Earlier this year, Jayashree talkies in Cuttack has stopped screening movies for good. Before that, some cinema halls in Cuttack, Bhadrak and other places in the state had also brought the curtains down.

## Capital PS IIC's transfer revoked

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** Commissionerate Police, Tuesday, reinstated Girija Shankar Chakraborty, the incumbent IIC of Capital police station, canceling its earlier order Monday regarding his posting as the IIC of Laxmisagar police station.

Questions were raised over the manner in which his transfer order was cancelled just a few hours after the reshuffle announcement Monday evening.

Meanwhile, sources claimed that a sulking Chakraborty expressed his displeasure over the order before the higher authorities as well as various media persons. He was allowed to continue at his current place of posting. Bharat Charan Sahoo, earlier given the charge of Capital police station, has now been posted as the IIC of Laxmisagar police station instead.

## POLITICKLE by MANJUL



# SC reserves order on UG, PG final exams

Odisha has opposed the guidelines issued by UGC making it mandatory to hold the final year examinations of undergraduate and postgraduate courses

POST NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi, August 18:** The Supreme Court, Tuesday, reserved its judgement in a batch of petitions challenging University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines which mandate universities across the country to conduct final year exams by September 30.

A three-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and MR Shah completed the hearing in the case and asked all counsels to submit their written submissions within three days.

Significantly, Odisha has opposed the guidelines issued by UGC making it mandatory to hold the final year examinations of UG and PG courses.

Advocate general of Odisha Ashok Parija submitted to the SC that COVID-19 cases are at their peak in the state and in such scenario, it would be impossible for the state to hold exams as mandated by the UGC. He also submitted that an alternative evaluation process has been devised



He informed the court that colleges have been closed and students have left for their native places. In many parts of the state, students don't have internet facility

## ODISHA'S STAND

Advocate general of Odisha Ashok Parija submitted to the SC that COVID-19 cases are at their peak in the state and in such scenario, it would be impossible for the state to hold exams as mandated by the UGC

Parija informed the SC that an alternative evaluation process has been devised by the state and the final examination should be culmination of six semesters

by the state and the final examination should be culmination of six semesters.

The advocate general informed the court that colleges have been closed and students have left for their native places. In many parts of the state, students don't have internet facility. They could neither come to colleges as the institutions and hostels have been shut. Thus, it is not possible to hold the examinations conventionally, the advocate general said.

The advocate general also submitted to the court that the UGC

guidelines are themselves compromising with the standard of examinations.

"If the UGC guidelines are with regard to compromising the sanctity of final year examinations, the guidelines of UGC itself sacrificed the sanctity because either you will have online examination or open book examination and the normal examination which scheduled every time will not be conducted. So, anyway, you are compromising with the standard of examinations," Parija said.

However, Solicitor General

Tushar Mehta, said that universities can seek postponement of exams but they cannot take decision of conferring degrees without exams.

It is to be mentioned here that UGC, through its July 6 order, had directed all 900 universities across the country to conduct final year exams by September 30 either through online, offline or in blended mode. Odisha, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Delhi have opposed the UGC guidelines for conducting examination by September 30.

# Umbrella portal for all power services soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** As part of 5T model of governance, the state government is going to launch unified online portal for all electricity services soon.

This was revealed during a high-level review meeting on digital mode under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy. Energy secretary Nikunja Bihari Dhal made a detailed presentation for timely delivery of services and good governance.

Tripathy directed the department to make online system more user friendly with bi-lingual (Odia & English) applications for common citizens.



New service connection to domestic and micro business enterprises would be made available within 48 hours where power infra is available

The department was asked to develop a mobile application so that the citizens could access the services through cellphones. The Chief Secretary asked all power distribution companies (discoms) to make their service delivery system ready to operate through this common portal.

As of now, all discoms are following different processes for pro-

viding new service connections. They are levying different charges for this service. The grievance redressal systems of the discoms are also different from each other. The common portal will resolve all these issues, Dhal said.

Consumers will get new power connections within a specified time across the state irrespective of the area of operation, he stated.

The portal with its standardised process and application form would facilitate new service connection to domestic and micro business enterprises (up to 5 KW) within 48 hours where power infrastructure is available.

Besides, the portal would have proper escalation matrix for timely service with SMS facility both to the applicant and the discom official concerned at each stage of the work.

The system would also provide for online submission of application, issue of contract demand, bill payment, registration of consumer grievance and their redressal. Consumers would have option to pay the fees both in online and offline modes.



An oriental garden lizard perches on a structure within the precincts of a temple in the Old Town area of Bhubaneswar, Tuesday

## BASKING IN THE LONELINESS

## Ex-forest ranger under Vig scanner

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** Vigilance sleuths, Tuesday, conducted simultaneous raids at retired forest ranger, Balugaon Abhaya Kumar Jena's residence and other places on allegation of amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

The officers of the Vigilance department, Bhubaneswar Division, carried out the raids on the strength of search warrants.

Raids were going on at five places till the last report came in. The places being raided are one three-storied building at Forest Park in Bhubaneswar, his residential house at Hindolkothi in Cuttack, a house of his relative at Bangalpur village, Patakura in Kendrapara district, his ancestral house at Bangalpur village, Patkura and his official quarters at Balugaon in Khurda.

# More rain in store; minister reviews flood-hit Malkangiri

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** The flood-like situation witnessed in parts of Odisha showed signs of improvement Tuesday with the intensity of rainfall subsiding, even as 933 villages were affected and 321 houses damaged in the worst-hit Malkangiri district, officials said.

However, a fresh downpour is likely in parts of the state over the next few days as another low-pressure area is all set to form over Bay of Bengal by Wednesday. The state has been battered by heavy rains due to the formation of three-back-to-back low-pressure areas this month, they said.

Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) P K Jena said the district Collectors have been asked to remain alert and closely monitor the situation in view of the fresh low-pressure area forecast by the IMD.

A clear picture of the intensity of rainfall and areas where it may occur will emerge after the low-

pressure area forms, he said.

As per preliminary reports, around 933 villages in Malkangiri have been affected by the heavy rains that pounded Odisha since August 13, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Sudam Marndi said after conducting an aerial survey of the affected areas in the district.

The minister, who along with Jena held a review meeting with senior officials of Malkangiri, said that crops over 1,971 hectares of agricultural land have been affected due to the torrential rainfall, which also damaged 321 houses.

Marndi said Malkangiri Collector has been asked to conduct a thorough survey and submit a report on the extent of the damage within a week. The state government will take steps for payment of compensation to the affected farmers and people within 48 hours of getting the assessment report, he said.

Though rainfall has subsided in the state, some low-lying areas in



Revenue Minister Sudam Marndi and other dignitaries at the review meeting

Malkangiri were still under water, officials said, adding that all the seven blocks in the district were affected. Severely hit were Kalimela and Mathili blocks, they said.

While the water level in Sileru and Saberi rivers was yet to reduce, the flood-like situation in Motu tehsil remained grim.

The situation in Jajpur,

Dhenkanal, Deogarh, Kendrapara, Subarnapur, Bhadrak, Boudh and Bargarh showed signs of considerable improvement, officials said.

The Meteorological Centre said a cyclonic circulation now lies over northeast Bay of Bengal and the neighbouring areas. Under its influence, a fresh low-pressure area is likely to form over north Bay of

## FRESH LOPAR BREWS

SRC P K Jena has asked the Collectors to remain alert and closely monitor the situation in view of a fresh low-pressure area formed over Bay of Bengal

Around 933 villages in Malkangiri have been affected by the heavy rains that pounded Odisha since August 13

The govt will take steps for payment of compensation to the affected farmers and people within 48 hours of getting the assessment report

Bengal by Wednesday.

It is likely to become more marked during the subsequent 24 hours and move westwards gradually. Under its impact, rainfall of varying intensity will lash most parts of the state, particularly north Odisha,

it said. Heavy rainfall is likely to occur at some places in Bargarh, Sundargarh, Sambalpur, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Keonjhar, Angul, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Jajpur, Bhadrak and Kendrapara by Wednesday morning.

Similarly, heavy to very heavy rainfall may occur in some areas of Sambalpur, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Sundargarh, Cuttack, Kendrapara, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Keonjhar, Bolangir, Sonapur.

Extremely heavy rainfall is likely in some parts of Angul, Deogarh and Sambalpur Wednesday and Thursday, it said.

On Thursday, some parts of Bargarh, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Keonjhar and Deogarh districts are likely to receive heavy to very heavy rainfall, it said.

Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea along and off Odisha coast Wednesday and Thursday as squally weather with surface wind up to 50 kmph speed may prevail.

# STATE'S COVID-19 TALLY NEARS 65K

# BMC SOP for opening Covid Care Homes

POST NEWS NETWORK



cent as per CPWD guidelines," the order stated.

Furthermore, the order also advised for providing either a volunteer doctor residing within complex or from nearby hospital along with a caregiver to the CCHs. Along with this, the BMC will appoint a rapid response team (RRT) that will visit the CCH and will rectify and provide anything that a CCH will be missing before being operational.

"The zonal RRT will also be responsible for medically examining the patients and designating them as suspected, asymptomatic, mild or pre-symptomatic case. Patients admitted to CCHs will use triple-layer masks all the time. The RWAs will monitor patients through video cameras to ensure that no patient leave facility premises and visit their household, parks or other common utility areas," the order added.

The RWAs as per the SOP are also directed to put all bio-medical waste such as PPE kits, syringe, gloves, masks and others in a yellow garbage bag which will be disposed as per Biomedical Waste Management guidelines.

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** The Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Tuesday, issued an SOP for setting up of COVID Care Homes (CCH) by Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) in gated residential complexes and colonies for suspected, mildly symptomatic and asymptomatic patients.

Issuing an order, the BMC stated that communities living in gated complexes should create small CCHs comprising up to 20 beds within their vicinities which should be managed by the RWAs. Such CCHs are aimed to provide psychological comfort to patients who will feel at home and will also reduce burden on existing COVID health facilities.

Issuing the SOP for setting up CCHs, the order said that community halls, empty flats, common utility areas or any place within the complex having an isolated location should be preferred for a CCH. The CCH must have separate entry and exit doors and have adequate space to place beds within 6-ft distance.

"Separate partitions should be made for suspected and confirmed cases and shouldn't be allowed to mix under any circumstances. Adequate cross ventilation should be provided with ACs set between 24-30 degrees Celsius. Relative humidity should be around 40-70 per

## '608 under home isolation recovered'

A month after the state government allowed home isolation for asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic COVID-19 patients, more than 600 people in Bhubaneswar have recovered from the disease without being hospitalised, a senior official said.

Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy had said last month that the state government received several requests for home isolation, with patients claiming that it would reduce their 'psychological burden'.

At least 1,085 people who have tested positive for the virus since mid-July in the state Capital underwent home isolation, and 608 have recovered, a senior Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) official said Tuesday.

"Only those with no comorbidity are allowed to stay at home under the supervision of a nodal ward officer,"

or a ward officer, provided they self-isolate themselves. During the phase, the patient should be giving mandatory updates to the state-level and city-level control rooms," said the official.

The official added that a caregiver could be assigned if necessary. People under home isolation will have to ensure their own safety along with that of the household and the community at large.

If there is a need to shift a patient to a COVID Care facility, it could be arranged in consultation with BMC, which will make arrangements for an ambulance, added the official. Official sources said the government has started distributing safety kits to those living under home quarantine. Each kit contains Vitamin C tablets and oral rehydration salt sachets among other things.

Only those without any comorbidity are allowed to stay at home under supervision of a nodal or a ward officer



## VITAL STATS

Of the 2,239 fresh cases, 1,416 were reported from quarantine centres while the remaining were detected during contact tracing

Khurda registered the maximum number of new cases (419), followed by Ganjam (246), Nayagarh (147), Balasore (130) and Rayagada (120)

Nine fatalities were reported from six districts—three in Ganjam, two in Rayagada, and one each in Malkangiri, Sambalpur, Khurda and Balasore districts

As many as 50,525 samples were tested for coronavirus in Odisha Monday, taking the total number of such examinations to 10,09,454

conducting over 50,000 tests for the last three days and has planned to enhance it to one lakh per day in the coming days.

Ganjam district continued to be in the top of the list with 15,256 cases and 158 COVID deaths followed by Khurda with 9,380 cases, 49 COVID deaths.

Cuttack district has reported 4,247 cases and 18 deaths while Sundargarh has registered 3,322 cases with 22 deaths. Rayagada district, on the other hand, has reported 17 deaths followed by nine each in Puri and Nayagarh districts and eight each in Sambalpur and Balasore districts.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has claimed that COVID-19 positivity rate has drastically reduced

in the state with the intensive contact tracing and enhancement of testing capacity.

The positivity rate, Patnaik said, has also drastically come down while the fatality rate in Odisha is among the lowest in the country.

"With intensive contact tracing and enhancement of testing capacity, COVID-19 positivity rate has declined from around 10.78 per cent in July to 5.2 per cent in August," the CM said.

## Twin city sees 299 fresh cases

As many as 299 persons were tested positive for the novel coronavirus in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack Tuesday. While the Capital city reported 220 cases, the Silver City of Cuttack saw 79 COVID-19 cases.

Of the fresh cases in

Bhubaneswar, 136 were from quarantine centres while 84 were local contact ones, the BMC said Tuesday, adding that 123 persons who had earlier tested positive for COVID-19 recovered. The Cuttack Municipal Corporation, on the other hand, took to the Twitter to say, "Out of the

new 79 cases detected in its jurisdiction, 56 were quarantine cases and 23 were from local contacts. As many as 109 patients recovered from the disease."

The Millennium City has so far seen 2,516 cases while Bhubaneswar registered 5,707 cases.

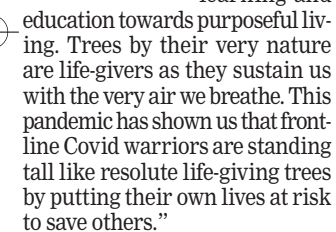
## WTG School dedicates its anthem to Covid warriors

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** In a unique initiative, Wisdom Tree Global School in the city here has dedicated its school anthem to Covid warriors on the occasion of the Independence Day.

The school anthem (COVID HOPE ANTHEM) has been composed and sung by renowned singer Padmashree Hariharan and Akshay Hariharan and written by Panchami Manoo Ukil, the Executive Trustee of the school.

Speaking about the initiative, executive trustee Panchami Manoo Ukil said, "Our school anthem extols the virtues of the tree of wisdom that sustains learning and education towards purposeful living. Trees by their very nature are life-givers as they sustain us with the very air we breathe. This pandemic has shown us that frontline Covid warriors are standing tall like resolute life-giving trees by putting their own lives at risk to save others."



## No Ganesh puja in Khurda this year

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Khurda, August 18:** The Khurda district administration, Tuesday, barred any community-level Ganesh puja celebration this year due to Covid-19 pandemic.

A decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of the district administration here Tuesday. "The administration has decided not to allow Ganesh puja at community level and on mandaps in Khurda to ensure safety of common people in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic," said Collector Sanat Mohanty.

The meeting emphasised on ramping up tests to curb the spread of novel coronavirus in Khurda. Mohanty advised people as well as government employees to maintain social distance and use masks to keep the virus at bay. "Around 1,500 swab samples are tested every day in Khurda district excluding the localities coming under the jurisdiction of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC)," Mohanty said.

The Collector further revealed that Khurda district excluding the BMC area has altogether 1,087 beds at designated Covid care centres. "Besides, people without any comorbidity and with mild symptoms



can undergo home isolation as per guidelines laid down by the government. These patients will have to undergo medication prescribed by doctors concerned," he said.

Meanwhile, the district administration has constituted two squads for proper management of Covid situation in Khurda. These squads will ensure strict compliance of Covid-19 guidelines by citizens as well as business establishments.

"The number of positive cases is rising in Khurda district. We will impose penalty on business establishments if there is violation in social distancing and other

## PIL challenges ban on Ganesh puja

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Cuttack, August 18:** A public interest litigation (PIL) was filed with the Orissa High Court (HC) Tuesday challenging the restrictions imposed by the Commissionerate Police on community celebration of Ganesh puja in the twin cities of Cuttack and Bhubaneswar.

In his PIL, 'Cuttack Nagar Buddha Ganesh Puja Committee' president Sibananda Kumar Hati has made the Chief Secretary, Special Relief Commissioner, Director General of Police, Police Commissioner, Cuttack Collector, Cuttack Deputy Commissioner of Police and Cuttack Municipal Corporation Commissioner as parties to the case.

Hati, a resident of Buxi Bazar in

the Silver City, has informed the HC that the Millennium City has been hosting Ganesh puja for centuries now.

"However, wary of the steady rise in COVID cases and deaths, the Commissionerate Police had decided not to permit community celebration of Ganesh Puja in the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, August 22. Banning the community level celebration of the puja is totally unfair particularly at a time when committees can ensure participation of a maximum of 10-20 people in the puja while adhering to COVID-19 guidelines," Hati said, adding that it would also help ensure continuation of the rich tradition in the twin cities.

Hati urged the HC to direct the parties to permit conduct of Ganesh puja at community level.



## Khadanga new CPRO of ECoR

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** Kaushalendra Kishore Khadanga has taken over as the Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) of East Coast Railway, Bhubaneswar. Before this, Khadanga was posted as Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer in Mancheswar workshop.

Khadanga is an alumnus of Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan in M-TECH and belongs to 2010-batch of Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineer (IRSM) Cadre.

He has also worked in various key posts in ADME and DME in Diesel loco shed Visakhapatnam. Khadanga was nominated by Government of India for two year Masters in High Speed Rail at Tokyo, Japan, under MEXT Scholarship, JICA.

After returning from Japan, he has worked in various capacities in Khurda Railway Division, Puri coaching depot and ECoR headquarters.



## Use of plastic in agriculture improves yield: KVK experts



MANISH KUMAR, OP

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** Agriculture scientists from the Khurda Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) have now demonstrated ways to utilise plastic in growing vegetables to increase its yield with limited investments.

Experts claimed that farmers as well as urban dwellers can use this technology termed 'mulching' to reduce the amount of water needed for irrigation. They also claimed that it can also help in improving the yield besides early germination.

"The technology can help us in reducing wastage of close to 60 per cent of water. The use of plastic ensures that there is less evaporation

with plastic sheets and small pores are made in a zig zag manner. Seeds or small saplings could be sowed on these pores.

"We have been experimenting with this technique for two years. We have seen very good results. Not only does it help in reducing wastage of water but also aids early germination of the plant," said Surendra Singh, Subject Matter Specialist at KVK, Khurda.

He also added, "We also use vertical nets over the covered soil bridges which help vine trees to expand easily."

According to the experts, vegetables like ridge gourd, tomato, brinjal, cowpea, bitter melon and others are grown successfully in this technology. The KVK experts also said that this could also be used in roof-top farming with some manipulations.

According to the KVK, with the threat of water scarcity looming large, such modes of sustainable farming can be adopted en masse. KVK claims that after training, several farmers from the district have started using this technology and yielding good results.

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Fishermen cast nets for a catch at Naraj in Cuttack, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

## AGRI MINISTER URGES CENTRE TO MEET UREA DEMAND

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** Agriculture Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo Tuesday urged the Centre to take steps to meet Odisha's need for urea fertilizer during the ongoing kharif season.

In a virtual conference with Union Minister of State for Chemical and Fertilizers, Mansukh Laxmanbhai Mandaviya, Sahoo

took up the fertilizer issue and urged the former to send required amount of urea for the month of August.

Sahoo informed the Union minister that farmers in Odisha usually require more than 60 per cent of the urea need for the kharif season between July and September.

Farmers in Odisha required more than 70,000 tonne urea in June but the state got only 57,000 tonne from

the Centre. Similarly, the state also received less than the required amount of urea in July. At present, Odisha requires around 1.3 lakh tonne urea fertilizer, Sahoo informed the Union Minister.

Sahoo further said that the state government had discussed with Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) and Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers Limited (RCF) for providing fer-

tilizer. But, the state is yet to get the imported fertiliser from Centre, he added.

He also urged the Centre to provide urea to Odisha through Indian Potash Limited.

Sahoo claimed that the state government has taken steps for making urea retail sale digital and cashless. More than 1,000 urea fertilizer distribution centres in the state has been made digital, he said.

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# Land acquisition roadblock to ring road

## IT HAS BEEN NINE YEARS SINCE THE PROJECT AT TARABHA IN SUBARNAPUR IS CONTINUING SPORADICALLY

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Tarabha, August 18:** The long-awaited ring road is a major project that can save people from the flood fury in Tarabha town of Subarnapur district. But it has been stuck due to land hurdles, a report said.

Every year floodwater from Nibruti rivulet plays havoc with the town. The Water Resources department has started work of the right road on the right side of the rivulet, but land acquisition has been a bottleneck.

Through the administration and local political leaders had held talks with locals to sort out the issue in the past, there has been no breakthrough till date.

Whenever monsoon arrives, the people of this town lose their sleep.

The present and erstwhile Finance minister Niranjan Pujari took the initiative and the work on the ring road project began in 2011. In between, the work was paused for three years because the government stopped



Floodwater from Nibruti rivulet wreaking havoc on Tarabha is an annual affair

The ring road aims at addressing the issue

The incomplete ring road suffered damages due to floodwaters in August last year

In 2018, the government decided to

carry forward the ring road project along with a protective dyke so as to facilitate communication and check floodwater from entering the town. Finance minister Niranjan Pujari had laid the foundation stone of the project October 9, 2018. The Water Resource department also started the work of the 1118-metre-long ring road project. But the work got stalled near Nibruti Jora as a land owner has been unwilling to spare his land which is required for a 70-metre-

### ALWAYS A HURDLE

Land acquisition is one of the most challenging aspects in developing an infrastructure project in India and has continuously been an area resulting into severe delay in executing these projects. As per a 2018 report, more than 435 infrastructure projects have been delayed due to delay in getting timely possession of the land acquired by the government and delay in getting required regulatory approvals. The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (LARR Act) has replaced the 120-year-old colonial statute, the Land Acquisition Act, 1894. The LARR Act was introduced to bring transparency in the process of land acquisition, development of essential infrastructural facilities, urbanisation with the least disturbance to the land owners and provide just and fair compensation to the affected families and make adequate provisions for their rehabilitation and resettlement.

They also pointed out that two years have passed since its work was started; the authorities and the contractor have not put up any information plaque about its cost and other details.

They have expressed doubt over the project and demanded that expeditious steps be taken for completion of the ring road project.

Some locals have blamed the administration for their failure to resolve the land issue.

stretch of the project. The work has been completed to the block office. The incomplete ring road suffered damage due to floodwaters in August last year. Crores of rupees have been spent, but the people fail to get the benefits.

# Bolangir provides 100-days work to 3,898 families

## Across the state, Bolangir is making the best of the MGNREGA to tide over Covid crisis

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bolangir, August 18:** Bolangir district has scripted a record in providing 100-days work to migrant returnees under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), a report said.

According to the details available from the district administration, the district has stood first among the 30 districts in providing 100-days work to maximum 3,898 families by Tuesday.

Ganjam district comes second in providing work under the Act to 3,815 families while Sundargarh is placed at third position for providing work to 3,521 families.

Nabarangpur district is placed at fourth position for providing work to 2,789 families while Kandhamal is placed in the fifth position in providing work to 2,768 families for 100-days.

Similarly, Koraput with 2,590 families and Nuapada with 2,389 families are placed in sixth and seventh positions respectively. The Boudh district is at the bottom of the list by providing 100-days work to only 15 families.

Similarly, 18 families in Jagatsinghpur district, 23 in Bhadrak district, 41 in Puri district, 79 in Kendrapara district have been able to get 100 days work.

The rural job scheme since its implementation was predicted that it will be of much help in providing work to people in Bolangir district which is known for its rampant migration to other states.

The scheme raised hopes after lakhs of migrants returned to the district post the coronavirus induced lockdown and subsequent shutdown.

The situation caused concern for the district administration after lakhs of migrants returned to the district post the Covid-19 lockdown.

The district administration led by Collector Arindam Dakua and PD, DRDA Maheswar Swain spearheaded the rural job scheme to provide work to migrant returnees.

As a result, over 1 lakh migrants were provided work on a single day in the month of June which has become an all-time record. Currently, the district administration has been able to provide 100 days work to 3,898 families. Currently, the district has 3,087,519 active workers.

However, the Act will not be sufficient to provide work to all the returnees in coming days for which the district administration has to devise new schemes to provide work to all the needy people, observers said.

## SWEATING IT OUT



Women farmers transplant paddy saplings in a farmland in Bargarh

OP PHOTO

## ACTIVE COVID CASES DECLINE IN GANJAM

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, August 18:** Ganjam Collector Vijay Amruta Kulange Tuesday said that the number of active COVID-19 cases in the district has been decreasing.

Kulange took to Twitter to inform that about 4 lakh migrants returned to Ganjam amid COVID-19 induced lockdown. With many of them testing positive for COVID-19, the number of positive cases in the district crossed 15,000.

However, data from August 2 to August 15 revealed that the coronavirus active cases in the district have decreased. It was observed that the total number of active cases August 2 was 3,422 while it has decreased to 2,272 August 15.

Ganjam district emerged as a corona hotspot district between June 30 and July 30. The numbers of coronavirus cases of the district were in peak in comparison to other districts of the state.

Notably, with 246 cases tested positive for COVID-19 in the district Tuesday, the total numbers of cases in the district rose to 15,256.

# Maoists cut trees, block roads in Kandhamal dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Phulbani, August 18:** In an attempt to create fear among local populace and scare them into joining the Red bandwagon, Maoists Tuesday blocked Gochapada-Balandapada road in Kandhamal district by felling trees.

The ultras put huge logs in two places on the road disrupting road communication in the area.

Besides, the Maoist also put up banners in the logs of trees urging public to join them in order to fight against the government. They also called for a strike from August 18 to August 24 through these banners.

Notably, August 16 a Maoist banner surfaced at Dhungiadia ghat



Reds block the road and leave a pamphlet

who were killed in gunfights with jawans. They also called the dead Maoist as martyrs. The division took the help of the banner to convey their tributes to the killed Maoists.

Notably, seven Maoists were killed in three incidents of fire exchange during combing operations carried out by jawans of Special Operation Group (SOG) and the District Voluntary Force (DVF) of the state police in Sirla forest under Tumudibandha block.

Recently, the state government removed five districts from the list of Naxal-hit areas. These districts include Angul, Boudh, Sambalpur, Deogarh and Nayagarh. Now, a total of 11 districts in the state are officially free from Maoists. In April 2018, six districts - Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Gajapati and Ganjam - were declared free from Maoist activities and those districts were removed from the Central Government-sponsored Security Related Expenditure scheme.

## ATM set afire after failed loot attempt

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Udala, August 18:** Miscreants allegedly made an attempt to loot a SBI ATM which is a kilometre away from Udala police station in Mayurbhanj district late Monday night. But they set the machine afire after an unsuccessful loot bid.

Reports said the wrongdoers used a gas cutter to break open the ATM machine at 2.30 am. As they were on the act, a police van was passing by. On seeing them, the miscreants torched the ATM immediately and escaped.

Firefighters rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control. A scientific team from Baripada rushed to the spot and initiated an investigation. Police said the miscreants had covered the CCTV at the kiosk before doing their act.

Police seized the gas cutter, a crow bar and gas cylinder at the ATM kiosk. The CCTV hard disc has been seized too. It was learnt that the machine was replenished with ₹20 lakh cash at 11 am Monday. But how much money has been burnt is yet to be ascertained.

## 'Mathematical Equation' Sambalpuri saree goes under the hammer

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, August 18:** The online auction of the Sambalpuri 'Mathematical Equation' saree worn by actor Vidya Balan has started this Independence Day and will continue till August 20, 10:00 PM. The actor wore the 'Sambalpuri Bandha' saree July 30, 2020, during the e-promotion of her latest Hindi movie 'Shakuntala Devi'. The film is based on the life of mathematical genius Shakuntala Devi. The movie was recently released online. Those interested in acquiring the same saree can do so by visiting the 'Google Forms' link shared on @utkalamrita social media handles (Instagram/Facebook/Twitter). Every night at 10:30 PM, the highest bid of the day received till 10 PM is being announced.

Notably, Utkalamrita is a brand of Bhubaneswar-based 'Sabat Exports Private Limited' co-founded by Dr. Anita Sabat and Amrita Sabat. Sabat Exports is the first Geographical Indication (GI) Authorised User (AU) of 'Orissa Ikat' GI.

# The pandemic is making Dongria Kondhs cry

## FROM A HEALTH CRISIS TO AN ECONOMIC DEBACLE, THE DEADLY METAMORPHOSIS OF THE COVID-19 HAS NOT EVEN SPARED THE REMOTEST TRIBAL POCKETS OF ODISHA

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhawanipatna, August 18:** The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted all sectors in the country. Its far reaching effect is also felt in the Niyamgiri hill, the home to Dongria Kondh tribal, one of the primitive tribes in the state, a report said.

The pandemic has impacted the primitive tribals to a great extent by snatching away their livelihood. This has pushed them into distress sale. The minor forest produces they sale to earn a living has few takers these days after the outbreak of the pandemic.

The Dongria Kondhs comprising 2,075 families live on the Niyamgiri hill which is spread over Kalahandi and Rayagada districts. The Kondhs living on the Niyamgiri hill sustain themselves from the resources of the Niyamgiri forests, practising horticulture and shifting cultivation.

The subsequent lockdown announced in the country to contain the spread of the coronavirus has led to an immediate, alarming loss of



income for the tribal communities, raising the spectre of impending hunger.

The Dongria Kondhs - among the 75 particularly vulnerable tribal groups have been struggling to sustain their livelihood after the lockdown abruptly closed their traditional marketplaces.

The Dongria Kondhs are innocent, honest in nature and never have the habit to bow or beg before others to earn a living, said a social

activist. "They work hard in collecting minor forest produce and practise shifting cultivations which sustain them and their families all round the years."

The means of earnings of the tribals are varied in nature. They cultivate vegetables, raggi, maize, corn, some indigenous varieties of pulses, ginger, alsu, turmeric, mangoes, pineapples oranges and tamarinds.

They also prepare leaf plates, brooms, bamboo products collect

Dongria Kondhs comprising 2,075 families live on the Niyamgiri hill which is spread over Kalahandi and Rayagada districts

A dozen of banana which earlier used to be sold at ₹40-50 is now being sold at ₹10

Sale of Karadi which is a flavoured delicacy of the tribals and local residents has also declined

Sale of minor forest produce is a critical source of livelihood, especially during the dry season of March to June, when chances of availing alternative sources of income are slim

A dozen of banana which earlier used to be sold at ₹40-50 is now being sold at ₹10. The sale of Karadi which is a flavoured delicacy of the tribals and local residents has also declined. The Dongria women who earlier used to sell a bundle of Karadi for ₹10 are now selling three bundles for ₹10. Observers and intellectuals have demanded the state government to intervene and make alternative arrangements for the livelihood of the tribals.

lockdown and subsequent shutdown. Moreover, the fear of getting infected by coronavirus has prevented people to buy anything from the tribals.

As a result, the tribals are now forced to sell their produce at a throw-away price to private traders or to the households during the lockdown. The Dongria Kondhs are traditionally dependent on forest resources for survival.

Sale of minor forest produce is a critical source of livelihood, especially during the pre-monsoon dry season of March to June, when chances of availing alternative sources of income are slim.

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

BHARAT PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED (BPCL) is intending to take on lease the lands totally admeasuring 1.09 acres comprised in Khata No. 33, Plot No. 125 at Mouza-Tangarpali, Village- Gudapada, Tahasil- Boudh, Thana-Baunsuni, District- Boudh, Odisha owned by Smt. Laxmi Jagdala, W/o- Late Laiban Jagdala. The aforesaid land has devolved by inheritance from Late Banmali Jagdala to his son Late Laiban Jagdala and from him to his wife Smt. Laxmi Jagdala. The said land is more fully described hereunder "Schedule Property".

Any person or entities (Including Banks/Societies/Financial Institutions), other than the owner mentioned above having any right/ title/ interest of any kind whatsoever including mortgage/ charge/ claim/ encumbrance/ demand over the Schedule Property whether by way of sale, transfer, assignment, exchange, charge, encumbrance, tenancy, sub- tenancy, lease, sublease, license, mortgage, inheritance, succession, partition, share, gift, devise, lien, maintenance, bequest, easement, trust, covenant, possession, development rights or otherwise of any nature whatsoever, to or upon the Schedule Property must lodge their claim(s) with the undersigned, together with complete documentary evidence/proof thereof, within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which, such rights, if any, would be considered as abandoned/ waived and it will be presumed that no person(s) or entities other than the owner mentioned above, has any right/ title/ claim and/ or interest in/ to the Schedule Property and the BPCL is absolutely free to lease that same.

**SCHEDULE PROPERTY**

All the piece of parcel of land totally admeasuring 1.09 acres comprised in Khata No. 33, Plot No. 125 at Mouza Tangarpali, Village Gudapada, Tahasil Boudh, Thana Baunsuni, District Boudh, Odisha.

**TERRITORY MANAGER (RETAIL)**

BPCL Territory office at- Sambalpur, Bhagwati Complex, Besides Incom Tax Office NH-6, Ainthapali, Sambalpur- 768004

**ODISHA LIFT IRRIGATION CORPORATION LTD.**  
(A GOVT. OF ODISHA UNDERTAKING)

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, LIFT IRRIGATION DIVISION, KEONJHAR**

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER e-Procurement**

**2nd Corrigendum to e-Procurement Notice Bid ID No. 04 EELID (KJR/2020-21) Dt. 30.07.2020**

No. CAD-364: The following changes has been made to e-Procurement Bid ID No. 04 EELID (KJR/2020-21) Dt. 30.07.2020.

- At DTCN Page No. 2, Col. 6, Date & Time of Opening of tender in the Office of the Executive Engineer, L.I. Division, Boudh may be read as Executive Engineer, L.I. Division, Keonjhar.
- At Section - IV, General terms and conditions 4.1 (h)(x) the labour licence is not required at any where and any time.
- At general terms and conditions Clause No. 2.2, 3.2, 3.9 and any where of the DTCN the validity of licence may be read as one month from the date of opening of tender.

Further Corrigendum if any can be seen from the website: [www.tenderodisha.gov.in](http://www.tenderodisha.gov.in).

Sd./- Executive Engineer, L.I. Division, Keonjhar  
OIPR-32156/11/0004/2021

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, KALAHANDI (R&B) DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA**

E-mail: eekalahandi@gmail.com, Fax No.: 06670-230512, Cell No.: 9437050413

No. B-190 **E-Procurement Notice**

Bid Identification No. BC KLD - 07/2020-21

No. 6831 **Dated: 10.08.2020**

1	Name of the Work	: 06 (Six) Nos. of Building Works
2	Estimated Cost	: Varies from Rs.8.00 lakhs to Rs.30.00 lakhs
3	Period of Completion	: Varies from 03 (Three) to 04 (Four) Calendar Months
4	Date and time of availability of Bid document in the portal	: 11.00 hours of 18.08.2020 to 17.00 hours of 25.08.2020
5	Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal	: 17.00 hours of 25.08.2020
6	Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Executive Engineer, Kalahandi (R&B) Division, Bhawanipatna
7	Date & Venue of opening of the Single & Double Cover Bid and Technical Bid (Cover - 1) of Double Cover Bid	: On 26.08.2020 at 11.00 A.M. in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Kalahandi (R&B) Division, Bhawanipatna

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersorissa.gov.in>.

Sd./- (E. A. K. Babu)  
Executive Engineer, Kalahandi (R&B) Division  
OIPR-34017/11/0002/2021

A thought is an arrow shot at the truth; it can hit a point, but not cover the whole target. But the archer is too well satisfied with his success to ask anything farther.



SRI AUROBINDO

Despicable Face

Facebook Inc. has been in news recently. Not just in India but globally. Recent history has shown the company in a very poor light in its own motherland, the United States of America.

However, very recent reports suggest the company might be buckling to intense pressure from social activists backed by major US corporates who have withdrawn their advertisement support to Facebook.

In India, the story of Facebook is unraveling in quite a similar pattern. Facebook boasts of nearly 300 plus million users from India alone.

Piate

Tathaqata Satpathy

The Policy Head of Facebook in India, Ankhi Das, has been reported as saying that 'any such action of punishing violations by politicians from Modi's party would damage the company's business prospects in the country.'

Facebook Inc., no doubt, has an uphill task of monitoring such voluminous postings and is expected to adopt disciplinary actions.

These are some of the dark sides of modern technological advancements. On one side, the world might be shrinking as communications become faster but on the other side the evil plans of people out to destroy civilized life cannot be wished away.

FOCUS EDUCATION

KIDS OF COVID GENERATION

On top of everything else, the Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a global education emergency. With more than one billion children out of school because of social-distancing and lockdown measures, the crisis threatens to leave behind a 'Covid generation' whose future prospects have been irreparably damaged.



Because education is a critical factor in almost every area of human development - from child survival and maternal health to gender equity, job creation, and inclusive economic growth - today's crisis has implications for the fate of the entire 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

girls, children in conflict zones, and the disabled. The fastest way to free up resources for education is through debt relief. With the world's 76 poorest countries on track to incur \$86 billion in debt-servicing costs over the next two years, debt suspension is urgent so that this money can be reallocated to education and other high-priority investments for children.

Third, the IMF should issue \$1.2 trillion in Special Drawing Rights (its global reserve asset), and its members should agree to channel these resources toward the countries that need them most. For its part, the World Bank should unlock more support for low-income countries through a supplementary International Development Association budget.

All of these new sources of funding should be in addition to the funds for replenishing the Global Partnership for Education and Education Cannot Wait over the next two years. And, obviously all governments must continue to support UNESCO, UNICEF, and other United Nations agencies working to provide all children with an education.

The challenges posed by Covid-19 are momentous, to be sure. But they also represent an occasion to redouble our efforts to achieve the fourth Sustainable Development Goal: quality education for all. The children of the Covid Generation deserve nothing less than the chance to reach their full potential.

Ban Ki-moon is a former Secretary-General of the United Nations. Others who contributed to this article are Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, Graça Machel, founder of the Graça Machel Trust, Helen Clark, former PM of New Zealand, and Gordon Brown, former PM of UK.

PROJECT SYNDICATE



Ban Ki-moon

WITH MORE THAN ONE BILLION CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL BECAUSE OF SOCIAL-DISTANCING AND LOCKDOWN MEASURES, THE CRISIS THREATENS TO LEAVE BEHIND A 'COVID GENERATION' WHOSE FUTURE PROSPECTS HAVE BEEN IRREPARABLY DAMAGED

school, including many of the 13 million child refugees and 40 million internally displaced children. Moreover, half of all children in developing countries suffer from 'learning poverty,' demonstrating little to no basic literacy or numeracy even at age 11.

To have any chance of reversing these bleak trends, the millions of children who have already lost half a year of education will need to be afforded assistance so that they can catch up. Resources are urgently needed to resume young people's education and 'build back better' with investments in online and personalised learning, more trained teachers, conditional cash transfers for poor families, safer schools, and other outlays.

To push for more funding in these areas, a coalition of global organisations recently came together to launch the Save our Future initiative. The effort is a response to the fact that while extra resources are needed now more than ever, education funding is facing a triple whammy.

First, the pandemic-induced recession will result in less revenue to fund public services, not least education. Second, as governments determine how to allocate scarce funds, they inevitably will focus spending on public health and

economic recovery, once again neglecting education. And, third, the intensifying fiscal pressure on developing-country governments will pervasively lead to a reduction in international development aid for education, which has already been losing out to other priorities in the allocation of bilateral and multilateral aid.

In fact, the same multilateral donors who already underinvest in education may now reallocate even more funds away from schooling. Hence, the World Bank estimates that over the next year, overall education spending in low and middle income countries could fall by \$100-150 billion below what was planned.

This funding crisis will not resolve itself. It is thus imperative that the G20, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, regional development banks, and all countries recognise the scale of the crisis and intervene to help displaced children catch up.

First, every country should pledge to protect education spending and emphasise the needs of the most disadvantaged children wherever possible, including through conditional and unconditional cash transfers to promote school attendance.

Second, the international community must increase aid for education, particularly for the most vulnerable, including the poor,

IN JEST THIS

Punjab's height-boosting cuisine



Melvin Durai

IT'S NO SECRET THAT MANY OF THE TALLEST PEOPLE IN INDIA COME FROM PUNJAB. INDEED, NO OTHER STATE IN INDIA HAS PRODUCED DOZENS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE ABILITY TO DUNK A BASKETBALL

My fourteen-year-old son, Rahul, is 5-foot-8 (172 cm) and still growing. I can't help wondering how tall he will be in a few years. I'm 6-foot-2 (187 cm) and my wife is 5-foot-2. So, Rahul is right in the middle - and about to find out which side of the family he has inherited his 'height genes' from.

Is there a chance that I will one day have to look up when I talk to him? Indeed there is, especially since I am apparently getting shorter as I age. Between the ages of 30 and 70, the average man loses about an inch of height, according to scientists. And since I consider myself "above average," I will probably lose more than one inch.

My son will have to be at least six feet tall to eventually be taller than me, assuming that I shrink at an "above average" rate. But it isn't just genetics that will determine his height - it's also his diet. In this area, he has a major advantage over me. Not only does he have a voracious appetite, he also enjoys a greater variety of food than I did as a youngster. But perhaps his diet isn't as ideal as



it could be. Perhaps I need to put him on some top-notch, height-boosting food: Punjabi cuisine.

It's no secret that many of the tallest people in India come from Punjab, had signed to play in the National Basketball Association's G-League, the NBA's official minor league in America. He is the first NBA Academy graduate to sign with the G-League and first NBA Academy India graduate to sign a professional contract. The NBA Academy India is an elite basketball training center in Delhi

National Capital Region (NCR), not far from all the people who eat Punjabi food every day.

Princepal Singh is following in the footsteps of Satnam Singh, a 7-foot-2 centre from Punjab who was selected by the Dallas Mavericks with the 52nd pick in the 2015 NBA draft. Satnam was the first player of Indian descent to be drafted by an NBA team and appeared in 27 games for the Maverick's G-League affiliate, the Texas Legends.

A 7-foot-2, Satnam Singh would make me feel extremely short, but he's not the tallest athlete of Indian descent to play professionally in North America. That distinction goes to 7-foot-5 Sim Bhullar, a Punjabi Canadian who played briefly for the Sacramento

Kings in 2015. Sim has a younger brother, Tanveer, who is 7-foot-2 and played college basketball. Their parents, who emigrated from Punjab to Canada, undoubtedly fed their sons great quantities of roti, paneer, chana masala, and butter chicken.

Actually that's just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to mouthwatering Punjabi cuisine. There are just too many tasty dishes to choose from. That's why I'm always disappointed when I visit a Punjabi restaurant with a buffet. I never have enough room in my stomach to taste every dish more than five times. I'm often surrounded by young Punjabi men who are quite tall - and apparently eager to get even taller.

According to Wikipedia, the average height of an Indian man is 5-foot-5. But if you don't include Satnam Singh, the average drops to 5-foot-4. Well, perhaps Satnam alone doesn't make such a difference, but the entire population of Punjab certainly does. Indeed, the average height of a man in Patiala, Punjab, is 5-foot-10. That's why I won't be surprised if Punjabi cuisine is one day considered the official food of the NBA.

WISDOM CORNER

- When written in Chinese, the word 'crisis' is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity. JOHN F KENNEDY
Just as treasures are uncovered from the earth, so virtue appears from good deeds, and wisdom appears from a pure and peaceful mind. To walk safely through the maze of human life, one needs the light of wisdom and the guidance of virtue. LORD BUDDHA
Habit is the nursery of errors. VICTOR HUGO

WORDSWORTH

Teller

It's almost as ancient as the verb to tell. It comes from a Germanic source that mainly meant to relate something, but it also had the sense of counting or reckoning (the modern German verb zählen, to count, comes from the same root, as do words in other Germanic languages). It suggests that the original sense may have been something like "put in order". The sense of counting attached to the verb is recorded from about the year 1000 and remained in the language until the nineteenth century at least.

LOL TRAIN JOURNEY

A large two engined train was crossing America. After they had gone some distance one of the engines broke down. "No problem," the engineer thought, and carried on at half power. Farther on down the line, the other engine broke down, and the train came to a standstill. The engineer decided he should inform the passengers about why the



train had stopped, and made the following announcement: "Ladies and gentlemen, I have some good news and some bad news. The bad news is that both engines have failed, and we will be stuck here for some time. The good news is that you decided to take the train and not fly."

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

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

Social media rules

Sir, Social media is the platform for sharing pleasantness and civility. It has a global reach. This is a communication tool reaching out to a wider mass. Therefore, it should be genuine, honest, reliable and trustworthy. This is not a tool to spread venom and spite. One viral video can harm the reputation of a person, family, organisation, society and state. Some viral videos are toxic that need to be dealt with severely. Viral video can create communal violence, social disharmony, strife and mistrust among the public. There should be stringent punishment for misuse of social media. At the same time, freedom of individual should not be affected as long as citizens use social media in a responsible manner. Criticism of government should be acceptable and tolerated by all means. This is integral to the functioning of democracy in a healthy manner. Prabhudutt Dash, BHUBANESWAR

NOTA's popularity

Sir, None-Of-The-Above (NOTA) is becoming popular and playing an important role in constituencies with low victory margins. If people are not happy with the contestants in the fray, this is the way to register their disapproval. Two Assembly constituencies in Maharashtra, namely Latur (rural) and Palus Kadegaon, witnessed NOTA emerging second, after the winning candidate in the 2019 polls. The large fall in voter-turnout and increased vote-share for NOTA in previous Assembly-elections for Haryana and Maharashtra are proof that the common people are fed up with present type of professional politicians and the political system as a whole. All those getting votes less than NOTA should be disqualified for life from contesting any future election. This will, in part, help clean politics. Political parties will be compelled to field good candidates rather than professional, discredited, hand-in-the-honeypot politicians. Madhu Agarwal, DELHI

Dhoni the great

Sir, Some sixteen years of top-class cricket is possible only for gifted and persevering players. Mahendra Singh Dhoni was both, as he climbed the steep ladder of success step-by-step to attain legendary status. A unique batting style, caring little for technique, was his forte. Excellent swing of the bat, aided by an extraordinary weight transfer from a muscular lower half of the body, was a Dhoni exclusive. Purists scorned at his manner of scoring runs; Dhoni marched ahead unmindful of the critics. Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA

# Violence-hit Visva Bharati seeks PM's intervention

### THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES SAY THEY WILL SEEK A CBI INQUIRY INTO THE AUGUST 17 CAMPUS VIOLENCE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bolpur (WB), August 18:** Visva Bharati authorities have decided to seek Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention for deployment of central security forces on its premises, a day after vandalism forced its closure, a top official of the prestigious institution said Tuesday.



The heritage university founded by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore was shut down indefinitely Monday following violent protests against its decision to construct a boundary wall around the venue of Poush Mela, a prestigious annual cultural event started more than a century ago.

The executive council (of the university) has unanimously decided to write to the honourable chancellor (the prime minister) for deployment of any of the central security forces to deal with security issues on the campus," one of its members told PTI. According to Shyam Singh, the Birbhum district superintendent of police, nine persons have been arrested for campus violence. Palpable tension prevailed at the institute with barely any movement seen Tuesday morning.

Given the vandalism leading to the destruction of university property worth several lakhs (of rupees) due to the complete absence of police deployment in spite of having two police stations within the university campus, it is decided to bring this to the notice of the Hon'ble Chancellor, Visva Bharati said in a statement

## Blame on TMC MLA

Blaming TMC MLA Naresh Bauri and two other party leaders for the violence, the university statement Tuesday said the 'university authorities will seek a CBI inquiry into the incident.' "Unless the miscreants, who committed vandalism along with TMC leaders at the lead, are booked and until we are at ease through the creation of condition in which the members of the university are free from bodily harm and humiliation, Visva Bharati would remain closed."

tute, however, will not affect the admission process, examinations and other emergency work. According to district officials, tension had been brewing in the area over the past few days as local traders were miffed at the university's decision to cancel this year's Poush Mela, a year-end annual fair that draws lakhs of visitors from across the world. Trouble erupted Monday after the fencing work began on the fair ground, with thousands of protesters vandalising construction equipment and tearing down the main gate. The Trinamool Congress government condemned the violence,

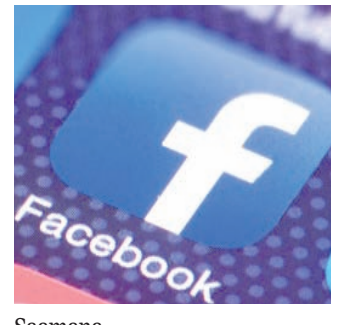
but threw its weight behind the protesters. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said she was against any construction at the site and asked the district administration to convene a meeting of the stakeholders.

The university authorities, however, said a fence around the fair venue was required to honour an order of the National Green Tribunal, which had November 1, 2017, said that a "barrier needs to be constructed to demarcate the Mela ground from the university and the locality." "Given the vandalism today leading to the destruction of university property worth several lakhs (of rupees) due to the complete absence of police deployment in spite of having two police stations within the university campus, it is decided to bring this to the notice of the Hon'ble Chancellor," a Visva Bharati statement had said Monday.

It said the university will remain closed till the situation improved. Meanwhile, TMC's Dubrajpur MLA Naresh Bauri, who was present at the site during the violence, said he had gone there as a former student of the institute and not a party leader.

# Act against those spreading hatred on Facebook: Sena

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



**Mumbai, August 18:** The Shiv Sena Tuesday sought action 'irrespective of party affiliations' against those who spread hatred and talk of disintegrating the country on social media platforms like Facebook. Companies like Facebook can't ignore someone spreading hatred because the person belongs to the ruling party, the Sena said and asked the social media platform to observe rules and ethics of business.

The party's comments come a day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi accused the BJP and RSS of spreading fake news using Facebook and WhatsApp to influence the electorate. Gandhi's claim followed a Wall Street Journal report that said Facebook ignored applying its hate speech rules to politicians of the ruling party in India.

"There is no objection to debates on a medium like Facebook. But action should be taken irrespective of party affiliation if hatred is spread and language of disintegrating the country and communities is used," the Sena said in an editorial of its mouthpiece

Saamana. "Companies like Facebook cannot ignore the person spreading hatred just because he/she belongs to the ruling party," it said. The Sena said India's population forms a big market for Facebook. Politics is being played the most on social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp, it said. The world has come closer, but these platforms have also caused a divide between communities, the party said. The Sena said it has now become a 'paid profession' to defame others on social media and nobody has been spared. "You (Facebook) have come to our country to do business and will have to observe minimum ethics-rules of business," it said.

# Philippines to follow 'Dharavi model'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Mumbai, August 18:** The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's 'Chase the Virus' strategy in Dharavi - Asia's biggest slum - has found a new fan in the Philippines government as the Southeast Asia nation also grapples with the pandemic, a top official said here Tuesday.

"The Philippines government will follow and implement the Dharavi Model for containing Covid in densely populated slums," an elated BMC Municipal Commissioner IS Chahal told IANS. The BMC has already shared details of the 'Chase the Virus' policy with the Philippines' Department of Health (DOH).

A news portal, Inquirer.net Tuesday, has quoted the Philippines DOH which declared that it would follow the Dharavi-Mumbai campaign conceptualised by BMC's Assistant Municipal Commissioner Kiran Dighavkar which earned all round praise.

The Philippines, with a population of around 10.1 crore crammed in an area of nearly 2.98 lakh sq.km, is slightly smaller than Maharashtra with 3.07 lakh sq. km area and a population close to 11.5 crore.

## VIRUS CONTROL



The Philippines, with a population of around 10.1 crore crammed in an area of nearly 2.98 lakh sq.km, is slightly smaller than Maharashtra

However, the archipelagic country currently ranks 22nd on the Corona Worldometer with 169,213 cases and 2,687 fatalities compared to Maharashtra's 604,358 cases and 20,265 deaths. Like Mumbai, around 30-lakh people live in congested slums in Manila, besides other cities in the Philippines.

The high population density of Dharavi posed a huge challenge to the BMC and state health authorities to tackle the corona spread. Civic officials said that the city succeeded in achieving what was earlier considered virtually a 'mission impossible', especially in Dharavi, earning the BMC and Maharashtra government a pat from the World Health Organisation in early July.

Chahal said that as a result of its strategy, there are only 17,704 'active cases' in Mumbai, of which around 5,338 symptomatic patients are currently in hospitals. The city - which last week came down to the second worst-hit city (after Pune district moved to the top slot) in terms of Covid cases - is witnessing an average of less than 1,000 new cases daily, the recovery rate

is 80 per cent, doubling rate of cases is 86 days, and infection rate is 0.8 per cent - among the lowest anywhere.

The situation has eased to the extent that since late June, the BMC started moving out of Dharavi, and later shut down several small or medium quarantine facilities in the city. Patients are now being referred to the jumbo facilities at NSCI, Mahalaxmi Race Court, Bandra Kurla Complex and in Dahisar and Mulund to ensure centralised care.

Amid apprehensions of patients unable to get beds, the current bed strength is 16,075 for complicated or serious cases, 23,437 for mild and asymptomatic patients besides 10,525 oxygen beds, 1,844 ICU beds and 1,096 ventilator beds.

Of these, nearly 14,548 are vacant, but ready for operationalisation whenever required, besides 330 vacant in ICUs, giving a very comfortable position, said Chahal.

Buoyed by the success of the 'Chase the Virus' game, the state government is now implementing it in Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Pune, Aurangabad, Solapur, Nashik, Jalgaon and other upcoming hotspots even as the Mumbai Corona crisis has practically been 'chased' away.

# BACK TO WORK



An employee works at a powerloom that was opened after relaxation in COVID-19 lockdown restrictions in Bhiwandi, Thane, Tuesday.

# Muslim artisan fights virus slowdown with Hindu idols

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

**Mumbai, August 18:** Since the coronavirus pandemic clobbered his pottery business, one Muslim artisan from India's largest slum has turned to a Hindu god to revive his fortunes by making environmentally friendly Ganesha idols for an upcoming festival.

Potter Yusuf Zakaria Galwani works with his two brothers in Dharavi to create 13-inch-tall statues out of terracotta clay, counting on the god - who is revered as the remover of obstacles - to give his business a much-needed boost ahead of the celebrations.

Ganesh Chaturthi - which kicks off Saturday - is embraced with gusto in India's financial hub.

The Hindu festival traditionally ends with devotees leading massive processions to the Arabian Sea to immerse elaborately decorated figurines of the much-loved elephant god into the water.

But this year's celebrations are expected to be muted, with authorities in the virus-plagued city urging people to mark the 10-day festival at home in a bid to ensure social distancing.

"As our pottery sales dwindled, I decided to make Ganesha statues... as a means of survival and also to promote environmentally friendly (alternatives)," 40-year-old Galwani told AFP.

Activists have long criticised the practice of immersing the idols in



As our pottery sales dwindled, I decided to make Ganesha statues... as a means of survival and also to promote environmentally friendly (alternatives)

the sea, arguing it contributes to water pollution, and Galwani agrees. "Every year, we see huge Ganesha statues made from plaster of Paris washing up on the shores after the immersion. This affects our local environment and marine life as well," he said.

His clay creations are designed to disintegrate quickly and turn into soil. They also contain a seed inside which can germinate if watered like a plant. Sold for Rs 1,500 each, Galwani has received orders for 800 statues so far and hopes to see his neighbourhood bounce back economically after tackling the virus.

Made famous by the 2008 Oscar-winner 'Slumdog Millionaire', Dharavi was thrown back into the spotlight in April over fears that the lack of social distancing or sani-

# Cured migrants are now Covid warriors

### Lakhs of migrants returned to their native places in Bengal by trains, buses while some cycled back home from different parts of the country due to the pandemic. Many of them tested positive later

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, August 18:** Migrant workers recovering from coronavirus have been inducted by the West Bengal government as members of "Covid-19 warriors club" to provide a healing touch to people undergoing treatment for infection in different hospitals in the metropolis, a senior government official said Tuesday.

Forty-nine migrant workers cured of the deadly disease have been enrolled in the club to assist patients admitted to hospitals for virus.

They hail from Birbhum, Coochbehar, Purba and Paschim Medinipur besides Murshidabad, he said.

They are given a monthly honorarium of Rs 15,000, he said.

"The primary job of these COVID-19 warriors is to keep up the morale of the patients currently undergoing treatment in the coronavirus wards in hospitals by sharing with them their own stories of recovery. These men also provide updates to the relatives of those being treated," he said.

Before pressing them into service, the cured migrant labourers were imparted training for at least seven days about safety measures while assisting a patient at the COVID-19 wards, the official said.

"They are basically providing non-medical services mainly through counselling. They also play a role in raising awareness about the contagion among the patients, their relatives and others," the official said.

They have been given lessons on how to change oxygen cylinders,



# What is Bengal's Covid patient mgmt system

**Kolkata, August 18:** The West Bengal government Monday launched a COVID Patient Management System to deal with admission and treatment-related issues at the hospitals.

Addressing a press conference, Chief Secretary Rajiva Sinha said the system has been started with three COVID hospitals in Kolkata, and in another week 84 hospitals in the state will be brought under its purview.

The system will help people get an update about the facilities available in a particular hospital, facilitate admissions, and ensure that a patient does not have to move around for bed in case of an emergency, he said.

"Our COVID-19 healthcare system is good and this new mechanism is unique. It is one of the

biggest steps of the government," Sinha said. This will also help ensure transparency, he added. Further, Sinha said that the state has made provisions to provide oxygen support at all the beds in the COVID hospitals. Oxygen support will be available in all the 11,775 beds now, he said. West Bengal's COVID-19 discharge rate crossed the 75-per cent mark Monday with the state reporting more recoveries, even as record 3,080 new cases were detected, as per an official bulletin.

The state's COVID-19 tally rose to 1,19,578 with reporting of the fresh cases. The toll increased to 2,473 as 45 more people died, the bulletin issued by the Health Department said.

check blood pressure, body temperature and a few other basics of treating a patient, he said.

Currently these 49 COVID-19 warriors are working in different hospitals in the city, including the state-run Kolkata Medical College and Hospital, the Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute at Rajarhat, MR Bangur Hospital, the official said.

All of them have been put up at the Youth Hostel at Salt Lake stadium. The state government plans to set up similar clubs in other districts too, the official added. Roping in of Covid-19 club warriors besides boosting manpower to attend the coronavirus persons in different hospitals in city is also aimed at de-stressing those being treated for the virus. Lakhs of migrant workers returned to their native places in West Bengal by trains, buses while some cycled back home from different parts of the country due to pandemic and also loss of jobs. Many of them tested positive later.



This (COVID-19) pandemic has given us a chance to revisit and structurally re-imagine a robust public health infrastructure for our country  
HARSH VARDHAN | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

## 2,400-YR-OLD MUMMY ENJOYS FRESH AIR AFTER 130 YEARS

A 2,400-year-old mummy at the Albert Hall Museum in Jaipur was taken out from its box for the first time in past 130 years to save it from drowning



### of the day quote

An estimated 3.65 crore jobs would be generated in construction of all sanctioned houses, of which about 1.65 crore jobs would have already been generated in construction of houses grounded under PMAY (U) so far  
HARDEEP SINGH PURI | UNION MINISTER

Had WHO done its job correctly the COVID pandemic would not have spread around the globe  
SANJAY ROUT | SHIV SENA MP

The decision (to conduct final examinations) has been taken keeping the future of students in mind. It was done so that students do not face any difficulty in future  
RAMESH POKHRIYAL 'NISHANK' | UNION MINISTER OF EDUCATION

## UGC says final year exams cannot be cancelled, SC reserves verdict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: The UGC told the Supreme Court Tuesday that its July 6 directive, asking universities and colleges to conduct final year exams by September 30 amid the COVID-19 pandemic, is "not a diktat" but states cannot take decision to confer degrees without holding the examinations.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the University Grants Commission (UGC), told a bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan that the directive is for the "benefit of students" as the universities have to start admissions to post-graduate courses and state authorities cannot override the UGC's guideline.

The bench, also comprising Justices RS Reddy and MR Shah, observed that the issue is if the state disaster management authority has decided that situation is not conducive for holding exams, can they overrule the UGC.

The bench, which reserved its verdict on a batch of petitions questioning the validity of the UGC's July 6 directive, said that another issue is whether the commission can override state authorities and ask the universities to hold examinations on given dates.

During the hearing conducted through video-conferencing, Mehta told the bench that states might seek extension of the deadline but they cannot take the decision to confer degrees without holding the exams. "The deadline was given for benefit of the students. It is not a diktat," Mehta told the bench, adding that "all universities have to start admissions of postgraduate courses. The country is working".

He argued that COVID-19 is a national disaster and the state authorities cannot override the UGC.



Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the UGC, told a bench that the directive is for the "benefit of students" as the universities have to start admissions to postgraduate courses

The bench observed that it has to be kept in mind that welfare of students is not for the students to decide and it is for the statutory body to take decision in this regard

consultation.

The counsel appearing for one of the states argued that not holding final year exam does not lead to dilution of standards and even premier institutes like the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) has said that they would give degree without holding exams.

One of the lawyers raised the issue of problems faced by students during the recent online exams conducted by the Delhi University.

The apex court was earlier told by one of the petitioners that nobody is against the university examinations in "normal times" and the students are challenging the UGC's decision because of the pandemic.

The UGC had said that final examination is a "crucial step" in the academic career of a student and the state government cannot say that its July 6 directive was "not binding".

Assailing the decisions of some states like Maharashtra and Delhi of cancelling the final year exams, the UGC had said such decisions directly affect the standards of higher education and will be an encroachment on the legislative field of coordinating and determining the standards of higher education.

## Amit Shah admitted to AIIMS again for 'post-COVID care'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Home Minister Amit Shah, who tested negative for COVID-19 last week, has been admitted to AIIMS in Delhi, the government hospital said in a statement. The Home Minister has been "complaining of fatigue and body ache for last three-four days", the hospital said. "Amit Shah has been complaining of fatigue and body aches for last three-four days. He has tested negative for COVID-19. He has been admitted to AIIMS for COVID care. He is comfortable and is continuing his work from hospital," AIIMS media and protocol division chairperson Dr Aarti Vij said in the statement.



Shah, 55, was discharged from the private hospital Medanta in Gurgaon last week after testing negative for COVID-19. He had tweeted August 14 he would be in home isolation for a few more days on the advice of his doctors. A day later he was seen taking part in Independence Day celebrations and hoisting the national flag at his official residence.

The Home Minister had taken part in a cabinet meet three weeks ago, just before he was tested positive for the highly infectious COVID-19. The meeting was attended by all top ministers, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

## Govt jobs in MP only for locals: CM Chouhan

While the Chief Minister did not spell out the proposed legal provisions, Congress described the move an "election stunt" ahead of by-polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhopal, August 18: Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan Tuesday said necessary legal provisions will be made to ensure that only local people get jobs in the state government.

He also said resources of the state are meant for residents of the state.

"The state (BJP) government has taken an important decision today that government jobs will be given only to youths of Madhya Pradesh. We are making necessary legal provisions for this purpose. Resources of Madhya Pradesh are meant for children of the state," Chouhan said in a video statement.

He, however, did not elaborate on the proposed legal provisions. Later in a tweet addressed to youths, the CM said, "From today, the children of Madhya Pradesh will have the first right over the resources of Madhya Pradesh. All government jobs will be reserved only for the children of Madhya Pradesh. Our aim is to involve the local talents in the uplift of the state".

An official statement quoted Chouhan as saying that students of the state will be taken in government services and "necessary statutory provisions will be made to ensure this".

In his Independence Day speech, Chouhan had announced that preference would be given to local people in government jobs. He had also said his government will devise a mechanism to ensure employment to youths on the basis of their mark-sheets of Classes 10 and 12.

The then Kamal Nath-led



Congress government had also announced to reserve 70 per cent of jobs in industrial units for locals.

Reacting to the announcement made by the CM, Nath, who heads the state Congress unit, said, "Students and youths of the state should not be cheated again as had happened during the earlier 15-year stints of the BJP". Hopefully this announcement was not made with an eye on upcoming Assembly by-polls.

By-elections are due on 27 seats, 25 of which fell vacant after resignations of sitting MLAs this year while two legislators had died. 22 of the 25 MLAs had walked out with Congress rebel Jyotiraditya Scindia in March this year and joined the BJP, leading to collapse of the Nath-led government.

Nath demanded that the government make public the data on the number of youths who have been provided jobs by the BJP in its previous stints of 15 years.

Senior Congress leader Digvijaya Singh said he had been demanding that residents of the state get jobs in government.

"Thank you for conceding my demand, Shivraj ji. But how to trust you till the issuance of government order in this regard?" Singh asked.

### SHORT TAKES

#### Man poisons wife, kids, kills self

Jaipur: A man allegedly poisoned his wife and two children before killing himself in Karauli district of Rajasthan but the bodies were discovered at least four days later, police said Tuesday. However, no suicide note has been found. The incident appears to have taken place last week and came to light after neighbours informed police about a foul smell emanating from their home Monday evening, they said.

#### 60-year-old woman raped in UP

Gorakhpur: An elderly woman was allegedly gangraped in Uttar Pradesh's Siddharthnagar district, police said Tuesday. The 60-year-old woman belonging to the Shohratgarh area of the district was found injured and unconscious on the outskirts of a village Saturday, they said. Two people have been arrested on the rape charge. Police said they were informed about the incident by some villagers after which the woman was rushed to a community health centre of the area.

#### Doctor held for 'links' with ISIS

New Delhi: The NIA has arrested an ophthalmologist from a medical college in Bangalore for allegedly being in touch with ISIS operatives, working to develop medical and weaponry-related applications to help terrorist cadres and furthering its activities in the country, officials said Tuesday. Abdur Rahman, 28, working at MS Ramaiah Medical College, was taken into custody Monday in connection with the Islamic State Khurasan Province (ISKP) case being probed by the agency, they said. The ISKP case was initially registered by the Delhi Police Special Cell in March, 2020.

#### Tuskers trample youth in J'khand

Ramgarh: A 25-year-old man from Ramgarh district who was trampled by tuskers two days ago, died at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Ranchi Monday, an official said. Ramesh Murmu was trampled by a herd of elephants August 15, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Ramgarh, Vijay Shankar Dubey said. He was taken to RIMS in Ranchi for better treatment but he succumbed to injuries on Monday, he said, adding the dependents of deceased would get ₹4 lakh ex gratia from the government.

## CONG ALLEGES FB EXEC ANKHI HAS LINKS WITH BJP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 18: The Opposition Congress Tuesday alleged that there is an "unholy nexus" between the ruling BJP and social media giant Facebook.

The party said that the connection of Facebook executive Ankhi Das with senior BJP leaders and MPs in the run up to the Lok Sabha election of 2014 stands exposed.

Addressing a press conference, Congress spokesperson Pawan



Levine, in reference to the intermediary rules in a closed door meeting which then Minister for Law and Justice and Information and Technology Kapil Sibal was holding with opposition Members of Parliament to discuss the language of these rules.

Khera alleged that internal mails reveal that there was a connection between BJP and Facebook when UPA was in power. He said that in the same memo there was a mention of the privacy law being drafted by a 'Group of Experts on Privacy'.

## PRAKASH UTSAV



A Sikh devotee takes a dip in the sacred pond of Harmandir Sahib (Golden Temple) on the eve of 416th Prakash Utsav of Sri Guru Granth Sahib in Amritsar, Tuesday

## Satya Pal Malik transferred to Meghalaya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Goa Governor Satya Pal Malik was on Tuesday transferred and appointed as the Governor of Meghalaya, while Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari was given additional charge as the Governor of Goa.

A Rashtrapati Bhavan communique said Satya Pal Malik, Governor of Goa, is transferred



and appointed as Governor of Meghalaya. The communique further said

Governor of Maharashtra Bhagat Singh Koshiyari has been asked to discharge the functions of Goa Governor in addition to his own duties.

Satya Pal Malik will be replacing Tathagata Roy who completed his five-year tenure by serving as Tripura Governor for three years and the remaining in Meghalaya. Malik reportedly did not share a good relationship with Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant.

## HIV +ve children 'dragged out of shelter home' in Ch'garh

WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS, ACCOMPANIED BY THE POLICE, HAD GONE TO CLOSE THE FACILITY

AGENCIES

Bhopal, August 18: Fourteen HIV-positive children at a shelter home run by a non-profit in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur were allegedly dragged out by officials who had orders from the district administration to close the facility. CCTV footage shows a lawyer who has been representing the children against being shifted from the facility being pushed by officials.

A police case has been filed against the lawyer, Priyanka Shukla, after the incident at Apna Ghar where 14 children between four and 18 years old had been staying. The police said Shukla started a fight with the officials who had gone to

shut down the facility.

When NGO staff Deepika Singh asked for a copy of the order to shut down the facility, the officials started manhandling her, dragged out the children and refused to give a copy of the eviction order, Apna Ghar director Sanjeev Thakkar said on phone. He shared audio recordings of the children calling him and complaining of alleged misbehaviour by the officials. Women and Child Development Department officials, accompanied by the police, had gone to the facility.

Bilaspur senior police officer Prashant Agrawal denied the officials manhandled the lawyer or the children. "The officials acted as



per the orders of the Collector. It was the lawyer Priyanka Shukla who got into a brawl with the officials, who suffered bruises. Shukla was arrested on a complaint by Women and Child Welfare Officer Parvati Verma," Agrawal said.

The NGO's director Sanjeev

Thakkar said Apna Ghar is Chhattisgarh's only shelter home for HIV patients run on a non-profit basis. He said he has been running the shelter home for several years with volunteers. A police case has also been filed against Thakkar, who said he was not at the building when the incident happened.

With a high monthly expense of ₹75,000, Thakkar said they decided to apply for a grant from the Women and Child Development Department, adding their troubles started soon after that.

Thakkar alleged some officials demanded a "30 per cent commission" from the grant, and when he refused, the officials checked the shel-

ter home and claimed they have found certain discrepancies and recommended cancellation of the NGO's registration and shifting of the children.

Thakkar said when they met with Women and Child Development Minister Anila Bhediya, the minister asked questions like how the children get infected with HIV.

The matter then reached the Bilaspur High Court, which ordered the Collector to hear Apna Ghar and take a decision.

In March this year, Collector Sanjay Alang had ordered officials to shift the children. In his order, he said a second report has also cited irregularities at the shelter home.





## of the day quote

The verdict by Supreme Court on PM-CARES is a resounding blow to the nefarious designs of Rahul Gandhi & his band of 'rent-a-cause' activists



There are guest houses, resorts (in Goa) which are shut for general public but rave parties are organised there in the name of birthday bash or some other functions during the pandemic



Congress leaders are struggling to get their chair back. They want that they should anyhow get their chair back. They have nothing to do with public service or with the promises they had made to people



## SHORT TAKES

### Two held with fake currency

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency arrested two persons for their alleged involvement in circulation of fake currency notes. Two accused, identified as Md Baitullah and Md Mukhtar, were arrested in connection with a case which pertains to a conspiracy hatched by a network of individuals for production, circulation and smuggling of fake notes, the NIA said.

### Rape charge against BJP MLA

Dehradun: A woman has filed a police complaint against an Uttarakhand BJP MLA accusing him of raping her several times between 2016 and 2018, and she has been charged for allegedly blackmailing him following a complaint by the legislator's wife, police said Monday. "The woman who is married levelled the allegations against the BJP's Dwarahat MLA Mahesh Negi. A complaint was lodged at Nehru colony police station here Sunday," DG (law and order) Ashok Kumar said.

### 19 kids rescued in Uttar Pradesh

Gorakhpur: Nineteen minors have been rescued and nine persons arrested by the anti-human trafficking unit (AHTU) in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur. According to AHTU Inspector Ajit Pratap Singh, "Acting on the tip-off by Surya Pratap Mishra, UP state coordinator of Bachpan Bachao Andolan, an operation was launched Monday. The children were being trafficked from Araria in Bihar to Delhi by bus." The nine accused have been booked under Sections 370 IPC, 420 IPC, and Section 79 Juvenile Justice Act and 3 Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act 2016 and sent to jail.



Lord Ram belongs to all, Lord Krishna belongs to all. Lord Ram and Lord Krishna were incarnations of Lord Vishnu, who belongs to all

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF

## NOW SPECIAL BOOKS FOR KIDS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Children with intellectual disabilities will now find it easy to learn English as the English Language Teaching Institute is preparing to roll out books that have been specially designed for such students in primary classes



## DELUGE



View of the flood-hit Dujra area along the bank of Ganga river in Patna, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

## SC's reputation cannot be dislodged by tweets: BAI

Exercise of contempt jurisdiction by the apex court SC does more self-harm, says Bar Association of India

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, August 18: In a statement released to the Supreme Court as well as the people of India at large, the Executive Committee of Bar Association of India has questioned the suo motu exercise of contempt jurisdiction by the apex court which found lawyer Prashant Bhushan guilty of contempt of court last Friday.

At the outset, the letter, signed by 1,923 members of the Bar Association of India, expresses the 'deep dismay and concern' of the

committee at the exercise of the contempt jurisdiction by the Supreme Court against a member of the legal profession.

"The association is of the view that the exercise of contempt jurisdiction by the apex court in this manner has potential for more self-harm than the avowed purpose of safeguarding the prestige of the institution," it adds.

The letter, signed by the Bar Association of India president Dr Lalit Bhasin among others, records that the association had filed an intervention application in the Bhushan case but it was not listed.

In its application, the association had submitted that members of the Bar had a "duty to speak on institutional and structural matters concerning the judiciary, judicial officers and judicial conduct".

The letter says the suo motu exercise of power to deliver judgments curbing the free exercise of



speech and expression by an advocate is "conspicuously old-fashioned", especially at a time when the citizenry is facing huge challenges. "We are of the firm view that the judgment must not be given effect to, until a larger bench, sitting

in open court after the pandemic has the opportunity to review the standards of criminal contempt. We do believe that the Supreme Court will hear the voice of the people expressed all around in last 72 hours on the subject and take corrective steps to prevent miscarriage of justice and restore the confidence and respect that citizens have generally reposed in it," the letter emphasised.

"The reputation of the Supreme Court of India cannot be dislodged by a couple of 'tweets'," the letter says.

The statement emphasises the duty of the Bar and the Bench is to work together to deliver justice and ensure the freedom of speech to criticise the working of institutions.

"Trenchant criticism, commentary, satire and humour help build institutions in a free society," the statement adds.

## COVID re-emergence seen in cured patients

Some hospitals in the national capital have said they are seeing recovered coronavirus patients returning to them with recurrence of the infection

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, August 18: Some hospitals in the national capital have said they are seeing recovered coronavirus patients returning to them with recurrence of the infection.

Earlier this month, the Delhi government-run Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital saw two instances of patients with relapse of coronavirus, almost one-and-a-half months after they were cured of the infection. In both the instances of relapse, the patients had moderate symptoms.

Aakash Healthcare in Dwarka had also reported a case where a cancer patient recovered from coronavirus and contracted the disease again after a couple of months. The second time proved fatal for the patient and he died due to the virus.

Last month, the case of a Delhi policeman having a relapse of the novel coronavirus had emerged which had left experts baffled.

In the same month, a similar case had surfaced in the national capital after a nurse employed at a civic-run dedicated COVID-19 hospital had tested positive again after recovering from the contagious disease.

According to Dr BL Sherwal, medical director of the Delhi gov-

## nCoV tally crosses 27-lakh mark

NEW DELHI: A spike of 55,079 cases took India's COVID-19 tally past 27 lakh Tuesday just a day after it crossed the 26-lakh mark, while 19.77 lakh people have so far recuperated from the disease pushing the recovery rate to 73.18 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data. The COVID-19 case-load stood at 27,02,742, while the death toll climbed to 51,797 with 876 people succumbing to the disease in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed. Case fatality rate stands at 1.92 per cent.

ernment-run hospital, unless the virus is cultured or gene sequencing done, it will be difficult to determine whether it is a different strain of the virus that has infected the person the second time.

"There can be a relapse. The virus can be isolated from the body particularly from the sputum. We have the evidence that after ninth or tenth day the virus becomes non-infectious and the patients are not tested again," he said.

"However, the virus has been reported to be living in patients who have recovered around 39 to 40 days back," he added.



## Public poll in tribal dialects in Ch'garh

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi/Raipur, August 18: A public opinion poll in native languages of Chhattisgarh is being held to seek a people's solution to the ongoing Maoist violence in central India.

The 'New Peace Process' (NPP), an initiative headed by Shubranshu Choudhary, a peace and human rights activist who has been working with tribals in Chhattisgarh for decades, is conducting a public opinion poll in Gondi, Halbi and Hindi languages over phone on the Maoist violence.

The poll began on the 74th Independence Day. In a statement, the NPP said the poll was aimed at finding out how many people in central India believe that the resolution of the violence between Maoists and the police in Chhattisgarh is dialogue and how many believe that the solution is military and police response to the violence perpetrated by Maoists.

Anyone in Chhattisgarh can give a missed call on a phone number (7477 288 444) and provide their opinion. On giving a missed call, the caller will get a call back from another number and the computer will talk to the caller in Hindi, Gondi and Halbi languages. Callers can also record their views in de-



tail in the three languages. The phone number will remain open till October 2, this year and the result of this poll will be announced at 'Break the Silence' e-rally of the NPP on Gandhi Jayanti.

The NPP also initiated a selfie competition on the topic of "Bastar Minge: Freedom from violence" on the Independence Day. Participants were encouraged to take their selfies on the subject and upload it on various social media platforms. On October 2, in 'Break the Silence' e-rally of the new peace process, winners will be rewarded for the best selfie slogan.

Convener of the NPP, Shubranshu Chaudhary said that they are also starting a series of meetings called "Chaikle Maandi". Gondi's word "chaikle maandi" means "meeting for peace and happiness". In these meetings, victims of violence from both sides will be invited and their opinion about possible solutions to end the Maoist violence.

## AIIMS lost exceptionally bright students to self-harm: Guleria

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, August 18: All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Director Randeep Guleria has expressed concern over the increase in suicides in the institute and urged students as well as the faculty members to reach out for support.

The remarks came after the decomposing body of a 40-year-old AIIMS doctor was recovered from his residence.

Over the last two months, the premier institute in the capital city has seen six suicides, including that of three doctors.

"A number of unfortunate recent events have caused us great distress. This has led us to lose some of our exceptionally bright and caring students and part of our family due to self-harm," Guleria said, reassuring that AIIMS will do everything possible to prevent its recurrence.

Alluding to a survey conducted by British Medical Journal, the AIIMS Director said that 30 per cent of students experience or have received treatment for mental health issues. He rued that it is a huge number, much more than what is seen in the general population.

"The American Medical



Student Association stated that the cycle of stress, anxiety and depression takes place during medical school since students frequently lack time for enough sleep, healthy eating, regular exercise and smaller support system. I think that is something we need to work on," he added.

Guleria, who is also the part of a core team monitoring the pandemic, said that the Coronavirus has itself taken a toll on mental health. "We, as a community, thrive on social interaction and freedom and we are suddenly forced into a life of isolation, fear and restrictions. Although we talk of physical distancing, we re-

ally do not want that there should be any social distancing."

To deal with the issue of suicide, he said that there is a 24x7 students' wellness wing led by Pratap Saran and the department of psychiatry. Five clinical psychologists run the wing.

Besides this, there is a mobile helpline and email which is available 24x7, emergency support from the department of psychiatry, skill development workshop to help in stress management, communication skills, system for providing financial assistance to students belonging to deprived backgrounds, eleven wellness clubs. A wellness website is also near completion.

## Manipur cop, accused in drug case, given gallantry medal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Imphal, August 18: The Manipur government had to withdraw the gallantry medal conferred to one of its police officials Manipur Patriot Day after it was emerged that he was allegedly involved in a 2013 drug trafficking case.

The government has further ordered a probe to check the selection process that recommended his name for the honour.

A sub-inspector of Manipur Police, Bheishamayum Debson Singh was conferred the gallantry award.

His name figured in the list of awardees that Governor Najma Heptulla had announced. A total of 13 police personnel were selected for the Chief Minister's Police Medal for Gallantry and Chief Minister's Police Medal for devotion to duty.

The awards were given August 13, which is celebrated as Manipur Patriot Day.

All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU), through press statement, had alleged the accused cop was arrested along with an 11-member team of Manipur Police commandos on the charge of trafficking drugs valued at more than ₹3.64 crore in 2013.

His name figured in the list of awardees that Governor Najma Heptulla had announced. A total of 13 police personnel were selected for the Chief Minister's Police Medal for Gallantry

AMSU had questioned the government over its selection procedure for gallantry awards.

Taking note of the allegations, the state government has now suspended policeman and people who recommended his name, government sources added.

A committee headed by Inspector General of Police (Intelligence) K Radhashyam will inquire into the matter in depth, Manipur police sources added.

## Militants shifting base from south to north Kashmir

TWO DEADLY MILITANT ATTACKS IN SRINAGAR AND BARAMULLA AUGUST 14 AND AUGUST 17 GIVE SUFFICIENT INDICATIONS THAT THE ULTRAS ARE RE-STRATEGISING

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Srinagar, August 18: Two deadly militant attacks in central and north Kashmir districts of Srinagar and Baramulla August 14 and August 17 left 5 security men dead, giving sufficient indications that the ultras are re-strategising after south Kashmir areas ceased to be safe havens for them.

The attacks in Nowgam area of Srinagar and Kreeri area of Baramulla occurred in broad daylight even as senior police officers said there was no security lapse that allowed the militants to carry out these hit and run attacks.



Acting swiftly, security forces Monday killed the two militants who carried out the attack in Kreeri

area of Baramulla district in which two CRPF troopers and a SPO of the local police were killed.

Senior police officers including Dilbag Singh, DGP and Vijay Kumar, IGP (Kashmir), have said they are developing leads to neutralise those responsible for carrying out the attack in Nowgam (Srinagar).

"You can't kill a security man and get away with it. We will get them and neutralise those who carried out the Nowgam attack."

"There is no record of any militant who killed a security person and survived for long during the last 30 years of violence."

"There is little doubt that the militants are finding the south Kashmir districts of Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama and Shopian too

hot to operate in."

"There is a perceptible change in public mood in these districts where parents are increasingly becoming concerned about their sons joining the militant ranks."

"Militants are clearly shifting their activities to central and north Kashmir districts with two main objectives." "One is their belief that shifting of security forces focus from south Kashmir areas would ease pressure on their overground workers and sympathisers."

"Secondly, militants feel that densely populated areas like Srinagar and remote areas of Baramulla and other north Kashmir

districts would give them more mobility." "Initially, the militants had some element of surprise while shifting focus to Srinagar and Baramulla districts, but that psychological cover is now blown", said a senior intelligence officer who did not want to be named.

The officer added that despite the apparent perception of the militants re-strategising to shift their base from south to north Kashmir, their numbers are too small to get a fresh foothold in these areas.

"Loss of a security person is unfortunate, but that only strengthens our resolve to wipe them out," said another senior officer.



The more hysterical the US suppression of Huawei and other Chinese companies, the more it proves the success of these companies and the hypocrisy and arrogance of the United States

### 1 MN DISPLACED IN BURKINA FASO

The Norwegian Refugee Council says around one million people are displaced by violence in Burkina Faso amid the COVID-19 outbreak



### of the day quote

To give ourselves the best chance of beating this virus once and for all - and of spotting and being ready to respond to other health threats, now and in the future, we are creating a brand new organisation



It's really shocking to most virologists and epidemiologists that airborne dust, rather than expiratory droplets, can carry influenza virus capable of infecting animals



By firing Morneau, Trudeau is hoping to take the attention off him. Once the government announced that Carney was 'advising' Trudeau that signaled that Morneau would soon be gone



### SHORT TAKES

#### Pak Army, ISI chiefs in KSA

Islamabad: Pakistan has flexed its muscles and expressed disregard over the performance of the Saudi-led Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the Kashmir dispute. It followed Saudi Arabia's subsequent rigid response and immediate demand for return of its financial aid to the cash-strapped Pakistan. Now, Pakistan Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa along with head of ISI Lt General Faiz Hameed is in Riyadh to meet the Saudi leadership to mend strained ties.

#### Ex-CIA officer held for spying

Washington: A former Central Intelligence Agency officer has been arrested on charges of conspiring with a relative to spy for China, according to the Department of Justice (DoJ). In a statement Monday, the DoJ said that Alexander Yuk Ching Ma, 67, who was arrested August 14 and has been charged, is accused of divulging classified national defence information to Chinese intelligence officials, reports the BBC.

#### 23 Indians stuck at Gulf airports

Abu Dhabi: At least 23 passengers who recently arrived from India are reportedly stranded at the airports of Abu Dhabi and Sharjah due to some 'confusion' about pre-travel approvals, a media report said Tuesday. Five passengers, who landed in Abu Dhabi on an Etihad Airways flight August 15, and some 18 travellers who arrived in Sharjah on board an Air Arabia plane Monday morning said they were "not being allowed to enter the country," according to the Khaleej Times report.

#### N Korea has 60 N-bombs: USA

Seoul/Washington: North Korea is believed to have up to 60 nuclear bombs and the world's third-largest stockpile of chemical weapons totalling to 5,000 tonnes, the US Army said in a report. The US Department of the Army headquarters made the assessment in its report, titled "North Korean tactics", saying Pyongyang is unlikely to give up these weapons to ensure the regime's survival, the Seoul-based Yonhap News Agency reported.

## World silent on Uyghur persecution

### CHINA BUILDS TOILET ON XINJIANG MOSQUE SITE, ORDERS FORCIBLE ABORTION OF UYGHURS

AGENCIES

New Delhi/Urumsqi, August 18: Authorities of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) regime have built a public toilet on the site of a mosque after demolishing it in Xinjiang province and also ordered forcible abortions of pregnant women as part of a campaign against the Uyghur Muslims.

As per the reports of Radio Free Asia (RFA), a public toilet has been erected on the site of the demolished Tokul mosque in Suntagh village of Atush city and hospitals have been "forced to abort and kill babies born in excess of family planning limits or who were in uterus less than three years after the mother's previous birth," in what is called the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

The region was captured by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in 1949 and assimilated into China completely by 1955.

Since then, Uyghurs have been seeking independence but as the resistance movement against the authoritarian rule of the CCP, grew bigger, Beijing cracked down on the human rights of the minority community.

Around 1.8 million Muslim Uyghurs and other Muslims have been detained under Xi Jinping's

### THE BACKGROUND



BUT AS THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AGAINST THE AUTHORITARIAN RULE OF THE CCP, GREW BIGGER, BEIJING CRACKED DOWN ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE MINORITY COMMUNITY

The Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region was captured by the People's Liberation Army in 1949 and assimilated into China completely by 1955

Since then, Uyghurs have been seeking independence

regime in Xinjiang's camps where they are being cleansed of their ethno-religious views and identity since 2017.

RFA reported that the authorities had razed two of three mosques in Suntagh village, "carrying out a directive to destroy Muslim places of worship en masse."

The drive against mosques was launched in late 2016 as a "part of a series of hardline policies under top leader Xi Jinping."

Suntagh village in Atush, is a county-level city of about 270,000 people under the administration of

Kashgar prefecture in the cotton- and grape-growing region of south-western XUAR, RFA reported.

Quoting the village committee chief, RFA said that the Tokul mosque was demolished in 2018 and a lavatory built upon it even as people in the village have toilets at home.

"The committee chief said that with Suntagh located about 3 km outside of central Atush, the area sees few to no tourists who would require access to a washroom," RFA reported.

The toilet was likely built to cover

up the ruins of the destroyed Tokul mosque, as well as for the needs of inspecting groups or cadres visiting the area, RFA quoted the village head as saying.

In 2019, the Azna mosque had been replaced with "a convenience store" that sells alcohol and cigarettes, the use of which is frowned upon in Islam, RFA said.

Besides, the Bastaggaq mosque has been destroyed while Teres mosque, the smallest, is in the poorest condition of all three.

RFA said the authorities have destroyed 70 per cent of the mosques in the region under the 'mosque rectification' campaign.

In addition to mosques, Chinese authorities have been systematically destroying Muslim cemeteries and other religious structures and sites across Xinjiang since 2016, the RFA said.

Last year, the Washington-based Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) published a report, titled 'Demolishing Faith: The Destruction and Desecration of Uyghurs Mosques and Shrines', which was based on a study using geo-location and other techniques.

It showed that anywhere between 10,000 and 15,000 mosques, shrines, and other religious sites in the region were destroyed between 2016 and 2019.

## Lower-risk groups are 'driving' Covid spread

AGENCIES

Geneva, August 18: The World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that people in their 20s, 30s and 40s, who are unaware that they are infected with the Covid-19, are driving the spread of the deadly virus, it was reported Tuesday.

The proportion of young people with Covid-19 has risen, the BBC quoted WHO officials as saying Monday, putting the lives of those who are more vulnerable at risk if people socialise without realising they are carrying the virus. "The epidemic is changing," the WHO Western Pacific regional director, Takeshi Kasai, also explained.

"What we are observing is not simply a resurgence. We believe it's a signal that we have entered a

new phase of pandemic in the Asia-Pacific," he said.

Outbreaks have occurred in recent weeks in countries like Vietnam where the virus had appeared to be under control.

Several European countries including France and Spain have seen case numbers rise significantly in the past two weeks, with some warning that young people are not following social distancing guidelines.

As of Tuesday, the overall number of global coronavirus cases stood at 21,814,597, while the fatalities rose to 772,782, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

The US accounts for the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 5,437,969 and 170,491, respectively.

Brazil came in the second place with 3,359,570 infections and 108,536 deaths.

What we are observing is not simply a resurgence. We believe it's a signal that we have entered a new phase of pandemic in the Asia-Pacific

TAKESHI KASAI | REGIONAL DIRECTOR, WHO WESTERN PACIFIC



### IN SOLIDARITY



Protestors with a banner reading 'Country for life' prepare to release balloons in colours of old Belarusian national flag into the sky to show their solidarity with the detainees at a detention centre during opposition rally in Minsk, Belarus, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

## Ardern hits back at Trump over Covid 'surge'

AGENCIES

Wellington, August 18: New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern hit back Tuesday against US President Donald Trump for saying her country is experiencing a "big surge" in COVID-19, calling the remarks "patently wrong".

Trump sparked uproar in New Zealand when he told a crowd in Minnesota that the South Pacific country of 5 million people was in the grip of a "terrible" upsurge in COVID-19 cases, having earlier suc-

ceeded in eliminating the disease.

Thirteen new infections were confirmed in New Zealand Tuesday, taking the country's total number of cases since the pandemic began to 1,293, with 22 deaths. This compares with the US tally of more than 5.2 million cases and 170,000 deaths.

"You see what's going on in New Zealand?" Trump said. "They beat it, they beat it, it was like front page they beat it... because they wanted to show me something. The problem is... big surge in New Zealand, you know it's terri-



ble. We don't want that." Ardern said there was no comparison between New Zealand's handful of new cases a day and the "tens of thousands" reported in the United States.

"I think anyone who's following COVID and its transmission globally will quite easily see that New Zealand's nine cases in a day does not compare to the United States' tens of thousands, and in fact does not compare to most countries in the world," she told reporters.

"Obviously it's patently wrong," she said of Trump's comments.

"We are still one of the best-performing countries in the world when it comes to COVID... our workers are focused on keeping it that way."

### WHITE HOUSE RACE

## Michelle takes a 'truth and science' jibe at Prez Trump

### MICHELLE OBAMA, IN AN 18-MINUTE SPEECH ON DAY ONE OF THE VIRTUAL DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION, TEARS INTO DONALD TRUMP'S PRESIDENCY

AGENCIES

New York, August 18: Former vice president Joe Biden will "tell the truth and trust science" if he is elected to the White House in November, former First Lady Michelle Obama said Monday as Democrats kicked off their now-

virtual convention.

Michelle Obama, in an 18-minute speech on Day One of the virtual Democratic convention, tore into Donald Trump's Presidency. "Immense weight and awesome power of the Presidency" she hit out.

"Donald Trump is the wrong President for our country. He has had more than enough time to prove that he can do the job but he is clearly... over his head. He cannot meet this moment. He simply cannot be who we need him to be for us," Obama said, revealing a string of what she called "cold, hard truths."

Obama was seeking to show the sharp differences between Trump and former vice president Joe Biden, with less than 80 days to go before the November election. She chose



to underline a recurring theme of Biden's empathy. Tragedy has followed Biden from the early 70s till after he became vice president. Biden lost his first wife and baby daughter after he was elected to the US Senate in 1972; he lost his son

Beau from brain cancer in 2015.

"Joe knows the anguish of sitting at a table with an empty chair; that is why he gives his time, so freely to grieving parents," Obama said.

Trump knocked Obama and the video format of the Democratic

convention from a rally in Wisconsin: "Who wants to listen to Michelle Obama do a taped speech?"

"There was an urgency in her address, there was an intimacy to it. She gave people clear instructions. She asked people to vote like their life depends on it. Pretty strong!" is how former Obama campaign manager David Plouffe assessed the Michelle Obama speech.

Robert Gibbs, former White House press secretary, said Michelle Obama set the ball rolling for what will be the single biggest takeaway from this Democratic convention - how the party defines Joe Biden for American voters.

The Biden campaign is hoping for the famed Obama bump from this high profile endorsement.

Nearly four years after leaving the

White House, Michelle Obama remains hugely popular with the Democratic base, and among Black women in particular.

Dressed in a dark chocolate coloured silk dress, Obama roasted Trump in her keynote speech, describing him as someone who "cannot meet the moment" amid a global pandemic. Obama slammed Trump for downplaying the threat from the coronavirus which has killed more than 1,70,000 Americans and left the economy in "shambles."

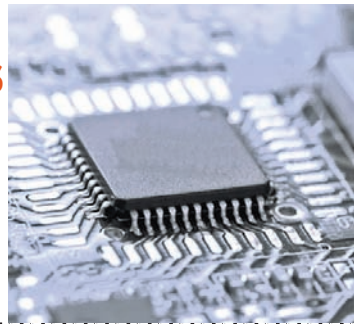
"I am one of the handful of people living today who have seen firsthand the immense weight and awesome power of the presidency," Obama said, speaking of her personal experience in the White House from 2008 to 2016.



**Yes Bank has overhauled its risk and governance frameworks to save itself from reputational risks and come out as a brand committed to integrity**  
PRASHANT KUMAR | CHIEF EXECUTIVE & MD, YES BANK

## CONTEST TO DEVELOP TECH PRODUCTS USING INDIGENOUS MICROPROCESSORS

The Ministry of Electronics and IT Tuesday launched a ₹4.3 crore contest for development of technology products using microprocessors developed by IIT Madras and CDAC.



### of the day quote

The throughput of interstate lorries has dropped significantly due to lack of return loads and paralysed demand



KULTARAN SINGH ATWAL | PRESIDENT, AIMT

The emergence of work-from-home culture has triggered fresh challenges, and underscored the need for a new type of cybersecurity architecture



RAJESH PANT | NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY COORDINATOR

Industry stakeholders should prepare a plan to enhance investment that will boost steel consumption and create new job opportunities in the country



DHARMENDRA PRADHAN | UNION STEEL MINISTER

# Centre keen to speed up stake sale in 4 banks

REUTERS

**New Delhi, August 18:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's office has asked officials to speed up the process of trimming government stakes in at least four primarily state-owned banks within the current fiscal year, according to two officials familiar with the discussions.

The sources said the four lenders are Punjab & Sind Bank (PUNA.NS), Bank of Maharashtra (BMBK.NS), UCO Bank (UCBK.NS) and IDBI Bank (IDBLNS), in which the Indian government owns majority stakes through direct and indirect holdings.

New Delhi wants to overhaul the banking sector and is also pushing the privatisation of banks and other state-run companies to help raise funds for budgeted spending amid a fall in tax collections due to

## RAISING FUNDS



**NEW DELHI WANTS TO OVERHAUL THE BANKING SECTOR AND IS ALSO PUSHING THE PRIVATISATION OF BANKS AND OTHER STATE-RUN COMPANIES**

**THIS IS TO HELP RAISE FUNDS FOR BUDGETED SPENDING AMID A FALL IN TAX COLLECTIONS DUE TO THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC**

the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.

The prime minister's office wrote a letter to India's finance ministry earlier this month asking it to expedite the process of privatising these lenders in the current financial year, which ends in March 2021,

said one government source with direct knowledge of the matter.

"The process of privatising the banks has started," the person said, adding some consultations had already taken place.

The prime minister's office and lenders did not immediately re-

spond to requests for comment, while the finance ministry declined to comment. The sources, who declined to be named as the discussions are private, noted the government's timeline is aggressive and might be a challenge given current market conditions.

Last month, Reuters reported India was looking to privatise more than half of its state-owned banks to reduce the number of government-owned lenders to just five as part of an overhaul of the banking industry. India currently has a dozen public sector banks in addition to IDBI, in which the government owns 47.11% while the state-owned insurance behemoth Life Insurance Corp owns a 51% stake.

The move to privatise banks also comes ahead of an anticipated surge in bad loan growth at the lenders, which could force the government

to inject fresh funds to bail out state-run lenders.

However, the stake sale in these lenders will be challenging and may spill into the next financial year as these banks are already burdened with a higher proportion of bad loans, banking and government officials have previously said.

Another government official, involved in the stake sale push, said more consultations would be held before the process proceeds.

While the government is keen to push through reforms amid the pandemic, some officials have advised that the government restructure these banks before privatisation to cut down their losses by offering voluntary retirement to surplus staff and closing loss-making domestic and overseas branches to make them more attractive assets, the sources said.

## Data, AI can add \$500bn to India's GDP by 2025 end

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 18:** Data and artificial intelligence (AI) can add USD 450-500 billion to India's GDP by 2025, representing about 10 per cent of the USD 5 trillion economy aspiration of the Indian government, a report by industry body Nasscom said Tuesday.



## Consumer goods & retail, agriculture and banking & insurance will deliver nearly 45 per cent of this value

Nearly 45 per cent of this value is likely to be delivered by 3 sectors - consumer goods and retail (USD 90-95 billion), agriculture (USD 60-65 billion), and banking and insurance (USD 60-65 billion), the report said.

The report - titled Unlocking Value from Data and AI - presented an action plan with five key building blocks to promote increased data utilisation and adoption of AI, including strategy, data, technology stack, talent and execution.

It emphasised that datasets of national importance be identified with each ministry with specific use cases, a programme to create a marketplace of data and derived assets be created, and a central agency be established for defining and enforcing data standards.

The report said platform(s) to securely host data, AI services, models, open-source libraries, applications and testbeds should be created and that policies be formulated to ensure the security, reliability, interoperability and economic viability of the stack.

## Govt may give MSME status to dealers: Min

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 18:** The government is considering according MSME status to dealers as it will enable them to avail benefits offered to micro, small and medium enterprises, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said Tuesday.

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) comprising manufacturing and services units need to get registered to avail the benefits and subsidies offered under various government schemes.

Registered MSMEs are eligible for tariff subsidies and tax and capital subsidies. The registration also helps them in getting government tenders and enables easier access to loans at low interest rates.

Regarding MSME, we are thinking now of giving MSME status to dealers also and they will get benefit of it, that is also under consideration by which they will get the benefits, Gadkari said.

The minister also reiterated his



appeal to major industries to clear the outstanding dues to MSMEs in a timely manner.

We are also requesting to the Finance Ministry, the industries who want to make their technology centers, training centers, research centers, from Income Tax point of view whether we are in a position to give some more support to them by which we can inspire and motivate them for more research and innovation, Gadkari said.

The Minister for MSME and Road Transport and Highways was addressing a virtual exhibition on 'Construction Equipment, Technology Components and Aggregates'.

## India's agri exports up 23.24%

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, August 18:** India's farm exports rose 23.24 per cent in value terms to ₹25,552.7 crore during March-June period amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the Agriculture Ministry said Tuesday.

To promote farm exports, a comprehensive action plan has been prepared under which 'Export Promotion Forums' are being created and existing agri-clusters are being strengthened besides identifying certain destinations for promotion of agricultural exports, the ministry said in a statement.

Promotion of farm exports is extremely important not only for earning precious foreign exchange for the country but also for achieving the goal of an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat', for which self-reliant agriculture is critical, it added.

Even during the difficult time of pandemic lockdown, India took care not to disturb the world food supply chain and continued to export, it said. Exports of agri-commodities increased by 23.24 per cent to ₹25,552.7 crore during March-June 2020 as



Despite being ranked third in vegetable production in the world, India's export ranking is 14th

against ₹20,734.8 crore in the year-ago period, it added.

According to the ministry, clear and proactive interventions are required to be taken to ensure India becomes a top exporting nation in agriculture commensurate with the production.

India holds second rank in world's wheat production, but ranks 34th in exports. Similarly, despite being ranked third in vegetable produc-

tion in the world, India's export ranking is 14th.

Same is the case for fruits, where India is the second largest producer in the world, but export rank is 23rd, the statement said.

Highlighting the comprehensive action plan for promotion of agri trade, the ministry said product specific Export Promotion Forums (EPFs) have been created to lead agri exports to new heights.

### SHORT TAKES

#### BPCL's bottling plant in TN soon

**Chennai:** Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd would shortly be commissioning its new state-of-the-art bottling plant in the state aimed to serve the southern districts, a company official said on Tuesday. According to a company official, BPCL has a customer base of 55.20 lakh families in Tamil Nadu and 86,000 in Puducherry. The company has bottling plants in Chennai, Coimbatore, Tuticorin and Thanjavur.

#### Chinese bank buys ICICI stake

**New Delhi:** After picking up a stake in housing finance major HDFC, the Chinese central bank People's Bank of China has acquired a very small stake in ICICI Bank through the recently closed ₹15,000 crore share sale by the country's second largest private sector lender. The People's Bank of China was among 357 institutional investors.

#### Auto demand to plunge over 20%

**Mumbai:** International rating agency Fitch has forecasted over 20 per cent decline in domestic automobile demand during this fiscal year as the industry faces several challenges and not just pandemic driven issues. Attributing the marginal improvement in July volumes to pent-up demand following easing of lockdown restrictions, Fitch said the problems facing the auto industry remains unabated.

#### Loan approved

**New Delhi:** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Tuesday said it has approved a USD 1 billion loan to support construction of modern, high-speed Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System. The transit system project aims to help decongest the city and improve regional connectivity by establishing transit options through the densely populated sections of the NCR, connecting Delhi to Meerut in Uttar Pradesh, ADB said.

#### IDBI raises ₹11K cr

**New Delhi:** IDBI Bank Tuesday said it has received shareholders' approval to raise up to ₹11,000 crore by issuing shares through various modes. The decision was taken at the bank's annual general meeting that took place on August 17, 2020, through audio-visual means.

### BIZ BUZZ

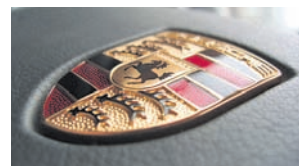
#### RBI releases framework for retail payments systems



**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank Tuesday unveiled the framework for setting up umbrella entities for operating pan-India retail payments systems and invited applications from eligible companies by February 26, 2021. As per the framework, the companies with a net worth of over ₹500 crore will be eligible to set up an umbrella entity which among other things will be permitted to set up, manage and operate new payment systems in the retail space comprising ATMs, White Label PoS, Aadhaar-based payments and remittance services. "The Reserve Bank invites applications for the umbrella entity which shall be submitted in the prescribed form (Form A) till the close of business on February 26, 2021," said a central bank press release.

#### Porsche drives in Spyder, Cayman models

**New Delhi:** Luxury sports carmaker Porsche on Tuesday said it has launched 718 Spyder and the 718 Cayman GT4 in India, with prices of the two models starting at ₹1.59 crore and 1.63 crore (ex-showroom), respectively. Featuring a newly-developed 420 PS six-cylinder engine mated to six-speed manual transmission, the models appeal to the most hardened sports car enthusiasts, Porsche said in a statement. Whilst the GT4 represents the entry-level GT road model from Porsche, the Spyder is geared towards open-top, dynamic driving, it added. "The 718 Cayman GT4 and 718 Spyder are about unrivalled driving fun and sheer emotions," Porsche India Head of Sales Ashish Kaul said.



#### PLI proposals worth ₹12L cr received

**New Delhi:** Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad Tuesday said proposals worth ₹12 lakh crore have been received under the new scheme to boost electronics manufacturing, and some manufacturing lines have moved from China to India during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Minister for IT and Communications, while speaking at an industry event, also pointed out that close to ₹90,000 crore have been transferred by way of direct benefit transfer. He added that about 8-9 manufacturing lines have also shifted from China to India. These schemes jointly offer incentives of around ₹50,000 crore over the period of next five years.

# India urges auto firms to cut royalties to foreign parents

TOP-SELLING CARMAKERS PAY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN ROYALTIES TO PARENT COMPANIES IN JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA FOR USING THEIR TECH & BRAND

REUTERS

**New Delhi, August 18:** India's commerce minister has asked automakers to find ways to reduce royalty payments to foreign parent companies for use of technology or brand names, two sources told Reuters, in an effort to boost local investment and reduce outflows.

The sources declined to be named as the talks are private. The ministry did not respond to a request for comment. India, for years, has debated imposing stricter caps on royalty payments which spiked after 2009 when foreign investment rules were eased and restrictions on such payments were removed.

The country's markets regulator last year suggested imposing curbs on payments exceeding 2% of revenue. The limit was finally set at 5% after complaints from some sectors and fears it may dissuade foreign firms from investing or shar-

ing technology.

Recently however, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has made a renewed push



to make the country a major manufacturing hub by encouraging domestic production and curbing imports. It also wants to increase local

investment and reduce foreign outflows. While India does not restrict the amount that can be paid as royalty, any payment by a locally listed company exceeding 5% of revenues needs shareholder approval.

Listed companies such as Maruti Suzuki (MRTI.NS) and parts makers including Bosch (BOSH.NS), Schaeffler India (SCHE.NS) and Wabco India (WABC.NS) typically pay royalties of between 1%-5% to their foreign owners.

Maruti Suzuki paid 38.2 billion rupees (\$510 million) as royalty to its Japanese parent Suzuki Motor (7269.T) in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020, amounting to 5% of its revenue, according to its annual report.

Privately-owned companies such as Hyundai's local unit paid \$150 million or 2.6% of revenue as royalties

to its South Korean parent in fiscal 2019 and Toyota Motor's (7203.T) India arm paid \$88 million or 3.4% of revenue to its Japanese parent, government data shows.

Royalty provision has been important in attracting foreign investments into various sectors in India, especially autos, said Vaibhav Gupta, partner at tax firm, Dhruva Advisors.

"Depending on the form in which the government brings back such caps ... it may impact the ability of auto companies to benefit from the use of foreign brands and technical know-how," said Gupta.

He said for many foreign companies royalties are a profit repatriation strategy and changes to these could impact operating and supply chain structures from a fiscal perspective.

Serie A side rip through Shakhtar Donetsk defense as they reach Europa League final following a 5-0 rout over Ukrainian club

# INTER ON RAMPAGE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dusseldorf (Germany), August 18: Inter Milan are back in a European final for the first time in a decade, and the Italian team are playing like they've never been away.

Lautaro Martinez and Romelu Lukaku scored twice each as Inter ended their wait Monday, demolishing Shakhtar Donetsk 5-0 in the Europa League semifinals.

Inter grounded down Shakhtar in what was at first a tight, defensive game before scoring four times in the last half-hour. The Italian club will face five-time winner Sevilla in the final Friday in Cologne.

"We reached the final by beating a very strong team, don't get fooled by the result," Inter coach Antonio Conte said. "We were good not allowing them to play the way they wanted."

Since arriving last year, Conte has imposed discipline on what had been a fractious Inter squad and rebuilt it around Lukaku, who has 33 goals in his first season with the club.

Headers from Martinez in the 19th minute and Danilo D'Ambrosio in the 64th put Inter on course to play for their first major continental trophy since winning the Champions League in 2010 under Jose Mourinho. Martinez and Lukaku added three more goals in 10 minutes to make sure of the result.

Shakhtar was also trying to emulate past European glories after winning the UEFA Cup in 2009. The only remaining player from that team, goalkeeper Andriy Pyatov, was at fault for the opening goal.

Pyatov sliced a pass directly to Inter midfielder Nicolo Barella, who sped down the right flank and sent in a cross which eluded Lukaku but left his strike partner Martinez an easy header at the far post for the opening goal.

Inter tightened its grip when D'Ambrosio headed in at the far post off an outswinging corner from Josip Brozovic. That came less than two minutes after Shakhtar's best chance of the game, headed from point-blank range by Junior Moraes straight at Inter



**DEADLY DUO:** Romelu Lukaku (L) and Lautaro Martinez celebrate an Inter goal against Shakhtar Donetsk, Monday

goalkeeper Samir Handanovic.

Inter suffocated Shakhtar's usual passing style, relentlessly pressing the Ukrainian champions' defensive line to stop them developing any passing moves. "They completely closed down the start of our attacks," coach Luis Castro said through a translator.

Martinez got his second in the

74th with a low shot from the edge of the box and four minutes later set up Lukaku to score Inter's fourth. Lukaku outpaced defender Davit Khocholava to score his second and Inter's fifth in the 84th.

The Belgian has scored in all five of Inter's Europa League games this campaign, and in a record 10 consecutive Europa League games,

including five he played for Everton in 2014-15.

Inter won the UEFA Cup, as the Europa League was then known, in 1991, 1994 and 1998. Conte's team will go into the final on a six-game winning run, having conceded only once in their last seven games, in the 2-1 win over Bayer Leverkusen in the quarterfinals.

# Barcelona sack Setien

Koeman likely to be the next coach of the Catalan giants

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Barcelona, August 18: Barcelona fired coach Quique Setien, three days after the team's humiliating 2-8 loss to Bayern Munich in the quarterfinals of the Champions League, the first step in what it said would be 'a wide-ranging restructuring' of the club.

The decision was announced after an urgent board meeting summoned by president Josep Bartomeu in Barcelona. The club also announced new elections for March 2021 and said 'profound changes' were coming for the first team.

A replacement to Setien was not immediately announced but Spanish media said Dutch coach Ronald Koeman was the front-runner to take charge. The former Barcelona defender was reportedly already in Barcelona.

Barcelona said 'the new coach will be announced in the coming days as part of a wide-ranging restructuring of the first team'.

The new elections next March mean that the board will 'assume full responsibility regarding the 2020-2021 financial year'.

"The club will continue to implement the plan to reverse the sporting and economic situation, based on profound changes to the first team, plus a redefined budget to deal with the new situation caused by COVID-19, before the end of the current mandate," Barcelona said in a statement.

Bartomeu, who was heavily criticised for his club management recently, has been at the club's helm since 2014. The loss to Bayern ended a disappointing season for the Catalan club, the first without a title since 2007-



QUIQUE SETIEN

08. The team had already gone through a coaching change when Setien replaced Ernesto Valverde amid poor results in January.

The season was also marked by disputes between players and club directors over a series of issues, and the team lost the Spanish league title to Real Madrid despite returning from the pandemic break with the lead atop the standings.

Lionel Messi had been among the outspoken players against some of the club's decisions, and Gerard Pique made his views clear minutes after the rout against Bayern - arguably the most devastating loss in the history of the 120-year-old club.

"We have hit rock bottom. This club needs changes at every level," Pique said. "I don't mean just players and the coaching staff... the club needs structural changes."

Many had called for Bartomeu to call early elections to help bring

those changes to the club. The president had said after the game in Lisbon that it wasn't 'the time to make knee-jerk decisions'.

Setien was hired after good campaigns with Real Betis. The team played only 25 matches during his time in charge, with 16 wins four draws and five losses. Among the setbacks were defeats in the 'clasico' against Real Madrid and to Athletic Bilbao in the quarterfinals of the Copa del Rey.

Former Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino and ex-Barcelona player Xavi Hernandez were among the other candidates in contention, according to Spanish media, but it was Koeman who looked set to take over.

The 57-year-old Koeman became an assistant to Louis van Gaal at Barcelona in the late 1990s, shortly after retiring as a player. He played with the club in the early 1990s, winning four straight Spanish league titles from 1991-94. He also scored the extra-time winner that gave Barcelona its first European title in 1992.

Koeman played for the Netherlands in the 1990 and 1994 World Cups, and won the 1988 European Championship with the national team.

He has been coaching the Dutch national team since 2018, leading it to the Nations League Finals last year. His contract with the national team was valid until after the 2022 World Cup. Koeman previously also coached Everton, Southampton, Ajax, PSV Eindhoven and Valencia, among other clubs.



RONALD KOEMAN

## KHEL RATNA RECOMMENDATION

# Rohit, Vinesh among 5 nominated athletes



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA



decision resting on sports minister Kiren Rijiju.

New Delhi, August 18: Star cricketer Rohit Sharma, wrestler Vinesh Phogat, and women's hockey captain Rani Rampal were among an unprecedented five picked for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, while another unparalleled 29 were recommended for the Arjuna award by the sports ministry's selection committee here Tuesday.

Paddler Manika Batra and Rio Paralympic gold-winning high jumper Mariyappan Thangavelu were the other two recommended for the country's highest sporting honour by a 12-member selection committee.

Rampal was a late addition to the initial list of four: She is only the third and lone female hockey player to have been recommended for the honour. Before Rani, only Dhanraj Pillay (2000) and Sardar Singh (2017) won the prestigious award. Sardar, incidentally, was a part of the 12-member selection committee this year.

For the Arjuna, India pacer Ishant Sharma, recurve archer Atanu Das, women's hockey team player Deepika Thakur, kabaddi player Deepak Hooda, and tennis player Divij Sharan were among the 29 short-listed, an official source told this agency after the selection committee's meeting here.

This is the first time in the history of awards that five athletes have been recommended for the top sporting accolade with the final

# Mighty Bayern test awaits Lyon

AGENCIES

Lisbon, August 18: After stunning Manchester City in the quarterfinals, Lyon's unpredictable run set to face the mightiest hurdle this term when they take on German powerhouse and a free-scoring Bayern Munich in the second semifinal.

They will face off at the Estadio Jose Alvalade Wednesday evening with a place in the Champions League final up for grabs.

German champions Bayern thrashed Barcelona 8-2 to book a place in the semifinals, while Lyon stunned Manchester City with a 3-1 win.

Even before crushing Barcelona, Bayern were already the favourites of many to go all the way in this year's competition and lift the European Cup for a sixth time.

After becoming the first side to

**TONIGHT'S MATCH**

LYON VS LYON

Time: 12:30 am

Telecast: Sony Ten channels

score eight goals in a Champions League knockout match, it is now tough to see exactly which team will stop them from winning a famous treble.

Nineteen teams have tried and failed to stop the Bavarian giants from winning in a run stretching back to February 16.

In fact, going further back, Hansi Flick's men have now won 24 of their last 25 matches in all competitions, the exception being a stalemate with fellow semifinalists RB Leipzig. The manner of their crushing win over European heavyweights Barca really was one of those 'where were you?' moments, with six different players getting on the scoresheet.

Even more impressive than that, all eight goals were assisted by a different player, showing just how much attacking depth Bayern have in their ranks.

As witnessed in the last round against a much-fancied Man City side, though, Lyon cannot be written off in this intriguing final-four showdown in Lisbon.



Moussa Dembele

Incredibly, Lyon have not won consecutive Champions League matches in a single campaign since the 2011-12 season when defeating Dinamo Zagreb and APOEL.

Les Gones also knocked out Italian champions Juventus in the last 16, however, and will enter this match full of confidence.

In what could be a good omen for Lyon - and they will no doubt take whatever they can - Bayern have failed to progress from each of their last four semifinals.

Bayern came out on top when the sides met at this stage in the 2009-10 semis, albeit with that tie being played over two legs, unlike this one-off clash on neutral soil.

In a unique campaign that has provided many surprises, Lyon will be hoping for one more massive twist as they look to overcome the continent's most in-form side.



Robert Lewandowski

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Nortje to replace Woakes at Delhi Capitals

Mumbai: South African fast bowler Anrich Nortje will replace England's Chris Woakes in the Delhi Capitals squad for this year's IPL, the franchise said Tuesday. Woakes, a key part of England's 50-over World Cup-winning squad last year and a regular member of the Test team, pulled out of the IPL to prolong his international career. The 31-year-old has not played for his country in the T20 format since 2015. Nortje, 26, made his international debut last year and has played six Tests, seven ODIs and three T20 matches. The 53-day tournament (IPL) will begin September 19 in Dubai.

### Barca's Ter Stegen to undergo knee surgery

Barcelona: Barcelona goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen said he will undergo knee surgery to prevent future injuries. He said doctors suggested the tendon surgery as a 'clean-up as there were some irritations earlier this season'. "It's a proactive intervention in order to prevent and prepare for the future," the goalkeeper said on his Instagram account Monday. He said he will need "some weeks" to recover and return to full strength. "I'm calm and positive about the situation," he said. "I will come back soon."

### Asian Boxing C'ship postponed to 2021

New Delhi: The Asian Boxing Championship, which was to be held in India in November-December, has been postponed to next year owing to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the national federation's secretary general Jay Kowli told PTI, Tuesday. The decision was taken at the Asian Boxing Confederation's (ASBC) Executive Committee meeting held online Monday. India last hosted the men's Asian meet back in 1980 in Mumbai before conducting the women's event in 2003 in Hisar.

### David Silva joins Sociedad from Man City

Madrid: Real Sociedad signed former Manchester City playmaker David Silva on a two-year contract. The Basque Country club picked up Silva on a free transfer after his decade-long stint at City ended. Sociedad said the 34-year-old Spaniard will join the rest of the squad in the coming days for pre-season training. Silva joined Man City since 2010, helping revamp the English club and turn it into a contender in European soccer. His last game with City was the 1-3 loss to Lyon in the quarterfinals of the Champions League Saturday, when he came on as a late substitute. Silva previously played for Spanish teams Valencia, Eibar and Celta Vigo.

# Bad light issue needs to be addressed: Root

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Southampton, August 18: Following the culmination of the rain-marred second Test against Pakistan which ended in a pale draw, England captain Joe Root believes bad light issue need to be addressed to keep the players on the ground.

Only 134.3 overs could be bowled in the second Test at the Ageas Bowl because of rain and bad light, making it the ninth shortest Test in England

in terms of balls bowled and the shortest match since England hosted Pakistan at Lord's in 1987.

In his post-match press conference Monday, the 29-year-old said authorities could consider using a brighter red ball, bringing forward the start time and improving floodlights.

"It is something that needs looking at higher up the chain," Root was quoted as saying by BBC Sport. "It is way above my pay grade but there are dif-

ferent things that may be able to be trialled to see if there are other ways we could do things in this country to avoid similar scenarios. It has been a huge talking point but it needs to be addressed somewhere somehow," he added.

Root, who did not blame the umpires, added: "We are all for playing but don't want anyone getting injured or hurt because of light or wet ground."

Pakistan, who lost the first Test at the Old Trafford by

three wickets, must win the final Test, which starts at the Ageas Bowl Friday, to draw the series.

Meanwhile, Root also said he would 'love' to play in Pakistan, however adding that it was 'not my decision to make'. England have not toured Pakistan since 2005-06 over security concerns following the 2009 terrorist attack on the Sri Lanka team bus in Lahore. The Three Lions are, however, scheduled to tour the country in 2022.

