



INNER CALLING

Miss Universe third runner-up Adline Castelino looks forward to work in some meaningful films

LEISURE P2



NOTICE TO BENGAL EX-CS

The MHA has served a show-cause notice to Alapan Bandyopadhyay under the Disaster Management Act

TWO STATES P7



OSAKA PULLS OUT

Four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka quits French Open mid-way due to 'anxiety and depression'

SPORTS P12

Now Pre-Book Your GOLD ONLINE* @ offers.khimjionline.in

Bhubaneswar | Berhampur | Cuttack | Rourkela
Toll Free 1800 3131 777

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Hurry up! It's not some usual How-to-save-lives-during-corona meet... We're meeting to plan for elections

SBI lowers India's FY22 growth forecast to 7.9%

MUMBAI: As the second wave of Covid-19 and the resultant restrictions again cripple economic activities, the State Bank of India has revised India's growth outlook downwards for the current financial year. The latest SBI Ecwrap report has projected a 7.9 per cent growth for India's GDP, down from its previous projection of 10.4 per cent growth. However, it added: "We impart an upward bias to this number with the fervent hope of 1 crore vaccinations per day beginning mid-July."

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX 51934.88	↓ 2.56
NIFTY 15574.90	↓ 7.90
DOLLAR 73.17	↑ ₹0.28
EURO 89.24	↑ ₹0.60
GOLD ₹49,030	↑ ₹209
SILVER ₹72,750	↑ ₹852

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
TEMP MAX	37.7°C	37.0°C
TEMP MIN	26.6°C	26.6°C
Humidity	66%	79%
Rainfall	Nil	Nil

Forecast: Light rain very likely

STATE URGES CENTRE TO BRING A NATIONAL-LEVEL VACCINE PROCUREMENT POLICY

Jolt to global vax tender

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Despite all-out efforts, the state government's global tender initiative to procure Covid-19 vaccines directly from the international market has failed to yield the desired results. This was indicated by state Health Minister Naba Kishore Das in a letter to the Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan.

In the letter, Das said there has been limited response to the global tender floated by the state as observed during the pre-bid stage. Even, Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech have not participated in the pre-bid meeting.

It is understood that the two pharmaceutical firms are not in a position to provide vaccines to states in large-scale and, hence, there is an urgent need to scale up their capacities, he said.

He said that like other states facing vaccine scarcity, now Odisha too is receiving no response from vaccine makers despite floating a global tender.

"Global vaccine manufacturers like Pfizer and Moderna are concerned about indemnity-related issues, among others. Secondly, they are willing to deal with federal-level central procurement only. Global vaccine manufacturers will be requiring statutory clearances from the Central government for supplying to

IN BRIEF

- Despite efforts, the state government's global tender initiative to procure Covid-19 vaccines directly from the international market failed to yield the desired results
- Even Indian vaccine manufacturers, Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech did not participate in the pre-bid meeting
- Though most of the Plus II students are 17 years old or little above, the minister wants priority vaccination for them and their families

the states," Das stated in his letter.

In this backdrop, the state Health Minister proposed that the Centre bring a national-level procurement policy for procuring Covid-19 vaccines, adding that it would make things "faster and economical".

Stating the Odisha government will bear the cost of the vaccines for the people of the state, Das sought flexibility on design and decision on distribution of vaccines taking local factors into consideration.

He said the state government cannot make online registration mandatory in hill areas where internet connectivity is poor.

Even though most of the Plus II students are of age 17 or little above, the minister said that the state gov-

ernment would like get them as well as their family members vaccinated on a priority basis.

Das further said the state wants to complete the vaccination process at the earliest so as to prevent a third wave of the pandemic and save lives and livelihood. The vaccines will be provided free to people of the state, he added.

So far, the state has vaccinated over 61 lakh people (including those who received one dose), vaccinating at a rate of two lakh people per day in early April. However, owing to vaccine supply constraints, it is able to vaccinate 60,000 to 70,000 people per day despite possessing the capacity to vaccinate three lakh people daily.

As the supply of vaccines is very poor now, the state government had placed

an order for 220 lakh doses of Covishield vaccine with SII and 10.34 lakh doses of Covaxin with Bharat Biotech. While SII has only supplied 5,78,480 doses of Covishield, the state received 1,65,490 doses of Covaxin so far.

On May 14, the state-run Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd (OSMCL) floated a global tender to procure Covid-19 vaccines to inoculate people in the 18 to 44 age group. Due to very poor response from the vaccine manufacturers, the last date for submission of bid documents was extended by seven days from May 28 to June 4. Prior to that, the state government had also relaxed the terms of global tender document. Meanwhile, the OSMCL has again revised its terms and conditions for procurement of vaccines.



CBSE XII board exams cancelled

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, June 1: The government Tuesday decided to cancel the CBSE Class XII board exams amid the continuing Covid-19 pandemic across the country with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that the decision has been taken in the interest of students and the anxiety among the students, parents and teachers must be put to an end.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Modi in which it was decided that the CBSE will take steps to compile the results of Class XII students as per a well-defined objective criterion in a time-bound manner.

With the decision coming amid a high caseload of COVID-19 cases in several

states and continuing health-related apprehensions about the future, Modi said the health and safety of students are of utmost importance, and there would be no compromise on this aspect.

Anxiety among students, parents and teachers must be put to an end, and students should not be forced to appear for exams in such a stressful situation, a government statement quoted the prime minister as saying. Modi further asserted that all stakeholders need to show sensitivity for the students as well as their parents and teachers.

In the review meeting, officials gave a detailed presentation on the wide and extensive consultation held so far and views received from all stakeholders, including state governments.

Be prepared for Covid-19 '3rd wave': CM tells babus

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday asked senior government officials and Collectors to be prepared for the possible third wave of the Covid pandemic, which is apprehended to affect children.

Chairing the weekly Covid review meeting with district Collectors and SPs through virtual mode, Naveen said, "Hopefully in the coming weeks, Covid caseload will continue to decline in the state. Nevertheless, we should learn from experience and be prepared for the possible third wave of the pandemic. Special arrangements need to be put in place to treat infected children in every district."

He said the main weapon against future Covid-19 waves and variants will be the vaccination programme.

"We are trying in every possible manner to increase the supply of the vaccines in spite of all constraints. We hope the vaccine supply will increase in the next month," Patnaik said.

Stating the Covid situation in the state is improving, the Chief Minister said the test positivity rate (TPR) has come below 15 per cent and in most districts there is a declining trend in



new positive cases. The impact of the lockdown is now visible and, to further control the spread of the virus, the restrictions have been extended till June 17, he pointed out.

As there is a possibility that the cases might increase in the cyclone-hit areas, he advised the officials to increase testing in these areas and undertake necessary follow-up action taken on priority.

Expressing concern over increasing number of cases of black fungus in the state, the CM said, "Please ensure that we have sufficient number of trained doctors and medicines to deal with this disease."

The door-to-door survey to identify potential Covid cases has started from May 24. He asked the officials to launch publicity and IEC campaigns to make people aware of the programme.

MORE P4

Petrol, diesel prices continue increasing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: Petrol and diesel prices Tuesday scaled new highs across the country after they were hiked for the 17th time in a month.

Petrol price was increased by 26 paise per litre and diesel by 23 paise a litre, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

In Delhi, petrol hit an all-time high of ₹94.49 a litre, while diesel is priced at ₹85.38 per litre.

CITY FUEL PRICES	
PETROL	₹95.28 (+0.27)
DIESEL	₹93.09 (+0.25)

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest value-added tax (VAT) on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

The price of petrol, which had already crossed the ₹100-mark in several cities in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, breached the psychological barrier in Mumbai Saturday Tuesday's price increase was the second since then.

SAVE THE PLANET



Ice sculptures of children created by 'Sand in Your Eye' to highlight the importance of COP26, the global climate conference, are seen at New Brighton Beach on the Wirral peninsula in New Brighton, Britain

Floodplain infringements threaten Mahanadi ecology

CONSTRUCTION WORK ON RIVER BANKS CAN MAKE CITIES VULNERABLE TO FLOODING, SAY EXPERTS

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 1: The threat to the riverine ecology in the state has escalated manifold in the last few years with rampant encroachments on the floodplains of Mahanadi in Odisha, especially near Cuttack city.

On the one hand, the government has admitted before the courts and tribunals that there are encroachments on the floodplains of Mahanadi in Cuttack, on the other, it has allowed as well as promoted several infrastructure projects to come up there owing to the lack of any law or guidelines regarding protecting the eco-sensitive zone of the river.

In the last few years, the government has allowed dumping of wastes on the river floodplains for mega events, announced expansion of the new building of SCB Medical College and boasted about the Balyatra Riverfront



Improvement (BARFI) project on the same riverine zone.

Experts apprehend that the invasion of the Mahanadi floodplains would damage the ecology of the area. "Floodplains are areas along the periphery of a river that accommodate

flood waters. If the government allows more human interference and construction activities, it could harm the natural potential of rivers to control floods," said Shankar Prasad Pani, an environmentalist and National Green Tribunal (NGT) lawyer.

Environmentalists in Cuttack are angry over the expansion of government constructions in the floodplains of Mahanadi in the city. "I had filed a case before the NGT on the issue around five years back and also challenged other upcoming projects there. If further invasions are made, it could

RIVERS IN PERIL - I

make Cuttack city more vulnerable to urban flooding and prove to be disastrous for the city," said Biswajit Mohanty, an environmentalist based in Cuttack.

The NGT and Orissa High Court have dealt with the issue in the past and asked the government to enact laws and norms to regulate the activities on the floodplains of Mahanadi and other rivers where clear demarcations of sensitive zones are necessary. In fact, there is no demarcated

floodplain zone in Odisha - a fact vetted by the NGT in its written order.

In 2020, the NGT had asked the state Water Resources Department to enact norms for Mahanadi floodplains. In its written order, the NGT had said, "We constitute a joint committee...to consider the issue and lay down norms so as to ensure that the proposal of the state for construction of the medical college and river front development takes place in accordance with law, without any damage to the floodplains of the rivers."

In its response, the department said that it is at no fault. Officials well versed with the developments said that the government dredged sand from the river and dumped it on the banks as per an order of the Orissa High Court. It also said that the norms for demarcation of flood plain was in process and would be submitted to the NGT soon.

Average monsoon in Odisha this year: IMD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Here is good news for farmers. The southwest monsoon is likely to be normal in Odisha this year, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast Tuesday.

"As per our forecast, rainfall in Odisha will remain almost normal during the southwest monsoon season (June to September). Only few places may receive deficit rainfall, which will be clear in the later stage," said director of Bhubaneswar Met Centre, HR Biswas.

However, the state will witness more than normal downpour during the month of June, he said. Most places in the state are likely to

record higher rainfall this month, Biswas said.

The south-west monsoon, which is likely to hit Kerala Thursday, is expected to arrive in Odisha in the next 10 to 12 days. Last year, monsoon arrived in Odisha June 11 and withdrew from the state, October 28.

The state had recorded 1140.8 mm rainfall between June 1 and September 30 against long-term average value of 1155.3 mm. Rainfall over the state during the months of June, July, August and September 2020 was 115 per cent, 65 per cent, 140 per cent and 68 per cent respectively.

Of the 30 districts in the state, two districts received excess rainfall, namely Malkangiri and Jharsuguda.



WHEN WINSLET FOUGHT TO RETAIN AN INTIMATE SCENE

Oscar-winning actress Kate Winslet has shared that she fought to retain an intimate scene in the limited series *Mare Of Easttown* that shows 'a bulgy bit of belly', because she wanted a realistic portrayal of a middle-aged lady having sex.

NEVER TOO LATE TO SET BOUNDARY WITH THE WORLD: DEMI LOVATO

Singer Demi Lovato, who recently came out as non-binary, says it is never too late to set a boundary with the world. Lovato, who wishes to be addressed as 'they', started out as a child actor in *Barney & Friends* and then landed the starring role in film *Camp Rock* in 2007.



FORTUNE FORECAST

GaneshaSpeaks.com
accuracy • reliability • trust
FOR ASTROLOGY DIAL 55181

ARIES
You will experience a profound connection with the cosmos today. And you will be very grateful to the almighty for showering his grace on you. Your love for your kith and kin deepens today, says Ganesha, and you will spend extravagantly on them.

TAURUS
This day, you need to watch out against your selfish and possessive tendencies. Ganesha advises you not to be too determined or demanding. Try to not be self-centred. Do not impose your need and wishes on anyone. You should act generously towards one and all; particularly towards your spouse.

GEMINI
You will be more inclined towards religious teachings and rituals today. You will probably visit a place of worship and spend some time there and this will bring you mental peace and calm. However, you still need to do justice to your duties, says Ganesha.

CANCER
Today, you will put your heart and soul into whatever task you take up. But the results may not be too forthcoming. However, that should not be a reason for you to get dejected or anxious. You will get your due sooner or later.

LEO
You will leave no stone unturned to satisfy and please your partner today. So your chances of slipping up are very slight. You will be able to impress your partner today. You need to be careful in all your financial dealings today, says Ganesha.

VIRGO
Give attention to your deepest feelings. A small excursion may be on the cards. Ganesha says today you will easily get along with other people. You will shower your sincere love and affection on your near and dear ones. Use your magical skills to improve your relationships.

LIBRA
Ganesha says you will try to attain prestige in society today. This prestige will come to you via the field of communication or by your own thought processes. In your free time you will be able to learn about various topics of interest to you. Ganesha wishes you all the very best in life.

SCORPIO
You are quite vocal about your ambitious plans, says Ganesha. But, being too harsh on yourself or others for that matter may spoil your relationships with many people. Stay away from lengthy discussions to avoid any conflicts.

SAGITTARIUS
A cheerful you, your energy level is on an all time high. Ganesha foresees that you will enrol you name for a correspondence or a part-time course. This will boost your confidence and brush up your memory as well. People who are in legal profession will have a rocking day ahead.

CAPRICORN
Lack of proper planning is probably the reason for you not being able to get your work done in time. You'll realise this mistake and today, you will spend majority of time drawing a plan on paper, says Ganesha.

AQUARIUS
Today, you will want to expand your horizon of knowledge. You will give a tough fight to your opponents and come out triumphant, feels Ganesha. Troubles will not be able trouble you as you will be able to turn them into your advantage.

PISCES
Financial bearings will be at the fore front of your attention today, feels Ganesha. Bank accounts, stocks, loans and other such things will dominate your thoughts and words. Earning money will be your primary goal and you will focus on those methods that will be most profitable to you, today.

Parineeti wants to be 'candid on Instagram'

Mumbai: Parineeti Chopra has sought fan advice. She wants to don streetwear and be like Gen Z, and needs their opinion.

"I wanna wear streetwear and be 'candid on Instagram' like Gen Z. Please advise," she wrote as caption for an image from her Turkish holiday.

In the image that Parineeti posted on Instagram, she is seen in sweat-pants and sweat-shirt. She completed her look with sneakers, sunglasses and a satchel.

Parineeti's brother Shivang Chopra wrote: "Ahemmm.... This is where i shine!!! Lessgo. @parineetichopra."

In a recent interview, the actress said that the pandemic has changed the way people want to be entertained, and the films being made need to be in accordance to what people want to watch.

The actress has three releases this year - *Sandeep Aur Pinky Faraar*, *Saina* and *The Girl On The Train*.

Mumbai: Top star Salman Khan has shared words of encouragement for fans facing various crises amidst the ongoing second wave of the Covid pandemic.

"I would just like to say that we all need to stay positive and hold the fort until these bad times pass. This is a phase and it shall pass. I know all of us are going through very critical times, we must have faith and help each other in whatever way we can," Salman said.

Meanwhile, he is excited about his popular *Dabangg* avatar of Inspector Chulbul Pandey getting an animated avatar on the small screen.

Dabangg: The Animated Series will be created keeping in mind his young fans.

"It is an adaptation and reimagination of *Dabangg*. The action-comedy series chronicles the day-to-day life of police officer Chulbul Pandey, who stands in the face of evil to keep the city safe. He is joined by his younger brother Makkhi, who attempts to emulate his older brother in every sticky situation," added Salman.

Need to stay positive and hold fort: Salman

Mumbai: Top star Salman Khan has shared words of encouragement for fans facing various crises amidst the ongoing second wave of the Covid pandemic.

"I would just like to say that we all need to stay positive and hold the fort until these bad times pass. This is a phase and it shall pass. I know all of us are going through very critical times, we must have faith and help each other in whatever way we can," Salman said.

Meanwhile, he is excited about his popular *Dabangg* avatar of Inspector Chulbul Pandey getting an animated avatar on the small screen.

Dabangg: The Animated Series will be created keeping in mind his young fans.

"It is an adaptation and reimagination of *Dabangg*. The action-comedy series chronicles the day-to-day life of police officer Chulbul Pandey, who stands in the face of evil to keep the city safe. He is joined by his younger brother Makkhi, who attempts to emulate his older brother in every sticky situation," added Salman.



Adah Sharma turning flautist

Mumbai: Actress Adah Sharma says she is learning to play the flute.

"I picked up the flute a few months back when lockdown was relaxed and shooting started again. I love playing the piano but the flute I can carry in my bag, (and play) in the van between shoots," she said.

Adah had mentioned about her interest in the flute last year, too. In an Instagram video she posted in October 2020, Adah had captured a tune played by a flute player. She was trying to use her social media presence to help

the musician who was struggling to make a living on empty streets during lockdown, she had said back then, and she encouraged her followers to contact people like him, purchase flutes from him and learn the art from 'Basuriwale bhaiya'.

She had also said in her post back then that her fans would be 'inflicted with me playing the flute in videos soon'.

It seems now that Adah is finally honing her skills as a flautist.



Adline looks forward to stint in showbiz

Twenty-two-year-old Indian model, Adline Castelino, emerged as the third runner-up at the 69th edition of Miss Universe 2021, held in the US. It has taken India 20 years since Lara Dutta won the title, to gain a position in the competition which saw 74 participants from across the globe.

One being asked the reason why she might not have won the title, the Kuwait-born model says, "No reason to feel that way, every woman out there gave their best in the limited resources and challenges this year has placed."

Despite suffering from Covid-19, she kept her training on and went on to bag a position. How did she manage that? "Being in last leg of the preparations, honestly very challenging mentally and physically not only for me but for the team to get everything arranged. I kept my mind positive which become incredibly hard to do due to isolation and medication. Focused on the task in hand, fighting fears and on taking one step at a time. It feels like a miracle but we made it! It was truly meant to be!" stated Adline.

Asked if Hindi film industry is her next destination, she said, "Absolutely yes! Looking forward to some meaningful projects that I could contribute to."

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

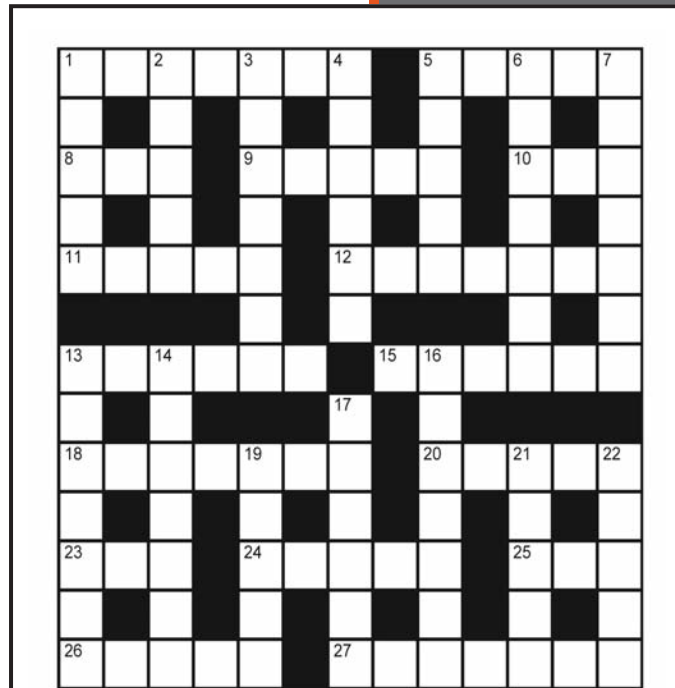


BREVITY



FUN post

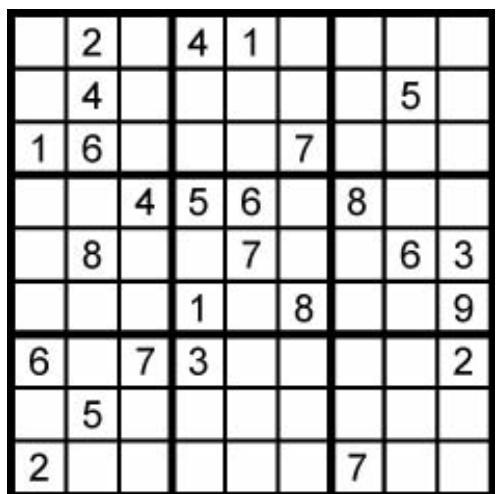
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 1 Wet blanket
 - 5 Knight mare?
 - 8 Convent dweller
 - 9 Kangaroo kids
 - 10 Easy mark
 - 11 Swagger
 - 12 Philanders
 - 13 Plaster of Paris starter
 - 15 Snub
 - 18 Timepiece of old
 - 20 Modify
 - 23 Venom carrier
 - 24 English race place
 - 25 Curling surface
 - 26 Cheque recipient
 - 27 Methods
 - 6 Resulting
 - 7 Sediment
 - 13 Illumination of yore (3,4)
 - 14 Impressive array
 - 16 Simple shelters (4-3)
 - 17 Trousers
 - 19 Publicist's concern
 - 21 Old hat
 - 22 Flightless birds

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



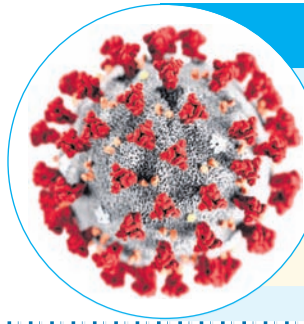
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



TROPICAL FRUIT

Denizens buy blackberry from a roadside seller near Ravenshaw University in Cuttack, Tuesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	17,15,98,743	15,39,39,005	35,67,709
India	2,81,75,044	2,59,47,629	3,31,895
Odisha	7,73,732	6,92,027	2,791

CAR FEST PREP



Maharana servitors busy constructing chariots at Rath Yard in Puri, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

Gym guard found dead; family alleges murder

Mission Shakti now a separate dept

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: After approval of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Department of Mission Shakti has been separated from Women and Child Development department and has started functioning as 'Department of Mission Shakti' from June 1.

As per the decision of the state government, the parent department - Women and Child Development and Mission Shakti - will be renamed as Women and Child Development department.

The Mission Shakti department will run from Lok Seva Bhawan here while its branches would function from existing places like Mission Shakti Bhawan, Pokhariput and OLM Building, SIRD campus.

The new department will deal with subjects and projects that include Mission Shakti, OLM for Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana, NRLM and NRETP

The administrative control of Mission Shakti Bhawan will vest with new department from date of the notification.

The new department will deal with the subjects and projects that include Mission Shakti, Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM) for Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP) and self-help group (SHG) activities.

Women and Child Development Minister Tukuni Sahu has been allocated the portfolio while Sujata R Karthikeyan has been appointed as commissioner-cum-secretary of the new department.

Since the new department will have its own budget from the next financial year 2022-23, all budgetary matters pertaining to the new department for the current financial year shall be met out of the approved budget of the respective department.

1.10L more inoculated

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: The state Health and Family Welfare department Tuesday said that it has vaccinated 1,10,993 persons against Covid-19 in the latest round of inoculation drive undertaken Tuesday.

The vaccination was conducted at 902 active sites. By the end of Tuesday, the government was able to inoculate a total of 78,62,597 persons.



The department has, meanwhile, planned to conduct a total of 731 sessions Wednesday. The department also said that it was left with a total of 4,11,150 Covishield and 4,31,030 Covaxin doses received from the Union government by Tuesday night.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: The body of a youth was found hanging on the premises of a gymnasium near Kalpana Square under mysterious circumstances Tuesday. The deceased was identified as Ranjit Kumar Nayak, a native of Ranpur area in Nayagarh district. He was staying at a slum in Unit-VI area under Capital police limits.

Ranjit was an employee of Jagannath Placement and Security Services Private Limited, a security agency. Ranjit had been deployed as a security guard at the gymnasium under the state Sports and Youth Services department at Bhanja Kala Mandap here for the last two years.

The staff of the gymnasium informed the police about the incident Tuesday morning. Police reached



Inconsolable family members of the deceased

The deceased was identified as Ranjit Kumar Nayak, a native of Ranpur area in Nayagarh district

He had been working as a security guard at the gymnasium under the state Sports and Youth Services department at Bhanja Kala Mandap

Ranjit's family members alleged that some miscreants hanged him from the bar after murdering him as they were stopped from consuming liquor inside the gym

the spot and found Ranjit's body hanging from the pull-up bar with a towel.

Later, police officials brought down the body and sent it to Capital Hospital for post-mortem.

The family members of Ranjit alleged that some miscreants hanged him from the bar after murdering him Monday night. They added that some miscreants who used to drink inside the gymnasium were unhappy with Ranjit for denying them permission.

Ranjit's family members also claimed about spotting wounds and swelling marks on his body. They also revealed that the gymnasium gate was locked from out-

side and his body was touching the ground, raising suspicion.

The family members went on a rampage at the morgue at Capital Hospital over some statements made by the medical officer. The deceased's angry relatives ransacked some window glasses at the hospital.

On the basis of a complaint lodged by Nayak's family members, police lodged a case of murder and are investigating the matter from various angles including suicide.

"It is too early to say anything about the case. We are waiting for the post-mortem report. We are hoping it would help us solve the case," said an officer.



FILE PHOTO OF RANJIT NAYAK

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



24 kids lost 1 or both parents during Covid outbreak in state



administrations in Odisha have uploaded complete information of 12 children (eight orphans and four single parent) while the information of 12 children is incomplete.

The NCPCCR opined that the children who have lost either of the parents to Covid-19 are in need of financial assistance and can be entitled to government schemes.

"It is necessary that the children who are living with surviving single parent are given the benefit of government implemented schemes and financial assistance. The financial assistance would ensure that the child could continue his or her education while continuing to live in the same environment," the NCPCCR submitted in the affidavit.

Notably, the SC had May 28 directed the state governments to furnish the latest information about the identification of children who have become orphans post March 2020, either due to the pandemic or otherwise and steps taken for attending to their basic needs.

The apex court's order came following an application filed by amicus curiae Gaurav Agarwal seeking directions in respect of children who are adversely affected due to the pandemic and increased instances of child trafficking, especially of the girl children.

The top court had observed that the provisions of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 make it clear that there is an obligation on the part of the authorities to take care of children in need.

NCPCCR FILED AN AFFIDAVIT IN THE SC MENTIONING THAT AS MANY AS 14 CHILDREN IN THE STATE HAVE BECOME ORPHANS WHILE 10 CHILDREN HAVE LOST ONE PARENT

THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIONS HAVE UPLOADED COMPLETE INFORMATION OF 12 CHILDREN WHILE THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE OTHER 12 CHILDREN IS INCOMPLETE

1,742 CHILDREN HAVE BECOME ORPHANS, 140 HAVE BEEN ABANDONED AND 7,464 LOST ONE OF THEIR PARENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY POST PANDEMIC

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, June 1: As many as 24 children in Odisha have lost either the breadwinner of the family or both parents since March 2020 following the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCCR) filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court mentioning that as many as 14 children in the state have become orphans while 10 children have lost one parent. The NCPCCR submitted that the information has been collected from the Bal Swaraj portal. The Supreme Court

had earlier directed all the district authorities to upload the information of children who have been orphaned during Covid-19 pandemic. The district administrations were directed to upload data by May 29.

Significantly, as many as 1,742 children have become orphans, 140 have been abandoned and 7,464 have lost one of their parents across the country post pandemic.

However, the NCPCCR alleged that the district administrations have not uploaded complete information of the children who are adversely affected by the pandemic. The NCPCCR said that the district

alone. Sources at Commissionerate Police revealed that the help desk received 256 of the 529 calls from the residents of the Capital city. The desk has received 273 calls in connection with various cyber frauds from other parts of the state last month.

As many as 160 persons including 63 from Bhubaneswar lost several lakhs through UPI fraud. The cyber fraudsters also cheated 100

persons including 48 victims from the city through credit card and debit card frauds.

The total amount lost by the victims stood at Rs 1, 40, 09, 469 in May while the fraudsters succeeded in taking away Rs 1.19 crore in April. The victims from Bhubaneswar lost Rs 70, 78,714 to the fraudsters in May.

The help desk managed to block and retrieve Rs 12, 05,306 after get-

As many as 160 persons including 63 from Bhubaneswar lost several lakhs through UPI fraud

ting informed by the victims in the first few hours of the transaction.

Meanwhile, cyber fraudsters

duped a youth of Rs 70,000 on the pretext of winning a lottery of several lakhs. The victim has been identified as Roshan Mallick of Sailashree Vihar area under Chandrasekharpur police station.

According to sources, Roshan received a phone call from the cyber criminals few days back. The fraudsters informed Roshan that he had won a lottery to the tune of Rs 50 lakh and that he had

to register with their website to get the amount. Upon registration, they started demanding different amounts of money from Roshan. He deposited Rs 70,000 in the accounts of the fraudsters through different installments. Roshan smelt a rat when the fraudsters continued to demand more money. Roshan Tuesday lodged a complaint with the cyber help desk in this regard.

Govt in slumber as Yaas-hit villagers suffer: Cong

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Congress leader Pradeep Majhi Tuesday accused the state government of neglecting cyclone Yaas-affected villagers in waterlogged areas of north Odisha.

Addressing a presser here, Majhi said that several residents of villages that are still marooned in rain-water are unable to get food and assistance from the government. He said, "Odisha government is now more conscious about saving its image nationally



Around 10,000 people are unable to cook food in these areas and struggling for survival. However, the government is not reaching out to them

PRADEEP MAJHI | CONGRESS LEADER

and internationally rather than giving relief to the people affected by severe cyclonic storm Yaas."

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had warned the state gov-

ernment about the cyclone eight days before, said the former MP. It is the people who themselves came to safer places like shelter homes, he stated, adding that the government started distribution of relief materials two days after the cyclone.

"The government has claimed that many villages are still sub-

merged. It is the people who moved from one area to another on their own wooden boats. But the government was nowhere to be seen to rescue them. The Chief Minister announced cooked food for the storm-affected persons but the promise turned out to be an eye-wash as people are struggling to get any assistance," he said.

The Congress leader said the government claimed that 128 villages were submerged. "Around 10,000 people are unable to cook food in these areas and struggling for survival. However, the government is not reaching out to them," he alleged.

BJD spokesperson Sasmit Patra did not respond to the allegations made by the Congress leader when approached by **Orissa POST**.

LOCKDOWN?



A road in Kalpana area of Bhubaneswar witnesses a rush even during the lockdown, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

Covid widows, orphans in state to get pension Fake LED TV racket busted

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik Tuesday asked officials to identify women widowed by Covid-19 and children who lost parents due to the deadly disease in the state and bring them under social welfare schemes.

Patnaik was reviewing the prevailing pandemic situation in the state hit by the second wave like other parts of the country.

He asked the officials to make Covid widows and children part of social welfare scheme like Madhu Babu Pension Yojana.

Similarly, he instructed the administration to disburse three months' advance pension to all the beneficiaries under social security schemes keeping in view the prevailing pandemic situation.

He said the beneficiaries must get the pension amount in cash in their respective villages.



Expressing concern over detection of cases of black fungus in the state, Patnaik said the administration should remain well prepared to tackle the situation

Chief Minister instructed the administration to disburse three months' advance pension to all the beneficiaries under social security schemes keeping in view the prevailing pandemic situation

The Chief Minister hoped the second wave of the pandemic will decline by the next week.

He said communities should be involved in the measures being taken to check the spread of infection among the people.

While focusing on the vaccination programme, Patnaik said jabs are powerful instruments to fight against the possible third wave of the pandemic as well as the new variants of the infection.

The Chief Minister said the state

government has been trying its level best to improve the inoculation drive and expressed confidence that the vaccination programme will gain strength soon.

Expressing concern over detection of cases of black fungus in the state, Patnaik said the administration should remain well prepared to tackle the situation.

He directed the Health department to train manpower to deal with the black fungus cases and store required medicines for the purpose.

Patnaik said the black fungus affecting Covid and non-Covid patients should be segregated for better treatment.

Chief Secretary S C Mohapatra, who joined the CM's review meeting, said that the state has all along involved communities in the Covid-19 management and the process of sample testing for coronavirus will be further strengthened.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: The special squad of the twin city Commissionerate Police Tuesday busted a racket involved in selling of duplicate Sony LED TV sets in the Capital city. Owners of four electronic showrooms in the City were arrested in this connection.

A total of 120 duplicate TV sets were also seized from their possession.

Those arrested were identified as T Pravakar Rao, owner of Khushi Electronics at Netaji Market in Laxmisagar area, Siba Prasad Sahu of SAI Electronics at Tankapani Road, Manas Jena of Ganapati Electronics at Kargil Basti near Airport and Shamin Khan of Unitech Electronics at Idco Colony in Mancheswar area here.

Pravakar Rao is said to be the mastermind of the entire crime.

Acting on allegations, the special squad carried out simultaneous



raids at the four showrooms and found those selling duplicate LED TV sets. The cops arrested the owners from the shops. Some miscreants in Kolkata were involved in the import of the substandard LED TV sets and its parts from China and other countries. According to police sources, T Pravakar Rao, the mastermind behind the duplicate LED TV syndicate, used to procure fake TVs from Kolkata along with logo

and stickers of SONY. Later, he used to sell it in the local markets at much cheaper price in comparison to the original television sets. The other accused shop owners were also associated with Rao and sold such duplicate sets.

"They were duping the customers by convincing them that they are procuring SONY TVs through the port and as they are avoiding the custom, excise duties and the GST, they are able to sell the TV at a cost 50 per cent less than the original price," claims police.

They opened their showrooms near slums as they mostly targeted gullible slum dwellers.

In this connection, four cases were registered one each at Laxmisagar, Badagada, Airfield and Mancheswar police stations. The four accused were produced in court and remanded to judicial custody as their bail pleas were rejected.

Indramani Tripathy new I&PR director



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Just a day after the retirement of senior OAS officer KS Mishra, the state government Tuesday appointed Indramani Tripathy as the new Information and Public Relations (I&PR) director. Niranjan Sethi was Monday appointed as director in-charge of I&PR department till the appointment of a regular director.

Moreover, as per a notification issued by the General Administration and Public Grievance (GA&PG) department, Additional IG of Prisons Tusar Kanta Mohanty has been posted as director; Land Records & Survey while Manoj Kumar Mohanty transferred as additional secretary in GA & PG department.

Similarly, senior OAS officer Bijay Kumar Dash was posted as new CGM (land) IDCO, Ratnakar Sahoo as ADM Nabarangpur and Saroj Kumar Swain as executive officer of Puri Municipality.

Besides, the government has appointed Sashadhara Nayak as new additional secretary in the Revenue and Disaster Management department and Sushanta Kumar Mohanty as director of estate in the GA&PG department.

INVITING TROUBLE



People queue up at the Radiation Oncology department of Acharya Harihar Post Graduate Institute of Cancer in Cuttack without maintaining social distance, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

Football coach Nanda Kishore loses battle against Covid

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Renowned football coach Nanda Kishore Patnaik died of Covid-19 while undergoing treatment at a private healthcare facility here late Monday night. He was 65.

Family sources said that Patnaik was in home isolation after he tested positive for novel coronavirus May 12 last. Later, he was admitted to a Covid hospital at Baripada. He was shifted to a private hospital here but he passed away last night, family sources said.

Born in Baripada March 16, 1956, Patnaik represented Odisha twice in the junior football championship in 1977 and 1978. He took to coaching in 1992-93 and imparted training to women football players in 1995.

He served as the coach of the Odisha Women's football team several times and has groomed several national and international women footballers like Shradhanjali Samantaray, Ranjita Mohanty, Mamali Das, Runi Nayak and Bishnupriya Mohanty.



Many eminent personalities, including Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, expressed their profound grief over the death and sympathies to the bereaved family members.

In a condolence message, the Chief Minister said that Nand Kishore's contribution in creating world-class sports persons will always be remembered.

Pradhan in his condolence message said, "Pained to learn about the demise of eminent football coach Nanda Kishore Patnaik. His contribution in grooming several talented international level football players is beyond comparison and prayed for the salvation of his soul."

14,967 more schools get LPG connection

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: In a bid to facilitate cooking of mid-day meal (MDM) in government-run schools, 14,967 more schools were provided LPG connections out of state funds

during financial year (FY) 2020-21, taking the total LPG coverage to 47,177 schools in the state.

This was revealed at a state level steering-cum-monitoring committee meeting on MDM, chaired by Development Commissioner

cum-Additional Chief Secretary Pradeep Kumar Jena recently.

The meeting revealed that during closure of schools due to Covid-19 pandemic, food security allowance was given to the schoolchildren. Food security allowance consists of MDM rice entitlements which were distributed to the parents on the school campuses or through fair price shops and cooking cost was transferred to the bank accounts of the children.

During financial year (FY) 2020-21, 14,967 schools were provided



LPG connection out of state funds, taking the total LPG coverage to 47,177 schools. This apart, 43,000 schools were provided Rs 5,000 each for raising school nutri-gar-

den. During the pandemic, 31,500 schools raised kitchen gardens and harvested vegetables.

During school closure, iron & folic acid tablets were also distributed at the doorsteps of children to address the iron deficiency.

Jena suggested setting up of new kitchen sheds or renovation of the existing ones to make them disaster resilient for use during the natural calamity. He also suggested for piloting or experimenting drip irrigation in the school nutri-garden project. The development com-

missioner-cum-additional chief secretary was keen on fortification of rice in MDM. He suggested constituting a committee under State Nodal Officer, MDM to discuss and work out the modalities.

Drawing reference to the recent resolution of cabinet, he suggested for inclusion of Disaster & Pandemic management in the curriculum of Class VIII-XII.

S&ME principal secretary Satyabrata Sahu highlighted convergence mechanism adopted for implementation of different schemes.

'Abrupt' end to vax-on-wheels drive irks Cuttack denizens

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, June 1: Although the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) has discontinued the 'vaccination and testing-on-wheels' drive that was launched for the differently-abled and people above 70 years of age, lack of awareness among the denizens about it has left many confused.

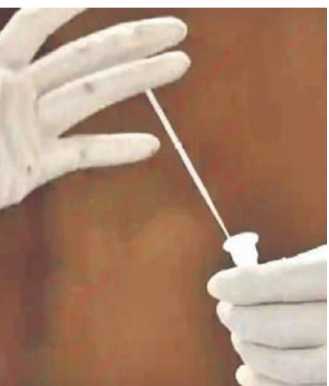
According to sources, in a bid to ensure differently-abled and 70-plus age group get inoculated against Covid-19 as well as tested for the infection without any hassles, the CMC had launched 'vaccination and testing-on-wheels' drive May 19, 2021.

"As per the plan, mobile vans with health workers were to visit houses and facilitate vaccination for and collect swab samples from differently-abled and those above 70 years of age. People were required to call 9777067297 for vaccination and 7205337217 for testing between 10 am and 3pm from Monday to Friday and share their information like name and address to avail the services," the source said.

The facility was, however, dis-

AS PER THE PLAN, MOBILE VANS WITH HEALTH WORKERS WERE TO VISIT HOUSES AND FACILITATE VACCINATION FOR AND COLLECT SWAB SAMPLES FROM DIFFERENTLY-ABLED AND THOSE ABOVE 70 YEARS OF AGE

PEOPLE WERE REQUIRED TO CALL 9777067297 FOR VACCINATION AND 7205337217 FOR TESTING BETWEEN 10 AM AND 3PM FROM MONDAY TO FRIDAY AND SHARE THEIR INFORMATION LIKE NAME AND ADDRESS TO AVAIL THE SERVICES



continued following a state government's directive, the source pointed out.

On the other hand, many in the Millennium City who are yet to learn about the facility's discontinuation have been desperately dialling the contact numbers, but to no avail. What next is an obvious sense of helplessness and confusion among the denizens about the abrupt halt of the programme.

Asked, CMC joint commissioner Sumita Sarkar said that although the 'vaccination and testing-on-wheels' facility has been discon-

tinued, the civic body has made elaborate arrangements to ensure hassle-free testing and inoculation for differently-abled and those above the age of 70.

"Differently-abled as well as those above the age of 70 wishing to get tested for Covid or get inoculated against the infection can dial the dedicated number to avail the facilities. They'll be given a particular time slot. CMC-arranged vehicle will carry them to the centre. In case, they wish to go on a vehicle arranged by self, CMC staffers will escort them to the centre," Sarkar pointed out.

'Animal welfare board needs to be more active'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Fisheries and Animal Resources Development Minister Arun Sahoo Tuesday said that of State Animal Welfare Board needs to be more active for the safety of animals in the state.

He said this at the state animal welfare board meeting Tuesday. The minister said that attack on animals is inhuman activity and animal welfare board should focus on implementing different laws and Acts regarding animal welfare.

R Raghu Prasad, commissioner-cum-secretary of Fisheries and Animal Resources Development department said, "To provide immediate help to animals which face attacks or injuries, we have started a helpline number and animal treatment ambulance."

Director of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services Smruti Ranjan Pradhan said the board should be very strict during registration of pet shops and dog breeding centres and providing certificates.

People must be educated about cyber security, say experts

POST NEWS NETWORK

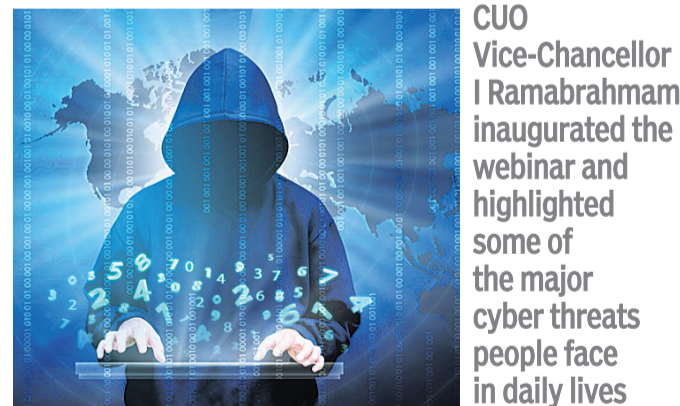
Bhubaneswar, June 1: A webinar on cyber security was organised by the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of the Central University of Odisha through virtual mode, Tuesday.

Despite awareness, the number of cyber fraud cases continues to rise in the state with a whopping Rs 1.40 crore cheated from people by fraudsters in the month of May.

As per the information shared by the Commissionerate Police, cyber fraudsters have duped gullible people of Rs 1.40,09,469 in May as against Rs 1,19,63,297 in April. Of the total Rs 1.40 crore, Rs 70,78,714 has been defrauded from people in Bhubaneswar alone. Total 17 cybercrime cases were registered during the period.

The aim of the seminar was to create awareness on varieties of cybercrimes taking place and various cyber security features that will keep us safe from hackers, cybercriminals and other agents of fraud in the digital world.

Professor I Ramabrahmam, Vice-Chancellor of the university, inaugurated the webinar and high-



lighted some of the major cyber threats that we face in our daily lives. He advised we should be aware and take necessary preventive measures against cyber attacks.

Prof PS Avadhani, Dept of Computer Science, CUO defined different types of cyber threats like computer viruses, hackers, cyber fraud, cybercriminals, viruses, malware, ransomwares and cyber agents.

He said, "Nowadays many people have been victimised by cybercrime and this happens due to

CUO Vice-Chancellor I Ramabrahmam inaugurated the webinar and highlighted some of the major cyber threats people face in daily lives

lack of our digital knowledge and ignorance on cyber security."

He advised to keep RFID ATMs in aluminum foil, frequently change the password, give long password instead of short ones, use authorised antivirus in computers/laptops, protect the file and computers by giving strong security code, log out all the applications before switching off the computers and not to disclose passwords, not to give ID numbers to any unauthorised person and not to use cyber cafe in any financial transaction.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-7978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895550649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri-Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemann-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baisnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-9777682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

Tihidi youth reaps success in integrated farming

POST NEWS NETWORK

Simulia, June 1: A youth from Jhinkiria area of Tihidi block in Bhadrak district has set an example for many by achieving success in integrated farming.

Manoranjan Behera had completed his intermediate degree in science stream from Charampa College in 2012 and managed to get a job in the Horticulture department in Kendrapara district.

However, Behera had left the job to concentrate on farming. "I was a good student and I always had a desire to do something different. I left my job in the Horticulture department and started integrated farming," Behera said.

Behera usually cultivates paddy on around 13 acres of land while he is utilising another acre for fish farming. This apart, the young farmer grows vegetables and mushrooms on two acres, sources said. "I have a dairy farm consisting



MANORANJAN BEHERA HAD COMPLETED HIS INTERMEDIATE DEGREE IN SCIENCE STREAM FROM CHARAMPA COLLEGE IN 2012 AND MANAGED TO GET A JOB IN THE HORTICULTURE DEPARTMENT IN KENDRAPARA DISTRICT. HE HAD LEFT THE JOB TO CONCENTRATE ON FARMING

BEHERA USUALLY CULTIVATES PADDY ON AROUND 13 ACRES OF LAND WHILE HE IS UTILISING ANOTHER ACRE FOR FISH FARMING. THIS APART, THE YOUNG FARMER GROWS VEGETABLES AND MUSHROOMS ON TWO ACRE

of 14 cows. I use cow dung as manure in vegetable cultivation. Besides, I have a bio-gas plant. My wife Sunita and younger brother Ranjan assist me in the farming work," Behera said.

The young farmer claimed that he is producing around 20 kg mushrooms daily from his farm. "I am using modern technology in farming. Now, I am giving im-

portance to mushroom cultivation. In winter, I used to produce around 30 kg mushrooms daily. Now, I am earning around Rs 6 lakh per annum from my farm," Behera added.

According to Behera, a former official of the Horticulture department at Tihidi had helped him a lot in the integrated farming. This apart, the experts at Ranital

Krushi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) provided him technical support.

"I have been felicitated by various government and non-government organisations. The state government has also awarded me in this year's Krushi Odisha event in Bhubaneswar. I love to provide private tuition to needy students. Besides, I have acted in a few music albums," Behera added.



Nor'wester rain has damaged several acres of banana plantation in Sinapali area of Nuapada district

OP PHOTO

3-year-old boy hacked to death by neighbour



Preliminary investigation revealed that accused Bulu Sethi, 37, was mentally challenged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Berhampur, June 1: A three-year-old boy was allegedly hacked to death by his neighbour in Ganjam district Tuesday, police said.

The incident happened around 9am at Bhabarada village in Polasara area, around 50km from Berhampur, they said.

The child was attacked with a sharp-edged weapon when he was playing near his house, an officer said.

The father also got wounded while trying to save him, he said.

The accused sustained injuries while trying to escape from the irate villagers after the incident, police said.

Preliminary investigation revealed that accused Bulu Sethi, 37, was mentally challenged, Polasara police station in-charge Jeetendra Mallick said.

An inquiry has been initiated to find out what led to the incident, Mallick said.

A murder case has been registered and the weapon used in the crime seized. The body has been sent for post-mortem, the inspector said.

Pradhan inaugurates 279-bed Covid care centre at Angul



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, June 1: Union Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Tuesday dedicated a 279-bed Covid care centre at Jindal Steel & Power Ltd (JSPL) Plant in Angul to the people in the area for better treatment of Covid-19 patients.

According to the ministry, the Covid care centre is equipped with 270 oxygen supported beds, which includes 10 non-invasive ventilation beds and five ICU beds with ventilators.

"The company plans to expand the capacity of the Covid care centre to 400 beds by next month. Local community members can avail of the facility providing free Covid-19 testing, isolation centre, ambulance services, medical treatment with free medicines, food as well as counselling services. A dedicated team of doctors and paramedics are engaged to provide 24x7 services at the centre," the Steel ministry said.

Inaugurating the Covid care centre, Pradhan appreciated JSPL's

JSPL plans to expand the capacity of the Covid care centre to 400 beds by next month

support to the government in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. He also lauded JSPL for supplying life saving liquid medical oxygen to various hospitals across the country.

The Union minister said that JSPL's vision to build the largest steel plant of the world with 25 MTPA capacity at Angul by 2030 will certainly fructify the aspiration of the local youths for sustainable livelihood and improve the quality of life of the People in the region.

Health & Family Welfare Minister Naba Kisore Das and JSPL's chairman Naveen Jindal were also present on the occasion.

The state health minister thanked JSPL for its efforts to extend life support oxygen, medical treatment and livelihood support for the local community to fight the global pandemic.

Ministers take stock of Yaas-hit Basudevpur

POST NEWS NETWORK

Basudevpur, June 1: Two ministers Tuesday visited Basudevpur area of Bhadrak district and took stock of the damage caused by cyclonic storm Yaas that made a land-fall on Odisha coast May 26.

Agriculture Minister Arun Kumar Sahoo and Energy Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra also reviewed the post-cyclone situation in the locality.

Sahoo visited Padmapur, Jagannathprasad, Rajgharpokhari, Biras, Balimeda and Dhamra areas of Bhadrak to assess the damage caused by the summer storm. Later, Sahoo along with Mishra held a review meeting at Basudevpur block office.

Mishra directed the officials to take immediate steps to resolve various issues with regard to the supply of power to the cyclone-hit areas.

Deer carcass seized near Similipal NP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baripada, June 1: The carcass of a deer was seized from a deserted house during a raid by the Forest department at a village near Similipal National Park (NP) in Mayurbhanj district Tuesday, an official said.

It is suspected that the people of Jorapokhari village killed the animal after it came out of the national park, Rairangpur Divisional Forest Officer Arun Mishra said. Acting on inputs, Forest department officials conducted the raid at a deserted house in the village and recovered the carcass, Mishra said. An autopsy was carried out and a case has been registered. No arrest has been made so far and an investigation is on, the official added.

Odisha logs highest 37 deaths in a day

PNN/ AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Odisha reported the highest single-day Covid-19 deaths Tuesday as 37 people lost their lives, taking the toll to 2,791, a Health department official said.

The state also reported 8,735 new Covid-19 cases, pushing the tally to 7,73,732. These cases were detected after testing 62,293 samples.

At present, there are 89,956 active cases in Odisha.

In the last 24 hours, 10,405 people have recovered. The total recovery stands at 6,80,932. In all, 711 people have died of Covid-19 in the state in May. Khurda district, where state capital Bhubaneswar is located, has alone accounted for 471 deaths, followed by Ganjam (284), Sundargarh (270) and Cuttack (165).

Five of the latest deaths were reported from Angul and four people each died in Cuttack and Kalahandi.

Of the new infections, 4,892 were



Five of the latest deaths were reported from Angul and four people each died in Cuttack and Kalahandi

detected at quarantine centres, while the rest 3,843 were local contact cases.

Khurda district reported the highest 1,222 new cases, followed by Cuttack (673) and Balasore (566).

Brown sugar, country liquor seized; 2 held

AGENCIES

Bhadrak, June 1: At least 138 gms of brown sugar and 15 litres of country liquor was seized from two youths near Bonth square in Bhadrak Tuesday by the special intelligence team of Excise department.

The contraband is estimated to be worth Rs 14 lakh as per present market value.

One of the accused peddling brown sugar was identified as

Ganesh Panda from Aranji village under Bhadrak Rural police limits. As per reports, the sleuths apprehended the accused while patrolling in the area. Similarly, another accused identified as Baikuntha Das from Basudevpur area of the district was also intercepted by the police from the same area while he was trafficking 14 bottles of country liquor Tuesday.

Sources said, the Excise Intelligence team of the Central Division in Cuttack had been closely



monitoring Das' activities since long and he was trapped in the police drag net Tuesday. Speaking about the haul, Jagdis

Samal, Inspector of Excise Intelligence, Central Division said, "We have arrested Ganesh Panda across the LIC office at Bonth square during patrolling and seized brown sugar worth Rs 14 lakh from his possession. Panda was arrested earlier last year too."

"Another accused had also been rounded up from the same place today while carrying 15 litres of country liquor and he was forwarded to court as well," Samal added.

LIS professionals join hands to support librarian community

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: The Covid-19 pandemic has posed grave challenges to the world community that have to be faced with unusual but pragmatic initiatives.

The second wave of Covid-19 is taking away lives of many Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals globally, and India is not an exception to it.

A significant number of LIS professionals are struggling for survival now.

While the families of those working in government and well-established institutions are adequately compensated or supported, those in private establishments are at the receiving end.

In such trying times, a group of LIS professional associations joined hands together and decided to assist Covid-19 affected professionals and their families by launching an initiative - HelpLIS-Mission (www.helpLIS-mission.org).

Odisha Library Academy (OLA) is also part of this mission to coordinate with the eastern region of India.

CONSTABLE'S BODY FOUND FROM DRAIN IN KEONJHAR

POST NEWS NETWORK

Keonjhar, June 1: The body of a police constable was found lying under mysterious circumstances in a drain near the office of the Sub Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) at the Jail Road in Keonjhar town Tuesday.

The deceased constable has been identified as Biswa Bhushan Sethy, 38, of Fakirpur under Anandpur police limits.

According to a source, some passersby first spotted the body lying in the drain in the morning. They immediately alerted the police. Soon, Keonjhar Town police

reached the spot and recovered the body. Later, the body was sent to Keonjhar district headquarters hospital (DHH) for postmortem, sources said.

The police are yet to unravel the cause of Sethy's death.

"It is too early to arrive at a conclusion about the cause of Sethy's death. The postmortem report will provide us with some leads to solve the case. We have launched a probe into the incident," said a police officer. The deceased being a police constable, the incident has been a matter of intense discussion and speculation in Keonjhar town.



MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati inaugurates a procurement centre for Rabi crops at Jeypore in Koraput district, Tuesday

OP PHOTO

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
E-procurement Notice
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
SONEPUR (R&B) DIVISION, SONEPUR
E-mail- eepwdsnr@gmail.com; Phone-06654-221081
No. 2357/Dt. 1/6/21
Tender Revocation
No. B-113- The tender for the work Development of Basic Amenities for "Ma Sureswari Temple Complex, Sonapur in the District of Subarnapur" bearing Bid Identification No. EE/R&B/SNPR/04/2021-22 (Tender ID: 202_EICCL_68477_1) is hereby revoked after re-evaluation of technical bid of Sri Susanta Kumar Khatua, "B" Class Contractor by the Technical Bid Evaluation Committee on dtd. 31.05.2021.
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Sonapur (R&B) Division, Sonapur
OIPR-34081/11/0005/2122

“Inspiration is a slender river of brightness leaping from a vast and Eternal Knowledge, it exceeds reason more perfectly than reason exceeds the knowledge of the senses.”
SRI AUROBINDO



One Nation One Vax

It is an irony that the Supreme Court had to remind the Centre that it has to procure COVID-19 vaccines and distribute them throughout the country instead of leaving the States to fend for themselves since Article 1 of the Constitution says India or Bharat “shall be a Union of States”. It is the BJP-led government which has been clamouring for the past few years for uniform systems for the entire country for different facilities. Starting from One Nation One Tax, One Nation One Ration Card, One Nation One ID (Aadhaar) Card to floating thoughts on One Nation One Election and One Nation One Language, the government has left no stone unturned to create an atmosphere of forced uniformity under the guise of Unity. And, of course, the Uniform Civil Code to dispense with the prevalent different personal and religious laws must not be forgotten.

However, when it comes to real welfare work such as vaccinating the entire population against the lethal coronavirus playing havoc with the people irrespective of their religious, social and economic differences, the current dispensation at the Centre keeps mum on a policy such as “one country one vaccine (supplier)” and abdicates its responsibility to save the citizens from the pandemic. In fact, the citizens have been thrown to the wolves. This has resulted in private players fleeing money taking advantage of the woefully inadequate supply of vaccines and panic gripping the people.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan’s letter May 31 to 11 chief ministers requesting them to close ranks to press the Centre to procure COVID-19 vaccines and distribute them to States free of cost only highlights the helplessness of the states and the Centre’s criminal dereliction of duty. The need of the hour is, indeed, for the States to jointly approach the Centre and force it to concede the genuine demand.

The Supreme Court Amicus Curiae Jaideep Gupta put the case graphically during the hearing of a suo motu COVID case before the Bench of Justices DY Chandrachud, L Nageswara Rao and Ravindra Bhat May 31 that according to government affidavit the total vaccine capacity, including Sputnik, is 15 crore per month. Going by this rate it is impossible for the Centre to achieve its target of vaccinating the whole population by the end of December, 2021 or January, 2022. The government seems to be prevaricating when it announces this deadline in the apex court and outside. The suspicion about its real intent stems from the fact that it has not yet spelt out how the production capacity has increased or likely to increase in the next few months so the largest number of persons can be vaccinated within the deadline. While the Centre is loath to state the actual vaccine capacity, the Amicus Curiae has arrived at 15 crore per month on the basis of figures from the Serum Institute of India, Bharat Biotech and Sputnik. The government has even said some other vaccines are in the stage of development. If that be so, it may be unethical to give such hope to the people since the new products would require ample time at the testing stages.

As the Centre keeps the citizens guessing about the availability of vaccines, distress calls are coming from people in the age group of 18 to 44 that they can’t register their names for vaccines online because the apps show that within two minutes all slots are booked.

What is shocking is that the Centre has changed the country’s age-old, time-tested vaccination policy being followed since Independence. Under Entry 29 of the Concurrent List of the Constitution the responsibility of supplying vaccines free to the citizens is at the doorstep of the Centre and the latter can’t pass it on to the States as it has done in the case of COVID-19 vaccination. Some States have agreed to provide vaccines free to the age group from 18 to 44, but this is an ad hoc measure and no government policy.

In fact, the government’s very policy of dividing the population into two age groups - 45 years and above and 18 years and above - is arbitrary and irrational. The argument that people above 45 years are more vulnerable than the younger population is not tenable anymore since the younger generation too is falling prey to the virus during the second wave. Moreover, if the Centre could roll out vaccines free for the older group, what prevents it from doing so in case of the younger population?

Till now about 3 per cent of the country’s population has been vaccinated and according to a rough estimate 70 per cent of them hail from urban areas. This is because of the digital divide and the concentration of private health facilities in urban areas. The government acted thoughtlessly by making online registration mandatory as it left bulk of the rural population out of the coverage for inadequate digital facilities. The price differences of the vaccines are also excluding a majority of the population from getting the jobs.

The next big issue is that of the States floating independent global tenders for vaccines. Not only has Punjab been rebuffed by Moderna which said it will deal only with the Central government, Orissa’s tender has failed to receive any response from any manufacturer. Even domestic producers have preferred to stay away from these tenders.

The other big issue is payment for these imported vaccines will require Reserve Bank of India (RBI) releasing those huge amounts of foreign exchange in proper time. No one, as of now, has discussed or cleared the RBI’s take on this matter.

WISDOM CORNER

“Be not simply good - be good for something.” HENRY DAVID THOREAU

“Things start out as hopes and end up as habits.” LILLIAN HELLMAN

“Be less curious about people and more curious about ideas.” MARIE CURIE

WORDSWORTH

■ New York minute

The term New York minute is well known in the USA to mean a very short period of time. Where did the phrase originate and why? Despite its intimate relationship with that ceaseless city of rush and hurry, it might not be from New York. The Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE) quotes this explanation of the term, from 1984: “Immediately. Equates to a nanosecond, or that infinitesimal blink of time in New York after the traffic light turns green and before the ol’ boy behind you honks his horn.” This is from Texas Crude by Ken Weaver, a glossary of Lone Star state slang and expletives that, though sometimes obscene, has to be believed. So it is likely that it began as an outsider’s jaundiced view of the lack of patience shown by the Big Apple’s urban cowboys. That doesn’t necessarily tie it to Texas, even though DARE’s first known example, from its own field records, puts it in that state as long ago as 1967. Our guess is that by the 1970s it was becoming fairly widely known; we base this on finding a mention of a racehorse with the name New York Minute in Maryland in 1976, which surely suggests the term had by then achieved some notoriety.

LOL

TRAVEL WITH A HORSE

An out-of-towner drove his car into a ditch in a desolated area. Luckily, a local farmer came to help with his big strong horse named Buddy. He hitched Buddy up to the car and yelled, “Pull, Nellie, pull!” Buddy didn’t move. Then the farmer hollered, “Pull, Buster, pull!” Buddy didn’t respond. Once more the farmer commanded,

“Pull, Coco, pull!” Nothing. Then the farmer nonchalantly said, “Pull, Buddy, pull!” And the horse easily dragged the car out of the ditch. The motorist was most appreciative and very curious. He asked the farmer why he called his horse by the wrong name three times. “Well... Buddy is blind and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn’t even try!”



Prativa Pritimita

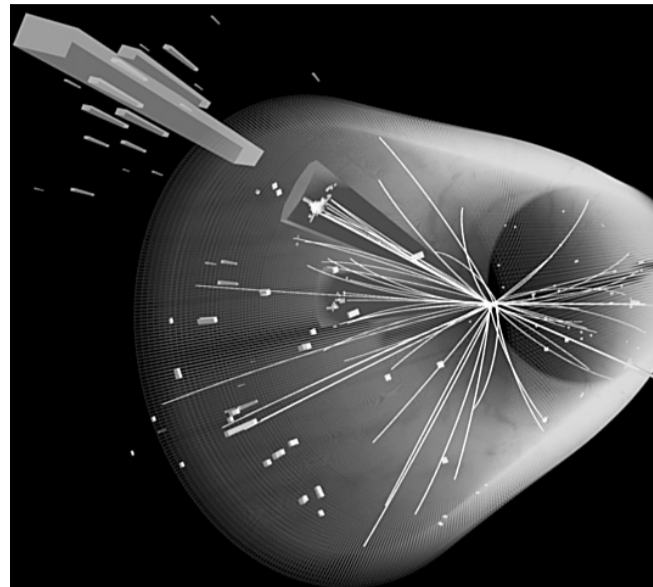
WHATEVER WE SEE AROUND US MAKES ONLY FOUR PER CENT OF THE UNIVERSE. NOTHING IS KNOWN ABOUT THE REST NINETY-SIX PER CENT WHICH WE CALL DARK MATTER AND DARK ENERGY

Quite often, I get baffled by the questions my six-year-old throws at me and one such question was, “Who created us?” Even though I wanted to give a scientific answer to it, I quickly replied, “God”, like most other parents would do, because I wanted him to believe that there is some supernatural power working beyond our understanding. But the immediate question that followed this was more difficult to answer: “If God created us, then who created God?”, my son asked. This reminded me of a very engaging interaction with a co-passenger in a long flight a few years back who had asked me, “Is not it surprising that scientists, who usually don’t rely upon the belief that God is the ultimate creator, have named a particle after Him?”

For the readers who are unaware that a fundamental particle fondly called the ‘God particle’ exists, let me give you a brief knowledge about it. Fundamental particles are the basic building blocks of nature that make everything we see around us and they can be broadly classified as quarks, leptons and bosons. Of all these particles, the God particle, a type of boson was the last one to be discovered. Quarks are of six types namely; up, down, charm, strange, top and bottom. Two up quarks and one down quark bind together to make protons whereas one up quark and two down quarks make a neutron. Protons and neutrons together make a nucleus around which electrons move in orbits to make an atom that forms any visible matter. An electron is a type of lepton which are also six in number. Electron, muon, tau are charged leptons and their respective neutral partners are electron neutrino, muon neutrino and tau neutrino. All these particles interact or in simpler words, talk to one another through the four fundamental forces of nature that are, the strong force, the weak force, the electro-magnetic force and the gravitational force. These forces are carried by some vector particles called bosons. The strong force

FOCUS SCIENCE

OF GOD & PARTICLES



Though we have come a long way in understanding the complexities of the universe, a lot still remains unanswered. The more we try to find their answers, the more awestruck we get by the beauty of this creation of the creator

is carried by gluons, weak force by ‘W’ and ‘Z’ bosons, electro-magnetic force by photons and of yet nothing is known by the carrier of gravitational force. All these particles are nicely accommodated in the most successful theory of particle physics called the Standard Model.

The particles have different mass and energy and they behave differently. But where do they get their mass from? This was the topic of research for many physicists including the British theoretical physicist Peter Higgs who wrote a research paper in 1964 postulating that particles that were born massless out of the Big Bang acquired mass within a fraction of second by interacting with a massive boson. This can be thought of as; there is a certain fat person who makes others fat the moment they collide with him without losing his own mass. This theory remained only as a good idea for a long period of time because

the signatures of such a massive boson could not be found experimentally. During this phase, in the 1990s physicist Leon Lederman wrote a book on this elusive particle and called it “The Goddamn particle” poking fun at how difficult it was to find it. However, the publishers of the book didn’t find it quite welcoming and struck off the word ‘damn’ just before publication. Later in 2012 a boson with 125 GeV mass was discovered at CERN, Geneva using the most powerful particle smasher in the world, the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in a 27 kilometre long underground tunnel recreating a Big Bang like event. The particle was named ‘Higgs boson’ after its postulator Peter Higgs who got the Nobel Prize in physics along with Francois Englert the next year. However the news of the discovery appeared on almost all newspapers in the world with the chosen name ‘God particle’ be-

cause of the famous book by Leon Lederman.

One interesting point about Higgs boson is that while it loves to interact with all other fundamental particles, it is not in talking terms with neutrinos. This means neutrinos that are a million times lighter than electron don’t get their mass through Higgs mechanism. So as to answer, “who gives masses to neutrinos then?”, that took a huge part of my PhD thesis and that is still a topic of on-going research. That’s not all we are looking for: Whatever we see around us makes only four per cent of the universe. Nothing is known about the rest ninety-six per cent which we call dark matter and dark energy. Another such unsolved puzzle is matter-antimatter asymmetry of the present universe. It is believed that when the universe was created there were as many antiparticles as particles. Antiparticles look the same as particles but have exactly opposite charge. Their total absence in the present universe is a mystery which scientists are still pondering about.

Though we have come a long way in understanding the complexities of the universe, a lot still remains unanswered. The more we try to find their answers, the more awestruck we get by the beauty of this creation of the creator. If you wonder, like my son still does, who created the creator and how does He look like, then I would say, God is pure energy and energy is never created or destroyed. It just gets transformed from one form to another. If we observe closely, we can find Him in many forms around us; be it in the tiniest possible form like a quanta of positive energy that we feel inside ourselves or in an enormous form like the ultimate source of energy, the Sun that we see every day. Let me quote here the famous physicist Albert Einstein who once said, “The more I study science, the more I believe in God.”

The writer is a Research Scientist at the Department of Physics, IIT, Bombay.

IN JEST THIS

China has to try harder to boost population



Melvin Durai

AT THIS RATE, CHINA WILL HAVE A 7-CHILD POLICY IN 2041

Within the next decade, India is projected to overtake China and have the largest population in the world. But China is not ready to give up the No. 1 spot without a fight. That’s why China’s ruling Communist Party made a big announcement on Monday: married couples in China will now be allowed to have three children.

As a father of three, I was happy to hear this news. I don’t think there should be any limits on the number of children you can have. Go ahead and have as many children as you want, within reason. When I say “within reason,” I don’t really think it’s wise to have more than 50.

Of course, Ziona Chana of Mizoram may disagree with me. He belongs to a religious sect that permits polygamy and has about 90 children from almost 40 wives, according to news reports. If India overtakes China and attains the No. 1 spot, newspapers in Mizoram may carry this headline: “India Beats China, thanks to Chana.”

China was once so far ahead of India, I didn’t think India had any chance of catching up. When China reached the one billion milestone in 1980, India’s population was only



about 700 million. It would take 17 more years before India’s population hit one billion. But while India’s population continued to grow steadily, China implemented a strict one-child policy in 1979. For the next three decades, all Chinese children were deprived of siblings. Having a brother or sister was as strange in China as having freedom of speech.

The one-child policy slowed China’s population growth, but created another problem. As the population grew older, there weren’t enough young people to fill all the jobs and keep the economy going. Many western countries solve this problem by allowing more people to immigrate. Canada, for example, has opened its doors to not just high-skilled immigrants, but also those with skills that the country

needs. Among the semi-skilled and low-skilled jobs currently in demand: truck-driver, livestock worker, and food and beverage server. If you happen to be a truck-driver who can haul livestock, as well as food and beverages, you’ve got it made. Canada will roll out the welcome mat for you.

Canada has a land mass of 9.98 million square kilometres, making it the second largest country in the world by total area. But it has a population of only 38 million, so it shouldn’t be surprising that Canada encourages its people, including all the immigrants, to have more children. If you give birth to a child in Canada, the government gives you about \$500 per month to take care of your child. If you have a second child, the government gives you \$1,000 per month. If you

have a third child, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau shows up at your door to shake your hand. “Thank you for helping to populate Canada,” he says, handing you a gift certificate for 10,000 diapers.

Unlike Canada, China doesn’t seem inclined to increase immigration, being already so wary about foreign influence. Immigrants may bring with them crazy ideas such as democracy, civil liberties and human rights.

Instead, China has revoked its one-child policy, replacing it with a two-child policy in 2016 and now a three-child policy. At this rate, China will have a 7-child policy in 2041.

You may think that married couples in China are excited about having three children, but the reception to the news has been lukewarm. News reporters were actually able to find a few couples who weren’t in their bedrooms trying to make more babies.

Many of them are satisfied with two children and aren’t eager to have more, especially since it costs so much to raise and educate a child. China may need to provide greater financial incentives to parents; otherwise India will soon be cruising into the No. 1 spot.

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

Flames of fuel

Sir, Apropos the news item “Fuel prices continue to see upward spiral.” **Orissa POST**, June 1, rising international crude prices coupled with high Central and state taxes hiked the pump prices over Rs 100. It was in April 2020 when international fuel prices touched rock bottom the consumers thought they would reap the benefits, but the Centre and states saw it as an appropriate moment to earn some easy money. They hiked their respective taxes on fuel while the consumer kept paying the same price despite low crude rates. Now when international prices are rising, governments have been unwilling to cut taxes in order to provide fuel at the previous rates. As a result, the average fuel price in India is among highest in the world - Rs 93 per litre of petrol and Rs 88 per litre of diesel. From this, the Centre corners Rs 33 on every litre of petrol sold and states about Rs 20. This is reflected in the skewed correlation between the global crude prices and rate at the pumps. Since May last, global petrol prices have risen by just Rs 3.53. But retail prices went up by Rs 20.
N Sadhasiva Reddy, BANGALORE

Israel-Hamas truce

Sir, The current Israel-Hamas conflict in the Middle East has seriously jeopardized international peace and security amidst the COVID pandemic. Egypt’s attempt to prop up a truce between the two conflicting groups is praiseworthy. In my view, for a permanent settlement of the crisis a decisive role is expected on the part of UN Security Council. Moreover, in order to secure a long term end to the violence and in the interest of peace countries like Iran and Syria should stop supplying arms and ammunition to Hamas.
Dr. Bishal Das, BARIPADA.

Centre-Bengal tussle

Sir, The tussle between the Centre and the state turned dramatic, with West Bengal government refusing to release Chief Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay for Central duty and forcing him to retire. Didi later appointed him as Chief Adviser to the CM. The TMC supremo also had the audacity to call the Prime Minister and Home Minister names. She also wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, urging him to rescind the order, asking the Chief Secretary to report to Delhi.
NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

CENTRE VS BENGAL

MHA notice to ex-CS

A home ministry official said that hours before Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced his retirement Monday, Bandyopadhyay was served the notice for refusing to comply with lawful direction of the central government in violation of Section 51-B of the Disaster Management Act, 2005



AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 1: The Union Home Ministry has served a show-cause notice to former chief secretary of West Bengal Alapan Bandyopadhyay under a stringent provision of the Disaster Management Act that entails imprisonment up to two years, amid a tug-of-war between the Centre and the Mamata Banerjee government over him.

A home ministry official said that hours before Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced his retirement Monday, Bandyopadhyay was served the notice for refusing to comply with lawful direction of the central government in violation of Section 51-B of the Disaster

Management Act, 2005.

The officer has been asked to reply within three days to the notice, the official said.

Bandyopadhyay, who was due to retire May 31, was given an extension of three months and days later asked to report at the Centre. However, Banerjee announced his retirement Monday and appointed him as chief advisor to the state government.

According to Section 51 (b), whosoever refuses to comply with any direction given by or on behalf of the central government or the state government or the National Executive Committee or the State Executive Committee or the District Authority under this Act, shall on conviction be pun-

ishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine, or with both.

"And if such obstruction or refusal to comply with directions results in loss of lives or imminent danger thereof, shall on conviction be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to two years," the Act says.

The retired IAS officer has been asked to explain in writing to the home ministry within three days why action should be taken against him under the provisions of the Act.

Earlier, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) had asked him to report to the central government in Delhi by Monday.

The Centre's action had come after Bandyopadhyay, along with the chief minister, did not stay for a meeting held by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Cyclone Yaas' impact. However, he did not come to the capital and chose to retire, instead of accepting a three-month extension sanctioned to him by the state and central government.

Chief Minister Banerjee had alleged that the officer was targeted by the central government due to a "political vendetta".

The Union Home Secretary is the chairman of the national executive committee under the DM Act which is currently in force due to the Covid pandemic.

The Covid-19 lockdown measures have been implemented under the Disaster Management Act.



Vehicles on a flyover after easing of restrictions of Covid-19 lockdown in Kolkata

PTI PHOTO

TOWARDS NORMALCY

38% of total nCoV deaths in Pb took place in May

THE STATE HAD REGISTERED THE HIGHEST SINGLE-DAY SPIKE OF 9,100 NEW CASES MAY 8

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Chandigarh, June 1: Around 38 per cent of the coronavirus-related deaths in Punjab took place in May alone, while the month also saw 1,36,634 new cases or 35 per cent of the state's infection count, according to official data.

Punjab, which has the highest case fatality rate of 2.4 per cent in the country, registered more than 100 deaths due to Covid-19 every single day in May, according to the medical bulletin data. The state saw a record 231 deaths in a single day May 18. Punjab had reported a total of 9,022 fatalities due to the infection as on April 30. The toll rose



to 14,550, as on May 31, showing 5,528 more people losing their lives to the contagion in that month, the data stated.

Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Mohali, Patiala and Amritsar were some of the districts worst affected due to

the virus. In May, Ludhiana registered a maximum of 624 Covid-linked fatalities, followed by 495 in Amritsar, 447 in Patiala, 365 in Mohali and 296 in Jalandhar, according to the data.

Ludhiana, Amritsar, Jalandhar,

Patiala and Mohali districts have so far witnessed a total of 1,999; 1,457; 1,378; 1,224 and 960 deaths, respectively. On May 31, Punjab's infection tally stood at 5,67,607 while it was 3,70,973 on April 30.

The state had registered the highest single-day spike of 9,100 new cases May 8. Meanwhile, Punjab has been witnessing a decline in the number of fresh cases for the past several days. The number of active cases has also come down to 36,433 as against 79,963 May 12. To contain the spread of the infection, the state government had imposed Covid restrictions including night curfew and weekend lockdown.

Punjab and Haryana High Court permits import of ventilators

THE DIRECTION CAME ON A PETITION FILED AGAINST THE UNION OF INDIA AND OTHER RESPONDENTS BY M/S SB MEDICAL SYSTEMS



AGENCIES

Chandigarh, June 1: Amidst an increasing number of Covid-19 cases, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has allowed the import of ventilators after holding that the denial of permission to bring in the life support systems was against the patients' interests when deaths were taking place.

The Bench of Justice Jitendra Chauhan and Justice Vivek Puri added that the "State ought to have facilitated import of the ventilators" when thousands of people were lying in the hospitals. Noting that a petition on the issue was filed almost a year back, but the grievance was yet to be addressed, the Bench also described the "extreme technicality" as "highly deplorable" in difficult times of pandemic.

"Thousands of people, who are lying admitted, are not getting oxygen or ventilators, which is very vital for the treatment of Covid patients. The oxygen and ICUs are required here and now. Any delay by the administration in providing the ventilators shall definitely result into fatalities," the Bench asserted.

The direction and the observations came on a petition filed against the Union of India and other respondents by M/S SB Medical Systems. The Bench asserted the nation was witnessing a "huge number of deaths everyday" and "certain deaths have happened for want of ventilators".

The Bench asserted the nation was witnessing a "huge number of deaths everyday" and "certain deaths have happened for want of ventilators"

"Therefore, we order that the import of ventilators in question be allowed without further delay, in case the same carry certification from the manufacturer", the Bench added, while making it clear that the same were required to be inspected for quality.

Elaborating, the Bench directed the petitioner to inform the competent authority within 24 hours of receiving the ventilators for quality inspection. This, the Bench clarified, was in the larger interest of the patients and to ensure that the ventilators were as per specifications prescribed by the competent authority.

The authority, on receiving the information, would depute official concerned to determine whether the ventilators were fit to be utilized. In case the ventilators were found to be deficient as per the specifications laid down by the Government of India, the same would not be put to use. "It will be only after the certification by the competent authority, the ventilators in question be put to use," the Bench asserted, while fixing the case for June 29.

SIDHU MEETS CONG PANEL

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Chandigarh /New Delhi, June 1: Disgruntled Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu, who has targeted Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on various issues including the 2015 Guru Granth Sahib sacrilege case, Tuesday met the Congress panel for Punjab and presented his version.

Interacting with reporters after the meeting, he said: "I came here on the call of the party high command and I have presented people's voices from grass root level to the part, my stand on democratic power remains the same that the 'power of the people' must return to the people."

"Every Punjabi must be made a shareholder in Punjab's progress. Jittega Punjab, Jitgegi Punjabiyat, Jittega har Punjabi."

On Monday, Congress state chief Sunil Jakhar met the committee constituted by party president Sonia Gandhi and comprising of Mallikarjun Kharge, JP Aggarwal and General Secretary in charge of the state Harish Rawat.

Apart from Jakhar, state ministers Sunder Sham Arora,



Charanjit Channi, Aruna Chowdhry, Brahm Mohindra, O.P. Soni, Manpreet Badal, Tript Bajwa, Rana Sodhi and Sukhjinder Randhawa also met the committee.

The committee will continue its consultations on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, sources indicated that there is no talk of replacing the Chief Minister, but only rehabilitation of important leaders. The Congress high command will not take the risk of replacing the Chief Minister as there is nobody of his stature to face the Akali Dal, spe-

cially the Badal family. The Congress will have to devise a middle path as 20 MLAs are reported to be unhappy with Amarinder Singh's style of functioning.

Most of these MLAs complained about arbitrary actions by the CM but the key concern was the government's inability to bring to book the culprits in the desecration of Guru Granth Sahib and police firing during peaceful protests in 2015, when the Akali Dal-BJP government was in power; as promised in the party's election manifesto. Sidhu, who has even dared

Meanwhile, sources indicated that there is no talk of replacing the CM, but only rehabilitation of important leaders. The Congress high command will not take the risk of replacing the CM as there is nobody of his stature to face the Akali Dal, specially the Badal family

Amarinder Singh to prove his allegations of joining another party, wants his rehabilitation either in the government or the party. He saying that he is waiting as the high command has intervened.

Sources said the committee will perform a balancing act between the two factions. Sidhu and one non-Sikh leader may be appointed as Deputy Chief Ministers. The committee is expected to submit its report this week itself.

RKM sets up safe homes for Covid patients

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 1: Amid the relentless spike in Covid-19 cases, the Ramakrishna Mission (RKM) has set up two safe homes for patients with mild symptoms - one at its Belur Math headquarters and the other on the premises of its educational institute in Narendrapur, authorities said.

The 50-bed safe home at Belur, which started functioning Tuesday, is offering free-of-cost treatment. "Set up on the campus of shilpa-mandir polytechnic college at Belur Math, the facility will be operational for six months," a spokesperson of RKM said.

At the Narendrapur institute, the safe home, which has come up in a hostel building, is well equipped with oxygen cylinders, and other necessary medical amenities, RKM Secretary Swami Sarvalokananda said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Hindustan Club in south Kolkata, of which state Minister Chandrima Bhattacharya is the president, has set up a 25-bed Covid care unit in Gariahat area.

Cyclone-ravaged Sunderbans fight for livelihood

NAMKHANA BLOCK IS ONE OF THE WORST-AFFECTED IN THE SUNDERBANS REGION IN WEST BENGAL'S SOUTH 24 PARGANAS DISTRICT

AGENCIES

Namkhana (WB), June 1: For people in the ecologically fragile Sunderbans, life revolves around battling high tides daily and cyclones regularly. But every cyclone throws up new challenges to the Sunderbans and its inhabitants. Over just the past three years from 2018-2021, the Sunderbans, which is home to close to five million people, has been battered by four tropical cyclones - Fani (May 2019), Bulbul (November 2019), Amphan (May 2020) and Yaas (May 2021). On each occasion, the region has suffered damage because of gale winds and breached embankments, leading to ingress of sea water. Jana and Mondal are among



People wade through a waterlogged area in the aftermath of Cyclone Yaas, at Raidighi Sunderbans

PTI FILE PHOTO

thousands of people living in the Namkhana block - one of the worst-affected in the Sunderbans region in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district who have lost their homes and livelihoods due to the cyclone. Jana, who lives in the Narayanpur village, was planning to cast the roof of his house this summer with the grant provided by the government.

"I started working on the house last year, completed the structure and got the first tranche of Rs 60,000. A few weeks back, I bought the construction materials and hoped to cast the roof but then the cyclone hit. Everything got washed away," he said. "I planted brinjal and sponge gourd this season. Everything is destroyed. I don't know what will we do for the next

one year," he said, trying hard to hold back his tears. Picking up a large dead 'catla' fish, which would have fetched anywhere between Rs 1,000-1,500 in the wholesale markets of Kolkata, Pronab Mondal said, "Our condition is also like this fish, it died as saline water entered the pond and we are as good as dead after back-to-back disasters. First, it was cyclone Amphan, then Covid and now, Yaas."

Mousuni Island, which has become a popular camping destination over the years, is the most-affected of the seven panchayat areas in Namkhana. Block Development Officer Shantanu Singha Thakur said. "The population of the block is around 2 lakh as per the 2011 Census and almost 50 per cent of the population is affected. More than the cyclone, the astronomical tide caused by the full Moon that day has impacted the area. It is now under control and we are working round the clock," he said.

"We shifted 62,000 people to rescue centres ahead of the cyclone following all Covid protocols. We are operating 162 community kitchens at present to provide cooked food twice a day, and also giving them

snacks," Thakur said.

"In the last one week, we barely had time to make out whether it's day or night outside. We have been working, eating and napping here," said an officer, pointing to the makeshift bed in his cabin. Overhearing the conversation, a man who worked at the BDO office said, "You should have asked him why is there such a situation every time? Why couldn't the embankments be made of concrete?"

"They will build mud embankments every year and those will be breached. What is the use? We will continue to live like this throughout our lives it seems," he said before rushing out to help an officer with some work. Outside the complex, a truck stood with a machine that was churning out drinking water pouches.

If operated from 7 am to 11 pm, it can produce 80-90,000 pouches of 200 ml each. It has come all the way from Burdwan, said the supervisor as he kept a log and prodded the workers to ensure zero wastage. Besides, 2,000-litre tankers are being sent to the villages on motor-operated vans as a drinking water crisis has engulfed the area.



India remains fully committed to the implementation of comprehensive strategic partnership with Australia. Both sides look forward to convening the Ministerial 2+2 Dialogue at the earliest opportunity
RAJNATH SINGH | UNION DEFENCE MINISTER

GIRL'S APPEAL TO PM OVER HOMEWORK GETS LG'S REPLY

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday took note of the video appeal by a six-year-old girl to PM Narendra Modi and ordered the education department to ensure that kids are not overburdened with homework



of the day quote

The state government first asked for permission to vaccinate 18 years and above age group at its own level. Then creates a drama of global tender. When they were unsuccessful, the Congress government started blaming the Centre
GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT | UNION JAL SHAKTI MINISTER

Two chief secretaries in J&K, an administration split between loyalists of the outgoing CS & others who want to get on with their work but can't figure out what's going on. So much for good governance & accountability
OMAR ABDULLAH | NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEADER

There is no shortage of oxygen and no scarcity of beds in hospitals following the efforts taken by the government to improve amenities in the past about three weeks. The truth is, beds are vacant in several hospitals
M K STALIN | CHIEF MINISTER, TN

SHORT TAKES

Class 1-8 students promoted in TN

Chennai: Tamil Nadu's Director of Elementary Education said Tuesday that students of Class 1 to 8 in all schools under the state board have been promoted for the academic year 2020-21. The office of the director of elementary education said that this is in accordance with the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009. The Director also said that officials of the School Education Department should inform all government, government-aided and private state board schools under their jurisdiction to promote all students of Class 1 to Class 8.

Fund declared for 31 blocks

Leh: As a step to empower Panchayati Raj institutions in Ladakh, LG Radha Krishna Mathur has announced block development fund of Rs 1 crore each for all 31 blocks in the current financial year. The plans to be undertaken under this fund will be approved by BDC chairpersons in plan formulations meeting of Block Development Councils, according to an order issued by the Rural Development Department.

Sanitary napkins as flood relief

Guwahati: The Assam government has added sanitary napkins to the list of relief materials to be distributed among women and adolescent girls affected by floods and other natural disasters, a notification said. The order was recently issued by Revenue and Disaster Management Department Commissioner and Secretary M S Manivannan. Drawing the attention of all district deputy commissioners and sub-divisional officers (civil), it said menstrual management during emergencies faced by women and adolescent girls living in flood-prone areas have until now remained unattended as a relief measure.

230 doctors on mass leave

Nagpur: A total of 230 resident doctors of a government medical college in Nagpur in Maharashtra Tuesday went on an indefinite mass leave demanding they be relieved from Covid-19 duties at a time when the number of cases is falling so that they can focus on post-graduation. The protest has not affected the emergency and ICU services at the Indira Gandhi Government Medical College and Hospital.

NORMAL MONSOON THIS YEAR

BELOW NORMAL SEASONAL RAINFALL IS MOST LIKELY OVER SOME AREAS OF NORTH, EAST, NORTHEAST PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AND WESTERN PARTS OF THE SOUTH PENINSULA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: The southwest monsoon is likely to be normal in north and south India, above-normal in central India and below-normal in east and northeast India, the Met department said Tuesday.

Releasing its second long range forecast for southwest monsoon 2021, India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General Mrunanjay Mohapatra said June is likely to witness normal monsoon which is also the sowing season.

He said the monsoon this year is likely to be normal in the country as a whole. "We are expecting a good monsoon which will help the agriculture sector," Mohapatra said in an online briefing.

"Quantitatively, the monsoon seasonal (June to September) rainfall over the country as a whole is likely to be 101 per cent of the Long



Period Average (LPA) with a model error of plus or minus four per cent," he said.

Rainfall in the range of 96-104 of the LPA is categorised as normal.

The LPA of the season rainfall over the country as a whole for the period 1961-2010 is 88 cm.

In its first long range forecast for southwest monsoon 2021, the IMD

had predicted rainfall to be 98 per cent of the LPA which also falls under the normal category. But it has not upgraded its forecast to 101 per cent of the LPA which is on the higher side of the normal range.

Mohapatra said there is a 40 per cent chance of a normal rainfall, 22 per cent above normal, 12 per cent excess and 18 per cent below normal.

"The southwest monsoon seasonal (June to September) rainfall over the four homogeneous rainfall is most likely to be normal over northwest India (92-108 per cent) and south peninsula (93-107 per cent). Seasonal rainfall is most likely to be below normal over northeast India (106 per cent)," the IMD said.

He said spatial distribution suggests normal or above normal seasonal rainfall is most likely over many areas of northwest and central India, and eastern parts of

southern peninsula.

Below normal seasonal rainfall is most likely over some areas of north, east, northeast parts of the country and western parts of the south peninsula, he said.

Mohapatra said the latest global model forecasts indicate the prevailing neutral ENSO conditions are likely to continue over the equatorial Pacific Ocean and possibility of development of negative Indian Ocean Dipole conditions over the Indian Ocean during the monsoon season. El Nino, La Nina, positive and negative IOD are believed to have an influence over the Indian monsoon.

El Nino and La Nina are associated with the heating and cooling of the equatorial Pacific Ocean respectively. Negative and positive IOD are also linked to the heating and cooling of the Indian Ocean waters respectively.

BLACK DAY

FORDA members begin protest at Delhi hosps

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: Upset over yoga guru Ramdev's remarks on allopathy, resident doctors at several Delhi hospitals launched a protest as part of a nationwide stir Tuesday and sought an unconditional public apology or action under the Epidemic Diseases Act.

Banded under the Federation of Resident Doctors Associations (FORDA), which had called for the protest May 29 and stressed that healthcare services would not be hampered, the doctors wore black armbands, ribbons and held up placards.

"Our protest began Tuesday morning against the remarks made by Ramdev, who is not qualified to even speak on the discipline of allopathy. It had affected the morale of doctors, who are fighting day in and day out in the (Covid-19) pandemic. We demand an unconditional public apology from him or action against him under the Epidemic Diseases Act," a senior FORDA official said.

The RDAs that have already joined the stir are from AIIMS, Safdarjung Hospital, Lady Hardinge Medical College and Hospital, Hindu Rao Hospital, Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital, B R Ambedkar Hospital and more will join later in the day, he said.

"Many doctors are wearing black armbands or black ribbons to symbolise the protest," the FORDA official said, adding, "Doctors in other cities are also joining the stir."

While some doctors held up placards bearing protest messages, others wearing PPE kits had "Black Day Protest" scribbled on the back of the medical gear.

In a statement issued Saturday, FORDA India had said even after raising objections to the statements made by Ramdev, "no action has been taken yet. We are hereby declaring Nationwide #BlackDayProtest on 1st June, 2021 at workplace, without hampering healthcare services". "We demand an unconditional open public apology from him or action against him under the relevant sections of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897," the statement had said.

In a statement, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) RDA said, such "slandering remarks" by Ramdev will "incite violence against the healthcare services personnel and would lead to a total failure of public health systems."

Ramdev was recently forced to withdraw a statement made in a 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". His remarks had irked the medical fraternity, upsetting both the IMA and the Delhi Medical Association (DMA).



HELPING HANDS



Needy people receive ration kits distributed by social workers, in Prayagraj, Tuesday

PTI PHOTO

Top court stays HC order on IGST on O₂ concentrators

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 1: The Supreme Court Tuesday stayed the operation of Delhi High Court order, which held that imposition of Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) on the import of oxygen concentrators as gift for personal use is unconstitutional.

A bench comprising Justices DY Chandrachud and MR Shah said: "We issue notice and till next date of hearing there shall be stay on operation of the May 21 order of the Delhi High Court."

Attorney General KK Venugopal, representing the Ministry of Finance, said the government removed the slab from 28 per cent and brought to 12 per cent, but still they're saying that Article 21 is violated.

The AG argued that several hundreds of such equipment will be imported using the High Court order



challenging the High Court order and stayed the High Court judgment till the next date of listing.

The High Court quashed the May 1 notification levying 12 per cent IGST on imported oxygen concentrators.

The court noted that importers of oxygen concentrators would have to furnish a letter of undertaking to the concerned authority, declaring that device is for personal use, and not for commercial use.

The order was passed on the plea of Covid-19 patient, whose nephew had sent an oxygen generator as gift from the US. The petitioner counsel had argued that the imposition of IGST by the central government on devices meant for personal use violated the Article 14 and also abridged the right to have oxygen, which was part of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

After a brief hearing in the matter, the top court issued notice on the plea filed by Ministry of Finance

RESHUFFLE IN MILITARY'S TOP HIERARCHY

THE MAJOR RESHUFFLE IN THE INDIAN MILITARY TOOK PLACE AFTER SEVERAL KEY POSTS FELL VACANT

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 1: The armed forces saw a series of changes in the top hierarchy in the last two days, including new joinings in the posts of Commander-in-Chief of Andaman and Nicobar Command, Eastern Army Commander, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff and Director General of Assam Rifles.

Accordingly, Vice Admiral Ravneet Singh, assumed charge as the Deputy Chief of Naval Staff Tuesday, taking over from Vice Admiral MS Pawar, who superannuated May 31.

Ravneet Singh was commissioned into the Indian Navy on July 1, 1983 and he specialised in aviation. The Flag Officer is a qual-

ified flying instructor with Master Green instrument rating. He has flown HT-2, Kiran HJT 16, TS 11 Iskra, Hunter, Jet Provost, Chetak, Gazelle, Hawk and Mig 29 KUB aircraft during his illustrious career; the Navy said.

He has commanded various front-line ships and Naval Air Squadrons, including INS Himgiri, INS Ranvijay, INS Ranvir, INAS 551B, INAS 300 as well as the premier Air Base INS Hansa. Additionally, he was also appointed Indian Defence Advisor to Kenya, Tanzania and Seychelles from 2005 to 2008.

Meanwhile, the Assam Rifles got a new chief as Lieutenant General Pradeep Chandran Nair took over as its Director General.

Pradeep Chandran Nair has rich experience of Assam Rifles and



the Northeast, having earlier been an Inspector General and a Company Commander in Assam

Rifles, besides having commanded Assam Rifles battalions as a Brigade Commander.

In other significant postings in the Indian Navy, Vice Admiral Dinesh Tripathi took over as Chief of Personnel, Vice Admiral Sandeep Naithani assumed charge as Chief of Material, and Vice Admiral Kiran Deshmukh was appointed Controller Warship Production and Acquisition.

Lt Gen Manoj Pande took over the critical Eastern Command of the Indian Army based in Kolkata, while Lt Gen Ajai Singh took charge as the Commander in Chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command.

The Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) is crucial for the military's planning as it's the only tri-service of the country and the model for synergy based on which theaterisation of the country's Army, Navy and Air Force capa-

bilities is being planned.

Lt Gen Ajai Singh, who heads the Andaman and Nicobar Command now, is an armored corps officer and a fifth generation army officer. He was commissioned in December 1983 into 81-Armored Regiment, a regiment raised by his late father.

He has also undertaken volunteer tenures for counter-insurgency operations in the Kashmir Valley and in Northeast, where he was posted at a Mountain Division on the border.

The General has also held sensitive posts at the army headquarters as the Additional DG at the Military Operations Directorate, and has been the Director General (DG) of Financial Planning and also the Director General of Military Training.

COAL MINE MISHAP

Miners still trapped, rain hampers rescue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Shillong, June 1: Heavy rainfall Tuesday hampered operations to rescue at least five miners trapped for two days deep inside an illegal rat-hole coal pit in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills district, officials said.

The district administration has identified five miners - four from Assam and one from Tripura who were trapped at the coal pit in the remote Umpleng area of Sutnga Elaka since Sunday when a dynamite blast had led to the flooding of the coal mine.

Superintendent of Police in neighbouring Assam's Silchar district had sent information to the authorities here about the possibility of six miners of his state being trapped in the mine.



"Heavy rainfall hampered rescue operations. Twenty-five personnel of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), and fire service personnel are at the site. We are trying to mobilise a crane to first ascertain the depth of the mine," district deputy commissioner E Kharmalki told PTI.

A high-powered pump has also been requisitioned but this would be put into operation once the divers can go inside the pit to find out if anyone is alive, he said. The district administration has put out a public notice seeking information about the accident May 30.

"Anyone having any knowledge about this matter is requested to deposit at the office of the deputy commissioner between 11 am and 3 pm on or before June 8," the order said.



Government should clarify about the situation of black fungus epidemic, what is being done for the shortage of Amphotericin B. Why is the government not giving proper treatment but indulging in formalities

RAHUL GANDHI | CONGRESS LEADER

2ND CONSECUTIVE SFH ACADEMIC YEAR BEGINS

The new academic year in Kerala began Tuesday, but like in the previous year, this time too, students are in the study from home (SFH) mode - online classes, as the second wave of Covid rages through the state



of the day quote

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council has constituted an eight-member panel of ministers, which does not include any member from Congress-ruled states, for exemption from tax on essential goods related to Corona

Maharashtra has initiated the vaccination for students travelling overseas for further studies, however the 12-15 week mandated gap by ICMR has led to apprehension about receiving the 2nd dose on time. My appeal to Health Secretary is to reduce the mandated gap for these students

Every State has its own high risk groups depending on the geographical, cultural and traditional heterogeneity. As such, a common framework defined by the Central Government with regard to prioritising of beneficiaries across the country is not desirable

'2020-21 darkest year of economy in four decades'

The research and survey reports of Aziz Premji University have concluded that 23 crore people have been pushed below the poverty line and into indebtedness

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 1: Former Finance Minister and senior Congress leader P Chidambaram Tuesday said that 2020-21 has been the darkest year of the economy in four decades and that the government should print more money if necessary as suggested by several economists, including Nobel Laureate Abhijit Banerjee. "We may note that Banerjee has called for printing more money and increasing the spending, though Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her recent interviews to various newspapers defended the government's misguided and disastrous policies."



He said, "As expected, the GDP at constant prices recorded a negative growth of (-) 7.3 per cent, the first time India has recorded negative annual growth since 1979-80. Earlier addressing a press conference, Chidambaram virtually

"2020-21 has been the darkest year of the economy in four decades. The performance in the four quarters of 2020-21 tells the story. The first two quarters witnessed a recession (-24.4 and -7.4 per cent). The performance in the third and fourth quarters did not herald a recovery," the senior Congress leader added. "They saw 'green shoots' when no one else did. They predicted a V-shaped recovery. It was a false story and we had expressed our strong reservations and warned there were no signs of a recovery. We had pointed out that what the economy needed was a strong dose of stimulus, including increased government expenditure, direct transfers of cash to the poor and liberal distribution of free rations.

Our pleas fell on deaf ears, and the result is a negative growth of (-) 7.3 per cent." What is most worrying is that the per capita GDP has fallen below ₹1 lakh, to ₹99,694. In percentage terms it is a decline of (-) 8.2 per cent over the previous year. It is lower than the level achieved in 2018-19 (and maybe even 2017-18). The deeply worrying conclusion is that most Indians are poorer than they were two years ago. The RBI's monthly review has flagged the 'demand shock' and its consequences. If 2021-22 should not go the same way as 2020-21 did, the government must wake up, admit its errors of commission and omission, reverse its policies and heed the advice of economists and the Opposition.

IUML moves SC against MHA order allowing citizenship to non-Muslims

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 1: The Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) has moved the Supreme Court seeking a stay on the May 28 order of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which empowered certain districts to grant citizenship to non-Muslim refugees from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The application filed by IUML said during the pendency Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 (CAA) the MHA has gone ahead and issued an order dated May 28, whereby the Centre, relying on Section 16 of the Citizenship Act 1955 (henceforth referred to as the Act), the power to grant citizenship under Sections 5(citizenship by registration) and 6(citizenship by naturalisation) have been delegated to collectors of certain districts to grant citizenship to persons. The plea claimed the Centre has illegally permitted the collectors of the chosen districts to grant citizenship to persons belonging to Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians.



THE PETITIONER CLAIMED THE ATTEMPT BEING MADE BY THE CENTRE IN WHITTLING DOWN THE APPLICABILITY OF THE TWO PROVISIONS THROUGH AN EXECUTIVE ORDER IS ILLEGAL

The application cited Section 5 (1)(a)-(g) of the Act lays down in unequivocal terms the persons who are eligible to apply for citizenship by registration, Section 6 of the Act permits any person (not being an illegal migrant) to apply for citizenship by naturalisation. The petitioner claimed the attempt being made by the Centre in whittling down the applicability of the two provisions through an executive order is illegal. "That the two provisions read together do not permit the classification of applicants on the ground

of religion and therefore the order goes beyond what is permitted by the provision itself. Furthermore, the order does not withstand the test of Article 14 inasmuch as it treats people within a particular class i.e. persons entitled to apply for citizenship by registration and naturalisation unequally by virtue of their religion", said the application. The petitioner claimed that Centre during CAA hearing in the top court had provided assurance that staying of the amendment Act was not necessary since the

rules of it, had not been framed. "However, the Respondent Union, in a roundabout way, and in an attempt to circumvent the assurance given to this court, have sought to implement their mala fide designs envisaged under the Amendment Act through the recently issued order dated May 28", added the application. The petitioner sought stay on any further proceedings pursuant to the May 28 order issued by the Union of India, Ministry of Home Affairs until such time the CAA matter is pending.

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 1: Noting that Covid-19 vaccination drive is ramping up, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General Balram Bhargava Tuesday said they hope to vaccinate the "whole country" by end of this year. Addressing a press conference here, Bhargava also announced that enough doses to vaccinate 1 crore people per day will be possible by mid-July or August this year. The ICMR Director General also appealed people to have patience, saying "we are equal to the US in terms of vaccinating people. However, our population is almost four times of the US, we should have patience". "Our vaccination drive is being ramped up and by December 2021, we hope to have the whole country vaccinated. India is one of the five countries which is producing vaccines," he said. The ICMR chief also said that "there is no shortage of vaccine in the country". "By mid-July or August, we will have enough doses to vaccinate 1 crore people per day. We are confident of vaccinating the



whole population by December." He also shared the government's plan to gradually lift the lockdown by ensuring less than five per cent cases in containment areas, and over 70 per cent inoculation to vulnerable section or people over 60 years. "We will not witness a massive surge. However, we have to ensure that vaccination is prioritised. The vaccination rate must be up to 70 per cent and Covid appropriate behaviour should be followed."

SHORT TAKES

Largest consignment of Sputnik V in Hyd

Hyderabad: GMR Hyderabad Air Cargo (GHAC) Tuesday handled largest shipment of Russian made Sputnik V vaccines. The vaccine consignment arrived from Russia on a specially chartered freighter RU-9450 which touched down Hyderabad Airport at 03.43 hours. While GHAC has already handled several import shipments of vaccines prior to this, Tuesday's shipment of 56.6 tonnes of vaccines is the single largest import shipment of Covid-19 vaccines handled in India till date.

Youths flock to pvt hosps for job

Chennai: While the suburban areas of Chennai like Chengalpattu, Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram are showing signs of a spike in Covid cases, the vaccination of youngsters in the age group of 18-44 in these areas has almost stopped due to shortage and people are rushing to private hospitals in Chennai to get a job. The private hospitals in Chennai are charging anything between ₹850 to ₹900 for a job and coupled with the cost of transport from the suburban areas to the city, it has burned a hole in the pocket of these youths.

Excise Commissioner removed after tragedy

Lucknow: The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has removed state Excise Commissioner R Guruprasad, following the Aligarh hooch tragedy that has claimed 36 lives so far. Orders to this effect were issued late Monday night. The state government has also suspended Karmveer Singh, police Circle Officer of Gabhana, for his laxity in checking sale of spurious liquor. Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Avanshi Awasthi, said that Circle Officer Gabhana has not only been suspended, but a departmental inquiry has also been initiated against him.

2 killed, 7 injured in building collapse

Varanasi: Two people were killed and seven injured when a dilapidated building collapsed in the Kashi Vishwanath complex early morning Tuesday. The building was in the vicinity of the Kashi Vishwanath Dham and was occupied by migrant labourers from Malda district of West Bengal. The injured have been admitted to the hospital and senior officials reached the site of the incident to supervise rescue operations.

ONE NATION ONE STANDARD RDSO 1st institution to be declared SDO

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 1: The Research Design and Standards Organisation (RDSO) Tuesday became the first Institution to be declared Standard Developing Organisation (SDO) under "One Nation One Standard" mission on Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS). Addressing a press conference here, Railway Board Chairman Suneet Sharma said that the RDSO of Indian Railways has become the first Institution to be declared SDO under one "One Nation One Standard" mission on BIS, which is Institution under Department of Consumer Affairs. He said that this is a unique initiative of two organisations under government is going to set a template for all the rest of leading research and standard development organisations in the coun-

try to follow and adapt World Class Standards. In a statement, the railway ministry said: "To attain 'One Nation One Standard' vision of the government, BIS has launched a scheme which provides for 'Recognition of SDO' and through this scheme, BIS aims at aggregating and integrating the existing capabilities and dedicated domain specific expertise available with various organisations in the country engaged in standards development in their specific area. It said that RDSO, which is the sole research and design wing of Railways, is one of India's leading Standard formulating Body undertaking standardisation work for railway sector. It said that the recognition is valid for three years and will require renewal after completion of the validity period.

CURBS RELAXED



A worker busy at a factory as the unlocking process of Covid-19 lockdown begins in Kanpur, Tuesday

India commits to BRICS again

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 1: In a move that is contradictory to the Quad grouping, India Tuesday committed itself once again to the shared values of the BRICS. While the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is an informal strategic dialogue between the United States, Japan, Australia and India to contain China's aggressive geopolitical policies, BRICS is a grouping of five major economies, including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. In a virtual meeting on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of BRICS Tuesday, the foreign affairs ministers of the five countries espoused their shared values of peace, freedom and rule of law, respect for human rights and democracy as well as a more fair, just, inclusive, equitable and representative multipolar international system, based on international law. An official joint statement released after the meeting said that the five members committed themselves again to strengthening and reforming the multilateral system through enhanced cooperation and close coordination in all relevant multilateral fora and international organisations, including the UN and G20. The ministers reiterated their commitment to multilateralism through upholding international law, including the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations as its indispensable cornerstone, and to the central role of the UN in an international system in which sovereign states cooperate to maintain peace and security, advance sustainable development and ensure the promotion and protection of democracy, among others. They further stressed the imperative of refraining from any coercive measures not based on international law and the UN Charter.

'Climate change behind 1 in 3 heat-related deaths globally'

The research, published in the journal Nature Climate Change, used data from 732 locations in 43 countries, showing for the first time the actual contribution of human-made climate change in increasing mortality risks due to heat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: Human-induced global warming is responsible for over a third of all deaths in which heat played a role in the last three decades, according to a study. The research, published Monday in the journal Nature Climate Change, used data from 732 locations in 43 countries, showing for the first time the actual contribution of human-made climate change in increasing mortality risks due to heat. The researchers at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), UK, and the University of Bern in Switzerland



found that 37 per cent of all heat-related deaths in the recent summer periods were attributable to the warming of the planet due to human-caused activities. This percentage of heat-related deaths attributed to human-induced climate change was highest in Central and South America - up to 76 per cent in Ecuador or

Colombia, for example - and South-East Asia, between 48 per cent and 61 per cent. The findings are further evidence of the need to adopt strong mitigation policies to reduce future warming and to implement interventions to protect populations from the adverse consequences of heat exposure, the researchers said. We expect the proportion of heat-related deaths to continue to grow if we don't do something about climate change or adapt, said first author of the study, Ana M Vicedo-Cabrera, from the University of Bern. So far, the average global temperature has only increased by

about 1 degree Celsius, which is a fraction of what we could face if emissions continue to grow unchecked, Cabrera said. The study examined past weather conditions simulated under scenarios with and without anthropogenic or human-caused emissions. This enabled the researchers to separate the warming and related health impact linked with human activities from natural trends. Heat-related mortality was defined as the number of deaths attributed to heat, occurring at exposures higher than the optimum temperature for human health, which varies across locations.



Pandemics are a threat to all of us. So we must work together to build a healthier, safer, fairer future -- for all of us
TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS | WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

NZ TO SIGN SPACE PACT WITH NASA
New Zealand announced Tuesday it was the latest country to sign a space agreement with NASA, just as New Zealand's nascent space industry begins to take off



of the day quote

Since the beginning of the year and despite the impact of the Covid-19, India as BRICS chair has worked vigorously focussing on the theme of BRICS BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus
WANG YI | CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER

Brazil is prepared to offer unique opportunities to investors from all over the world due to its potential, as well as its legal and economic security
JAIR BOLSONARO | BRAZIL PRESIDENT

There is no impasse in the Vienna talks
ALI RABIEI | IRANIAN GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN

SHORT TAKES

4 Pak soldiers killed in terror attacks

Islamabad: Terrorists attacked a Pakistani security post and later targeted a military vehicle carrying IED, killing at least four paramilitary soldiers and injuring eight others in the restive southwestern province of Balochistan, the Army said. In the first incident, terrorists targeted Frontier Corps (FC) troops in Quetta and Turbat respectively Monday, according to a statement issued by the media wing of the Pakistan Army - the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

UK reports zero daily Covid deaths

London: Britain Tuesday reported zero daily coronavirus-related deaths for the first time since the pandemic began last year even as scientists continued to urge caution over a complete easing of lockdown restrictions. There were 3,165 new Covid-19 cases recorded in the latest 24-hour period, according to official government data released after what was a longer Bank Holiday weekend in the UK, when the number of deaths and cases can be lower due to reporting lags.

Rain fury kills 10 in Pakistan

Islamabad: At least 10 people were killed and three others injured in different rain-related incidents in Pakistan's Punjab province, local media reported Tuesday. According to the reports, a roof collapsed in Tariq Abad area of Okara city during a thunderstorm, leaving eight people dead and three injured, Xinhua news agency reported.

Flood recedes in New Zealand

Wellington: Floodwaters in New Zealand receded Tuesday, leaving behind a big mess on many farms in the Canterbury region and damage to a major bridge. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told reporters the top priority was getting transport links working again, although it was unclear how long it would take to fix the bridge that connects the town of Ashburton to the main highway south.

Homicides spike in US city: Report

Oakland: Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic early last year, Oakland city in the US state of California has witnessed a sharp increase in the number of homicides, a media report said citing local authorities. Through May 23, the city had recorded 51 homicides, a 132 per cent increase compared with the same period last year and a 70 per cent increase compared with 2019, report said.

China's new three-child policy draws scepticism

Beijing, June 1: China's decision to allow families to have up to three children was met with scepticism Tuesday, with doubts expressed on social media whether it would make much difference, and calls for details on what promised "supportive measures" will include.
On Monday, Beijing announced that it was lifting the two-child limit in an effort to encourage more child-bearing, weeks after census data confirmed rapid aging and a decline in fertility that puts China on track to see its population, the world's largest, begin shrinking. Rules in force since 1980 that limited most couples to one birth were changed in 2015 to allow two. After a brief uptick the next year,

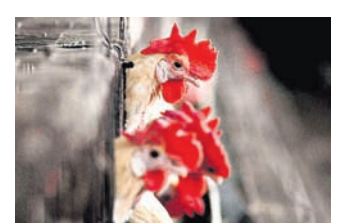


however, the number who had even one child fell, while the share of the population over age 65 is rising. China's population of 1.4 billion already was expected to peak later this decade and start to decline. Census data released May 11 suggest that is happening faster than

forecast, adding to pressure to prepare for slower economic growth and do more to help the elderly.
The rise in average age could disrupt official ambitions to turn China into a technology leader and prosperous consumer-driven economy.
"The aging of the Chinese population grows faster than we expected," said Yi Fuxian, a senior scientist in obstetrics and gynecology at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.
"This will result in a drop in the economic growth rate," Yi said. The 12 million births reported last year were down nearly one-fifth from 2019. About 40% were second children, down from 50% in 2017, according to Ning Jizhe, a statistics official who announced the figures May 11. The share of working-age

people under 60 in China's population of 1.4 billion fell to 63.3% last year from 70.1% a decade earlier, according to census data. The group aged 65 and older grew to 13.5% from 8.9%. China and other Asian economies such as Thailand face the challenge of whether they can grow rich before they grow old.
Chinese researchers and the labor ministry say the share of working-age people might fall to half the population by 2050. That increases the "dependency ratio," or number of retirees who rely on each worker to generate income for pension funds and pay taxes for health and other public services. A growing number of retirees, even with children, live alone because sons and daughters have left home for work.

China reports 1st human case of H10N3 bird flu



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, June 1: China has reported the first case of human infection with the H10N3 strain of bird flu from the country's eastern Jiangsu province, China's National Health Commission said Tuesday.
The patient, a 41-year-old man from Zhenjiang city, is currently in a stable condition and meets discharge standards, the state-run CGTN TV reported.

Health authorities played down the outbreak, saying the case was a sporadic virus transmission from poultry to humans, and the risk of causing a pandemic was extremely low. The patient was diagnosed as having the H10N3 avian influenza virus on May 28, National Health Commission said in a statement without elaborating on how the man had got infected with the virus. No other cases of human infection with H10N3 have previously been reported globally, it said. H10N3 is a low pathogenic or relatively less severe strain of the virus in poultry and the risk of it spreading on a large scale is very low.
There are many different strains of avian influenza in China and some sporadically infect people, generally those working with poultry.

H5N8 is a subtype of the Influenza A virus (also known as the bird flu virus). While H5N8 only presents a low risk to humans, it is highly lethal to wild birds and poultry. In April, a highly pathogenic H5N6 avian flu was found in wild birds in northeast China's Shenyang city.

WHO names nCoV variants found in India

United Nations/Geneva, Jun 1: The B.1.617.1 and B.1.617.2 variants of the Covid-19, first identified in India, have been named as 'Kappa' and 'Delta' respectively by the WHO as it named various variants of the coronavirus using Greek alphabets to simplify public discussions and also help remove stigma from the names.
The World Health Organisation's move Monday came nearly three weeks after India objected to the B.1.617 mutant of the novel coronavirus being termed an "Indian Variant" in media reports with the Union Health Ministry pointing out that the UN's top health organ has not used the word "Indian" for this strain in its document.

places where they are detected, which is stigmatizing & discriminatory," the WHO said in a tweet Monday.

The Geneva-based global health agency encouraged countries and others to adopt these names as they will ease public discussions about the global Covid-19 Variants of Concern and Interest. The B.1.1.7 strain first detected in the UK will be known as "Alpha", while the B.1.351 variant detected in South Africa is now 'Beta', P.1 variant first found in Brazil is "Gamma" and the P.2 variant is "Zeta". The strains found in the US are "Epsilon" and "Iota".
"No country should be stigmatised for detecting and reporting variants. Globally, we need robust surveillance for variants, incl epi, molecular and sequencing to be carried out and shared. We need to continue to do all we can to reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2 (sic)," Infectious Disease Epidemiologist and Covid-19 Technical Lead at the WHO Kerkhove said in a tweet.

"The labels don't replace existing scientific names, which convey (important) scientific info and will continue to be used in research. These labels will help with public discussion about VOC/VOI as the numbering system can be difficult to follow," she said.
In order to assist with public discussions of variants, the WHO convened a group of scientists from the WHO Virus Evolution Working Group, the WHO COVID-19 reference laboratory network, representatives from GISAI, Nextstrain, Pango and additional experts in virological, microbial nomenclature and communication from several countries and agencies to consider easy-to-pronounce and non-stigmatising labels for VOIs and VOCs.

The UN health agency named the B.1.617.1 variant of the Covid-19 as 'Kappa' while the B.1.617.2 variant was dubbed 'Delta'. Both the variants were first found in India. Taking to Twitter, Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's technical Covid-19 lead, Monday said: "Today, @WHO announces new, easy-to-say labels for #SARSCoV2 Variants of Concern (VOCs) & Interest (VOIs). They will not replace existing scientific names, but are aimed to help in public discussion of VOI/VOC".

The WHO, while announcing the new naming system "making them simple, easy to say and remember", said that it is "stigmatising and discriminatory" to call the variants by names of the nations they are first detected in.

"The labels do not replace existing scientific names, which convey important scientific information & will continue to be used in research. The naming system aims to prevent calling Covid-19 variants by the



FUN TIME



A child plays with a flamingo shaped balloon in bubbles during Children's Day at a mall in Beijing PTI PHOTO

UN Nuclear watchdog 'concerned'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Vienna, June 1: The UN nuclear watchdog voiced concern that Iran had not clarified queries over possible undeclared nuclear activity, adding that its enriched uranium stockpile was 16 times over the limit.

The two reports issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Monday are the first substantive reports since Iran suspended some inspections in February. Last week the IAEA said

IRAN'S UNDECLARED NUKE SITES

it had extended a temporary agreement with Iran until June 24 which has allowed many inspections to continue. The report said IAEA director general Rafael Grossi was "concerned that the technical discussions between the agency and Iran have not yielded the expected results," referring to exchanges on the sites where undeclared nuclear activity may have occurred.
The IAEA says that the results of its inspection work have estab-

lished "a clear indication that nuclear material and/or equipment contaminated by nuclear material has been present" at three undeclared locations, with most of the activity in question dating back to the early 2000s. The agency also said Iran has failed to answer questions regarding a fourth site where natural uranium may have been present between 2002 and 2003 in the form of a metal disc. Iran and world powers are engaged in talks

in Vienna to rescue the 2015 nuclear deal after former US president Donald Trump walked away from it in 2018 and reimposed crippling sanctions on Tehran.

Trump's successor Joe Biden has signalled his willingness to revive the plan. For this to happen, the US would need to return to the accord and lift the sanctions reinstated by Trump while Tehran would have to re-commit to full compliance with nuclear obligations it progressively withdrew from since 2019.

POPE REVISES CHURCH LAW

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vatican City, June 1: Pope Francis has changed church law to explicitly criminalize the sexual abuse of adults by priests who abuse their authority and to say that laypeople who hold church office can be sanctioned for similar sex crimes.

The new provisions, released Tuesday after 14 years of study, were contained in the revised criminal law section of the Vatican's Code of Canon Law, the in-house legal system that covers the 1.3 billion-strong Catholic Church.
The most significant changes are contained in two articles, 1395 and 1398, which aim to address major shortcomings in the church's



handling of sexual abuse. The law recognizes that adults, too, can be victimised by priests who abuse their authority, and said that laypeople in church offices can

be punished for abusing minors as well as adults.

The Vatican also criminalised the "grooming" of minors or vulnerable adults by priests to compel them to engage in pornography. It's the first time church law has officially recognized as criminal the method used by sexual predators to build relationships with their victims to then sexually exploit them.

The law also removes much of the discretion that had long allowed bishops and religious superiors to ignore or cover up abuse, making clear they can be held responsible for omissions and negligence in failing to properly investigate and sanction errant priests.

Nepal SC to form Bench on judges' seniority

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kathmandu, June 1: The Supreme Court of Nepal Tuesday agreed to form a Constitutional Bench on the basis of seniority of the judges to hear a bunch of petitions challenging the dissolution of the House of Representatives, after differences among justices led to the postponement of the crucial hearing.

In a meeting with the representatives of the Supreme Court Bar Association, Chief Justice Cholendra Shumsher Rana, who leads the five-member Constitutional Bench, said he would amend the regulation for the functioning of the apex court, The Himalayan Times newspaper reported.

The amendment of the regulation, which has been proposed to be carried out within a week as agreed upon by both sides, would be endorsed by the full court, it said.

"It will ensure the appointment of judges to the bench based on seniority," senior advocate Purna Man Shukya told the media.

Secretary at Supreme Court Bar Rishi Ram Ghimire said that this will pave the way for permanently resolving the dispute surrounding the formation of the bench to resolve constitutional issues.

According to Ghimire, the justices who have potential conflict of interest in the case being heard can skip the bench and a justice who is immediate next in seniority will be picked in the bench for the hearing.

'Iceland's glaciers lost 750 sq kms in last 20 yrs'

THE GLACIERS, WHICH COVER MORE THAN 10% OF THE COUNTRY'S LAND MASS, SHRANK IN 2019 TO 10,400 SQUARE KILOMETERS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Reykjavik, Iceland, June 1: Iceland's glaciers have lost around 750 square kilometres (290 square miles), or seven percent of their surface, since the turn of the millennium due to global warming, a study published Monday showed.
The glaciers, which cover more than 10 percent of the country's land mass, shrank in 2019 to 10,400 square kilometres, the study in the Icelandic scientific journal Jokull said.
Since 1890, the land covered by glaciers has decreased by almost 2,200 square kilometres, or 18 percent. But almost a third of this decline has oc-



curring since 2000, according to the recent calculations by glaciologists, geologists and geophysicists. Experts have previously warned that Iceland's glaciers are at risk of dis-

appearing entirely by 2200.
The ice's retreat over the past two decades is almost equivalent to the total surface area of Hofsjokull, Iceland's third-biggest ice cap at

810 square kilometres." Glacier-area variations in Iceland since around 1890 show a clear response to variations in climate," the authors of the study wrote.

"They have been rather synchronous over the country, although surges and subglacial volcanic activity influence the position of some glacier margins," they added. In 2014, glaciologists stripped the Okjokull glacier of its status as a glacier; a first for Iceland, after determining that it was made up of dead ice and was no longer moving as glaciers do. Nearly all of the world's 220,000 glaciers are losing mass at an ever increasing pace, contributing to more than a fifth of

global sea level rise this century, according to a study published in Nature in April. Analysing images taken by NASA's Terra satellite, they found that between 2000-2019, the world's glaciers lost an average of 267 billion tonnes of ice each year. The team also found that the rate of glacier melt had accelerated sharply during the same period. Between 2000 and 2004, glaciers lost 227 billion tonnes of ice per year. But between 2015-2019, they lost an average of 298 billion tonnes each year. The findings will be included in a forthcoming assessment report from the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change due in 2022.

business

of the day quote

We are evidently going through one of the toughest times in the history of the aviation industry



LESLIE THING | VISTARA CEO

We have always been and always will be believer in open markets and open competition. The concept of global open standard has made mobile technology affordable due to significant economies of scale.



BORJE EKHOLM | PRESIDENT AND CEO ERICSSON

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that flexibility can work for both employees and employers, and flexible working is the new currency for attracting and retaining top talent



ANURAG MALIK | PARTNER, PEOPLE ADVISORY SERVICES, EY INDIA

SHORT TAKES

Rolex Rings to launch IPO

New Delhi: Auto components maker Rolex Rings has received capital markets regulator Sebi's approval to float an initial public offer (IPO). Rolex Rings' IPO comprises fresh issue of shares worth ₹70 crore and an offer for sale of up to 65 lakh equity stocks by Rivendell PE LLC (formerly known as NSR-PE Mauritius LLC), according to draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). Currently, Rivendell holds 45.51 per cent stake in Rolex Rings.

Justices reject J&J appeal

Washington: The Supreme Court is leaving in place a USD 2 billion verdict in favour of women who claim they developed ovarian cancer from using Johnson & Johnson talc products. The justices did not comment Tuesday in rejecting Johnson & Johnson's appeal. The company argued that it was not treated fairly in facing one trial involving 22 cancer sufferers who came from 12 states and different backgrounds. A Missouri jury initially awarded the women USD 4.7 billion, but a state appeals court dropped two women from the suit and reduced the award to USD 2 billion. The jury found that the company's talc products contain asbestos and asbestos-laced talc can cause ovarian cancer. The company disputes both points.

Infosys to probe insider trading

New Delhi: India's second largest IT firm Infosys Tuesday said it will initiate an internal investigation into an insider trading matter after markets regulator Sebi barred two of its employees from the securities market in the case. Sebi has banned eight entities, including two employees of Infosys, for indulging in insider trading activities in the shares of the company.

Daimler India halts production

Mumbai: Daimler India Commercial Vehicles (DICV) has halted production for three days until June 3 at its Oragadam facility near Chennai on account of temporary shortage of spare parts due to the COVID-19 induced lockdown in the country, according to a statement. A small team, however, is working at the plant to continue essential operations, the company said in a statement to PTI. DICV is a subsidiary of German auto major Daimler AG. DICV has declared a non-production day for June 1 till June 3, due to temporary parts shortages caused by lockdown.



I believe that augmented and virtual reality are going to enable a deeper sense of presence and social connection than any existing platform, and they're going to be an important part of how we'll interact with computers in the future

MARK ZUCKERBERG | FACEBOOK CEO

ELECTRICITY USE DOWN 10.4%

India's average daily electricity use in May fell 10.4% from April, a Reuters analysis of government data showed, as states imposed lockdowns to rein in a devastating second wave of coronavirus infections.



Indian economy to grow 9.3 pc in FY22: Moody's

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: Indian economy would rebound in the current fiscal ending March 2022 and clock a growth of 9.3 per cent, but a severe second COVID wave has increased risks to India's credit profile and rated entities, Moody's Investors Service said Tuesday.

Moody's, which has a 'Baa3' rating on India with a negative outlook, said it expects a decline in economic activity in the June quarter due to reimposition of lockdown measures along with behavioural changes on fear of contagion.

"India's economy rebounded quickly from a steep contraction in 2020, but a severe second wave of the coronavirus has increased risks to the outlook with potential longer-term credit implications. Risks to India's credit profile, including a persistent slowdown in growth, weak government finances and rising financial sector risks, have been exacerbated by the shock," Moody's said.

In an FAQ on the coronavirus second wave and the sovereign's medium-term credit challenges, the US-based rating agency said the pandemic will leave new eco-



nomics scars and deepen pre-pandemic constraints and GDP growth would average around 6 per cent in the longer term.

"We expect a decline in economic activity in the April-June quarter, followed by a rebound, resulting in real, inflation-adjusted GDP growth of 9.3 per cent in the fiscal year ending March 2022 (fiscal 2021) and 7.9 per cent in fiscal 2022," it said, adding that the impact from potential subsequent waves remain a risk to its forecasts.

Moody's had in February forecast a 13.7 per cent growth in current fiscal. The Indian economy contracted by 7.3 per cent in fiscal 2020-21 as the country battled the

first wave of COVID, as against a 4 per cent growth in 2019-20.

It said the government's ability to limit the spread of the virus and materially increase the rate of vaccinations will have a direct impact on the trajectory of both health and economic outcomes.

Last month, another US-based rating agency S&P had said India's GDP growth rate could drop to 9.8 per cent under the 'moderate' scenario, where COVID infections peak in May. It could even fall to as low as 8.2 per cent in a 'severe' scenario under which cases peak in late June. S&P in March had forecast India to grow at 11 per cent in current fiscal.

Firms face iron ore shortage

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 1: Secondary steel sector industries including sponge iron manufacturers across Odisha expressed their concern over the unprecedented shortage of iron ore owing to rampant inter-state export by merchant miners.

The Orissa Sponge Iron Manufacturers' Association (OSIMA) has urged state government to intervene in the matter and resolve it immediately.

Chairman of the Association YK Dalmia said in his letter, "All these currently installed plants in the state need about 81.40 mtpa of high-grade iron ore after deducting supply from captive mines, which has become impossible to source because of rampant inter-state export of iron ore, making it very challenging for Odisha based end use plants to secure ore availability at reasonable prices. Evidently, even though Odisha is worse off, the other states benefit with higher revenues due to the finished products being manufactured in those states and booming upstream and downstream industries."

"A larger portion of iron ore is being diverted and exported outside the state, feeding plants situated in states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka,"



A larger portion of iron ore is being diverted and exported outside the state, feeding plants situated in states such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka

YK DALMIA | OSIMA CHAIRMAN

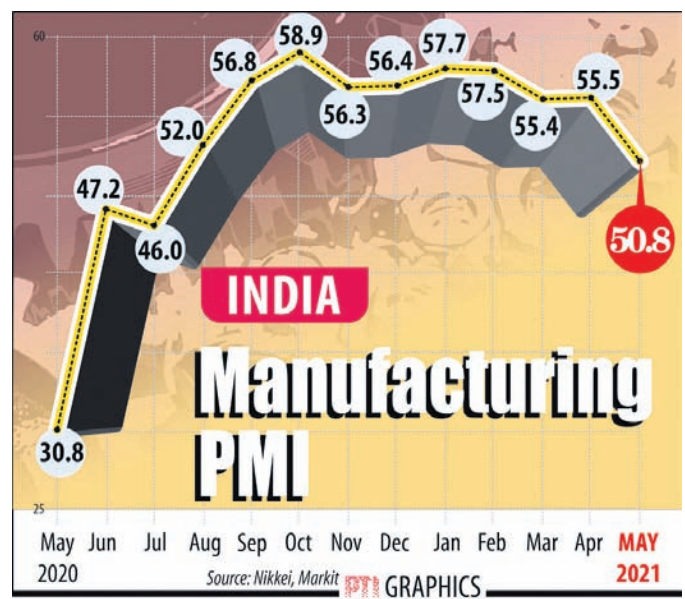
Dalmia claimed.

The association highlighted that 60-62% grade, average sale prices (ASP) of iron ore lumps and fines in Odisha have increased by 111% and 238%, respectively which is the highest increase in India during the period from March '20 to February '21 (last ASP declared upto February'21).

It further added that the present market prices of iron ore lumps and fines in May '21 are even higher and have reached an all-time high of ₹12,500 per tonne and ₹9,300 per tonne, respectively. As a result, state based end use plants that were set up under the firm commitment from the state government to have secured supply and access to local iron ore are scrambling to secure iron ore at reasonable prices.

Also, the association requested the state government to exercise the right of pre-emption under the Minerals (Other than Atomic and Hydrocarbons Energy Minerals) Concession Rules 2016, so that, 50 per cent of iron ore produced in the state can be reserved for end use plants operating in the state.

Covid slows India's May factory growth



REUTERS

Mumbai, June 1: India's factory activity growth slowed significantly in May as an escalation in coronavirus cases whacked new orders and output while scarcity of raw materials drove up input costs, a private sector survey showed Tuesday.

Although daily infection rates have started falling in the past few days there are concerns about under-reporting of cases due to a dearth of testing in rural areas. India has already reported around 28 million coronavirus cases and over 300,000 deaths, leading many states to impose restrictions affecting economic activity. The Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (INPMI=ECI), compiled by IHS Markit, fell to 50.8 in May from 55.5 in April, its lowest since July 2020. That was only just above the 50-mark separating growth from contraction. "Key gauges of current sales, production and input buying weakened noticeably in May and pointed to the slowest rates of increase in ten months. In fact, all indices were down from April," noted

Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit.

"That said, the detrimental impacts of the pandemic and associated restrictions seen in the manufacturing sector are considerably less severe than during the first lockdown when unprecedented contractions had been recorded."

The output and new orders sub-indices fell to their lowest levels since July last year.

Some of that meager expansion was driven by producers completing pending projects and backlogs of work declined for the first time in over a year. With activity weak, firms reduced headcount for the 14th consecutive month and IHS Markit said close to 5% of companies shed jobs. Despite softening to a four-month low, input price inflation remained sharp, with the strongest rise noted in the consumer goods segment. Only some of that burden was passed on to buyers.

The Reserve Bank of India, however, is expected to hold interest rates this fiscal year, supporting an economy struggling with a devastating second wave of the virus, a recent Reuters poll showed.

AUTO SALES SKID IN MAY AS SECOND WAVE BITES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 1: Major automobile manufacturers like Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai, Mahindra & Mahindra, Tata Motors and Toyota Kirloskar Tuesday reported decline in domestic passenger vehicle sales in May compared to the previous month as a spike in COVID-19 cases and lockdowns across various states hit production and dispatches.

The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI), which shut production from May 1 to May 16 so as to divert oxygen from industrial use for medical purposes, reported domestic dispatches to dealers at 35,293 units last month, down 75 per cent from 1,42,454 units in April.

The company said sales of its mini cars, comprising Alto and S-Presso, declined by 81 per cent to 4,760 units in May as against 25,041 units in April this year.

Sales of compact segment vehicles, including Swift, Celerio, Ignis, Baleno and Dzire, declined by 72 per cent to 20,343 units from 72,318 cars in April. Likewise, utility vehicle sales, including Vitar Brezza, S-Cross and Ertiga, declined 75 per cent to 6,355 units as against 25,484 in April.

Rival Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) posted domestic sales of 25,001 units last month as against 49,002 units in April, a drop of 49 per cent.

Homegrown auto major Tata Motors said its passenger vehicle sales in the domestic market stood at 15,181 units in May, down 40 per cent from 25,085 units in April this year.

Similarly, compatriot M&M's domestic passenger vehicle sales stood at 8,004 units last month, down 56 per cent from 18,285 units in April 2021.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) reported total sales of 707 units in May. It had reported wholesales of



The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India reported domestic dispatches to dealers at 35,293 units last month, down 75 per cent from 1,42,454 units in April

9,622 units in April and 1,639 units in May last year.

"Last month witnessed no production at our plants in Bidadi as well as minimal sales owing to the much needed restrictions and sporadic lockdowns in different parts of the country."

"Hence comparing last month's performance to that of May 2020, would be highly skewed, as May 2020, had witnessed a gradual restart of both operations and sales," TKM Senior Vice President Naveen Soni said in a statement.

More so for TKM, as even before the restrictions were announced in Karnataka, the company was well within its planned annual maintenance shutdown, thereby adding to the number of non-production days, he added.

Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL) said it despatched 2,032 units in domestic market in May 2021 amid

the prevailing second wave of COVID-19 and state-wide lockdowns.

"Multiple state-wide lockdowns throughout the country to control the spike in COVID-19 infections in May 2021 impacted retail business. During last month, we also undertook extended maintenance related shutdown of our factory leading to limited production but effectively breaking the chain amidst high number of cases in north India," HCIL Senior Vice-President and Director, Marketing & Sales, Rajesh Goel said.

Another carmaker MG Motor India reported sales of 1,016 units in May 2021, impacted by lockdown imposed to curb the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic along with production constraints due to diversion of oxygen for medical use.

The company said its retail business was severely impacted as almost all markets remained closed during the lockdown for most part of the month of May 2021.

"The vehicle production during the month was impacted due to shutdown to divert oxygen for medical use. Additionally, supply chain constraints impacted production as suppliers remained closed during the lockdown in May," it added.

Eli Lilly India gets nod for emergency use of Covid drugs

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 1: Eli Lilly and Company India Tuesday said it has received permission for emergency use of its antibody drugs combination used for treatment of mild to moderate COVID-19, in the country.

The company has received permission for restricted emergency use of its monoclonal antibody drugs, bamlanivimab 700 mg and etesevimab 1400 mg, used together for the treatment of patients with mild to moderate COVID-19, Eli Lilly said in a statement.



"Lilly is engaging in active dialogue with the Indian government and regulatory authorities to donate bamlanivimab and etesevimab in order to speed up access and provide treatment options for patients with COVID-19," it added.

Railways loads highest-ever freight in May



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 1: The Indian Railways Tuesday said that despite the Covid challenges, the national transporter made highest-ever loading in the month of May this year.

A Railway Ministry spokesperson said that in May 2021, railways loaded 114.8 MT, which is 9.7 per cent more than May 2019 (104.6 MT).

He said that the important items transported during May 2021 includes 54.52 million tonne of coal, 15.12 million tonne of iron ore, 5.61 million tonne of foodgrains, 3.68 million tonne of fertilisers, 3.18 million tonne of mineral oil, 5.36 million tonne of cement, and 4.2 million tonne of clinker.

The national transporter, in May 2021, earned ₹11,604.94 crore from freight loading. He also stated that the wagon turnaround time has seen an improvement of 26 per cent in this month. "In May 2021, wagon turnaround time was registered at 4.81 days as compared to 6.46 in May 2019," he said, citing the speed of freight trains being enhanced in the existing network.

BSE, ESC join hands to boost SME, startup listing

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 1: The BSE signed an MoU with the Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) Tuesday to create awareness about benefits of listing among ICT SMEs and startups of the country.

The ESC is an organisation sponsored by the government with a mandate to promote export of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector from the country and works as a bridge between the government and industry on policy and promotional matters.

It has a strong membership of over 2,300 ICT exporters covering



the entire gamut of electronics and IT industry in the areas like consumer electronics, components, instrumentation, telecommunications, computer hardware and pe-

ripherals, computer software, and IT-enabled Services.

Through this MoU, the ESC shall utilise its pan-India network of Electronics and IT Exporters and

evaluate the SMEs and start-ups amongst these for listing on BSE SME and Startup exchange. The ESC shall also assist in sensitising its investor network for investing in SMEs listed on BSE SME exchange.

Besides, as a joint effort, the BSE and the ESC shall collectively host joint road shows and events across India to create awareness and promote listing of SMEs & start-ups on BSE SME & Startup exchange.

BSE SME & Startup head Ajay Thakur said: "This MoU will help us in reaching out to ESC's pan India network of electronics and IT exporters and create greater awareness amongst the SMEs & start-ups about benefits of list-

ing on the BSE SME & Startup platform. Considering the economic impact of Covid-19 pandemic, it will further encourage more and more SMEs & start-ups to list and raise equity capital on the exchange to expand and grow their business."

ESC Chairman Sandeep Narula said: "SMEs, especially the IT SMEs, are now exposed to greater opportunities than ever for expansion and diversification across sectors. The Indian IT industry, despite initial hiccups, remained resilient during the current crisis and its response will go a long way in cementing stronger partnerships with global clients."

OSAKA PULLS OUT OF FRENCH OPEN

FOUR-TIME GRAND SLAM CHAMPION QUILTS ROLAND GARROS EVENT EARLY ON DUE TO 'ANXIETY' REVEALING HER TOUGH TIMES AS SHE HAS 'SUFFERED LONG BOUTS OF DEPRESSION SINCE 2018 US OPEN'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, June 1: Naomi Osaka withdrew from the French Open and wrote on Twitter that she would be taking a break from competition, a dramatic turn of events for a four-time Grand Slam champion who said she experiences "huge waves of anxiety" before speaking to the media and revealed she has "suffered long bouts of depression."

Osaka's agent, Stuart Duguid, confirmed in an email to The Associated Press that the world's No. 2-ranked tennis player was pulling out before her second-round match at the clay-court tournament in Paris.

The stunning move came a day after Osaka, a 23-year-old who was born in Japan and moved with her family to the US at age of 3, was fined USD 15,000 for skipping the post-match news conference after her first-round victory at the French Open.

She also was threatened by all four Grand Slam tournaments with possible additional punishment, including disqualification or suspension, if she continued with her intention — which Osaka revealed last week on Twitter — to not "do any press during Roland Garros."

She framed the matter as a mental health issue, saying that it can create self-doubt to have to answer questions after a loss.

"First and foremost we are sorry and sad for Naomi Osaka. The outcome of Naomi withdrawing from Roland Garros is unfortunate," French tennis federation president Gilles Moretton said Monday.

"We wish her the best and the quickest possible recovery. And we look forward to having Naomi in our tournament next year."

Moretton said the four major tournaments, and the professional tennis tours, "remain very com-

NAOMI'S STATEMENT

Hey everyone, this isn't a situation I ever imagined or intended when I posted a few days ago. I think now the best thing for the tournament, the other players and my well-being is that I withdraw so that everyone can get back to focusing on the tennis going on in Paris.

I never wanted to be a distraction and I accept that my timing was not ideal and my message could have been clearer. More importantly I would never trivialize mental health or use the term lightly.

The truth is that I have suffered long bouts of depression since the US Open in 2018 and I have had a really hard time coping with that. Anyone that knows me knows I'm introverted, and anyone that has seen me at the tournaments will notice that I'm often wearing headphones as that helps dull my social anxiety.

Though the tennis press has always been kind to me (and I wanna apologize especially to all the cool journalists who I may have hurt), I am not a

natural public speaker and get huge waves of anxiety before I speak to the world's media. I get really nervous and find it stressful to always try to engage and give you the best answers I can.

So here in Paris I was already feeling vulnerable and anxious so I thought it was better to exercise self-care and skip the press conferences. I announced it preemptively because I do feel like the rules are quite outdated in parts and I wanted to highlight that.

I wrote privately to the tournament apologizing and saying that I would be more than happy to speak with them after the tournament as the Slams are intense.

I'm gonna take some time away from the court now, but when the time is right I really want to work with the Tour to discuss ways we can make things better for the players, press and fans. Anyways hope you are all doing well and staying safe, love you guys I'll see you when I see you (heart emoji)

mitted to all athletes' well-being and to continually improving every aspect of players' experience in our tournament, including with the media, like we always have."

In Monday's post, Osaka spoke about dealing with depression since the 2018 US Open, which she won by beating Serena Williams in a final filled with controversy.

"I would never trivialize mental health or use the term lightly," Osaka wrote, explaining that speaking with the media makes her anxious.

"I think now the best thing for the tournament, the other players and my well-being is that I withdraw so that everyone can get back to focusing on the tennis going on in Paris," Osaka wrote. "I never wanted to be a distraction and I accept that my timing was not ideal and my message could have been clearer."

She continued: "Anyone that knows me knows I'm introverted,

and anyone that has seen me at the tournaments will notice that I'm often wearing headphones as that helps dull my social anxiety. I am not a natural public speaker and get huge waves of anxiety before I speak to the world's media."

Osaka has never been past the third round on the French Open's red clay. It takes seven victories to win a Grand Slam title, which she has done four times at hard-court tournaments: the US Open in 2018 and 2020; the Australian Open in 2019 and this February.

"Here in Paris I was already feeling vulnerable and anxious so I thought it was better to exercise self-care and skip the press conferences," she wrote.

Tennis players are required to attend news conferences if requested to do so. The maximum fine of USD 20,000 is not a big deal to Osaka, the world's highest-earn-

ing female athlete thanks to endorsement contracts totaling tens of millions of dollars.

"Mental health and awareness around it is one of the highest priorities to the WTA," the women's tennis tour said in a statement emailed by a spokeswoman.

"We have invested significant resources, staffing and educational tools in this area for the past 20-plus years and continue to develop our mental health support system for the betterment of the athletes and the organization. We remain here to support and assist Naomi in any way possible and we hope to see her back on the court soon."

Other players, notably 13-time French Open champion Rafa Nadal and No.1-ranked Ash Barty, have said they respect Osaka's right to take a stance but explained that they consider speaking to reporters part of the job.



'Dealing with media scrutiny' made Serena stronger

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, June 1: Serena Williams says she can identify with anxiety regarding news conference scrutiny, and has experienced it frequently after matches. "Many of them I've been into where I've been — very difficult to walk in those moments," she said. "But you know, it made me stronger."

Williams made her comments in a post-match news conference following her first-round victory Monday at the French Open. She spoke hours after four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka withdrew from the tournament, saying in a statement that she has dealt with long bouts of depression since win-

I feel like I wish I could give her a hug because I know what it's like. I've been in those positions

SERENA WILLIAMS ON OSAKA

ning a tumultuous final against Williams in the 2018 US Open.

Last week Osaka said she would not participate in the standard post-match news conferences during Roland Garros, citing her decision as a mental health matter because media questions can create self-doubt.

Few athletes have been under the media spotlight like Williams, 39, who is chasing a record-tying

24th Grand Slam singles title. When the glare becomes too intense, she said, it's important to reach out for support.

"You really have to step forward and make an effort, just as in anything, and say, 'I need help with A, B, C and D,' and talk to someone. I think that's so important to have a sounding board, whether it's someone at the WTA, or someone in your life, or maybe it's someone you talk to on a weekly basis."

"I've been in that position too, and I've definitely had opportunities to talk to people and just get things off my chest that I can't necessarily talk about to anyone in my family or anyone I know."

SUPPORT FOR OSAKA



SERENA WILLIAMS: I feel for Naomi. Not everyone is the same. I'm thick. Other people are thin. Everyone is different and everyone handles things differently. You just have to let her handle it the way she wants to and the best way she thinks she can. That's the only thing I can say: I think she is doing the best she can



BILLIE JEAN KING: It's incredibly brave that Naomi Osaka has revealed her truth about her struggle with depression. Right now, the important thing is that we give her the space and time she needs. We wish her well



MARTINA NAVRATILOVA: I am so sad about Naomi Osaka. I truly hope she will be ok. As athletes we are taught to take care of our body, and perhaps the mental &



STEPHEN CURRY: You shouldn't ever have to make a decision like this—but so damn impressive taking the high road when the powers that be don't protect their own. Major respect



LISA LESLIE: It's so sad that we are in a time that when a young person tells you they need help or a break, people respond with anger and a lack of support! I stand with you... Your mental health is just as important as your physical health

Rafa starts bid with win; Barty through



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, June 1: The 13-time Roland Garros champion Rafa Nadal had to toil hard in the final set to eventually come on top of 21-year-old Australian Alexei Popyrin in his first round match of the French Open, Tuesday.

After comfortably sealing the first two sets, the World No.3 lost some momentum as he trailed the Australian 3-5 in the third set. However, a vintage Spaniard took the set to tie-breaker finally sealing the match 6-3, 6-2, 7-6(7-3).

Seventh-seeded Andrey Rublev was knocked out in the first round, losing 3-6, 6-7(6-8), 6-4, 6-3, 4-6 to Jan-Lennard Struff.

Earlier, at the mercy of Bernarda Pera's deep groundstrokes and struggling with her moves, WTA top-ranked Ashleigh Barty gave the

impression that her return to Roland Garros would be short-lived.

Barty was often left stranded on the red clay by the big shots of her American rival. But two years after claiming the French Open title, the Australian fought hard enough to overcome the challenge and eventually prevailed 6-4, 3-6, 6-2.

Fifth-seeded Elina Svitolina trailed 2-5 in the second set but beat wild card Oceane Babel 6-2, 7-5. Australian Open runner-up Jennifer Brady breezed past Anastasija Sevastova 6-3, 6-3.

Earlier, play was briefly delayed on Court Simonne-Mathieu following a bomb scare near the stadium that turned out to be a false alarm, according to French police. A security perimeter was quickly set up as spectators and tournament employees were forced to enter the venue via another access.

Haaland, Ibra, Van Dijk miss out

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, June 1: One of the best players in the world will not be at the European Championship. Norway forward Erling Haaland is the biggest name missing from Euro 2020, because his country failed to qualify for the tournament.

A host of other players who ply their trade at Europe's biggest clubs will miss out for similar reasons, while several top players will also be absent from the rescheduled tournament after getting injured this season.

DIDN'T QUALIFY Haaland was 'really angry' when Norway lost to Serbia in the playoff semifinals, denying the prolific striker the chance to show off his skills on one of the biggest international stages.

The 20-year-old Haaland has been sensational over the past few seasons and his performances have seen him deemed the heir to Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo. Haaland has scored 59 goals in 57 appearances for Borussia Dortmund over the past two seasons.

Sergej Milinkovic-Savic netted two goals for Serbia in that semifinal match against Norway but the Lazio midfielder — one of the most exciting creative talents — will also miss the tournament after his team lost to Scotland on penalties in the playoff final.



One of the world's best goalkeepers also plays for a country which failed to qualify. Atletico Madrid keeper Jan Oblak captains Slovenia, whose absence also sees Atalanta forward Jospil Ilicic miss out.

INJURIES

Sweden's greatest player — and one of the world's top strikers — came out of international retirement in March, but 39-year-old Zlatan Ibrahimovic has been ruled out of the tournament after injuring his knee while playing for AC Milan.

Netherlands captain Virgil van Dijk also injured a knee and won't return in time for Euro 2020. Another Liverpool center back, Joe Gomez, will miss out for England for the same reason.

Defending champion Portugal will be without forward Pedro



Neto, while record-breaking teenager Ansu Fati is out for Spain. The Barcelona teenager recently had a third surgery on his troublesome knee.

CHOICE

Spain coach Luis Enrique omitted veteran captain Sergio Ramos from his squad for the tournament following a season plagued by injuries.

Enrique said the 35-year-old Real Madrid defender's lack of play recently made it difficult for him to be included in the Euro 2020 squad.

With 180 games for Spain, Ramos has the most national team appearances for a European nation and had been on track to break Egypt player Ahmed Hassan's world record of 184.

For Germany, coach Joachim Loew again left out Jerome Boateng but recalled Thomas



Muller and Mats Hummels. Loew had dropped all three players as part of his shakeup following the disappointing early exit from the 2018 World Cup, but the team has failed to shine in their absence.

Croatia midfielder Ivan Rakitic didn't even give his coach a choice, making the decision himself. The 33-year-old Rakitic retired from international football last year, shortly after he left Barcelona and signed for Sevilla.

Croatia will also be without Borna Sosa, who has dual nationality with Germany. The left winger thought he might be playing for the German national team at Euro 2020, but FIFA rules prevented him from switching nationalities.