

IMAGE MAKEOVER
Actor Raima Sen says the idea behind shooting some bold photos for Instagram was to reinvent her image
LEISURE P2

HEART PROBLEMS
Israel's health ministry has said Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine has caused heart ailments to many recipients
INTERNATIONAL P10

INDIA FACE QATAR
Blue Tigers take on Qatar in a second-leg game of the joint World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers in Doha, today
SPORTS P12

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IRREGULAR by MANJUL
When I grow up, I will vote for corona uncle

Bijayshree Routray breathes his last

Naveen against fight for vax

ODISHA CM WANTS DECENTRALISATION OF VACCINATION PROGRAMME TO PREVENT 3RD WAVE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik wrote Wednesday to all his counterparts in India and urged them to build a consensus over procurement of Covid-19 vaccines by the Centre for distribution among the states. In his own way, Patnaik informed the other states that all will be better off if they are in agreement regarding the procurement of vaccines and not fight against one another.

In the letter, Patnaik wrote that no state is safe unless all adopt vaccination as topmost priority and execute it on war-footing. "The only way to protect our people against future Covid-19 waves and provide them with a hope of survival is vaccination," Patnaik wrote in the letter that he shared on Twitter. He tagged all the chief ministers. "But this cannot be a battle among the states to compete against each other to procure vaccines," Patnaik added.

The Odisha chief minister noted that after the Centre announced phase-3 of the vaccine policy, allowing vaccination for everyone above the age of 18 years and opened procurement for the states and private sector, the demand has increased.

"Many states have floated global tenders for vaccine procurement. However, it is quite clear that the global vaccine manufacturers are looking forward to the Union government for clearances and assurances," he said. "They are unwilling to get into supply contracts with the state governments.

HIGHEST SPIKE IN DAILY DEATHS

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha reported Wednesday 40 more deaths due to Covid-19. It is the highest number of casualties in a single day so far. The new fatalities pushed the toll to 2,831, a Health department official said. The state also registered 8,399 new positive cases of Covid-19 taking the total caseload to 7,82,131. The districts of Angul, Khurda, Cuttack and Kalahandi reported five fatalities each. The active number of cases in Odisha now stands at 87,220. **P4**

The domestic vaccine manufacturers on the other hand have supply constraints and are not able to commit to supplies required," the chief minister pointed out.

Patnaik said that under these circumstances, the best option available is for the Centre to centrally procure vaccines and distribute them among the states so that the people are vaccinated at the earliest.

"At the same time, the execution of the vaccination programme has to be decentralised and states allowed the flexibility to determine their own mechanism to ensure universal vaccination," Patnaik mentioned.

"For example, many hilly and rural areas cannot access the internet and therefore online registration has to be flexible," Patnaik added. He also said vulnerable tribes can be given priority for immunization.



LIFELINE: A woman gets vaccinated at Unit-IV in the capital City

Patnaik said that he has already raised the matter with the Centre and also spoken to a few chief ministers. "I would respectfully suggest that all state governments should come to a consensus on this issue for early resolution of this problem. We should act fast before any third wave comes and creates

further havoc," he wrote in the letter. Patnaik's letter comes a day after Odisha Health Minister Naba Kishore Das had urged Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan to formulate a national-level policy for procurement of vaccine from global manufacturers and supply it to the states.

FLOODPLAINS PROJECTS TO CONTINUE DESPITE PROTESTS

Dredging can cause huge floods in Cuttack city, say experts

MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Despite opposition from environmentalists and experts over use of floodplains of Mahanadi river in Cuttack and other districts for human-related activities and construction, the Odisha government is determined to go ahead with its plans.

Sources said that the Mahanadi floodplains will be used to develop parking spaces, playgrounds of BOSE and SCB Medical College and other amenities for citizens of Cuttack. Dredging of the Mahanadi has already started with funding from a PSU. It has provided funds to the tune of ₹300 crore.

The alleged dumping of sand to low lying areas and utilising it for urban development have come under the scanner of environmentalists. Officials of Water Resources department however, clarified that dredging is being carried out as per the 2012 Orissa High Court order and recommendations of IIT (Madras).

However, threats regarding the Balyatra River Front Improvement (BARFI) project were allayed by the department. "There is no project named BARFI on pen and paper. It was an imaginary announcement made by the then Cuttack district collector.



RIVERS IN PERIL - II

River dredging and filling of low lying areas on the Mahanadi floodplains are in accordance with law," an official from the State Water Resource department, said Wednesday.

There is however, no clear cut demarcation of the Mahanadi floodplains and that is attracting the wrath of the environmentalists. They said that the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had earlier asked for a clear cut demarcation policy. However, it is yet to get one.

Sources said, that the National Institute of Technology (NIT), Rourkela in association with National Institute of Hydrology (NIH), Roorkee are now working together to formulate the policies for demarcation of the sensitive zones on Mahanadi river floodplains.

Environmentalists have pointed out that if floodplains are plundered through man-made projects in an indiscriminate manner, it will lead to a number of major problems. The threat of urban flooding will increase manifold. Also loss of trees will lead to climate changes and Cuttack city may suffer due to groundwater contamination.

The NGT earlier had lamented that there is a dearth of laws both at the central and state-level to regulate utilisation of floodplains. It pointed out that only a few Indian states have some local norms rules related to their river floodplains. However, there should be proper regulations both at the central and state levels to control the indiscriminate use of floodplains.

DOMINICA GOVT WANTS CHOKSI BACK IN INDIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: The Government of Dominica has told a court there to reject the habeas corpus petition filed on behalf of businessman Mehul Choksi who had claimed that he was abducted and forcefully brought to the Caribbean island nation, local media reported, Wednesday. Sources said that it wants Choksi deported to India.

The High Court of Dominica ordered that Choksi be produced in a magistrate's court to answer charges of his illegal entry into the country. The hearing on the habeas corpus petition was adjourned till Thursday, local media said.

Rejecting Choksi's submission the prosecution said the habeas corpus petition does not stand as he had illegally entered Dominica and was subsequently detained. In case of an adverse order, Choksi has the option of appealing in a higher court.

"The matter being heard is of habeas corpus petition...And not of his repatriation to India. His citizenship is not in question before the court," Choksi's lawyer Vijay Aggarwal said.

High Court of Dominica Judge Bernie Stephenson heard the matter through video-conferencing with the diamond trader attending the hearing from a hospital where he was admitted recently. Choksi's lawyers said he should be sent back to Antigua.

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Special package for PVTGs announced

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: With Covid-19 turning out to be a cause of concern, the Odisha government Wednesday announced a special package for the particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs). Sources in the ST & SC Development department informed that government will provide dry rations worth ₹2,500 to all Covid-19 affected PVTG households. Incentive of ₹1,400 (₹100 per day) will also be provided to all such tribal groups who are affected by Covid-19 for stay in quarantine centres.

Similarly, free masks and sanitisers will be distributed to all PVTGs. Door-to-door survey and screening will be carried out for detection of Covid-19 symptoms, the sources said.

The Community Resource Persons (CRPs) working in PVTG villages will be awarded an incentive of ₹1,000 per month for four months. Moreover, health kits and life insurance coverage has been provided for all the field functionaries under micro project agencies (MPAs). The government feels that this scheme will boost the confidence of those working in tribal areas.

Provision of funds has been created for supporting isolation centres at village level and Covid care centres at MPA level and dedicated ambulances for emergency transport.

There are 13 PVTG communities of Odisha residing in 14 districts. It should be stated here that many tribal groups living in Malkangiri and Sundargarh districts had initially stayed away for vaccination. Some of these groups were not even ready to follow Covid-19 guidelines leading to spread of the pandemic in rural areas.

JAJPUR, PURI DISTRICTS TO BENEFIT ₹254 crore Nabard aid for rural water projects

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) of ₹254 crore for setting up mega piped drinking water supply projects in Odisha. Nabard will set up two mega piped drinking water supply projects, one of which will be in Jajpur district and the other in Puri district. The project in Jajpur will cover the Badachana and Dharmasala blocks, while the one in Puri will facilitate water supply to the Brahmagiri and Krushnaprasad blocks.

The two projects are expected to provide clean and safe drinking water to 8.78 lakh rural population across 1.37 lakh household in 565 villages on completion. Nabard said in its official notification released Wednesday.

The mega piped drinking water supply projects are intended for providing 70 LPCD of clean, safe hygienic portable drinking water through Functional Household Tape Connection (FHTC). The supply to the households in the four blocks will last for eight hours every day.

The projects will contribute in achieving the goal of provision of drinking water to the rural population by 2022, added Nabard.

The Odisha government accords top priority to mega piped water supply projects in the state. Nabard said in the statement that it aims to boost development in rural belts of Odisha through RIDF.



The drinking water projects will benefit Badachana and Dharmasala blocks in Jajpur and Brahmagiri and Krushnaprasad blocks in Puri

MARKET WATCH

INDEX	VAIATION
SENSEX	51849.48 ↓ 85.40
NIFTY	15576.20 ↑ 1.30
DOLLAR	73.69 ↑ ₹0.22
EURO	89.32 ↓ ₹0.10
GOLD	₹49,200 ↑ ₹205
SILVER	₹72,289 ↑ ₹41

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	35.0°C	33.6°C
MIN	26.9°C	26.5°C
Humidity	100%	95%
Rainfall	19.6mm	19.8mm
Forecast	Light rain very likely	

More than 8K killed in train accidents

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: More than 8,700 people have been mowed down on railway tracks in 2020 even though passenger train services were severely curtailed due to the nationwide coronavirus lockdown. Railway officials said Wednesday that many of the victims were migrant workers who were returning home in the first phase of lockdown last year.

The Railway Board shared the data on such deaths for the period between January and December 2020 in its reply to a question by

Madhya Pradesh-based activist Chandra Shekhar Gaur under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

"Based on the information received from police departments of various states, 8,733 people died on railway tracks between January and December 2020. A total of 805 people also suffered injuries," the Railway Board said.

Officials separately said that many of those dead migrant workers who chose to walk home along the tracks because train routes are considered shorter than roads or highways. They said these workers also chose tracks as a way as they



Tendency of migrant workers to use railway tracks to reach their destinations led to most accidents during the lockdown phase

could evade police for violating lockdown norms. The victims also had the belief they would not get lost midway. "They also assumed that

MOST VICTIMS WERE MIGRANTS WHO THOUGHT TRACKS WERE SAFE MODE OF TRAVEL DURING LOCKDOWN

- A total of 56,271 people died due to accident on railway tracks between 2016 and 2019
- Most of the victims on the tracks in 2020 were migrant workers
- In 2019 more than 15,000 people died due to railway-related accidents

trains won't be plying because of the lockdown," an official pointed out. While the fatalities in 2020 are fewer compared to four years immediately before that, they are still significant as passenger services were restricted after the coron-

avirus lockdown was announced March 25. Only freight trains were in operation during the lockdown before the railways started 'Shramik Special' trains from May 1 to ferry migrant workers home.

Many fatalities on tracks last year could not be registered for some reason or the other. However, deaths of 16 migrant workers after being run over by a freight train in Maharashtra's Aurangabad last May rattled many. They were killed while resting on the tracks thinking no train would be coming due to the Covid-19 imposed lockdown.

leisure

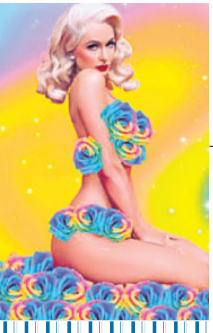


McCONAUGHEY ENGAGES IN TALK WITH SADHGURU

Hollywood star Matthew McConaughey took to Instagram to inform fans that he was engaged in a conversation with Sadhguru. The interview went live Wednesday, on YouTube. The Oscar-winning actor's discussion with the spiritual guru pertained to Karma, crafting one's destiny, the connection between yoga and religion, and exploring the unknown.

I SEND MY LOVE TO LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY: PARIS HILTON

Socialite-entrepreneur Paris Hilton is celebrating Pride Month and Wednesday sent out love for the LGBTQ+ community, thanking them for always being an inspiration. In an Instagram image Paris posted, she is covered with colourful roses. To complete her look, the socialite sported a short bob and bold red lips.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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ARIES
Today's events will be dominated by lots of friends. Life will seem to you to be a huge party, even if it is just tea that you are having together. However, Ganesh suggests that you set aside the evening for a special friend.

TAURUS
There is a fair chance that you will make heads turn at work today, forecasts Ganesh. It may not be an auspicious day for auction bids or tenders. Some of you may succeed in interviews and entrance tests this afternoon, says Ganesh.

GEMINI
You will desire to go on a short trip to escape the drudgery of your daily routine. You will successfully schedule and execute your plans for a fun-filled and relaxing journey. In the evening you will take up some pending work projects, says Ganesh.

CANCER
You must get ready yourself to handle a few usual situations in an unusual way, foretells Ganesh. You will probably learn a few lessons in public psychology during the afternoon. Before arriving at any crucial decision, weigh the pros and cons with an unbiased mind, says Ganesh.

LEO
Today is not a very productive day for traders and businessmen, says Ganesh. Some competitors may try to slander your reputation. You need to be a little more sly in your dealings and work your way around these obstacles cleverly.

VIRGO
You will be very open-minded today, very receptive to ideas from everyone. However, when it boils down to taking decisions, it will be the stubborn ones that will prevail. Today is also a time to resolve pending issues at work.

LIBRA
Ganesh says the first blush of love will make your mind blissful today. You will be able to gain closeness with your beloved today. The afternoon will see you try to take part in religious matters. Ganesh says that today will be a good day to listen to religious discourses and make your mind and heart follow God.

SCORPIO
Power packed day in store for you, according to Ganesh. Your flamboyant attitude at work would leave your team mates awestruck. Your energy level is at an all-time high, which would find its way to the dance floor in the evening. Groove to some foot-tapping music and dance as if there's no tomorrow.

SAGITTARIUS
Success will knock your doors today and you may be in the limelight. The experience will be full of emotions for you. Romantic developments on cards today, predicts Ganesh.

CAPRICORN
Generally, you are a calm and composed person. People around you are in for a great surprise as today you will burst out with anger. It is probably just not your day, so don't enter into any kind of war of words.

AQUARIUS
Your friends are family to you and those who are in influential position will help you climb up the ladder today. Professionally, it is a favourable day for you, foresees Ganesh. If you are a student, you can afford to bunk a couple of classes at school/college, your friends will take care of your studies.

PISCES
You will find happiness on the relationship front as you and your life partner find common ground to unite and chain your differences to provide you with marital bliss. Compromise and adjustments are mandatory in every relationship, yours will not be exception but at the end of the day what matters is what you have and not what you let go.

RAIMA OPENS UP ON STEAMY INSTA SHOOT

New Delhi: Raima Sen, who mostly stuck to a girl-next-door image in her over two-decade filmy career, made heads turn recently posting a few steamy photographs on social media. She says she wasn't thinking about image makeover or the risks that come with it.

"I am not worried about my image just because I shot some photos for Instagram. I think I still get the roles that I deserve and I have already carved a niche. I don't think I will be typecast," Raima said.

She added: "It's not that I will just

be getting bold roles after this. That was not the idea of doing this shoot. The shoot was just – there is a lockdown and nothing to do, so I thought that let me reinvent my image. Tomorrow, I will probably shoot in Indian wear. I don't think that makes a difference."

Her latest release is the web series, *The Last Hour*, which also stars Karma Takapa, Shahana Goswami and Sanjay Kapoor among others.

IANS



Sunny takes aim for the 'heart'

Mumbai: When Sunny Leone takes aim, she shoots straight through the 'heart'.

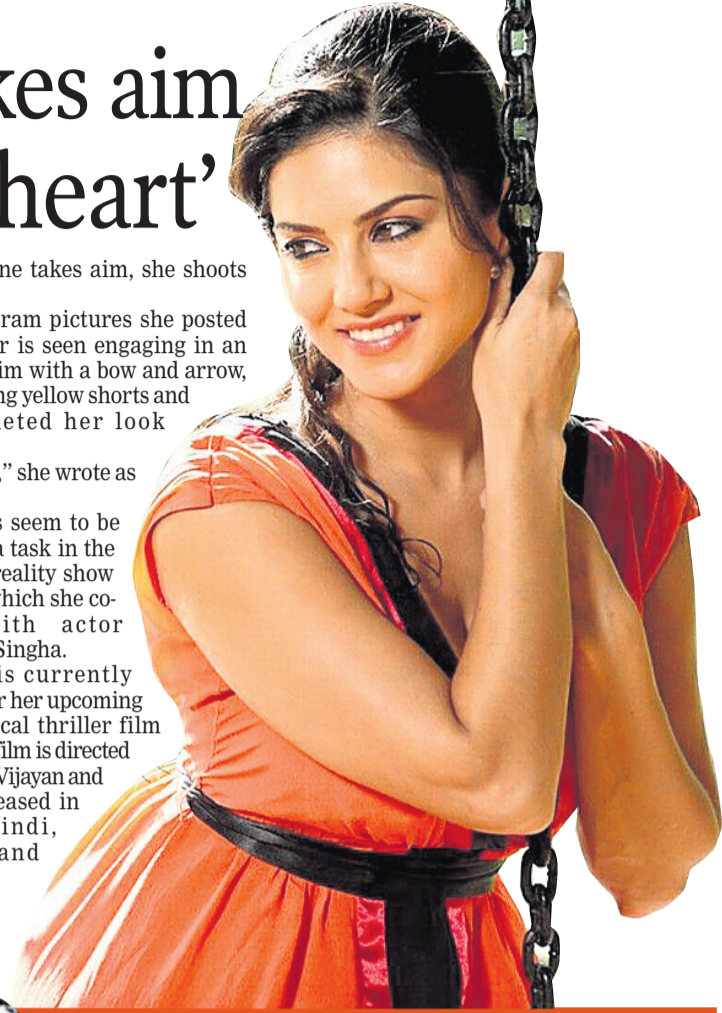
In a string of new Instagram pictures she posted Wednesday, the glamour star is seen engaging in an archery session. She takes aim with a bow and arrow, dressed casually in a stunning yellow shorts and a crop top. She completed her look with sunglasses.

"Thru your heart," she wrote as the caption.

The pictures seem to be taken during a task in the youth-based reality show *Splitsvilla*, which she co-judges with actor Rannvijay Singha.

Sunny is currently shooting for her upcoming psychological thriller film *Shero*. The film is directed by Sreejith Vijayan and will be released in Tamil, Hindi, Telugu and Malayalam.

IANS



Vidya plays a woman of many dimensions

Mumbai: The trailer of the Vidya Balan-starrer *Shermi* was unveiled on Wednesday. The actress says the film, which is slated to release June 18, deals with a sensitive topic that touches upon respect, mutual understanding, and co-existence, not just between man-animal, but between humans as well.

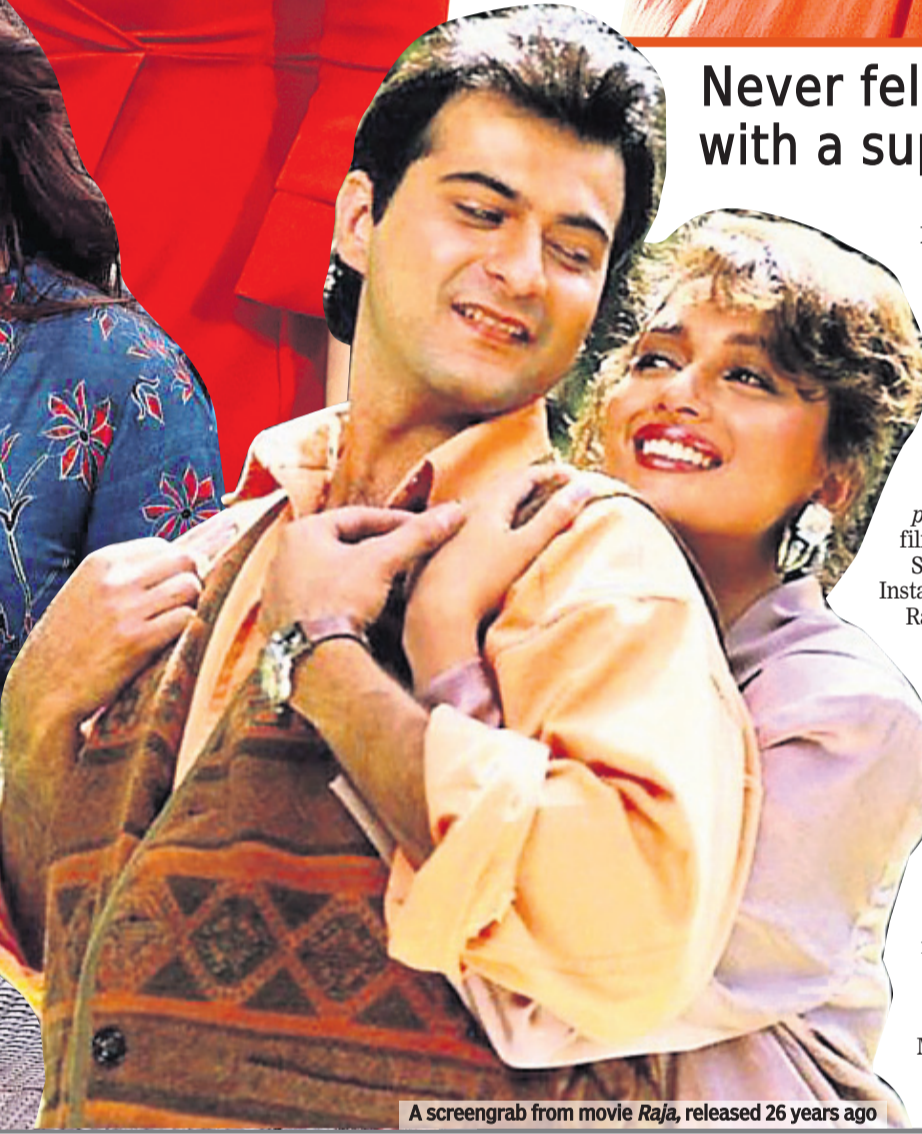
"Ever since I first heard the story of *Shermi*, I found the world fascinating and so far removed from my own. Also the character I play, Vidya, is a woman of few words but many dimensions," Vidya said.

The film will see Vidya as an upright forest officer who battles social barrier set by the patriarchal society and lackadaisical attitudes within her department.

"The film deals with a sensitive topic that touches upon respect, mutual understanding, and co-existence, not just between man-animal, but between humans as well," the actress said.

Shermi is directed by Amit Masurkar, who earlier helmed *Newton* and *Sulemani Keeda*.

IANS



Never felt I was working with a superstar: Sanjay

Mumbai: The Madhuri Dixit-Sanjay Kapoor starrer *Raja* released 26 years ago on this day. Recalling memories of his first day at shoot with Madhuri, Sanjay said he never felt like he was working with a superstar.

The songs of the film became popular on release, and Sanjay recalled the shoot of the title song, *Kisi din banungi main raja ki rani, zara phir se kehna* in Ooty. The song was filmed on Madhuri and him.

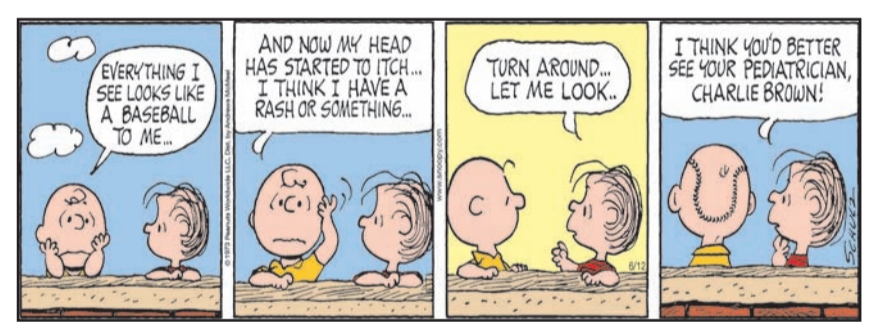
Sharing a video of the song on Instagram, the actor wrote: "26 years of *Raja* #timeflies, We started shooting for *Raja* with this song in Ooty. *Zara phir se kehna* was the first shot I gave, I cannot thank Madhuri enough for making me so comfortable on set never felt I was working with a super super super STAR, Wat a super team we had @madhuridixitene #pareshrawal #induirani #ashokthakeria #babazmi #nadeemsharvan #sameer #unforgettablememories."

The Indra Kumar directorial also featured Paresh Rawal, Mukesh Khanna, Dalip Tahil and Rita Bhaduri in key roles.

Sanjay is all set to reunite with Madhuri in the upcoming thriller series *Finding Anamika*.

IANS

PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

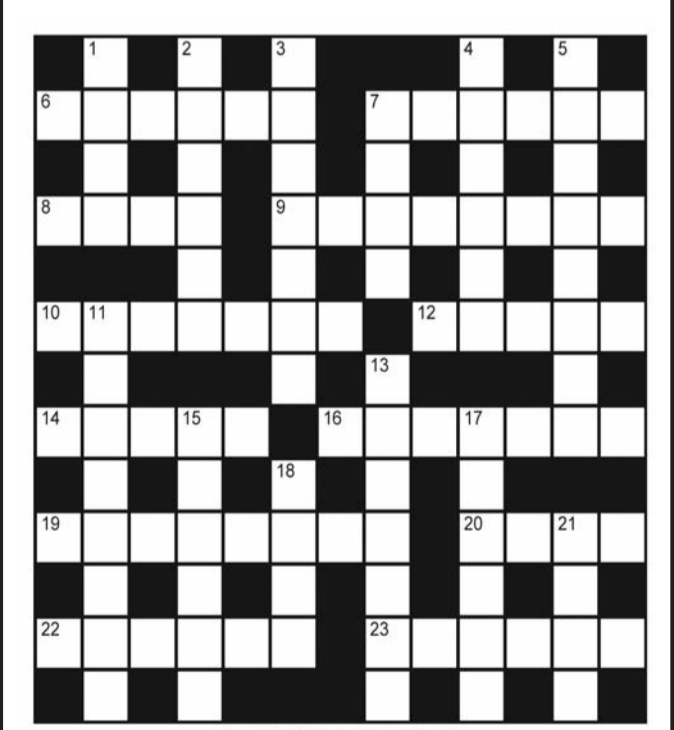


BREVITY



FUN post

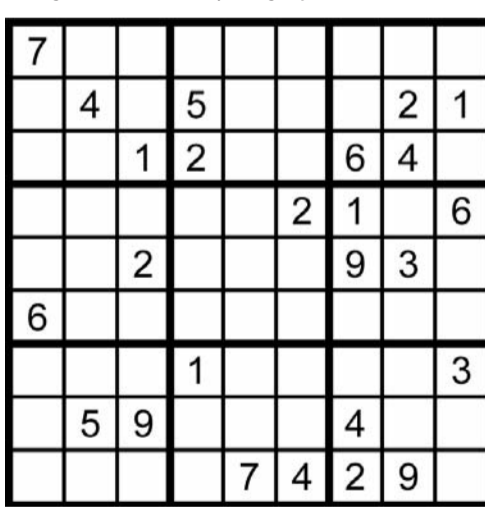
CROSSWORD



- Across**
- 6 Fox or jackal
 - 7 Medic
 - 8 Prepare for takeoff
 - 9 Snarl
 - 10 Accelerate (5,2)
 - 12 "Vamoose!"
 - 14 The press
 - 16 Nudged
 - 19 Small fatty Atlantic fish
 - 20 Bistro
 - 22 Thin crisp biscuits
 - 23 Songbird
- Down**
- 1 Big party
 - 2 Conquer's pal
 - 3 Proceeds
 - 4 Reversed by many
 - 5 Lover, usually (4,4)
 - 7 Tariff
 - 11 Kind of care
 - 13 Cavorts
 - 15 Printer type (3-3)
 - 17 Pour out
 - 18 Greek war god
 - 21 Terrarium plant

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

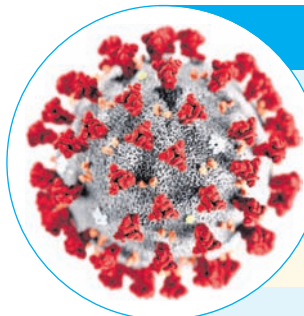


CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW



CAR FEST PREP

Chariot ropes for this year's Rath Yatra reach Puri, Wednesday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	17,21,46,280	15,47,59,325	36,95,216
India	2,83,07,832	2,61,79,085	3,35,102
Odisha	7,82,131	7,02,621	2,831

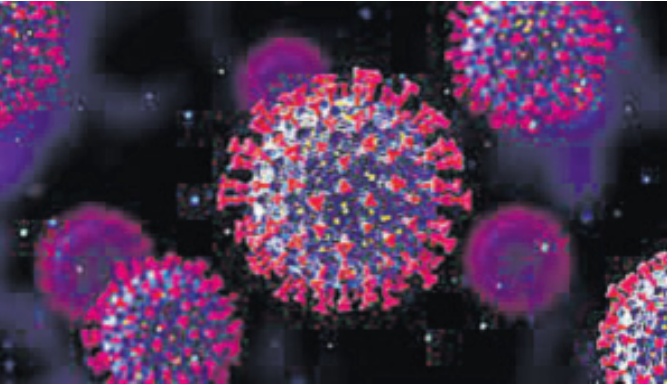
SUMMER FESTIVAL



Chandan Yatra of Lord Lingaraj being conducted at Bindusagar lake in Bhubaneswar, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

State rolls up sleeves to face likely 3rd wave



The state might have crossed the peak in May and the infection rate will continue to dip in the coming days, said the public health director

Tuesday, had asked senior officers to be prepared for the possible third wave. He had directed the officials to strengthen child care facilities in the state.

Speaking on black fungus infections in the state, he said "We have reports of 41 patients infected with black fungus so far while many other states have reported thousands of such cases. Necessary steps are being taken."

Stating that the state might have crossed the peak of the second wave of Covid-19 in May, the director said the infection rate is now showing downward trend and will continue to dip in the coming days.

States like Maharashtra, Gujarat and Haryana have crossed the peak earlier as the outbreak of the second wave started early there. In case of Odisha, the infection came late, so dip in daily cases would be delayed accordingly, he added. Mishra attributed the daily deaths to more critically-ill patients being treated at various hospitals.

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Even as the second wave of Covid-19 is ostensibly dying down, the state government has started rolling up its sleeves to tackle a possible third wave of the highly infectious virus that is likely to affect the kids more.

Speaking to reporters here, state Public Health director Niranjan Mishra Wednesday said the peak of the Covid-19 second wave is already over and the government is taking all necessary steps for the possible third wave.

"Preparation to tackle the pandemic is a continuous process. A special task force has been formed for the purpose. As per its recommendations, preparation for the third wave is being expedited," Mishra said, adding, the state gov-

We have reports of 41 patients infected with black fungus so far while many other states have reported thousands of such cases. Necessary steps are being taken

NIRANJAN MISHRA | PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR

ernment has already issued detailed guidelines to the districts to remain prepared for possible third wave.

Separate wards for Covid and other patients in all district headquarters hospitals will be set up. Door-to-door survey has kicked off to trace and track more infections especially in rural areas, he said.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik,

US-based organisation donates ₹50L to CMRF

Bhubaneswar: A US-based organisation, which was established by an Odia woman, donated nearly Rs 50 lakh to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund (CMRF) to support the state in its fight against the coronavirus pandemic, an official release said. "Our Biswas", which is managed by Joyasree Mahanti, has been working for women empowerment in different parts of Odisha since 2008, the release said. It has donated USD 68,500 -- Rs 49.89 lakh approximately -- to the relief fund, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Sanjeev Chopra said in a statement. "Because of the timely decisions and appropriate action, Covid situation in Odisha is within control," Mahanti said.

State pegs Yaas losses at ₹610Cr

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: The state government has estimated that cyclone Yaas which hit north Odisha May 26 has caused losses to the tune of Rs 610 crore.

Special Relief Commissioner (SRC), PK Jena informed this during a review meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik here Wednesday through videoconferencing mode.

Jena said that around 60 lakh people from 11,000 villages were affected by the cyclone. He said public infrastructure worth Rs 520 crore and private property worth Rs 90 crore was damaged in the cyclone. The SRC further said that Rs 66 crore is needed for providing relief to the cyclone-affected people.

Highlighting the damage caused to the agriculture sector, Jena said that ingress of tidal waves into farmlands of coastal districts has created problems for the upcoming kharif crop.

Scientists from Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) and the Central Rice Research Institute (CRRDI) have been asked to study the effects. The scientists are currently examining the situation on the ground and reports will be received soon,



Around 60 lakh people from 11,000 villages were affected by cyclone Yaas

he said.

During the meeting, Naveen asked the officials for documentation of the pre-cyclone preparedness, evacuation, impact of landfall, and post-cyclone restoration. The documentary will prove to be a handy guide for the future in a cyclone-prone state like Odisha, he stated.

Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra said a total of 150 villages were marooned in the cyclone. The crop was also damaged due to entry of saline water from the sea. In the aftermath of the cyclone, 1,000 generator sets and tankers were deployed to provide electricity and drinking water to the people.

DAILY TESTING IN CAPITAL DECLINES AS CASES SURGE

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: With the daily Covid-19 cases in the state capital hovering around 1,000, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) seems to have reduced the daily testing since last week.

As per the information provided by the civic authority, the Capital city recorded 7,943 cases between May 24 and May 31. Meanwhile, during the same period, about 30,275 tests were conducted for the suspected patients. The duration also saw the city witnessing cyclone Yaas when the BMC did not conduct any tests.

The figures also revealed that while 3,723 tests were conducted May 24, the number dropped to 2,944 tests the following day. However, the BMC abandoned testing May 26, when the summer storm hit the state, citing safety concerns. Although a whopping 4,668 samples were tested May 27,



the number gradually started to fall with only 3,055 tests done June 1.

"We have been constantly making efforts to increase the testing. As per directions, we have achieved close to 3,000 tests on a daily basis which will be increased to 5,000 soon. The marginal drop could be due to Sundays when only mobile testing vans collect samples. Moreover, cyclone Yaas had also affected the daily testing," a BMC official said.

Meanwhile, sources at the BMC also said that the data for daily Covid cases is largely based on the tests conducted during the previous day. This was substantiated from the fact that May 27, the day after the cyclone, reported only 471 new

Date	Testing	Cases
May 24	3,723	905
May 25	2,944	996
May 26	0	919
May 27	4,668	471
May 28	4,625	995
May 29	4,089	871
May 30	2,681	1,001
May 31	4,490	811
June 1	3,055	974

cases when the average daily new cases remained around 900.

Moreover, sources said that with surge in Covid cases, labs in the city are overburdened with samples. People have complained of long waiting period for getting results, largely from public testing facilities.

Experts opined that this may affect the daily tally and hint at a false picture of drop in the caseload.

Cong: Govt distributed substandard rice



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: The Congress party Wednesday accused the state government of distributing substandard rice among the people of Odisha under the Public Distribution System (PDS).

Cuttack district Congress committee president Manas Choudhury cited the recent visit of a team from Union Food Supplies Ministry which had allegedly talked about substandard rice being supplied from the warehouses in Cuttack and Khurda districts for the PDS scheme.

"The rice being distributed by the Odisha government under PDS scheme is not good for consumption, quality wise. The Food Supplies Ministry, in its latest report, claimed that nine samples from Odisha were not of good quality. The samples were collected from Khurda, Cuttack and other districts," Choudhury said.

He also added, "If this is the situation in Khurda and Cuttack districts, one can imagine the situation in other parts of the state. The central team has reportedly sought adequate security for it while conducting the scrutiny process. The episode hints at possible threat from the mill mafia."

The Congress leader said that the state government has been boasting of its rice distribution system while the ruling party is using this to garner votes in elections. "I would like to urge the state government to take the issue seriously and ensure that good quality cereals are distributed among the people under PDS," he said.

Free meals for needy Covid patients

Bhubaneswar: Film actor and social activist Nandita Das virtually launched distribution of free ration to people with special needs and free meals to the needy Covid patients at Baripada and Nuapada. The initiative was organised by 'So Am I Foundation Trust' in association with AAONXT & Ms Ghanashyam Misra & Son. Chairman of the foundation Padmasree Debi Prasanna Pattanayak and Maharani of Mayurbhanj HH Rashmi Rajyalakshmi Bhanjdeo were also present in inauguration virtually.

Odisha 2nd largest contributor of LMO: Rlys

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, June 2: The Union Ministry of Railways Wednesday said that Odisha is the second largest contributor of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) delivered through Oxygen Expresses of Indian railways to various states across the country.

According to the Railway ministry, Oxygen Expresses loaded 7,102 MT of LMO from Odisha, 6,384 MT from Gujarat, 1,360 from West Bengal, 488 MT from Maharashtra, 218 MT from

Chhattisgarh and 164 MT from Andhra Pradesh for delivery across the country. Jharkhand tops the chart with 8,025 MT of LMO loaded from the state.

"Criss-crossing the country, Indian Railways is picking up oxygen from places like Hapa, Baroda and Mundra in the West and Rourkela, Durgapur, Tatanagar and Angul in the East and then delivering it to states of Uttarakhanda, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Haryana,

Telangana, Punjab, Kerala, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Assam in complex operational route planning scenarios," the ministry said.

According to the ministry, southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Telangana received more than 2,000 MT of LMO each from Oxygen Expresses. Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Indian Railway Board Suneet Sharma Wednesday told **Orissa POST** that the Railways has implemented Covid protocols during train operations.

NEW FACILITY



Srimandir chief administrator Krishan Kumar along with other officials (inset) inspects an under-construction shelter house for devotees in Puri, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

Decision to cancel CBSE Class XII exams hailed

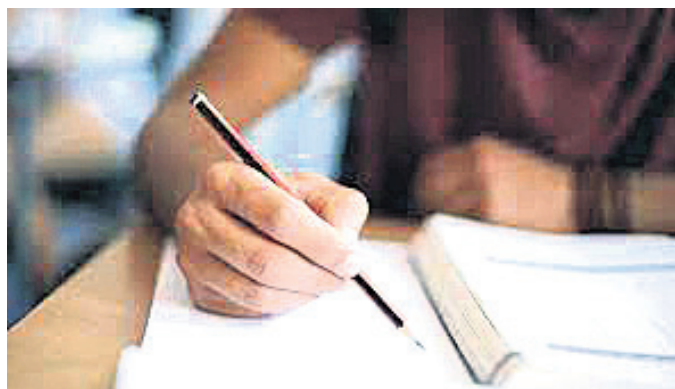
POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Many students and teachers in the Capital city here have welcomed the Central government's decision to cancel the CBSE Class XII exams in the wake of the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

Talking to **Orissa POST**, many students claimed that the decision to cancel the exams has brought them a sigh of relief.

Anurag Patnaik of SAI International School said Class XII exam is an important milestone in a student's career. The exam plays a significant role for admissions into higher education institutions. "We were preparing for the examination for last five months. The uncertainty over the exams had caused immense stress and anxiety among the students. Thus the Central government's decision has ended all uncertainty and speculation over the exams. We welcome the decision," Patnaik said.

SS Mardikar, another student of SAI International School, said it's good that the government has taken a call on the CBSE board exams. "Though Class XII exam



has a lot of importance in a student's life, it is not wise to conduct the exam amid the pandemic. We welcome the decision and wait for the details regarding the evaluation method," Mardikar added.

Subhranshu Dash of Delhi Public School, Kalinga, said, "I am glad that the Centre decided to cancel the examination keeping the pandemic situation in mind. We had worked hard for the exam and all our efforts would have wasted if there were only objective papers. I also welcome the decision allowing students to take the exams as and when the situation becomes conducive. It is a

tough time for students who were planning to opt for higher studies."

Many teachers too opined that the decision has brought the much needed relief to the students and parents amid the pandemic. "Following requests from students all over the country, the Prime Minister has cancelled the CBSE Class XII exams. It is a much-awaited decision. With the alarming rise in Covid cases across the country, cancellation of the exams has brought relief to both students and their guardians. Conducting a crucial examination amidst the pandemic could have posed sev-

eral challenges for the schools," said Mona Lisa Bal, Chairperson, KiiT International School.

SAI International School principal Nilakanth Panigrahi said, "For the last several days, there was big question mark on Class XII examination. The decision taken by the Centre is the right one in the prevailing scenario."

Principal of ODM Public School Satyabrata Minaketan said, "No examination can be more important than life and safety of our students and teachers. Moreover, the exam could raise the infection rate. This result can be rationally and reasonably tabulated on the basis of the half-yearly examination and Pre-Board examination and if necessary the performances of students in Class XI and Class X examination can also be taken into account."

Record 40 Covid deaths in 24 hours

STATE'S POSITIVITY RATE STANDS AT 6.57%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Odisha Wednesday registered 40 more deaths due to Covid-19, the highest so far in a single day, pushing the toll to 2,831, a Health department official said.

At least 8,399 new coronavirus-positive cases raised the caseload in the coastal state to 7,82,131, said the official.

Taking to Twitter, the Health and Family Welfare department said, "Regret to inform the demise of forty Covid positive patients, while under treatment in hospitals (sic)."

Five fresh fatalities each were reported from Angul, Cuttack, Kalahandi and Khurda, four from Jharsuguda, three each from Boudh and Rayagada and two each from Deogarh, Nabarangpur and Sambalpur. One patient each succumbed to the infection in Balasore, Dhenkanal, Jajpur and Malkangiri, the official said.



Five fresh fatalities each were reported from Angul, Cuttack, Kalahandi and Khurda, four from Jharsuguda, three each from Boudh and Rayagada and two each from Deogarh, Nabarangpur and Sambalpur

One patient each succumbed to the infection in Balasore, Dhenkanal, Jajpur and Malkangiri

The state has so far conducted over 1.19 crore sample tests for Covid-19, including 66,683 Tuesday

The fatality rate in the last 15 days remained almost 0.3 per, the lowest in the country

Fifty-three other Covid-19 patients have also died due to comorbidities, the official pointed out. Khurda district reported the maximum number of fresh cases at 1,102, followed by Cuttack (766) and Jajpur (514).

At least 11,095 people were cured of the disease Tuesday, taking the total number of recoveries to 6,92,027. Odisha now has 87,220 active cases, the official said.

The state has so far conducted over 1.19 crore sample tests for Covid-19, including 66,683 Tuesday, and the positivity rate stands at 6.57 per cent.

Altogether, 78,26,597 doses of vaccine have been administered to beneficiaries till Tuesday, the official added.

The district administration of Cuttack has launched X-ray on wheels, an initiative to provide radiography services to ensure early detection of infection among Covid-19 patients at Covid Care Centers (CCCs) and for those in home isolation.

Sources said that as many as 1,028 villages in Cuttack have managed to keep the virus at bay with the efforts made by sarpanches, ward members, ASHA and Anganwadi workers, along with strict adherence to Covid norms, setting a precedent in Covid management for others.

The fatality rate in the state during the last 15 days remained almost 0.3 per, the lowest in the country.

CIVIC WOES



The main road at Badambadi in Cuttack witnesses extensive waterlogging soon after rain lashed the city, Wednesday

Cong urges CM to cancel Class XII state board exam

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Odisha Congress president Niranjana Patnaik Wednesday demanded that the state government should cancel the Class XII board examination due to the prevailing second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The demand came a day after the Centre announced the cancellation of Class XII CBSE exams over the pandemic situation.

The CISCE has also announced its decision to cancel Class XII ISC examinations.

"It will be unreasonable to push students of Odisha to appear for the #CHSE (Council of Higher Secondary Education) exams in the midst of a raging pandemic," Patnaik tweeted.

With the death of 40 people Wednesday, Odisha registered its highest single-day spike in Covid-19 fatalities. The state also recorded 8,399 fresh cases during the day.

"We shouldn't have unrealistic expectations from our children in these difficult times. Ensuring their safety should be our top priority," the OPCC president said.

The Congress leader added that it was high time that the Odisha government called off the Council of Higher Secondary Education examinations for the well-being of the students.

He urged Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to decide without any further delay.

The governments of Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Uttarakhnad have already cancelled the Class 12 state board exams, while several states are likely to take a call on the issue soon.

₹8.15 lakh health assistance for 19 Odia artists

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Nineteen artists of the state have been provided Rs 8.15 lakh monetary assistance for their treatment from Artist Relief Fund of Odia Language, Literature and Culture department in financial year 2020-21.

The artists who have received the amount are: Bijay Kumar Patnaik, Bichitra Kumar Malia, Golak Barik, Meera Mohanty, Prabhat Kumar Sahoo, Ramesh Chandra Behera, Shirshananda Das Kanungo, Bharat Chandra Nasik, Kunjalata Dash, Laxmidhar Maharana, Ashok Kumar, Bhagbat Patra, Shantilata Sahoo, Balabhadra Panda, Raj Kishore Pradhan, Baikuntha Nanda, Raghu Pilai, Ratnakar Barik and Durga Prasad Patnaik.

Snana Purnima to be observed sans devotees



AGENCIES

Puri, June 2: The Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) is contemplating to conduct the famous "Snana Purnima" rituals of the Trinity only by the servitors adhering to Covid guidelines.

The chief administrator of SJTA Krishna Kumar said efforts are on to observe the Snana Purnima rituals by servitors without the presence of devotees.

"We are observing the Covid situation and in short intervals evaluating the situation. If everything remains under control the Snana Yatra and annual Rath Yatra of the Trinity will be conducted as per tradition without the participation of devotees" Dr Kumar said.

Last year also the "Snana Yatra" and the car festival were conducted by the temple administration without

the participation of the devotees due to the pandemic.

Kumar along with Puri Collector Samarth Verma and Superintendent of police K Vishal Singh Wednesday visited the Rath Khala (chariot construction yard) to assess the progress made in construction.

After taking stock of the work in the construction yard the SJTA chief Dr Kumar told media persons that work is moving as per the prescribed schedule.

As per tradition on the concluding day of Chandan Yatra on Thursday one axle each of the three chariots would be fixed with three sets of wheels.

Today artisans have completed 20 wheels out of the total required 42 wheels for three chariots.

About 200 workers including carpenters, blacksmiths, roopakaras and chitrakar are engaged in the yard.

The artisans are working in a bio bubble atmosphere. Only covid-19 negative workers are allowed to work and they are housed in Niladri Bhakta Nibas, a temple facility where all their needs from food to other basic amenities are taken care of, SJTA Chief said.

100-bed Covid care facility at RSP



POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, June 2: Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Dharmaendra Pradhan Wednesday dedicated Ispat Nidaan Kendra, a 100-bed Covid care facility on the premises of SAIL's Rourkela Steel Plant.

Inaugurating the facility, Pradhan said the facility will be later scaled up to 500 beds.

According to the ministry, all the beds in this jumbo Covid care facility have the provision of gaseous oxygen through dedicated line drawn directly from the oxygen unit of the steel plant.

"The provision of gaseous oxygen will help in getting rid of

the need to replenish cylinders and the logistic issues, besides ensuring uninterrupted availability of the life saving gas. This jumbo facility, which has been set up within a record time, is in addition to the beds and ICU beds already made available earlier for fight against Covid," the ministry said

Pradhan said that this massive facility will help in containing the second wave of the Covid pandemic in the southern Rourkela region and also strengthen health-care response in the wake of a possible third wave.

The permanent facility will also be used for non-Covid treatment post the pandemic, he added.

City school holds virtual summer camp

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: While the whole world is fighting against the highly-infectious novel coronavirus, the Rainbow International School here Wednesday said that it stands as an icon of knowledge

for its students.

The school recently organised a virtual summer camp under the supervision of the principal Gitanjali Sahu piloting numerous innovative activities such as fireless cooking, story animation, maths magic, fun with colours,

spoken English, how to come to stage, rangoli, jhota, brain treasure, cooking for both parents and children.

All children enjoyed and developed a good chain of friendship and unity being grouped into categories based on class.

Vax drive for inmates of old-age homes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: In a bid to ensure the vulnerable groups of the society get vaccinated against the novel coronavirus, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Wednesday started an inoculation drive for the inmates of at least three old-age homes in the City.

"Apart from the inmates of two old-age homes at Nuagaon and at Keuta Sahi Chhak near Lingaraj temple here, more than 40 inmates of Shri Krishna old-age home, a voluntary organisation in the Old Town area here, have been vaccinated on the first day of the drive after on-spot registration of the beneficiaries," the civic body said.

A BMC team comprising a vaccinator, a data entry operator, a nodal officer and a doctor reached the Shri Krishna old-age home at 9.30am and carried out the vaccination before heading for other old-age homes, the civic body pointed out.

Expressing their gratitude, many senior citizens thanked BMC for the hassle-free vaccination. "It's a great help for people like us as we stay at old-age homes and are unable to step outside due to various health ailments and the risk of getting infected," said Priyabrata Nanda, 64.

Later in the day, four inmates of Odisha Association for the Blind located at Satya Nagar here were

Pradhan flags off 7-day vax camp

Bhubaneswar: Union Petroleum Minister Dharmaendra Pradhan Wednesday inaugurated a week-long Covid-19 vaccination camp at the Indian Oil office here.

The camp has been organised for employees, customer attendants at petrol pumps, LPG delivery executives, mechanics, fuel truck drivers, helpers, and others at the Indian Oil's Odisha office at Chandrasekharpur, the public sector unit said in a statement. The free vaccination drive, which will continue till next Tuesday, plans to administer 200 Covishield doses per day.

The initiative has been undertaken in association with Apollo Hospital, Bhubaneswar, the statement said.

Inaugurating the camp, Pradhan commended the oil firm for stepping forward towards vaccinating Covid warriors, it said. The petroleum and natural gas minister urged companies such as SAIL, Nalco, NTPC, and other public sector undertakings (PSUs) to come forward for organising similar vaccination camps for the people of Odisha.

Don't destroy Ekamra Kanan greenery: NGT

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has ordered a status quo on diversion of Ekamra Kanan land here for construction purposes and asked the government not to cut trees in the farm until further order.

The order of the tribunal came after a petition was filed with NGT by environment activist Sushant Kumar Jena who challenged the order of the state Horticulture department regarding surrender of 20.192 acre land of the farmland to construction activities.

"... it would be necessary to issue an interim direction to ensure that during the pendency of this matter in the tribunal, the deemed forest area and the trees over the land in question are not to be cut or destroyed. We accordingly direct the Respondents (state government & others) to maintain status-quo with regard to the land in question till the next date of listing," the NGT bench comprising Justice B Amit Shalekar and expert member Saibal Dasgupta said.



The NGT has ordered for constitution of a committee that would visit the site, scrutinise the allegations and submit its report

The bench, meanwhile, also ordered the constitution of a committee comprising five officials—a senior scientist from the regional office of Ministry of Environment and Forests, Khurda Collector, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Chandaka and the state Horticulture Director.

The committee has been asked to visit the site, scrutinise the allegations made by the petitioner and submit its report to the NGT within four weeks. The panel has been asked to examine if the area has characteristics of a forest, if parts of the area are classified as Jungle Kism/Revenue Forest in land record and details of medicinal plants and other plants the area hosts. The petition had alleged that the areas that the government plans to divert for construction works host full-grown fruit bearing trees and plants of medicinal value.

It was alleged that some parts of the land have been categorised as Jungle Kism, a type of revenue forest land.



A temple being demolished at Telugu Sahi near Chhatra Bazar in Cuttack, Wednesday, to facilitate the expansion of Taladanda canal road

ROAD EXPANSION PLAN

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Share-croppers shying away from farming



REPRESENTATIVE PICS

state government had convened a meeting to identify share-croppers in 2015.

The meeting had lengthy discussions on the problems of share-croppers and their inclusion in all agriculture related schemes and social security measures. However, six years have passed since then but there has been no progress on the issue. As a result, the share-croppers have failed to get their names enrolled in schemes like KALIA and PM Kisan, Dhala added.

A land owner Trilochan Jena of Indupur village under Kendrapara block said there are some obstacles in giving legal sanction to share-croppers. The issues like lease agreement and share of the land owner on the harvest should be discussed threadbare before bringing in any legislation on the issue. A law for share-croppers will increase their interest towards cultivation but the ownership of the land should be protected, he added.

A farmer Satyabrata Senapati of Mahakalpara said land is a family property which protects the owners in difficult times. If the land is legally given on lease to the share-croppers then it would create problems in its sale to other persons at times of exigencies.

Amiya Behera, a farmer of Dumuka village under Marshaghai block, said, "Distress sale of paddy, lack of government assistance during natural calamities and lack of other benefits are discouraging share-croppers from taking up farming."

Distress sale of paddy, lack of government assistance during natural calamities and lack of other benefits are discouraging share-croppers from taking up farming

AMIYA BEHERA | FARMER

of the land is cultivated by share-croppers. The share-cropper takes the land on lease for a year from land owner. The share-cropper has to pay half of the harvested paddy in kharif season and two-fifth of harvested crops in rabi season to the land owners.

The share-croppers have to take all the risks associated with farming such as natural calamities and the land owner never helps him in any way. The share-croppers also face problems in availing bank loans and during paddy procurement.

Pramod Kumar Sahu, president of a primary agriculture cooperative society (PACS), said only 15 per cent of the farmers till their own land while the rest of the land is cultivated by share-croppers.

However, the share-croppers are yet to be identified for which they are deprived of bank loans, crop insurance and other benefits.

Gayadhar Dhala, president of Kendrapara district farmers' and labourers' association, said the

POST NEWS NETWORK

Kendrapara, June 2: In a predominantly agricultural district like Kendrapara share-croppers are a harassed lot. They are slowly turning away from cultivation as both the land owners and the administration are not sympathetic to their problems.

Most of the times, they resort to distress sale of their crops. The share-croppers are in no mood to carry out farming this year.

Claiming themselves to be farmers, the landowners are grabbing all the benefits of the state-sponsored KALIA scheme and the Centre-sponsored PM Kisan Yojana while the share-croppers are remaining deprived of the benefits.

The administration and the lending agencies are equally apathetic to their problems. The banks are not inclined to give them loans as they are share-croppers and do not have any land of their own. The share-croppers are also facing a host of problems in selling their paddy crops during kharif and rabi seasons.

Farmer leader Bijay Kumar Parida said out of the total land owned by 3 lakh farmers, 70 per cent

Woman's body exhumed two days after death

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jajpur, June 2: Police exhumed the body of a 22-year-old woman in Jajpur district Tuesday after receiving a complaint that she was murdered, an official said.

The family members of the woman - a resident of Aruha village in Dharmasala area, 26 km from Jajpur town - had claimed that she died of a heart attack Sunday evening. They buried the body that night in a graveyard.



A resident of the village, however, contacted the superintendent of police Monday, alleging that the woman was murdered and her body was buried hurriedly.

Police reached the village and after an investigation, exhumed the body in the presence of a magistrate. The body has been sent for post-mortem and the exact cause of death can be ascertained after receiving the report, Dharmasala police station in-charge Saroj Sahoo said. Action will be taken accordingly, he said, adding that an investigation was on.

She was living in the village with her mother, a widow, while her brother works in a firm outside.

HOCKEY STADIUM WORK MIRED IN CONTROVERSY

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, June 2: The construction of a hockey stadium here continues to be mired in controversy as allegations of sub-standard work surfaced during the visit of a technical team to the project site, Wednesday.

The stadium is being constructed at Jujumura High School playground. Locals have alleged delay in construction and use sub-standard raw materials. The team took some photographs and samples of the construction.

The stadium is being constructed at a plan outlay of ₹4 crore and is being implemented by a Delhi-based consultancy agency.

A group of local youths met the

technical team and raised allegation of sub-standard work. As a result, cracks have developed at many places in the structure, they said. Officials of the concerned department and the consultancy agency didn't monitor the construction work properly, the locals alleged. Following the complaints, a team from the Sports department from Bhubaneswar had visited the site and directed the agency to form a team comprising eminent citizens of the area for smooth conduct of the project work.

The youths alleged that the agency authorities were working according to their whims. The technical team assured the youths that the matter will be taken up with the higher-ups.

Vigilance seizes ₹19L from TDCC manager

Acting on a tip-off, the Vigilance team led by DSP Sudhansu Sekhar Pujari chased and intercepted the SUV at Masnikani toll plaza

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sundargarh, June 2: In a major crackdown, a team of Vigilance officials detained the District Manager of the Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation (TDCC) in Sundargarh, Wednesday. The official was on his way to Bhubaneswar with unaccounted

cash of ₹19 lakh, a member of the Vigilance squad said.

According to sources, the district manager Jayaprakash Mohanty was travelling from Sundargarh district headquarters to Jharsuguda town in an SUV, when he was intercepted by the Vigilance officials. However, Mohanty was scheduled to travel

REMINISCING THE BYGONE



Men ride a horse-driven carriage during lockdown in Angul, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

Woman 'kills' 6 dogs for damaging her scooter

POST NEWS NETWORK

Sambalpur, June 2: A woman of MCL Jagruti Vihar Colony in Burla allegedly poisoned six dogs to death for damaging her scooter. The matter came to fore after People for Animals, Sambalpur chapter, lodged a complaint in Burla police station.

Taking cognizance of the matter, Lok Sabha MP and chief of People for Animals Maneka Gandhi spoke to Sambalpur SP Batula Gangadhar and Burla police station IIC Kamal Lochan Panda on the issue. She demanded a probe and immediate action on the matter.

The SP said a case has been registered against the woman at the Burla police station on the basis of the complaint. Police are probing the matter from various angles.

According to the complaint, six dogs were found dead in the colony May 28. Members of People for Animals visited the spot May 29. During their enquiry, circumstantial evidence indicated that the canine deaths had occurred due to poisoning.



Police, veterinarians and the members of the animal welfare outfit during the post-mortem

They held discussion with the security officer and other persons, who told them that a woman of the colony had recently complained about the damage done to her scooter's seat cover by the dogs.

The woman had complained about it to the security guards of the colony asking them to get rid of the animals. The dogs however, continued to roam around the colony. A few days later, the dogs were found dead in the colony.

The complaint held the woman responsible for the death of the dogs. Legal action will be taken against anyone found guilty, the SP said. The Burla police station IIC said the colony has no CCTV camera, while the security guards in the colony are keeping mum.

The carcasses have been sent for post-mortem but veterinarians are yet to ascertain the reason behind the deaths. Police are conducting a probe, the IIC said.

Pregnant woman crushed under wheels of truck

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nuapada, June 2: In a tragic incident, a pregnant woman was crushed under the wheels of a truck on the under-construction Biju Expressway near Binopur village under Boden police limits in Nuapada district Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as Sabita Nag of Binopur village. Family members said that she was 8-month pregnant. Reports said Sabita was travelling to some place with her relative Lakhi Salama on a motorcycle. The mishap occurred when their bike collided with a speeding dumper on the Biju Expressway near the village.

They were rescued with help of an earthmover machine. However, Sabita succumbed to the injuries on the way to a hospital, while the biker was admitted to the hospital in critical condition. The mishap sparked outrage among the residents who blocked the Khariar-Boden road demanding compensation for deceased woman's family. Police have launched a probe.

Truck catches fire after collision, driver charred to death

POST NEWS NETWORK

Dhenkanal, June 2: In a tragic road mishap that took place in wee hours of Wednesday the driver of a truck was charred to death after it rammmed a stationary truck at Jadapal village under Kamakhyanagar police limits in Dhenkanal district.

According to an eyewitness, the fly ash-laden truck was on its way from BRG Iron and Steel plant located at Kantabanja to a road expansion site on NH-53 in Kamakhyanagar area in the district. The speeding vehicle rammmed into a stationary truck. The impact of the collision was severe and the speeding truck caught fire immediately. The driver of the vehicle was unable to come out of the truck and was burnt alive.

FLOODED ROAD



A biker negotiates a waterlogged road in Berhampur after a heavy downpour, Wednesday

OP PHOTO

Miscreants open fire during loot, 3 injured

POST NEWS NETWORK

Balasure, June 2: Three persons of a family suffered grievous injuries after armed miscreants indiscriminately opened fire at them late Tuesday night, during a loot bid at a jeweller's house at Saudu village under Soro police limits in Balasure district.

According to a source, a group of 10 miscreants barged into the house of Sanatan Kamila located in Bahanaga block at around 2.00am. The miscreants looted jewellery worth over ₹10 lakh by terrorising the family members at gunpoint. Family members shouted for help and the miscreants started decamping with the valuables. Moments later, the looters opened fire as some neighbours rushed to the spot after hearing the screams. The looters fired about 10 rounds

at the family members and villagers leaving three of them critically injured.

"We rushed to the spot after hearing the screams and gunshots. Rabindra Barik and his son Debashish entered the house of the jeweller in a bid to capture the looters. The miscreants opened fire at them. Rabindra and his son suffered multiple bullet injuries on head and chest," Bijay Kumar Barik, a local resident, said.

The injured were immediately rushed to Balasure district headquarters hospital (DHH). Later, they were shifted to SCB Medical College and Hospital in Cuttack after their condition deteriorated.

Soro police registered a case and launched a probe. A manhunt is underway and the miscreants would be arrested soon, a senior police official said.

EAST COAST RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. 04-SBP-TRD-OT-2021-22, Date : 31.05.2021

NAME OF THE WORK : HIRING & OPERATING OF TWO NUMBER OF TRUCKS OF 4.5T LOADING CAPACITY EACH MAKE & MODEL SWARAJ MAZDA LIMITED SARTAJ HG 72 BS-IV 3335/EICHER 10.75 E2PLUS 3515 OR EQUIVALENT FOR ONE DEPOT AT BOINDA (BONA) AND KANTABANJI (KBJ) FOR TWO YEARS WITH 24 HOURS AVAILABILITY.

Approximate Cost (₹) 36,96,626.40
Completion Period : 730 Days
Tender Closing Date and Time : At 1530 Hrs. of 22.06.2021

No manual offers sent by Post / Courier / Fax or in person accepted against such e-tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website : <http://www.reps.gov.in>

Note : The prospective tenderers are advised to revisit the website 15 (Fifteen) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes / corrigendum issued for this tender.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRD), PR-130/M/21-22 Sambalpur



Let the Divine fill your thoughts with His presence.

THE MOTHER



Conscious Fashion

It's not just what you eat that is killing the earth and all its inhabitants. It is also what you wear. Every time you buy an article of clothing you make a choice between the biosphere and the lithosphere. The biosphere is an agricultural field where cotton, linen (made from flax), hemp – even silk (mulberry trees) – are grown. Wool, though cruel in another way, is also grown. The lithosphere is the protective crust of the earth. Fossil fuels are extracted from this and turned into synthetic fabrics like polyester.

Clearly, a sensible human being would choose a renewable resource; something that can be grown again and again. But 70% of all clothing comes from non renewable fuels – we humans are wearing plastic, nylon, acrylic, polyester. Even the wonderful sarees from Benaras, which were heirlooms for all brides, are now mixed with polyester.

Fashion is as much an agricultural choice as food. It is common for us to pay attention to vegetables and grain and interrogate the farming community, but we pay no attention to the fashion industry. Think about cloth as emerging from the ground and then concern yourself about the practices required to grow and harvest it.

The beef industry is responsible for the cutting of thousands of forests – but the fashion industry is no less. Tree based fabrics, such as bamboo and eucalyptus, cause forests to be cut and turned into plantations and these trees are turned into clothes.

If we choose cotton, as I have done my whole life, I am guilty of ignoring the massive pesticides used and how they impact all life. Cotton in India uses Neonicotinoid pesticides – which are responsible for the destruction of billions of bees, putting our food supplies at major risk. But polyester/nylon is responsible for massive mining, destroying forests, leaving gaping holes in the ground and contaminating water sources for miles around.

However, even if you make the choice to wear a sustainable agricultural produce, the next problem is dyes. The cloth may be organic cotton but its colour comes from synthetic dyes. First the cotton is bleached – and bleach kills all sea life. Then it is dyed. Synthetic dyes colour most of the textiles we wear.

It's estimated that 25% of chemicals produced globally are used to produce clothing, and many of these go toward dyeing. Heavy metals, such as cadmium, mercury, tin, cobalt, lead, and chrome, are needed to bind the dyes to the fabric, and are present in 60-70% of dyes. Vast amounts of water are needed in the dyeing industry as well and the surplus chemical dyes are rinsed out and thrown into rivers as effluent. Some years ago I was in Udaipur and I came across the most terrible rivers: blood red waters with so many animal corpses around – animals that had been forced to drink, as there was no other water. All this was the downstream of the cloth dyeing industry.

The effect of working with chemical dyes is apparent in communities employed in this work (they suffer the effects of exposure to endocrine disruptors contained in the dyes. Endocrine disrupting chemicals can interfere with hormones, causing cancerous tumours and birth defects). Who knows the effect of synthetic dyes on human bodies through the clothing. Dyes are not the only problem: There are far more chemicals contained in our clothing than we may realize.

The textile industry is the most polluting of all industries in India. Worldwide, clothes are the second largest source of pollution after oil. This industry is responsible for 10% of global carbon emission and becomes world's fifth biggest emitter of carbon dioxide. It is also one of the top 3 water wasting industries and pollutes fresh water resources badly. About 2600 litres of water are required to produce a single t-shirt.

Every time you wash synthetic materials they shed millions of plastic microfibrils, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Debris Program. Microfibrils are a type of microplastic, which is a plastic-based thread that is thinner than a human hair, below 5mm in size. The threads are so small, they pass straight through wastewater treatment plants into the sea. Lots are caught up in sludge at the treatment plants – which is then sprayed over the soils as fertilizer. Sea organisms, like plankton, mistake these tiny plastics for food. Smaller animals and fish depend on plankton as their main food. And humans eat fish. So the fibres get off your clothes and into your stomach.

In a study in Science News, it was shown that nitrous oxide is increasing in the atmosphere by 0.2% annually and a portion of this comes from the production of nylon and polyesters. Nitrous oxide is a powerful greenhouse gas and has 300 times more potentiality than carbon dioxide. Polyester production, for textiles, released about 706 billion kg (1.5 trillion pounds) of greenhouse gases in 2015; the equivalent of 185 coal-fired power plants' annual emissions.

What do they do to you? Plastic clothing has an effect on the skin and respiratory tract. It has also been found to cause infertility in men. Nylon, used in swimsuits, tights and stockings, requires chemicals to reduce the electric static. Formaldehyde in fabrics causes skin allergies, eye watering, and is also a known potent carcinogen.

How does one get out of this mess? There are only a few solutions at the moment, but they are important ones.

Do not buy any artificial cloth: no nylon, polyester, lycra, acrylic, no 'up-cycled plastic' which many fashion brands say are green. If you stop using man made synthetic, artificial cloth, the mining will reduce and you might save some forests. You will certainly save a great deal of petroleum. And none of these artificial materials are biodegradable. There's also something that is often referred to as semi-synthetic, like rayon, which is made from natural materials like cellulose from trees, but the fibres are made artificially. Rayon causes massive deforestation because trees have to be stripped, and this includes protected forests. Some animals are on the endangered species list specifically due to rayon. Bamboo is also not to be encouraged. Its stiffness is converted to softness by using toxic chemicals such as carbon disulfide, sodium hydroxide, and sulphuric acid.

Don't buy so many clothes and don't throw away clothes because they are out of 'fashion'. A recent study by the Ellen McArthur Foundation found that one garbage truck of textiles is wasted every second. The Copenhagen Fashion Summit reported that fashion is responsible for 92 million tonnes of solid waste dumped in landfills each year. Synthetic fibres can take up to 200 years to decompose. More than 1 million tonnes of textiles are thrown away every year. An estimated 150 billion garments are produced annually – about 20 new garments to every individual. From 1999 and 2009 the discarding of clothes has grown by 40%.

Try out fibres like pineapple leather. Plant or fruit leather, made from waste materials, is gaining attention. Pinatex, for example, is a material made from the leaves of pineapples grown in the Philippines. Its production is much more sustainable than traditional leather. It requires less water and no harmful chemicals that are ecologically toxic to wildlife. The leftover leaf waste is recycled and used for fertiliser or biomass. Soy fabric is an eco-friendly fabric made from the hull of soybeans, leftover from food production; a cruelty-free and sustainable option. They are biodegradable, and the material is renewable.

Keep it simple: Just buy organic cotton with organic dyes and you will save the world.

To join the animal welfare movement contact gandhim@nic.in, www.peopleforanimalsindia.org



Maneka Gandhi

Worldwide, clothes are the second largest source of pollution after oil



Bertrand Piccard

SUSTAINING THIS SITUATION OF FALSE ABUNDANCE IS MORALLY UNACCEPTABLE WHEN A LARGE PART OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION LACKS WHAT A SMALL PART ROUTINELY WASTES

Our world is extraordinarily inefficient. We waste enormous quantities of energy, water, raw materials, and food. We even waste our waste and the precious resources it contains. We do so not necessarily because we lack ecological awareness, but rather because the society we live in is built on the myth of infinite resources.

Sustaining this situation of false abundance is morally unacceptable when a large part of the world's population lacks what a small part routinely wastes. It also has a considerable financial cost now that technologies exist to end this waste.

While some are considering economic degrowth as an option to achieve global climate targets and other environmental goals, there is a much stronger case for adopting technologies that allow us to become more efficient. That means replacing old polluting infrastructure with cleaner modern systems.

The good news is that the resulting efficiency gains outweigh the financial cost of the transition. Better still, we won't have to sacrifice economic growth in the process. Over the past four years, the Solar Impulse Foundation has selected and labelled more than 1,000 products, services, and processes that can greatly increase efficiency in the fields of mobility, construction, agriculture, industry, energy, and water.

Efficiency is the ability to achieve the most with the least. Energy efficiency, for example, means maximising service while minimising consumption.

The search for efficiency long had a bad reputation because of the so-called rebound effect, a perverse phenomenon whereby technological improvements result in increased resource consumption. The British economist William Stanley Jevons first described it in 1865. The emergence of more efficient steam engines, he observed, led to greater coal use.

FOCUS SUSTAINABILITY

WASTE LESS, EARN MORE



While some advocate economic degrowth as an option to achieve climate targets and other environmental goals, there is a much stronger case for adopting efficient clean technologies. The gains from introducing them would outweigh the financial cost of the green transition, and economies would not have to sacrifice growth in the process

But Jevons was observing conditions in a totally free market. Today, ecological regulations and incentives to reduce consumption, such as carbon taxes, help to preserve the environmental gains of efficiency. Moreover, rebound effects work both ways: current heightened environmental awareness could produce a positive effect, whereby a household spends the economic gains from lower energy costs on a healthier diet or the purchase of an electric vehicle.

In any case, efficiency must be part of our overall response to the climate challenge. The International Energy Agency estimates that today's technologies could reduce our electricity consumption by about 3,000 terawatt hours, or more than 10 per cent of the total in some regions and 5 per cent globally. By 2040, this potential for improvement will almost double, to roughly a quarter of total consumption.

This is because energy-management systems in recent years have become able to limit generation and distribution losses and

support increasing shares of variable and distributed renewables while increasing grid flexibility. They have also become much smarter; integrating external data sources such as weather conditions and traffic patterns. Using artificial intelligence, these advanced systems can forecast energy demand more accurately and improve grid-response capabilities.

Public policies to boost efficiency would also improve access to electricity for the 13 per cent of the world's population still without it. As the global standard of living increases, we must ensure that new consumption demand – including for electricity, goods, and mobility – is met with efficient devices. That way, we can reconcile greater prosperity with adherence to our environmental commitments.

Technologies that boost efficiency are not limited to the energy sector: We are also wasting huge amounts of water at a time when scarcity is affecting hundreds of millions of people – often fuelling conflict, displacement, and other disruptions of lives

and livelihoods. But today's technologies enable us, for example, to allocate the minimum quantity of water needed to increase agricultural yields.

The responsibility of policymakers today is to set higher efficiency standards in every sector. This will increase demand for clean and efficient technologies and thus encourage innovative firms to bring them to market. Such regulations would be hard to accept if they penalised citizens and undermined economic growth. But new green technologies do exactly the opposite: they increase corporate profits and create jobs.

As a result, we can now finally escape from the sterile debate pitting economic growth against ecological stewardship. The two must go hand in hand. Clean, efficient, and profitable technologies are available today, and the faster we implement them, the more will be available tomorrow.

The writer is Founder and Chairman of the Solar Impulse Foundation.

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SPECTRUM ECONOMY

Unemployment insurance: Need of the hour



DV Ramana

IT IS TIME FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO SERIOUSLY WORK ON UNEMPLOYMENT SUPPORT SYSTEM OTHERWISE DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND WILL BECOME A DEMOGRAPHIC BURDEN

A pandemic is a wrong time to worry about fiscal prudence. The government has to respond to the urgent needs of its citizens even if the costs are high. Management of unemployment is one such need.

If we go by the recent report of the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE) the number of employees has come down from 400.7 million to 390.7 million during January-April 2021. The report further says the unemployment rate has increased from 6.52 per cent to 7.97 per cent during this period.

The above data is not from any government source. CMIE, a privately owned organisation, generates this important information and makes it available for free. This is an example of a private entity generating public good. Before we examine the data there is a need to understand CMIE's definition of labour force and the unemployment rate.

Labour force consists of persons who are of 15 years of age, employed or unemployed but actively looking for a job.

Unemployment rate is the unemployed actively looking for a job expressed as a percentage of the labour force.

The report says the number of unemployed actively looking for jobs has increased from 2.7 crore to 3.38 crore during January-April

2021. But one should remember that the actual unemployed number will be much higher than 3.38 crore because of the definition.

It is relevant to mention here that the number of unemployed keeps on fluctuating. Monthly fluctuation during the last one year was in the range of negative 11 crore to positive 6 crore. The fluctuation is the reflection of the temporary nature of unemployment.

Situations like pandemics and other contingencies push people into short term unemployment. People may find it extremely difficult to survive during those days of unemployment. For some, it may lead to personal depression and some may get into the vicious cycle of poverty due to unemployment driven debts.

According to a survey (www.statista.com) among the Indian urban youth about life in lockdown, less than 20 per cent of full-time employees had paid sick leave and only one per cent had unemployment insurance. Though the survey was done only in the metros, it is a reflection of the state of unemployment support available in India.

It is time for the government to seriously work on unemployment support system otherwise the demographic dividend will become a demographic burden. One policy intervention in that direction is unemployment insurance.

Unemployment insurance has a rich history in different parts of the world. The United Kingdom started providing unemployment insurance since 1920. Unemployment benefits were introduced in Germany in 1927 and in most European countries immediately after the Second World War. Unemployment insurance in the US originated in 1932 and further got strengthened by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, enacted in March 2020.

Unemployment insurance aims to immediately tackle the risk of poverty, while at the same time creating incentives for individuals to look for a job and increase their employability. The financial support under unemployment insurance helps in maintaining the liquidity at the bottom of the pyramid. Several researchers have shown that unemployment insurance can be used as one of the government's most effective fiscal tools against economic recessions and personal depression. But who will bear the cost of unemployment insurance?

One of the popular methods is distributing the cost across different stakeholders: employees, employers, and the government. As per a report of the ILO, the average contribution by employees is 1 per cent of the wage in advanced economies and 0.5 per cent in emerg-

ing economies and the employers' contribution is 1.6 per cent and 1 per cent respectively.

India does not have full-fledged unemployment insurance at the moment. Some general insurers sell this insurance bundled with the health or home insurance products. The government owned ESIC provides some form of unemployment insurance for eligible employees, but the conditions attached to it restrict the benefits to a small number of unemployed people.

It is time for the government to work on a comprehensive unemployment insurance policy in consultation with the IRDA. Both, the employee and employer should contribute to the fund with a matching contribution by the state or the central government. The public-sector insurance companies may be entrusted with the responsibility of managing the scheme. Executing such a scheme needs timely, correct, and comprehensive employment data. Organisation like the CMIE may be roped in to provide such data. Efforts should be made to create awareness about unemployment insurance so that every employee will have one such policy in her portfolio of financial products like mutual funds, life insurance, and other investment instruments.

The writer is a Professor, XIMB.

No child's play

Sir, Providing school education to the deprived is not a child's play. Children have their own emotions, likes and dislikes. The authorities should rise to the occasion; mere lip service will not do. Last two years have been cruel for a child's personality development. Boys and girls have been robbed of honing their aptitude in the schooling environment. There was a hesitant restart of some schools only to shut doors for the better. When governments decide on internet-based education to children, it has to be clear on so many aspects. Online education, thanks to the proliferation of smartphones, has ceased to be the privilege of a select few. That said, there are large sections of the population that struggle to make both ends meet. For them, arranging online education for their wards can be a distant dream. Internet connectivity to India's big chunk of rural population is still not foolproof. There always are the other attendant socioeconomic issues known to cripple a child's progress. Governments cannot miss the woods for the trees. Even if the governments make up their mind to throw open schools to the children, the latter cannot be left in lurch without their essential tools - books. In an inclusive education, there is little scope for ifs and buts. One may not see the schools reopening in June though some governments have decided in principle to permit physical classes. However, the third wave of the pandemic, said to infect children, is looming large, and the parents are a worried lot. As of now, no worthwhile vaccination programmes has been chalked out for children. But there may be one on the anvil. States should be ready with their agendas for school children.

Ganapathi Bhat, AKOLA (MAHARASHTRA)

Relief to students

Sir, The Central government's move to cancel the CBSE class 12 board exams is a big relief for students, parents, and teachers. Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that the decision has been made in the interest of students. COVID-19 seems to have an impact on the academic calendar, and the issue of board exams has caused significant worry among students, parents, and educators, which needs to be addressed. Our children's health and safety are the greatest priority to us, so we can make no compromise in this regard. The results will now be prepared in a fair and efficient way, based on well-defined criteria. Stakeholders must be sensitive to students and give them appropriate opportunities to advance their professions.

Amit Singh Kushwaha, SATNA (MP)

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

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WISDOM CORNER

- If you want a thing done well, do it yourself. NAPOLEON BONAPARTE
- Have no fear of perfection - you'll never reach it. SALVADOR DALI
- You change the world by being yourself. YOKO ONO

Sena downplays Pawar-Fadnavis meet

The editorial in the Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana' also dismissed speculations suggesting political realignments in Maharashtra under operation Lotus post the meeting

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 2: The Shiv Sena Wednesday downplayed the recent meeting between Sharad Pawar and Maharashtra opposition leader Devendra Fadnavis, saying there is nothing mysterious about the interaction as the NCP chief's stature is such that politicians including Prime Minister Narendra Modi keep consulting him on various issues.

The editorial in the Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana' also dismissed speculations suggesting political realignments in Maharashtra under operation Lotus post the meeting Monday.

There is no mystery or secrecy regarding the recent meeting between Fadnavis and Sharad Pawar. Those who feel that way don't know Sharad Pawar well, the edit said. Fadnavis met Pawar at the latter's residence in Mumbai Monday morning.

After the meeting, Fadnavis said it was a courtesy interaction with Pawar (80), who has resumed his activities after recovering from surgery. The Sena heads the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government of which the NCP and the Congress are also constituents.

The editorial said Pawar didn't believe in taking rest and his supporters and critics keep him busy. Many speculations surfaced on



the possible motive behind Fadnavis calling upon Pawar. Some started saying that 'Operation Lotus' is on in Maharashtra, it said. However, what Fadnavis said was true. It was purely a courtesy visit. Pawar is not just a leader of Maharashtra but he belongs to the entire country. Political leaders including PM Modi consult him on various issues, the Sena said.

The Sena referred to meetings between Indira Gandhi and socialist leader Jay Prakash Narayan to underscore that stature of some leaders is above politics like Pawar.

Dialogue is important in a democracy. (then prime minister) Indira Gandhi had been defeated by the alliance of opposition leaders led by Jay Prakash Narayan. During Emergency, Indira Gandhi put several leaders in jails, but after her

The Sena referred to meetings between Indira Gandhi and socialist leader Jay Prakash Narayan to underscore that stature of some leaders like Pawar is above politics

defeat, she used to meet Narayan to seek his blessings, the Sena said.

In Maharashtra, several politicians would call on Sena founder patriarch Bal Thackeray at his residence 'Matoshree'.

Some leaders are above politics and Pawar is one of them. This is the reason why Fadnavis met him. It is good that Fadnavis met the right person to get positive energy,

the Sena said. Those who know Pawar will agree that he must have coached Fadnavis on how to behave responsibly during a crisis. These days Fadnavis wants to oppose the government just for the sake of opposing it. He is blaming the MVA government for every happening in Maharashtra and the rest of India, it said.

The Sena said when Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, who heads the party, was inaugurating trial runs of Mumbai Metro, BJP leaders were showing black flags at a protest and on the other hand, Fadnavis was meeting Pawar.

Maharashtra has had a glorious tradition of opposition leaders who would corner the government to get people's work done expeditiously. If Fadnavis continues this tradition, his political graph would grow, it said.

The Sena also took a swipe at the BJP over its ambitions to return to power. When Maharashtra is fighting the coronavirus pandemic, tackling cyclones, handling economic crisis how appropriate is it to dream about toppling a government which has a majority the edit questioned.

Sharad Pawar had made and broke several governments. He must have surely given Fadnavis some tips about how to play the role of an opposition leader, the Sena said.

VILLAGE HEADS ASKED TO REMOVE VAX HESITANCY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, June 2: The administrations of all 75 districts in Uttar Pradesh have been asked to involve the newly elected village pradhans to convince the rural population about the importance of vaccination and help them overcome the vaccine hesitancy.

The village pradhans are also being asked to dispel misinformation about the vaccine among people.

Vaccine hesitancy in villages is emerging as a major challenge for the state government and many departments have been mobilised to accelerate the vaccination campaign, particularly in villages.

The vaccination in rural areas remains extremely sluggish, said health department officials, adding that people are refusing to get vaccinated. In Barabanki, a group of



people even jumped into a river when they saw a vaccination team approaching. A senior health official said,

"We are asking the health officials and district magistrates in district to take the help of village pradhans and convince people to take the vaccine. We want the vaccination drive to cover maximum population before the third wave sets in."

The administration is also asking people who have taken the first dose of the vaccine to persuade others to get vaccinated.

People in the village are wary of getting vaccinated because they believe that immunity becomes zero for 10 days after the vaccine and this period makes them vulnerable to catching Covid. They are also afraid of getting fever after the vaccine.

'No vaccination, no salary'

Firozabad: In a bid to encourage Covid vaccination, the district administration here has ordered that government employees will not receive their salaries unless they are vaccinated, an official said here Wednesday. Chief Development Officer, Charchit Gaur said that District Magistrate Chandra Vijay Singh has issued an oral order of 'no vaccination, no salary'. As per the order, if an employee does not take Covid vaccine, the department will initiate action and stop their salary for the month of May, Gaur said. District treasury officer and other departmental heads have been given directions to implement the order and were asked to make a list and ensure vaccination, he said. The CDO said that the employees are trying to get themselves vaccinated in fear that their salary might be stopped.

'Covid-free Village' contest to eradicate virus in Maha



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, June 2: After five small villages in the state independently attained Covid-free status in May, the Maharashtra government has now come up with a unique proposal to inspire more such rural settlements to chase away the virus.

Rural Development Minister Hasan Mushrif Wednesday announced a 'Covid-free Village' Competition with fat cash prizes to be implemented across the state soon.

"If the villages become free from the coronavirus, then the talukas, districts, regions and the entire state will get rid of the scourge as soon as possible, with the participation of the common

of Antroli and lawyer Rururaj Deshmukh of Ghatane.

Both shot to overnight fame after their efforts to make their respective villages Corona-free earned a mention from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Thackeray just last week.

The competition shall be held in all the six revenue divisions of the state with top three prizes for each division - Rs 50 lakh, Rs 25 lakh, and Rs 15 lakh - to the villages coming out with flying colours in controlling the Covid-19 contagion, now compounded by the black fungus menace that is rearing its head in the state.

"We shall be giving away a total of 18 first, second, and third prizes in each division and the amount would be Rs 5.40 crore. This amount will be spent by the winner villages for carrying out various developments and other works in their vicinity," Mushrif said.

Additionally, these winning villages which perform well in making their regions Covid-free shall also be entitled to additional funds of Rs 50 lakh, Rs 25 lakh, and Rs 15 lakh each, as incentives and the money would be used for priority development projects.

Mushrif said that villages shall be judged on the basis of 22 different criteria by a special committee of experts, the details of which will be announced shortly and appealed to all villages to participate in the competition to make their areas 'Covid-free'.

people," he said.

The competition comes close on the heels of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray last week lavishing praises on villages that had virtually barred the gates on the coronavirus by taking strict initiatives at the local level and setting a national example.

The villages include Hivare Bazaar where the initiative was inspired by Padma Shri awardee Popatrao Pawar and Bhoysare Khurd (both in Ahmednagar district), Bhoisi in Nanded which earned the Centre's laurels and Antroli and Ghatane villages, both in Solapur district.

Incidentally, 21-year-old educated youth head the two villages - Komal Karpe, a botanist, is the Sarpanch

PROTECTIVE PROHIBITION



A view of a poster that says entry allowed only with Covid-19 vaccination certificate and RT-PCR test report, outside the gate of Dudheshwar Nath Mandir in Ghaziabad

UP to plant 30cr saplings in 2021

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Lucknow, June 2: The Uttar Pradesh government aims to plant 30 crore saplings in this year's plantation drive beginning July first week.

Last year, July 6, chief minister Yogi Adityanath oversaw the planting of 26.75 crore saplings of 201 varieties in a single day under Mission Vrikshropan 2020 and the Van Mahotsav campaign.

Chief Secretary Rajendra Kumar Tiwari has asked all district magistrates to identify land and supply saplings for the purpose to the district forest officers (DFOs) by June 15.

The chief secretary has directed district magistrates to immediately convene the meetings of plantation committees and ensure that the target is met.

'Disclose efficacy, safety data on vax'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, June 2: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav Wednesday demanded that the government should publicly share data on the safety and efficacy of various anti-Covid vaccines.

"Why is the government not publicly sharing data on effectiveness and safety of various vaccines? Transparent disclosure will help health care workers optimise uptake of vaccines and provide greater comfort to Indian citizens when it comes to infections and mortality," he said in a tweet.



We have full faith in our doctors but not in the government. It is good that coronavirus vaccines have come out; but only believe what the doctors say, not Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath

The SP chief made the demand while tagging a media report on lack of transparency in Covid-19 vaccine pricing.

He said amidst the Covid pandemic, a discussion is going on in the state over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Varanasi model and CM Yogi Adityanath's

Gorakhpur model. Yadav's latest tweet came hours after his demand that state boards should also cancel class 12 examinations as the CBSE did in the interest of students.

In a previous tweet in Hindi, he had said, "The insensitive BJP government had to bow down to the

pressure of the examinees-parents and to take cancel the CBSE class 12 exams."

"Other state boards' exams too should be cancelled now. No examination without vaccination," he said.

When the coronavirus vaccine was launched in January, Yadav had sought to know from the government how the drive will be conducted and when the poor will get the shot free of cost.

The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister had said he has faith in doctors of the country but not the government.

82 hostels for children of migrant sugarcane workers

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, June 2: The Maharashtra government has decided to provide 82 permanent residential accommodations for the children of the migrant sugarcane workers in the state under the Sant Bhagwan Baba Government Hostel Scheme.

The decision was taken at the state cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, said Social Justice Minister Dhananjay Munde.

In the first phase, 10 separate hostels each for boys and girls shall be started from the current academic year in Beed, Ahmednagar, Jalna, Nanded, Parbhani, Osmanabad, Latur, Aurangabad, Nashik, and Jalgaon.

These shall be launched in rented buildings with a capacity of 100 each, providing free lodging and boarding to the children, since the construction of new hostels will take time, said the minister. The scheme had been approved



by the previous Bharatiya Janata Party-led government in September 2019, but languished and Munde had revived it now, terming as a true tribute to the memory of the late Union Minister Gopinath Munde, who was his uncle.

Munde said that there are 232 sugar factories in Maharashtra which employ over 800,000 workers, both men and women as sugarcane cutters.

Acid attack victims distribute 'thalis' and smiles

THE DRIVE, JOINTLY SUPPORTED BY CHHANV FOUNDATION AND SHEROES HANGOUT CAFE RUN BY ACID ATTACK SURVIVORS, IS BEING RUN UNDER THE CAMPAIGN 'SMILE GOAL HAI'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Agra, June 2: Acid attack survivors in Agra are carrying out a food distribution drive for Covid patients and the needy people affected by the pandemic.

The drive, jointly supported by Chhanv Foundation and Sheroes Hangout Cafe run by acid attack survivors, is being run under the 'Smile Goal Hai' campaign which aims to bring smiles on people's faces in these challenging times.

Ashish Shukla, co-founder of Sheroes Hangout Cafe told PTI that the aim behind the initiative was to provide food to Covid patients and financially deprived people.

"We have begun distributing food packets and 'thalis' since May 17 to Covid patients at District Hospital in Agra and to the people living on footpaths or slums, he



added. "Initially we used to distribute about 40-50 'thalis' to Covid patients and vaccination staff at

This work makes me and my team happy as we are able to bring a smile to the faces of the needy people during this pandemic

ROOPA | ACID ATTACK SURVIVOR

Shukla said. "We have also been giving 70-80 food boxes containing sabzi, daal-chawal, roti, raita and salad," he added. "The kitchen staff of the Sheroes cafe prepares food with the utmost care of hygiene. And to ensure that we use hand sanitiser, face mask, hand gloves and safely deliver food packets on a daily basis," Shukla said.

Sharing her experience, Roopa, who works at the cafe, said that on Wednesday food packets were dis-

tributed to patients at the District Hospital and children who live on footpaths on MG Road.

"This work makes me and my team happy as we are able to bring a smile to the faces of the needy people during this pandemic," Roopa, an acid attack survivor, said.

The co-founder further said, "We will continue this food drive post Covid as well, as we know how difficult it is for homeless people to live without food. We will keep on delivering food boxes as per our capabilities."

Spokesperson at the Sheroes cafe, Ajay Tomar, who also helps in packing food boxes and delivering them to patients, said that people can join their initiative.

People can support us to continue this food drive by providing ration and other cooking essentials, he added.

of the day quote

No government structure or cooperation has ever been asked by the court to sell its property, assets to pay salaries of its employees. It has happened because of rampant corruption by the BJP

MANISH SISODIA | DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER OF DELHI

The state government delayed the tender process. The government has the right to appoint companies for crop insurance. They have failed. To hide these failures, it is blaming the Centre

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS | BJP LEADER

Collective efforts of people and the government are helping the state in overcoming the Covid-19 challenges despite lacking adequate manpower and facilities

ZORAMTHANGA | MIZORAM CHIEF MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Gunbattle breaks out

Srinagar: A gunbattle broke out between a surrendered militant and police inside a camp in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir after the terrorist snatched a rifle from a policeman and opened fire at him, officials said.

Left MPs stage protest in Ker

Thiruvananthapuram: Left Parliamentarians from Kerala Wednesday staged a protest before the Raj Bhavan here against the central government and sought recall of Lakshadweep administrator Praful Khoda Patel.

Six killed in MP road mishaps

Bhopal: Six persons were killed in two separate road accidents in Madhya Pradesh Wednesday, police said. Four persons were killed in Bhopal while two were killed in Betul district.

Delhi to plant 33L saplings

New Delhi: The Delhi government announced on Wednesday that it will start a tree plantation drive in the national capital from June 5 on the occasion of the World Environment Day.

Criminal escapes

Kanpur (UP): Eight people allegedly surrounded a police jeep and forcibly took away a wanted history-sheeter while he was being taken to Naubasta police station here Wednesday, an official said.



In the cities and towns of Haryana, the unemployment rate has reached 41.80 per cent

RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA | CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

BICYCLE MAYOR

Chirag Shah, a 32-year-old entrepreneur, was Wednesday appointed as the first 'bicycle mayor' of Thane by the Dutch social enterprise BYCS.



First lockdown improved air quality in India: Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: The first lockdown imposed in India last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic led to an improvement in air quality and a reduction in land surface temperature in major urban areas of the country, according to a study.

The findings, published in the journal Environmental Research, provide a strong evidence for potential environmental benefits through larger scale policy implementation. The study found that travel and work restrictions imposed early in the pandemic resulted in a significant environmental improvement, due to an

abrupt reduction in industrial activities and a major decrease in the use of land and air transport.

The researchers used data from a range of Earth observation sensors, including those from the European Space Agency's Sentinel-5p and NASA's MODIS sensors, to measure changes in surface temperature and atmospheric pollutants and aerosols.

They concentrated on six major urban areas: Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore, and Hyderabad, comparing data from the lockdown in March to May last year with pre-pandemic years. The study revealed a significant reduction in nitrogen dioxide (NO2),



a greenhouse gas emitted from the combustion of fossil fuels, equivalent to an average decrease of 12

per cent throughout India, and 31.5 per cent over the six cities. There was a 40 per cent reduction over the national capital, the researchers said.

In India alone, about 16,000 premature deaths occur annually due to exposure to poor air quality, they said.

The study also found land surface temperature over major cities in India substantially declined in contrast with the previous five-year average (2015-2019) with day temperatures being up to 1 degree Celsius cooler, and those at night up to 2 degrees Celsius cooler. "The lockdown provided a natural experiment to understand the coupling between urbanisation and local microclimate," said study co-author Jadu Dash, Professor at the University of Southampton in the

UK. "We clearly observed that reduction in atmospheric pollutants resulted in a decrease in local day and night-time temperature. This is an important finding to feed into the planning for sustainable urban development," Dash said. The study found that along with surface temperature, the atmospheric fluxes at the surface and top of the atmosphere also significantly declined over major parts of India.

The reduction of greenhouse gas concentration, higher atmospheric water vapour content and meteorological conditions played a complex role in the land and near-surface temperature reduction.

CENTRE-BENGAL ROW

WB GOVT TO STAND BY EX-CS: MAMATA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kolkata, June 2: West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee Wednesday asserted that her administration will stand by Alapan Bandyopadhyay in the tussle with the Centre which has seen the former chief secretary of the state being recalled to Delhi and later served a notice by the Union Home Ministry for allegedly violating the Disaster Management Act, by not attending a meeting called by the prime minister.

The chief minister also claimed the controversy was now a "closed chapter", though she did not explain how, since the officer who chose to retire Monday faces possible criminal action by the Centre for his alleged violation of the stringent DMA.

"Alapan Bandyopadhyay chapter is over now. The West Bengal government will give full support to Alapan Bandyopadhyay in whatever is going on with him," Banerjee told reporters when asked about her government's stance on the controversy. The state administration is now drafting replies to the Centre's notice to Bandyopadhyay and the West Bengal government, a top official said. "We are exploring all legal op-



tions and the replies will be sent very soon," he said. Bandyopadhyay, a 1987-batch IAS officer of West Bengal cadre, was set to retire May 31, but the state had last month sought and received permission to extend his tenure as chief secretary by three months as he was heading West Bengal's efforts to combat a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He was, however, sent a directive to report to North Bloc in Delhi by the Centre, shortly after a row broke out over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's post-cyclone review meeting with Banerjee May 28.

The chief minister chose to

meet the Prime Minister for just 15 minutes instead of a longer planned review meeting, upset that her former aide, BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari too had been called for the meeting at Kalaikunda airbase to review the damage wrought by cyclone 'Yaas'. The bureaucrat, instead of reporting to Delhi, chose to retire amid the Centre-state tussle. He was subsequently appointed as the CM's chief adviser.

The Union Home Ministry then served a show-cause notice on Bandyopadhyay under a stringent provision of the Disaster Management Act that entails imprisonment up to two years.

Was abducted by Indian agents, given shock, claims Choksi

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 2: Fugitive diamondaire Mehul Choksi, who went missing May 23 from Antigua and Barbuda and was captured in Dominica few days later, has said that he was abducted by Indian agents and was given shock with a Taser gun whenever he resisted, according to a media report.

He also alleged that he was beaten up by the officials. In a statement to Business Standard newspaper, Choksi said that he was abducted from the Caribbean Island of Antigua on the night of May 23 from where he was forcibly taken on a boat to the island of Dominica.

In a statement to Business Standard, Choksi, who is wanted in India in the Rs 13,500 crore Punjab and National Bank (PNB) loan fraud case, said that a friend of his in Antigua named Barbara Jabarika had invited him to her house.

"So I went into the house. In three minutes there were about 8 to 10 people and they said that we knew who you are and you have to go for investigation just now with us they just grabbed me and I tried to fight against them, but it was very, very hard they came at me from all sides, they tied my hands, my legs and everything," Choksi, who has been staying in Antigua and Barbuda since 2018 after taking citizenship in 2017 under the



Citizenship by Investment programme, said in the statement.

"Then they brought one wheelchair they tried to make a story that even the police of Antigua were involved in this half of them were India, very, very strong like army people. And they put me in the wheelchair and whenever I was fighting, they would shock me with a taser. They tied me from behind, my legs and my body, my hands, everything. And they put a gag, very big plastic gag in my face," he said.

"Then they got a mask and covered my head. And they put me in a boat, the whole entire wheelchair; then they put me on a big boat, a very big boat then they took off the mask. There were two Indians. They said they were agents from India. The two gentlemen who were with me, they were Gurjit Singh and there was another name," Business Standard quoted Choksi as saying.

Cooking gas cylinder blast kills eight in UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Gonda (UP), June 2: Eight people, including three children, were killed and seven others severely injured when a two-storey building collapsed following a cooking gas cylinder blast here, police said Wednesday.

The incident took place Tuesday night in Tikri village, they said. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed shock over the deaths and directed officials to provide better treatment to the injured. He asked the district magistrate to enquire the cause of the incident and submit the report to the government at the earliest.

"An LPG cylinder exploded in the house of one Nurul Hasan around 10 pm Tuesday, which led to the double-storey building to collapse. Eight people died in the incident while seven others were seriously injured," District Magistrate Markandey Shahi said. The deceased have been identified as Nisar Ahmad (35), Rubina Bano (32), Shamsad (28), Sairunisha (35), Shahbaz (14), Noori Saba (12), Meraj (11) and Mohammad Shoeb (2). Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Mishra said policemen rushed to the spot after receiving information about the incident. "Forensic teams are collecting samples from the site and a probe has been ordered into the incident," he said.

Shahi said the house of Nurul Hasan was completely destroyed while that of his neighbour Somnath Prajapati was damaged. The district administration is extending monetary help to the next of kin of the deceased and affected persons under different schemes, he said.

The family of Hasan was also dealing in firecrackers' business and there are chances that explosive material could have been present in the house, the sources said. But no police or administrative official has so far issued any statement.

Gujarat, MP, U'khand cancel Class XII exams

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: Following the Centre's decision to cancel class 12 CBSE board exams in view of the Covid pandemic, several states including Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand called off their board exams Wednesday while few others said they will take a call soon.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi Tuesday asserted that the decision to cancel the exams has been taken in the interest of students and the anxiety among students, parents and teachers must be put to an end. Soon after, CBSE and the Haryana government also announced cancellation of their respective board exams.

Maharashtra, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa and Uttar Pradesh are among the states which said they are soon going to announce a final decision in this regard.

Security, intel officials face new gag order

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: The Centre has amended its rules barring officers who had worked in intelligence and security related organisations from publishing sensitive information by adding new clauses, including the conditions that they can't share any material on 'domain of the organisation' or its personnel.

The Central Civil Services (Pension) Amendment Rules, 2021, dated May 31 and notified late Tuesday, also states that they need to take prior permission from the 'head of the organisation' for publishing such material. In the earlier 2007 rules, permission was to be taken from the head of the department. All employees would have to give an undertaking to the

head of organisation that they would not publish such information failing which pension can be 'withheld or withdrawn', the amendment states.

The rules apply to employees who retire from the Intelligence Bureau (IB), Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Central Economic Intelligence Bureau, Directorate of Enforcement (ED), Aviation Research Centre, BSF, CRPF, NSG, CISF and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police. According to the Central Civil Services (Pension) Amendment Rules 2007 that was notified in March 2008, all such employees are already barred from publishing any sensitive information, 'the disclosure of which would prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of India'.

RARE SUN RING



A solar halo forms in the sky after heavy rain in few parts of Hyderabad

PTI PHOTO

594 docs have died of Covid in 2nd wave: IMA

DELHI, BIHAR, UP AND RAJASTHAN HAVE LOST THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DOCTORS

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 2: As many as 594 doctors have died due to COVID-19 in the ongoing second wave with Delhi recording the maximum 107 fatalities, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has said.

According to the IMA, 748 doctors died of the infection across the country in the first wave of the pandemic. Delhi recorded 107 deaths in the second wave, followed by Bihar 96, Uttar Pradesh 67, Rajasthan 43, Jharkhand 39 and Andhra Pradesh and Telangana



32 each, according to data compiled at the IMA's COVID-19 registry. "Last year 748 doctors across India succumbed to COVID-19, while in the current wave we have lost 594 doctors in a short period," IMA president J A Jayalal said.

The data shared by IMA showed that as many as 107 doctors had died in Delhi during the second wave. Bihar saw the deaths of 96 doctors, while 67 died in Uttar Pradesh, 43 in Rajasthan, and 39 in Jharkhand, too. However, the IMA

IMA SEEKS STRONG LAW

The IMA has been seeking an effective and strong law "against healthcare violence" and wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah Tuesday making reference to an incident in Assam Monday where a mob thrashed a doctor after a Covid-19 patient died. "It was an extremely inhuman attack," the IMA said. The doctor, Seuj Kumar, was working in the Covid care centre in Hojai district of the state. The Indian Medical Association urged the minister to consider its appeal on emergency basis and enact a strong and effective Act to safeguard the healthcare professionals of the country.

being a voluntary organisation of physicians in India, it is possible that the actual number of fatalities far exceeds these statistics, since the association only keeps a record of its 3.5 lakh members, out of the

12-lakh-odd doctors in the country. The IMA data, however, provides a reliable approximation of the physician community's plight in India, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

national

of the day quote

We have three suggestions before us right now. One is to cancel the exams, the second is to declare results on internal assessment of marks (secured during the academic year) or allow those who are keen on taking the exam to appear for it, and the third is to declare both the results (internal assessment and final examination) together

PRAMOD SAWANT | GOA CHIEF MINISTER

Be it UP or West Bengal, the role of governors should be within constitutional limits. But this is not happening in the BJP regime. In West Bengal, while there is undue interference of the governor, in UP governor's role is that of an advisor only

AKHILESH YADAV | SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT

What type of agitation (by farmers) is this that elected representatives are not being allowed to take part in any public function, visit hospitals to enquire about the wellbeing of patients or freely travel to their homes? Such things will not be tolerated

ANIL VIJ | HARYANA'S HOME MINISTER

SHORT TAKES

Man kills infant son and wife

Kota (Rajasthan): A man hacked his wife to death and then dragged her body on the street here, police said Wednesday, adding that their infant son, who was injured in the attack, died at a hospital later. In the incident that took place Tuesday night in the Bhatapara area, the accused was identified as Sunil Valmiki (40) alias Pintu, they said. Earlier Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) and Circle Officer (CO) Ram Kalyan told PTI that Valmiki surrendered at Rampura police station and confessed to the crime, leaving his wife's body on the street.

Assault on doc: 24 held in Assam

Guwahati: At least 24 people, including a woman were arrested by the police after a doctor at a government hospital in Assam's Hojai district, was brutally beaten up. Seuj Kumar Senapati, posted in Udali Covid Care Centre in Hojai, around 140 km from Guwahati, was kicked and pounded with metal trash and bricks by relatives of a Covid patient who had died, allegedly due to oxygen shortage, police said Wednesday.

Man kills wife for 'salad'

Shamli: In a bizarre incident, a man, in a fit of rage, hacked his wife to death and injured his son after he was not being served salad with the dinner. The accused has since been absconding. The incident took place in Gogawan Jalalpur area here Monday night. The police spokesman said that Murli had demanded salad along with the dinner but his wife was busy with other work and did not serve him the salad with the food that led to an altercation between them and an angry Murli, attacked her with a hoe.

Salary of 200 cops stopped

Patna: Around 200 policemen, including nine SHOs, in Bihar's Muzaffarpur has been penalised for inefficient work, as seen from rising incidents of crime in their respective jurisdictions. Muzaffarpur's Senior Superintendent of Police, Jayant Kant, has stopped the salaries of these police personnel, including the SHOs of Bela, Sahebganj, Hatauri, Peeyar, Mushari, Hatha, Panapur, Sikandarpur, and Bariyarpur.



In J&K besides security, COVID has become another excuse to prevent me from reaching out to people in distress. Government of India wants to obfuscate the truth and brush such tragedies under the run

MEHBOOBA MUFTI | PDP PRESIDENT AND FORMER J&K CM

SIDHU 'MISSING'

With former Punjab Cabinet minister Navjot Singh Sidhu putting up more at his ancestral house in Patiala of late, posters saying "Sidhu is missing" from his Assembly constituency in Amritsar (East) surfaced on Wednesday, promising ₹50,000 reward for anyone who 'finds' the MLA



ਗੁਮਸ਼ੁਦਾ ਦੀ ਤਲਾਸ਼
ਨਾਮ - ਨਵਜੋਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਧੂ
ਲੱਭਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਨਾਮ
50,000/-

SC pulls up Centre on vaccination policy



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: Observing courts cannot be "silent spectators" when constitutional rights of citizens are infringed by executive policies, the Supreme Court on Wednesday slammed the Centre's Covid vaccination policy, describing as "prima facie arbitrary and irrational" allowing states and private hospitals to charge those in the 18-44 age group while the jabs were offered free for groups in the first two phases, and ordered its review.

Seeking to scrutinise the Covid vaccination policy in detail, the top court also asked the Centre to provide information including as to how Rs 35,000 crore, earmarked for vaccines, has been spent so far, and to place on record all relevant documents and file notings reflecting its thinking culminating in the policy. The apex court's May 31 order, uploaded on its site on Wednesday, was critical of the Centre's decisions on liberalized vaccination policy, differential pricing of vaccines for Centre, states and private hospitals, basis

of such a norm and mandatory registration on CoWIN App for booking slots for jabs in view of huge digital divide between rural and urban India and sought response from the government on its queries in in two weeks.

The apex court said that in grappling with the second wave of the Covid pandemic, it does not intend to second-guess the wisdom of the executive when it chooses between two competing and efficacious policy measures.

The court, however, added that it will continue to exercise jurisdiction to determine "if the chosen policy conforms to the standards of reasonableness, militates against manifest arbitrariness and protects the right to life of all persons". "Constitution does not envisage courts to be silent spectators when constitutional rights of citizens are infringed by executive policies", the bench said in its order in a hard hitting response to the Centre's submissions in an affidavit that the judiciary should not enter into the policy making domain. "The Union Budget for Financial Year 2021-2022 had ear-

marked Rs 35,000 crore for procuring vaccines. In light of the Liberalized Vaccination Policy, the Central Government is directed to clarify how these funds have been spent so far and why they cannot be utilized for vaccinating persons aged 18-44 years," said a special bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud, L Nageswara Rao and S Ravindra Bhat.

"We direct the Union of India(UoI) to undertake a fresh review of its vaccination policy addressing the concerns raised," said the order which is a part of a series of judicial decisions rendered on the suo motu case on Covid-19 management in the country.

Finding fault with the vaccination policy, it said unlike the previous one, it did not prioritize persons with comorbidities and this became important in view of the fact that in the second wave, persons between 18-44 years of age have suffered severe effects of infection including deaths in unfortunate cases.

"Due to the changing nature of the pandemic, we are now faced with a situation where the 18-44 age group also needs to be vaccinated, although priority may be retained between different age groups on a scientific basis.

"Hence, due to the importance of vaccinating individuals in the 18-44 age group, the policy of the Central Government for conducting free vaccination themselves for groups under the first 2 phases, and replacing it with paid vaccination by the State/UT Governments and private hospitals for the persons between 18-44 years is, prima facie, arbitrary and irrational," Justice Chandrachud said in the 32-page order. Healthcare workers and those above 45 years figured in the first two phases.

RISKY RIDE



Domestic gas supply men ride with the cylinders on a two-wheeler in Coimbatore

PTI PHOTO

No clinical trials necessary for global vaccines in India

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 2: Globally available Covid 19 vaccines can now be launched in India without the requirement of post approval clinical trials and testing every batch of the vaccine.

The Drugs Controller General of India in a notification has said that vaccines which have been approved for restricted use by US FDA, EMA, UK MHRA and PMDA Japan and under the WHO Emergency Use Listing (EUL) and where millions of individuals have been vaccinated, the requirement of conducting post ap-

proval clinical trials and the requirement of testing every batch of the vaccine by Central Drugs Laboratory (CDL), Kasauli can be exempted if the vaccine batch has been certified and released by National Control Laboratory of country of origin.

However, scrutiny and review of their summary lot protocol and certificate of analysis of the batch shall be undertaken by CDL, Kasauli for batch release as per standard procedures and the requirement of assessment of the first 100 beneficiaries for first 7 days for safety outcomes before the vaccine rolled out

for further immunisation programme and other procedures for applications will remain the same.

This nod is likely to apply first to Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. AstraZeneca's Covishield and Russia's Sputnik have already been approved.

It is not clear whether the Chinese vaccines will come under this ambit or they will apply in India.

This is being done to augment the increased availability of imported vaccines for meeting the national requirements even though the domestic manufacturing is being lifted.

32 die of black fungus in 20 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Indore, June 2: As many as 32 patients have died of mucormycosis in the last 20 days at a government-run hospital in Madhya Pradesh's Indore city, an official said Wednesday.

Of late, several cases of mucormycosis, also known as the black fungus, a serious infection, have been found in people who have recovered from Covid-19.

The Maharaja Yeshwantrao Hospital (MYH) in the state's industrial hub Indore has been treating a number of black fungus patients not only from here, but also from various other districts.

"The first patient of black fungus was admitted in the MYH May 13 and since then, a total of 439 patients have been admitted till now in the hospital. Out of them, 84 people were discharged after treatment, while 32 patients have died so far," MYH superintendent Pramendra Thakur said in a statement.

The present black fungus mortality rate in the hospital is 7.29 per cent, he said, claiming that the fatality rate was lower than other hospitals in the state.

Cabinet approves Model Tenancy Act

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: The Union Cabinet Wednesday approved the Model Tenancy Act under which separate rent authorities, courts and tribunals will be set up in districts to protect the interest of both the owner and tenant.

For residential premises, tenants will have to submit security deposit of maximum two months' rent, while incase of commercial property, six months' rent will have to be deposited. States and union territories can adopt the Model Tenancy Act by enacting fresh legislation or they can amend their existing rental laws suitably.

The Act mandates for written agreement for all new tenancies, which will have to be submitted to concerned district 'Rent Authority'. Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said that the move will help overhaul the legal framework with respect to rental housing across the country.

The government said that the MTA will be applicable prospectively and will not affect existing tenancies. Rent and duration of tenancy will be fixed by mutual



consent between owner and tenant through a written agreement.

The Act says that no landlord or property manager can withhold any essential supply to the premises occupied by the tenant. According to the ministry, ten-

ant will not be evicted during the continuance of tenancy agreement unless otherwise agreed to in writing by both the parties.

Under the Model Tenancy Act, unless otherwise agreed in the tenancy agreement, the landlord

will be responsible for activities like structural repairs except those necessitated by damage caused by the tenant, white-washing of walls and painting of doors and windows, changing and plumbing pipes when necessary and internal and external electrical wiring and related maintenance when necessary.

On his part, tenant will be responsible for drain cleaning, witches and socket repairs, kitchen fixtures repairs, replacement of glass panels in windows, doors and maintenance of gardens and open spaces, among others.

"Where the landlord proposes to make any improvement in or construct any additional structure on any premises, which has been let out to a tenant and the tenant refuses to allow the landlord to make such improvement or construct such additional structure, the landlord may make an application in this behalf to the Rent Court," the Act stated.

The Act stated that the state government and union territories, in consultation with the jurisdictional high court can appoint district judge or additional district judge as 'Rent Tribunal' in each district.

'86% Indians maintain digital hygiene amid WFH'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 2: While there has been an increase in Covid-themed attacks targeting people working remotely, more Indians (86 per cent of those surveyed) have implemented more protection for their digital devices at home, a report showed Wednesday.

Nearly 88 per cent of Indian consumers feel more digitally connected since the pandemic via devices, online activities and connected homes, and 57 per cent of them that digital hygiene or the lack of it can put them and their families at risk, according to cybersecurity firm McAfee's e2021 Consumer Security Mindset Survey.

Cybercriminals have worked



feverishly to launch Covid-themed attacks that increased by 240 per cent in Q3 2020 and 114 per cent in Q4 last year, with an average of 648 new threats per minute.

"While the study indicates that more Indians are digitally connected owing to the pandemic, they are also now actively taking steps to keep themselves protected from

online threats," said Venkat Krishnapur, vice-president of engineering and managing director, McAfee India.

"The spike in our digital footprints during this time, makes it critical for everyone to understand the importance of online security and take measures towards protecting themselves," Krishnapur said in a statement.

Two out of three Indians check if the network that they are joining is secure before connecting.

Furthermore, more than half (53 per cent) feel more vulnerable to risks when someone has visited their home and has connected to their internet.

"Remote working, online learning, and a surge in the usage of

connected devices due to more time being spent indoors has resulted in increased digital dependence among Indians," Krishnapur said.

More than half of Indians (58 per cent) indicate having a good understanding of the data they store on their mobile devices.

Nearly 81 per cent of Indians said that since 2020, members in their household have started to participate in distance learning via virtual platforms.

However, less than half (36 per cent) of these purchased new security/protection technology to protect their family and home when distance learning was introduced into their new life routine, the findings showed.

Juhi's suit against 5G technology 'defective': HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: The Delhi High Court Wednesday termed as "defective" the suit of actress-environmentalist Juhi Chawla against setting up of 5G wireless networks in the country and said it was filed for "media publicity". The court also questioned Chawla for filing the suit without giving any representation to the government on her concerns related to the technology. Justice J R Midha said the plaintiffs, Chawla



and two others, were required to first approach the government for their rights and if denied, they should come to the court. The court said, "It is a defective plaint. This suit has been filed only for media publicity and nothing more than that. It is very shocking."

"Did you approach the government with a representation? If yes, is there any denial?," the court asked to which the plaintiffs' counsel replied in negative. The court said in the suit, the plaintiff says 'I have personal knowledge of paragraphs 1 to 8' only.

"Plaintiff has no personal knowledge of the plaint. I am surprised. How can it be? Is the suit permissible when the plaintiff has no personal knowledge of the averment? I have not seen a suit where a person says I don't know, please conduct an inquiry," the judge said. The court asked about the knowledge of plaintiffs on the facts and warned to prosecute them on filing false claims. The suit, filed by Chawla, social worker Veeresh Malik and Teena Vachani, said that if the telecom industry's plans for 5G come to fruition, no person, animal, bird, insect and plant on earth will be able to avoid exposure, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to levels of RF radiation that are 10x to 100x times greater than what exists today.

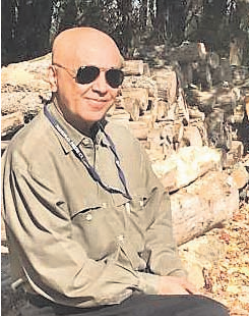
international



It is more important how we and Pakistan can build trust and how China and India can build trust regarding Afghanistan regardless of other issues. It is about peace in the whole region
WANG YI | FOREIGN MINISTER, CHINA

INDIA AMERICA TODAY EDITOR PASSES AWAY

Tejinder Singh, the founder editor of the Washington-based India America Today newspaper has died. Tuesday, Pentagon spokesperson John Kirby paid tributes to Singh calling him "a real gentleman, good reporter, damn good reporter"



of the day quote

It is now increasingly clear to leaders everywhere and to ordinary people that we are not going to succeed in overcoming the economic crisis this pandemic triggered, unless we bring the pandemic to a durable end
KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA | MANAGING DIRECTOR, IMF

All BRICS countries stressed the need to strengthen multilateralism, not within some abstract format, but through a universal format that is based on the framework of the United Nations (UN) Charter
SERGEI LAVROV | FOREIGN MINISTER, RUSSIA

We must put an end to all foreign interference, which involves the withdrawal of all foreign mercenaries' forces on Libyan soil: the Russians, the Turkish, the Syrian mercenaries and all the others
EMMANUEL MACRON | PRESIDENT, FRANCE

SHORT TAKES

Mixing, matching of vax permitted

Ottawa: Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization has announced its updated guidance to allow mixing and matching approved Covid-19 vaccines in most scenarios. Under the updated guidance, people who received a first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine may receive Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna for their second dose, unless contraindicated. Four vaccines, developed by Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson, have been authorized for use in Canada to date.

Pakistan to give arms to Tajikistan

Islamabad: Pakistan Wednesday signed a defence agreement with Tajikistan under which it will sell domestically manufactured arms to the Central Asian country. The agreement was part of several memorandums of understanding signed between the two countries during the visit of Tajik President Emomali Rahmon to Pakistan. Rahmon earlier arrived in Islamabad on a two-day visit and was received at the Prime Minister House where he was given a guard of honour.

1 killed, 16 injured after tornado, hail

Harbin: One person was killed and 16 others were injured as tornado and hail lashed northeast China's Heilongjiang Province Tuesday, local authorities said Wednesday. The extreme weather has thrashed the city of Shangzhi for about 30 minutes starting from 5:30 pm, with four local townships being affected, according to the municipal authorities, the Xinhua news agency reported. As of 6 am Wednesday, it was reported that the tornado had damaged or toppled 148 houses and ravaged through farmlands.

Fire breaks out at oil refinery

Tehran: A massive fire broke out Wednesday night at the oil refinery serving Iran's capital, sending thick plumes of black smoke over Tehran. It wasn't immediately clear if there were injuries. The fire struck the state-owned Tondgooyan Petrochemical Co to the south of Tehran, said Mansour Darajati, the director-general of the capital's crisis management team. Firefighters believe it struck a pipeline for liquefied petroleum gas at the facility, Darajati told Iranian state television.

Chemical cargo ship sinks off SL, fouling rich fishing waters

AGENCIES

Colombo, June 2: A cargo ship carrying tonnes of chemicals sank off Sri Lanka's west coast, its navy said Wednesday, and tonnes of plastic pellets have fouled the country's rich fishing waters in one of its worst-ever marine disasters.

The government Wednesday suspended fishing along an 80-km (50-mile) stretch of the island's coastline, affecting 5,600 fishing boats, and hundreds of soldiers have been deployed to clean affected beaches.

The Singapore-registered MV X-Press Pearl, carrying 1,486 containers, including 25 tonnes of ni-

The ship has dealt a death blow to our lives. We can't go into the sea which means we can't make a living

JOSHUA ANTHONY | HEAD OF A REGION FISHING UNION

tric acid along with other chemicals and cosmetics, was anchored off Sri Lanka's west coast when a fire erupted onboard after an explosion May 20.

Flaming containers laden with chemicals tumbled into the sea from the ship's deck as emergency crews sought to contain the blaze over the ensuing two weeks.



The craft began to sink early Wednesday, and a salvage crew tried to tow the vessel to deeper water away from the coast, Fisheries Minister Kanchana Wijesekera said in a tweet, but the attempt

was abandoned after several hours. "The towing of the fire-engulfed X-Press Pearl ship was stopped due to the rear end of the vessel hitting the sea bed," said navy spokesman Captain Indika de Silva.

Photos taken by the country's air force showed the charred wreck of the ship spewing white smoke as it listed to the right and began sinking, and part of it soon touched the seabed, just 22 metres (73 feet) deep in the immediate area.

The navy was preparing to deal with an oil spill after the ship sank, Silva added.

"The ship has dealt a death blow to our lives," said Joshua Anthony, head of a region fishing union. "We can't go into the sea which means we can't make a living."

The MV X-Press Pearl had left the port of Hazira in India May 15 and was on its way to Singapore via Colombo.

Iran's largest warship catches fire, sinks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tehran, June 2: The largest warship in the Iranian navy caught fire and later sank Wednesday in the Gulf of Oman under unclear circumstances, semiofficial news agencies reported.



The Fars and Tasnim news agencies said efforts failed to save the support warship Kharg, named after the island that serves as the main oil terminal for Iran.

The blaze began around 2:25 AM and firefighters tried to contain it, Fars said. The vessel sank near the Iranian port of Jask, some 1,270 kilometers (790 miles) southeast of Tehran on the Gulf of Oman near the Strait of Hormuz — the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf.

The Kharg serves as one of a few vessels in the Iranian navy capable of providing replenishment at sea for its other ships. It also can lift heavy cargo and serve as a launch point for helicopters.

The warship, built in Britain and launched in 1977, entered the Iranian navy in 1984 after lengthy negotiations that followed Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

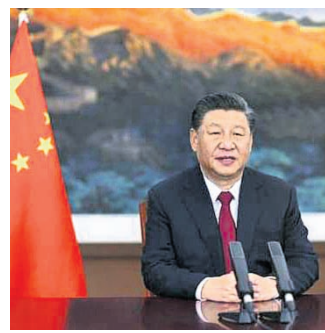
Xi asks media, diplomats to tone down aggressive stand

The remarks appear to be related to Washington's move to use an international investigation into the origins of the coronavirus to target China, which has gained momentum in recent weeks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Beijing, June 2: President Xi Jinping has called for better international communication, urging the bellicose official Chinese media and "wolf warrior" diplomats to adopt a tone that displays openness and conveys modesty, in what observers see as a rare admission of Beijing's growing isolation exacerbated by Covid-19.

In a comment seen as an expression of dissatisfaction with the current lot of "wolf warrior" diplomats and bellicose official media outlets, Xi spoke of the need for conveying the message with modesty and humility.



Xi said a tone that displayed openness, confidence and conveyed modesty and humility must be maintained, the state-run China Daily said in its report on the speech.

China needs a voice that matches its national strength and international status, it said.

"It is necessary to give better play to the role of high-level experts and use platforms and channels such as important international conferences and forums and foreign mainstream media to speak out," Xi said.

He also emphasised the efforts to introduce the Chinese culture abroad and strive to shape a reli-

able, admirable and respectable image of the Communist giant.

"It is necessary to make friends, unite and win over the majority, and constantly expand the circle of friends [when it comes to] international public opinion," Xi was quoted as saying.

Asked whether China will take a different approach in its diplomatic efforts in the light of Xi's remarks, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here Wednesday that the comments were in line with China's "peaceful development".

"I want to stress that enhancing and improving our international publicity work and better build our capability in international publicity will help China to create a more favourable external environment for our reform and development," he said.

"This is in line with what we need for China's peaceful development as well as reform and opening up. It is also conducive to the trend of peace and development. It is both in the interest of China and beyond," Wang said.

Probable link between Pfizer shots, myocarditis

AGENCIES

Jerusalem, June 2: Israel's Health Ministry said Tuesday it found the small number of heart inflammation cases observed mainly in young men who received Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine in Israel were likely linked to their vaccination.

Pfizer has said it has not observed a higher rate of the condition, known as myocarditis, than would normally be expected in the general population.

In Israel, 275 cases of myocarditis were reported between December 2020 and May 2021 among more than 5 million vaccinated people, the ministry said in disclosing the findings of a study it commissioned to examine the matter.

Most patients who experienced heart inflammation spent no more than four days in hospital and 95% of the cases were classified as mild, according to the study, which the ministry said was conducted by three teams of experts.

The study found "there is a probable link between receiving the second dose (of Pfizer) vaccine and the appearance of myocarditis among men aged 16 to 30," it said in a statement.

According to the findings, such



a link was observed more among men aged 16 to 19 than in other age groups. Pfizer said in a statement that it is aware of the Israeli observations of myocarditis, noting that no causal link to its vaccine has been established.

Adverse events are thoroughly reviewed and Pfizer meets regularly with the Vaccine Safety Department of the Israeli Ministry of Health to review data, it said.

A US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisory group last month recommended further study of the possibility of a link between myocarditis and mRNA vaccines, which include those from Pfizer and Moderna Inc.

CDC monitoring systems had not found more cases than would be expected in the population, but the advisory group said in a statement that members felt healthcare providers should be made aware of reports of a "potential adverse event."

EXTREMIST BILL

Russia to bar critics from contesting polls

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Moscow, June 2: The upper house of Russia's parliament Wednesday overwhelmingly backed legislation that is expected to be used to ban allies of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny from running in elections.

The bill approved by the Federation Council would make it impossible to run in elections for leaders, sponsors and rank-and-file members of "extremist" organisations, a designation being considered for Navalny's organisations.

A Russian court is considering whether to designate his political network an "extremist" organisation and could make a decision as early as next week.

Kremlin critics say Russian authorities are widening a crackdown on the opposition ahead of parliamentary elections in

September.

A total of 146 senators backed the legislation, while one voted against and one abstained. The bill will now have to be signed by President Vladimir Putin to become law.

The legislation could affect not only senior members and activists of Navalny's political network but potentially tens of thousands of Russians who supported its work with donations.

Leaders of such groups will not be able to run in parliamentary elections for five years while members and those who helped finance their work will be banned from running for three years.

Russian authorities had for years tolerated opposition groups including Navalny's political movement but Kremlin critics say authorities are moving to remove any vestiges of dissent.

WITH THE WIND



A rider is covered in mud as Native Americans from all over the United States participate in an Indian relay race over Memorial Day weekend at the Osage County Fairgrounds in Pawhuska, Oklahoma

Plant-based diets could help prevent the next pandemic

ALL VIRUSES HAVE ARISEN WHERE ANIMALS AND HUMANS MEET, AND RAISING BILLIONS OF ANIMALS AS FOOD WILL HAVE EFFECTS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Saskatoon, June 2: Viruses like Covid-19, SARS, bovine spongiform, swine flu and avian flu all have something in common: They all come from animals, described by scientists as zoonotic diseases.

Yet, these diseases do not really "come from animals." After all, it is not like animals conspire against humans, throwing Covid-19 over the backyard fence. When we say this pandemic "comes from animals," it means that these diseases come from the way society raises, harvests and eats animals.

A well-rounded policy strategy for avoiding the next pandemic should include reducing the demand for animal products. Fortunately, an effective ap-

proach need not imply government telling people what they should or should not eat.

Zoonosis and food production

The fact that a growing list of pandemics originate exclusively within the animal and agricultural sectors is nothing new to a small but growing group of independent scientists. The United Nations recently voiced a similar concern.

In its report, Preventing the Next Pandemic: Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission, the UN laid out some of the things needed for improving health governance in relation to food production.

Some of the policy options include expanding scientific inquiry into the environmental di-



mensions of zoonotic diseases and developing and implementing stronger biosecurity measures. It calls for policies that strengthen animal health and increased capacity in monitoring

and regulating food production.

Origins of a pandemic

Early cases of Covid-19 were linked to markets in China where wild animals were sold. Pangolins

and bats have been identified as possible sources of infection, neither of which is on the shopping lists of the average global consumer. The deeper roots of this pandemic, however, are more complicated.

Many earlier viruses have originated in the animal husbandry industrial production chain.

In the 1980's the United Kingdom's cattle production began to see outbreaks of Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow disease), and its human equivalent variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

In 1997, the bird flu (H5N1) was traced to chicken factories in China. In 2009, the swine flu (H1N1) originated in pig farms in Mexico and North Carolina in the United States.

More recently, a possible new

strain of Covid-19 has been found in farms in Denmark, where mink are raised for fur coats.

Plant-based diet as policy

A reason why politicians might not see a move towards a plant-based diet as a viable policy option could be because it relies on changing peoples' behaviour, and some would argue that governments should not be in the business of trying to impose dietary choices. Yet there is good reason to think that people are already open to transitioning to a plant-based diet.

According to a recent UN survey, 30 per cent of the world supports a plant-based diet as a climate policy. The number of people attempting to eat plant-based diets is growing fast.

business



Dynamic working means that the majority of our employees will have the flexibility in managing their own working patterns: flexibility in where they work from and flexibility in when they work
ANNE RICHARDS | GLOBAL CEO, FIDELITY

ASSOCHAM SEEKS WAGE SUPPORT

Industry chamber Assocham Wednesday recommended the government to extend relief measures such as regulatory easing, wage support, and interest subsidy for the MSMEs which are reeling under the severe impact of Covid-19



of the day quote

The small and micro-businesses have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and we are pleased to help them grow their business during these tough times. We are taking a major step ahead in our vision to offer the best possible CRM experience to our small business customers

MANI VEMBU | COO, ZOHO

The impact of the crude oil price surge on oil public sector companies is expected to be mixed. An improvement in the gross refining margins (GRMs) is expected owing to increasing demand

SABYASACHI MAJUMDAR | GROUP HEAD AND SENIOR VP, ICRA

Our study shows utilising ₹1,000 crore can provide oxygen support to nearly 1 lakh beds and go a long way in preparing the country's health infrastructure for future pandemic waves

NITIN KANSAL | DIRECTOR, CRISIL

SHORT TAKES

New WA tools to bind people, biz

New Delhi: WhatsApp Wednesday announced new features to help businesses chat with people with ease and grow further. The company said that it has cut down the time it takes for businesses to get up and running from weeks to just five minutes. The Facebook-owned company said that it is also rolling out new messaging features that can help people get business done faster.

'Economy will bounce back'

New Delhi: Hitting back to former Finance Minister P Chidambaram for his comments on the economy, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur Wednesday said India's growth will rebound on the back of consistent reforms and strong fundamentals. Thakur also regretted that "leaderless Congress (was) behaving like an ostrich reading economic data". "Indian economy is resilient and will rebound in the times ahead based on consistent reforms that have ensured strong fundamentals through these difficult times, Thakur said.

Follow a graded approach: FICCI

New Delhi: With the number of coronavirus infections declining in the country, industry chamber FICCI has suggested the government to follow a graded approach in unlocking economic activities. The chamber has suggested opening up of economic activities depending upon the positivity rate of Covid-19 cases in that region or district. It has divided regions at four levels: minimal risk, low risk, medium risk and high risk.

US suspends additional tariffs

Washington D.C.: The US Wednesday announced tariffs on six countries, including India that have imposed or are considering equalisation levy/digital services tax on e-commerce companies but immediately suspended the taxes for up to six months to provide additional time to complete the ongoing multilateral negotiations on international taxation at the OECD and G20. USTR Katherine Tai, announced the conclusion of the one-year Section 301 investigations of Digital Service Taxes adopted by Austria, India, Italy, Spain, Turkey and the UK.

PRELIMINARY TREND

India's May exports rise to \$32.21bn; trade deficit at \$6.32bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: India's exports grew by 67.39 per cent to \$32.21 billion in May driven by healthy growth in sectors such as engineering, petroleum products and gems and jewellery, even as trade deficit widened to \$6.32 billion, according to government data released Wednesday. Exports in May last year stood at \$19.24 billion and in May 2019 it was at \$29.85 billion, the commerce ministry's preliminary data showed.

Imports in May rose by 68.54 per cent to \$38.53 billion, from \$22.86 billion in May 2020. In May 2019, imports stood at \$46.68 billion.

"India is thus a net importer in May 2021 with a trade deficit of \$6.32 billion, an increase of 74.69 per cent over trade deficit USD 3.62 billion in May 2020 and reduction by 62.49 per cent over trade deficit \$16.84 billion in May 2019," the ministry said.

The country's merchandise exports in April had jumped nearly three-fold to \$30.63 billion, even as the trade deficit widened to \$15.1 billion.

Oil imports during May this year rose to \$9.45 billion, as compared to \$3.57 billion in May 2020. In May 2019, it stood at \$12.59 billion.

Exports during April-May this year have jumped to \$62.84 billion, as against \$29.6 billion in the same period last year. It was \$55.88 billion in April-May 2019, the data showed.

Imports during April-May 2021



EXPORTS DURING APRIL-MAY THIS YEAR HAVE JUMPED TO \$62.84 BILLION, AS AGAINST USD 29.6 BILLION IN THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR

IMPORTS IN MAY ROSE BY 68.54% TO \$38.53 BILLION, FROM \$22.86 BILLION IN MAY 2020. IN MAY 2019, IMPORTS STOOD AT \$46.68 BILLION

were \$84.25 billion, up from \$39.98 billion in April-May 2020. In Apr-May 2019 it stood at \$89.07 billion.

In Apr-May 2021, oil imports aggregated at \$20.32 billion, up from \$8.24 billion in Apr-May 2020. In Apr-May 2019 it was \$24.16 billion.

ers have so far largely refused to work with the industry as cannabis is still a classified substance at the federal level.

"In the past, like many employers, we've disqualified people from working at Amazon if they tested positive for marijuana use," Clark said. "However, given where state laws are moving across the US, we've changed course."

Amazon was hit with a proposed class action suit, which claimed that the company was violating a New York City law by testing applicants for jobs at local facilities for marijuana, according to a Westlaw report.

The company does not allow marijuana sales on its platform.

Amazon also said it is tweaking its worker productivity tracking tool, "Time off Task."

Amazon backs proposed US legislation to legalise cannabis

REUTERS

Washington D.C., June 2: Amazon has said that it supports a proposed US legislation to legalize cannabis at the federal level, and would drop weed-testing requirements for some recruitments.

The e-commerce company's public policy team will be actively supporting The Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act of 2021 (MORE Act), which seeks to legalise marijuana at the federal level, its consumer boss Dave Clark said in a blog post.

Amazon will also no longer screen its job applicants for marijuana use for any positions not regulated by the Department of Transportation, Clark added.

While many US states have legalized marijuana use, employ-



'Tata Power caters to 9mn customers across Odisha'



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Tata Power currently caters to a customer base of 2.6 million in five circles of Central Odisha and has a total customer base of 9 million across the entire state, said Sanjay Banga, President of T&D, Tata Power.

Addressing the celebration of the first year of its successful operations in Odisha, Wednesday, Banga said, "The Company's focus now lies in managing the

Byju's, Google team up to offer 'learning solution' for schools

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 2: Education technology firm Byju's Wednesday announced a partnership with tech giant Google to offer a 'learning solution' for schools. With this, the simplicity, flexibility and security of Google Workspace for Education and Byju's content pedagogy come together on the 'Vidyarthi' platform to aid effective learning at school, according to a statement.

This integration of Google Workspace for Education with Byju's would offer a collaborative and personalised digital platform for classroom organisation, available for free to participating educational institutions, the statement added.

"With a commitment to digital education, Google Workspace for Education will combine Byju's unparalleled pedagogy to empower educators in their journey towards digital transformation," the statement said.

Built on the Vidyarthi platform, this partnership will provide direct access to Byju's math and science pedagogy and visually-rich learning solutions, including chapter-wise slides, readymade assignments, data banks, summary docs, handouts, tests, among others.



The significant rise and acceptance of online learning in the last one year has led to the swift digitisation of the education system, Mrinal Mohit, COO, Byju's noted.

Global IoT market to surpass \$1tn-mark by 2024: Report



AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 2: The global internet of things (IoT) market by revenue will be worth \$1.1 trillion by 2024, with much of the growth coming from wearables, a new report said Wednesday.

The global IoT market was worth \$622 billion in 2020, up from \$586 billion in 2019, and will grow to reach \$1,077 billion by 2024, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13% over the period, according to data and analytics company GlobalData.

The dominance of the enterprise IoT will continue for the foreseeable future. The enterprise IoT dominates the overall IoT market, generating 76% of total revenue in 2020. GlobalData expects this segment to still occupy 73% of the overall IoT market in 2024.

"The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the crucial role the IoT has come to play in our lives. Several IoT use cases saw growing adoption during the pandemic, including using connected thermal cameras to detect potential Covid-19 infections and sen-

Several IoT use cases saw growing adoption during the pandemic, including using connected thermal cameras to detect potential Covid-19 infections and sensors for monitoring office occupancy levels,

JASASWINI BISWAL | ASSOCIATE PROJECT MANAGER, (THEMATIC RESEARCH), GLOBALDATA

sors for monitoring office occupancy levels," said Jasaswini Biswal, Associate Project Manager for Thematic Research at GlobalData.

The Covid-19 driven new digital transformation wave will fuel higher growth across all IoT markets.

"The demand for technologies that can help the workforce get safely back to work is rising and will likely continue to grow. IoT applications such as contact tracing devices and health-monitoring wearables provide critical data to help fight the pandemic," Biswal added.

According to a GlobalData survey, 48% of respondents showed a positive sentiment towards IoT, and 45% believed IoT would play a critical role in the new business generation over the next three years.

Ramco Cements donates medical relief to govt

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 2: Ramco Cements contributed Covid-19 medical relief items to the state government. Earlier, the company had promised ₹1 crore of Covid medical relief to the government.

The items were delivered to SR Ransingh, General Manager (Equipment) of Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMCL).



REPRESENTATIONAL PIC

The medical equipments include BPL make ventilators (Elisa 600), BPL make ventilators (vent 50 c), Venus make N95 masks, and oxygen face masks.

The company has been closely coordinating with various government agencies and providing relief by procuring lifesaving equipment and instruments and making the same available to the health care systems.

Virus disaster leaves deep scars on Indian economy

SOME OBSERVERS FEAR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BLOW FROM THE VIRUS DISASTER THAT RIPPED THROUGH INDIA THIS YEAR KILLING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WILL LEAVE CONSUMER RELUCTANT TO SPEND

REUTERS

New Delhi, June 2: Expectations for India's economic growth are being revised sharply lower as a surge in people losing their jobs and defaulting on debt suggest a more halting recovery from the financial shock of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Economists are downgrading their estimates as a range of data - from the rate of cheques bouncing to the amount of mortgaged gold jewellery up for sale - shows the extent of the economic damage from a devastating second wave of the disease.

Some observers also fear the psychological blow from the virus disaster that ripped through India this year killing tens of thousands of people will leave consumer re-

luctant to spend. India's government is sticking with a forecast that the economy will grow 10.5% in the fiscal year that started April 1, but on Tuesday State Bank of India - the country's largest lender - slashed its growth forecast to 7.9% from 10.4%.

Several international banks such as Barclays and UBS have also cut back their predictions.

After a 7.3% contraction in 2020-21 - the sharpest ever recorded by India - the relatively muted recovery puts India at odds with countries like United States and China that are seeing a swift rebound as they emerge from the pandemic, and suggests deeper damage has been done to an economy worth around \$2.9 trillion before the crisis hit.

The knock-on effects of sub-par growth on a rapidly developing



economy like India could be significant.

"GDP growth of less than 10% will be a - I won't use the word disaster, but it will not be very beautiful," SBI's Chief Economist Soumya Kanti Ghosh told Reuters

after lowering his forecast.

The situation has exacerbated unemployment that touched a 12-month high of 11.9% in May from 7.97% in April, according to data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. Rural unem-

ployment that normally hovers around 6-7% also hit double digit levels in May, according to the privately owned firm.

Last year, India announced a \$266 billion package to support the economy during a strict nationwide lockdown to contain the first coronavirus wave. But this was largely liquidity support given to banks to boost company credit, with less than a tenth of the sum used for welfare programmes for the poorest in the country.

India did not launch job support schemes on the scale of those seen in some developed economies and the government has not announced a major stimulus package since the second wave hit.

Surging unemployment, coupled with state lockdowns, a large increase in hospitalisations and

fatalities amid the second wave and fears of a third wave, are prompting many people to cut spending.

Sales of goods including grocery, footwear, apparel and beauty products fell 49% in April, according to the Retail Association of India, whose head Kumar Rajagopalan anticipates a bigger decline in May.

Meanwhile, sales of cars and motorcycles fell 30% in April over March and are expected to slump by over 60% in May as automakers including Maruti Suzuki and Hero MotoCorp halted production for several days amid rising infections. Dealerships remain closed.

While car sales bounced back after the first wave last year it was not on a scale seen elsewhere and the recovery was brief.

DAUNTING TASK AHEAD



GETTING BATTLE READY: Indian players go through training drills ahead of their World Cup qualifying round match against Qatar, Thursday

India to face mighty Qatar in WC qualifying round match

Doha, June 2: Their preparation was far from ideal but India would take inspiration from the draw against Asian champions Qatar in 2019 when they face the same opponents in the second-leg match of the joint World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers, here Thursday.

India had held mighty Qatar 0-0 in September 2019 here, a result considered as one of the best for the side in recent times.

But India are playing their home match here as the Qatari capital was chosen as the centralised venue for all the remaining Group E matches after the qualifiers were halted last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

India's performance, however,

has gone south since then while Qatar, the group toppers, have come into Thursday match on a high.

They beat Luxembourg (1-0) and Azerbaijan (2-1) and played out a 1-1 draw against Ireland in the international friendly matches in March. India are coming into this match after a demoralising 0-6 drubbing against the UAE in an international friendly in March.

On top of that, India's preparation has been hit hard as they had to cancel a national camp scheduled in early May in Kolkata. The team reached here on May 19 only to find that the players would not get the facilities they would have wanted.

Stimac himself had expressed the frustration, saying that it was "not an ideal preparation" for the World

Cup qualifiers.

On the positive side, Stimac will have the chance to field a full strength Indian team after a long time with all the core players available for selection and without injury concern.

That 2019 match against Qatar did not have talisman Sunil Chhetri due to a viral fever and his return will surely boost the confidence of the young Indian side. Chhetri also missed the two international friendlies in March, including the one against UAE, as he was recovering from COVID-19 infection.

But there will be gulf in class between the two sides. Qatar are ranked 58th in the FIFA chart against India's 105th. "Qatar are one of the top teams in Asia. They have had some decent results against

top European and South American teams in the recent past," Chhetri said.

"The last time we took a point against them makes us confident as a team. We understand that they will come out all guns blazing at us, and we need to stick together as a team."

In that drawn game in 2019 also, Qatar dominated throughout with waves of attacks on the Indian citadel. It was to the credit of goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu and Sandesh Jhingran-led defence that stood tall to deny the Qataris a win.

Currently fourth in Group E with three points from five matches, India are already out of reckoning for a World Cup berth but still in contention for the 2023 Asian Cup.

Qatar have won five out of their six matches in these qualifiers. Boasting of a lethal attacking lineup with top striker Almoez Ali and Hasan Al-Haydos leading the pack, Qatar would be looking at nothing less than a convincing win.

The squad: Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Amrinder Singh, Dheeraj Singh, Pritam Kotal, Rahul Bheke, Narender Gehlot, Chinglensana Singh, Sandesh Jhingran, Adil Khan, Akash Mishra, Subhashish Bose, Udanta Singh, Brandon Fernandes, Liston Colaco, Rowlin Borges, Glan Martins, Anirudh Thapa, Pronoy Halder, Suresh Singh, Lalengmawia Ralte, Abdul Sahal, Yasir Mohammad, Lallianzuala Chhangte, Bipin Singh, Ashique Kuruniyan, Ishan Pandita, Sunil Chhetri & Manvir Singh.

UEFA EURO 2020

Absent Ramos still attracting attention

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Madrid, June 2: For the first time in 15 years, Spain finds itself preparing for a major tournament without Sergio Ramos. The veteran defender, however, is still attracting much of the attention ahead of the European Championship as Spain starts its preparations in Madrid.

"Sergio Ramos has always been with the national team, so it's a bit strange that he isn't here now," Koke said Tuesday at the team's training camp.

Ramos had been with "La Roja" for every major tournament since the 2006 World Cup, having first made the senior team in 2005 at age 18. He was a surprising absence for the Euro 2020 squad despite a season plagued by injuries. Coach Luis Enrique decided to leave the veteran captain off his list because of a lack of play in recent months.

The 35-year-old Ramos missed most of the second half of the season with Real Madrid after a series of muscle injuries and a knee problem that required surgery. He also tested positive for COVID-19 in April, but was expected to be injury free by the time Euro 2020 started.

Many in Spain criticised Luis Enrique for leaving the star defender out, especially because the coach decided not to use two of the 26 spots available, with Ramos potentially benefiting the squad with his experience and leadership even if he wasn't fully fit.

"In the end, these decisions are made by the coach, he is the one who announces the list," said Koke. "It wasn't only Sergio Ramos who was left out, but also other very important players for their clubs, and other very important players for



Spain. We have to respect these decisions."

Luis Enrique said he didn't want to pick a full complement of 26 players because some wouldn't end up being used at all. "There is always controversy when it comes to any decision related to Ramos," Luis Enrique said when the list was announced. "But I see it as something normal, I don't think his absence will affect the national team."

Ramos came out supporting the coach's decision, saying that in his case it was best to rest and try to fully recover for the future. He had hinted before that he could play in the Tokyo Olympics, and was still aiming at playing in the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Ramos is close to breaking the record for most appearances for a national team. He already holds the European record with 180 appearances, four fewer than the world record held by Egypt player Ahmed Hassan.

KOHLI NOT TOO CONCERNED

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, June 2: India captain Virat Kohli is not too concerned about the limited preparation time that his team will get for the World Test Championship (WTC) final against New Zealand as he believes that it has the requisite understanding of conditions from its past experience of playing in England.

India take on New Zealand in the marquee game at Southampton from June 18. Currently, New Zealand are engaged in a two-Test series against England, while India would be in quarantine after landing there, including three days of hotel quarantine.

"Look, in the past we have landed in places three days prior even in a proper schedule and have had a hell of a series and hell of competition, so it is all in the head," Kohli said in the pre-departure press conference.

Virat insisted that it was also about the mindset. "It is not the first time we are playing in England, we all know what the conditions are like," he said.

LACK OF PREPARATION TIME FOR WTC FINAL



"And even if you are used to the conditions, if you don't enter the field in the right frame of mind, you are going to nick that first ball or you are going to find it tough to pick wickets," added the superstar.

According to Kohli, his side would not have any issues even if it gets just four practice sessions. "We don't have any issues even with four practice sessions head-

ing into the game, because we are absolutely sure of what we can do as a team and we all have played in England.

"Whether it is with the Indian team or India A as well, for the likes of (Mohammed) Siraj. So we are not bothered by that at all and we just want to get there and make the most of the opportunity at hand," he added.

DJOKO EASES PAST SANDGREN; KASTAKINA ENDS BENCIC RUN AT FRENCH OPEN

Zverev toils hard to enter third round

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Paris, June 2: Down 1-4 in the third set, Alexander Zverev decided it was time to shorten his match at Roland Garros. He was determined to avoid another lengthy fight following a five-set battle in the previous round, so he applied pressure on qualifier Roman Safiullin.

The sixth-seeded German won the next game at love, broke back by pushing his rival into unforced errors and was nearly flawless in the tie-breaker. The reward was a 7-6(7-4), 6-3, 7-6(7-1) victory to advance into the third round at the French Open.

Elsewhere, World No.1 Novak Djokovic completely outplayed unseeded Tennys Sandgren 6-2, 6-4, 6-2 to make it into the second round. The Serb will next face Laslo Dere, who came from two sets down to outwit Miomir Kecmanovic 4-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-3.

Among others, Fabio Fognini, 23rd seed, beat Marton Fucsovics 7-6(8-6), 6-1, 6-2. The 31st seed John



Isner also had to toil hard to get past Filip Krajinovic 7-6(8-6), 6-1, 7-6(7-5). Both Fognini and Isner advanced to third round.

However, it was a tough day for 11th seed Roberto Bautista Agut as the Spaniard went down to an unseeded Henri Laksonen of Switzerland 3-6, 6-2, 3-6, 2-6.

Zverev, facing a rival he has

known since their days in the boys' categories, dropped his serve three times on Court Suzanne Lenglen but managed to catch up with Safiullin with his fighting spirit.

A 25-shot rally in the final tie-breaker epitomized Zverev's combative attitude. First on the defensive, Zverev turned it around and won the point with a passing shot.

He took the next five points to seal the match and extend his perfect record against qualifiers to four matches on the Paris clay.

In the women's draw, 2019 runner-up Marketa Vondrousova reached the third round with a 6-1, 6-3 win over wild card Harmony Tan.

Earlier, tenth-seeded Belinda Bencic's campaign at Roland Garros ended with a 6-2, 6-2 loss to Daria Kasatkina while Katerina Siniakova saved two match points to oust 29th-seeded Veronika Kudermetova 7-6(9-7), 5-7, 7-5.

Ahead of the French Open, Siniakova made a deep run in Parma, where she upset top-seeded Serena Williams. Bencic struggled with her serve throughout and was broken four times by her Russian rival. The Swiss player has never progressed past the third round at the French Open in five appearances.

Kasatkina made it to the quarterfinals in Paris in 2018, but it's the first time this season that she has won consecutive matches on clay.

EURO 2020: Foden leads continent's young guns

Any European Championship offers young players a chance to make their name on the international stage. Even more so this time. The coronavirus pandemic means three years have passed since the World Cup, so more players are making their major tournament debuts. UEFA has expanded squads from 23 players to 26, which could encourage coaches to take a chance on less experienced players. Here is a look at some young players who can make their major tournament debuts at Euro 2020...



PHIL FODEN

When Manchester City faced Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League quarterfinals, all eyes were on Dortmund striker Erling Haaland. But it was Foden who decided the outcome from midfield with a goal in each leg as City won 4-2 on aggregate.

The 21-year-old Foden was born a few miles from City's home stadium and came through stiff competition in the club's youth system to stake his place in the first team. He played almost every game this season in City's run to the Premier League title. Foden was too young to play at the 2018 World Cup but made his England debut last year and immediately looked comfortable.

FERRAN TORRES



A hat-trick in Spain's 6-0 rout of Germany last year underlined just how much the 21-year-old Torres means for a new-look Spain team. He's already a regular starter at international level and proved his worth for Manchester City this year with four goals in the group stage of the Champions League. Record-breaking 18-year-old Ansu Fati has sometimes outshone Torres in the Spain squad, but a severe knee injury in November means Fati won't return in time for Euro 2020.

JOAO FELIX

The Atletico Madrid forward has sometimes seemed to be weighed down by expectations since moving from Benfica for 126 million euros (USD 153 million) in 2019. Injuries and a coronavirus infection disrupted his rhythm this season, but Joao Felix can be devastating when he is in form.



He has seemed at home in the Portugal squad ever since he was trusted to make his debut in a Nations League semifinal match in 2019. Still, he may be a bit-part player at Euro 2020 with coach Fernando Santos preferring a front three of Cristiano Ronaldo, Diogo Jota and Bernardo Silva.

GIANLUIGI DONNARUMMA



The AC Milan goalkeeper is still only 22, but he's already been part of the Italy team for nearly five

years. Donnarumma is the definitive goalkeeper prodigy of the last decade and Italy's heir to the great Gianluigi Buffon. Donnarumma made his debut for Milan in Serie A at 16 in 2015 and immediately pushed aside more experienced teammates to make himself the club's first choice in goal. Italy's failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup means that Donnarumma is set to make his major tournament debut at Euro 2020.

KAI HAVERTZ



Chelsea made a splash by signing the 21-year-old Havertz for a reported 70 million pounds (USD 99 million) from Bayer Leverkusen last year. He's taken time adapting to life in the Premier League but seems more at home since German coach Thomas Tuchel took charge at Chelsea. Joachim Loew could

select more young talents for his last tournament as Germany coach. Bayern Munich forward Jamal Musiala made his debut in March after choosing Germany over England, and 17-year-old Leverkusen midfielder Florian Wirtz is on the fringe of the squad.

MATTHIJS DE LIGT



The Netherlands has developed a whole new generation of players since its last tournament appearance at the 2014 World Cup. De Ligt emerged alongside international teammates Frenkie de Jong, Donny van de Beek and Ryan Gravenberch on the Ajax team which reached the 2019 Champions League semifinals. Since joining Juventus, De Ligt has cemented his place as one of the world's leading defenders. At the age of 21, he's already played more than 20 times for his country.