



DEEPIKA'S NEW FEAT

Actor Deepika Padukone has featured in the 'Seven Happy Women' list by Chopard under its 'Happy Diamond' campaign

LEISURE P2



CHINA BLAMES BRITAIN

In an unusual diplomatic move, China has lashed out at Britain, blaming them for India's troubles in Kashmir

INTERNATIONAL P10



UEFA CL FINAL TODAY

Manchester City lock horns with rivals Chelsea in an all-English UEFA Champions League final in Porto

SPORTS P12

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Asks nothing, wants long term solutions

PM MODI ANNOUNCES ₹500 CRORE ASSISTANCE FOR YAAS-HIT ODISHA

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday reviewed the post-cyclone situation in the state at a meeting here where the Odisha government sought no immediate funds to manage the expenditure incurred in disaster management as the Centre is already burdened by the Covid crisis and demanded long term solutions to mitigate problems of repeated cyclones and provision of disaster resilient power systems.

The state stressed on long term solutions to the problem as Odisha is frequently hit by major calamities like cyclones, Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) PK Jena told reporters after the meeting.

Immediately after the review meeting which continued for about an hour, attended by Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Pratap Sarangi, Chief Secretary SC Mahapatra and other senior officials, the Prime Minister left for aerial survey to the worst cyclone affected areas of Balasore and Bhadrak, on his way to West Bengal.

"Sought assistance for long term measures to make Odisha disaster resilient as we are frequented by such climate hazards every year. Highlighted Odisha's demand for disaster resilient power infrastructure and resilient coastal protection with storm surge resilient embankments," Patnaik said through his Twitter handle.

The Prime Minister was earlier received by Governor Ganeshi Lal, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union

We have to continue the focus towards more scientific management of disasters. As the frequency and impact of cyclonic systems are increasing in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, communication systems, mitigation efforts and preparedness have to undergo a major change

NARENDRA MODI | PM

As the country is at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have not sought any immediate financial assistance to burden the Central government and would like to manage it through our own resources to tide over the crisis

NAVEEN PATNAIK | CM



PM Narendra Modi chairs a meeting with CM Naveen Patnaik, Governor Ganeshi Lal and others to review the impact of Cyclone Yaas in Odisha, Friday.

Ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Pratap Sarangi at the Biju Patnaik International Airport here.

The Chief Minister sought both a disaster resilient power infrastructure and a permanent solution to protect the coastal region from storm surges which accompany cyclones, the SRC said adding that Odisha has a long coastline of about 480 km of which above 200 km is vulnerable to tidal surge. Though the state has not demanded any immediate financial demand over the loss caused by the cyclone Yaas, the PM has announced an assistance of ₹500 crore for Odisha.

"As the country is at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have not sought any immediate financial assistance to burden the Central government and would like to manage it through our own resources to tide

over the crisis," the CM had said earlier in the day.

However, after returning back to New Delhi, the Prime Minister announced financial assistance of ₹500 crore to Odisha in the aftermath of cyclone Yaas.

Modi said the Centre will deploy an inter-ministerial team to visit Odisha and West Bengal to assess the extent of damage, based on which further assistance will be granted.

"We have to continue the focus towards more scientific management of disasters. As the frequency and impact of cyclonic systems are increasing in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, communication systems, mitigation efforts and preparedness have to undergo a major change," Modi said.

The PM appreciated the preparedness and disaster management activ-

ities of the Odisha government which have resulted in minimal loss of lives. He also noted that the state has embarked on long term mitigation efforts for dealing with such natural disasters.

Cyclone Yaas, packing winds gusting to 145 kmph whiplashed parts of India's eastern coast Wednesday, killing at least three people in Odisha and one in West Bengal and leaving behind a trail of damaged homes and flooded farmland, forcing more than 21 lakh people to be evacuated to safe shelters in the states of West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand.

After the havoc caused by the cyclone, heavy post-cyclone rains Thursday have seen river water levels rising above the danger mark, placing four districts of Odisha - Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara and Keonjhar - on high alert.

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Earlier one forced me to stop using motor vehicles, now this I worry will make her stop cooking

Court in Dominica stops Mehul Choksi's removal from country



AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 28: A court in Dominica has "restrained" authorities from removing fugitive businessman Mehul Choksi from the Caribbean island country till further orders, local media reported.

The order came on a petition filed by the lawyers of Choksi, who was detained in Dominica for "illegal entry". "The legal team has filed a habeas corpus petition in Dominica for Mehul Choksi and have also highlighted deprivation of access to Mehul Choksi and deprivation of constitutional rights to legal assistance," Choksi's lawyer Vijay Aggarwal told PTI.

Aggarwal had Thursday raised doubts about the way Choksi had gone missing from Antigua and Barbuda only to be detained in Dominica, about 100 nautical miles away, for illegal entry.

Choksi's lawyer in Dominica, Wayne Marsh, had told a radio show that in a brief interaction with his client, allowed by authorities after a lot of efforts, the diamondaire had claimed that he was picked up at Jolly Harbour in Antigua and Barbuda by men looking like Indian and Antiguan policemen and was put in a vessel. Choksi, who is wanted in a ₹13,500-crore loan fraud in the PNB, was last seen in his car in Antigua and Barbuda Sunday.

WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE



A couple walks on Sendhapur-Jajpur main road flooded by the Baitarani in Dhamnagar block of Bhadrak district, Friday. OP PHOTO

Flight returns mid-air to Delhi after dead bat found in business class

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 28: An Air India flight to Newark in the US had to return to the Delhi airport on the morning of May 27 as cabin crew saw a bat's carcass inside the business class area of the plane just half an hour after takeoff, sources said Friday.

The plane had departed from the Delhi airport at 2.20 am Thursday and no one noticed the bat's carcass before the takeoff, they mentioned.

The cabin crew members saw the carcass in the eighth row, which is in the business class area of the plane, and informed the pilots, the sources said.

The pilot then informed the air traffic controller (ATC) about the carcass and the plane was turned back, they stated.

India's Covid surge impacts COVAX supply

THERE WILL BE A SHORTFALL OF 190 MILLION DOSES BY THE END OF JUNE, SAYS A JOINT STATEMENT BY WHO, UNICEF, GAVI & CEPI

AGENCIES

United Nations, May 28: The "terrible" surge of the coronavirus cases in India has severely impacted COVAX's vaccine supply in the second quarter of this year to the extent that there will be a shortfall of 190 million doses by the end of June, according to a joint statement by the WHO, UNICEF, GAVI and CEPI.

The joint statement was issued Thursday by Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) CEO Dr Richard Hatchett, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance CEO Dr Seth Berkley, WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. "Countries that are advanced in their vaccination programmes are seeing cases of COVID-19 decline, hospitalisations decrease



and early signs of some kind of normality resume. However, the global picture is far more concerning," the statement said. Giving a call to action to equip COVAX to deliver 2 billion doses in 2021, the statement said, "We

are seeing the traumatic effects of the terrible surge of COVID-19 in South Asia - a surge which has also severely impacted global vaccine supplies."

It added that COVAX has proven it works as the global mechanism for equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines, having delivered over 70 million doses to 126 countries and economies around the world since February. "However, the terrible surge of the virus in India has had a severe impact on COVAX's supply in the second quarter of this year, to the point where, by the end of June we will face a shortfall of 190 million doses," the statement said.

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VALUE	VI	VA
SENSEX	51422.88	↑	307.66
NIFTY	15435.70	↑	97.80
DOLLAR	73.17	↓	₹0.07
EURO	88.22	↓	₹0.41
GOLD	₹48,472	↓	₹109
SILVER	₹71,311	↓	₹408

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	35.2°C	35.2°C
MIN	27.0°C	25.2°C
Humidity	82%	79%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil
Forecast	Light rain likely	

COVID VAX ADVISORY PANEL MEET

CM banks on expert advice for future waves

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: For early vaccination of people against Covid-19, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Friday said his government intends to utilise all resources.

Speaking at the first Vaccination Advisory Committee meeting here, Patnaik sought the advice of top health experts of the country on strategy to tackle the future waves of the pandemic and on how to

timely help to Covid patients and take care of their healthcare requirements to a large extent.

"We have been able to manage the oxygen support systems and even provided help to other states for their oxygen systems. We have been able to manage without our healthcare systems getting over overwhelmed," he pointed out.

Stating that the current trend of Covid cases is on decline across the state except for a few districts, the CM

Vaccine tender date extended

BHUBANESWAR: Due to poor response, state-run Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd (OSMCL) Friday extended the last date for submission of bid documents of the global tender floated for procurement of Covid-19 vaccines. The date has been extended by seven days till June 4. The corporation has also extended the submission of online bid, technical bid opening and price bid for a week. The tender was scheduled to be awarded Friday. In a hurry, the state government extended the dates at the last moment. Health department sources said that the date was extended in view of requests from many prospective vendors, cyclone Yaas and to encourage greater participation. However, it seems that there was poor response to the tender for Covid-19 vaccines. In an aim to attract more manufacturers, the state government first relaxed the terms of the global tender document. Now, with this extension of date, it seems that the government is not able to get proper vaccine suppliers. Following the shortage in supply from Indian vaccine manufacturers, the state had decided to procure the vaccines from the open market through global tender to vaccinate the people of the 18 to 44 age group.

strengthen the healthcare system further.

The CM said the pandemic has devastated families, communities and economies across the world. "In India, the second wave has caused so much turmoil that people are very scared about the future. They fear more variants and more waves. They fear the uncertainty. On top of it, the lockdowns and their effects on the economy have caused great financial pressure on many families and businesses," he said.

Speaking on the Odisha situation, Patnaik said the state has been able to provide

helped that the second wave is beginning to recede in the state.

Expressing his concern over the next wave, Patnaik said, "All of us are concerned about the next wave and if it's going to affect the children. If it's true, then we will have to be better prepared since taking care of children in hospitals is a big challenge."

Expressing his support to the suggestions of the committee, he said the government values the advice of this committee. "We need to fine tune our processes to defeat the coronavirus with your advice," he added.

All except Twitter share details under IT rules

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: Google, Facebook and WhatsApp have shared details with IT ministry under the digital rules but Twitter is still not following the new norms, government sources said Friday.

The sources said Twitter has not sent details of Chief Compliance Officer to the ministry and only shared details of a lawyer working in a law firm in India as their Nodal Contact Person and Grievance Officer. This has been done when the rules require such designated officers of the signif-

icant social media platforms to be the employees of the company and resident in India, they pointed out.

Most of the large social media platforms have shared details of Chief Compliance Officer, Nodal Contact Person, Grievance Officer with the IT Ministry as required under the new rules. The sources said social media intermediaries, including

Google, Facebook, WhatsApp, Koo, Sharechat, Telegram and LinkedIn, have shared details with the ministry as per the requirements of the new rules. Twitter is still not following the rules, the sources said.





AJITPAL SINGH'S FIRE IN THE MOUNTAINS BAGS AUDIENCE AWARD AT IFFLA

Filmmaker Ajitpal Singh's acclaimed movie *Fire in the Mountains* has won the Audience Award for Best Feature at the 19th Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA). The 19th edition of festival concluded its eight-day run Thursday, during which it showcased 40 films in 17 languages, including movies by 16 women directors.

SIMON CANNOT IMAGINE LIFE WITHOUT HIS SON

Music mogul Simon Cowell says his son Eric is the most amazing thing to have happened to him. He shares seven-year-old Eric with girlfriend Lauren Silverman.



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ARIES
You will be torn between work and family as both try to grab your attention. You may reserve the evening for having fun. You crave to become famous and are likely to accomplish your ambition shortly. You have Ganesha's blessings to support you.

TAURUS
Ganesha sees you happily engaged in attending to day to day affairs. The day will turn out to be a hectic one. Do not expect too many time outs or even small breaks. Fortunately you will not be too uncomfortable with your tight schedule and will feel as fresh and easy at cease work as you had been at the beginning of the day.

GEMINI
You have a certain degree of equanimity when it comes to reacting to praise and criticism. Today, however, you will be emotional, and it won't be too bad. You will get appreciated at work and your liberal show of emotions will only make others like you more.

CANCER
Today, Cupid will send its arrow right through your heart. You will be trembling with pain - the sweet pain of lust and love. But the overzealous Cupid may not stop at just that. Just to be completely sure, it will virtually do shooting practice at you.

LEO
It is good to be impulsive sometimes; but if one were to ask you today, you would be all for a meticulously planned approach to life. So much so that from now on, planning will become almost a part and parcel of your life, predicts Ganesha.

VIRGO
Today, find yourself rummaging through the vast recesses of your inner self. You will make fabulous money to spend on your loved ones. Face up to work pressures by indulging in corporeal pleasures.

LIBRA
Today might be a good day to invest in that body armour you saw on the telly last night. At least find one that will shield you from being at the receiving end of your seniors and the daily grind of life. If you happen to be a job aspirant, be prepared to slog it out for your success.

SCORPIO
You may find yourself at crossroads, wondering which path to take. Crucial decisions regarding your personal life may numb your thoughts. Let this not interfere with your routine or it may lead to complications at work and with loved ones. Avoid making any hasty decisions, and in case you cannot find an apt solution, then delay the decision altogether, advises Ganesha.

SAGITTARIUS
Personal grooming will be on your mind today. A small fortune may be spent on enhancing the way you look, especially on a new hair-do. Retail Therapy is on the cards, and you may indulge spending on clothes and jewellery.

CAPRICORN
It's difficult to keep calm and have a control over your temper in times of distress, but today, you will prove all who surrendered to the whims of adversity wrong, foresees Ganesha. You will be unfaltering in dealing with problems, and will overcome them with ease.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will have a lot of fun with your siblings! Though generally well-organised and methodical, you will enjoy going with the flow of what your siblings and friends plan for you. Sometimes, spontaneity is a good thing, says Ganesha.

PISCES
For those in the creative, marketing or advertising fields, today will likely bring about an important milestone on their path to progress, says Ganesha. Your creativity and ingenuity will be at their peak. Remembering that confidence is the key to success will keep you from shying away from challenges, which when surmounted will bring you substantial gains.

'You just want people to like watching you'

Mumbai: Actress Ileana D'Cruz has had a great run down South and has also been doing her share of Hindi films. She says everything comes down to people and, as an artiste, one just wants the audience to like watching you.

Popularity, she explains, is the one thing that balances the fact that the film industry can actually be a very cruel place to survive.

"It (the film industry) is brutal, of course, but it comes down to people. If they (people) like you that is all you need. You just want people to like watching you," she told IANS.

Ileana feels the moment an actor is not appreciated they lose the mark.

"It basically goes the same for me. I wouldn't want to watch a film with an actor I don't like watching. The minute you are not liked anymore you sort of lose the mark. The industry is brutal in a sense, but it has got so many perks as well," she says.

Acting is a profession that comes with its pros and cons, the actress notes, in this context.

"You cannot have all the good things only, there is always a little bit of con. I think that makes it interesting. It makes you work harder. It makes you strive to keep doing better," she sums up.

Ileana will next be seen in *Unfair N Lovely*, a comic take on India's obsession with fair skin. The film is set against the backdrop of Haryana and casts her opposite Randeep Hooda.



Deepika features in 'Seven Happy Women' list

New Delhi: Actress Deepika Padukone has featured in the 'Seven Happy Women' list by Chopard under its 'Happy Diamond' campaign. The other names in the list include Aja Naomi King, Jung Ryeo-Won, Sadie Sink, Anne Nakamura, Dorra Zarrouk and Yang Zi.

Chopard's Co-President and Artistic Director, Caroline Scheufele, has chosen the names with unparalleled influence to embody Happy Diamonds. "Seven Friends of the Maison who represent, each through in their own way, a strong, free, joyful way of living in the world and of owning the spirit of the era. Deepika Padukone, Aja Naomi King, Jung Ryeo-Won, Sadie Sink, Anne Nakamura, Dorra Zarrouk and Yang Zi have all grasped the codes of their time to blaze their trail in a manner that is both singular and generous."

Their are powerful voices that resonate with that of Karin Scheufele — Caroline Scheufele's mother — who once exclaimed, faced with the first sketches of the future Happy Diamonds: "diamonds are happier when they are free".

The brand quotes: "An indispensable voice, she (Deepika) speaks of the fragility and strength of the human mind, which she describes with great intelligence: 'To accept the highs and the lows. To embrace the various emotions that we are challenged with every single day. And to live a life that is fuelled by authenticity and purpose'. A strong mantra for a free spirit that bears witness to a deep humanity, making her a true global icon."

MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

UNICEF ropes in Manushi to raise awareness

Mumbai: Manushi Chhillar has been relentlessly working towards raising awareness on menstrual hygiene in India and this year she has been roped in by UNICEF to raise awareness on the issue in India. Speaking about the initiative, Manushi shared, "Poor menstrual hygiene affects the health and well-being of women and especially girls, but we don't very often discuss this. The existing culture of silence, misinformation and harmful myths around menstruation denies many girls the future and opportunities that they deserve."

UNICEF is advocating menstrual hygiene education for girls before their first period, sensitizing men and boys to be understanding and supportive and to open conversations about periods among other objectives. Manushi too will be working on these through her social media platforms, tapping in the

youth audience base. Manushi feels that the current pandemic situation has further exacerbated menstruation-related challenges for women and girls. "COVID-19, lockdowns and safety precautions have disrupted access to sanitary products, adding to the challenges they face. We need to speak up to dispel menstruation-related taboos and stigma, sensitize men and boys to be supportive of girls; and support availability of essential sanitary products for girls and women in times of crisis," shared the former Miss World.

Manushi Chhillar is all set to debut in Hindi film industry. She has signed up to play the lead op-



Kunal Kemmu is an Insta poet!

Mumbai: Actor Kunal Kemmu revealed his poetic side on social media Friday, penning random thoughts about the pandemic and the recent spate of cyclones in rhyme.

"Troubled are the times like rough weather at sea
But happiness will begin with you and me

The times may be tough and smiles may be few
We may need to change a few things both old and new

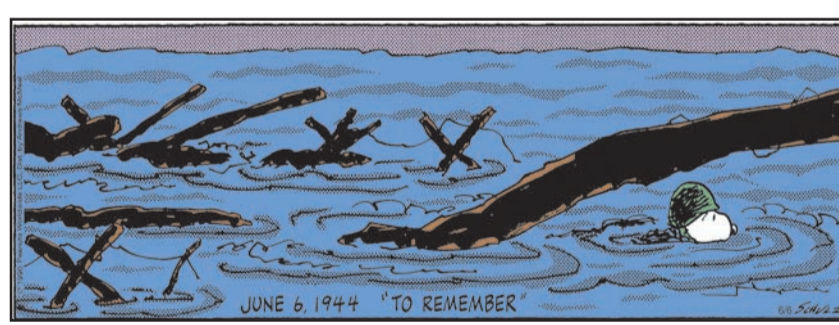
We are capable of making things better inside and out
We will see through this too, without a doubt

Sometimes it may feel dark and look like it won't change ever
The best and worst thing about time is this, nothing lasts forever," he wrote.

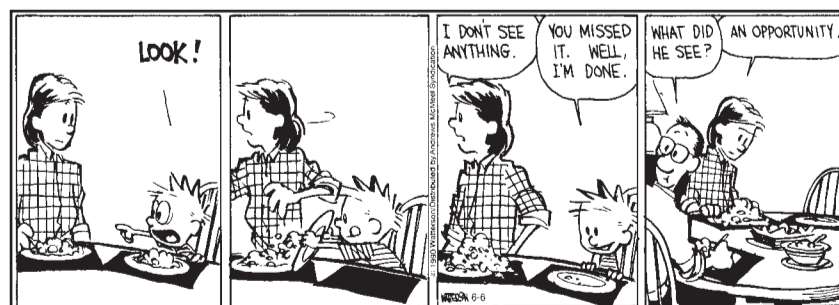
Kunal posted his poem with two pictures on Instagram, sporting a bright blue T-shirt as he looked into the camera intensely.



PEANUTS



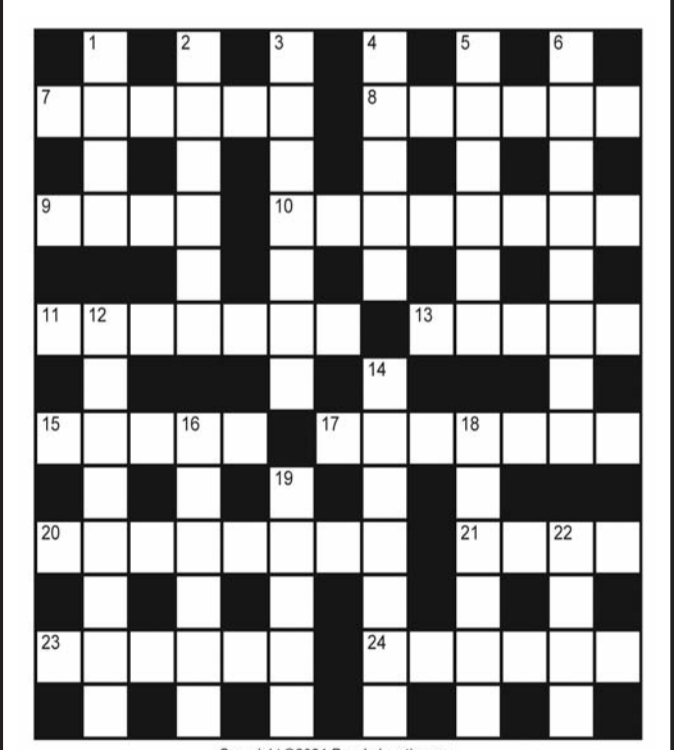
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



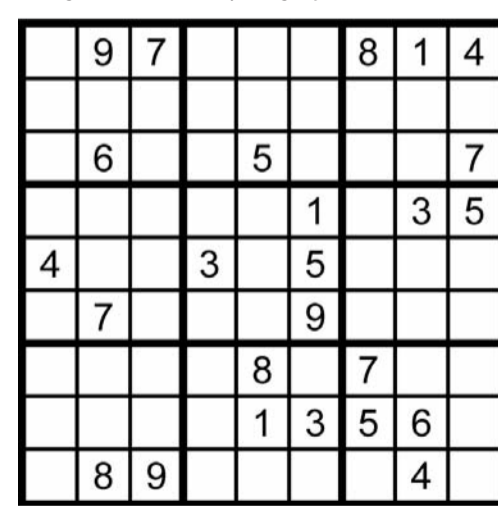
FUN post CROSSWORD



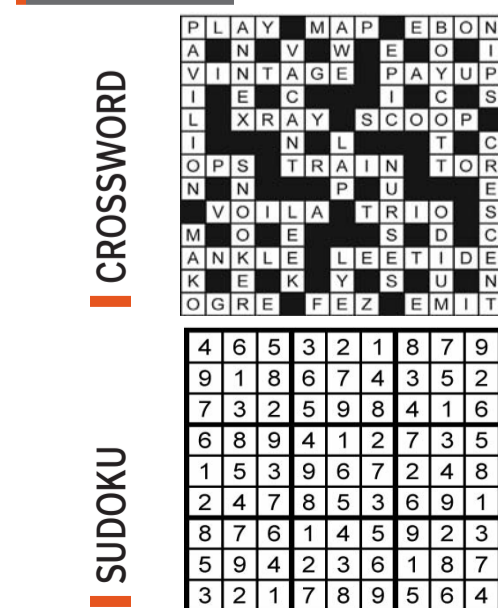
- Across**
- 7 Chest of drawers
 - 8 Souped-up car (3,3)
 - 9 Blackthorn fruit
 - 10 Harbours
 - 11 Grazing land
 - 13 Jeans material
 - 15 Corpulent
 - 17 Nudged
 - 20 Kind of guitar
 - 21 London district
 - 23 Desk item
 - 24 Kicks out
 - 3 Baby's room
 - 4 Chintzy
 - 5 Flunky
 - 6 Land turtle
 - 12 Small tuna
 - 14 Ice mass
 - 16 Court game
 - 18 Pearl maker
 - 19 Baby bird?
 - 22 Despise
- Down**
- 1 Kittiwake
 - 2 Echo

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



SOLUTIONS

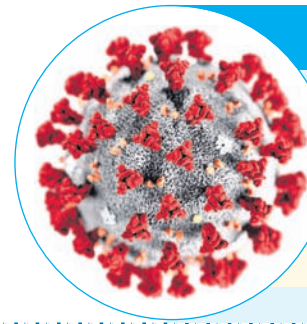


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

RATH YATRA PREP



Carpenters busy constructing chariot wheels at Rath Yard in Puri, Friday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	16,98,79,799	15,16,47,310	35,30,136
India	2,75,55,457	2,48,93,410	3,18,895
Odisha	7,39,955	6,47,133	2,651

Govt asks Collectors to vet Covid deaths

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: With death of Covid positive patients showing no signs of abating, the state government has directed the district Collectors and municipal commissioners to review these fatalities through an expert panel within 48 hours of the occurrence.

In a letter to all the Collectors and municipal commissioners, Health and Family Welfare, Additional Chief Secretary (ACS) PK Mohapatra has asked them to functionalise the district level committees to review Covid-19 deaths. The panels will also audit quality of care being provided in various Covid care facilities under their jurisdictions.

The role of these committees will be to audit the quality of care at Covid care facilities and review the death of Covid positive and suspected patients in government and private hospitals in the districts and corporation areas, Mohapatra said.



Further, the panels will also examine all the medical records of the patients while auditing the quality of care and reviewing deaths with a view to strengthening and improving Covid response system to save lives, he said.

The ACS urged the Collectors and commissioners to direct the officials concerned to convene meetings of district level committees daily or on every alternate day so that each death is reviewed within

48 hours of its occurrence.

In October 2020, during first wave of Covid, the government had issued a similar order asking the authorities to form such panels headed by an officer not below the rank of additional district magistrate (ADM). The other members would be chief district medical officer, an ICU trained doctor and medical officer of concerned treating hospital. However, the order was not followed by many of

The role of the district level committees will be to audit the quality of services at Covid care facilities and review the death of Covid positive and suspected patients in government and private hospitals in the districts and corporation areas

The ACS urged the Collectors and commissioners to direct the officials concerned to convene meetings of district level committees daily or on every alternate day so that each death is reviewed within 48 hours of its occurrence

the district and municipal administrations.

A total of 608 persons have died due to Covid-19 in May this year. In past five days, the fatalities remained high—above 30. While 32 Covid patients died May 24, the figure stood at 33, 35, 34 and 33 in next four days.

BUMPER CATCH



Fishermen clear their nets after a good catch following cyclonic storm Yaas in Puri, Friday

OP PHOTO

510 roads cleared of blockages post Yaas



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: The state government Friday said that it has been able to clear 510 roads after the devastation caused by cyclone Yaas in north Odisha.

The highest 328 road blockages were reported in Balasore district while the least of eight such blockages were reported from Cuttack.

The government said that a total of 2,074 trees were uprooted during the cyclone, creating the road blocks which have now been cleared by the district administration and other departments.

Balasore reported the highest number of uprooting of trees at 1,701 while the lowest such instances was reported from Cuttack district at 12. All the fallen trees have been removed from roads and other places, the government said.

Data was collected from eight cyclone affected districts of Odisha.

Uploading of marks for HSC results starts today

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, May 28: The Board of Secondary Education (BSE), Odisha, will start uploading the marks of previous internal examinations on its website from May 29 to facilitate the process of publication of results for annual high school certificate (HSC) examinations.

The headmasters of mentor schools will upload the marks in the presence of the headmasters of all affiliated schools within 7am and 5pm.

The BSE has asked the headmasters of mentor schools to upload the marks with due care. "The headmasters of mentor schools will press the save button after entering the marks of students. Other teachers will verify the entries and press the update button. The headmasters will press the submission button after verifying the entries with utmost care," said the BSE instruction. The uploading of marks will continue till June 7, BSE sources said.

The board has asked the headmasters to upload the highest mark secured by a student in each subject from his/her performances in the half-yearly and annual examinations of Class IX and the second, third and fourth practice tests of Class X. The headmasters have



THE BOARD HAS ASKED THE HMs TO UPLOAD THE HIGHEST MARK SECURED BY A STUDENT IN INTERNAL EXAMS

been told to maintain secrecy while uploading the marks, sources added.

All information and instructions with regard to the uploading of marks would be made available on the website www.bseodisha.ac.in. The results of the annual HSC examinations would be announced in July, BSE sources said.

It is worth mentioning here that the state government has cancelled this year's HSC examinations due to the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

The BSE has fixed modalities for awarding marks to the Class X students.

SC hearing on CBSE Class XII exams Monday

PNN/AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 28: The Supreme Court Friday said it would hear May 31 a plea seeking directions to cancel Class XII board examinations of CBSE and ICSE in the wake of surge in Covid-19 cases across the country.

A two-judge bench of the apex court comprising Justices AM Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari asked the petitioner, Mamta Sharma, to issue a copy of the petition to the counsels of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) and also to the Attorney General. The bench observed that some resolution may come out by Monday.

When the petitioner said she will serve the copy of the petition to the parties, the bench observed, "You do it. We will have it on Monday (May 31)".

The petition has arrayed the Centre, the CBSE and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination as respondents in the matter.



The petition has sought directions to the Centre, the CBSE and the ICSE to cancel the Class XII examinations and devise an "objective methodology" to declare the result within a specific timeframe

The petitioner contended that the CBSE and ICSE authorities cannot remain "mute spectators" to the present scenario by not taking timely decision regarding the exams of around 12 lakh students of Class XII

During the hearing conducted through videoconferencing, Justice Maheshwari observed that the CBSE is likely to take a call on this issue June 1.

The counsel representing the ICSE told the bench that since the apex court is hearing the matter, the high courts should not deal with it.

"Nothing will happen till Monday," the bench said.

When the petitioner told the bench that the top court can take suo motu cognisance of the issue, the bench said, "Be optimistic. May be by Monday some resolution will be there. Let us have it on Monday."

The petition has sought directions to the Centre, the CBSE and the ICSE to cancel the Class XII examinations and devise an "objective methodology" to declare the result within a specific timeframe.

The plea has contended that due to the unprecedented health emergency and surge in Covid-19 cases in the country, it is not possible to conduct the examination and any further delay would cause irreparable loss to the future of students.

The petitioner also contended that the CBSE and ICSE authorities cannot remain "mute spectators" to the present scenario by not taking timely decision regarding the exams of around 12 lakh students of Class XII. The CBSE had earlier said it has not taken any decision yet on Class XII board examination even as a section of students and parents have been demanding cancellation of exams in view of the pandemic situation. The board had April 14 announced cancellation of Class X exams and postponement of Class XII exams in view of the surge in coronavirus cases.

Apply online to renew off-road vehicles: Govt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: The state Transport department Friday decided to continue with the process of receiving online applications for renewal of off-road (unused) vehicles.

The department had last year issued a notification regarding use of online application portal (Vahan) of Transport department for getting the certificates instead of physically visiting offices to get the certificates.

The department, however, said that the applications must be made on or before the expiry of the validity of the previous certificate, in case of renewal.

The department said that after receiving the application for the same, the department will scrutinise the same with the registration details, permits and others and issue it online.

After the applicant's plea is accepted, he/she can download the same from the portal without visiting the department of offices.

The decision was taken in view of relentless rise in Covid-19 cases in the state, said sources.

BAMBOO CRAFTS



A woman weaves bamboo baskets in Ranihaat area of Cuttack amid the Covid-induced lockdown, Friday

OP PHOTO

Helpline numbers launched for Cuttack Covid hosps

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, May 28: The Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) has issued helpline numbers for various Dedicated Covid Hospitals (DCHs) and Covid Care Centres (CCCs) in the city here.

The family members of Covid patients can update themselves with the status of health conditions of their near and dear ones through the helpline numbers, CMC sources said.

The state government has opened helpdesks at various Covid hospitals to provide detailed information



The CMC has issued helpline numbers for eight DCHs and 3 CCCs in the Silver city

CMC has issued special helpline numbers at eight DCHs and three CCCs in the city, sources added.

Now, family members of Covid patients can collect information about their near and dear ones by dialing 9238008832 and 789446045 for Ashwini DCH; 18003459595, 8984580633, 6712411477 and 6371220412 for SCB DCH; 7327859198, 7205096002

and 7205096022 for Sadguru DCH; 7847803971 for South Point DCH; 7847825366 for Shruti DCH; 6370566949 for Unique DCH; 6371082845 for Omm Shubham DCH and 9337335788 for Rudra DCH. The helpline numbers for three CCCs are 7326830977 for L&T CCC, 7205337219 for IMIT CCC and 7609886298 for Bose CCC, sources said.

"The helpline numbers will function round the clock. People can collect detailed information related to the health condition and treatment of their Covid infected relatives through the helplines," said an official of CMC.

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Below 10K cases for 2nd day in a row

NO LET-UP IN COVID DEATHS AS ODISHA CONTINUES TO LOSE 30+ LIVES FOR 5 DAYS NOW

PNN/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 28: Odisha's Covid-19 tally soared to 7,39,955 Friday as 7,216 more people tested positive for the infection, while 33 fresh fatalities pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 2,651, a Health department official said.

As many as 4,041 new cases were reported in quarantine centres, while 3,175 infections were detected during contact tracing.

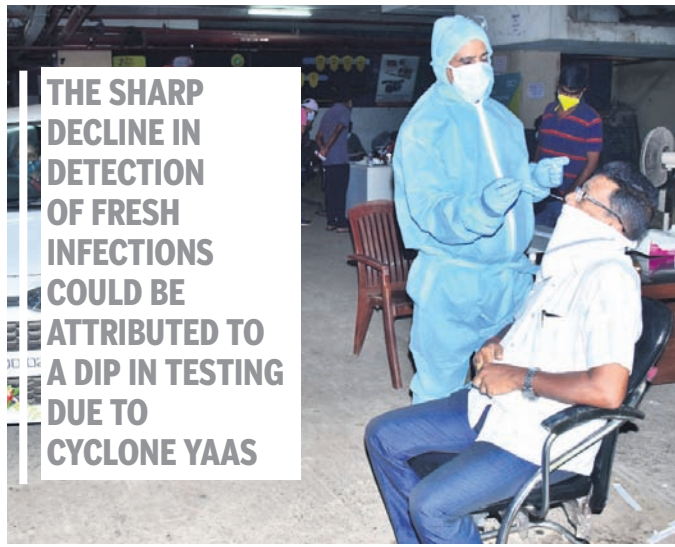
The number of fresh infections dropped below 10,000 for the second consecutive day this month as testing of samples also dipped due to the havoc wreaked by cyclone Yaas in the coastal state.

Cuttack reported the highest number of new cases at 1,091, followed by Khurda (809) and Kendrapara (487).

Angul district recorded the highest number of fresh fatalities at five, followed by four in Sundargarh and three each in Boudh, Kalahandi, Khurda and Keonjhar.

On May 27, the Health and Family Welfare department reported 34 deaths due to Covid-19, while 35 persons succumbed to the infection a day earlier—May 26. The department May 25 said that 33 persons died of Covid, while 32 persons lost their lives to the infection the day before.

As many as 6,47,133 people have



thus far recovered from the disease, including 11,551 Thursday.

Fifty-three coronavirus patients have died due to comorbidities so far.

The state has tested over 1.15 crore samples for Covid-19 till date, including 43,768 Thursday.

Odisha's overall positivity rate stands at 6.38 per cent, as per Health department data.

Meanwhile, the state government has directed all the district authorities to conduct health check-up of all the evacuees as well as officials involved in the cy-

DAYS	DEATHS
MAY 24	32
MAY 25	33
MAY 26	35
MAY 27	34
MAY 28	33

clone relief, restoration and rehabilitation.

Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Family Welfare department, Pradipta Kumar Mohapatra directed the Collectors of 12 districts affected by cyclone

Yaas to closely monitor the health conditions of the people evacuated to safety and the officials who were on duty to mitigate the calamity.

A total of 7.5 lakh people were evacuated and over 1 lakh officials were engaged in disaster management.

The health check-up will be conducted in Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Sundargarh, Puri, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Angul and Khurda districts.

"As the families in the cyclone shelters are now returning to their homes and the restoration work will also be completed over time, it is important that the concerned persons should be closely monitored for Covid symptoms over the coming weeks," an order issued by the Health department said.

The Additional Chief Secretary asked officials concerned to be vigilant during surveillance of families returning from cyclone shelters and people engaged in restoration work.

"Such people (those participating in cyclone management and evacuees) should also be sensitised to monitor their own health. In case of any symptoms, they should be immediately isolated and tested for the virus," Mohapatra pointed out.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has directed the state Health and Family Welfare department secretary to pay Rs 4.50 lakh compensation to the family of a pregnant woman who died due to alleged negligence by authorities of Balasore district headquarters hospital (DHH) in 2014.

Hearing the plea filed by rights activist Jayant Kumar Dash, the commission also directed the government to submit a status report regarding the departmental proceedings initiated against the errant doctor Trinath Pal, Obstetrics & Gynaecology specialist at Balasore DHH for dereliction of duty.


The NHRC has asked the state government to submit a compliance report in connection with the payment of financial aid to the relatives of the deceased, Sudipta Das, within four weeks. The Chief Secretary has been asked to coordinate with the Health department officials and ensure the compliance of the directions by the NHRC.

The complainant lodged a petition with the commission October 12, 2014 on the basis of a report published in leading Odia daily Dharitri regarding the death of

₹4.5L NHRC succour to kin of medical negligence victim

2014 BALASORE DHH CASE

The complainant lodged a petition with the commission October 12, 2014 on the basis of a report published in leading Odia daily Dharitri regarding the death of Sudipta due to the negligence of doctors

Sudipta was admitted to the DHH by her husband after she experienced labour pain around 2pm October 9, 2014		One of the nurses at the DHH had allegedly demanded ₹1,500 from the deceased's husband for Sudipta's treatment
Despite repeated requests by her husband, the doctor delayed the treatment of the patient who was writhing in pain for more than six hour		Sudipta died around 10pm on the same night

The rights panel directed the govt to submit a status report regarding the departmental proceedings initiated against the errant doctor Trinath Pal, O&G specialist at Balasore DHH for dereliction of duty

Sudipta due to the negligence of doctors and alleged demand for bribe from her husband Damburdhar Das of Jambeswarpur village in Balasore. Dash had demanded financial aid to the family and legal action against the doctor.

According to sources, Sudipta was admitted to the DHH by her husband after she experienced labour pain at around 2pm October 9, 2014. However, despite repeated requests by her husband, the doctor delayed the treatment of the patient who was writhing in pain

for more than six hours. Meanwhile, one of the nurses had also allegedly demanded Rs 1,500 from the deceased's husband for Sudipta's treatment.

Sudipta died around 10pm on the same night. Subsequently, the O&G specialist, who was in charge at the time, was immediately transferred to another hospital in Nilagiri area. A case under section 304(A) of IPC (causing death by negligence) has also been registered against Pal following the commission's intervention in 2019.

Degree colleges, varsities in state to reopen June 1



AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, May 28: All public universities and degree colleges in the state will commence operation from June 1 following completion of summer vacation, state Higher Education (HE) department said Friday.

In a letter to all university vice-chancellors and principals of degree colleges, the department wrote, "The summer vacation as declared by this department will come to an end May 31, 2021. After end of summer vacation, the Higher Education Institutions shall resume functioning as per the earlier guidelines."

On May 4, the HE department had announced summer vacation for all higher educational institutions starting May 5 to May 31 this year. The state government had allowed holding interview of PhD and other research scholars on scheduled dates during the vacation. However, online classes and examinations were not held during the summer vacation period, said a source.

Centre urged to lend 3.45L Covaxin doses

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: In a bid to ensure seamless vaccination of those in the age group of 18-44 in Bhubaneswar, Health Minister Naba Kishore Das Friday urged the Centre to lend it 3.45 lakh doses of Covaxin.

In his letter, Das informed Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan that the Capital city of Bhubaneswar needs 7,92,730 doses of Covaxin in a bid to ensure both doses to 3,96,365 people, including healthcare and frontline workers as well as the 45-plus age group.

"Odisha has till date received 9,86,780 doses of Covaxin under the Centre's quota and 1,51,500 doses have been allocated for June. The state will be left with 3,45,550 doses of Covaxin even after inoculating 3,96,365 people," Das wrote in his letter.

Under the state procurement, Odisha has been allocated 1,65,940 doses of Covaxin which will be completely utilized by end of May. The allocation of Covaxin for June is 1,64,370 doses which can only be used for second dose vaccination of due beneficiaries and no new beneficiary can be vaccinated in June 2021, Das pointed out, adding that 1,37,426 beneficiaries have been vaccinated in the City so far.

The target beneficiary of Bhubaneswar urban in the 18 to 44

years age group is 5.17 lakh for which 10.34 lakh doses of Covaxin is required, he said.

Stating that 1.65 lakh doses of Covaxin will be completely utilized for first dose vaccination by the end of May, the Health Minister said another 3.52 lakh doses of Covaxin is required to inoculate the remaining beneficiaries in the city in June.

"Bhubaneswar is a large urban centre and presently has a high positivity rate of Covid-19 infection. Further, as a nodal point for air, rail and road communication as well as for commercial activities, Bhubaneswar always remains vulnerable to new waves of infection. It is therefore the priority of the state to saturate Covid-19 vaccination of the population of Bhubaneswar at the earliest," Das said.

He sought the permission to utilize 3.45 lakh dose of Covaxin available in Odisha under government of India supply for vaccination of 18 to 44 years age group in Bhubaneswar which shall be adjusted later on from state allocation.

74.9 lakh vaccinated in state

The Health department said that a total of 74,99,728 people have been vaccinated in the state against Covid-19. The department Friday was able to vaccinate 1,21,531 persons in the ongoing drive. A total of 666 active sites were planned for Friday.



NEED OF THE HOUR: (Clockwise from top) A serpentine queue to take vaccine against Covid-19 during a drive-in inoculation camp at Utkal Kanika Galleria Mall near Kalpana Square in Bhubaneswar, Friday; a woman takes a shot

OP PHOTOS

WORLD MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: All adolescent girls and women should be vaccinated against Covid-19 even during the menstruation period as it is a normal physiological process. This was revealed at a state-level sensitisation programme on the occasion of World Menstrual Hygiene Day, Friday.

The programme was conducted virtually by Women and Child Development (W&CD) department in collaboration with Unicef & UNFPA.

This year's theme is 'Action and Investment in Menstrual Hygiene and Health'.

The objective behind this day is to create awareness about the challenges and hardships girls and women face during menstruation. During this pandemic, lockdown, shutdown, everything may stop, but periods as human biological process don't stop — it's every adolescent girl's right to manage her

'No bar on vaccination even during periods'



Adolescent girls display posters and pamphlets to spread awareness on menstrual hygiene

OP PHOTO

period safely and with dignity. On the occasion, Seba Mohapatra, former director of Health and

Family Welfare department spoke on pandemic, menstrual hygiene and vaccination. She stressed on the

POOR MENSTRUAL HYGIENE IS ONE OF THE MAJOR REASONS BEHIND THE HIGH PREVALENCE OF REPRODUCTIVE TRACT INFECTIONS IN THE COUNTRY

taboos that still exist in many places with regard to menstruation. She also said that hygiene-related practices of women during menstruation are of considerable importance as it increases vulnerability to reproductive tract infections (RTIs). Poor menstrual hygiene is one of the major reasons behind the high prevalence of RTIs in the country.

She stated that vaccination is the prime concern for everyone now. "All women and girls above

18 years should be vaccinated and since menstruation is a biological process, one can be vaccinated during her menstruation period too."

Shirpa Saxena, WASH specialist, Unicef, delivered her address on global context. She focused on key issues and challenges and highlighted 'period poverty' and taboos. She also stressed on the importance of managing menstrual hygiene by all menstruating women and girls and managing of menstrual wastes.

Ghasiram Panda, Programme Manager of Action Aid, drew the attention of the participants to linking of MHM to child marriage and child birth. He said that menstruation is a usual physiological process. "Still in many parts of our state menstrual taboos are there," he added. Panda also highlighted that approximately 23 per cent drop-outs among adolescents in India is because of menstruation related stigma.

Cyber fraudsters dupe youth of ₹4L

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 28: Cyber fraudsters duped a youth of around Rs 4 lakh on the pretext of arranging a suitable match for him.

Victim Sarba Prasanna Panda, a native of Nemala area in Cuttack district, Friday lodged a complaint in this regard with the cyber helpdesk at the DCP office here.

According to sources, Panda had registered himself in a matrimonial site. He received a call from a girl recently.

The cyber fraudsters called Panda using the contact number he had shared in his account on the matrimonial site. The girl told Panda that she was working in a hospital in United Kingdom as a doctor and searching for a

suitable Odia youth. Soon, they started chatting on social media. They also talked over phone.

The lady, later, asked Panda to share his address as she would send some jewellery gifts including gold bracelet, gold ring to him. Accordingly, Panda shared his address and other details with the woman.

A few days later, Panda received a call from a person who identified himself as a Customs department official.

The person informed Panda that a parcel in his name had arrived at the New Delhi Airport and to release the gift, he had to pay custom duties and GST.

Subsequently, Panda paid Rs 3.95 lakh in several installments to the cyber fraudsters.

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Flood fear looms large in Subarnarekha

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhograi, May 28: Heavy rainfall in upstream of Subarnarekha river since the last two days, under the impact of cyclone Yaas, has led to a flood-like situation in the river system.

The flood situation occurred after the surplus water from various water bodies in the upstream of the river was released into Subarnarekha. Reports said that the opening of 18 gates of Galudhi barrage in Jharkhand to release water led to a flood situation in the river.

The barrage is reportedly releasing 3 lakh cusecs of water into the river every minute. The Irrigation department fears that further rise in water level might result in floods in Bhograi, Baliapal, Basta and Jaleswar blocks of Balasore district. The district as well as the local administration has used public address system to ask people living in low-lying areas in Bhograi and Baliapal to shift to their nearest cyclone centres.

The river was flowing above the danger at 10.36-metre as against danger mark of 9.45-metre at Rajghat. It is apprehended that the water level might rise further at night.

The rise in floodwater level in the river has sparked fear of floodwaters inundating the riparian villages as the river embankments



YAAS IMPACT

The flood situation occurred after the surplus water from various water bodies on the upstream of the river was released into Subarnarekha

Galudhi barrage in Jharkhand is reportedly releasing 3 lakh cusecs of water into the river per minute

Baitarani river also witnessed a surge due to cyclone-induced heavy rains in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts

THE IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT FEARS THAT FURTHER RISE IN WATER LEVEL MIGHT RESULT IN FLOODS IN BHOGRAI, BALIAPAL, BASTA AND JALESWAR BLOCKS IN BALASORE DISTRICT

were found to be weak at various places. The Irrigation department is working on wartime footing to repair six broken sluice gates of the river at Bhograi.

The water-level in the upstream of Subarnarekha at Jamshola Ghat in West Bengal-Odisha border touched the danger-mark at around 9 pm Thursday. The water

level touched 50.88 metres at Jamosalaghat against the danger level of 49.16-metre Thursday night, said reports.

Meanwhile, state Food Supplies Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain and district planning board chairman-cum-Bhograi MLA Ananta Das visited the areas and directed the BDO and tehsildar to prepare

a report on the losses caused by the cyclone Yaas in 25 villages under eight panchayats of Bhograi block and submit it at the earliest

However, as the inflow of water has decreased in the upstream of Subarnarekha river since the last three hours, the water-level is gradually receding there. Similarly, after the floodwater reaches the state, it will remain for some hours and gradually recede.

On the other hand, Baitarani river also witnessed a surge due to cyclone-induced heavy rains in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts. The water-level in the river had touched the danger level at Anandpur in Keonjhar Thursday.

It is feared that the water level will increase further in the downstream near Akhuapada. But the level in the upstream will decrease gradually after a little some increase. "We are patrolling the site and are alert to face any eventuality," said Rohit Sethy, chief engineer (construction), Water Resources department. He added that there is no such major risk as the water will recede gradually.

People living in the lower catchment of Baitarani in Jajpur district are also in the grip of fear due to steady increase in water level downstream. The administration has advised the people to shift to safer places before the situation worsens further.



Floodwater swirls in Kani river, a distributary of the Baitarani in Jajpur district, following a breach

OP PHOTO

46 migrant workers stranded in AP return home

POST NEWS NETWORK

Athagarh, May 28: As many as 46 migrant workers stranded in Andhra Pradesh due to Covid-induced lockdown returned home Friday.

The matter came to fore after the migrant workers hailing from Athagarh returned home by a special bus Friday. Their return was made possible after the state Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare Minister intervened into the matter and provided assistance for their safe return.

Sources said that the labourers had gone to Andhra Pradesh a few months back. However, they were left stranded at the place following the outbreak of Covid-19 second wave and subsequent lockdown.

With no money at their disposal, they had to spend many days without food. Later, they urged the Food Supply Minister for assistance.

Acting on the directive of the minister, a special bus left for the place where the migrants were stranded and brought them to the state Wednesday. Later, they were sent to their village Friday.

The returnees will now undergo Covid-19 testing after which they will be sent homes, said a Health department official in Athagarh.

Flying squirrel rescued in Nabarangpur dist

POST NEWS NETWORK

Umerkote, May 28: Forest personnel rescued a rare species of flying squirrel from the backyard of a villager at Taraguda village under this block in Nabarangpur district.

The matter came to fore after some villagers spotted the flying squirrel in the backyard of a villager in Taraguda village. They were stunned to see such a rare animal and informed the Forest department personnel. Forest officials soon reached the village and rescued the animal.

Purnachandra Naik, Forest officer, said that flying squirrels, which are generally nocturnal in nature, were spotted in the area earlier too.

However, their numbers are declining due to change in environmental conditions. Later, the rescued flying squirrel was released in Sansari Forest, Naik added.

FLOOD THREAT

OIC held for raping woman constable

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasore/Bahanaga, May 28: The officer-in-charge of Gopalpur police outpost in Balasore district was arrested Friday on the charge of raping a woman constable.

The accused was identified as Bansidhar Pradhan, a sub-inspector of police. He was produced in a court after a medical examination was conducted on him, DSP Umesh Panda said. A case has been registered at the Town police station in this connection. Pradhan was arrested after the survivor lodged a complaint with IG (Eastern)

Diptesh Patnaik and SP Sudhanshu Sekhar Mishra.

Sources said Pradhan allegedly raped the woman constable when she had been deputed to Gopalpur on special duty before the landfall of cyclone Yaas, May 24. She was resting inside the Gopalpur outpost May 25 night after completing her duty when Pradhan raped her. She tried to commit suicide but was rescued by others. Later, she met the IG and the SP and lodged a complaint. The accused was called to Balasore where he was arrested and later sent for medical examination.

Locals irked over slow pace of work on NH-55 at Angul

POST NEWS NETWORK

Boinda, May 28: Several local residents Friday resented the slow pace of construction of the four-lane which is underway on National Highway-55 at Boinda in Angul district. Sources said that construction work had started three years back but it is yet to be completed. Hundreds of people had been evicted from Kishorenagar block to facilitate land acquisition and road construction.

So far only a few kilometres of the highway has been widened. Surprisingly, however, cracks have already developed in the newly-



laid track near Kamarei area under Handapa police limits. Locals met the District Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain Friday morning in this connection and submitted a memorandum, villagers from Boinda informed.

The locals also complained against severe irregularities and low-quality of work. Around 400 makeshift shops were demolished for the purpose of land acquisition last February. The affected shopkeepers have neither been paid any compensation nor rehabilitated, they fumed.

On being contacted, Athmallick MLA Ramesh Chandra Sai said, "The NHAI authorities and the contract firm have been directed to focus on early completion of the work and use of good quality materials. The department concerned will accordingly be instructed to conduct a probe into the cracks that have reportedly developed on the newly laid road."

Yaas exposes 'development' claims in Kendrapara dist

Though over two decades have passed since the super cyclone-1999 struck the state, the district administration here is yet to learn from its past mistakes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, May 28: Though over two decades have passed since the super cyclone-1999 struck the state, the district administration here is yet to learn from its past mistakes and prepare itself for greater challenges, a report said.

The very severe cyclonic storm Yaas, which struck the state Wednesday, has again exposed the loopholes in the style of functioning of the district administration and its lackadaisical attitude in meeting the challenges posed by natural calamities. It is worth mentioning here that Kendrapara district is prone to natural calamities like floods and cyclonic storms. However, neither the district administration nor the public representatives seems to have learnt a lesson or two from the past calamities in protecting the district and its people. This has laid bare the district administration's hollow claims of ushering in various development projects during the last 20 years.

The district administration's approach towards natural calamities is limited to evacuation and relief distribution work. The issue crops up only when there is an impending cyclone or a flood threat in the district. Everybody forgets the issue once the problem gets over.

Reports said that over 55 villages in the district are marooned whenever there is flooding. However, neither the district administration nor the government is making adequate efforts to repair the existing



Submerged farmlands in Pattamundai block

OP PHOTO

embankments and construct new ones to control floods.

What is worse is that no effort is being made to protect the natural mangrove forests which have stood as a protective barrier against tsunami and cyclonic storms in the past. Mangrove forests on large patches of government land have been cleared for construction of prawn gheries. As a result, the coastlines has become vulnerable to threats of cyclone and tsunami.

The cyclonic storm Yaas made landfall near Bahanaga coast in Balasore, May 26. However, its impact was felt a day before the landfall. Locals said that the cyclone failed to cause much destruction at the seaside blocks such as Rajnagar and Mahakalapara as the wind speed was within 100 to 120 km per hour. The calamity might have wreaked havoc had the wind speed gone up to 185 km per hour.

Moreover, 1,05, 802 people were evacuated and rehabilitated at 974 multi-purpose cyclone centres. Locals Ganesh Chandra Samal, Radhakant Mohanty, Manoj Kumar Nayak, Chitranjan Sahu and environmentalist Hemant Kumar

Rout have questioned the district administration as to what prompted them to shift so many people.

They claimed that this has happened due to lack of effective implementation of Centre and state-sponsored housing schemes. There would be no need to shift so many people had people been provided with a house under the Awas Yojanas, they added.

The government report published after the Super Cyclone-1999 claimed that 397 persons died during the calamity. However, in reality the total death toll is more than 1,000. Moreover, every year people are losing their livelihood due to natural calamities but efforts are not being made to provide them with alternative livelihood opportunities. The rural job scheme MGNREGS could have provided jobs to the people during emergencies but it is in limbo due to lack of effective implementation.

When contacted, ADM Basant Kumar Rout said that efforts are being made to repair the river embankments and creation of more mangrove forests in Bhitarkanika National Park to protect the coastline.

Yaas devastates betel leaf farms in Jajpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Rasulpur, May 28: The very severe cyclonic storm and the subsequent flood in the Baitarani river has been a double whammy for betel leaf farmers of Rasulpur block in Jajpur district.

According to sources, several acres of betel farmland ('Pan Baraj' in local parlance) in the district were destroyed by cyclone 'Yaas. Betel leaves, being highly perishable, have been completely destroyed. Several farmers of Karanjari and Melaka villages of Odiso panchayat in Jajpur had adopted betel leaf farming this year.

Betel leaf farming was not something unusual in Rasulpur block as farmers here opted for



FIELD OFFICERS HAVE BEEN ASSESSING THE LOSSES WHICH WILL BE COMMUNICATED TO THE STATE GOVERNMENT. COMPENSATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE AFFECTED BETEL LEAF FARMERS OF RASULPUR BLOCK IN THE DISTRICT AS PER THE AMOUNT SANCTIONED BY THE GOVERNMENT, ASSISTANT HORTICULTURE OFFICER (AHO) RASULPUR SAID

other crops over two decades ago. This year, Rasulpur Horticulture

department had encouraged the local farmers to take up betel leaf

farming. Around 16 villagers had undertaken betel leaf farming in

Betel leaves, being highly perishable, have been completely destroyed. Several farmers of Karanjari and Melaka villages of Odiso panchayat in Jajpur had taken up betel leaf farming this year

This year, Rasulpur Horticulture department had encouraged the local farmers to take up betel leaf farming. Around 16 villagers had undertaken betel leaf farming in over five hectares during this crop season and they are now repenting their decision

over five hectares during this crop season and they are now repenting their decision.

Betel leaf farmers like Benudhar Parida, Rabindra Das, Uttam Dutta, Basudev Dutta, Birabara Behera and many others in Rasulpur block have now demanded adequate compensation from the state government after due assessment of their losses due to the cyclone.

When contacted, Assistant Horticulture Officer (AHO) Rasulpur, Jayadev Shit said, "Field officers have been assessing the losses which will be communicated to the state government. Compensation will be given to the affected betel leaf farmers of Rasulpur block in the district as per the amount sanctioned by the government."

EAST COAST RAILWAY
NOTIFICATION FOR ENGAGEMENT OF COMMISSION AGENT AT VANI VIHAR PASSENGER HALT IN BETWEEN MANCHESWAR - BHUBANESWAR STATIONS

No. : G.51/P.H/BNBH Date : 25.05.2021
APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FROM INTERESTED PERSONS FOR ENGAGEMENT AS COMMISSION AGENT TO SELL TICKETS FOR VANI VIHAR (BNBH) PASSENGER HALT IN BETWEEN MANCHESWAR - BHUBANESWAR STATION OF KHURDAROAD DIVISION. COMMISSION PAYABLE TO THE HALT AGENT WILL BE AS UNDER:
Amount of Sale of tickets per month & Commission payable:
* ₹ 1 to 15,000/-: 15%, * ₹ 15,001 to 50,000/-: 12%, * ₹ 50,001 to 1,00,000/-: 9%, * ₹ 1,00,001 to 2,00,000/-: 6%, * ₹ 2,00,001 and above: 3%.
Security Deposit : ₹ 2,500/- (₹ 2,000/- towards Security deposit + ₹ 500/- towards 50% of the cost of Railway materials) which is to be deposited after selection.
How to Apply : Candidates may apply in prescribed format for the above Passenger Halt to which they are eligible from place of residence point of view with the required documents to the Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, East Coast Railway, Khurda Road, PO-Jatni, Dist-Khurda, Pin-752050 and applications should be dropped in the box kept for this purpose in the office of the Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager, East Coast Railway, Khurda Road. Application sent through postal service or by any other means shall not be entertained.
Application duly filled in prescribed format should reach this office by 1500 hrs. on or before 24.06.2021 (Thursday), if the last day i.e., 24.06.2021 happens to be or is declared to be a holiday, applications will be received by the same time on the next working day. All the received application will be opened at 1530 hrs on 24.06.2021.
The Railway Administration reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason whatsoever.
For complete details, application format and other terms & conditions please visit our website: www.eastcoastrail.indianrailways.gov.in
PR-122/M/21-22 Divisional Commercial Manager /Khurda Road

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER, REDHAKHOL FOREST DIVISION
Mobile No. 9437054951,
Email ID: dforedhakhol@gmail.com
No.MM-78:- Redhakhol Forest Division is inviting tender for procurement of planting materials for taking up plantation work Redhakhol Forest Division during 2021-22 Financial year. The tenderers having eligibility criteria are required to apply.
For details & tender documents, please visit the following website: www.odisha.gov.in (tenders.gov.in) and www.odishaforest.in.
Sd./- Divisional Forest Officer
Redhakhol Division
OIPR-08030/11/0002/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA (e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE)
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER G.P.H DIVISION NO.1, BHUBANESWAR, ODISHA, INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)
Bid Identification No.EEGPHIBSR-2/2021-22 Dt.24.05.2021
No.C-319:- The Executive Engineer, G.P.H. Division No.-I, Bhubaneswar on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in single cover system to be received in online mode only for the works detailed in the table below.
01. Name of the work : One No. of work
02. Estimate cost : Rs.39,73,196.00
03. Period of completion : 3 (Three Months)
04. Class of contractor : C&B Class
05. Date & time of availability : From 11.00 AM of Dt.02.06.2021 of bid document in the to 5.00 P.M. of 16.06.2021 portal
06. Last date/ time of receipt : 5.00 P.M. of 16.06.2021 of bids in the portal
07. Date & time of opening : At 2.30 P.M. of 17.06.2021 of bids
08. Name and address of : Executive Engineer, G.P.H. the Officer Inviting Bid Division-I, Bhubaneswar
Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "<https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>"
Sd./- (Er.Ashok Kumar Mohapatra),
Executive Engineer,
G.P.H. Division No-I, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-13017/11/0001/2122

Watch the too indignantly righteous. Before long you will find them committing or condoning the very offence which they have so fiercely censured.



SRI AUROBINDO

What's proper, what's not?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pep talk to district magistrates on the Covid-19 issue in an online meeting has got some raising the issue of whether it was right for Modi to interact directly with district magistrates and other officials while bypassing their respective ministers. Moreover, the event was telecast live when just a few weeks ago, the Centre had objected sharply to Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for a live feed during Modi's meeting with Chief Ministers.

While seemingly there is nothing wrong with the Prime Minister addressing government officials whenever he chooses to, but the question is about propriety and federalism. District officials work under elected state governments and Chief Ministers and report to them as well. Bypassing the state governments indicates thumbing one's nose at the federal structure, which is problematic, it is being said.

Interestingly, Modi's interaction follows a similar meeting organized by Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal who spoke directly with state education secretaries, overlooking the state education ministers. This was one reason why the Tamil Nadu government boycotted the meeting.

IAS, IPS officers use their medical skills

Taking a cue from Gujarat which took this step during the first wave of Covid last year, the Haryana government is using IAS and IPS officers who have a medical degree in the state's fight against the pandemic.

Sources say that five Haryana cadre IAS officers and three IPS officers who have MBBS degrees have been pulled off their administrative duties and have been directed to assist medical teams running Covid hospitals in the state. They have been deputed to additional Chief Secretary for Health Rajeev Arora for the creation and administration of 500-bed hospitals in Panipat and Hisar and other related duties.

The IAS officers are Dr Chander Shekhar Khare, Dr RS Dhillon, Dr Sangeeta Tatarwal, Dr Manoj Kumar and Dr Vaishali Sharma. The IPS officers are Dr Dheeraj Kumar, Dr Anshu Singla and Dr Arpit Jain. The state government has also deputed 22 senior IAS officers to oversee Covid preparedness in different districts.

No doubt, this is a temporary arrangement to combat the second wave of the pandemic. However, it also coincides with the growing demand by some medical experts and organisations that the government create a special all-India cadre of medical officers along the lines of the IAS and IPS etc. If this stopgap measure is successful, it might prod the Centre to seriously consider the demand for a specialised medical service.

Two senior cops lock horns in Haryana

An intra-service battle has erupted in Haryana Police. IGP Y Puran Kumar, a 2001-batch IPS officer has filed a petition in the Punjab & Haryana High Court against the state police chief Manoj Yadava for alleged "discriminatory behaviour" towards Kumar.

Sources say that Kumar has accused DGP Yadava of "partial attitude, discriminatory treatment and violation of service rules". He has sought directions from the court to direct the Additional Chief Secretary for Home to take immediate decision on his complaints submitted against Yadava.

The spat does not seem to be new. Kumar has accused Yadava of targeting him since July 2020 "in a vindictive manner" ever since Kumar was posted to Ambala instead of another officer favoured by the DGP. Kumar has also sought directions from the court to restrain Yadava from writing his annual performance appraisal report until the petition is decided.

The feud at the top in the state's police service has happened at a time when the state is struggling with the Covid epidemic and also dealing with the farmers' agitation against Central laws, and which shows no sign of disappearing. And when two senior cops take on each other instead of the issues facing Haryana, it can't bode well for law and order in the state.

Share a babu experience! Follow diliptherian@twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

WISDOM CORNER

Every truth passes through three stages before it is recognized. In the first, it is ridiculed. In the second, it is opposed. In the third, it is regarded as self evident.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

The difference between a successful person and others is not lack of strength not a lack of knowledge but rather a lack of will.

VINCE LOMBARDI

I don't believe you have to be better than everybody else. I believe you have to be better than you ever thought you could be.

KEN VENTURI

WORDSWORTH

Bustard

There was quite a splash in various British newspapers, lamenting what one described as the "final extinction" of the great bustard, a puzzling statement when reference books say it last bred in the British list again because it's so impressive: it's Europe's largest land bird, often weighing 25lb (12 kilos), the size of a turkey, with a fine courtship display in spring. Its breeding area is now restricted to Spain, northern Germany and the central European plain and it is only a very occasional visitor to these shores, one that causes great excitement when it occurs. It was once relatively common and was a prized dish, considered excellent eating; stuck with cloves, it was prepared by roasting or baking exactly like a turkey. Even the arrival of the turkey itself in the 1520s didn't change that opinion, it being described as "much prized" in the 1690s. But by the 1750s it was becoming rare and was called "this curious fowl" in a cookery book of that date. It was too easy to hunt for its own survival despite being a shy bird. It needed lots of wide open flat countryside of a kind which vanished the best part of two centuries ago in England. In the late eighteenth century the bustard was hanging on in the open turnip fields of Wiltshire, with reports of flocks of fifty or more. But by the 1790s it was said to be very rare and shortly after it vanished for ever from the English countryside as well as the English dining table.

LOL

Geese-hunting

Three doctors are out geese-hunting. A gaggle flies over and the oncologist raises and then lowers his gun. "I better conduct an MRI first to determine if those were really geese." Some more geese fly by & the endocrinologist raises his gun and



then lowers it. "I'll need some bloodwork to conduct an AIC and determine what those birds were first." Some more geese fly over. The trauma doc raises his shotgun and blows them out of the sky. "What were those things, anyway?" he asks.

FOCUS COVID BLUES

POST-PANDEMIC WHIPLASH

The world is currently transfixed by the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic sweeping through many regions, especially Asia, Africa, and South America. But, focused as we are on the public-health crisis, we risk overlooking pandemic-related economic problems that could plague developing countries long after the wave has receded.

At the global level, the International Monetary Fund has warned of a "Great Divergence," whereby rich countries recover strongly while others flounder. Recent evidence suggests that several advanced economies, notably the United States, and a few developing countries, like Vietnam, Thailand, and Bangladesh, seem to be pulling out of the crisis and could grow faster than they did before the pandemic. But many emerging economies and low-income countries are likely to languish for a long time.

A Great Divergence is visible even within economies. The pandemic has punished sectors such as hospitality, travel, and tourism, and boosted others like pharmaceuticals, digital platforms, and networking technology. It is therefore not surprising that many rich people, including those who are good at navigating equity markets, have actually emerged from the crisis better off, while the poor have borne the brunt of its impact.

Therein lay the real danger. Unlike a pandemic that puts rich and poor alike at risk, the kind of economic crisis currently simmering in much of the developing world does not affect the rich as much and therefore does not generate headlines and is easy to disregard - that is, until it can no longer be ignored.

Sure enough, evidence of trouble is beginning to mount. Emerging economies everywhere face rising debts, and some, like Zambia and Argentina, have already defaulted. In 2020, Latin America's economy contracted by 7.7%; the Philippines and India took even bigger hits, registering growth rates of -9.5% and -9.6%, respectively. And the World



A Great Divergence is visible even within economies. It is therefore not surprising that many rich people, including those who are good at navigating equity markets, have actually emerged from the crisis better off, while the poor have borne the brunt of its impact

Bank estimates that the pandemic may have pushed up to 40 million people in Africa into extreme poverty.

The current wave of Covid-19 that began in India became discernible only in late March. Although systematic data regarding its economic impact are not yet available, anecdotal evidence paints a gloomy picture. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, the seven million jobs lost in April caused the national unemployment rate to jump to 8%, from 6.5% in March. Moreover, youth unemployment in India already reached an all-time high of 23.75% last year.

The regular reports of dead bodies being dumped into the River Ganges and washing up in small Indian towns and cities indicate the tragic severity. But they are also tell-tale signs of a brewing economic crisis. For Hindus, not being able to acquire logs and find space to cremate the dead is

a desperate situation. Only in cases of extreme poverty would they abandon this effort and throw corpses into the river.

Another sobering account comes from the two women who run Nanritam, a remarkable NGO that operates a school and an eye hospital in a remote part of West Bengal. They told me how registration at their school is down to nearly half its normal level. Furthermore, the pandemic has forced thousands of the region's tribal chhau dancers and jhumur singers - whose only regular income is the Rs1,000 (\$14) per month they receive from the state government - to resort to begging. When Nanritam recently announced its usual simple relief dole for the poor living around their campus, the NGO was taken aback by some who walked and cycled for miles to get it.

But, aside from such evidence, official data are also beginning to flash warning signs. Last month, Indian wholesale price inflation

climbed to 10.5%, the highest rate in 11 years. This reflects mismatches in demand and supply, which, if not corrected soon, could become a major crisis, causing macroeconomic imbalances that can affect trade and financial flows. India has a highly capable central bank, but many of the country's current problems will be difficult to rectify through monetary policy alone, because they arise from poor governance.

India therefore urgently needs policy blueprints for dealing with the crisis. Policymakers should recognize that when basic goods such as medical oxygen, vaccines, or food are in short supply, pure financial interventions may not work, because the rich will be prepared to spend whatever it takes to get what they need (and more as a precautionary buffer). Providing the poor with cash support to make sure they can meet their basic survival needs will mean that the price of the good rises until the rich have what they want. The poor will thus be back at square one.

We see this kind of problem at both the micro and the international levels, notably with Covid-19 vaccines. Whereas many rich countries are buying up doses to secure ample stocks that go well beyond their basic needs, poor countries, including large parts of Africa, are left without any access to supplies.

Just as national governments in India and other developing countries have a lot to do, multi-lateral organizations such as the World Bank, the IMF, and the G20 also must act quickly to build up policy buffers and help coordinate support. Otherwise, today's looming economic threat will be tomorrow's front-page news.

The writer, a former chief economist of the World Bank and chief economic adviser to the Government of India, is Professor of Economics at Cornell University and Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution.

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SPECTRUM BIG TECH

Break-up social media



Bharat Jhunjhunwala

THE INTRUSION OF GOOGLE, FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND WHATSAPP CAN NOT ONLY MANIPULATE THE MINDS, BUT ALSO BUSINESSES OF OUR PEOPLE TO PROMOTE THEIR COMMERCIAL INTERESTS

The sovereignty of the people requires that every activity in the country be responsible to its people. We cannot forget that the East India Company had entered the country in the name of providing economic benefits from trade and in mere two centuries the share of India in the world income fell from 23 percent to mere 2 percent. The intrusion of Google, Facebook, Twitter and Whatsapp is deeper because a foreign-based company can manipulate the minds, not merely businesses, of our people to promote their commercial interests. For example, these companies are actively spreading the misinformation that India will be deprived of foreign investment if India imposes controls on them. They deliberately hide the fact that China continues to receive huge foreign investment despite having stricter controls than India.

As of now, these companies take controversial decisions. For example, Twitter had blocked the account of President Trump during the recent elections. Similarly, they had blocked certain stories put forth by the BJP saying they were forged. The question is not whether these blockages were right or not. The question is whether Twitter

took these decisions to promote its commercial interests or to protect the truth? Can the decision of "true" and "false" be left to the compulsions of commercial pursuits? Thus, the rules made by the Government of India for the regulation of social media companies are in the right direction. They are required to nominate a complaint officer, a governance officer and a nodal officer for being answerable to the government.

The last is similar to the newspapers in the country being required to nominate a person who would be responsible for the news that is posted. In a parallel move, the government has asked Whatsapp to put in place a system to track the origin of a post. Whatsapp has not complied so far. Its argument is that the messages are encrypted and it does not want to violate the privacy of the members by breaking the encryption. However, it is like the courier company that carries the packet not knowing the contents; but it can still trace the origin of the packet. Prof V Kamakoti of IIT Madras says that such tracking is possible without Twitter having to break the encryption. The rules formulated by the Government of India

are grossly inadequate because they, at best, establish a complaint redressal mechanism which is much short of a pro-active accountability of social media to the people. The rules are like establishment of a police station. They are not like the elections wherein the government itself is made accountable. Yet, these are small steps in the right direction.

However, there is another danger lurking in the dark if the control of social media is wholly handed over to the government. For example, China has blocked all news relating to the possible origins of the Covid virus in a government laboratory in Wuhan. Or, would the Government of India be justified in placing restrictions on Baba Ramdev for him questioning the efficacy of allopathic medicines in the management of Covid? Lukashenko in Belarus and Min Aung Hlaing in Myanmar would like to muzzle the social media to oppress their own people. Therefore, social media has a huge positive role in providing information to the people outside the eyes of the governments.

We face two contrary objectives. On the one hand, social media should be accountable to the peo-

ple of the country; and not peddle its commercial interests under the garb of freedom of speech. On the other hand, social media should be able to bypass and reach the people despite the restrictions imposed by their governments - oppressive or not.

Facebook has constituted an Oversight Board to overcome the accusations of manipulation of content. As of now, the Board has some prominent and respectable persons as its members. They include former editor-in-chief of The Guardian newspaper Alan Rusbridger, Vice Chancellor of the National Law School of India University Sudhir Krishnaswamy, and former Prime Minister of Denmark Helle Thorning-Schmidt. Board began its work in October 2020 and its first four out of the five decisions overturned Facebook's actions. The establishment of the Oversight Board is welcome but that still is not accountable to the people of India. Therefore, it is necessary to establish accountability of social media to the people of India but not necessarily to the Government of India.

The writer is a former Professor of Economics at IIM Bangalore. Views are personal.

A new device for corporate

Sir, These days there is a new slogan - 'Work from home' (WFH). Pandemic and lockdown have prevented people from coming out from their homes. Establishments that could make use of digital technology have asked their stakeholders and employees to work from home. It could be in education, health, business and such others, but the precondition was always there. Obviously, it required the infrastructure and resources to sustain WFH. It was not meant for a farmer who feeds the country or for a delivery boy who has to take pains to keep the lifeline of supply alive in the market. So 'WFH' came really handy to a privileged few of the society. The corporate world took up the cue and was all praise for 'WFH'. But WFH means a kind of self-isolation thrust in lieu of money. Man being a social entity, needs to interact and be interrelated with others in the society. From the day a youth enters a workplace, he or she builds up an association, which helps him or her to develop certain new traits of mind-set, cultural-moral structure. 'WFH' puts a stop to all this. It throws the person into a shell. This is not only abnormal for a human being, but an imposition of the capitalist system on personal life and hence infringement upon individual liberty and self-respect. In brief, though 'WFH' system is yet in its introductory stage, the corporate houses are hell bent upon making the system flawless, enjoying, because this is bringing in huge dividend to them.

Asit Mohanty, JAJPUR

Humanitarian act

Sir, The second wave of Covid-19 has made life extremely difficult. While the social, economic and other sectors have suffered, the fatality rate too has increased compared to the first wave. Meanwhile, two cyclones - 'Tauktae' and 'Yaas' played havoc in the western and eastern states respectively. Amidst this, the humane act of Odisha government cannot be ignored. The government has been supplying liquid medical oxygen (LMO) to more than a dozen of states. Managing supply of oxygen and protecting people from 'Yaas' have been handled together. To ensure unhindered supply of oxygen particularly during the cyclone, the government has created a Green Corridor under the close supervision of the Odisha Police. So far the government has supplied 22,542.895 tons of medical oxygen to 15 states through 1,226 tankers. Undoubtedly, it is a humanitarian act. Saving mankind from challenges should be the top priority of all.

Santosh Kumar Satapathy, PARALAKHEMUNDI

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

Orissa POST

B-15, Russagarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010



Delhi unlock process to begin from May 31: CM

The process of lifting the lockdown will start with resumption of construction activities and reopening of factories for one week from Monday

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 28: Claiming that the deadly second wave of Covid-19 pandemic is under control in the national capital, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Friday decided to start process of lifting lockdown from Monday. The capital has been under strict lockdown since April 20.

After a meeting with Delhi Lt Governor Anil Baijal, who is also Chairman of DDMA, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the time has come when the process of lifting lockdown needs to be initiated. He asserted that people of Delhi have suffered a lot during this Covid pandemic and due to a month-long lockdown.

He stated those who are working as labourer and daily wage earner have lost their livelihood and it has been decided that these two activities will be opened from Monday (May 31).

"During the meeting, it has been decided that the situation of Covid-19 is under control as daily cases and positivity rate have reduced, now we have to focus on economic



activities as well. Many poor families have lost their livelihood due to lockdown and therefore, it has been decided that - two activities - construction work and factories in Delhi will start functioning from Monday," Kejriwal said.

A senior official told IANS that operations of manufacturing, production units in approved industrial areas, activities where the workers are employed within Delhi would be allowed to function.

Addressing a digital press conference Friday, Kejriwal also said that, taking in consideration the number of Covid cases, the process

of unlocking would be increased further.

"Every week, we will continue the process of opening slowly based on the suggestions of the public and on the basis of the views of the experts. If matters start growing again, we have to stop this process. Everyone needs to take precaution. Lockdown is imposed under compulsion... we do not want to impose," he added.

Meanwhile, he also appealed the citizen of Delhi that "not to leave the house unless there is a need. We all have to behave responsibly".

DU's college opens walk-in vax camp for univ staffers, family

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: Delhi University's Lakshmbai College began a walk-in vaccination drive Friday for its staffers and their family members aged 45 and above, the institution's principal said here.

The college had started a Covid-19 isolation centre last month as a tribute to one of its professors, Sangita Sharma, who succumbed to the virus, principal Pratyush Vatsala said.

A post-Covid care clinic was started Wednesday, she added.

"We are a public-funded institution and it's our responsibility to serve the society. The vaccination centre that we have started is currently only for DU staffers and their families, but if we do not get much crowd then we plan to open it for the common people too," Vatsala said.

Till now, the university had three vaccination camps at its health centres in the North and the South Campus and at Shivaji College.

"Lakshmbai College, in collaboration with the Office of the District Magistrate, North West, Government of NCT of Delhi, is happy to announce a walk-in vaccination drive from 28th May 2021 onwards."

"Continuing with our humble efforts to fight the pandemic and providing services for Covid care, we are starting Covid vaccination centre in the college premises," the university said on its official Twitter handle.

UP BJP MLA backs Ramdev over comments on allopathy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ballia, May 28: Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA Surendra Singh has joined the row between Ramdev and the doctors' fraternity, saying some doctors are like "demons".

Doctors who charge money by showing dead patients as alive in Intensive Care Units can only be called demons, Singh told reporters in Baira's Sonbarsa.

The Baira MLA also backed Ramdev for his remarks against allopathy, and termed him a flag bearer of the Indian medicine system.

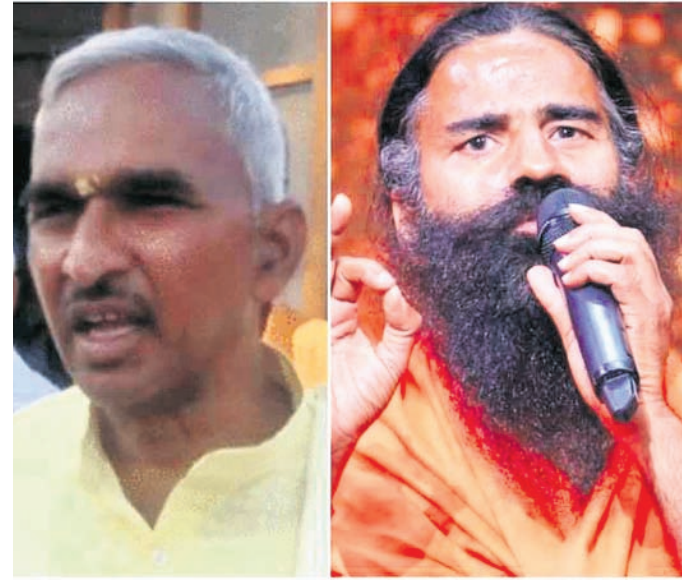
"Those robbing society by making the present medical system expensive are giving lessons on morality. People who sell tablets worth Rs 10 for Rs 100 in the field of allopathy are criminals in white clothes, not well-wishers of society," Singh said in a post on Facebook.

He, however, went on to say both allopathy and Ayurveda are helpful.

"Allopathy is useful but Ayurveda is no less. Physicians should serve the ailing people with this sense," the BJP MLA added.

In a second post, he said, "I heartily congratulate the flag bearer of the Indian system of medicine, Ramdev ji. He has started the 'Swasth Bharat, Samarth Bharat Abhiyan' through Ayurveda."

Speaking to reporters, Singh said Ramdev was pursuing



'Sanatana Dharma'.

"If I retire from politics, I will take up the responsibility for its promotion," he said, and added that the yoga guru's argument was absolutely correct.

Sunday, Ramdev was forced to withdraw a statement made in the viral video clip in which he was heard questioning some of the medicines being used to treat the coronavirus infection and saying that "lakhs have died from taking allopathic medicines for Covid-19".

The remarks were met with

vociferous protests, following which Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan asked him to withdraw the "extremely unfortunate" statement.

A day later, the yoga guru posed 25 questions to the IMA in an 'open letter' on his Twitter handle, asking if allopathy offered permanent relief for ailments.

Amid the raging controversy, another video has surfaced on social media in which Ramdev is seen reacting to a demand for his arrest, saying "even their father cannot arrest him".

Health worker suspended, medical officer transferred

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Siddharthnagar, May 28: A health worker was suspended and a medical officer transferred two weeks after 20 villagers here were administered Covaxin after getting Covishield as their first dose.

The goof-up took place May 14 at the primary health centre in Barhni where people from Audahi Kala and another village received Covaxin shots.

An inquiry was ordered and action taken against Auxiliary Nursing Midwife (ANM) Kalavati was suspended and Shivesh Kumar, the medical officer, who was in charge of the centre, for negligence, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Sandeep Chaudhary said in a statement.

The CMO also issued a recovery

UP VAX GOOF-UP



order of ₹7,500 against Immunisation Officer Shanti Singh after 50 doses of Covishield were found missing from the cold chain, it said. Meanwhile, medical teams visited villages, including Audahi Kala and Manpur, Thursday to examine the people who received the wrong jabs.

"We have tested 18 of the 20 people so far and none of them are facing any issues," said AS Khan, team-in-charge.

NSUI demands XII board exams cancelled

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 28: Intensifying its protest demanding the cancellation of Class XII board examinations, the National Students' Union of India (NSUI), the student wing of Congress, staged a demonstration outside the Union Ministry of Education here Friday.

The protest led by NSUI president Neeraj Kundan was joined by several activists wearing PPE kits and following the Covid protocols, raising slogans like 'Pahle Suraksha, Phir Pariksha' (safety first, then exams).

Kundan said, "Since the Central government announced its plan to conduct the Class XII board exams, NSUI has been demanding to find an alternative to physical examination."

He said that a few days back he



wrote a letter to the Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, reminding him that the government has not yet come up with any guidelines to ensure the safety of those below the age of 18 years, and majority of the students fall in this category.

"We specifically warned the government that this (holding exams) could be life-threatening for the

students. The government has already failed to procure adequate vaccines and there seems to be no definite plan for that. Now this lack of planning for the board exams will harm the academic year of these students. The only solution to save their academic year is to promote them on the basis of internal assessments, rather than wasting more time on discussing the

examinations," the NSUI leader said.

Lakeshore Chugh, national secretary of the NSUI, said that they will also launch a Twitter campaign from Friday demanding the government to cancel the board exams, and find out some alternative ways to physical examination with the hashtag of #CancelExamsSaveLives.

Kundan said that NSUI has made its stand clear that nothing could be more important than the lives of the students, and the government must find an alternative solution rather than conducting the examinations.

"The students' body is against conducting the examinations in any form because while physical examination will risk the students' lives, every student does not have access to internet in case the exams are held online," Kundan said.

AFTER 12-YEAR-OLD'S PLEA

HC seeks Centre, Delhi's reply on jabbing below 18



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 28: The Delhi High Court Friday sought response from Centre and Delhi government on a plea moved by a 12-year-old seeking for immediate vaccination of children between the ages of 12-17 in the city.

The plea contended that data from across the country, including Delhi, has revealed that between April-May, the number of reported cases of children infected and suffering from Covid-19 "has risen tremendously".

The plea said children have a fundamental right to be a beneficiary of the Covid-19 vaccines which are being promoted as "an easy, low-cost way to avoid the infection which may cause them serious harm or death".

A bench comprising Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh issued notice to the Centre and Delhi government on the petition.

The plea contended that it is pertinent that the vaccine policy against Covid-19 has failed to factor-in children or parents of children, who are a vulnerable section of society, for vaccination against the deadly virus.

The plea added that the evidence that unvaccinated children are more likely to develop a new, more powerful Covid-19 strain, is reflected in the prevalent 'second wave', which has infected many more children than the 'first wave' last year.

"The Respondents have failed to prepare a National Plan for children in adherence to the guidelines as given under the National Disaster Management Plan 2019, formulated under the Disaster Management Act 2005, which clearly recognize children and their vulnerability during a 'biological health emergency', such as the present Covid pandemic," said the plea.

The plea said there is enough empirical evidence to show that Covid-19 virus brings long-term health complications such as organ damage, long Covid, or multisystem inflammatory syndrome and death to at least some proportion of children.

"The State is obligated to recognize the vulnerability of children during this pandemic and accordingly take all suitable vaccination measures for them, along with other preventive medical infrastructure measures to ensure mitigation of the 'disaster'," added the plea.

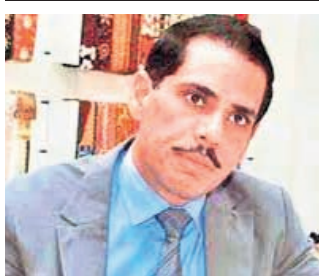
VADRA GETS MORE TIME TO REPLY TO I-T NOTICES

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 28: The Delhi High Court Friday gave three weeks to businessman Robert Vadra to reply to the Income Tax (I-T) Department notices under the black money law.

A bench comprising Justices Rajiv Shakdher and Talwant Singh issued notice to the I-T department and asked it to respond to Vadra's, who is the son-in-law of Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, petition challenging the notices to him December 4, 2018, and December 18, 2019, under Section 10 (1) of the Black Money Act, 2015, within four weeks. The court said no final order should be passed by the I-T department,

UNDER BLACK MONEY LAW



while it can continue with the assessment proceedings, and posted the matter for further hearing August 10.

Vadra sought these notices to be

declared as illegal and unconstitutional along with the show cause notice issued to him May 7 this year as well as the May 17 and May 22 letters. Vadra claimed these letters violated Article 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution.

In the plea, Vadra alleged that these communications issued to him show the mala fide attempt to pursue a political vendetta against him, his wife Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, General Secretary of the Congress party, and his in-laws.

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing Vadra, claimed that the department has not even supplied all the documents to them, and his client was not being given sufficient time to respond to the notices.

COVID TESTING



A medical worker collects swab sample of a child passenger for Covid-19 test at Charbagh railway station in Lucknow, Friday, May 28, 2021

PTI PHOTO

PETA India asks Amul to switch to producing vegan milk

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 28: Concerning demand for vegan food and beverages, PETA India called on Amul, an Indian dairy cooperative society, to realise which way the wind is blowing and switch to producing the creamy dairy-free milk that today's consumers want.

In the letter to Amul Managing Director R S Sodhi, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India said, "we would again like to encourage Amul to benefit from the booming vegan food and milk market, instead of wasting resources trying to fight the demand for plant-based products that is only growing. Other companies are responding to market changes,



and Amul can, too".

PETA India Vegan Outreach Coordinator Dr Kiran Ahuja said: "Much of the world - and that certainly includes India - has turned

sour towards dairy over animal welfare, environmental, and health concerns."

"PETA India is calling on Amul to realise which way the wind is

In India, most people would be astonished to learn that the dairy sector is the primary supplier of cattle to the beef industry and that most family farms are now gone, PETA India said

blowing and switch to producing the creamy dairy-free milk that today's consumers want."

Today, the group said, most cows and buffaloes used for dairy are raised in a factory environment and artificially inseminated and

their calves are typically stolen from them shortly after birth so that the milk nature intended for them to drink can be consumed by humans instead. "You've seen them on the street: male calves who are of no value to the dairy business, cast out to starve. Others are sold to be killed for their flesh and skin, while females are sentenced to the same fate as their mothers: they're used as milk machines until their bodies give out, at which point many are abandoned or slaughtered for cheap meat."

Such is the dairy industry's panic that the National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India has made a plea in the High Court of Delhi that only animal milk be permitted to be called "milk",

PETA India said.

PETA India - whose motto reads, in part, that "animals are not ours to eat" and which opposes a human-supremacist world view - notes that major dairy companies around the world - including Nestle, Epigamia, Chobani, Danone, and Yoplait - are now investing in non-dairy options.

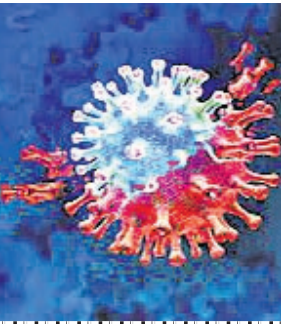
It also said analysts at the British financial services company Barclays predict that the vegan food and drink market could increase by more than 1,000 per cent by the end of the decade, and a 2019 article on a website run by Franchise India Holdings Limited found that the number of vegans in India has risen by 360 per cent in the past decade.



CALL FOR A CAUSE
We have made priority groups and are now giving vaccines to those with comorbidities and certain frontline categories only
PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CHIEF MINISTER

CALL FOR A CAUSE

India Friday supported the renewed global call for a comprehensive study by the WHO into the origins of coronavirus, days after US President Joe Biden asked American intelligence agencies to 'redouble' their efforts in investigating the emergence of the pandemic amid growing controversy about origins of the virus from a laboratory in China



of the day quote

The 38 farmers' groups which formed this federation were earlier not associated with any farmer outfit
GURNAM SINGH CHADUNI | HARYANA BKU CHIEF

Domestic power rates had been cut down by 50 paise per unit by the regulator in 2020 too
AMARINDER SINGH | PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

I will appeal the opposition leaders of Rajasthan that instead of creating all kinds of disputes, pressurise the Centre by looking at the interests of the state so that the state can get more vaccines
ASHOK GEHLOT | RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Army averts fire tragedy

Jammu: A major tragedy was averted after the Indian army's fire fighting trucks helped douse a raging fire at a chemical factory in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said Friday. The army said that in the late hours of Thursday a major fire broke out at the Chemical factory in Battal Ballian industrial area in Udhampur. "A distress call from the Udhampur civil administration was received by the station commander, Military Garrison Udhampur, seeking army's assistance in dousing the raging fire," the army said.

Militant killed

Srinagar: One terrorist has been killed in an ongoing encounter between terrorists and security forces in South Kashmir's Shopian district Friday, officials said. The gunbattle in Ganapora area started after a joint team of the police and the army cordoned off the area and launched a search operation on the basis of specific information about presence of terrorists.

Minor raped

Muzaffarnagar: A 17-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her neighbour here, police said Friday. The incident that took place Thursday evening was reported at Bhopa Police Station. The accused was identified as Nasir, who took the girl to his house saying his sister-in-law had asked to meet her. According to the complaint filed by victim's father, the accused threatened the girl and raped her while his friend Fateh Khan stood outside the gate.

Factory gutted

Udhampur: A pesticide factory was gutted in a fire in the industrial area of Jammu and Kashmir's Udhampur district, officials said Friday, adding no casualties were reported in the incident. It broke out in Dhanuka chemical factory at Batal-Ballian industrial estate around midnight Thursday, they said, adding eight fire tenders were pressed into service along with the army and the air force.

Man booked

Panaji: A Madhya Pradesh resident was arrested from popular sweet-water lake in beach village of Arambol in North Goa for possession of hashish worth Rs 60,000, police said on Friday. Rajesh Bansal, 31, from Sidhi district in Madhya Pradesh has been arrested and booked under relevant sections of the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, police inspector-in-charge of the Pernem police station Jivba Dalvi said.

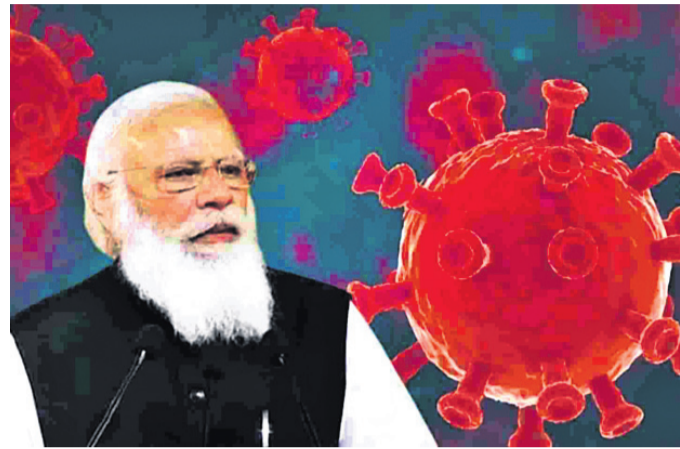
'PM responsible for 2nd Covid wave'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: Attacking the government for its Covid management, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Friday held Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "nautanki" (theatrics) responsible for the second coronavirus wave and warned of more waves to come at the current rate of vaccination.

Calling on the government to quickly evolve a vaccine strategy for the entire population, he urged the prime minister to procure vaccines for all Indians and not indulge in a blame-game or find excuses. Addressing an online press conference, he said India is the vaccine capital of the world and it is possible to escalate the inoculation drive as only 3 per cent of the people have received their jabs yet.

Gandhi also termed the prime minister an event manager and said it is time for him to show that he can organise vaccines for everyone. "The PM is responsible for the second wave of virus, it is a result of his 'nautanki' and the lack of his responsibility that the people have entrusted him with," he alleged. "It is time for the prime minister to be a leader and display leadership skills and show courage



and not come out with excuses and blame others," he also said. Hitting back at Gandhi, senior BJP leader and Union minister Prakash Javadekar alleged that his choice of words like "nautanki" for the prime minister when Modi is working to curb Covid is part of the toolkit's script, referring to a controversial document about targeting the government.

Javadekar noted that the health ministry had recently given a roadmap about producing 216 crore doses by December and how 108 crore people will be vaccinated, as he rebutted Gandhi's claim that it

may take three years to finish the exercise, considered critical to curb the disease. In a tweet, Gandhi said, "Bring the country together. Shut the space for viral spread. Stop the lies. Vaccinate extensively"

During the media interaction, he alleged that the Covid death rate in India is "a lie". The government, he said, is trying to spread lies and suppress information and that is why it is lying about the deaths. He also urged the government to not give the virus time or space and change the strategy. This is not the time for spreading this lies, if we have to fight this war against Covid, the gov-

ernment should understand and tell the truth, he noted. "My understanding and the understanding of experts is the current rate of vaccination of 3 per cent almost guarantees a third wave of virus when the lockdown goes, which is completely unnecessary," he warned. If the vaccination is at 50-60 per cent of the population, India would not have a third wave and certainly not a fourth or a fifth wave, Gandhi said.

"The problem is there is no strategy. The prime minister doesn't think strategically. He is an event manager. He thinks one event at a time. You don't need events now as events will kill people, you need a strategy. The aim of the strategy should be to shut the space for corona," he said. Going by the current pace of vaccination, the entire inoculation exercise will take another three years, till May 2024, and the country will witness several Covid waves by then, he claimed. Gandhi said the prime minister created space for Covid to spread through his actions.

According to the Congress leader, the lockdown, masks and social distancing are temporary fixes while vaccination is the permanent solution to COVID-19.

Covid daily count below 2-lakh mark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: The single day rise in coronavirus cases in India fell below the 2-lakh mark for the second time this month, while the recoveries continue to outnumber daily cases for the 15th consecutive day, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Friday.

A total of 1,86,364 new coronavirus infections were reported in a day, the lowest in around 44 days, taking the total tally of COVID-19 cases to 2,75,55,457. The death toll climbed to 3,18,895 with 3,660 daily deaths, the data updated at 8 am showed. The daily COVID-19 count in India last fell below the 2-lakh mark May 25.

Also, 20,70,508 tests were conducted on Thursday taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far for detection of COVID-19 in the country to 33,90,39,861. The daily positivity rate has declined to 9 per cent. It has been less than 10 per cent for four consecutive days, the ministry said, adding the weekly positivity rate has further declined to 10.42 per cent.

Recoveries continue to outnumber daily new cases for the 15th consecutive day, it said. The active cases have further reduced to 23,43,152 comprising 8.50 per cent of the total infections with a net decline of 76,755 cases in the active caseload in 24 hours, while the national COVID-19 recovery rate has improved to 90.34 per cent. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 2,48,93,410 and the case fatality rate has increased to 1.16 per cent, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark August 7, 30 lakh August 23, 40 lakh September 5 and 50 lakh September 16. It went past 60 lakh September 28, 70 lakh October 11, crossed 80 lakh October 29, 90 lakh November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of 2 crore May 4.

The 3,660 new fatalities include 884 from Maharashtra, 476 from Karnataka, 474 from Tamil Nadu, 187 from Uttar Pradesh, 181 from Kerala, 177 from Punjab, 148 from West Bengal, 117 from Delhi and 104 from Andhra Pradesh.

Won't allow any unilateral change at LAC: Naravane

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: In a clear and unambiguous message to China, Army Chief Gen MM Naravane Friday said there can be no de-escalation without complete disengagement at all friction points in eastern Ladakh and that the Indian Army is prepared for all contingencies in the region.

In an exclusive interview to PTI, Gen Naravane said India is dealing with China in a "firm" and "non-escalatory" manner to ensure the sanctity of its claims in eastern Ladakh, and that it was even open to initiating confidence-building measures.

It has been more than a year since the military standoff between the two sides erupted in eastern Ladakh May 5 during which there were fatalities on both sides for the first time in 45 years. They have made limited progress in achieving disengagement at the Pangong lake area while negotiations for similar steps at other points remained deadlocked.

Gen Naravane asserted that the Indian Army is currently holding onto all important areas in the high-altitude region and it has adequate personnel in the form of

"reserves" to react to any contingencies.

"We are very clear that no de-escalation can take place before disengagement at all friction points. India and China have signed a number of border agreements which have been unilaterally breached by the People's Liberation Army (PLA)," Gen Naravane said.

"Though we want peace and tranquillity at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and are open to initiating confidence-building measures, we remain prepared for all contingencies."

He also said the situation along the northern border is under control and that the coming rounds of military talks with China will focus on restoring the status quo ante of April 2020.

"Indian Army is very clear that no loss of territory or unilateral change in status quo will be permitted. We are dealing with the Chinese in a firm and non-escalatory way, ensuring the sanctity of our claims in eastern Ladakh," he said.

To a question on when a resolution of the standoff can be expected in areas like Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang, the Army Chief said it was difficult to predict the timeline.



Relatives perform last rites of a Covid-19 victim at a crematorium in Srinagar

PTI PHOTO

Cops arrest 1 more wrestler in Dhankar murder case

New Delhi: Hours after Delhi Police arrested a wrestler Rohit, involved in the May 4 Chhatrasal Stadium brawl that led to the death of Sagar Dhankar, the police said that it has arrested one more wrestler Vijender. Rohit was arrested after his role in the murder of Dhankar came to the fore. And later in the day Vijender was also arrested after his role cropped up during the probe, the source said. With two arrests Friday, now there are nine people, including star wrestler and two time Olympian Sushil Kumar, in custody. The source said that the police had taken Sushil Kumar to Haryana and Chandigarh Thursday to locate the places where he had taken shelter after he went into hiding following the brawl in the Delhi stadium.

Efforts on to provide quota to Marathas: Maha govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 28: The Maharashtra government had not stopped its efforts to provide quota to the Maratha community, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray told MP Sambhaji Chhatrapati Friday.

The Rajya Sabha member from the BJP met Thackeray to discuss the issue in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's ruling May 5 which quashed the quota for the Marathas in government jobs and education. "The discussions were positive and Thackeray made it clear that (ensuring) justice to the community was the stand of the



government and all efforts are being made in that direction," PWD minister Ashok Chavan, who was present at the meeting, tweeted. Chavan, who heads a cabinet sub-committee on the Maratha quota issue, further said the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress government has not given up the efforts to en-

sure that the quota is restored.

The quota legislation was enacted under a BJP government, but now the saffron party is not trying to do anything to restore it and only threatening to launch agitation, the Congress leader further said. "The difference between the two approaches is very clear. We can still work hand in hand. Let's see who is genuine," he added.

The state government has set up an eight-member committee headed by retired High Court judge Dilip Bhosale to analyse the Supreme Court verdict. It is expected to submit its report by May 31.

MHA invites applications for citizenship to migrants from 3 nations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: The Centre Friday invited non-Muslims like Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists belonging to Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan and residing in 13 districts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Punjab to apply for Indian citizenship.

The Union home ministry issued a notification in this effect for immediate implementation of the order under the Citizenship Act 1955 and Rules framed under the law in 2009 even though the rules under the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) enacted in 2019 are yet to be framed by the

government. When the CAA was enacted in 2019, there were widespread protests in different parts of the country and even riots took place in Delhi in early 2020 in the wake of these protests.

According to the CAA, Indian citizenship will be given to non-Muslim persecuted minorities from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan - Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist, Parsi and Christian - who had come to India till December 31, 2014. "In exercise of powers conferred under Section 16 of the Citizenship Act, 1955 (57 of 1955), the central government hereby directs that powers exercisable by it for registration as citizen of India under Section 5, or for grant of



certificate of naturalisation under section 6 of the Citizenship Act 1955 in respect of any person belonging to minority community in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and

Pakistan namely, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians, residing in the districts mentioned and the states mentioned below," the notification said.

People who are eligible to apply for Indian citizenship are those currently living in the districts of Morbi, Rajkot, Patan and Vadodara in Gujarat, Durg and Balodabazar in Chhattisgarh, Jalore, Udaipur, Pali, Barmer and Sirohi in Rajasthan, Faridabad in Haryana and Jalandhar in Punjab.

"The application for registration as citizen of India or grant of certificate of naturalisation as citizen of India under the said rules (Citizenship Rules, 2009) shall be made by the applicant online," the notification said.

The home ministry said the verification of the application is done simultaneously by collector or secretary (Home) of Haryana and

Punjab as the case may be, at the district-level and the state-level and the application and the reports thereon shall be made accessible simultaneously to the Centre on online portal.

The collector or the secretary, as the case may be, makes such inquiry as he considers necessary for ascertaining the suitability of the applicant and for that purpose forwards the application online to such agencies for verification and comments as may be required for completing such an inquiry and the instructions issued by the Centre from time-to-time in this regard shall be strictly complied with by state or union territory and district concerned, it said.



The UP government is following the dictatorship. A number of demands of employee organisations of the state are pending. Instead of sitting and talking to them, the government has extended ESMA in the state for the third time
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS GEN SECRETARY

SHOCKING NEWS

A Covid negative mother has given birth to a baby who tested positive immediately after being born



of the day quote

We have nothing against yoga guru Baba Ramdev. The IMA will consider taking back police complaints if he withdrew his remarks against vaccines and modern medicine
DR J A JAYALAL | IMA NATIONAL CHIEF

Corruption and looting of public exchequer will not be tolerated at any cost during my tenure
HEMANT SOREN | CHIEF MINISTER OF JHARHAT

For anyone who wants the second dose of Covaxin, be it in the 18-44 group or 45-plus group, there is no Covaxin in Delhi
ATISHI MARLENA | DELHI MLA

Take care of kids orphaned by Covid: SC

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 28: The Supreme Court Friday asked the state governments to identify children who have become orphan due to the Covid-19 pandemic and take steps to provide immediate relief to all such children.

The top court asked state governments to understand the agony of children starving on the streets and directed the district authorities that they be immediately taken care of without waiting for any further orders from the courts.

A vacation bench of Justices L N Rao and Aniruddha Bose directed district administrations to identify the orphans in their areas and upload their data on the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) website by Saturday evening. The top court's direction came on an application filed by amicus curiae Gaurav Agrawal in the pending suo motu case seeking identification of or-

phaned children due to Covid-19 or otherwise and providing them immediate relief by the state governments. The bench said state governments must inform it of the position of these children and the steps they have taken to provide them immediate relief. "We have read somewhere that in Maharashtra over 2,900 children have lost their one or both the parents due to Covid-19. We don't have an exact number of such children," the bench said. It told the state government's counsel appearing in the matter, "I hope you understand the agony of the children star-



ing on the streets. You please ask the state authorities to immediately take care of their basic needs". The top court noted that the Centre has already issued advisory to the concerned authorities for the protection of children, who have lost their parents due to Covid-19. "There is an obligation on the part of the authorities to ensure such children in need are taken care of," the bench said, while referring to various provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act. It said the district administration authorities should upload the latest data of such orphaned children on the website 'Baal Swaraj' of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) by Saturday evening. "We are of the opinion that Centre and State shall get the latest information on the identification of children, who have lost their one or both the parents due to pandemic and the steps taken to attend to their basic needs", it said, and listed the matter on June 1.

At the outset, Agrawal said that he has filed the application as there are numerous children, who have lost one or both the parents or guardians due to the Covid and they need to be immediately taken care of by the state governments. He said there are two categories of children adversely affected due to the Covid - the ones who lost both parents/guardians and those who have lost the earning parent/guardian of the family since March 2020. Agrawal said another issue of concern is that there are increased instances of child trafficking, especially of the girl child.

Pithani held, sent to 5 day NCB custody

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 28: Hindi film actor Sushant Singh Rajput's flatmate Siddharth Pithani was arrested from Hyderabad in a drug case related to the actor's death June 14 last year, and has been sent to five days custody of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). NCB Zonal Director Sameer Wankhede said that Pithani was produced before a Mumbai court which sent him to the agency's custody till June 1.

Pithani was asked to join the probe, but he didn't, and following this, NCB officials gathered information on his whereabouts. Wankhede said that the drug

law enforcement agency found that he was in Hyderabad and accordingly May 25, a team from Mumbai was sent there in search of Pithani, who has been long absconding.

The NCB Mumbai team was assisted by NCB, Sub Zonal Unit at Hyderabad, he said. He said that Pithani was arrested May 26 and his statement recorded. He was later produced before a court in Hyderabad for his transit remand.

With the grant of transit remand, Pithani was brought to Mumbai May 28 and produced before a court, Wankhede said. The arrest comes almost two and half

months after the NCB filed a 12,000-page charge sheet against 33 people, including Sushant's former girlfriend and actress Rhea Chakraborty, her brother Showik and others in the Bollywood-drugs

mafia probe case linked to Sushant's death on June 14, 2020, when he was found hanging in his flat.

On March 5, the NCB charge sheet was filed before a Mumbai Special NDPS Court, following two cases registered by the drug law enforcement agency after an intimation from the Enforcement Directorate which was probing the financial angles in Sushant's death.

SUSHANT CASE



SPURIOUS LIQUOR KILLS 15 IN ALIGARH

AGENCIES

Aligarh (UP), May 28: Fifteen people died Friday and at least 16 more were taken ill after allegedly consuming spurious liquor sold by a licensed vendor here, a senior official said.

The authorities have ordered a magisterial probe into the incident and suspend five excise officials while four people, including the liquor vend owner, have been arrested.

The inquiry will be conducted by an additional district magistrate-rank officer, DM Chandra Bhushan Singh told reporters.

The administration is likely to invoke the stringent National Security Act (NSA) against those found guilty, he said.

Additional District Magistrate (Finance) Vidhan Jaiswal told reporters that the victims are residents of villages under Lodha, Khair and Jawan police stations.

"While 15 people have died, 16 are being treated in different hospitals," he said.

The district magistrate has announced Rs 5 lakh ex gratia to the kin of the deceased.

DIG Dipak Kumar said the Lodha police station was informed in the morning about the death of two people after consuming country-made liquor bought from a vendor in Karsia. The victims were truck drivers who had gathered at a gas depot on the Aligarh-Tapaal highway for work, he said.

However, when police and senior district officials reached the spot, they were told that six more people belonging to Karsia and adjoining villages had died, the DIG said, adding that the bodies were sent for post-mortem.

Some of those taken ill were rushed to the district hospital, from where they were shifted to Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College Hospital at Aligarh Muslim University.

The liquor shop has been sealed and samples have been collected for testing. Four people, including the owner of the liquor vend at Andla, have been arrested, police said.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kalanidhi Naithani said six police teams are combing villages to trace victims and help people get medical assistance.



Warning labels on junk food must to curb kids' obesity

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 28: Strong regulations to cap salt, sugar and other harmful ingredients and simple to understand front of package labelling (FOPL) on junk food packets can help curb the alarming rise in childhood obesity in India, say public health experts and doctors, in a webinar organised by All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh Friday.

Warning labels are critical to help consumers and parents understand how much empty calories and harmful nutrients are being consumed by children.

"Food labels should provide clear guidance. Simple to understand labels with evidence based nutrition cut-off is a need of the hour



and will go a long way to address the crisis of childhood obesity in the country," said Umesh Kapil, Professor, Clinical Epidemiology, Indian Institute of Biliary Sciences.

The experts also urged that India must rapidly adopt the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended limits and also introduce simple, smart and interpretative FOPL.

MATTER OF CONCERN

With more than 14.4 million obese children, India has the second highest number of children with childhood obesity in the world

By 2025 this number is expected to reach a staggering 17 million

"There is enough scientific evidence and a globally agreed WHO SEARO framework for evidence-based cut-offs for anti-nutrients like sugar, salt and saturated fat present in packaged food," Kapil added.

WHO has identified FOPL as "one of the policy tools that can support healthy diets, both in stimulating consumers to make informed health-

ier food choices and in driving manufacturers to reformulate products to avoid making unfavourable nutrient content disclosure." With more than 14.4 million obese children, India has the second highest number of children with childhood obesity in the world. By 2025 this number is expected to reach a staggering 17 million. As is the trajectory in other developing nations, the proportion of packaged and ultra-processed foods is on the rise.

There is growing evidence that the Covid-19 pandemic could potentially increase the risk of children becoming obese. School closures and lockdowns have already deprived millions of children of nutritional school meals, sports and adequate physical exercise.

international



As a gesture of recognition for the immeasurable suffering inflicted on the victims, we want to support Namibia and the descendants of the victims with a substantial programme of € 1.1bn for reconstruction and development
HEIKO MAAS | FOREIGN MINISTER, GERMANY

OCTOGENARIAN LANDS IN COURT

An 84-year-old man went on trial in Germany Friday accused of hoarding a stash of Nazi-era weapons, including an army tank, in the basement of his residence in the city of Kiel



of the day quote

It's just good business (pay increase for women CEOs). It's no longer a, should more women be in business? More diverse pipelines produce better outcomes. As more businesses prove it can be done over time, then positive peer pressure kicks in

JANE STEVENSON | VICE CHAIR, BOARD AND CEO SERVICES, KORN FERRY

It's been nearly two weeks since we last announced the current round of measures (Phase II) to deal with the outbreak of cases in Singapore. Our assessment is that the measures are working, and they are having an effect in controlling the spread of the virus

LAWRENCE WONG | FINANCE MINISTER, SINGAPORE

Our public health experts' primary concern is just how fast this (India) variant is moving. We've seen overseas how difficult that movement can be to control

JAMES MERLINO | ACTING PREMIER, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA

SHORT TAKES

UK okays use of J&J vaccine

London: Regulators Friday authorised another coronavirus vaccine for use in the UK amid concerns about rising Covid-19 cases as a variant of the virus first identified in India spreads around the country. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency said the single-dose vaccine made by Johnson & Johnson met "the expected standards of safety, quality and effectiveness." The authorisation takes the number of vaccines in the UK's armoury to four following earlier approvals.

Policeman killed, 8 injured in clash

Manila: A police officer was killed and eight others injured Friday in a clash with suspected communist rebels in the Philippines, authorities said. Two police officers also went missing after the firefight in the town of Magsaysay in Occidental Mindoro province, according to a police report. The police officers were on their way back from a coordination meeting in the community when they encountered the guerrillas, triggering the firefight.

Indian-American gets nominated

Washington: US President Joe Biden's administration has nominated another Indian-American, Arun Venkataraman, to a key position in the Commerce Department, according to the White House. The White House on Thursday said Venkataraman has been nominated for the position of Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Director General of the US and Foreign Commercial Service.

People protest US support for Israel

Jakarta: Several hundred Indonesians Friday protested what they called American support for Israel outside the US Embassy and the UN mission in Jakarta. Carrying giant Palestinian and Indonesian flags and signs that read "Indonesian worker solidarity for free Palestine," the demonstrators marched from several mosques to a major street outside the embassy.

China blames Britain for India's woes in Kashmir

AGENCIES

Beijing, May 28: In an unusual diplomatic move, China Friday lashed out at the British blaming them for India's troubles in Kashmir. In a series of tweets, the Chinese government spokesperson Zhao Lijian attacked the UK and its British imperialistic past, with respect to India and Indian Kashmir. "If British India was the jewel in the crown of the British Empire, then Kashmir has been the biggest crack in it when the crown finally fell over on that land," he tweeted while quoting an article published in China's biggest and most influential state media, Xinhua news agency.

Xinhua is the official state-run press agency, headed by a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Opinion pieces published by the agency are perceived to be the official line of Beijing even as the CCP never owns it.

Zhao is the deputy director and spokesperson of the Foreign Ministry Information Department. An outspoken and fierce diplomat, Zhao is quite active on Twitter; the American micro-blogging site which is banned in China.

On Friday while sharing the article, he tweeted: "The British Empire fell, but the poison of hatred has been injected into the body politic of two peoples for decades to come. The land once as pristine as its famous Kashmir Sapphires was carved by innumerable scars, cracked by the greed of imperialists and soaked



If British India was the jewel in the crown of the British Empire, then Kashmir has been the biggest crack in it when the crown finally fell over on that land

ZHAO LIJIAN | GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON, CHINA

by the tears of people in fear." As long as the bloodshed in Kashmir continues, Britain can never clean itself from its bloody colonial past, Zhao added.

The endorsement to this view by the Chinese spokesperson, is likely to have political ramifications between India and China.

The article had quoted David Cameron, the former UK Prime Minister to point out Britain's admission to the creation of modern geopolitical conflicts.

Cameron, the article mentioned,

in his response to the questions from students in Pakistan in 2011 had said: "As with so many of the problems of the world, we are responsible for their creation in the first place."

But Cameron's "politics of apology" was trashed by both the Right and the Left within the UK, the article said.

"The imperial past is far from being dead. We should not be surprised when British foreign policy interests and interventions today are perceived by many as "neo-colonial" in their nature."

The article in Xinhua was based on India's retired justice Markandey Katju's book, "The Nation".

However, the fact that the Chinese state media chose to reproduce the select parts on Kashmir, has political connotations given the fact that China itself has been an aggressor in Jammu and Kashmir.

EU challenges TikTok over consumer rights breaches claim

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Brussels, May 28: The European Commission said on Friday it has given one month to the Chinese-owned video app TikTok to answer complaints from an European consumers group over its commercial practices.

The EU's executive arm said it has started discussions involving the platform and the national consumer authorities following an alert launched earlier this year by the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) about alleged breaches of consumers' rights.

The Commission said some contractual terms in TikTok's policies could be considered misleading and confusing for consumers, adding that concerns relating to issues including hidden marketing and advertising strategies tar-



getting children were raised.

In February, the BEUC filed a complaint with the European Commission and the network of consumer protection authorities against TikTok. It argued that several terms in TikTok's Terms of Service 'are unfair and said the platform, which is particularly popular with youngsters, failed to protect children and teenagers from hidden advertising and potentially harmful content.

Biden to propose \$6tn US budget for FY 2022



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington, May 28: US President Joe Biden Friday unveiled a \$6 trillion budget for next year that's piled high with new safety net programs for the poor and middle class, but his generosity depends on taxing corporations and the wealthy to keep the nation's spiking debt from spiralling totally out of control.

Biden has already described, in general terms, major plans on infrastructure and he won a major victory on Covid-19 relief earlier this year. But Friday's rollout tallies up the costs and incorporates them into the government's existing budget framework, including Social Security and Medicare, to provide a fuller view of the administration's fiscal posture.

The whopping deficit projections reflect a government with steadily accumulating debt that has topped \$28 trillion after well over \$5 trillion in already approved Covid-19 relief, which would require the government to borrow roughly 50 cents of every dollar it spends this year and next.

With the government's struc-

tural deficit remaining unchecked, Biden would use proposed tax hikes on businesses and high-earning people to power huge new social programmes like universal prekindergarten, large subsidies for child care and guaranteed paid leave.

"The best way to grow our economy is not from the top down, but from the bottom up and the middle out," Biden said in his written budget message. "Our prosperity comes from the people who get up every day, work hard, raise their family, pay their taxes, serve their Nation, and volunteer in their communities."

The budget incorporates the administration's eight-year, \$2.3 trillion infrastructure proposal and its \$1.8 trillion American Families Plan and adds details on his \$1.5 trillion request for annual operating expenditures for the Pentagon and domestic agencies.

"Together, these... Will be transformational: Strengthening our economy boosting American competitiveness, and delivering shared prosperity and economic security," said acting White House budget chief Shalanda Young.

PAKISTAN

Lawmaker demands Hindus to be called non-Muslims

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Islamabad, May 28: A Pakistani Member of the National Assembly (MNA) has submitted a bill and called on the House seeking to ensure that the country's religious minorities are referred to and identified as non-Muslims.

Keeso Mal Keel Das, from the opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), also issued a notice to the National Assembly Secretariat for introducing a private member bill under rule 118 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly, 2007.

The MNA argued that the Constitution discriminates against Pakistani non-Muslims by referring to them as minorities.

"Inaccurate reference gives the impression of being second-class citizens," he maintained.

Keel Das has suggested in the proposed bill that the act shall be called the Constitution Amendment Act, 2021, urging for it to be adopted and come into force immediately.

"It is against the spirit of the Constitution 1973, to discriminate against a large number of population by declaring them minority, when the sacrifices of that population are remarkable in every sphere of life of the prosperity, growth and bright future of the country," he said in his arguments and reasoning of the bill.

"The word 'minority' is used for four times (in the Constitution) while the word 'non-Muslims' is used 15 times, which reflects the intent of the makers of the Constitution. Therefore, the anomaly shall be omitted by substituting the word minority' with the word non-Muslims.



MUSIC THERAPY



Lemurs are seen as an 11-year-old boy plays keyboard for animals amid the Covid-19 outbreak, at a zoo in Chonburi, Thailand

Africa urgently needs 20mn vax doses for 2nd jobs: WHO

AGENCIES

Geneva, May 28: Africa urgently needs 20 million doses of the AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine to make sure everyone who has had a first jab can get a second within the recommended eight to 12-week window, the World Health Organization (WHO) said.

Another 200 million doses of any coronavirus vaccine are needed to get 10 per cent of the continent's population vaccinated by September, a news agency Friday quoted the WHO as saying.



WHO data shows 28 million doses from various manufacturers have reached Africa, which corresponds to fewer than two doses per 100 people. Meanwhile, 1.5 billion coronavirus vaccine doses have been administered globally. "Africa needs vaccines now. Any

pause in our vaccination campaigns will lead to lost lives and lost hope," Matshidiso Moeti, WHO's Regional Director for Africa said. It is too early to say whether Africa is on the cusp of a third wave, she said.

"However, we know that cases are rising, and the clock is ticking so we urgently appeal to countries that have vaccinated their high-risk groups to speed up the dose-sharing to fully protect the most vulnerable people."

France is the first country to provide 31,000 doses to Mauritania, said WHO.

HK changes electoral laws, reduces direct public vote

AGENCIES

Hong Kong, May 28: Hong Kong's legislature has passed a bill amending electoral laws that drastically reduces the public's ability to vote and increases the number of pro-Beijing lawmakers making decisions for the city.

The new law empowers the city's national security department to check the backgrounds of potential candidates for public office and sets up a new committee to ensure that the candidates are "patriotic".



The number of seats in Hong Kong's legislature will be expanded to 90, with 40 of them elected by a largely pro-Beijing election committee. The number of legislators elected directly by Hong Kong voters will be cut to 20, from the previous 35.

The bill, passed by a 40-2 vote, was met with little opposition, as most of the legislators are largely pro-Beijing. Their pro-democracy colleagues resigned en masse last year in protest over the ousting of four lawmakers deemed to be insufficiently loyal to Beijing.

Documentaries on Gandhi, Ray to be screened at NYIFF

It's the second year in a row that the oldest and prestigious film festival that features cinema from India and diaspora has gone online due to the pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New York, May 28: A documentary feature on Mahatma Gandhi and another on legendary Satyajit Ray are part of the line-up of 58 films that will showcased next month at the virtual edition of the 21st New York Indian Film Festival (NYIFF).

The NYIFF, presented by the Indo-American Arts Council (IAAC), will run from June 4- June 13 virtually. It's the second year in a row that the oldest and prestigious film festival that features cinema from India and diaspora has gone online due to the pandemic.

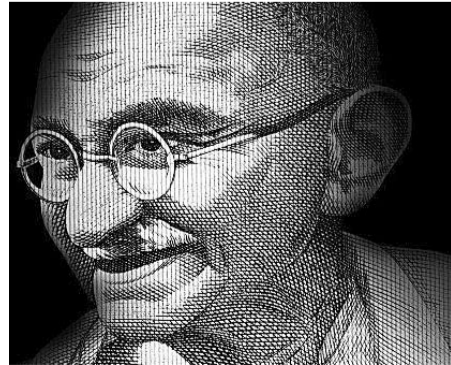
Award-winning filmmaker Prithvi Konanur's "Pinki Elli?"

(Where's Pinki?) will serve as the opening film at the festival.

The documentary on Gandhi, Ramesh Sharma-directed "Ahimsa Gandhi: The Power of the Powerless", will serve as the festival's centerpiece film along with Ajitesh Sharma's "WOMB: Women of my Billions".

Ramesh Sharma decided to make "Ahimsa Gandhi: The Power of the Powerless" in 2019, when the world commemorated the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Shot in India, South Africa, the US and Europe, the documentary tracks the influence of Gandhi's non-violence approach on world leaders including Martin Luther King Jr, late



Congressman John Lewis, former South African president Nelson Mandela and the Dalai Lama.

International musicians U2 and AR Rahman have contributed to the



title track of the documentary, the NYIFF said.

The festival has selected 1984 documentary "The Music of Satyajit Ray" to celebrate the birth cent-

nary of the globally renowned filmmaker, writer, illustrator and music composer who had been awarded the Bharat Ratna and an honorary Oscar. The film is based on inter-

views with the filmmaker, who passed away at the age 70 in 1992, and consists of a montage of Ray's works and rare recording sessions.

IAAC Exec Dir Suman Gollamudi said that last year the film festival had to be reimaged in a virtual format and it involved pivoting to an online platform.

"We emerged stronger with a larger footprint as global audiences engaged with the films. This year, with the pandemic creating even more distress, we feel a greater responsibility to provide filmmakers an outlet to showcase their work. Plus, offer audiences hope through cinematic stories that gives meaning to lift our emotions," she added.

business

of the day quote

Waaree Prime is a token of appreciation to our EPC partners who ensure solarising the remotest corners of India. Their contribution has enabled a widespread adaptation of solar that has transformed and strengthened the overall energy ecosystem

HITESH DOSHI | CHAIRMAN AND MD, WAAREE GROUP

We have been continuously working on expanding the ecosystem in the EV space, as one of the first entrants in the segment. The partnership with Attero gives our customers more confidence with respect to the battery's end-of-life usage. The move will assist in responsible recycling and will minimise the carbon footprint of ZS EV users

RAJEEV CHABA | PRESIDENT AND MD, MG MOTOR INDIA

The government will look into various demand of the real estate industry, including an extension of timeline for completion of projects by 6-9 months.

DURGA SHANKER MISHRA | HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS SECRETARY

SHORT TAKES

Uber to offer financial support

New Delhi: Ride hailing major Uber Friday said its drivers testing positive for Covid-19 will receive a one-time payout of up to ₹6,800 in partial earnings support for 14 days. Drivers furnishing a positive RT-PCR test from an accredited lab will receive a one-time payout of up to a maximum of ₹6,800 in partial earnings support for 14 days, depending upon their city of residence and engagement on the platform, according to a statement.

US pips Mauritius

New Delhi: The US replaced Mauritius as the second largest source of foreign direct investment into India during 2020-21 with inflows of \$13.82 billion, according to government data. Singapore remained the top source of FDI into the country for the third consecutive fiscal at \$17.41 billion. During the last financial year, India attracted USD 5.64 billion in FDI from Mauritius, according to the data by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.

UPL sets up oxygen plants

New Delhi: Agro-chemical major UPL Ltd Friday said it has set up oxygen plants at eight hospitals in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi. The company has converted four of its nitrogen plants in Gujarat to produce and deliver oxygen, it said. These converted plants have now been installed and operational at the hospitals, it added.

Mall owners suffer ₹3K cr loss

New Delhi: Mall owners have incurred a loss of around ₹3,000 crore during the ongoing second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic over the last eight weeks due to lockdowns and restrictions imposed by various states across the country. In the wake of the second pandemic wave, around 25 per cent of the business of the retail side across categories has been lost and this is going to impact the mall owners as well, according to Shopping Centres Association of India Chairman Mukesh Kumar.



Our bank's board of directors has recommended a dividend of 20 per cent for FY21. We unfortunately lost about 110 employees to the dreaded virus, most of them during the pandemic's second wave

PADMA CHUNDUR | MD AND CEO, INDIAN BANK

JIO RESTORES NETWORK

Telecom service provider Reliance Jio restored its 4G telecom network in all the districts of Odisha that were affected by cyclone Yaas. It created a war room strategy and stationed quick response teams at the respective districts with adequate equipment, spares, and other required materials along with experienced technical manpower



Economy added 16.9L less jobs in FY21: SBI research

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 28: Net job creation in the economy fell by 16.9 lakh in FY21 over the previous fiscal, shows an SBI Research analysis of EPFO payroll data. However, the FY21 numbers are better than the FY20 net job creation, which had declined by 28.9 lakh, further cementing the view that the economy is not creating new employment opportunities.

The latest EPFO data shows that net new EPF subscribers stood at 94.5 lakh in FY21, and NPS added 5.82 lakh, taking the cumulative net addition to 100.4 lakh, which is marginally down from 102.3 lakh in FY20.

However, according to Soumya Kanti Ghosh, SBI's group chief economic adviser, "this does not represent the correct picture as the data include the number of exited members who re-joined and re-subscribed, and thus not fresh job creation."

"An estimate of the actual net new payroll (first job) adjusted for re-joined/re-subscribed members and formalization (based on ECR data), shows the actual net new payroll is only 44 lakh in FY21, which is 16.9 lakh less than the net new payroll generated in FY20, when the new payroll declined by almost 28.9 lakh," he said.

Ghosh also said most of the 44 lakh additions are low quality jobs. The second job (or the exited members who re-joined and re-subscribed) rose by 17.9 lakh in FY21.



This does not represent the correct picture as the data include the number of exited members who re-joined and re-subscribed, and thus not fresh job creation

SOUMYA KANTI GHOSH | GROUP CEA, SBI

However, the number of new members who joined declined by 6.9 lakh in FY21 compared to an increase of 1.5 lakh in FY20. This indicates that lower number of people exited from job market in search for better/new jobs (which was obviously scarce during the pandemic-hit year).

"A breakup of the 95.4 lakhs job created by the EPFO payrolls, 41.2 lakh were through second jobs, 44 lakh through first jobs and 9.3 lakh were through formalisation," he said.

Ghosh added that the official numbers did not capture the 16.9

lakh decline in first-time jobs in FY21, though the number of second time jobs or those members who re-joined the payroll rose by 17.9 lakh.

Even the rate of formalisation declined by 1.2 lakh, reflecting the disruptions in MSME sector

"Cumulatively, total payroll generation of EPFO and NPS was almost 19 lakh less than the previous fiscal," he says, adding in the private sector, most job losses were in smaller companies.

The ratio of women enrolment to total enrolment in the EPFO data was 23 per cent in FY20 and has not changed significantly in FY21.

According to him, the problem with the EPFO/NPS data is that it does not exclude the number of retirees.

The latest World Bank data shows a deep compression in the labour force from 495 million in 2019 to 472 million in 2020, primarily due to the first wave of the pandemic.

DoT allocates spectrum for 5G trials to telecom operators



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: The Department of Telecom (DoT) has allocated spectrum to telecom operators to start 5G trials in the country, sources said. The trials will be conducted at various locations including Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Gujarat, Hyderabad, among others, according to industry sources.

"Telecom operators have been allocated spectrum in 700 Mhz band, 3.3-3.6 gigahertz (Ghz) band and 24.25-28.5 Ghz band across various locations," a telecom company official said.

On May 4, DoT had approved applications from Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and MTNL for conducting 5G trials without using technologies from Chinese companies.

DoT had approved trials of 5G with Ericsson, Nokia, Samsung and C-DOT. In addition, Reliance Jio Infocomm will be conducting trials using its own indigenous technology.

According to DoT, 5G technology is expected to deliver ten times better download speed than that of 4G and up to three times greater spectrum efficiency.

During the trials, application of 5G in Indian settings will get tested. This includes tele-medicine, tele-education and drone-based agriculture monitoring etc. Telecom operators will be able to test various 5G devices on their network.

The duration of the trials, at present, is for a period of 6 months. This includes a time period of 2 months for procurement and setting up of the equipment.

IT, electronics sector need to be more focused: Min

POST NEWS NETWORK

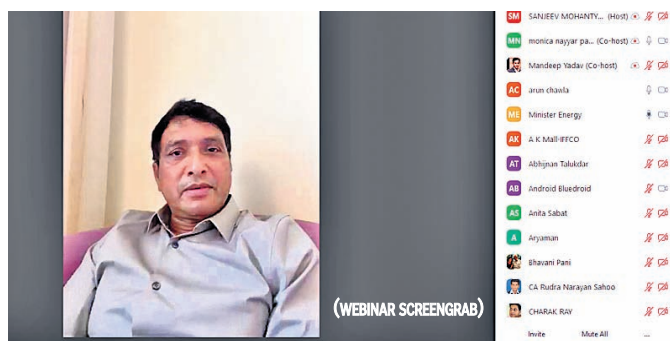
Bhubaneswar, May 28: State needs to offer more focus on IT and electronics sector for further development and investments, said Dibya Shankar Mishra, Odisha Industry Minister.

Addressing the Annual General Meeting of FICCI Odisha State Council, Mishra said, "Our state focuses in sectors like tourism, food processing, chemicals-plastics, and petrochemicals, electronics manufacturing, ancillary and downstream industries in metal sector, and textiles and apparels, both in terms of production and investments.

However, if the state has to aim for further development and investments, we need to focus on IT and electronics. There is a vast scope of development in this sector. The state government will facilitate all necessary actions towards this effect."

The minister also urged industry representatives to protect nature and work towards a zero-discharge industry.

He also said, "Odisha boasts of available land bank. It is time



Odisha boasts of available land bank. It is time to shift from the coast to the west and south of the state for available land resources for industries

DIBYA SHANKAR MISHRA | INDUSTRY MINISTER, ODISHA

to shift from the coast to the west and south of the state for available land resources for industries."

Principal Secretary of Industry Department Hemant Sharma

GST Council leaves tax rate on vaccines unchanged



PNN/AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 28: The GST Council Friday left taxes on Covid-19 vaccines and medical supplies unchanged but exempted duty on import of a medicine used for treatment of black fungus. A group of ministers will deliberate on tax structure on the vaccine and medical supplies, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told reporters after a meeting of the GST Council.

The GST Council, which is headed by the Union Finance Minister and comprises representatives of all states and union territories, exempted levy of I-GST on import of Amphotericin-B, which is used for the treatment of black fungus. Currently, vaccines attract 5 per cent GST.

Sitharaman said the Council decided to continue a waiver of I-GST on free Covid-19 related supplies imported from abroad.

Also, the panel decided that the Centre will borrow ₹1.58 lakh crore and pass it on to the states to make

up for the shortfall in their revenues from the implementation of the GST.

A special session of the Council will be held soon to consider extending the five-year GST shortfall compensation period to states beyond 2022. The panel provided relief to small GST taxpayers through an amnesty scheme for late return filers.

State finance minister Niranjan Pujari, Ashok Meena, Principal secretary, finance Department and Sushil Kumar Lohani, Commissioner of CT GST, Odisha had also attended the meeting.

Pujari raised the issue of reduction in tax rates on items required for Covid management like vaccines so that the burden on common people and states in procuring these items comes down. He highlighted that chief minister of Odisha has already written to Union Finance Minister earlier this month in this regard requesting GST council to consider the matter on priority in view of urgency.

Tata Digital acquires major stake in BigBasket

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 28: Tata Sons' subsidiary Tata Digital Friday said it has acquired a majority stake in supermarket grocery supplies private limited, the company which is better known as BigBasket.

According to the company, e-grocery has been one of the fastest growing segments in the consumer e-commerce space and its growth is propelled by India's rising consumption and digital penetration.

"The current pandemic has further accelerated its adoption as consumers seek the convenience of ordering quality groceries delivered safely at home."

In the e-grocery space, BigBasket provides one of the largest assortments with the convenience of home deliveries on preferred dates and timeslots.

Besides, it operates a farm-to-fork supply chain with over 12,000 farmers and several collection centers across India.

"Grocery is one of the largest components of an individual's consumption basket in India, and BigBasket as India's largest e-grocery player, fits in perfectly with our vision of creating a large consumer digital ecosystem," Pratik Pal, CEO of Tata Digital was quoted as saying in a company statement.

ENERGY DEMAND

Recovery to continue despite temporary blip: Ind-Ra

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) Friday said the recovery in energy demand will continue despite Covid-19 led temporary blip. India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has published the May 2021 edition of its credit news digest on India's power sector.

The report highlights the trends in the power sector, with a focus on capacity addition, generation, transmission, merchant power, deficit, regulatory changes and the recent rating actions by Ind-Ra.

Ind-Ra estimates, as per a statement, the all-India energy demand would decline in May 2021 on a month-on-month basis, despite the peak summer season, and to remain below pre-pandemic levels.

This is on account of the continuation of Covid-19 led restrictions put out by certain states till May 31,



2021. With Covid cases peaking in May and announcements by certain states to open up from June, Ind-Ra expects energy demand to start recovering from June 2021.

In the first 25 days of May 2021, the all-India energy demand was 88.8 billion units (May 2020: 102.6 billion

units; May 2019: 120.7 billion units). In April 2021, the all-India energy demand was higher by 39.3 per cent y-o-y at 118.4 billion units (March 2021: up 22.8 per cent) due to the lower base effect and the early onset of summer contributing to the higher demand.

The report highlights the trends in the power sector, with a focus on capacity addition, generation, merchant power, deficit, transmission, regulatory changes and the recent rating actions by Ind-Ra

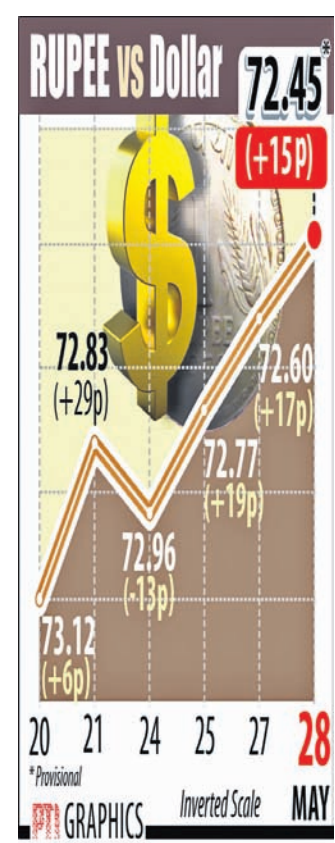
The short-term power price at Indian Energy Exchange remained high at ₹3.70/kWh in April 2021 (March 2021: ₹4.07/unit; April 2020: ₹2.41/kWh) on account of a high demand from the short-term power market.

The electricity generation increased 42.5 per cent y-o-y to 115.5 billion units in April 2021 (March

2021: up 23.5 per cent), supported by 55.4 per cent y-o-y growth in thermal generation (up 29.2 per cent y-o-y), although hydro generation fell 18.4 per cent y-o-y (down 7.8 per cent y-o-y). Electricity generation from renewable sources increased 17.9 per cent y-o-y to 11.7 billion units in April 2021, with solar generation increasing 41.5 per cent y-o-y.

The improvement in energy demand and the reduced generation from hydro generation have helped the thermal plant load factor (PLF) increase to 66.7 per cent in April 2021 (April 2020: 42.2 per cent; March 2021: 66.5 per cent).

In April 2021, the thermal sector's PLFs rose on a y-o-y basis across the central, state and private sectors, increasing to 78.4 per cent (April 2020: 52.0 per cent), 60.3 per cent (33.5 per cent) and 62.0 per cent (41.6 per cent), respectively, it added.



INTO THE BLUE

Guardiola's Manchester City lock horns with Tuchel's Chelsea in the all-English Champions League final tonight



Guardiola will finally lead his Sky Blues out for the Champions League final. Despite taking their foot off the gas in the Premier League since the start of the month – which hardly mattered at all in the grand scheme of things – Guardiola's men have been almost unplayable in Europe, with Borussia Monchengladbach, Borussia Dortmund and PSG all falling victim to the Citizens' superiority in the knock-

HEAD-TO-HEAD
The final will mark the 169th meeting between Man City and Chelsea in all competitions, with the Blues boasting 70 wins compared to the Sky Blues' 59
Tuchel got the better of Guardiola in the FA Cup semifinals before overseeing a 2-1 success at the Etihad earlier this month
Despite his fluffed penalty (panenka miss vs Chelsea), soon-to-be Barcelona attacker Aguero has struck 15 times in 22 games against Chelsea for City
The two clubs have not met in Europe since the 1970-71 Cup Winners' Cup, where the Blues overcame their English rivals in the semifinals before ultimately winning the tournament

imagine the stakes if the German was to come up against his former employers in the showpiece event. However, while the club that relieved him of his duties was being nullified by Man City's impenetrable defence, Tuchel focused on the task at hand against perennial champions Real Madrid. It can be argued that Tuchel is still finding his feet in English football after just six months in the role – which makes Chelsea's run to the Champions League final all the more impressive – but unlike City, the capital side do not have the wind in their sails ahead of Saturday's showdown.

Blues slipped out of the top four. Nevertheless, having become the first manager in history to reach the Champions League final two years in a row with two different clubs, Tuchel will undoubtedly be desperate to go one better this time around. However, whatever transpires over the course of 90 or 120 minutes – or even a 22-strike penalty shootout – at the Estadio do Dragao, one thing is for certain; the Champions League trophy will return home to English soil.



out rounds.

A goalless stalemate with Porto – whose stadium is hosting this year's showpiece event amid never-ending coronavirus controversy – represents the only minor blip during City's inspiring continental run, as they have secured victories in 11 of their 12 games in the tournament this year, including each of their last seven.

Guardiola's name is already etched into managerial folklore, but having led Barcelona to Champions League triumphs in 2009 and 2011, he could join the elite crowd of Bob Paisley, Carlo Ancelotti and Zinedine Zidane with a third winners' medal, and the 50-year-old needs no added incentive to get the job done in Portugal.

The City manager was born nearly nine months after the Sky Blues last added a European trophy to their glistening cabinet – the 1970 Cup Winners' Cup – and with the prospect of a domestic and European treble still on the line, their familiar opponents must produce 90 minutes of near-perfection if they are to prolong City's continental misery.

Like his adversary, Tuchel is a man who knows all about European heartache, having come so close yet so far with PSG last year, and one can only begin to

Indeed, a 0-1 derby defeat to Arsenal May 12 preceded an FA Cup final loss to Leicester City just a few days later, and despite gaining revenge on the Foxes in front of a roaring Stamford Bridge crowd, Chelsea's season ended in disappointment with a lowly 1-2 defeat to Aston Villa on the final day of the Premier League campaign.

Three defeats from four before a continental final is not exactly a recipe for success, but thankfully for Tuchel and the ever-demanding Chelsea board, Leicester's late defeat to Tottenham Hotspur means that the Blues secured fourth spot and a route into Europe's premier competition should their efforts in Portugal prove futile.

Furthermore, Tuchel's commitment to solid defensive foundations has seen the Blues also ship just four goals in their 12 Champions League games so far – although Frank Lampard can take some credit for that – and Porto's inconsequential 1-0 win in the quarterfinal second leg is their only defeat in the tournament this season.

With the demons of four consecutive last-16 finishes firmly banished, Chelsea's trigger-happy hierarchy can surely look ahead to a bright future under Tuchel after his overwhelmingly successful time in the dugout, although the story could have panned out a lot differently had the

MATCH TIMING

VS

TIME: 12:30 am
TELECAST: Sony Ten Network

PLAYERS TO WATCH OUT FOR

MAN CITY
Kevin De Bruyne, Riyad Mahrez, Ruben Dias, Phil Foden, Sergio Aguero

CHELSEA
Cesar Azpilicueta, N'Golo Kante, Thiago Silva, Kai Havertz, Mason Mount

Olympic hopes end for Srikanth, Saina



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 28: Kidambi Srikanth and Saina Nehwal's slim hopes of qualifying for Tokyo Games ended after the game's governing body (BWF) Friday made it clear there will not be any change in the current ranking list and no further tournament will be held inside the qualification period.

Former World No.1 Srikanth and London Games bronze-medallist Saina's hopes were all but dashed when the last of the Olympic qualifiers in Singapore was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The duo had hung on a slim hope when the governing body said it 'will issue a further statement on Tokyo Olympics qualifying at a later date'. "The Badminton World Federation (BWF) can confirm no further tournaments will be played inside the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games qualifying window," the apex body said in a statement Friday.

after postponement of three important events.

However, with no respite from the pandemic, BWF was forced to cancel or postpone the last three qualifiers – India Open, Malaysia Open and Singapore Open, leaving players, including Srikanth and Saina, with no chance to earn a qualification.

"The Olympic qualification process is in effect closed as there are no additional opportunities for players to earn points," BWF secretary general Thomas Lund said.

"However, we still need to receive confirmations from National Olympic Committees and Member Associations, followed by any possible reallocations, and this will take a number of weeks to complete."

According to the qualification rules, the top 16 players – a maximum of two players each in men's and women's singles from a country – as June 15 will gain direct entries.

The BWF said "invitations will be sent shortly with final participation lists and seedings to be published at the conclusion of this process."

Indian shuttlers who have already made the cut for the Olympics include PV Sindhu, B Sai Praneeth and the men's doubles pairing of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy.

Yates wins Stage 19 of Giro d'Italia

AGENCIES

Rome, May 28: Simon Yates of Team BikeExchange took a gripping and tense victory on stage 19 of the Giro d'Italia to win at the summit of Alpe di Mera to gain yet more time on race leader Egan Bernal (Ineos Grenadiers).

Yates attacked with 6.4km to go on the final climb, and then again a kilometre later, to win ahead of Joao Almeida by 11 seconds as Bernal limited his losses to 28 seconds to the British climber with two stages to go.

Damiano Caruso (Bahrain Victorious) who started the day in second overall was dropped by both Yates and Bernal but remains in second place, 2:29 down on the race leader with Yates just twenty seconds further adrift.

Bernal and Almeida, who started the day well out of contention in the overall standings, chipped away at Yates' lead and with 2km to go the gap was down to 15 seconds. However, the British rider hung on to win the stage without any challenge.

Amit, Shiva in Asian meet finals



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, May 28: Defending champion Amit Panghal (52kg) and Shiva Thapa (64kg) stormed into the Asian Boxing Championship finals with resounding victories even as an injured Vikas Krishan (69kg) signed off with a bronze medal here, Friday.

Olympic-bound Panghal out-punched familiar foe Saken Bibossinov of Kazakhstan 5-0. Thapa, the first Indian male boxer in the tournament history to secure

five medals, dominated top-seeded defending champion Bakhodur Usmonov of Tajikistan to make the finals with a 4-0 verdict.

However, Vikas, also bound for the Tokyo Games, endured a split decision loss to top seed and defending champion Batorov Bobo-Usmon of Uzbekistan. The bout lasted less than one round as Vikas' eye injury, sustained in the previous bout, aggravated forcing the referee to stop the contest.

Also ending with a bronze was tournament debutant and national

champion Varinder Singh (60kg) after a high-intensity clash against Iran's Daniyal Shahbakhsh. The Indian lost 2-3 after fighting his heart out.

Panghal will square off against reigning Olympic and World Champion Shakhobidin Zoirov of Uzbekistan in the final Monday. It will be a repeat of the 2019 World Championship final in which the Indian had lost to settle for silver.

The 27-year-old Thapa's first medal at the event was a gold in 2013, followed by a bronze in 2015, a silver in 2017 and another bronze in 2019. Thapa will be up against Mongolia's Asian Games silver-medallist Baatarsukh Chinzorig in the summit clash.

It was heartbreak for two-time world youth champion Sakshi Choudhary (54kg) as she lost her final spot after her rival, top-seeded Kazakh Dina Zholaman, successfully challenged the narrow victory that she had clinched in the last four stage. Sakshi had prevailed 3-2 in the regulation bout but the decision was challenged by the Kazakh team and eventually overturned.

WTC final: Joint winners in case of draw/tie

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Dubai, May 28: India and New Zealand will be adjudged joint winners of the inaugural World Test Championship (WTC) if their final clash in Southampton ends in a draw or tie, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said Friday.

According to the playing conditions unveiled by the global body, "a draw or a tie will see both teams crowned as joint winners."

The ICC has also allocated a Reserve Day to make up for any lost time during the regular days of the Final, scheduled to be played from 18 to 22 June, with 23 June set aside as the Reserve Day.

SHORT RUNS: The third umpire will automatically review any call of a 'short run' by the on-field umpire and communicate the decision prior to the next ball being bowled

PLAYER REVIEWS: The fielding captain or the dismissed batsman will be able confirm with the umpire whether a genuine attempt has been made to play the ball prior to deciding whether to initiate a review for LBW

DRS REVIEWS: For LBW reviews, the height margin of the wicket zone has been lifted to the top of the stumps to ensure the same 'Umpire's Call' margin around the stumps for both height and width

"Both of these decisions were made in June 2018, prior to the commencement of the ICC World Test Championship."

The Reserve Day has been scheduled to ensure five full days of play, and it will only be used if lost playing time cannot be recovered through

the normal provisions for each day.

"There will be no additional day's play if a positive result is not achieved after five full days of play and the match will be declared a draw in such a scenario," the ICC stated.

In the event of time being lost dur-

ing the match, the ICC match referee will regularly update the teams and media about the way in which the Reserve Day may be used.

The final decision on whether the Reserve Day needs to be used will be announced at the scheduled start of the last hour on the fifth day.

While India play at home with SG Test and New Zealand use Kookaburra at home, the final will be played with Grade 1 Dukes balls.

The final will also feature the implementation of three changes to international playing conditions, which were brought into effect with the ongoing World Cup Super League series between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka:

ON THIS DAY THAT YEAR

1968: Bobby Charlton scored twice as Manchester United beat Benfica 4-1 in the European Cup final at London's Wembley Stadium, becoming the first English club to win the trophy

1980: Larry Bird beat out Magic Johnson for NBA Rookie of the Year

2011: Golfer Tom Watson won his 6th and final Champions Tour major title with a birdie on the first playoff hole against David Eger

2016: David Warner's 38-ball 69 helped Sunrisers Hyderabad bag IPL trophy beating Royal Challengers Bangalore by 8 runs at M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bangalore

2017: Tiger Woods was arrested and charged with driving under the influence in Jupiter, Florida

BIRTHDAY



1981
ANDREY ARSHAVIN
former Russia and Arsenal footballer