



CASE IN POINT

Actor Juhi Chawla has filed a suit against the implementation of 5G wireless technology in India

LEISURE P2



FINAL CURTAIN

Years after PM Benjamin Netanyahu's hegemony over Israeli politics, a coalition of opponents may oust him

INTERNATIONAL P10



BRAZIL THE NEW HOST

Brazil to host Copa America 2021 after CONMEBOL dropped Argentina, Colombia as co-hosts due to COVID

SPORTS P12

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL

Oh no! It looks so heavy... I won't be able to lift it alone!!

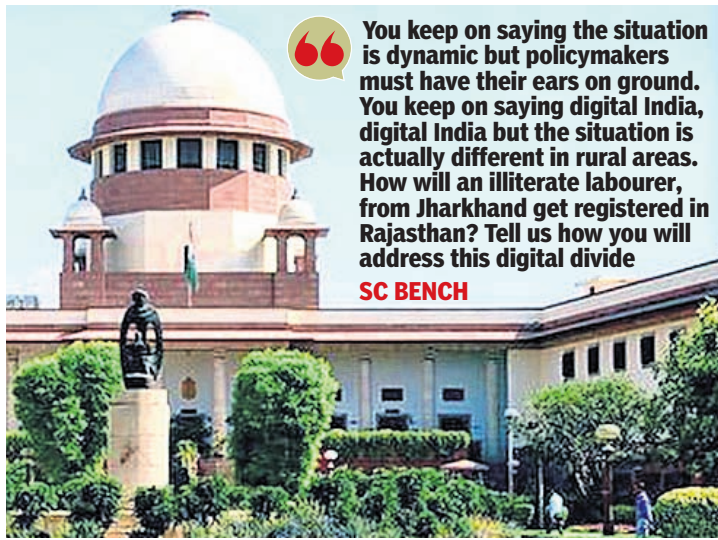
Smell the coffee: SC to Centre

TOP COURT POSES SEARCHING QUESTIONS TO UNION GOVERNMENT ON VACCINE POLICY

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 31: The Supreme Court Monday posed searching questions to the Centre on the COVID-19 vaccine procurement policy and need for mandatory registration on the CoWIN app for people to get vaccinated without keeping in mind the real 'digital India' situation, observing that policymakers must have an ear to the ground.

A special bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, LN Rao and S Ravindrabhat said that since the Centre has made CoWIN registration mandatory for vaccination, how is it going to address the issue of digital divide facing the country. "You keep on saying the situation is dynamic but policymakers must have their ears on ground. You keep on saying digital India, digital India but the situation is actually different in rural areas. How will an illiterate labourer, from Jharkhand get registered in Rajasthan? Tell us how you will address this digital divide," the bench sought to know from Solicitor General Tushar Mehta. It said, "You must smell the coffee



You keep on saying the situation is dynamic but policymakers must have their ears on ground. You keep on saying digital India, digital India but the situation is actually different in rural areas. How will an illiterate labourer, from Jharkhand get registered in Rajasthan? Tell us how you will address this digital divide

SC BENCH

and see what is happening across the country. You must know the ground situation and change the policy accordingly. If we had to do it, we would have done it 15-20 days back." Mehta replied that registration is mandatory as a person needs to be traced for a second dose and as far as rural areas are concerned there are community centres where a person can

get registered for vaccination. The bench questioned Mehta whether the government thinks that this process is viable and asked him to place the policy document on record. The top court was hearing a suo motu case on management of the COVID situation in the country. At the outset, it asked the Centre about the vaccine procurement policy

'WILL EXAMINE SEDITION LAW'

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Monday said it will examine the interpretation of sedition law, particularly in the light of media rights and free speech, as it gave protection to Telugu news channels -- TV5 and ABN Andhrajyothi -- from any coercive action in a case lodged against them under the colonial era provision.

MORE P9

of the Centre by referring to the fact that states like Punjab and Delhi are in the process of issuing global tenders to procure foreign vaccines for COVID-19.

The bench said that even Municipal Corporation like Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has received bids.

"Is this the policy of the Central government that the state or municipal corporation can procure the vaccine or the Union government is going to procure for them like a nodal agency? We want clarity on this and rationale behind this policy," the bench said.

The Leaders' Choice

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711 deaths in May: Is worst over for state?

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 31: Under the severe impact of the second wave of Covid-19, the state recorded over 3.20 lakh new cases and 711 fatalities during the month of May.

As per official data, at least 3,20,803 persons have been infected with the virus in May while 1,13,591 cases were reported in April. The number of deaths increased to 711 in May from 118 in April. Highest 12,852 cases were reported May 23 while 35 deaths were reported on three days (May 26, 29 and 31). Twenty-six deaths were reported May 22 and since then the toll is on the rise.

However, daily fresh cases have come down from 11,623 (May 26) to 8313 (May 31). A few days ago, the daily spike suddenly witnessed a sharp fall because of less testing in the wake of Cyclone Yaas in several districts. Now, though testing has been restored to its usual capacity (over 60,000 per day), the state has been reporting less number of Covid cases.

Speaking to mediaper-



sons here Monday, Public Health Director Niranjan Mishra said, "In Odisha, the cases are on declining path in some districts while a few other districts are still witnessing high case-load. Therefore, this is not a uniform phenomenon and cannot be generalised. But overall, the rate of infection is plummeting."

Going by this trend, cases in Odisha are expected to go down further in June, he said. Speaking at the Covid-19 Vaccination Advisory Committee three days back, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had said that the current trend of Covid cases is on decline across the state except for a few districts. The second wave is beginning to recede, he hoped. "We are focusing on vaccination and intend to utilise all resources to quickly vaccinate our people," the CM had stated.

Bengal CS retires

KOLKATA: Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Monday said she was appointing West Bengal's Chief Secretary (CS) Alapan Bandyopadhyay as Chief Advisor for three years effective from Tuesday, after allowing the bureaucrat who was ordered by the Central government to report to Delhi, to retire. Banerjee told newsmen here that the Central government had asked Bandyopadhyay to report to Delhi's North Block Tuesday, but she added an officer cannot join a new office without permission from the state administration.

MORE P8

US experts warn of Covid-26, Covid-32

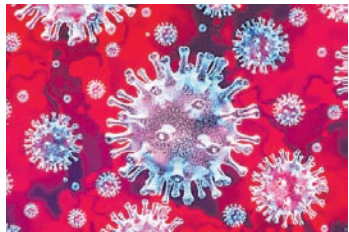
AGENCIES

New York, May 31: Two senior US disease experts have said the world needs China's cooperation in tracing the origins of Covid-19 to prevent future pandemic threats, Bloomberg reported.

According to Scott Gottlieb, a commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the Trump administration and now a board member of Pfizer Inc, information to support the theory that the SARS-CoV-2 virus may have escaped from a lab in Wuhan, China, has increased. China hasn't provided evidence to disprove that theory, while the search for signs that the virus emerged from wildlife hasn't yielded results, Gottlieb said on CBS News' "Face the Nation."

Not knowing how the pandemic started puts the world at risk of future outbreaks, Peter Hotez, co-director of the Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development, said in a separate TV appearance. "There's going to be Covid-26 and Covid-32 unless we fully understand the origins of Covid-19," Hotez said on NBC's "Meet the press."

Almost a year and half after the new pathogen was first detected spreading in a wet market in Wuhan, the precise origins of the virus remain unknown. Scientists have hypothesised that it most likely spread from wild animals to humans. The idea that the virus may have accidentally escaped from a research lab, long promoted by some



We need a team of scientists, epidemiologists, virologists, bat ecologists in Hubei province for a six-month, year-long period

PETER HOTEZ | US DISEASE EXPERT

Republicans, has gotten renewed attention from the Biden administration. In a surprise statement Wednesday, President Joe Biden called for a renewed investigation into the virus' emergence. US intelligence agencies had conflicting assessments of whether it was more likely the virus crossed the species barrier from a natural reservoir or leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, Biden said. He ordered the agencies to "redouble their efforts" and report to him again in 90 days.

Debate over the virus' origin was fuelled anew by a Wall Street Journal report May 23 that three researchers from the Wuhan Institute of Virology became sick enough in November 2019 that they sought hospital care for "symptoms consistent with both Covid-19 and common seasonal illness."

GDP shrinks 7.3% in FY21

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 31: India's economy contracted by less-than-expected 7.3 per cent in the fiscal year ended March 2021 after growth rate picked up in the fourth quarter, just before the world's worst outbreak of coronavirus infections hit the country.

The GDP in Asia's third-largest economy grew by 1.6 per cent in the January-March period, up from 0.5 per cent in the previous quarter when India began pulling out of a steep pandemic-induced recession in the earlier six months. GDP had grown by 3 per cent in the January-March quarter in the previous year. The economy, which was facing a

slowdown even before the pandemic broke out last year, contracted by 7.3 per cent during FY21, weighed down by nationwide lockdown that pummeled consumption and halted most economic activities. This is the first full-year contraction in the Indian economy in the last four decades since 1979-80, when GDP had shrunk by 5.2 per cent. The economy had grown by 4 per cent in the previous 2019-20 fiscal.

The GDP expanded by 8.3 per cent in FY17 before slipping to 7 per cent in the following fiscal and to 6.1 per cent in 2018-19. According to data released by NSO, India's real GDP contracted to ₹135 lakh crore in FY21 (2020-21) from ₹145 lakh crore at the end of March 2020.

Fuel prices continue to see upward spiral

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 31: After a day's pause, fuel prices increased once again Monday reaching new highs across the country with petrol crossing ₹100 per litre mark in several cities.

CITY FUEL PRICES	
PETROL	₹95.01 (+0.29)
DIESEL	₹92.84 (+0.29)

Accordingly, the pump prices of petrol and diesel increased by 29 paise and 26 paise per litre to ₹94.23 and ₹85.16 per litre respectively in Delhi Monday. Across the country as well, petrol and diesel prices increased Monday but the quantum varied depending on the level of local taxes in different states.

PEAK 'LOCKDOWN' HOUR



Heavy traffic seen on the national highway near Rasulgarh-Vani Vihar road in Bhubaneswar during lockdown, Monday

China adopts 3-child policy amid demographic crisis

The crisis was expected to deepen as the population above 60 years grew to 264 million, up by 18.7% last year

AGENCIES

Beijing, May 31: China's ruling Communist Party Monday announced a relaxation of its strict two-child policy to allow all couples to have up to three children, in a major policy change after recent data showed a steep decline in birth rates in the world's most populous country.

China permitted all couples to have two children in 2016, scrapping the draconian decades-old one-child policy which policymakers blame for the demographic crisis in the country.

Chinese officials claim the one-child policy implemented for over three decades has prevented over 400 million births. The decision to permit the third child came after this month's once-in-a-decade census showed that



China's population grew at the slowest pace to 1.412 billion amid official projections that the decline may begin as early as next year.

The new census figures revealed that

the demographic crisis China faced was expected to deepen as the population above 60 years grew to 264 million, up by 18.7 per cent last year.

As the calls for the government to

do away with the family planning restrictions grew louder due to the concerns that the declining population in the country could result in serious labour shortages negatively impacting the world's second-largest economy, the Communist Party of China (CPC) headed by President Xi Jinping decided to permit a third child while declining to completely scrap the family planning policy.

"China will support couples that wish to have a third child," state-run Xinhua news agency reported, quoting a decision made at the Political Bureau of CPC, presided over by President Xi. "Implementing the policy and its relevant supporting measures will help improve China's population structure, actively respond to the aging population, and preserve

the country's human resource advantages," the meeting said.

"Data shows the aging of the Chinese population has further deepened, and we will continue to face the pressure to achieve long-term balanced population development," Ning Jizhe, head of the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), said while releasing the census figures May 11.

Also the two-child policy failed to entice couples to have a second child as fewer opted for the second child citing heavy expenditure in raising the children. The poor response made Liang Jianzhang, professor at Peking University's School of Economics, to suggest to the government to offer parents one million yuan (USD 156,000) for each newborn child to shore up the country's declining birth rate.

Snatchers active during lockdown

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 31: After a brief lull, snatchers again became active in the capital posing a challenge to the city police. Sources said around 100 robbery and theft cases were reported in Bhubaneswar in May.

In a shocking incident, a looter attacked a housewife with a knife reportedly during a failed snatching bid here Monday morning.

The woman Anshu Gupta is a resident of IRC Village under Nayapalli police limits. According to sources, the miscreant followed Gupta who was going to the

nearby market and attacked her with a knife from behind to snatch away a gold chain which she reportedly was wearing. He failed to take out the chain but Gupta suffered serious injuries in the attack. Locals rushed to her help when the snatcher again tried to attack the woman. The miscreant managed to flee. The whole incident was captured in a CCTV camera. Several such cases of robbery and thefts were reported here during the last couple of days. Criminals are having a field day despite heavy deployment of police across the city for lockdown enforcement.

leisure



McKELLEN DOES ONLINE PILATES TO STAY FIT DURING LOCKDOWN

Veteran star Ian McKellen has credited online pilates sessions for keeping him active during Covid-19 lockdown. "On and off I've been aware that exercise is a good idea and I've done various disciplines. I've been doing pilates online through lockdown. It just keeps me active," McKellen said.

I ENJOY WORKING WHICH HAS KEPT ME GOING: HOPKINS

Anthony Hopkins is 83 and in fighting form in front of the camera, having just won an Oscar as Best Actor for *The Father*. He asserts that he enjoys working, which is what keeps him going.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today you will feel like going green, and Ganesh approves. You could plant a sapling, or organise some dustbins to keep the neighbourhood clean. If you wish to make the world a better place to live in, do it but take it step by step.

TAURUS
Ganesh sees you acting very possessive about people and things. You are, consequently, likely to feel suspicious, uncertain and insecure about everything, particularly people. It's even possible that you may even suspect the feelings and intentions of those who are close to you.

GEMINI
You will ponder over religious and cultural values and issues today. You will indulge in a fair amount of discussion with your family members over the issue and present your thoughts and feelings on the subject. These discussions could end up covering topics like law, education, societal concerns, manners and etiquette etc., says Ganesh.

CANCER
The day looks set to be an ordinary day, for both work and play, says Ganesh. Yet, if you are planning to participate in an event or a competition today, march ahead, by all means. There will, practically, be no one who'll be able to compete with you.

LEO
You will need to keep from being agitated today. Let your spouse or business partner take critical decisions if you aren't in the right frame of mind. Decisions you take today may have to be rethought of later. Important meetings will proceed smoothly, but you will not be able to commit to any final conclusions or contracts.

VIRGO
Appreciate the things that people do and try your best to inspire them to achieve greater success, says Ganesh. Put on your thinking cap and contemplate seriously. Simply criticising others will only hurt you. Be as level-headed as you can and keep pegging on towards your targets.

LIBRA
Ganesh says you will try to gain in-depth knowledge about new technological inventions in your spare time today. Some of you may have queries regarding higher education that you may be able to take up today and reach a conclusion about.

SCORPIO
Till now you have experienced all the highs. Today you may come across the lows of the professional world. The equation between your boss, colleagues and you may get slightly disturbed. However, you will make it up by evening. Freshers may look for some career opportunities.

SAGITTARIUS
Conversation and interaction with like-minded people is going to make your day, says Ganesh. Shooting ideas, brainstorming and casual discussions may enlighten you today. Those around you will enjoy your company.

CAPRICORN
Today, you will not be in the right mood to work or produce expected results. Mounting work pressure may further dampen your self-confidence, foretells Ganesh. The dullness will vanish in the air by the evening and you will be back to your happy self.

AQUARIUS
You spend a lot of time planning for a better future. Sure, it does minimize the chances of errors as you know possible obstacles in advance. But, the time you spend for calculations takes you away from the reality and you don't fully concentrate on what you have now. Learn to balance, advises Ganesh.

PISCES
You know how important money is and you will think about it all day. You will think less about expenses today and more about prosperity and fame today. Worry about family might increase and in return they will support you, says Ganesh.

Juhi files suit against 5G implementation

Mumbai: Actress Juhi Chawla has filed a suit against the implementation of 5G in India. She says that while she is not against technology and uses it as well, she feels that it's important to address the problems it causes to environment. The first hearing was held Monday.

"We are not against the implementation of technological advancements. On the contrary, we enjoy using the latest products that the world of technology has to offer, including in the field of wireless communications. However, whilst using the latter kind of devices, we are in a constant dilemma, because after doing our own research and studies regarding the RF radiation from wire-free gadgets and network cell towers, we have sufficient reason to believe that the radiation is extremely harmful and injurious to the health and safety of the people," she says.



Shilpa's tips to combat weakness

Mumbai: Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra Monday shared yoga therapy to combat weakness, in her new Instagram post.

Sharing a video that captures the actress practicing Mandukasana, she wrote: "To support all kinds of healing processes, the main source of energy comes from the core of our being. So, the Mandukasana is a very important asana as it focuses on your navel centre, which also happens to be your life-force centre called the second brain. It has the ability to give you the energy to combat all weaknesses. That's why they say, 'Go with your gut feeling'."

She added: "Please remember: people with knee, ankle, and back pain issues should avoid this asana - Tag a friend who should start this ritual right away."

The actress' family recovered from Covid-19 recently and she returned as a judge on the dance reality show *Super Dancer: Chapter 4*.



DIY tips for sustainable decor choices

These do-it-yourself guides can help one make environment-friendly changes to the interiors without causing a dent in pocket.

This World Environment Day, let's vouch to focus on sustainability and make environment-friendly changes to the interiors. Worried that it will cause a dent in your pocket? Fret not, here are a few suggestions that will help you fit these stunners within your home and transform it into an exquisite one.



A light to remember: Next time you go for a stroll in the garden and find dried tree branches, don't walk past it as it has serious statement decor potential. Pick it up and get it home! You can either paint the branches in a single hue like black/white or paint it in multiple pastel hues. Once dried, tie the branches together, wrap those festive fairy lights around it and hang it in that barren corner.

Hang(er) it: We all have spare hangers stuffed somewhere in the back of our storage or wardrobe. It's time to transform them into stunning pieces of decor. Got a macrame wall piece but can't find the right spot to hang it? Don't stress, paint that spare hanger in a neutral hue, hang it up on your accent wall and tie the macrame wall piece to it. You

have an aesthetically pleasing accent wall ready.

Jar full! Don't throw away the empty jam jar. There are a gazillion ways to reuse it. For all the plantsmen out there, we have another alluring suggestion to display those tiny succulents indoor. Take that empty jar and paint it in your favourite colour or you can wrap a metallic wire around it. Put the succulent in the jar and place it on your work desk or bedside table.

If you are somebody who often ends up running around the house last minute looking for car keys, mask and other knick-knacks then using the jar as a storage option is ideal for you.

So, the next time you're planning to throw something out, first have a quick look around to identify some empty, boring spaces. Get creative with these DIY tips and watch your space pop.

'Nora is the hottest dancer out there'

Mumbai: Actor Himansh Kohli has lately appeared in the music videos of a couple of hit recreated songs, and says he would love to work in a dance number with Nora Fatehi.

"I think if it's a dance number, I would love to collaborate with Nora Fatehi because she is literally the hottest dancer out there, and extremely talented," he says.

Himansh appears in the music video of Meet Bros and Jubin Nautiyal's new single *Wafa na raas aayee*, which has crossed 130 million views in less than 10 days of being dropped officially on YouTube. The video also features Arushi Nishank and Rohit Suchanti.

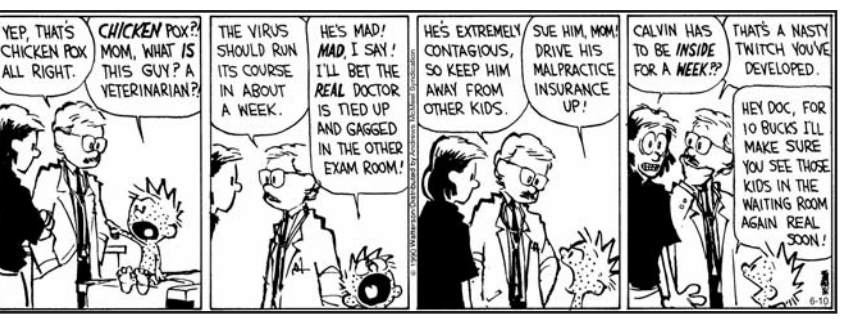
"I am feeling ecstatic and overwhelmed. I had expectations from this song because I experimented with my acting. I wanted to see if people would accept me in this new role or not," Himansh said.



PEANUTS



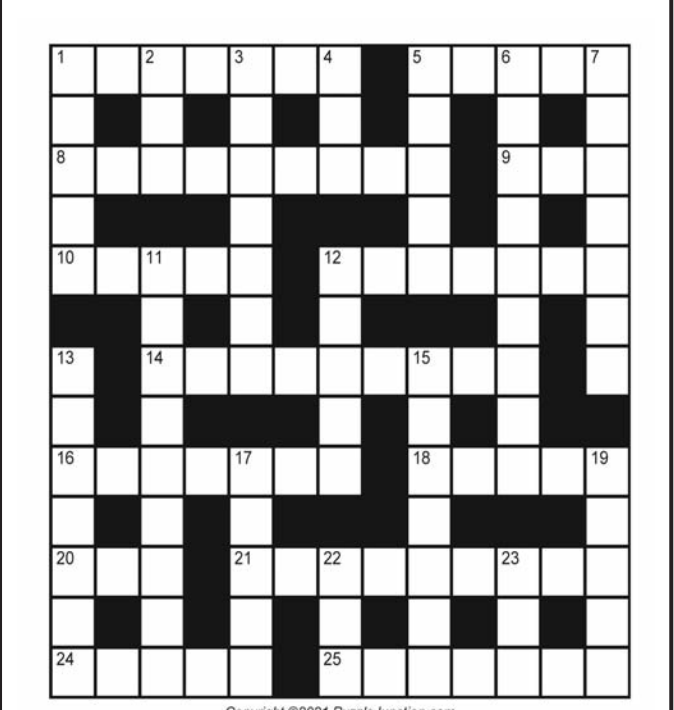
CALVIN AND HOBBS



BREVITY



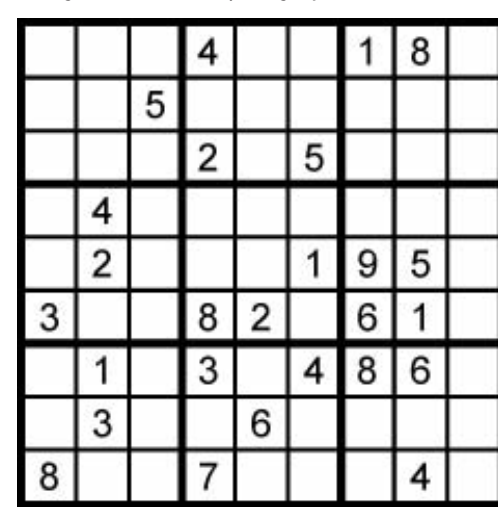
FUN post CROSSWORD



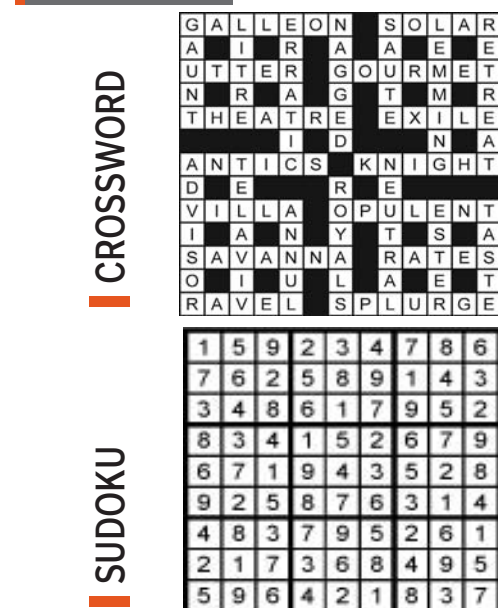
- Across**
- 1 Devilfish
 - 5 Gofers
 - 8 Enact a law
 - 9 Knight's title
 - 10 Postpone
 - 12 Physiatric care
 - 14 Looked like
 - 16 Prophets
 - 18 Kind of wave
 - 20 Ornamental carp
 - 21 Lacking bouquet
 - 24 Has dinner
 - 25 Music genre
 - Down**
 - 1 Young hooter
 - 2 Children's game
 - 3 Soft colours
 - 4 Hot springs
 - 5 Sharp narrow ridge
 - 6 Threw out
 - 7 Digressed
 - 11 Attila the Hun
 - 12 Weighty books
 - 13 Scandalised
 - 15 Exactly as written
 - 17 Zoo denizens
 - 19 Rodeo rope
 - 22 Tolkien beast
 - 23 Sixth sense

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



We have been assured that after June 20, we will get some doses. Sputnik V vaccine is not being produced domestically so far. A part of the doses imported from Russia will be provided to Delhi
ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FROM FRANCE

France announced Monday that it will send additional medical supplies, including around 16 large oxygen generation plants, to India to support the country's fight against the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic



of the day quote

Centre is trying to wash its hands off and asking the states to make its own arrangements even as companies are not that keen to enter into arrangements with the states
PINARAYI VIJAYAN | KERALA CHIEF MINISTER

I once again urge you (Union Education Minister) to reconsider holding the CBSE 12th board exams and to consider the suggestions made by them (students and parents) very, very seriously
PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

In India, over 1.3 million deaths are attributable to tobacco use every year amounting to 3,500 deaths per day, imposing a lot of avoidable socio-economic burden
HARSH VARDHAN | UNION HEALTH MINISTER

RIGHT OF PRESS, FREE SPEECH

SC to examine interpretation of sedition law

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, May 31: The Supreme Court Monday said it will examine the interpretation of sedition law, particularly in the light of media rights and free speech, as it gave protection to Telugu news channels - TV5 and ABN Andhrajyothi -- from any coercive action in a case lodged against them under the colonial era provision.

The two channels were booked by Andhra Pradesh police for alleged sedition in showing 'offensive' speeches of YSR Congress rebel MP K Raghurama Krishna Raju. A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, L N Rao and S Ravindra Bhat said, "We are of the view that provisions of 124A (sedition) and 153 (promoting enmity between classes) of the IPC require interpretation, particularly on the issue of the rights of press and free speech".

It restrained the Andhra Pradesh police from taking any coercive action against the channels and their employees or staffers in connection with the FIR. The bench also sought the response of the state government within four weeks on the pleas of the channels which are charged for various offences including the harsh penal offence of sedition.

Both the media houses have recently moved the top court seeking quashing of an FIR registered against it in a sedition case in Andhra Pradesh, with one house claiming the attempt is to "create a chilling effect" for news channels in the state so that they are wary of hosting any content which is critical of the government.

Shreya Broadcasting Pvt Ltd, which owns TV5 news channel with bureaus in Hyderabad, Vishakhapatnam and Vijayawada, has alleged in its petition that the state "intends to silence" its critics and the media by filing a "vague FIR" and abusing the process of law.



The FIR against the TV channel has connection with the sedition case lodged against Raju, who has already been arrested by the Andhra Pradesh police.

The channels have claimed that the FIR has been lodged against it for airing programmes involving Raju who has been critical of the state government led by his own party. The channels have sought the apex court's direction to restrain the authorities in Andhra Pradesh from taking any coercive action against the management and employees of the news channel in pursuance of the case lodged against them.

The Crime Investigation Department (CID), which has arrested Raju in the case, has also named two media houses and others as accused.

In its plea filed in the apex court through advocate Vipin Nair, Shreya Broadcasting Pvt Ltd has said that freedom of speech of media is of great importance and the FIR clearly intends to breach the same by "chilling the media houses into submission". On May 21, in a relief to the MP granted him bail in a sedition case registered in Andhra Pradesh saying that considering the medical report received from Army hospital, the possibility of his "ill-treatment" in custody cannot be ruled out.

Marathas brought under EWS quota

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, May 31: The Maharashtra government Monday extended benefits under the economically weaker section (EWS) quota to the Maratha community, days after the Supreme Court scrapped a separate reservation in jobs and education for the dominant social group.

A government order (GO) to this effect was issued by the General Administration Department (GAD) here. At present, a 10 per cent EWS quota is in force for those sections of the society which are not covered by any kind of reservations. The central law on the EWS quota was enacted more than two years ago to allow reservation for the poor in jobs and education among the general category.

The GAD order said the Maratha community, which has been classified as a Socially and Economically Backward Class (SEBC), can avail the 10 per cent EWS quota. The SC had, May 5,



struck down a state law that granted reservations in jobs and education to the Maratha community.

The EWS quota will be applicable to the community from the period of interim stay (on Maratha reservation) September 9, 2020, to the final verdict by the Supreme Court in May 5 this year, the gov-

ernment order said.

The EWS quota will be applicable for SEBC candidates whose appointments were pending before the interim stay and will not be applicable to those candidates who have benefited from the SEBC quota in appointments and admissions, it said.

BIG MOVE

- Maharashtra govt announces 10 per cent EWS reservation for students and candidates belonging to Maratha community
- This comes amid massive pressure build-up on the Maharashtra govt over the issue after SC struck down 13% reservation for Marathas

In another development, the Shiv Sena-led MVA government extended till June 7, the tenure of the Justice Dilip Bhosale Committee, set up to review the apex court's May 5 verdict and advise the state on the future course of action. Earlier, the multi-member committee was supposed to submit its report on or before May 31.

SHORT TAKES

Security forces destroy 2 IEDs

Srinagar: Security forces foiled twin attempts by militants to stage deadly attacks by detecting and defusing two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir Monday, police said. "Inputs were received that terrorists were planning to carry out #IED attacks which shall be spectacular. Acting swiftly 02 IEDs have been recovered from two different places in #Awantipora area (of Pulwama district)," Kashmir Zone Police tweeted. Police said the timely detection of explosives averted major terror incidents. The first IED was detected by a joint team of security forces near Railway link road at Panzgam in Pulwama district, a police official said.

Bihar: Lockdown extended till June 8

Patna: The Nitish Kumar government in Bihar Monday extended the lockdown till June 08 but eased many restrictions, relieved over the decline in intensity of the Covid-19 second wave which has killed thousands and infected lakhs of people in the state. The decision was taken at a meeting of the high-powered crisis management committee, chaired by the Chief Minister, which decided to continue with the lockdown, effective till Tuesday, for another week.

Woman gangraped

Jaipur: A woman was allegedly raped by three men when she stepped out of her house to attend nature's call in Rajasthan's Nagaur district, police said Monday. The incident took place May 24, they said. The victim, who is married, had gone out with her sister to attend nature's call. The main accused, Devekaran Gurjar, and two others threatened to kill her, forcibly took her to a secluded place on a tractor and raped her there, Station House Officer (SHO), Makrana, Roshan Lal Samaria said.

Naxal killed

Dantewada: A woman Naxal, carrying a reward of ₹2 lakh on her head, was killed in an encounter with security personnel in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district Monday, a police official said. The gunfight took place around 6.30 am near Gumalnar village under Geedam police station limits when a team of the District Reserve Guard (DRG) was out on an anti-Naxal operation, Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava said. After a brief exchange of fire, the rebels escaped.

6 more bodies found floating in Ganga

AN OFFICIAL SAID THAT THE BODIES COULD NOT BE IDENTIFIED AS THEY WERE HIGHLY DECOMPOSED



AGENCIES

Fatehpur (UP), May 31: Six more bodies of suspected COVID-19 victims were found floating in the Ganga in Uttar Pradesh, an official said Monday.

Fatehpur Sadar Tehsil Sub-Collector (SDM) Pramod Jha said he was informed about the bodies floating in the river Sunday morning, following which a search operation was launched. Six decomposed bodies were re-

covered from the river, he said. Later in the day, a team of doctors performed the last rites at Bhitora Ganga Ghat as per the Covid guidelines, the SDM said.

The bodies could not be identified as they were highly decomposed, the SDM said, adding that they appear to have come floating from far-off places. Earlier this month, at least 52 bodies were seen floating at the Ujiyar, Kulhadia and Bharauli ghats in Ballia's Narahi area.

However, the district authorities did not tell the exact number of bodies found there.

According to a report more than 2,000 bodies were found floating or buried in a 1,140 km stretch along the river Ganga in Uttar Pradesh.

Last week, a video of a coronavirus patient's body being dumped into a river had emerged from Uttar Pradesh's Balrampur district. In the video, two men can be seen lifting a body on a bridge over river Rapti. One of them, wearing personal protective equipment, seemed to be trying to open the body bag to dump the corpse.

UIDAI issues draft for new Aadhaar norms

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 31: The draft Aadhaar (Authentication and Offline Verification) Regulations, 2021 stipulate that the Authority may enable an Aadhaar number holder to permanently lock his/her biometrics and temporarily unlock it when needed for biometric authentication.



The draft regulations prepared by Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) stipulate that all biometric authentication against any such locked biometric records shall fail with a "No" answer with an appropriate response code. These draft norms are in supersession of the Aadhaar (Authentication) Regulations, 2016.

There have been privacy concerns with Aadhaar on identity theft and illegal use of biometrics.

An Aadhaar number holder shall be allowed to temporarily unlock his biometrics for authentication, and such temporary unlocking shall not continue beyond the time period specified by the Authority or till completion of the authentication transaction, whichever is earlier.

The Authority may make provisions for Aadhaar number holders to remove such permanent locks at any point in a secure manner. Similarly, the Authority shall enable an Aadhaar number holder to lock his/her Aadhaar number and unlock it when needed for authentication. (2) All authentication requests using Aadhaar number against any such locked Aadhaar number shall result with a "No" answer with an appropriate response code. (3) In case of a locked Aadhaar, the Authority will allow the resident to authenticate using Virtual ID or other means.

MOCKERY OF COVID NORMS



Beneficiaries wait to receive Covid-19 vaccine doses at a district government hospital in South Dinajpur, West Bengal

India's oldest train turns 110

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, May 31: The oldest running long-distance train of the Indian Railways, Punjab Mail, connecting Mumbai-Firozpur - originally linking Bombay with Peshawar (now in Pakistan) - turns 110 Tuesday, Central Railway officials said here Monday.

To begin with, there were the P&O steamers bringing in the mail, and excited officers of the British Raj along with their spouses, coming to their first postings in colonial India after a 13-day long sea voyage from Southampton to Mumbai Port.

Since the British officials held a combined ticket both for the sea voyage to Bombay and then onward inland journey by train to their place of postings, after disembarking they would simply board



one of the trains from here bound for Delhi, Calcutta or Madras.

The Punjab Limited used to run on fixed mail days from Bombay to Peshawar covering 2,496 kms in around 47 hours along the Great Indian Peninsular route, via Itarsi, Agra, Delhi and Lahore.

Later, from 1914, the Punjab Limited started originating and terminating at the Bombay VT Station, now Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus Mumbai and a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Finally, India halts vaccine exports: RTI

All major parties in the country including Congress, Nationalist Congress Party, Shiv Sena, Aam Aadmi Party, the Left and other Opposition parties had repeatedly slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Central government on the issue

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Pune, May 31: In a relief of sorts, from May 5, India has apparently halted exports of vaccines which has erupted into a massive political furore across the country, as per an RTI reply released here Monday.

In a response to the RTI query filed by Pune-based activist Prafulla Sarda, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has provided details of the vaccines exported in different categories to 95 countries till May 5.

To a question, the MEA has also made it clear that in future,

supplies (export) would be undertaken, "keeping in view the domestic production and the requirements of the national vaccination programme".

"However, barring the basic export data, the government has kept mum on many other related info but critical aspects pertaining to the exports of such a huge quantity of doses which deprived Indians in a big way," Sarda said.

For instance, the Centre has said it has no record or documents if any committee was formed by the government to decide on the vaccines export, its members, the details and minutes of the meetings if

any of such a committee.

"This is quite mysterious. Which ministry has actually taken the decision for the massive donations or exports especially since at least two key ministries - Health and MEA - could be directly involved in the process," Sarda pointed out.

The RTI reply has mentioned in passing that the vaccines were procured for the export purposes - as Grant, contractual supplies and under the Covax facility - as per the authorization from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

However, it throws no light on who took the such a critical de-



cision when the country is reeling under the massive second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, said Sarda.

As per the official data, the Centre has given away a whopping 107.15 lakh vaccines free as 'Grant' to 47 countries, sold 357.92 lakh doses

at commercial rates to 26 nations, and under the Covax programme sold 198.63 lakh vaccines to another 47 countries - totalling a staggering 663.70 lakh doses.

Till May 31 (today), India has vaccinated a total of 21,31,54,129 people under various approved categories, including those who got their second dose.

For the 'Grant', the government had purchased the vaccines from Pune-based Serum Institute of India Ltd (SII) at ₹200+GST per dose, and from Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Ltd at ₹295+GST per vaccine, said the RTI reply.

international



Australia and New Zealand are trading nations. But neither of us would ever trade our sovereignty or trade our values. We have stood side-by-side to defend and protect and promote these values
SCOTT MORRISON | PRIME MINISTER, AUSTRALIA

PLANE DIVERTS

A Ryanair flight from Ireland to Poland diverted to Berlin after the crew were warned of a "potential security threat" on the plane, the airline said. German ATC warned the crew of the Dublin-Krakow flight of the potential threat Sunday, Ryanair said.



of the day quote

More than 86,000 children under age 5 could be affected, compared with 41,000 reported last year. I was saddened to see so many children suffering from malnutrition. Some will not recover unless they receive treatment on time

JEAN GOUGH | REGIONAL DIRECTOR (LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN), UNICEF

We noticed that the workers from different factories sometimes live in the same area, and it made the virus spread to other places. Or another assumption is that a lot of them work as sub-contractors, so they have to move from one site to another all the time

APISAMAI SRIRANGSAN | GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON (CORONAVIRUS CENTER)

One day this global pandemic will subside. But I do not expect Covid-19 to disappear. It will remain with humankind, and become endemic. The virus will continue to circulate in pockets of the global population for years to come

LEE HSIEN LOONG | PRIME MINISTER, SINGAPORE

'Magician' Netanyahu faces final curtain after record run



AGENCIES

Jerusalem, May 31: Long the familiar face of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu has held on as prime minister for more than a decade, clinging to power through a criminal indictment and four elections in the past two years alone. Now, the question is whether the 71-year-old Netanyahu, dubbed "the magician" by his admirers, has any cards left up his sleeve.

After years in which he exerted near-complete hegemony over Israeli politics, an emerging broad coalition of opponents could be about to unseat him.

"Fraud of the century," an indignant Netanyahu declared Sunday, after fellow right-winger Naftali Bennett turned against him and opted to align with centrist opposition chief Yair Lapid despite a public promise that he wouldn't.

And while Netanyahu's Likud party has remained unflinchingly loyal to him, Gideon Saar, a disillusioned Likud defector, is in line to join the new government-in-making as head of his own New Horizon party.

Israeli political commentators said the political knives have been out for a while for Netanyahu, the country's longest-serving leader. A sense that he was living on borrowed time after 12 consecutive years in office was compounded by a corruption trial now under way.

The cases involve alleged favours to media tycoons and illegal receipt of expensive cigars and champagne. Netanyahu has denied all wrongdoing and says, without of-

POLITICAL UNREST

"Fraud of the century," an indignant Netanyahu declared Sunday, after fellow right-winger Naftali Bennett turned against him and opted to align with centrist opposition chief Yair Lapid

Israeli political commentators said the political knives have been out for a while for Netanyahu, the country's longest-serving leader

fering any evidence, that he is a victim of a deep state conspiracy against him. Don't count him out yet, political commentators warn.

"It's still too early to declare that (the) 'Bibi era' of Israeli politics has ended. But if change is ultimately achieved, Netanyahu will have been toppled by his colleagues on the right, who had it with his leadership," Aluf Benn, editor of the left-wing Haaretz newspaper, wrote Monday

GRACIOUS IN DEFEAT? Popularly known by his childhood nickname, Bibi, Netanyahu is the son of a historian and attended high school and college in the United States, where his father taught.

Never lost for a soundbite, his booming baritone has resounded on the world stage since serving as Israel's ambassador to the United Nations from 1984 to 1988. Entering politics in Israel as a Likud legislator, he became party leader in 1993. Netanyahu last lost the premiership, in his first term, before the turn of the millennium.

Lankan authorities begin probe in cargo vessel fire accident

AGENCIES

Colombo, May 31: Sri Lankan authorities have begun the investigation into the fire on board a Singapore-flagged cargo ship near the Colombo beach on May 20 in the country's worst-ever marine ecological disaster, and said statements would be recorded of one Indian and two Russian officials on duty in the vessel.

The cargo vessel - MV X-PRESS PEARL - was carrying a consignment of chemicals and raw materials for cosmetics from Hazira in Gujarat to Colombo Port May 20 when it caught fire some 9.5 nautical miles away from the port of Colombo.



The fire-fighting effort on May 21 was assisted by the Indian Coast Guard vessels and an aircraft, in addition to the Sri Lanka Navy and Air Force.

Apart from the 325 metric tonnes of fuel in its tanks, the vessel was loaded with 1,486 containers carrying about 25 tonnes of hazardous nitric acid.

'Once-in-a-100-year' rain, floods continue to lash New Zealand

AGENCIES

Wellington, May 31: Heavy rain and floods that forecasters said could be a "once-in-a-100-year" event continued to lash New Zealand's South Island Monday. The heavy rain caused severe floods, evacuations of more than 240 homes, power cuts and rising rivers, reports Xinhua news agency.

Authorities declared a state of emergency after some places received as much as 40 centimeters (16 inches) of rain over the weekend and into Monday. Forecasters warned of possible heavy rain through Monday evening before conditions improved.

The military helped evacuate more than 50 people including several overnight in an NH-90 military helicopter.

One man was clinging to a tree near the town of Darfield when he jumped into floodwaters and tried to swim to safety but was swept away, the military said.

Helicopter crews scoured the water for 30 minutes before finding the man and plucking him to safety. The military helicopter also rescued an elderly couple from the roof of their car.

"Seeing the community overnight pull together and support



Authorities declared a state of emergency after some places received as much as 40 centimeters of rain over the weekend

the displaced residents who were evacuated from their homes has been heartening," said Army Liaison Officer Cpt. Jake Faber.

Another man was rescued by a civilian helicopter pilot Sunday after he was swept from his farm as he tried to move his stock to safety.

Paul Adams told news organi-

zation Staff he thinks he got hit by a wall of water he didn't see coming. He was swept down the raging Ashburton River before managing to drag himself onto a fence and then into a tree. Another farmer spotted his headlamp and organized a rescue mission.

"The rescuers are fantastic," Adams told Stuff, adding that he was now back on his farm and "good as gold." He said that so far he'd only found about 100 of his herd of 250 animals alive.

Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who was visiting New Zealand, told reporters that he was thinking of those caught up in the floods.

SHORT TAKES

Belgium recalls ambassador

Seoul: Belgium will bring home its ambassador to South Korea amid public anger over his wife's alleged assault of two employees at a shop in Seoul. The Belgium Embassy said the country's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sophie Wilmès, decided it was in the best interest of bilateral relations to end Ambassador Peter Lescoquier's tenure this summer. He has been the envoy in Seoul for three years. The embassy didn't provide a specific date on when Lescoquier's term will end or name a replacement.

Vietnam to test all 9mn residents

Hanoi: Vietnam plans to test all 9 million people in its largest city for the coronavirus and imposed more restrictions Monday to deal with a growing Covid-19 outbreak. People in Ho Chi Minh city are only allowed to leave home for necessary activities and public gatherings of more than 10 people are banned for the next two weeks, the government announced.

Walmart attack plotter arrested

Kerrville (Texas): Authorities in Texas arrested a man accused of plotting to carry out a mass shooting at a Walmart, and a search of the suspect's home turned up firearms, ammunition and materials officials described as "radical ideology paraphernalia." Coleman Thomas Blevins, 28, was arrested Friday in Kerrville and has been charged with making a "terroristic threat to create public fear of serious bodily injury," the Kerr County Sheriff's Office said in a news release Sunday.

Egypt, Sudan end war games

Cairo: Egypt and Sudan Monday concluded joint war games that involved ground, air and naval units. The six-day drill meant to showcase deepening security ties between the two neighboring countries and present a show of force amid mounting tensions with Ethiopia. The dispute stems from Ethiopia's controversial, unfinished dam on the Nile river's main tributary.

UK in early stages of third Covid wave, report finds

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

London, May 31: The UK is in the early stages of a third wave of Covid-19, a scientist advising the UK government said, media reports said Monday. The B1617 variant, which was first detected in India in October 2020, had fuelled "exponential growth" and is responsible for at least three-quarters of cases in the UK, Ravi Gupta, a professor at the University of Cambridge, was quoted as saying by the BBC.

"Of course the number of cases is relatively low at the moment - all waves start with low numbers of cases that grumble in the back-



ground and then become explosive, so the key here is that what we are seeing here is the signs of an early wave," Gupta told BBC Radio 4's Today programme. However, he said the number of people who have been vaccinated in the UK meant this wave would probably take longer to emerge than the pre-

OVER THE MOON



Graduates toss their hats after receiving their diplomas at the graduation and commissioning ceremony for the U.S. Naval Academy's Class of 2021 with Vice President Kamala Harris in attendance, at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland

COUNTERING NATO

Russia to form 20 new military units in west

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Moscow, May 31: The Russian military will form 20 new units in the country's west this year to counter what it claims is a growing threat from NATO.

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu made the announcement Monday at a meeting with top military officials. He pointed to a growing number of flights by US strategic bombers near Russia's borders, deployments of NATO warships and increasingly frequent and massive drills by alliance forces.

He charged that such actions "destroy the international security system and force us to take

the relevant countermeasures." "We will form another 20 units and formations in the Western Military District until the year's end," Shoigu said

He added the military units in Western Russia have commissioned about 2,000 new pieces of weaponry this year. Last month, a massive troop buildup in Russia's south and southwest near the Ukrainian border raised concerns in Ukraine and the West, which urged Moscow to withdraw its forces.

Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 following the ouster of the country's Moscow-friendly president.

Under Obama-Biden, US spied on top German leaders

AGENCIES

Copenhagen, May 31: Under President Barack Obama and then Vice President Joe Biden's administration, the US was spying on Germany's Chancellor Angela Merkel from 2012 to 2014, using Denmark's secret service.

The scandal was exposed by Danish media, triggering a political storm. This is the second time since 2013, that the US has been accused of spying on European politicians and officials, especially Germany.

However, this time the Danish media has gained access to the reports which provide insights into how the Defence Intelligence Service (FE) of Denmark collaborated with the US National Security Agency (NSA) to collect intelligence and information on Germany, an ally of the US.



According to the Danish media reports, the spying operation was targeted at Merkel, German President - and then Foreign Minister - Frank-Walter Steinmeier and the then opposition leader Peer Steinbrück.

Code named as 'Operation Dunhammer', the US NSA, with the help of Denmark's FE, tapped into Danish internet cables to access phone conversations and text messages of several prominent European politicians.

WHY COMEDY IS IMPORTANT IN TIMES OF CATASTROPHE

LAUGHTER SERVES AS A GREAT WORKOUT, HELPING TO RELAX OUR MUSCLES AND PROMOTE CIRCULATION

AGENCIES

Bristol, May 31: Most of us have needed a good laugh over the last 12 months. Searches on Netflix for horror dipped at the peak of the first lockdown, while stand-up comedy saw a huge jump in viewers.

In the world of social media, accounts poking fun at responses to the virus have also gained enormous followings, with accounts like Quentin Quarantino and the Reddit thread CoronavirusMemes surging in popularity in the past year.

We've spent a significant amount of time joking about Zoom meetings, hand-washing songs, and home haircuts. But what makes us switch so quickly between pan-

icking at death tolls and chuckling at a video sent by a friend?

As a scholar who's spent much of my career studying laughter and comedy, I often come across surprising functions of humour: I've studied Italian comedy and its reception in 16th-century France, the political consequences of laughter in the Wars of Religion, and the historical antecedents to today's main theories of humour.

Humour in ancient Rome

Our need to laugh in the face of disaster is by no means new. In ancient Rome, gladiators would leave humorous graffiti on barrack walls before going to their deaths. The ancient Greeks also sought new ways to laugh at deadly disease. And during the Black Death pandemic

LAUGHING THROUGH LOCKDOWN



in 1348, the Italian Giovanni Boccaccio wrote the Decameron, a collection of often funny tales told by storytellers isolating from the plague.

The need to avoid offence with humour is just as ancient. In 335

BCE, Aristotle advised against laughing at anything painful or destructive. The Roman educator Quintilian also outlined in 95 CE the very fine line between ridere (laughter) and deridere (derision). It's still generally accepted a com-

mon position that humour shouldn't hurt, and this is particularly true when the object of laughter is already vulnerable.

When the boundary between laughter and derision is respected, comedy can play a key role in helping us to recover from disaster, providing benefits which explain our tendency to seek humour in serious situations, especially in terms of enhancing our sense of physical and mental wellbeing.

How humour helps during crises
Laughter serves as a great workout (laughing 100 times burns as many calories as 15 minutes on an exercise bike), helping to relax our muscles and promote circulation. Combinations of exercise and laughter — such as the increas-

ingly popular "laughter yoga" — can also provide significant benefits to patients with depression.

Laughter also decreases stress hormones and increases endorphins. In tough times, when we have thousands of thoughts a day, a bout of giggling provides our brains with respite we desperately need.

In the same way, we seek humour in a crisis because it is difficult to feel scared and amused at the same time, and most often, the combination of these emotions result in feeling thrill and not terror.

Sigmund Freud explored this in 1905 when revising the so-called "relief theory", suggesting that laughter feels good because it purges our system of pent-up energy.

business



The overall impact of the second wave of Covid-19 on the country's economy is not likely to be large but cautioned about an uncertainty surrounding the pandemic going ahead

KV SUBRAMANIAN
CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISER

GJC WRITES TO FM, RBI

The All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) has written to FM Nirmala Sitharaman and the RBI seeking immediate financial assistance and banking related relief for the stressed gem, jewellery and allied businesses post the devastating second wave of the Covid pandemic



of the day quote

We are a ₹1,000 crore turnover company. We are very close to becoming profitable. As soon as the market opens, I think it will show our first profit mark. After this we plan to go for an IPO in the next 12-18 months

ASHISH SHAH | CO-FOUNDER AND COO, PEPPERFRY

We are delighted to welcome Fidelity and our other new investors to our cap-table. This round of financing significantly strengthens our balance sheet and is a statement of confidence as we plan to go public

SAHIL BARUA | CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, DELIVERY

Launching Realme X7 Max 5G is yet another feather in the cap, which is India's first Mediatek Dimensity 1200 powered 5G smartphone. The MediaTek Dimensity 1200 in Realme X7 Max 5G will provide a far advanced dual 5G experience to our users

MADHAV SHETH | INDIA AND EUROPE CEO, REALME

OECD raises growth forecasts on vax rollouts

REUTERS

Dubai, May 31: The global economic outlook is improving as vaccine rollouts allow businesses to resume operations and as the United States pumps trillions of dollars into the world's largest economy, the OECD said Monday, nudging its forecasts higher.

The global economy is set to grow 5.8% this year and 4.4% next year, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) said, raising its estimates from 5.6% and 4.0% respectively in its last forecasts released in March.

The global economy has now returned to pre-pandemic activity levels, but has not yet achieved the growth expected prior to the global health crisis, the OECD said

in its latest Economic Outlook publication.

"The world economy is currently navigating towards the recovery, with lots of frictions," OECD chief economist Laurence Boone said in an editorial to the Outlook.

"The risk that sufficient post-pandemic growth is not achieved or widely shared is elevated," she added.

While vaccination campaigns were allowing advanced economies to gradually reopen for business, many emerging market economies were being held back by slow vaccination deployment and new Covid-19 outbreaks, the OECD said.

The OECD said central banks in advanced economies should keep financial conditions relaxed and tolerate inflation overshoot-



ing their targets. Sizeable spare capacity in the global economy would help keep a sustained increase in inflation at bay despite recent price pressures

said she was less certain about financial markets, where she saw a risk of higher market rates and volatility.

Governments should keep up income support for households and companies until vaccination is widespread enough to protect the most exposed sectors, the OECD said.

Buoyed by a multi-trillion-dollar stimulus plan, the U.S. economy was seen growing 6.9% this year, the OECD said, up from a previous forecast of 6.5%. It is expected to expand 3.6% in 2022, down from a 4.0% forecast in March.

The US stimulus plan was seen adding 3-4 percentage points to US growth and 1% to global growth while bringing the US economy back to pre-crisis levels by mid-2021.

OSL offers logistical support to state against Covid-19

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 31: In a major step towards ensuring fully logistical support to the Odisha Government, Orissa Stevedores Limited (OSL) carried out the customs and airport clearances of a special cargo flight carrying the consignment of 1,300 medical grade oxygen cylinders as well as other medical consumables which were airlifted from China and landed at Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) May 30, 2021.



OSL Group extends this support by not claiming any service charges. This is for the second time in this month; OSL Group has rendered logistical support.

As part of the Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR), OSL Group has been aiding the Government and the people of Odisha, by extending and sharing resources, helping in the vaccination process, focussing on employee welfare and many more.

Mahimananda Mishra, Managing Director, OSL Group said, "The need of the hour is to provide critical healthcare supplies and equipment to save precious lives of our fellow human beings.

This is our common fight and our contribution reaffirms our steadfast commitment to the state. I'm extending my deep gratitude to the AMNS India Limited for arranging such a huge volume of oxygen cylinders for our state."

JB Mohapatra gets interim charge of CBDT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, May 31: Jagannath Bidyadhar Mohapatra, Member, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), will discharge the duties and responsibilities of the post of CBDT Chairman for a period of three months.

"Consequent upon completion of tenure of Pramod Chandra Mody, Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), on 31.05.2021, it has been decided with the approval of the competent authority that Jagannath Bidyadhar Mohapatra, Member, CBDT, shall discharge the duties and responsibilities of the post of Chairman, CBDT, in addition to his own duties for a period of three months or till the appointment of a regular Chairman, whichever is earlier," said an office order issued by the Revenue Department Monday.

The government in February had extended CBDT Chairman Pramod Chandra Mody's tenure for the third time by three months till May 31, 2021.

A 1982-batch Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax cadre) officer, Mody took over as the CBDT chief in February 2019. He was appointed as CBDT Chairman after Sushil Chandra, the then CBDT chief, was appointed as an Election Commissioner.

Eight core sectors' output skyrockets by 56.1% in April

AGENCIES

New Delhi, May 31: The output of eight core sectors jumped by 56.1 per cent in April mainly due to a low base effect and uptick in production of natural gas, refinery products, steel, cement and electricity official data released Monday showed.

The eight infrastructure sectors of coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity had contracted by 37.9 per cent in April 2020 due to lockdown restrictions imposed to control the spread of coronavirus infection. In March this year, the eight sectors had recorded a growth rate of 11.4 per cent.

"This high growth rate in April 2021 is largely due to low index base in April 2020 consequent to the low industrial production across all sectors caused by nationwide lockdown imposed to contain spread of Covid-19 last year," the ministry said in a statement.

According to the commerce and industry ministry data, production of natural gas, refinery products, steel, cement and electricity jumped by 25 per cent, 30.9 per cent, 400 per cent, 548.8 per cent and 38.7 per cent in April, as against (-) 19.9 per cent, (-) 24.2 per cent, (-) 82.8 per cent, (-) 85.2 per cent and



As expected, the low base of the nationwide lockdown pushed up the core sector expansion in April. The improvement was fairly broad-based, with an expected spike in the growth of cement and steel production

ADITI NAYAR | CHIEF ECONOMIST, ICRA

(-) 22.9 per cent in April 2020, respectively. Coal and fertiliser segments too recorded positive growth during the month under review.

However, crude oil output dipped by 2.1 per cent in April as against (-) 6.4 per cent in the same month last year.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said that as expected, the low base of the nationwide lockdown pushed up the core sector expansion in April 2021.

"The improvement was fairly broad-based, with an expected spike in the growth of cement and steel production, although both lagged our projections suggesting some impact of the regional lockdowns on activity," she said.

"We expect the IIP (Index of Industrial Production) to record a transient spike to a 130-150 per cent expansion in April 2021, followed by a moderation in May 2021 in line with the proliferation in state-wise restrictions," she added.

The eight core Industries comprise 40.27 per cent of the weight of items included in the IIP.

Sony rolls out two new microphones

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 31: Sony India today announced two new microphones with the launch of the ECM-W2BT Multi Interface Shoe compatible wireless microphone and ECM-LV1 compact stereo lavalier microphone. Wireless high-quality audio recording with lower noise and stable connection is possible with the ECM-W2BT wireless microphone, especially when paired with the ECM-LV1 stereo lavalier microphone and one of Sony's cameras with digital audio compatibility. This combination offers the perfect solution to meet



the needs of today's vloggers, YouTubers and video creators who want to capture clear, reliable audio for a wide range of environments including street performance, product reviews, food reviews travel vlogs and more. Bluetooth range of up to 200 meters/600 ft with high-quality audio recording, 3 Modes (Mic, Receiver & Mix Mode) to record sound based on the desired preference.

Forecast: Global economy rebounding, faces multiple threats

AGENCIES

Frankfurt, May 31: The global economic rebound from the pandemic has picked up speed but remains uneven across countries and faces multiple headwinds. Most worrisome: the lack of vaccines in poorer nations, which could lead to new virus variants and more stop-and-go lockdowns.

Those were key points from the latest economic outlook published Monday by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

The OECD said that relief and stimulus measures in the more developed world had done much to get the economy through the pandemic recession and back on the path of growth.

If forecast global output would

rise 5.8 per cent, raising its forecast from 4.8 per cent during its previous outlook in December.

This year's predicted rebound follows last year's contraction of 3.5 per cent, and would be the fastest since 1973.

The US Economy was expected to grow 6.9 per cent upgraded from 6.5 per cent in the previous forecast. The OECD cited wide-ranging support from government spending on additional unemployment benefits, financial assistance for local governments and support for low-income households.

OECD chief economist Laurence Boone said that economic prospects "have improved considerably in recent months, and the outlook is brightening ... However, the health situation remains highly uncertain."

Although the OECD said most in-



dividual countries would reach pre-pandemic levels of output by the end of 2022, it cautioned that "this is far from enough."

It said that the global economy

had not reached the growth level that would have been reached without a pandemic. And the report said that too many countries would not see living standards reach pre-

SBI BHUB CIRCLE DONATES COVID TESTING VAN TO BMC

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, May 31: State Bank of India, Bhubaneswar Circle and SBI Foundation donates a Covid testing van and medical equipment's like mask, hand gloves and sanitiser to Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) for management of Covid-19 in the city. Suvendu Sahu, Deputy Commissioner, Ansuman Rath, Zonal Deputy Commissioner; other officials of BMC were present and received the ambulance and medical equipments from Ruma Dey, Chief General Manager, SBI, Bhubaneswar Circle.

CLN Charyulu, GM-I, Avay



Kishore K Pandey, Bejoy Kumar Kuzur, GM-II and the other official from SBI were present on the occasion.

Sahu expressed thanks to SBI and SBI foundation for their support during the pandemic and said the ambulance will be very useful for senior citizen of BMC area in Bhubaneswar. The sample for Covid

test will be collected from homes of senior citizens.

In another function SBI Bhubaneswar Circle and SBI Ladies Club donated a school van to Society for Children (SOCH). On behalf of SOCH, Manoj Kumar Swain Secretary and Laxmi Singh received the van from Ruma Dey, Chief General Manager of SBI.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

■ The OECD said that relief and stimulus measures in the more developed world had done much to get the economy through the pandemic recession and back on the path of growth

■ The US Economy was expected to grow 6.9% upgraded from 6.5% in the previous forecast

■ The Paris-based organization listed several threats to the recovery, including lack of vaccines in poorer countries that have fewer resources for relief efforts

■ As long as the vast majority of the global population is not vaccinated, most of us remain vulnerable to the emergence of new variants

pandemic levels by the end of 2022. The Paris-based organization

listed several threats to the recovery, including lack of vaccines in poorer countries that have fewer resources for relief efforts. "A renewed virus-driven weakening of growth would be harder to cushion, resulting in further increases in acute poverty" and raising the risk of financial crisis, the OECD said in its forecast report.

"This is all the more troubling because, notwithstanding the impact on lives and livelihoods, the global economic and social cost of maintaining closed borders dwarfs the costs of making vaccines, tests and health supplies more widely available to these countries."

As long as the vast majority of the global population is not vaccinated, the report said, "All of us remain vulnerable to the emergence of new variants."

