



LONG-DISTANCE RUNNER

Actor Mrunal Thakur says that she has always taken projects which will help her survive longer in the industry

LEISURE P2



UK URGES COMMITMENT

British PM Boris will use G7 summit to urge world leaders to commit to vaccinating the global population by 2022

INTERNATIONAL P10



FEDERER OPTS OUT

Roger Federer has pulled out of the French Open as he doesn't want to pressurise his knees

SPORTS P12

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

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

IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Prayer & work on nation building will start after this. Right now he's praying for a blue tick for his social media accounts!

BJYM leader beaten to death

BARIPADA: A BJP Yuva Morcha (BJYM) leader has been beaten to death by miscreants in Mayurbhanj district, a police officer said. Three persons have been arrested in connection with the incident, he said. Ranjit Pradhan (35), the BJYM district in-charge of Balasore, was on his way to his in-laws' place, when four bike-borne men intercepted his car at Nuasahi in Kaptipada police station area of the district. The saffron party leader reportedly engaged in an argument with the four men, following which he was thrashed at the spot, Sanjay Pradhan, the officer in-charge of Kaptipada police station, said. The BJYM leader was taken to Udala sub-divisional hospital, where the doctors declared him brought dead. A case has been registered under various sections of the IPC and three accused have been arrested. The fourth person is absconding, and the police are looking for him, the OC said.

Dilip Kumar hospitalised



MUMBAI: Legendary actor Dilip Kumar was admitted to a hospital here Sunday morning after experiencing breathlessness, his wife and veteran actor Saira Banu said. Kumar, 98, was taken to the suburban Khar-based Hinduja Hospital around 8.30 AM. "He was unwell today morning and had breathlessness. He is now here at Khar Hinduja non-Covid hospital for investigations," Banu told PTI. The actor was admitted to the same hospital last month for a regular health check-up. Kumar, who made his debut with "Jwar Bhata" in 1944, has appeared in several iconic films in his career spanning over five decades, including "Kohinoor", "Mughal-e-Azam", "Devdas", "Naya Daur", "Ram Aur Shyam", among others.

WEATHER

	BHUB	CTK
MAX	38.6°C	38.5°C
MIN	28.0°C	25.5°C
Humidity	61%	69%
Rainfall	NIL	NIL

Forecast: Light rain very likely

VACCINE INEQUITY

9 pvt hosps corner 50% doses

NINE CORPORATE HOSPITAL GROUPS CUMULATIVELY BOUGHT 60.57 LAKHS OF THE 1.20CR VACCINE DOSES IN MAY SINCE THE CENTRE REVISED ITS POLICY AND OPENED IT TO THE MARKET

AGENCIES

Mumbai, June 6: Reflecting the problem of vaccine inequity, just nine corporate hospital groups in big cities have cornered 50 per cent of the Covid-19 vaccine stock meant for the private sector in May. These nine corporate hospital groups cumulatively bought 60.57 lakh doses of the total 1.20 crore vaccine doses procured by private hospitals since the Centre revised its vaccine policy and opened it to the market. According to a report, the remaining 50 per cent of the vaccine stock was procured by 300-odd hospitals, mostly located in the urban centres who hardly served people beyond the Tier-2 cities. The Centre had allowed state governments and private players to buy 50 per cent of total production directly from vaccine manufacturers from May 1, itself purchasing the remaining 50 per cent of the output to distribute it to states to vaccinate the 45-plus age group.

The purchases by private hospitals in May was 1.20 crore doses or 15.6 per cent of the total procurement of 7.94 crore doses. Of this, they administered only 22 lakh doses or 18 per cent of the doses received during the month. On the other hand, the states procured 33.5 per cent or 2.66 crore doses and the Centre 50.9 per cent or 4.03 crore doses.



The top nine private hospitals are Apollo Hospitals (16.1 lakh doses); Max Healthcare (12.97 lakh doses); Reliance Foundation-run HN Hospital Trust (9.89 lakh doses); Medica Hospitals (6.26 lakh doses); Fortis Healthcare (4.48 lakh doses); Godrej (3.35 lakh doses); Manipal Health (3.24 lakh doses); Narayana Hrudalaya (2.02 lakh doses) and Techno India Dama (2 lakh doses). All these groups have their presence mostly in metros, state capitals and Tier-I cities. While the Centre has fixed the price of single dose of Covishield produced by Serum Institute

The nine private hospitals are Apollo Hospitals; Max Healthcare; Reliance Foundation-run HN Hospital Trust; Medica Hospitals; Fortis Healthcare; Godrej; Manipal Health; Narayana Hrudalaya and Techno India Dama

The Centre has fixed the price of single dose of Covishield and Covax at ₹150, but these private hospitals are reportedly charging ₹850 - ₹1,000 and ₹1,250 for single dose of Covishield and Covaxin respectively

of India (SII) and Covax produced by Bharat Biotech at ₹150, these private hospitals are reportedly charging ₹850 - ₹1,000 for each dose of Covishield and ₹1,250 for a single dose of Covaxin. This may be affordable for a section of city residents, but it is not so for the lower middle class and the poor.

Tejal Kantikar, Associate Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies in Bangalore, said, "Manufacturers will prefer to sell their stock to private players and hospitals that have more bargaining power."

In a suo motu hearing on vaccina-

tion, the Supreme Court last Wednesday rapped the Centre on its vaccine policy, calling the decision to make 18-44 year olds pay for their doses "arbitrary and irrational." It asked the Centre to review the vaccine policy while observing that the digital divide had hampered vaccination in rural areas, the report said.

But it is not just the digital divide. May's procurement data shows most stock purchased by the private sector is concentrated in urban regions. Apollo Hospitals purchased stock in nine cities, Max Healthcare purchased stock in six cities, HN Hospital (of Reliance Foundation) has only two hospitals in Mumbai and Navi Mumbai, while Medica has one hospital in Kolkata. The procurement data further reveals a strong urban bias with hospitals in the National Capital Region (NCR), Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Kolkata, Bangalore and Hyderabad together accounting for 80 per cent of total stock in May.

In stark contrast, Tier-III cities could procure only a few thousand doses. For example, Sarji, a small private hospital in Shimoga, a small city in Karnataka with 3.22 lakh population, bought 6,000 Covishield doses. In Jalgaon, Vishwaprabha Hospital bought 5,120 doses.

Shots for 18-44 age group in 22 new urban areas soon

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 6: The state Health Department Sunday said that vaccination drive for people in the 18-44 age group will soon be expanded to 22 more municipalities and Notified Area Councils (NAC) with the availability of more number of Covid-19 vaccine doses.

The government's decision came at a time when the state is expecting to receive 6,45,790 doses of Covishield in three tranches. With the availability of these doses, the vaccination drive would be expanded in the state. The department plans to give priority to students and athletes in the 18-44 year age group, officials said.

Man held for running over five puppies

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 6: A 50-year-old driver in the capital city reportedly ran over five puppies at Gosareeswar Square in Old Town area under Lingaraj police limits here a couple of days back. The accused was identified as Prafulla Rout, a resident of Old town area.

According to sources, Rout ran over a puppy while returning home Thursday night. He allegedly knocked down four other puppies under his SUV Friday. Subsequently, an animal rights organisation lodged a complaint with the Lingaraj police in this regard Saturday. Police Sunday arrested Rout after registering a case (151/21) in this regard. The cops have also seized Rout's vehicle. Recently, one banker in Infocity area of the city was caught throwing a kitten before street dogs that killed the animal.

LUNCH TIME



A herd of deer grazes on fresh grass at Tulasipur Park in Cuttack, Sunday

OP PHOTO

Biden reinvigorates tariff war against India

PRESIDENT BIDEN THREATENS TO INCREASE IMPORT DUTIES ON A RANGE OF ITEMS IN RETALIATION AGAINST NEW DELHI IMPOSING DIGITAL SERVICES TAX ON TECH GIANTS

AGENCIES

New York, June 6: The US tariff war against India has been reinvigorated by President Joe Biden threatening to increase import duties on a range of imports, from prawns and Basmati rice to furniture and jewellery, in retaliation against New Delhi imposing Digital Services Tax (DST) on tech giants.

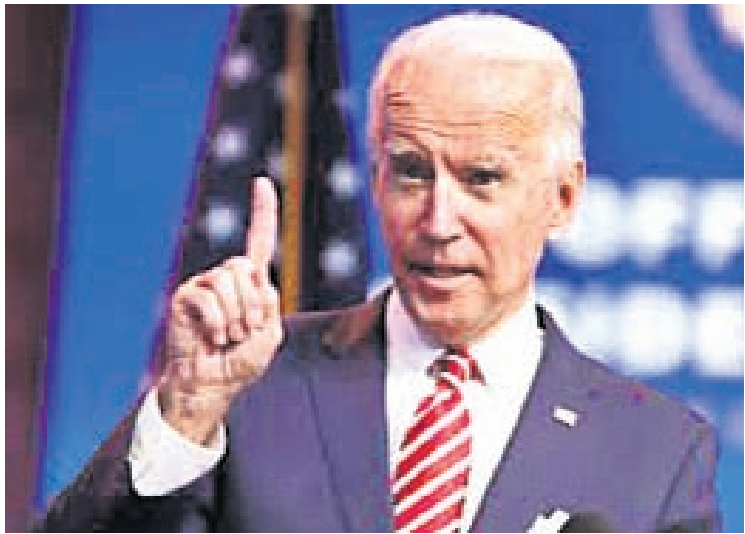
The US Trade Representative Katherine Tai announced June 2 the plan for the 25 per cent increase in the tariffs on 26 items from India, but said that the hikes will be on hold till December.

India imposed a two per cent tax starting in April last year on earnings in the country by foreign technology and e-commerce companies like Amazon, Facebook and Google. It was opposed by the administration of former President Donald Trump, and Biden has picked up the baton.

The Trade Representative's Office said: "India's DST is unreasonable or discriminatory and burdens or restricts US commerce."

The Office estimated the increased taxes on the selected imports from India will equal the taxes India assesses on the US companies under the DST.

"Estimates indicate that the value of the DST payable by US-based com-



pany groups to India will be up to approximately \$55 million per year. The level of trade covered by the action takes into five account estimates of the amount of tariffs to be collected on goods of India and the estimates of the amount of taxes assessed by India."

The other items threatened with increased duties include bamboo, window shutters, cigarette papers, pearl, copper foil and bedroom furniture. Inaugurating the new phase of trade

wars, the Biden administration also threatened to increase tariffs on imports from five other countries - the UK, Austria, Italy, Spain and Turkey over their DST.

Explaining the reason for holding the increases in abeyance for the six countries, Tai said it was to help the international negotiations on taxation.

"The US remains committed to reaching a consensus on international tax issues through the OECD (Organisation

for Economic Cooperation and Development) and G20 processes. Today's actions provide time for those negotiations to continue to make progress while maintaining the option of imposing tariffs."

In the first phase of the negotiations, the Finance Ministers of the G7, the major western industrial powers, meeting in London agreed Saturday to a minimum 15 per cent corporate tax rate to prevent companies using legal loopholes to avoid paying taxes on incomes in countries where they operate.

The deal will next go to next month's meeting in Italy of the G20 - a group of 19 countries, industrialised and developing, and the European Union.

The latest Biden salvo opens a new front in the trade war between the two countries that started in 2018 when Trump imposed 25 per cent duties on steel and aluminium imports from India.

In 2019, Trump withdrew the special treatment for some Indian exports, mostly low-tech items and handicrafts, under the General System of Preferences (GSP) that exempted them from import duties.

New Delhi retaliated with higher tariffs on 28 US products that included walnuts and almonds.

Biden has not so far taken steps to reinstate the GSP facility for India.

Odisha puts up improved show in PGI 2019-20

POST NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi, June 6: The Odisha government has shown improvement of over 10 per cent in the Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20 released by the Union Education Ministry with a set of 70 parameters to catalyse transformational change in the field of school education across the country.

Odisha, which had scored between 701 and 750 in 2017-18 and 2018-19, has secured 838 points in PGI 2019-20. The state has been given Grade-I in PGI 2019-20 along with Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and others.

The state has shown over 20 per cent improvement in PGI domain - infrastructure and facilities. It has also improved its performance in Equity domain by 10 per cent along with Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur.

"The state of Odisha scored 109 in 2019-20 from 72 in 2018-19 showing marked improvement in infrastructure domain between 2019-20 and 2018-19. This indicates that the state has

started to take action for improving its infrastructure and facilities," the ministry said. Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' approved the release of Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20 for states and Union Territories of India Sunday.

The ministry informed that Punjab, Chandigarh, Tamil Nadu, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Kerala occupy the highest grade (Grade A++) for 2019-20. The state of Punjab topped the chart with the score of 929 followed by Chandigarh (912), Tamil Nadu (906), Kerala and Andaman & Nicobar Islands both scored 901.

The PGI exercise envisages that the index would propel states and UTs towards undertaking multi-pronged interventions that would bring about the much-desired optimal education outcomes. The PGI helps the states/UTs to pinpoint the gaps and accordingly prioritise areas for intervention to ensure that the school education system is robust at every level," the Education Ministry said.



KYRA OPENS UP ABOUT HER MARRIAGE WITH KEVIN

American actress Kyra Sedgwick, about her marriage with actor Kevin Bacon, says they are in it for the long haul. "Most people have abandonment issues, my parents got divorced when I was little. I don't know why I know more that he's not going to leave me," she said.

JAMES BLUNT CONSIDERS PANDEMIC A 'BLESSING'

Singer James Blunt said that the Covid-19 pandemic has actually been a blessing for him as it gave him time to take a break. According to *contactmusic.com*, the singer was to go on tour but could not due to the pandemic.



FORTUNE FORECAST

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

ARIES

You will find some decisions difficult to make, but be intent and resolute. Emotions may put you off rail, but once you have resolved, don't stray from it. Besides, Ganesha advises you to learn to endure setbacks in a mature manner.

TAURUS

Today Ganesha sees you overdoing your aggression, domination bit and urges you to keep your assertiveness in check. This day is not a favourable one for new ventures and undertakings. Don't therefore attempt anything new. Talk pleasantly.

GEMINI

Ganesha advises that while today will be a day filled with a lot of festivity, you still need to guard against getting carried away. You will spend the day socialising with friends and family. You might end up neglecting your household duties in organizing some function or picnic, says Ganesha.

CANCER

Dame Luck will patronise you today. You will gain from land, house or building trade. You will get total support and co-operation from bosses and colleagues in the office. Ganesha indicates it as a very profitable day for you.

LEO

You will be very emotional and sentimental today. Your ego prevents you from expressing your true feelings at times. You need to keep this in mind when attempting to communicate with your beloved. It is a good day for romance, and for those seeking love, says Ganesha.

VIRGO

Financial affairs will face a major obstruction today. Ganesha advises you to allow your mind to prevail over your heart. Take extraordinary care of your precious personal possessions, apart from your legal duties and new projects keeping in view their long-term effect on your mind.

LIBRA

Ganesha says that this is the right time to enhance your personality and prove your talents to the world. Today you will be able to buy new clothes too. It is essential that you pay attention to people close to you. Today is the day you will spend in your dream world.

SCORPIO

You may be bored with the same, old routine. In short, you feel like you are stuck in a rut and desperately need to do something exciting. Hanging out with friends of opposite sex may bring some respite to your restless soul.

SAGITTARIUS

It's time for you to sit back, relax and let your actions do the talking. After all, actions speak louder than words, they say. You will also wrap up with all the pending tasks today, says Ganesha. You play an important role in resolving troubles, either for yourself or for others.

CAPRICORN

Confidence is the key to unlock the doors of success. Today, with your positive attitude you will mark your presence and come one step closer to success, says Ganesha. You're not a carefree person. You value your achievements and make every decision wisely.

AQUARIUS

You are a workaholic. With a lot of hard work you have achieved your targets. You are not somebody who will fail to differentiate between a pit stop and the final destination. Your success will motivate you to plan for bigger and longstanding goals. But, don't take everything so seriously that you fail to enjoy and celebrate your success, advises Ganesha.

PISCES

Confusion and uncertainty will linger like dark clouds in today's sky which will rain on your decision making parade and make it hard for you to find tangible solutions to problems. Steer clear of controversy and stick to your daily routine, advises Ganesha.

Mrunal wants to survive longer

Mumbai: Actress Mrunal Thakur, who has the films *Toofan*, *Jersey* and *Aankh Micholi* lined up, says that she has always taken projects which will help her survive longer in the industry. The actress says that she has always focused on giving her best performance in every role. "I am glad that cinema is reaching a wider audience. There were people and filmmakers who asked me to do certain films to be famous. But I never choose my films thinking that I will be a star. I want to survive longer here. One thing that lasts longer is talent and performances," she said. The actress adds that the medium has never really mattered to her. "No matter where my films

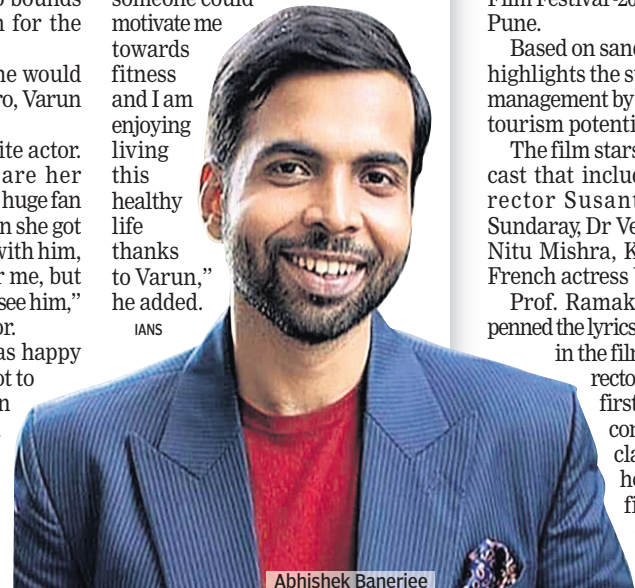
come from, they need to be good. If you ask me personally my job is just to be a part of the movie. That's what my dream is. Thanks to OTT, in the midst of a pandemic, as an artist if I can entertain then that is only through OTT," added the *Super 30* actress. IANS



'I am not my wife's favourite actor'

Mumbai: Actor Abhishek Banerjee says his wife Tina Noronha's joy knew no bounds when he was roped in for the film *Bhediya*. But that's because she would get to meet the film's hero, Varun Dhawan. "I am not her favourite actor. She has others who are her favourite actors. She is a huge fan of Varun Dhawan. When she got to know I was working with him, she was excited, not for me, but that she would get to see him," said the *Street* actor. In fact, she was happy that the actor got to train with Varun for the film. "She told me, 'Jo main 10 saal mein nai kar payi (what I wasn't able

to do in 10 years), Varun did in two months. She was happy that someone could motivate me towards fitness and I am enjoying living this healthy life thanks to Varun," he added. IANS



Odia filmmaker bags award at Pune int'l film festival

Bhubaneswar: *The Art Of Life*, a film made in Hindi but written and directed by Odia filmmaker Santosh Panda was adjudged Best Short Film in non-feature category at Chhatrapati Shivaji International Film Festival -2021 held recently at Pune. Based on sand art, the film also highlights the successful disaster management by Odisha and state's tourism potential. The film stars a large ensemble cast that includes renowned director Susant Misra, Jubilee Sundaray, Dr Vedula Ramalaxmi, Nitu Mishra, Kalinga Dash and French actress Violet Brigitte. Prof. Ramakanta Mishra has penned the lyrics of an English song in the film, composed by director Panda. This is the first ever English song composed by an Odia, claimed production house sources. The film is jointly produced by Panda and Prasan Prusti. PBN

Easy now to degrade an artiste: Mahika

Mumbai: Actress Mahika Sharma, who has been part of the show *ELR* as well as the films *Mr Joe B. Carvalho* and *Mardaani*, feels that controversies are part and parcel of showbiz. She says that she has never let them get to her. "These days it has become very easy to degrade the image of an artiste. And with that, it has also become easy for an artiste to carry that polluted

image gracefully. I guess one has understood that all this is part of being part of showbiz and cannot be helped," she says. Mahika, who herself has been surrounded by many controversies in the past, says these don't affect her in bagging projects. "One thing that I love the most about this industry is that they employ you for your talent and no one bothers about your image while offering work. They don't discriminate on the basis of what people say about you and, instead, welcome you and praise your hard work," she says. IANS



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBS

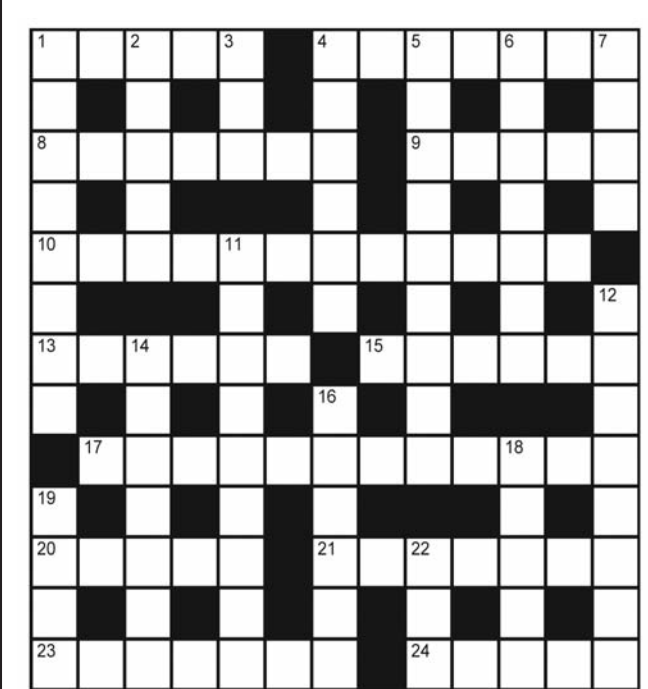


BREVITY



FUN post

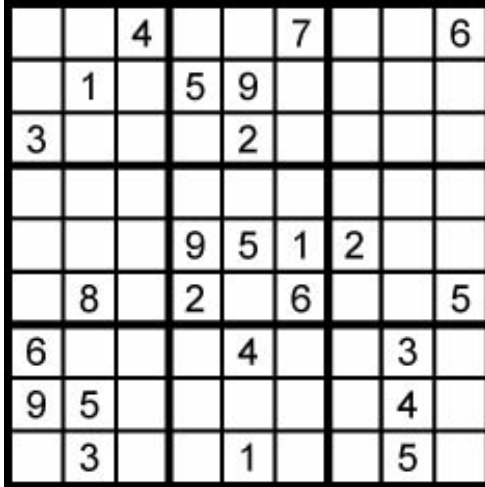
CROSSWORD



- Copyright ©2021 PuzzleJunction.com
- Across**
- 1 Swears
 - 4 Lobster part
 - 8 Worry
 - 9 Fit for a king
 - 10 Italian sparkling white wine (4,8)
 - 13 Leon Uris novel
 - 15 Ravel classic
 - 17 Horror movie character (4,8)
 - 20 Dutch cheese
 - 21 Purplish red
 - 23 Brain-teasers
 - 24 Eye sores
 - Down**
 - 1 Popped up
 - 2 Cousin of a bittern
 - 3 Paltry amount
 - 4 Framework for some plants
 - 5 They say it's fair play
 - 6 Lingerie item
 - 7 Comrade in arms
 - 11 University library, perhaps (5,4)
 - 12 Diaries
 - 14 Bombastic
 - 16 Garden decorations
 - 18 Mead ingredient
 - 19 Food thickener
 - 22 Petrol

SUDOKU

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



SOLUTIONS



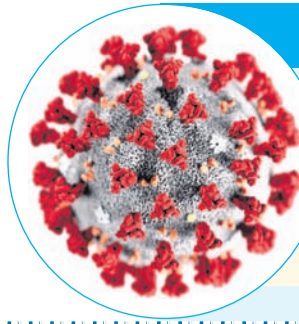
CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

downtown



INVITING DANGER

Social distancing norms take a beating while distribution of food among the needy at Master Canteen Square in Bhubaneswar, Sunday



COVID-19 TRACKER

	INFECTED	RECOVERED	DEAD
World	17,39,00,454	15,68,42,757	37,40,417
India	2,88,09,339	2,69,84,781	3,46,759
Odisha	8,13,096	7,39,376	2,994

FOOD SAFETY DAY

Toxic chemicals in street food worrisome



MANISH KUMAR, OP

Bhubaneswar, June 6: Several street food items examined by the Food Safety department in the last one year were found to be laced with high levels of synthetic colours, revealed an official of the department. During random checks of street food items in Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, it was found that the varieties of sauces used by the fast food sellers contained industrial dyes which could aggravate health complications if consumed for a longer period of time, department sources

said. "During the checks, we found that vendors selling noodles and other fast food items used sauces which contained synthetic dyes unfit for human consumption," said the official.

Adulterated paneer, oil and other food items also became a cause of concern among the officials of the Food Safety department. The department also found higher levels of monosaccharides in paneer and dairy products available in the market. Health experts are of the view that people should consume naturally-grown food to avoid health

complications. "People often get lured by the street foods. But, the harmful chemicals in street foods are causing several health complications. The best way to remain healthy is to opt for the natural food sources and shun packaged items and fast food," said Maheshwari Sangolli, a lifestyle physician from the city.

She also added, "The best way is to look for plant-based food items and cook those at home. Animal-based foods often contain antibiotics and other harmful elements which can cause health complica-

The best way is to look for plant-based food items and cook those at home. By eating homemade food, people can avoid preservatives and harmful chemicals present in many street foods

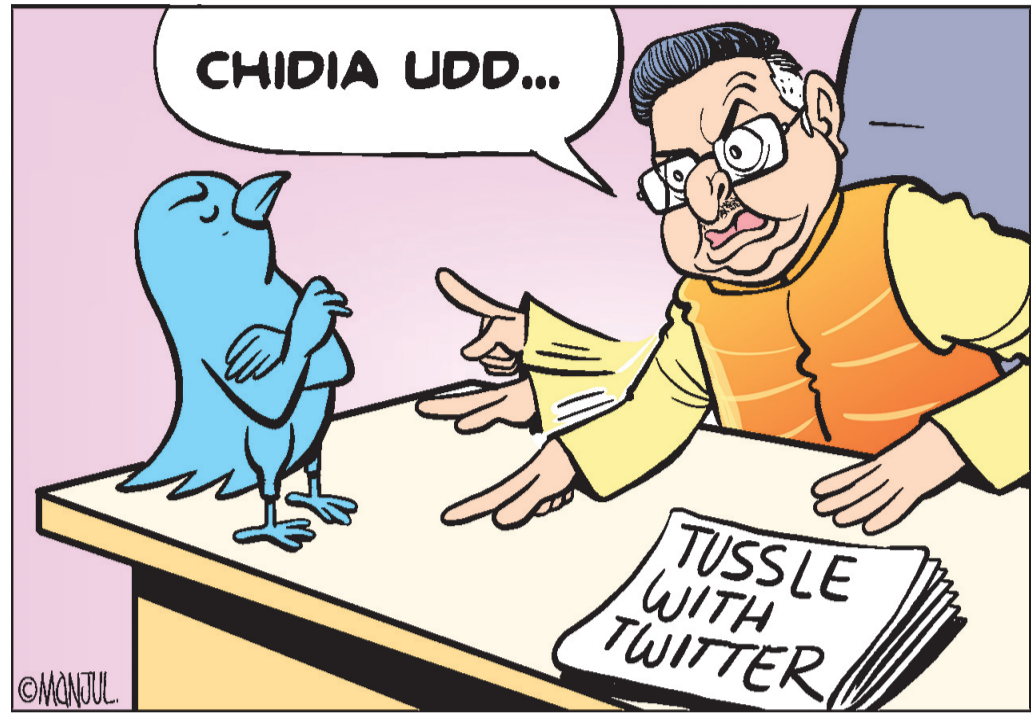
MAHESHWARI SANGOLLI | LIFESTYLE PHYSICIAN

tions. By eating homemade food, people can avoid preservatives and harmful chemicals present in many unhealthy street foods." Ayashkant Singh, a gastroenterologist from the city, said consumption of chemical dyes could have long lasting effect on health of a person. "It varies from short-term effects like diarrhoea and ulcer to serious cases like cancer if consumed for longer period."

"We know what unsafe food can do. Consumption of safe food will improve nutrition among the youths and protect them from diseases. Safe food can lead to less cases of hospitalisation," he added.

According to government data, the Food Safety department tested more than 500 samples of food and beverages and found several cases of adulteration and misbranding.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL



State turning hotbed of drug trade

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 6: The growing tentacles of drug abuse across Odisha have turned into a major cause of worry for the security agencies in the state.

Illegal trade of brown sugar is rapidly making its inroads into different parts of the state.

The data released by Odisha Police Saturday exposes the grim reality of drug abuse in the state during the last couple of years. According to the data, the state police seized 35.616 kg of brown sugar in 2020. The amount of seizure of illegal drugs in 2020 is more than 17 times the amount seized in 2019.

The state police had seized 2.647 kg of brown sugar in 2019 while the seized amount stood at 1.45 kg in 2018.

Speaking to Orissa POST, an official of the Special Task Force (STF) on condition of anonymity said that the huge seizure barely impacted the rampant drug trade in the state. The seizure is like a tip of the iceberg.

A DRI officer claimed that due to the rapid urbanisation, Bhubaneswar has become a hotspot for illegal trade in drugs. The slums with their ever increasing popu-



MATTER OF CONCERN

ODISHA POLICE SEIZED 35.616 KG BROWN SUGAR IN 2020

IT HAD SEIZED 2.647 KG OF THE CONTRABAND IN 2019 AND 1.45 KG IN 2018

EXPERTS CLAIMED THAT THE RAMPANT DRUG ADDICTION AMONG THE YOUTHS IN SLUMS IS THE PRIME REASON BEHIND THE RECENT SPURT IN CRIMES IN THE TWIN CITIES

lation have become hotbed of illegal drug trade in the capital city. The smugglers are also finding it easy to supply the illegal drugs to different parts of Odisha owing to its proximity to north-eastern states and neighbouring Bangladesh. The drug peddlers, mostly based in different areas of Balasore including Jaleswar, are procuring brown sugar from Kolkata and supplying it to Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Khurda and other places in Odisha.

This apart, experts also claimed that the rampant drug addiction among the youths in the slums and rural areas is the prime reason behind the recent spurt in the incidents of crime in the twin cities of

Cuttack and Bhubaneswar. Youths addicted to brown sugar are resorting to snatching and other crimes in order to arrange money to buy drugs.

On the other hand, in 2019, a nationwide survey 'Magnitude of Substance Use in India' by the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi had revealed that Odisha was among the top ten states in the country with maximum number of people who need help for opioids related problems. The survey found around 3 lakh people in Odisha were addicted to some form of the opioids.

42 more succumb to Covid in 24 hrs

PNN & PTI

Bhubaneswar, June 6: Odisha Sunday registered 7,002 fresh Covid-19 cases, which pushed the tally to 8,13,096, while 42 fresh fatalities raised the toll to 2,994, a Health department official said.

Of the 7,002 new cases, 3,921 were reported from quarantine centres and the rest are local contact cases, the official said.

Khurda district, of which the state capital Bhubaneswar is a part, reported the maximum number of new cases at 1,167, followed by Cuttack at 771 and Jajpur at 486.

As many as nine districts reported less than 100 cases each—Jharsuguda (97), Malkangiri (95), Bolangir (89), Ganjam (74), Deogarh (64), Sonepur (59), Gajapati (48)

Khurda district reported the maximum number of new cases at 1,167, followed by Cuttack at 771 and Jajpur at 486



As many as nine districts reported less than 100 cases each—Jharsuguda (97), Malkangiri (95), Bolangir (89), Ganjam (74), Deogarh (64), Sonepur (59), Gajapati (48) and Nuapada (28). Kandhamal recorded just 3 cases

4 fatalities each were registered in Angul, Cuttack and Khurda followed by 3 each in Boudh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda and Kalahandi and 2 each in Gajapati, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Rayagadda and Sundargarh

One patient each succumbed to the infection in the districts of Bargarh, Ganjam, Jajpur, Kandhamal, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nuapada and Puri

and Nuapada (28). Kandhamal recorded just three cases.

Taking to Twitter, the Health department said, "Regret to inform about the demise of forty two Covid positive patients while under

treatment in hospitals."

Four fatalities each were registered in Angul, Cuttack and Khurda followed by three each in Boudh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda and Kalahandi and two each in Gajapati,

Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Rayagadda and Sundargarh. One patient each succumbed to the infection in the districts of Bargarh, Ganjam, Jajpur, Kandhamal, Koraput, Malkangiri, Nuapada and Puri.

This apart, 53 other Covid-19 patients in the state have died due to comorbidities, the official said.

The active cases witnessed a further dip and stood at 78,031. As many as 18 districts in the state reported less than 2,500 active cases of which six have less than 1,000 cases. The rest 12 districts have registered more than 2,500 active cases.

Over 1.21 crore samples have been tested for Covid-19 thus far, including 71,973 Saturday. Odisha's positivity rate stands at 6.67 per cent.

Kerala CM backs Naveen's stand on vax procurement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar, June 6: Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has agreed to his Odisha counterpart Naveen Patnaik's suggestions that Covid-19 vaccines should be procured by the Centre from abroad and the states should be given the flexibility to manage the inoculation procedure.

sponding to Naveen Patnaik's June 2 letter to all the chief ministers where he had sought unity among states on an ideal procurement policy. He had also advised states to shun competition over procuring vaccines from manufacturers.

Patnaik had proposed a central procurement system and subsequent distribution among states for vaccination.

He had also said that there should be a consensus regarding the procurement of vaccines and states should not fight against each other.

"The only way to protect our people against future Covid-19 waves and provide them with a hope of survival is vaccination. Countries that have focused on vaccination programs have seen a remarkable improvement in their coronavirus situation. We have to provide this healing touch to our people," Patnaik wrote in the letter that he shared on Twitter, tagging all the chief ministers.

"But this cannot be a battle among the states to compete against each other to procure vaccines," Patnaik had stated in his letter to all the Chief Ministers.

Vijayan had May 29 written a letter to all non-BJP chief ministers including Patnaik seeking a united effort to press the Centre to procure vaccine and ensure universal vaccination.

"Wrote to 11 CMs in the spirit of Cooperative Federalism. Quite unfortunate that the Centre absolves itself of its duty to procure vaccines, ensure free universal vaccination. United effort to jointly pursue our genuine demand is the need of the hour, so that Centre acts immediately," Vijayan had tweeted.



Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan said Centre should procure the vaccine and the administration of vaccination be left to be managed effectively by the states

"...We are in complete agreement that the Centre should procure a preventive vaccine against Covid-19 and the administration of vaccination be left to be managed effectively by the states," Vijayan wrote to Patnaik Thursday.

"Looking forward to fruitful co-operation in the efforts to meet the unprecedented challenge posed by the pandemic," he added. Vijayan said this while re-



Pineapples being unloaded from a truck at Ashok Nagar in Bhubaneswar ahead of the Savitri festival, Sunday OP PHOTO

Rural women in Khurda take to kitchen gardening

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 6: Converting the dreadful Covid-19 crisis into an opportunity, a handful of rural women from underprivileged communities in Khurda district are raising vegetable gardens at home, as a viable source of income during the lockdown that saw men, the primary breadwinners of their families, lose jobs.

The women are the direct beneficiaries of Family Strengthening, the community outreach programme of SOS Children's Villages of India (SOSCVI) an NGO. The programme aims at increasing the household income of vulnerable families, and thus, upholds and enhances the quality of parental care for their children. The programme covers over 250 families with more than 600 children in the villages of Mahimangar, Kujimahal, Dalua, Nadhara, Giringaput and

A SILVER LINING



People work in their kitchen gardens in the rural areas of Khurda district

Haridamada of Khurda district. The families belong to tribal, scheduled castes and other backward classes with many of them working as migrant labourers. With agricultural inputs like seeds, tech-

nical guidance, and cash support from SOSCVI, the women have become successful in cultivating vegetables such as spinach, pumpkin and brinjal that fetch them up to Rs 100 per day, besides catering to the



OP PHOTOS

nutritional needs of the family. Commenting about the enterprising rural women, "Many of these families suddenly became cash-strapped when men, the sole breadwinners, lost their jobs dur-

ing successive lockdowns. About 100 to 150 men, who were working in Bhubaneswar and other cities nearby are now homebound. Hence, we are helping these families explore alternative livelihoods including home gardening," said Sumanta Kar, Secretary General, SOSCVI.

"We provide agricultural inputs and arrange guidance from agriculture experts. It has proven to be a game changer. Though these women did not have prior experience in gardening, they were determined to succeed when they saw that home gardening could be a sustainable source of decent income. The initiative has also led to provision of healthy and nutritious food for their children. When households have secure income, the quality of childcare is enhanced. We are planning to replicate this success in more communities in other locations," she added.

State to cover 5.26 lakh ha under watershed project

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 6: The state government has set a target to cover around 5.26 lakh hectare land spreading over 705 micro-watersheds under the proposed Rejuvenating Watershed for Agricultural Resilience through Innovative Development (Reward) project over a period of six years.

Chaired by Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra, a high-level meeting held virtually from the Lok Seva Bhawan here Sunday outlined the modalities of the programme.

Official sources said that a target was set to cover a total of around 5.26 lakh hectare of land spreading over 705 micro-watersheds under the proposed Reward project. "Around 1.15 lakh hectare of land under 152 micro-watershed units in five pilot districts—Koraput, Nayagarh, Dhenkanal, Deogarh and Sambalpur—would be taken up in the first phase. Besides, around 4.11 lakh hectare of land in seven districts covering about 533 micro-watershed units would be covered both for pilot intervention and intensive agriculture. These seven districts included Nabarangpur and Sundargarh in addition to above five districts," said a source.

The expected ecological outcomes of the project include prevention of soil run-off, regeneration of natural vegetation, rain water harvesting and recharging of the ground water table. This would enable multi-cropping and adoption of diverse agro-based activities for providing sustainable livelihoods to the people in the watershed area.



Mahapatra directed to focus enhancing productivity and opening up new sustainable livelihood opportunities for increasing the net income of the farmers.

The Chief Secretary also directed treating the watershed and adjacent areas on saturation mode through adoption of new technology and data-driven approaches. Agriculture & Farmers' Empowerment Secretary Suresh Kumar Vashishth, who also took part in the meeting, said that the programme would positively promote resource efficient growth in watershed areas, investment in human capital and developing networks of scientific and technical partners.

Describing Odisha is a fore-runner in watershed management, Pritee Kumar of the World Bank said that the proposed programme would be helpful in making the watersheds 'climate resilient through land resource inventory,

land use planning, and precision farming in the context of the specific agro-ecological conditions'.

The project would directly address key strategic actions around increasing farmers' income, more crops per drop of water, water to every plot and soil health. It would also focus on promotion of entrepreneurship through technical and financial support.

Odisha is one of three states in the country to have planned for such an ambitious programme. The other two states are Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.

According to sources, the approximate cost of the project was estimated around 211.57 million dollar out of which state and Centre would provide around 162.57 million dollar through convergence of different scheme and, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) of the World Bank would provide 49 million dollar as loan.

Man killed over past enmity, one held

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 6: A daily wager killed his friend over past enmity in Master Canteen area here late Saturday night. The accused was identified as Sumu Singh alias Sunu of village Aruha in Jajpur.

According to sources, Sunu and the deceased, Sk Abdul of Puruna Bazar in Bhadrak worked as daily wagers here. They were staying on footpath in Master Canteen area.

According to sources, Abdul had allegedly assaulted the accused around 15 days back. The accused Sunu, who had been harbouring a grudge against the deceased, accosted Abdul about the past incidence Saturday night. Sunu hit Abdul with an iron slab. The on-lookers present at the spot rushed Abdul to Capital Hospital where he was declared brought dead. On being informed, Kharvela Nagar police reached the spot and arrested Sunu.

CAR FEST PREP



Chariot construction for the upcoming Rath Yatra in progress at Rath Yard in Puri, Sunday

OP PHOTO

27 RRTs for home isolation patients

POST NEWS NETWORK

Khurda, June 6: The district administration has arranged a total of 750 beds at 23 Temporary Medical Centres (TMCs) in rural areas of Khurda for the treatment of people infected with novel coronavirus.

As per a report, the administration has set up 23 TMCs for the Covid patients of 190 panchayats under 10 blocks in Khurda. This apart, at least 145 beds have been arranged in six TMCs to treat Covid patients of Khurda and Jatni municipalities and Balugaon and Banapur Notified Area Councils (NACs), said the report.

Moreover, a Dedicated Covid Hospital (DCH) and three Covid Care Centres (CCCs) have been

set up in Khurda district to treat critical Covid patients. The DCH and the CCCs have altogether 810 beds, including 460 beds fitted with oxygen.

Neelachal DCH at Balakati has 160 beds, including 86 general beds, 34 intensive care units (ICUs) and 40 high dependency units (HDUs), said the report released by the district administration.

The CCC at INS-Chilika has 100 general beds and 50 oxygen-supported beds. Khudupur CCC has 100 oxygen-fitted beds and 200 general beds. Similarly, the CCC at Manjari Devi Homeopathic Medical College and Hospital has 150 oxygen-supported beds and 50 general beds to treat the Covid patients, added the report.

The administration has constituted 27 rapid response teams (RRTs) to attend patients who are under home isolation. "The rapid response teams are working under the supervision of the doctors at the community health centres (CHCs). The teams are providing medicine kits to home isolation patients and taking care of the people residing in the micro containment zones," said an official of the district administration.

According to the official, control rooms have been set up at all CHCs of the district for better management of the Covid-19 situation. This apart, three district-level control rooms have been established in Khurda to supervise the treatment of Covid patients, he said.

"A health monitoring cell is working at the district-level to provide telephonic consultations to the patients. Doctors at the cell have provided telephonic advice to 17,248 patients till May last. A telemedicine centre has been established at the DHH," added the official.

The report further claimed that the district has at least 20 oxygen-supported ambulances to carry critical Covid patients to hospitals. "The DHH has three ambulances fitted with advanced health equipment. Besides, at least 31 ambulances under the 108 and 102 fleets are also operating in the district. The administration has deployed two vans to carry bodies of Covid patients," the report said.

Odisha sends 27,348 MT O2 to 16 needy states

POST NEWS NETWORK

Cuttack, June 6: Odisha has sent at least 27,348.034 metric tonne (MT) medical oxygen through 1,482 tankers to 16 states facing shortage of the life-saving gas for treatment of Covid-19 patients during the second wave of the pandemic, an official said Sunday.

During the last 45 days, as many as 125 tankers have been sent to different states from Angul with 2036.562 MT of oxygen, 336 tankers were sent from Dhenkanal with 5574.19 MT of the gas, 295 containers left Jajpur with 6026.765 MT of oxygen and 726 tankers left Rourkela with 13710.517 MT of medical grade oxygen, according to the Odisha Police that has been entrusted with the mammoth task of ensuring hassle-free transportation of oxygen.

While Andhra Pradesh has received 439 tankers containing 8598.722 MT of oxygen, 375 tankers have reached Telangana with 6626.379 MT of oxygen. Tamil Nadu has received 203 tankers containing 3665.258 MT of medical oxygen and Haryana has received 3331.793 MT of oxygen through 182 tankers, sources at the state police headquarters said.

"At least 41 tankers with 660.051 MT of oxygen reached Maharashtra, while 667.231 MT of the life-saving gas filled in 41 tankers have so far been sent to Chhattisgarh. As many as 67 tankers have carried around 1297.662 MT of oxygen to Uttar Pradesh. 67 tankers with 1182.6 MT of oxygen have been sent to Madhya Pradesh," the sources said.

While 22 tankers with 410.24 MT of oxygen have so far been sent to Delhi, four tankers with 107.89 MT of the gas have reached Punjab. On the other hand, Karnataka, Bihar and Chandigarh have so far received 235.19 MT, 66.14 MT and 25.29 MT of oxygen respectively. While 21 tankers carried 405.068 MT of oxygen to Kerala, one tanker with 29.1 MT of the life-saving gas has reached West Bengal till date. Moreover, Rajasthan has received two tankers containing 39.42 MT of oxygen in the last 45 days.

The special cell, led by ADG (Law and Order) YK Jethwa, has been supervising the transportation of oxygen, added the sources.

CITY & SHUTDOWN



Bhubaneswar roads wear a deserted look as people stay indoors due to the weekend shutdown, Sunday

OP PHOTOS

8 months after death, Covid warrior's kin to get ₹50L aid

AGENCIES

Rourkela, June 6: The next of kin of a medical student in Odisha will finally receive a compensation of Rs 50 lakh around eight months after her death due to Covid-19, sources said Sunday.

Priyashri Mishra, 29, a second-year surgery student at the Ispat General Hospital in Rourkela, succumbed to the infection in September last year while rendering her services during the first wave of the pandemic.

However, despite being a 'corona warrior', her family did not receive the benefits of health insurance for medical personnel under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan package.

The Rourkela Steel Plant management and her colleagues pursued the matter and finally, a decision was taken to hand over a cheque of Rs 50 lakh to her family, an RSP PR department official said.

It would have been a complete dis-honour to her had her family not received the compensation, RSP executive association president Bimal Bisi said.

Mishra, a resident of Bihar's Nalanda, had contracted the disease

THE STORY SO FAR

Priyashri Mishra, 29, a second-year surgery student at the IGH in Rourkela, succumbed to the infection in September 2020 while rendering her services during Covid's first wave

Despite being a 'corona warrior', her family did not receive the benefits of health insurance for medical personnel under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan

The RSP management and her colleagues pursued the matter and finally a decision was taken to hand over a cheque of Rs 50 lakh to her family

Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan package, health workers' families are covered under insurance of ₹50L in case of any adversity to them due to Covid-19

September 22 last year and died five days later. The Sundargarh administration had given her a guard of honour during her last rites. Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan package, health workers' families are covered under insurance of Rs 50 lakh in case of any adversity to them due to Covid-19.

The scheme is being implemented through an insurance policy of the New India Assurance company

3500 new slots for 18-44 age group booked within minutes

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 6: In a bid to improve inoculation rate among the younger age group, the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC), Sunday opened new vaccination slots for people between 18-44 years for all seven drive-in locations in the capital city.

The civic authority stated that the vaccination drive will begin June 7 and will continue till June 12. While the jobs will be administered to 18-44 age group beneficiaries only for the first dose, those falling in 45+ age group will be provided with both first and second doses.

"The drive will begin, June 7. Those receiving their first dose will be given slot between 9 am to 1 pm. Meanwhile, all the vaccination centres will provide vaccine for the second dose for 45+ groups between 3 pm to 6 pm," a BMC official said.

However, despite opening new slots, huge demand for vaccination saw all slots getting booked within a few minutes of opening. Sources said that the civic authority had made available about 3500 new slots for the drive.

Health workers' healing touch for Covid patients

AGENCIES

Bhubaneswar, June 6: From celebrating birthdays to combing or braiding the hair of coronavirus patients, health workers of Odisha are walking the extra mile for the well-being of those infected with the disease.

A video of the health workers' care for the Covid patients at the MKCG Medical College and Hospital at Berhampur in Odisha's Ganjam district has won hearts.

The video starts with the caption: "An extra mile beyond the call of duty." It ends with "Our health workers are a true inspi-

ration to all."

A health worker can be seen in the video combing the hair of a woman patient, while another does the braiding of an elderly patient at the hospital, 168 km south of Bhubaneswar.

"Heart touching gesture by our health care workers at MKCG. Gratitude for their selfless service cannot be expressed through words," the Ganjam Collector tweeted Friday night, along with the 37-second video clip.

Chief Secretary Suresh Mahapatra also complimented the health workers.

"Sincere services rendered with touch of humanism and love wins

heart of the people and sets inspiring examples for others," Mahapatra said in a statement Saturday.

In neighbouring Nayagarh district, the birthday of a coronavirus patient was celebrated with a cake at a dedicated Covid health centre in Khandapada.

"Healing starts at the mind. We at Nayagarh prioritize both physical and mental well-being of our patients," the Collector tweeted, with a photo of the celebration.

"Therefore, we won't let the pandemic steal away such an important day from a person's life," the official added.

FOR CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS CONTACT OUR BOOKING STATIONS

Acharya Vihar-Dayal Agency-9437135727, A.P. Tours and Travel, Maitri Vihar, C.S. Pur- 9861301598, Aurobindo Market-Sai Audio & Electronics-9438304668, Airport Road-Sai Baba Variety Store-9090071530, Anish Infotech- Tankapani Road-9861341488, Bapuji Nagar- Dreamland Studio- 9777517314, Baramunda Rental Colony-Maa Ramchandi Communication-9658821469, Baramunda Housing Board Colony-Pappu Variety Store-9040500106, Cuttack Road-Alishan Snacks-8984236754, District Center (Chandrasekharpur)-Sai Google Mart-9776056507, Forest Park-DTDC Couriers & Services (HB Services)-7381024156, IRC Village-Bapi Xerox-9090090404, Gift Hut(Antriksh Gifts & Decors Pvt. Ltd.)-9954781084, Pruthvi Medicine-9853314816, Janpath-Krupajal Book Store-7978646669, Jaydev Vihar-AK Enterprises-97978116618, Subam Sai Books Store-8895506649, Swain Graphics- 9337121249, Jagannath Mobile Point- Janpath Road, Ram Mandir- 9938475415, Kanan Vihar-Auro Electronics-8260697560, Khandagiri- Swosti Mobile Centre- 7992914045, World Solution- 9938317559, KIIT Road-Jugad Jn-9338545031, Laxmi Sagar-Aditya Mobile-9438191836, Lewis Road-Spider Web-7809186415, Metro Satellite City-Arogya Mitra Medicine Store-9853621640, Madhusudan Nagar-Mohapatra Communication-9124446664, Maa Santoshi travels- Gajapati Nagar- 9777675867, Nayapalli- The Cake Room- 7873660137, Near Mayfair Lagoon-Cookiemana-9439491273, Nigamananda-Omm Sai Travels-9668284823, Nr Cosmopolis Main Gate- Shreeram Medical Store- 8763711714, Net Square- Niladri Vihar (C.S. Pur)- 7205634821, Priyadarshini Market-Astro Point-9938134346, R.N. General Store-Nilakantha Nagar-9438642501, Sahid Nagar- Maa Communication- 9437353424, Sahini General Store- Near Patia Railway Station, Mahavir Vihar- 9937586626, Satya Nagar-Baishnavi Mixture & Sweets-7894821764, Samantapur- Download Point-7504557743, Sailashree Vihar-Harsha Book Store-8093449515, Saheed Nagar-Jagannath Graphics-7978652670, Photo World-7978468191, Sainath Photo Studio-8984436129, Shanti & Co-9937071063, Siripur-Omm Maa Sarala Communication-977682449, Sushree fashion- Jagmara-9938714347, Shree Vision- Sailashree Vihar-9861476678, Unit-3-LIC of India Premium Point-9337787080, Unit-7- LIC Premium Point- 9338227422, VSS Nagar-Friends Cake & Bake-8658200930, Jeet Infoworld-7205195782, XIMB Square-LD Books-9658061373.

UNORGANISED SECTOR

Registration of workers disappointing in Nayagarh

POST NEWS NETWORK

Nayagarh, June 6: Registration of workers in the unorganised sectors in this district is quite disappointing, a report said. This has happened due to lack of awareness, sources said. Many of them do not even know that by registering themselves they can become beneficiaries of a government scheme. As a result, Nayagarh district lies at the bottom of the list of the registration of workers in the unorganised sector while Boudh district takes top position. It is pertinent to mention here that only a handful of 376 workers have registered for this government scheme in Nayagarh district while 26,236 have signed up in Boudh district.



REPRESENTATIVE PICTURE

Bhubaneswar: Among them, 1,964 are from Angul district, 7,468 from Balasore district, 9,618 in Bhadrak district, 2,393 in Bargarh district and 11,153 in Bolangir district.

The figures for the other districts are Boudh (26,236), Ganjam (3,350), Cuttack (6,891), Deogarh (636), Dhenkanal (1,536), Gajapati (1,183), Jagatsinghpur (6,799), Jajpur (5,596), Jharsuguda (1,691), Kalahandi (1,120), Kandhamal (1,089), Kendrapara (8,193), Khurda (3,728), Keonjhar (6,832), Koraput (3,058), Malkangiri (3,118), Mayurbhanj (1,473), Nayagarh (376), Nabarangpur (11,438), Nuapada (6,000), Puri (6,967), Rayagada (6,058), Sambalpur (494), Subarnapur (4,379), Ganjam (11,810) and Sundargarh (10,592).

When contacted, Mohapatra said going by the number of registration of workers it seems that the officials of the Labour department are not working in Nayagarh district. He alleged that even though there are a lot of workers in the unorganised sector in the district but officials are deliberately not registering their names for reasons best known to them.

Trade Union leader Basudev Mohanty said that small traders, domestic workers, rickshaw pullers, auto-drivers, farm labourers, cobblers, kendu leaf pluckers and workers, newspaper hawkers, scarp pickers and dealers vegetables, fruit vendors, tea and coffee stall owners, eateries and snacks vendors can register their names and receive the benefits from the board on the basis of let-

Nayagarh district lies at the bottom of the list of the registration of workers in the unorganised sector while Boudh district takes top position

Alloo dum-dahibara seller Subrat Sahu, tea stall owner Ramachandra Swain, auto-driver Sudam Pradhan, rickshaw puller Bata Krushna Naik and newspaper hawker Chiranjaibi Pradhan said they are not aware of any scheme launched by the government for their benefit

ter (3327, dated April 24, 2017) issued by the state government.

Sunyajay Mishra, president of Nayagarh District Labour Federation alleged that officials register construction workers under the scheme because they get cutback money. As that doesn't happen in case of other workers in the unorganised sector, the officials are apathetic towards building awareness about the government scheme in Nayagarh district.

Alloo dum-dahibara seller Subrat Sahu, tea stall owner Ramachandra Swain, auto-driver Sudam Pradhan, rickshaw puller Bata Krushna Naik and newspaper hawker Chiranjaibi Pradhan said they are not aware of any scheme launched by the government for their benefit.



RIVERBED ENCROACHMENT

Rampant encroachment of riverbed has shrunk the space for Gobari river flowing through Kendrapara district OP PHOTO

Angul DHH to be developed as multi-specialty healthcare centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

Angul, June 6: The district headquarters hospital (DHH) in Angul will be developed into a multi-specialty healthcare facility and the tendering process for the facelift was recently completed, an official said Sunday.

The new building will consist of an outdoor-patient department (OPD), a trauma-care centre (TCC) and a burn unit. The modernised hospital will have OPDs for people suffering from kidney and heart ailments as well. The construction work will start soon, officials of district Angul administration tweeted.

On its official Twitter handle, the district administration has also posted an architectural graphic image depicting how the new DHH building will look. Local residents



had been demanding infrastructure development of the hospital for a long time, added an official.

Earlier, patients coming to the DHH in critical condition and people injured in accidents were being referred to either Indira Gandhi Hospital (IGH) in Rourkela or to SCB Medical College and Hospital (SCBMCH) in Cuttack

for further treatment.

On being contacted, Angul district chief medical officer (CDMO) Dr Trilochan Pradhan said, "The state government has already approved posts for 25 doctors in Angul district. The new recruits will be posted at different hospitals across the district including the DHH."

Veteran Cong leader Bahinipati hospitalised



POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 6: Veteran Congress leader and Jeypore Assembly constituency MLA Taraprasad Bahinipati has been admitted to a private Covid-19 hospital here Sunday. Bahinipati tested positive for Covid-19 in the morning. He had developed mild symptoms, his family sources said. MP and Congress party leader Saptagiri Ulaka wished Bahinipati a speedy recovery.

Taking to his Twitter handle, the MP wrote, "Wishing Senior Congress Leader Hon'ble MLA Jeypore Shri Taraprasad Bahinipati speedy and complete recovery who has tested positive for #Covid19. My prayers for his quick recovery @bhalubh55."

2 killed in road mishap

POST NEWS NETWORK

Barbil, June 6: Two people were killed Sunday after a truck hit the two-wheeler they were riding on near Kandara fuel station on Rimuli-Rajamunda road in Keonjhar district.

While one of the deceased has been identified as Budhadeb Munda from Basudevpur area under Champua police limits, the identity of the second deceased has not been ascertained.

According to a source, the duo on a scooter was going towards Joda. As they were nearing Kandara fuel station, a speeding truck hit them.

TUSKER CARCASS RECOVERED FROM ORCHARD

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhampur, June 6: A tusker was found dead at a mango orchard of a resident in this district Sunday.

The matter came to fore after locals spotted the dead elephant lying in a mango orchard belonging to Aryendu Kumar Jena, a resident of Gobindaprasad village under Sadar forest range of Dhenkanal district.

Locals suspect that the tusker might have got electrocuted after coming in contact with the solar barbed fencing wires around the orchard. However, forest officials said it is highly unlikely for large animals like the elephant to get electrocuted by solar barbed wires.



They said it must have come in contact with high voltage electric wires. The incident was immediately reported to the Forest department and the Gobindaprasad police station. Locals said mango and cashew have grown abundantly in the locality this year attracting the pachyderms to the orchards. The animals are damaging the

Forest officials suspect that the tusker might have died after coming in contact with high voltage electric wires

crops but they are not being paid proper compensation, locals alleged. They demanded that forest officials must work to drive away the elephant herds which are frequently straying into the area

A team of forest officials seized the carcass from the spot and sent it for post-mortem. Action will be taken on the basis of post-mortem report, ACF Rashmiranjan Swain and Ranger Dharitri Murmu said.

People suffer as saline water wreaks havoc

POST NEWS NETWORK

Jajpur/Bari, June 6: Groundwater in the delta region of Bari block in Jajpur district turning saline has sent alarm bells ringing among the residents and farmers in the area, a report said.

Brahmani, Birupa and Genguti rivers forms the delta region in Bari block. Digging of soil leads to oozing out of saline water. It is unfit for drinking, cooking and cultivation.

As a result, over 40,000 residents in Ratnagiri, Mandari, Amathpur and Serpur panchayats under this block are being deprived of clean drinking water. Hundreds of hectares of farmlands have also been rendered uncultivable with farmers abandoning agriculture due to this reason.

Saline water oozed out of the ground when a survey was undertaken for installation of a 200-feet long lift irrigation point at Benjerapur in Mandari panchayat of the block. Residents said that clean drinking water will be available only if over 750 feet deep ex-



cavation is carried out.

The residents have drawn the attention of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, irrigation minister, principal secretary, Irrigation and the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) departments towards their plight but to no avail. MLA Adhiraj Panigrahi also raised a question in this regard in the last session of the State Assembly. However, no solution has emerged till date for the problem due to which residents have been forced to use fluoride mixed water.

Reports said that over 10 bore wells each of 200-feet in length

have been dug up in Anikana and Mandari revenue villages under Bari block. However, the water pumped out by the bore wells is not conducive for agriculture for which farmers are not interested in taking up cultivation of crops.

Farmers, Raghunath Jena, Bishnu Charan Jena, Shyam Sundar Jena said that cultivation could be taken up in hundred of hectares of farmlands if the Irrigation department helps them in getting clean drinking water. The availability of clean water could benefit the farmers as this is a locality which is famous for veg-

etable cultivation. Moreover, drinking water problem is quite acute in the area. There are two piped drinking water supply projects in Patna and Ratnagiri areas under the block. However, the projects are pumping out only saline water.

Residents are suffering a lot as the authorities have not installed any filter in the pipes supplying water. The non-availability of drinking water is a very serious problem for the residents of this panchayat. However, the district administration is yet to take any constructive step to resolve the problem.

Efforts to contact Motilal Tiwari, executive engineer of RWSS department for his response went unanswered. His phone was switched off.

Debasmita Behuria a local resident of the area attributed the problem to the location of the Bari block. She said the locality is 20-25 km from the coastline, so saline water tends to slip into the soil quite easily. She said that government has not taken any steps to ease the plight of the people in Bari block.

Driver trapped inside overturned truck rescued

POST NEWS NETWORK

Muniguda, June 6: After a three-hour long operation, police with the help of fire personnel rescued the driver of an iron-laden truck who was trapped inside the mangled remains of the vehicle after it overturned. The operation was carried out near Badigaon bridge on Bissamcuttack-Therubali road in Rayagada district Sunday.

According to a source, the truck was coming from Raipur and as the driver was negotiating a curve near Badigaon bridge, he lost control of the vehicle leading to the mishap. The helper of the truck managed to escape. However, the driver got trapped inside the vehicle.

Local residents immediately informed the police and fire department. Soon a team from Bissamcuttack police station and fire personnel reached the spot and launched a rescue operation.

The operation to rescue the already injured driver was carried out very carefully. Both the police



and the firefighters took utmost care not to aggravate the injuries of the already-hurt driver. Eventually the driver was brought out from under the overturned truck and rushed to the Bissamcuttack community health centre (CHC) where his condition is stated to be stable.

The members of the rescue team were applauded for their well-coordinated operation as a slight mistake could have proved fatal to the driver.

REACHING OUT



RDC (South) T Apang Ao giving away land patta to a woman beneficiary at Labanyagad in Gajapati district during a tour of the district, Sunday OP PHOTO

Showing the way in e-waste management

POST NEWS NETWORK

Berhampur, June 6: At a time when the alarming increase in e-waste has constantly been a cause of concern, skilled professionals of ITI, Berhampur are developing a robot using e-waste. The objective is to share the concern with others and draw the attention of the world community to this serious issue.

On the occasion of 'World Environment Day', officials said students and teachers of Electric and Instrument Mechanic departments of the institution are working on a 29 feet tall installation.

Principal, ITI, Rajat Kumar Panigrahi talked about the ongoing project. "The sculpture is taking the shape of a robot. There is a structure built from e-waste which has been installed in Bhubaneswar. That is 16 ft high. Our installation is going to be the tallest in the world," informed Panigrahi.

"The work on the structure started a month ago. This is a project very close to the students and

BERHAMPUR ITI



The structure being built at e-scrap Park looks like a gigantic robot. It has been erected to make it the tallest e-waste statue in the world so that it can feature in the Guinness World Records book

Students and teachers of Electric and Instrument Mechanic departments of the institution are working on the 29 feet tall installation

Berhampur ITI team has already set up a park of sculptures built using e-waste. It is amongst the largest parks in Asia. It has already found a place in the Asia Book of Records

teachers associated with it. They are working on it tirelessly. About three tonne of e-waste are being used in this installation. Most of the materials are discarded computers, mobile phones, CD players, TVs, VCRs etc collected from Berhampur

city," added Panigrahi. The structure which is being built at e-scrap Park looks like a gigantic robot. It has been erected to make it the tallest e-waste statue in the world so that it can feature in the Guinness World Records book.

"If we have to get rid of e-waste pollution, upcycling of scraps and waste electronic materials is the only way. And our robot will send out this message across the globe," Panigrahi pointed out.

As per the Waste Management Rules, 2016, the e-waste should be scientifically stored and dismantled as they will otherwise give rise to more serious environmental hazards. In 2019, the world generated 53.6 million tonne of e-waste, an average of 7.3kg per capita. It is projected that the total volume of e-waste generated in the world will have reached 74.7 million tonne by 2030.

According to the team members, the tallest robot will create awareness about e-waste management among people, particularly among those serious about the environment.

Notably, Berhampur ITI team has already set up a park of sculptures built using e-waste. It is amongst the largest parks in Asia. It has already found a place in the Asia Book of Records.

FOCUS PANDEMIC

ON THE ORIGIN OF VIRUS



An open scientific investigation into the true origin of COVID-19 will help policymakers formulate strategies to educate citizens and mitigate the risk of future outbreaks

It is already one and a half years since the first COVID-19 case was reported in Wuhan, China. Wuhan is home to the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) and the Wuhan Center for Disease Control. Both institutes are leaders in bat-coronaviruses research and have huge collections of these viruses. The virus that caused the pandemic is called SARS-CoV-2. From the beginning SARS-CoV-2 has spread like wildfire claiming the lives of around 3.7 million people worldwide. Also, it has infected over 171 million people globally and is still counting. Furthermore, post-COVID-19 complications (like mucormycosis) are creating havoc. The unprecedented multiple waves of the pandemic led to loss of human life, loss of jobs and completely overwhelmed the existing healthcare system.

In the midst of ongoing chaos, the scientific community is yet to pinpoint on the true origin of the virus. There has been debate around the world about the source of the virus. Several theories are floating around, for instance: i) a form of animal-to-human transmission via a host (Zoonoses) and ii) it is leaked from a laboratory (lab leak). Various excellent articles on these topics were written by Nicholas Wade, David A. Relman, Katherine Eban, Rowan Jacobsen and many others.

On 20 October 2020, two Indian researchers (MC Rahalkar and RA Bahulikar) from the Agharkar Research Institute, Pune and the BAIF Development Research Foundation, Pune published a paper in the Frontiers in Public Health proposing lethal pneumonia cases in Mojiang Miners (2012) and the mineshaft could provide important clues to the origin of SARS-CoV-2. This publication cited a master's thesis by Li Xu entitled: "The Analysis of Six Patients with Severe Pneumonia Caused by Unknown Viruses" (May 2013, Kun Ming Medical University). An Indian twitter user (@TheSeeker268) first found the thesis and then sent it to the researchers based in Pune. An English version of the thesis is now available online: <https://www.documentcloud.org/do>

Several internet users (including TheSeeker, Rahalkar and Bahulikar) from across the world formed a group called DRASTIC (Decentralized Radical Autonomous Search Team Investigating COVID-19) and unearthed data from various available publications and websites. The documents found by DRASTIC brought out new facts about the origin of SARS-CoV-2 ([drasticre-search.org](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/6981198-Analysis-of-Six-Patients-With-Unknown-Viruses.html)).

The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported on 23 May 2021 (by citing undisclosed US documents) that three researchers from the WIV became sick in November 2019 and they were hospitalized. Another investigation report by the WSJ on 24 May 2021 stated that its reporter was detained by the police in Mojiang, China for several hours; later, photographs of an abandoned copper mine located in Mojiang were deleted from the journalist's electronic device. The WSJ report further added that in April 2012, six miners fell ill after cleaning bat excreta in the mine and three of them died. On 28 May 2021, the EL ESPAÑOL described that the hospital where the miners were treated decided to send samples to the WIV. Subsequently, a team from the WIV led by Shi Zheng-Li (a prominent Chinese virologist working on bat coronavirus, known as the 'Bat woman') conducted research on it. The re-

sults of the study (describing new coronavirus) was published in which six cases of the disease as well as death of three miners were not mentioned. A year before the publication of the said article, Shi Zheng-Li and her team from the WIV approached the abandoned copper mine to collect more bat samples. Thus far, no information is available about these samples. The chain of emerging events indicates that the master's thesis by Li Xu (found by the DRASTIC team) is corroborating facts mentioned in several news reports.

Recently a team appointed by the WHO and its Chinese counterpart conducted a joint investigation to look into the source of SARS-CoV-2. Liang Wannian, the Chinese head of the team, reportedly said that Chinese authorities tested 50,000 animal specimens, including 1,100 bats. But they did not find a matching virus. The report remains inconclusive.

Science is a never-ending process as new discoveries always lead to new questions. Science is about never-ending questioning and demanding for adequate experimental evidence about any theory. Are the samples collected from six Mojiang miners available? Are the samples collected from bats in the abandoned copper mine available? Will it be possible to collect samples from the miners who survived the illness? Can an independent group of scientists examine these samples? Will China

allow access to the abandoned copper mine in Mojiang? Why are investigative journalists denied access to the abandoned mine? Will the joint report submitted by Chinese-WHO team undergo a peer review process? Will we ever know the true origin of COVID-19?

A group of 18 eminent scientists recently published a letter in the Science journal. They have sought a thorough investigation into the origins of COVID-19.

The current scenario looks even more complicated since Shi Zheng-Li had conducted research projects in collaboration with US-based virologists. For instance, Peter Daszak, EcoHealth Alliance, US, had been collaborating with Shi Zheng-Li for several years. Also, Daszak's organization funded coronavirus research at the WIV and channeled government funds for it. Notably, researchers from the WIV are performing gain-of-function research (experiments designed to alter a pathogen to make it more infectious). Fredrik Elgh, Professor of Virology at Umeå University, Sweden, who examined the 2003 SARS virus leak, says it is possible that the ongoing pandemic began with a laboratory leak.

An open scientific investigation into the true origin of COVID-19 will help policymakers formulate strategies to educate citizens and mitigate the risk of future outbreaks. For example, the Odisha government has passed a resolution to make disaster and pandemic preparedness a part of the curriculum of schools and colleges. In addition, knowing the origin of the pandemic will help to understand and prevent accidents/leaks in biological laboratories since proliferation of bio-labs worldwide has increased the risks of a pandemic. Politics should not take precedence over data, facts, and science. At present, the focus should be on information gathering, and to conduct an open investigation by giving equal weightage to both zoonotic spillover and lab-leak. The conclusion can be drawn once adequate information is available.

The writer is a scientist and an alumnus of IIT Madras.



Sanjib Kumar Karmee

SCIENCE IS A NEVER-ENDING PROCESS AS NEW DISCOVERIES ALWAYS LEAD TO NEW QUESTIONS

Vaccine Famine

When the head of India's coronavirus taskforce, Dr VK Paul, said June 5 that the country has overtaken the United States in terms of the number of people who have received their first shot of a Covid-19 vaccine, he was rather too economical on truth. His claim, made at a time when the country is virtually facing a vaccine famine, sounds like a crude joke bordering on cynical unconcern for millions helplessly running from pillar to post for one jab. People in the age group from 18 to 44 years are being given a raw deal with the Centre refusing to provide vaccines free as it did in the case of people above 45 years. Private hospital chains are on an average charging between ₹900 and ₹1,500 per shot. It is so easy to reel off statistics the way Dr Paul did that the number of people getting at least one dose of vaccine in India is 17.2 crore. (According to latest government figures, the number of vaccinated has increased to 22.9 crore).

Numbers can be interpreted to suit different interests of different people and agencies. It is one thing to score political brownie points with statistics and another to reassure people groaning under the pandemic with concrete actions. Certainly, it is not the time for any government official to try and fool people with jugglery of figures as has been done by Dr Paul. A report released by the International Monetary Fund states the US and the UK have already inoculated 35-40 per cent of their population, while more than 50 per cent have received at least one jab. India's vaccination record so far is about 3 per cent. Comparing the number of people in India with that of the US or the UK to claim achievement in vaccination is illogical as the population sizes greatly differ.

The other things that Dr Paul said were pious platitude and inane lecture. He reminded the people "not to act carelessly as Covid-19 cases dip." What the country desperately needs now is ramping up of vaccine production with speed which, no doubt, is easier said than done. It is also not difficult to understand why the government has gone on an overdrive in releasing statistics to create the impression that it is doing reasonably well in fighting the pandemic. The Supreme Court last week put the government on the mat by asking tough questions on its vaccination policy with the Amicus Curiae Jaideep Gupta graphically presenting production figures to demonstrate that the government's claim to vaccinate the entire population by the end of December or January, 2022 has no substance. The apex court has given the government two weeks time to submit a report on the money being spent and the quantum of vaccines the Centre has procured and distributed. The government, it seems, is trying to build its case by dishing out figures to buttress its claim of good performance.

Simple arithmetic will show the dire situation the country is in. The country needs 190 crore vaccine doses for herd immunity is what we are told. If 70 per cent of the population is to be vaccinated, ₹10,400 crore will be required at the rate of ₹400 per dose. Against this the Centre has allocated ₹35,000 crore for buying vaccines. There are currently two locally-made vaccines for the coronavirus: Oxford Astra-Zeneca developed Covishield made by the Serum Institute of India (SII) and ICMR developed Covaxin by Bharat Biotech. Covishield constitutes 90 per cent of the locally available vaccines.

The government said in May that earlier this year it had ordered a total of 356 million doses of the two vaccines to be available for use up until July but not all of these doses have been delivered. The Sputnik V vaccine, which was approved for use in April, is also now available exclusively at Apollo Hospital chain, with three million doses supplied by Russia. SII's projections include 750 million doses of Covishield. Bharat Biotech plans to produce 550 million doses of Covaxin. The SII recently told the government they would produce 100 million doses per month from June onwards and Bharat Biotech's capacity would be boosted to 80 million doses per month from August.

After much dillydallying, the government has begun negotiations with US producers - Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson - for additional supplies. But these makers have said they can discuss availability only by October this year. That too if India enacts an indemnity clause.

In such a bleak situation the nation also hears reports of malfunctioning ventilators provided by the Centre to the states under the different schemes, including PM CARES. The courts have taken note of a large number of complaints of ventilators not working when patients were gasping for lack of oxygen. The Central exercise seems directed at passing the blame to the states which in some cases have allegedly left the devices unused in warehouses.

The Centre needs to stop taking refuge in excuses and hiding its colossal failure in fighting the pandemic. A lot of time has already been lost and lakhs of families ruined. The spectre of the third wave is looming large when babies in the cradle, toddlers and urchins would also come in the death grip of the lethal virus. The government must act fast, no blame-game would save the nation.

WISDOM CORNER

- Hope is the only bee that makes honey without flowers. **ROBERT GREEN INGERSOLL**
- Life appears to me too short to be spent in nursing animosity, or registering wrongs. **CHARLOTTE BRONTE**
- Love and desire are the spirit's wings to great deeds. **JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE**

WORDSWORTH

Niddering

This obscure word — meaning a coward, or cowardly — is the result of an error, but one which has been rubbed true by time. It's very rare, but it can carry a special punch when it appears: *Stripped of its outer integuments of salacity and fraud, the inner man is revealed as timid and niddering, lying to the last firm handshake and as sickly yellow as a poisonous toadstool* (Paul Johnson, *writing in the Spectator*, 22 May 1999). The historically correct form, which is now even rarer still, is nithing. The fault was that of the printer in the 1590s who had the job of setting William of Malmesbury's historical works in type. He misread the eth character in the old spelling nithing as a d followed by a mark, which he assumed meant an e had been omitted. The result was niddering, which later writers made to conform with the usual rules of English spelling by adding a second d. Its original, nithing, derives from an ancient Scandinavian legal term, the Oxford English Dictionary explains, that meant a person "who has committed a crime so heinous that no possible compensation may be made for it." It was taken over into the legal system of England before the Norman Conquest in the sense of a coward or outlaw. Later, it came to mean a miser or a treacherous person. Conversely an unnothing was an honest or generous man. Niddering owes much of what little circulation it has had in the past two centuries to the once-popular Sir Walter Scott, who used it in *Ivanhoe* in 1819.

LOL

New driver's license

Martin had just received his brand new driver's license. The family troops out to the driveway, and climbs in the car, where he is going to take them for a ride for the first time. Dad immediately heads for the back seat, directly behind the newly-minted driver. "I'll bet you're back there to get a



change of scenery after all those months of sitting in the front passenger seat teaching me how to drive," says the beaming boy to his father. "Nope," comes dad's reply, "I'm gonna sit here and kick the back of your seat as you drive, just like you've been doing to me all these years."

SPECTRUM CULTURE

Making of the Oxford English Dictionary

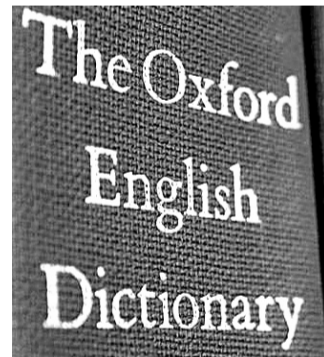


Sudha Devi Nayak

THE PRODIGIOUS EFFORTS OF DICTIONARY MAKERS IN SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES WERE MERELY STEPPING STONES TO THE STELLAR EFFORTS MADE FOR THE OED

It was in the eighteenth century that the British felt the want of a good dictionary to know their language in more detail. Dictionaries were there with lexicographers making tremendous efforts at corraling the entire language. One of the greatest literary figures of all time, Samuel Johnson created "A Dictionary of the English Language" which has remained ever since, a portrait of the language of the day in all its majesty, beauty, and marvellous confusion. With such illustrious predecessors, the monumental OED took birth in 1857, which took 70 years to complete. Simon Winchester, a geologist and globetrotting correspondent and writer tells us in his fascinating novel the genesis and journey of the great dictionary that symbolises everything English. "The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary" is the story of the strange collaboration of two men to produce the definitive of all guides to the language that for good or ill has become the lingua franca of the civilized modern world.

The two protagonists of the tale are, apart from the dictionary itself, the great philologist editor of OED, Dr James Murray and an American army surgeon, William Chester Minor, a murderer incarcerated at



an asylum for the criminally insane, who made the dictionary possible with their magnificent obsession for words. Murray is a towering figure in British scholarship who had an impassioned thirst for knowledge and believed in 'vita diligetissima' - nothing is better than a most diligent life. Murray after an interview with a formidable committee was appointed editor of OED. While Murray was of humble origin, Minor graduated from Yale Medical School and applied to the army during the civil war: Born in the serendipitous island of Ceylon, to missionary parents, experiencing the beauty of the island, he had access to a good life.

The exposure to the war and its horrors resulted in a mental condition that made him unfit for the

army. He left for London in a disturbed condition with his books, esauel, water colours, his paranoia and delusions. In London he took up quarters in Lambeth, a disreputable suburb and ended up killing, pursued by a psychotic fantasy, a man he had never known or met, George Merret. Dr Minor on trial was found not guilty on grounds of insanity but would be detained in permanent custody as a criminal lunatic.

To go back to the dictionary, the prodigious efforts of dictionary makers in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were merely stepping stones to the stellar efforts made for OED. The new project wanted every word of the English language with its evolution, meanings, shades, and nuances spelling and pronunciation, every illustrative citation from every English author. Since this titanic task was not possible without 'crowd sourcing', an appeal from Murray went out to volunteers to find words, supply quotations and definitions. This appeal was enclosed with books and journals, to shops and libraries. Meanwhile, stricken with remorse, Minor reached out to Eliza Merret, the widow of George Merret, with financial offers. She accepted the gesture, came to see him, collecting books on his behalf from London.

It is in one of these books he found Murray's appeal. After a decade of imprisonment Minor's self-worth began to re-emerge. He responded and Minor's contributions were remarkable with 12,000 quotes furnished with astonishing accuracy and detail. Unaware of Minor's condition, Murray undertakes a journey to meet him. Amazed at finding the truth about Minor a firm friendship began with mutual respect and love of words lasting twenty years. However with time, Minor's health deteriorated, he was allowed to leave for an asylum in Washington and subsequently shifted to a hospital for the elderly insane in Hartford Conn and died at the age of 85 in 1920 in obscurity. It is sad and ironical that his very insanity and incarceration has granted us the dictionary. Murray with OED still incomplete died at 76 in 1915. Both men earned their redemption through the dictionary. But most unsung of all the players in the drama is George Merret to whom Winchester magnanimously dedicated his novel.

The OED was completed on New Year's Eve 1927 and was announced on the front page of the New York Times. The work was done and the alphabet exhausted. The newspaper called it "one of the great romances of English Literature."

Over-pricing hospitals

Sir, Thousands of patients in India are routinely experiencing the arbitrary over-billing of private hospitals and nursing homes because our government hospitals are not capable of treating all the diseases and the diseases don't see whether you are poor or rich. Despite the implementation of health insurance programmes, not all citizens are benefited. Under Article 21 of the Constitution, it is the primary duty of the government to secure and safeguard the right to life of every citizen, which should not get violated by anyone. Both the Centre and state governments should protect the people facing such monopoly attitude of private hospitals and nursing homes by exercising executive power to control the pricing strategy.

PS Swagatika Sahoo, JAGATSINGHPUR

Save the saviour

Sir, There has been an increase in assault on doctors during this pandemic. After Assam, such incidents were also reported in Karnataka. The thrashing of doctors on duty needs to be stopped. Many doctors have lost their lives to the coronavirus while serving the people of the nation. The states as well as the Central government should provide adequate security to doctors and healthcare workers so that they can fight this battle against the virus without fear. Lives can be saved if doctors are safe.

Manoj Kumar Jena, CUTTACK

Centre-Twitter war

Sir, Twitter found itself in a muddle after the Centre on Saturday issued 'one last notice' to comply at once with the new IT intermediary rules, failing which the social media company would be liable for the content posted by its users. Curiously, the ministry did not set any deadline for the tech giant to comply with the rules. As a result, Twitter has developed a trust deficit by refusing to toe the government's line and put in place a system of checks and balances. Earlier, Twitter had courted controversy for removing the verified 'blue tick' marks of Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu, RSS chief Mohan Bhagawat and RSS functionaries Suresh Soni, Arun Kumar, Suresh Joshi and Krishna Gopal, citing inactivity in these accounts.

NJ Ravi Chander, BANGALORE

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

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

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

'No rift between Modi & Yogi' 8,000 bunkers for border residents

BJP national vice-president Radha Mohan Singh dismisses the possibility of an imminent Cabinet reshuffle in UP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Lucknow, June 6: BJP national vice-president Radha Mohan Singh Sunday dismissed the possibility of an imminent Cabinet reshuffle in Uttar Pradesh and shot down the speculation over a "rift" between Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Singh, the party's in-charge in UP, also junked talks over the possibilities of a change in party's or the government leadership in the state, asserting that both are working fine.

Singh made the rebuttals while talking to PTI after his meeting with Governor Anandiben Patel, which he described as a "personal" one. Asked about a TV news channel report claiming an imminent Cabinet expansion in UP, Singh told PTI, "No expansion is going to take place now. Everyone is focussed on the election of zila panchayat chairpersons."

"When it takes place, it will be known," he added.

"The reports appearing in news-



BJP Uttar Pradesh in-charge Radha Mohan Singh with Governor Anandiben Patel during a meeting, in Lucknow. PTI PHOTO

papers and news channels do not make any sense," he quipped.

Singh also junked the reports on the alleged rift between Modi and Yogi, describing the CM as the most "competent implement" to fulfil PM's dream.

"If you look at newspapers, you will see that Modi Ji was the first to greet Yogi Ji (on birthday). In fact,

we are of the view that Yogi ji is the most competent implement to fulfil the dreams of Modiji," he said.

The BJP vice president also discounted reports on likely changes in party's and government leadership in UP, terming them as a "figment of imagination".

"This is a figment of imagination. No question arises of it. Both the

government and the organisation are working fine," he asserted.

Singh's also dismissed Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav's recent claim that dissent and rebellious attitude of BJP workers have left the party leadership in shock and shot back, "What does he know of a party? He runs a company."

"He will be having information about the company he operates, the company of his family members," Singh said, reiterating "What knowledge does he (Akhilesh Yadav) and Rahul Gandhi have about party workers?"

"Our 17,000 workers have been adjusted in the UP government. Had they been in power, they would have adjusted their family members," he said.

Talking to reporters too immediately after his meeting with the governor, Singh had discounted reports on Cabinet reshuffle.

Asked about the possibility, he said "there is nothing like that".

However, on being asked about the Cabinet expansion to fill some ministerial berths, Singh said some

seats are vacant but they are not major ones.

"As far as vacant seats are concerned, the chief minister may take a decision at an appropriate time," he added.

There has been speculation earlier in media that former IAS officer AK Sharma, considered close to PM Modi, would be inducted into the UP Cabinet as a senior minister following his election as an MLC.

Singh also told reporters that the "BJP has the strongest organisation and most popular government in Uttar Pradesh."

About his meeting with Governor Patel, he said he had come to meet her because he had not been able to meet her for some time. "After becoming the party's in-charge of UP, I have not met the governor," he said.

"When she was the Gujarat chief minister, I was the agricultural minister. I had an old association with Gujarat. As I could not meet her in the past six months, I met her today. This was a personal meeting," he said.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Jammu, June 6: About 8,000 underground bunkers have been completed for the safety of the people living along the Line of Control (LoC) and International Border (IB) in Jammu province, officials said Sunday.

The Centre has sanctioned the construction of 14,460 individual and community bunkers for the border residents in the five districts of Jammu, Kathua and Samba covering the villages located along the IB and Poonch and Rajouri villages on the LoC. Later, the government sanctioned over 4,000 additional bunkers to cover a more vulnerable population. "A total of 7,923 bunkers, including 6,964 individual and 959 community bunkers, have been completed so far in (Jammu) division," an official spokesman said, as Divisional Commissioner Jammu Raghav Langer reviewed the progress on the construction of the safety structures at a meeting here. There has been no major ceasefire violation over the past three months in Jammu and Kashmir after India and Pakistan



signed a fresh agreement to maintain calm along the borders on February 25 this year.

The spokesman said the work is also in progress on 9,905 bunkers which are under different stages of construction. The deputy commissioners informed that 1,592 bunkers have been completed in Samba, 1,228 in Jammu, 1,521 in Kathua, 2,656 in Rajouri and 926 in Poonch.

Langer took strong note of delay in tendering of pending bunkers and directed the executive engineers concerned to float the tenders afresh for the construction of the bunkers which have not been taken up as yet for their early completion, the spokesman said. The divisional commissioner also directed the deputy commissioners to personally monitor already executed work.

Nothing can be achieved by killing political activists: Mehbooba Mufti

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Srinagar, June 6: PDP president Mehbooba Mufti Sunday asserted that nothing can be achieved by killing political activists like BJP councillor Rakesh Pandita and said such incidents only defame the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pandita was shot dead by militants in the Tral area of Pulwama district Wednesday.

"It was unfortunate. We condemn those who killed him and nothing can be achieved by such things. In fact, it defames the people of Jammu and Kashmir," Mufti told reporters in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

She said the entire Union Territory has to bear the brunt of such incidents. Asked about the possibility of the government conducting the Amarnath Yatra amidst the Covid pandemic, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said the decision on allowing the annual pilgrimage in the south Kashmir Himalayas was for the Centre to take. She also criticised the police over reports of the booking of a 15-year-old boy under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in north Kashmir's Bandipora.

"They (Centre) do not listen to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Had they listened, they would not have booked a 15-year-old under UAPA. They do whatever they want



to do. On one hand, there is Covid and it is difficult for people to come out of their homes, but on the other hand, if they want to have the yatra, who will tell them (not to have it)? They are the decision makers, they do whatever pleases them," Mufti said.

She, however, added that the "government of India has to take a decision on the yatra".

Meanwhile, in a tweet, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief said the booking of the 15-year-old boy under UAPA "is yet an-

other example of institutionalised tyranny".

"Booking a 15 year old under UAPA is yet another example of institutionalised tyranny. Not being satisfied with converting Kashmir into an open air prison where dissent is crushed this regime is now going after children. Does anyone in the country care?" she wrote on Twitter. Mufti was referring to reports of police in Bandipora booking a 15-year-old boy for allegedly raising anti-national slogans at a funeral.

Taj Mahal, a victim of nature and man

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Agra, June 6: Green crusaders have raised questions on the safety of the iconic Taj Mahal from pollution in Agra.

Since 1993, after the Supreme Court intervened and passed a series of orders to secure the sensitive Taj Trapezium Zone, from the ravages of pollution, the Union and the state governments have spent thousands of crores on a slew of projects designed to bring down the air pollution level.

However, according to environmentalists the positive results of these measures have yet to show. The crude reality is that neither the air pollution level has come down, now has the general quality of life improved in the 10,000 sq km eco-sensitive zone around the Taj Mahal.

The suspended particulate matter (SPM) in the ambient air continues to remain alarmingly high round the year, and the dry-polluted river Yamuna poses a serious threat to the Taj Mahal and other Mughal monuments along its banks.

"India's tourism icon and a symbol of earthly love, the 17th century white marble mausoleum, the Taj Mahal, is a victim of both nature and man. If the monument looks sick and pale to visitors, the reason is the dry and heavily polluted Yamuna that once formed an integral part of the Taj Mahal complex," says eminent environmentalist Devashish Bhattacharya of the River Connect Campaign.



During the scorching summer months the Taj is enveloped in yellowish sand from the neighbouring Rajasthan desert. Any discernible visitor can tell that the summer heat is taking its toll on the Taj Mahal, the timeless monument of love, blasted by sand from the dry Yamuna bed and the dust-laden winds from the Rajasthan desert, Bhattacharya added.

Many scientific studies in the past have identified the gaps left by illegal mining in the Aravali ranges that have raised the SPM in Agra.

running on CNG, as are the industries that are being allowed to run after the 1996 Supreme Court directive to shut down all coal based industries in the TTZ.

The number of vehicles in the city has shot up from around 40,000 in 1985 when Firozabad too was part of the Agra district, to more than a million now. The opening of the Yamuna Expressway, the Agra-Lucknow Expressway, has increased vehicular traffic, while the pressure of heavy vehicles on the Delhi-Kolkatta and Delhi-Mumbai national highways passing through Agra has increased phenomenally.

The Covid-19 pandemic, though has provided the Taj Mahal some breathing time and a respite, but in normal times, the fatigue and stress from human load has been quite discernible on the fragile white marble mausoleum. From a few hundred daily some decades ago, the Taj today is daily visited by thousands. This number does not include children below 15 years for whom entry is free. For five days in a year the entry to the monument is free for everyone. This opportunity is availed by lakhs of people.

Visitors who see the Taj Mahal for the first time never forget to ask the guides, "Is it turning yellow?" The explanation given by the guides is that it is the natural ageing process and has nothing to do with industrial pollution, as all polluting industries in the Agra region have been shut down by the Supreme Court.

Curbs eased in UP as virus caseload declines



AGENCIES

Lucknow, June 6: The Uttar Pradesh government has allowed shops and markets outside containment zones in Varanasi, Muzaffarnagar, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Ghaziabad to open for five days a week from Monday after active COVID-19 cases in these four districts fell below 600.

With this, the number of districts where active COVID-19 cases have fallen below 600 has reached 71, the state government said in a statement Saturday.

It said the relaxations will come into effect from June 7 and will be effective from Mondays to Fridays from 7 am to 7 pm. However, night and weekend curfews will continue.

"A watch is kept on Lucknow, Gorakhpur, Meerut and Saharanpur

districts and a decision on these may be taken Tuesday," according to the statement.

In view of the number of COVID-19 patients recovering in the state, four to five districts are likely to witness active cases fall below 600 by Monday.

May 30, the Uttar Pradesh government had relaxed the COVID-19 lockdown in 55 of 75 districts in the state.

Prior to Varanasi, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Muzaffarnagar and Ghaziabad, coronavirus curfew was relaxed in Bareilly and Bulandshahr on Saturday and in Jhansi June 3.

June 1, the curfew relaxations were extended to Lakhimpur Khiri, Ghazipur and Jaunpur while the curbs were relaxed in Sonbhadra, Deoria, Baghat, Prayagraj, Bijnor and Moradabad May 31.

A leopard attack that cut short 5-yr-old girl's life

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

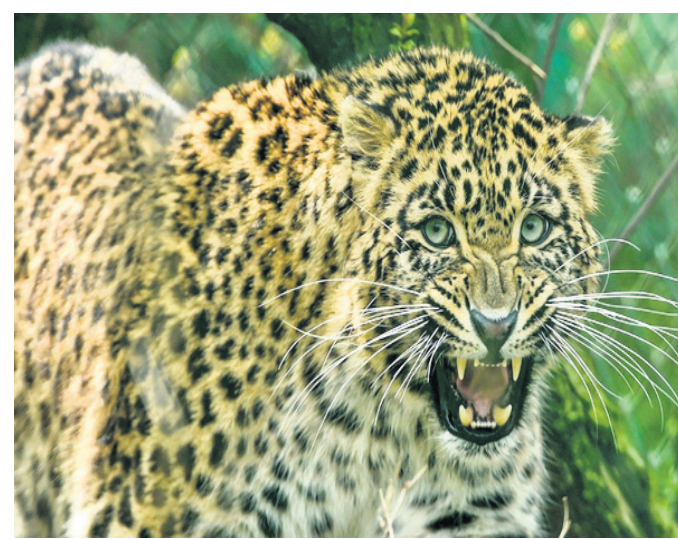
Srinagar, June 6: Five-year-old Mir Adda chose a 'Barbie dress', wore a crown and was excitedly calling for family to cut her brother's birthday cake, minutes before a leopard took her away from the lawn of her house on the city's outskirts, in a tragic case underlining human-animal conflict because of rapid forest destruction.

The Mir house at Om Pura, a locality just outside the city limits in the central district of Budgam, became the centre of attention as mourners swarmed the residence to express their condolences to the family of Adda, who loved to call herself 'Adda Rani'.

"Adda had returned from her maternal family home as it was her brother Ali's seventh birthday. She went upstairs and took out her favourite 'Barbie dress' for the occasion and wore a princess crown before stepping into the garden to ask her grandfather to finish his tea as they had to cut the cake," said her maternal uncle, Aijaj Ahmed.

A few minutes later, Adda's heart-wrenching shrieks pierced the silent evening of June 3. What followed was an exercise in futility as her family members, joined by neighbours and forest officials, only found some blood stains and a doll that she was carrying with her.

The next day Adda's body parts were recovered from an adjacent nursery-turned-forest, leaving a grieving family behind.



PICTURE USED FOR REPRESENTATION

They bid a tearful adieu to her as she was laid to rest Saturday and people reminisced about her smile and banter. Her relatives, who could not visit due to COVID-19 restrictions, took to Twitter to mourn her death.

"Adda rani, she would call herself. Can't forget the sound of her laughter and her running around. What a tragedy!" tweeted Sana Fazili, who stayed in the same locality.

She also posted a video, where Adda was copying a viral trend of social media. "Yeh mein hoon... Yeh meri party ho rahi hai (This is me... And I am having a party)."

Twitter and other social media platforms were full of users sympathizing with Adda and someone

posted, "Heaven must be a beautiful place now as it has you Adda..."

Parents of the little girl are still in shock. This is the second tragedy in their family as Adda's grandmother had passed away earlier this year.

The death of Adda, who was a student of DPS School, Srinagar, led to some suspensions in the Forest Department and pushed the Jammu and Kashmir administration to address the concerns of Om Pura locality about wild animals. "She was an extraordinary girl, always bubbly and with a smile. But what happened to her should not happen to anyone," an inconsolable Ahmed said.

Her father, Muddasir had returned from Thailand last year fol-

lowing the outbreak of Covid.

Her school also expressed condolences and circulated a message saying, "We are heartbroken by the suffering and loss of the little one and we stand with the family in grief and solidarity. We pray for the eternal peace of the departed soul and healing for those who she left behind shattered and inconsolable."

The sighting of wild animals was caught on camera but nobody had done anything, said Ahmed and other neighbours held the Forest Department responsible for the tragedy.

The Om Pura area has a 20 acre nursery adjacent to it which is maintained by the Social Forestry Department.

"The purpose of the nursery was to grow saplings which could be later planted in the forest area. But they have not maintained the nursery and it has virtually turned into a forest."

"After her death, they started pruning trees and clearing the bushes which they should have done over the years. We feel the death of the child is the outcome of the Forest Department's actions. This nursery is surrounded by human habitation and there are wild animals roaming freely in the nursery," Ahmed said.

Regional Wildlife Warden, Kashmir, Rashid Naqash, expressed shock over the tragedy but said his department could not be blamed for it.

"We have repeatedly raised the issue of the nursery and the pres-

ence of wild animals with the Forest Department over the last four years after the first sighting of a leopard there," Naqash told PTI. He said the department did its duty with professionalism after it came to know about the leopard sighting.

"We launched a vigorous house-to-house campaign to educate people about the threat and preventive measures needed to be taken for their safety. We asked them not to allow children outside their homes, especially at dawn and after dusk," the official said. He said they also pasted do's and don'ts at vantage points and used mosques to reach out to the residents, besides making efforts to catch leopards. "We succeeded in capturing a leopard in the vicinity over two weeks ago."

Asserting that the department has been making all out efforts to ensure that there is no man-animal conflict, he said, "Our efforts can be gauged by the fact that the trend (man-animal conflict) is on steady decline over the past several years despite facing shortage of manpower."

Urging the people to follow the guidelines religiously, he said the victim's house is located near the nursery and there is no proper fencing separating the two.

"The household has rabbits and poultry, and the girl was attacked when she was moving alone at dusk," he said. "I cannot bear the burden of being dubbed the girl's murderer..." an emotional Naqash said.

of the day quote

Nepotism and favouritism has crippled the administrative setup in state
MEHBOOBA MUFTI
PDP PRESIDENT

It is becoming a serious issue as a lot of people in the 18-44 group are nearing their date for the second dose. We are also hearing reports that people are travelling 100-200 km to Meerut, Bulandshahr to get their shots because there are no vaccines in Delhi
ATISHI MARLENA | AAP LEADER

The oil prices were not increased in March and April, as there were elections in five states but the repeated increase of petrol clearly shows the ruling BJP's determination to make petrol unaffordable for the common man. Let us all visit petrol pumps and pay floral tributes to pump machines to mark our protest
DK SHIVAKUMAR | KARNATAKA PRADESH CONGRESS COMMITTEE PRESIDENT

SHORT TAKES

Maha Covid tally overtakes France's

Mumbai: Maharashtra's Covid-19 death toll crossed the one lakh mark while continuing to remain on the higher side, even as fresh infections for the day kept falling, health officials said Sunday. In terms of total infections recorded till date, Maharashtra has touched 58,31,781 - overtaking France which ranks No 4 in the world with 57,07,683.

Mega vaccination drive held at Hitex

Hyderabad: A mega vaccination drive was held Sunday at Hitex, Hyderabad. Concerned about the spike in cases in the past 60 to 70 days that caused loss of lives, Medicovert Hospitals, in association with the Cyberabad Police Commissionerate & The Society for Cyberabad Security Council (SCSC), planned this initiative to combat Covid-19. The place was filled with people looking to get vaccinated since 8 a.m. when the drive began and it was slated to continue till 9 p.m. With over 500 counters for no waiting, different time slots were allocated all through the day.

NCB seizes 40 kg ganja

Mumbai: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) Mumbai has seized 40 kg ganja and Rs 100,000 cash from drug peddlers in Thane, a top official said Sunday. Continuing a follow-up operation in an ongoing probe, the NCB sleuths intercepted wanted peddler from Badlapur (Thane), Sunil Bhandari and accomplice Aman Gagade, along with the car in which they were travelling, near Patas toll plaza on the Pune-Solapur Highway.

Gujarat to set up over 75 O2 plants

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat government has initiated the process to set up more than 75 oxygen plants to produce additional 300 MT of the life-saving gas if the demand for it goes up during the possible third wave of Covid-19, Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel said.

Blast in Pulwama

Srinagar: At least seven people were injured in a blast in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir Sunday, a police official said. He said police are trying to ascertain the cause of the blast that occurred at a bus stand in Tral. The injured were taken to the hospital where their condition is stated to be stable, the police official said.



We, under the leadership of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, are making all possible efforts to grant reservation to the Maratha community which was struck down by the Supreme Court
AJIT PAWAR | MAHA DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

'NOORJAHAN' MANGOES

The 'Noorjahan' mango, cultivated in Madhya Pradesh's Alirajpur district, is fetching a higher price this year thanks to the good yield and sheer size of the fruit compared with the last year. The 'Noorjahan' mango is priced at ₹500 to ₹1,000 apiece this season, a farmer said



nCoV count in India lowest in 60 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 6: India reported 1,14,460 new coronavirus infections, the lowest in 60 days, while the daily positivity rate further dropped to 5.62 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated Sunday.

With the fresh cases, the total tally of coronavirus cases in the country climbed to 2,88,09,339. The Covid-19 death toll climbed to 3,46,759 with 2,677 daily deaths, the lowest in 42 days, while the active cases dropped below 15 lakh, the data updated at 8 am showed.

A total of 96,982 new cases were recorded in a span of 24 hours April 6. Also, 20,36,311 tests were conducted Saturday taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far for detection of Covid-19 in the country to 36,47,46,522. The daily positivity has further declined to 5.62 per cent. It has been less than 10 per cent for 13 consecutive days, the ministry said.

The weekly positivity rate has declined to 6.54 per cent. The active cases have reduced to 14,77,799 comprising 5.13 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate has improved to 93.67 per cent. A net decline of 77,449 cases has been recorded in the Covid-19 caseload in a span of 24 hours.

Recoveries continue to outnumber daily new cases for the 24th consecutive day. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 2,69,84,781, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.20 per cent, the



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

data stated. A total of 23,13,22,417 vaccine doses have been administered so far. India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark August 7, 30 lakh August 23, 40 lakh September 5 and 50 lakh September 16. It went past 60 lakh September 28, 70 lakh October 11, crossed 80 lakh October 29, 90 lakh November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of 2 crore May 4.

The 2,677 new fatalities include 741 from Maharashtra, 443 from Tamil Nadu, 365 from Karnataka, 209 from Kerala, 120 from Uttar Pradesh and 118 from West Bengal

A total of 3,46,759 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 99,512 from Maharashtra, 31,260 from Karnataka, 26,571 from Tamil Nadu, 24,557 from Delhi, 21,151 from Uttar Pradesh, 16,152 from West Bengal, 15,009 from Punjab and 13,192 from Chhattisgarh. The ministry stressed that more than 70 per cent of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the ministry said on its website, adding that state-wise distribution of figures is subject to further verification and reconciliation.

Lakshadweep deploys officials on fishing boats

The Lakshadweep administration also said locals will face fines and criminal prosecution if they do not dispose of coconut shells and tree leaves 'scientifically'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Kochi, June 6: Amid protests by islanders against its "reform" measures, the Lakshadweep island administration has taken a set of decisions, including deputing government officials onboard local fishing boats for intelligence gathering. The administration also issued a new order on managing cleanliness and hygiene, June 4, directing the people of the islands to scientifically dispose of the tender coconut shell, tree leaves, coconut husk, coconut shell, trunk etc in and around dwelling and public places.

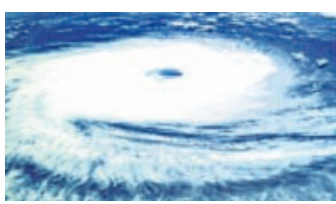
Lakshadweep MP Mohammed Faizal attacked the administration for its new directives, terming them as a "mockery" and urged the authorities to withdraw them immediately. It was May 28, a meeting chaired by Principal Secretary cum Advisor to the Administrator decided to depute responsible gov-

ernment servants onboard local fishing boats for intelligence gathering. The meeting also decided to strengthen the security measures to monitor the local fishing boats and crews, intensify checking of passenger boats and vessels reaching the islands and strengthen the ship berthing points and helibase by installing CCTV cameras. The administration later gave direction to officials concerned to initiate action as per decisions taken on the meeting.

He questioned the practicality of implementing the order, saying there are hundreds of fishing boats operating from the islands and how many officials are going to be deployed in such vessels. Noting that a well established system of surveillance by the Navy and the Coast Guard was already in place in all the islands, the MP said the Coast Guard headquarters in islands have an effective radar system which can cover activities of any vessels operating in 30 nautical mile areas. Faizal said every month or once in three months Coast Guard is having regular interaction with the local fishermen to train them on how to report the movement of suspected objects in the seas.

CYCLONE YAAS

Central team to visit WB to assess damage



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 6: A central team headed by a joint secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) will visit West Bengal to assess the damage caused by Cyclone Yaas, days after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee abstained from a cyclone review meeting convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi triggering a controversy.

The very severe cyclone Yaas made landfall in Odisha May 26 and affected a large part of the state as well as West Bengal. A central team led by a joint secretary of the MHA will visit West Bengal for three days to assess the damage caused by the cyclone, a Home Ministry official said.

The West Bengal chief minister had said, as per preliminary assessment, the cyclone had led to damage of an estimated ₹20,000 crore to property and agriculture. She had also said that 18 lakh people were affected by the cyclone and around 2.21 lakh hectares of crops and 71,560 hectares of horticulture area suffered damage.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi conducted an aerial survey of the cyclone-affected area of West Bengal May 28 and later called a review meeting at the Kalaikunda air force

station. However, the chief minister and the then chief secretary, Alapan Bandyopadhyay, a senior IAS officer, did not attend it, even though they met the prime minister for a few minutes.

Following this, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), the cadre controlling ministry for the IAS officers, summoned Bandyopadhyay for serving in the central government. However, he did not come to the capital and chose to retire May 31, instead of accepting a three-month extension sanctioned to him by the state and central government. Subsequently, he was appointed as the chief advisor to the state government by Banerjee.

On May 31 itself, the MHA slapped a show-cause notice on Bandyopadhyay under a stringent provision of the Disaster Management Act that entails imprisonment for up to two years for abstaining from the meeting presided by the prime minister at Kalaikunda. Chief Minister Banerjee had alleged that the officer was targeted by the central government due to a "political vendetta". The ruling Trinamool Congress claimed that the Centre was wreaking vengeance on the West Bengal government and that the notice sent to Bandyopadhyay was an "illegal" move.

17 MENTALLY ILL INDIANS IN PAK JAILS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 6: Six years after Pakistan conveyed to India about 17 "mentally unsound" Indians languishing in jails in that country, efforts to confirm their identity have not yielded any result despite the Ministry of Home Affairs putting up their photos on its official website and seeking assistance from the general public as well as states and UTs.

They have completed their sentences but due to non-confirmation of their nationality they could not be repatriated to India, an official said.



Among the 17 prisoners in Pakistan who are believed to be Indians, four are women and were named Gullu Jan, Ajmeera, Nagaya and Hasina by Pakistani authorities. The others are Sonu Singh, Surinder Mahto, Prahalad Singh, Silrof Salim, Birju, Raju, Bipla, Rupi Pal, Panwasi Lal, Raju Mahouli, Shyam Sunder, Ramesh and Raju Rai.

The MHA has said anyone who can identify these 17 persons should give information to the Under Secretary (Foreigners) in the Ministry of Home Affairs, the home department of state governments or union territory (UT) administration concerned or respective Director General of Police or Inspector General of Police or Commissioner of Police.

"Photographs of 17 mentally unsound persons, believed to be Indian nationals, who are lodged in jails in Pakistan, are attached. These persons have not been able to disclose any other particulars about them including the names of their parents or relatives, address in India, etc. Due to their mentally unsound condition," the MHA notification said.

In 2015, Pakistan had conveyed to India about these 17 Indians lodged in their jails and said they have completed their jail terms in that country but they cannot be sent back home as they are unable to recall their whereabouts since they are "mentally unsound".

HARVEST OF HOPE



Farmers ploughing a paddy field and sowing seeds after rain on the outskirts of Belagavi

UNI PHOTO

9.27L severely malnourished kids identified till Nov 2020

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 6: More than 9.27 lakh children in India are 'severely acute malnourished', with the most in Uttar Pradesh followed by Bihar, according to government data, underscoring concerns that the Covid pandemic could exacerbate the health and nutrition crisis among the poorest of the poor. An estimated 9,27,606 'severely acute malnour-

ished' children from six months to six years were identified across the country till November last year, the Women and Child Development Ministry said in response to an RTI query from PTI.

Of these, Uttar Pradesh counted for 3,98,359 and Bihar 2,79,427, according to the figures shared by the ministry.

Ladakh, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Manipur and Madhya Pradesh reported no severely mal-

nourished children. Except for Ladakh, none of the anganwadi centres in the other four, including Madhya Pradesh, one of India's largest states, reported any data on the matter, according to the RTI reply.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines 'severe acute malnutrition' (SAM) by very low weight-for-height or a mid-upper arm circumference less than 115 mm, or by the presence of nutri-

tional oedema. Children suffering from SAM have very low weight for their height, and are nine times more likely to die in case of diseases due to their weakened immune system.

The Women and Child Development Ministry had last year asked all states and union territories to identify SAM children for their early referral to hospitals. The figure of 9,27,606 came following that exercise.

27L caught without ticket on trains in 2020-21: RTI

The 2020-2021 financial year was the period when the Railways ran the least number of passenger trains in its history due to the coronavirus pandemic and there were severe restrictions on the movement of people inside railway premises, including non-issuance of platform tickets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 6: Despite severe restrictions on entry at railway stations without confirmed tickets in view of the coronavirus pandemic, over 27 lakh people were caught travelling on trains ticketless in the last fiscal, an RTI query has revealed.

This was, however, less than 25 per cent of the number of cases recorded the previous financial year and that is attributable to the restrictions imposed to check the Covid-19 contagion, say officials.

The data made available by the Railway Board following an RTI query made by Madhya Pradesh-based activist Chandra Shekhar Gaur showed that between April

2020 and March 2021, 27.57 lakh people were caught travelling ticketless and ₹143.82 crore was levied as a fine from them.

In the 2019-2020 fiscal, 1.10 crore people were caught travelling ticketless and in total, a fine of ₹561.73 crore was realized from them.

"Traveling ticketless or with an unauthorised ticket is a long-standing challenge before the Indian Railways. On its part, the Railways makes informative, educative and punitive measures to discourage people from doing the same," said Railway spokesperson D J Narain.

The 2020-2021 financial year was the period when the Railways ran the least number of passenger trains in its history due to the coronavirus pandemic and there were severe re-



Representative image

strictions on the movement of people inside railway premises, including non-issuance of platform tickets. It includes the lockdown period between April 14 and May 3

when the Railways was not operating any passenger trains except the Shramik Specials which started from May 1. These trains were run at the request of the state govern-

ments and the tickets were issued only to those authorised by the states.

In June last year, the Railways began running special trains and issued strict guidelines - e-ticketing through IRCTC website or through mobile App, no tickets booking at reservation counter, only passengers with confirmed tickets to be allowed entry at station and screening to be done before boarding with only asymptomatic passengers allowed to enter the train.

Fully waitlisted passengers and unreserved passengers were not allowed to travel on trains as the unreserved coaches were booked as reserved second sitting coaches to ensure that the necessary Covid-related protocols are followed.

"Accordingly, in line with these

instructions, without ticket passengers at railway premises and trains were being identified and charged as part of normal as well as special ticket checking drives.

"The number of without ticket cases in 2020-21 (27.57 lakh) was less than 25 per cent of the number of such cases detected in 2019-20 when such figure was 1.10 crore. This was feasible due to wide publicity efforts by railways to create awareness and to discourage irregular travel," Narain said.

Currently, the Railways is running 809 special Mail Express trains on an average per day, 2,891 suburban services, 26 special trains being operated as clones of highly patronised trains and 403 passenger services.



If pizza, burgers, smartphones and clothes can be delivered at home, then why can't ration be delivered at their doorstep
ARVIND KEJRIWAL | DELHI CHIEF MINISTER

FREE OXYGEN SUPPLY ON BIKES LAUNCHED

Actor Sonu Sood's Foundation and Swag ERT that supplies free oxygen on bikes to those patients needing it during pandemic times Sunday entered Tamil Nadu by opening a centre in Coimbatore



of the day quote

All is well when BJP-ruled states distribute ration for an additional Rs 3, but when the Delhi government decided to start doorstep delivery of ration to the poor, they have a huge problem
MANISH SISODIA | DELHI DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

The state government is taking a calculated risk and hence people have to take care of themselves. Nothing is going to be eased immediately. Some criteria and levels have been fixed and the local administration will take decisions on whether to ease restrictions and further tighten them
UDDHAV THACKERAY | MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

The DMK government would work tirelessly and relentlessly to include all languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution as the official language of the Union government
MK STALIN | TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER

Govt fighting for blue tick, not vax: Rahul

Rahul Gandhi's remarks came a day after outrage over the removal of 'blue tick' badge from the personal accounts of Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and RSS top functionaries including Mohan Bhagwat, by Twitter, only to restore it later

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 6: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Sunday took a swipe at the Modi government, saying it is fighting for a blue tick while leaving people to become "atmanirbhar" (self-reliant) to get Covid vaccines.

Hitting back at the Congress leader, the BJP said he should get out of social media and work on the ground. The party also asked him to speak to chief ministers of Congress-ruled states regarding alleged scams and irregularities in the Covid vaccination programme there.

Rahul's remarks came a day after outrage over the removal of 'blue tick' badge from the personal accounts of Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu and RSS top functionaries, including Mohan Bhagwat, by Twitter, only to restore it later.



"The Modi government is fighting for the blue tick. If you want a Covid vaccine, then be self-reliant," he said in a sarcastic tweet in Hindi, using the hashtag "#Priorities".

Taking a dig at Gandhi, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said doing politics on Twitter is his (Gandhi's) "most important subject" and "biggest platform". Patra

asserted that the Modi government has done an admirable job in spearheading such a big inoculation programme and providing free ration to the poor.

Meanwhile, the former Congress president also talked about stopping language discrimination after a Delhi government hospital asked its nurses not to converse in

Malayalam. The hospital order has been revoked. "Malayalam is as Indian as any other Indian language. Stop language discrimination," Gandhi said in another tweet.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also shared the concern and posted the order of the Govind Ballabh Pant Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research warning the nursing personnel to use only Hindi and English for communication, else serious action will be taken.

"This order is a violation of the basic values of our country. It is racist, discriminatory and utterly wrong," she said in a tweet in Malayalam, saying Malayali nurses are risking their lives in Covid times to save people.

"This order is also an insult. We owe them a debt of gratitude and respect. It should be withdrawn

as soon as possible and an apology should be published," she demanded.

In another tweet, Priyanka alleged that the Modi government reduced oxygen beds by 36 per cent, ICU beds by 46 per cent, ventilator beds by 28 per cent between September 2020 and January 2021.

"Is the health of Indian citizens less important than the Central Vista project?" she asked, alleging that the government has declared the project as an essential service with people working day and night to complete it by 2023.

"When every expert in the country, the Parliamentary Committee on Health and their own sero-surveys warned them that additional beds would be needed for an inevitable second wave," she said as part of her 'ZimmedarKaun' (Who is responsible) campaign.

'Need to prioritise pregnant women for vaccination'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 6: Amid rising deaths of pregnant women due to Covid-19, a report has made a strong case for their vaccination on a priority basis.

For Covid not to further aggravate the already heavy burden of maternal and under five mortality, there is a strong case for inclusion of pregnant women as a high priority group for vaccination, a report prepared by a group of doctors led by Yamini Sarwal of Delhi-based Vardhman Mahavir Medical College and Safdarjung Hospital said.



"We recommend including Covid-19 vaccination in the routine protocol for antenatal care in all countries, particularly India and Indonesia, in view of their high dual burden," it said. Currently, either pregnant women are not included for vaccination, or the policies are ambiguous with the decision being often left to the woman, the report said.

Evidence is emerging of the safety and efficacy of Covid vaccination, which along with benefits of passing on the protection to the newborn, call for including pregnant women in the high priority group for vaccination, it said.

Observing that pregnant women are known to be at significantly higher risk for severe coronavirus-related complications compared with non-pregnant women, it said, the issue of protecting such women is critical. Vaccination has emerged as a reliable protective measure against severe Covid-19 infection, the report noted.

Monsoon covers the entire northeast: IMD

The Monsoon, which hit Kerala two days ago, has advanced into most parts of sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim, some more parts of Maharashtra, the entire Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, some more parts of Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh, central Bay of Bengal and northeast Bay of Bengal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 6: The southwest Monsoon Sunday further advanced into central Arabian Sea, thus covering further parts of the country, including the entire northeastern region.

The Monsoon, which hit Kerala two days ago, has advanced into most parts of sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim, some more parts of Maharashtra, the entire Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, some more parts of Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh, central Bay of Bengal and northeast Bay of Bengal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Due to strengthening of south-westerly winds and a cyclonic circulation over sub-Himalayan West Bengal and neighbourhood in lower tropospheric level, the IMD predicted fairly widespread to widespread rainfall activity was very likely over northeastern states

and adjoining east India during next 4-5 days.

Isolated heavy rainfall is very likely over Arunachal Pradesh Sunday and Tuesday; over Assam and Meghalaya and sub-Himalayan West Bengal and Sikkim Tuesday and Wednesday; over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura Sunday and Monday; over Odisha Tuesday and Wednesday; and over Gangetic West Bengal Thursday.

Under the influence of the offshore trough at mean sea level from north Maharashtra coast to north Kerala coast and a cyclonic circulation over Konkan and Goa in lower tropospheric levels, scattered to widespread rainfall accompanied with thunderstorm, lightning and gusty winds is very likely over parts of south peninsular India and the west coast with isolated heavy rainfall on Sunday and reduction in intensity thereafter.



Representative image

For release of arrested farmers, Tikait leads sit-in at Haryana PS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Tohana (Haryana), June 6: A large number of farmers led by Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait continued their sit-in at Sadar police station in Fatehabad here on Sunday demanding the release of two farmers.

An FIR was registered after the farmers tried to gherao Jananayak Janata Party MLA Devendra Singh Babli's residence here Wednesday night. Vikas and Ravi Azad were arrested by the police in connection with the incident.

Addressing a gathering outside the police station Sunday, Tikait said the protesting farmers will not move from here till the time the fellow farmers are released. "We are ready for court arrest. We have been telling the police to either arrest us also or release them," the BKU leader said.

The protesting farmers had earlier also sought the registration of a case against Babli for allegedly hurling abuses at them.

RISKY JOURNEY



People along with their motorcycles travel by a boat to cross the river Ganga in Patna

PTI PHOTO

PALAMU TIGER RESERVE

Leopards now rein in Tigers' abode

Bizarre as it may sound, the fact is that a reserve that once took pride in its tiger populace is now a safe haven for about 150 leopards

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Ranchi, June 6: Leopards now rein in Palamu Tiger Reserve, known globally for undertaking the world's first census for big cats in 1932.

Tourists these days flock Palamu Tiger Reserve to have glimpses with leaps of leopards, say officials, who add that no tiger has been sighted since a tigress was found dead in February 2020 near Bela National Park.

"We now have about 150 leopard population, which has become an attraction for tourists coming to Palamu. Happy tourists are often seen taking photographs with the leopards. However, we are making all efforts to facilitate the return of the tigers' Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF) and Project Director, PTR YK Das said.



Representative image

Attributing "left-wing extremism activities, movement of security personnel, increased human encroachment and depleting prey bases in core and buffer zones of the reserve spread across about 1130 square km" as the main reasons behind the big cats abandoning their former safe haven and migrating

to forests in neighbouring Chhattisgarh and Odisha, Das said restoration of prey base among other measures were to lure them back.

He said that though no tigers were detected in the last All India Tiger Estimation, one tigress was found dead in PTR in February 2020 which establishes that tiger used to be there. A census taken nearly a decade ago had revealed one male tiger and five females lived there.

Palamu was declared a protected forest reserve in 1973-74 when Project Tiger was launched. Project Tiger was launched to try and stem the fall in numbers of India's national animal. It aimed to address depletion of tiger habitats and rectify damages to them to help preserve the country's tiger population.

SHORT TAKES

Hooch case: Key accused arrested

Aligarh (UP): The key accused in the last month's Aligarh hooch incident, which has claimed at least 35 lives so far, was nabbed in the early hours of Sunday, police said. Accused Rishi Sharma, who carried a reward of Rs 1 lakh on his arrest, was held near Bulandshahr border in western Uttar Pradesh, Aligarh Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kalanidhi Naithani said. Sharma, whom the police described as the kingpin of the liquor mafia, was named in 13 different cases connected to the recent liquor tragedy, and was nabbed this morning on the Aligarh-Bulandshahr border as he was about to slip out of the district after being holed up in his hideouts since the past nine days.

Illegal int'l call centre busted

New Delhi: The Delhi Police busted an illegally run international call centre in West Delhi's Naraina and arrested 21 people for allegedly duping UK-based citizens by posing as revenue and custom officials of that country, officials said Sunday. The employees at the call centre in Naraina Industrial Area approached UK-based citizens through phone service over the Internet (VoIP) and posed as HMRC (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, United Kingdom) officials who then duped them claiming that discrepancies were found in the audit of their income tax, they said.

Sikkim extends lockdown

Gangtok: The Sikkim government Sunday extended the statewide lockdown for one more week till June 14 in view of the raging Covid-19 pandemic, an official release said. The lockdown restrictions were scheduled to end June 7.

Quake hits J&K's Reasi

Jammu: A low-intensity earthquake of magnitude 2.5 hit Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district Sunday, an official said. The earthquake occurred 82 km east of Katra at 6.21 am, Director, Disaster Management, Aamir Ali said. He said the epicentre of the tremor was five km below the surface of the earth at latitude 32.99 degrees north and longitude 75.82 degrees east. The official said there was no report of any damage from anywhere.



Another Shah, Kishore bout

Political pundits are keenly waiting for the next round of bout between the BJP's Chankya and Union Home Minister Amit Shah and freelance poll strategist Prashant Kishore. He is a free-bird now after his contract with Mamata Banerjee is over. He is packing his bags to settle down in Delhi and no one knows his future plans. Mamata Banerjee win in West Bengal has established Kishore as a master strategist and he is particularly happy to settle a rather personal score with Amit Shah in his long-drawn battle after his departure from Modi camp in 2014. Though

Kishore has many wins to his credit beginning with Modi's own feat in 2014 when he was part of his poll strategy team. Then he had a stint with the AAP in Delhi's Assembly polls and Nitish Kumar in 2015 in Bihar where BJP was trounced decisively. The Akalis had to lick the dust with BJP in 2017 when Kishore joined Capt Amrinder Singh followed by Jagan Mohan Reddy in Andhra Pradesh and MK Stalin in Tamil Nadu. But the win in West Bengal is special as he had thrown an open challenge long before the campaign that BJP will not cross 100 seats mark while Amit Shah had claimed 200 plus seats for BJP. Now polls are due in seven states including UP which is mainstay of the BJP apart from Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur in February next year. Later, Gujarat is due. BJP's anxiety is visible and it cannot take things for granted any more after its humiliation in West Bengal.

Kejri's rising ambitions

If Mamata Banerjee is the new player on the horizon on the national political scene, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has not

given up his ambitions either. Even after his several failed attempts in the past, contesting against Modi in 2014 from Varanasi to fight state polls in a big way, he continues to sing his own tunes. He refuses to join the joint Opposition chorus against Modi like other political parties with Congress. He continues to pitch himself against BJP and Modi for seven years now. However, he has retained his citadel against heavy BJP onslaught successively as Mamata Banerjee faced Home Minister Amit Shah's fury. Kejriwal is also focusing on expanding his party's footprint in Uttarakhand, Goa and Gujarat. Of course, Punjab continues to be his pipe dream where he missed the bus in 2017 as he did not project anyone as the CM candidate. Surprisingly, he is concentrating on the Kumaon region in Uttarakhand where the Congress has strong roots and not in the Garhwal region known to be BJP's fiefdom. Manish Sisodia has been deputed there and AAP may end up hurting the Congress in the process, analysts say. The AAP is working hard in Goa where it had emerged as a force of sorts in 2017 and prevented Congress from winning. No single party

got majority and BJP pocketed the state.

11 crore Covaxin doses a month

The Centre and a few states are funding Bharat Biotech Limited (BBL) to increase Covaxin production to 11 crore doses a month from the current level of two crores. The Centre is funding three PSUs as grant-in-aid -- Mumbai-based Haffkine Biopharmaceutical Corporation (HBC), Indian Immunologicals, a NDDB unit and Bharat Immunologicals and Biologicals Ltd (BIBCOL), Bulandshahr. The HBC will produce 2 crore doses a month as Centre has given Rs 65 crore grant while Maharashtra is pumping Rs 95 crore. This shut down unit will take a long time to become operational. The NDDB is pumping huge money in Indian Immunologicals to make 12 million doses per month along with BIBCOL. The Centre has given Rs 30 crore to BIBCOL. It is yet to set up a new laboratory. All this starts sometime in October-November only. The BBL is setting up its own facilities which are expected to be operational by October-November to scale to 5-6

million doses. As of now, the BBL has supplied only 3.11 crore doses to Centre. The good news is Serum's has been supplying 7 crore doses of Covidshield a month now and ramping up to 11 crores by July.

How Sarma twisted BJP arm?

There is a mystery behind how Himanta Biswa Sarma made his way to become Chief Minister of Assam dislodging incumbent Sarbananda Sonowal. There is no doubt that Sarma is BJP's rising star ever since he quit Congress ridiculing Rahul Gandhi personally in 2015. Amit Shah was BJP chief and then Sarma became his chum. Shah was desperate to open BJP's account in North-East under his tenure. But Sonowal had already been groomed for the role by Nitin Gadkari since 2011 after he joined the party from AGP. Sonowal was made Union Minister in 2014. But Sarma was made NDA chairman for North East and eased out powerful BJP general secretary Ram Madhav and got his man appointed. Sarma walked away with a majority of 93 tickets out of 126 that BJP got in alliance with AGP & UPPL. The

results showed BJP lost 1% vote share compared to 2016 and did not get any seat extra. But Sarma's 42 MLAs sent the word to Delhi that no injustice was done to their leader. The result was obvious as a situation was created that the party cannot risk Assam after its humiliating defeat in West Bengal. It is not as if Sarma is the first Chief Minister from the non-BJP non-RSS core group. Earlier, Biren Singh was made the Chief Minister in Manipur and doing a fine job in a low profile. Even Pema Khandu is Chief Minister in Arunachal Pradesh and is BJP's trusted man in the North East. The Chief Minister of Nagaland Neiphiu Rio is also BJP's man-Friday. But nobody has risen in the BJP like Sarma in Assam. One thing may also be said about him that he is working as if there is no tomorrow ever since he took over. He seems to be a man in the hurry. Sarma has injected a new work culture and most of his cabinet colleagues, too, are seen trying to match his pace. The new set of ministers are travelling much more than their predecessors, holding regular review meetings, setting deadlines and fixing responsibilities to meet their targets. Few also act tough in front of the cameras.

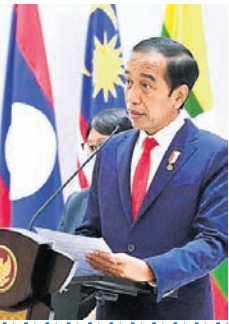
international



There have been many Covid outbreaks in Australia linked to hotel quarantine breaches, including the current outbreak in Victoria that has thrust the greater Melbourne area into its fourth lockdown

MYANMAR TO WORK WITH ASEAN

Myanmar is willing to work together with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to safeguard the domestic stability of the country and implement the relevant consensus, State Administration Council (SAC) Chair Sen-Gen Min Aung Hlaing said



of the day quote

Sunday said that a state-wide ban on Twitter which prompted international condemnation over the weekend was only a temporary measure in response to misinformation

MUHAMMADU BUHARI | PRESIDENT, NIGERIA

Things exploded — it was like a light switch. The labour market is just out of control. We literally cannot hire technicians ... We ramped up so quickly, the supply chain wasn't ready for it.

KIRBY MALLON | PRESIDENT, ELMER SCHULTZ SERVICES

As we face the biggest health and economic crisis of our lifetimes, I was greatly heartened to see how we united to make progress. We represent half of global GDP and wanted to use trade as a force for good

DAMIEN O'CONNOR | MINISTER FOR TRADE AND EXPORT GROWTH, NEW ZEALAND

SHORT TAKES

China authorises CoronaVac vax

Beijing: China has authorised the emergency use of CoronaVac, a Covid-19 vaccine manufactured by Chinese firm Sinovac, for children aged between 3 and 17 years, Sinovac Chairman Yin Weidong said. "But when the vaccine will be put into (emergency) use, and starting from what age in the group has yet to be decided," he was quoted as saying by the state-run Global Times Sunday. Sinovac has finished the Phase I and II clinical research stage, involving several hundred volunteers in this age group, Yin said.

3 dead in Mexico mine collapse

Mexico City: The bodies of two miners were pulled from a small coal mine in a northern Mexico border state by early Sunday, bringing to three the number confirmed dead in the flood and partial collapse of the shaft. Three miners remain missing, and search efforts continued. The dead miners were found at the small coal mine in the northern Mexico border state of Coahuila, where there have been complaints for years about unsafe conditions at coal mines.

LGBTQ groups rally in Tokyo

Tokyo: Japanese sexual minority groups and their supporters staged a rally outside Tokyo's iconic Shibuya Station Sunday calling for equal rights and public support for enacting a long-sought equality law before the Olympics, despite fading hopes due to the governing party's resistance. Around 100 people wearing rainbow facemasks danced and held banners with slogans in Japanese and English, such as "Equality Now!" "Legalise!" and "Equality Act during the current Parliament!"

Man kills couple, self

Athens: Police on the Greek island of Corfu said Sunday that a Greek man facing eviction killed his landlady and her husband and then committed suicide. The deaths occurred shortly before noon Sunday, in the resort town of Dassia, on the island's northeast. The victims were a Greek man and his French wife, both in their 60s, who divided their time equally between Greece and France, police said.

UK for commitment to global vax drive

ASSOCIATED PRESS

London, June 6: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will use the Group of Seven wealthy democracies' summit next week to urge world leaders to commit to vaccinating the global population by the end of 2022.

Johnson is expected to stress the importance of a global vaccination drive when he meets with fellow world leaders on Friday in Cornwall, on the coast of south-western England, for the first face-to-face G-7 summit since the pandemic hit.

"The world is looking to us to rise to the greatest challenge of the postwar era: defeating Covid and leading a global recovery driven by our shared values," he said in a statement Sunday. "Vaccinating the world by the end of next year would be the single greatest feat in medical history."



US President Joe Biden and leaders of Canada, France, Italy and Japan will arrive in Cornwall from Friday for three days of talks focusing on the global recovery from the pandemic.

Britain's government pledged in February to give most of the country's surplus vaccine supply

dered some 400 million doses of vaccines. Health Secretary Matt Hancock has said that the UK does not have any excess doses at the moment and that "we're just getting them into arms as quickly as possible".

The Sunday Times reported that Johnson is set to announce at the summit that the UK will pledge to donate over 2 billion pounds' worth of jobs this year, with further donations in 2022. The US has said it plans to share 80 million doses of its surplus vaccine globally by the end of June, most through COVAX.

The world is looking to us to rise to the greatest challenge of the postwar era: defeating Covid and leading a global recovery driven by our shared values. Vaccinating the world by the end of next year would be the single greatest feat in medical history

BORIS JOHNSON | PRIME MINISTER, BRITAIN

TWITTER BAN

US, EU CONDEMN NIGERIA'S DECISION

AGENCIES

Abuja, June 6: The US and the European Union voiced concern over Nigeria's decision to indefinitely ban Twitter after the US social media giant deleted a tweet from the president's account for violating its rules.

International human rights groups have also condemned the move, which followed previous attempts by the government of Africa's most populous country to regulate social media.

Nigerian telecoms operators complied with a government directive Friday to suspend access to Twitter indefinitely.



The diplomatic missions of the EU, US, Britain, Canada and Ireland issued a joint statement late Saturday condemning the ban. "Banning systems of expression is not the answer," it said.

"Precisely the moment when Nigeria needs to foster inclusive dialogue and expression of opinions, as well as share vital information in this time of the Covid-19 pandemic."

"The path to a more secure Nigeria lies in more, not less, communication," it added.

More than 39 million Nigerians have a Twitter account, according to NOI polls, a public opinion and research organization based in Nigeria. The platform has played an important role in public discourse in the country, with hashtags #BringBackOurGirls after Boko Haram kidnapped 276 schoolgirls in 2014, and #EndSARS during anti-police brutality protests last year.

THE ORANGE SKY



A woman walks her dog at sunset in Pembroke, as Malta prepares to ease restrictions further and allow tourists to visit in larger numbers

NATO warns Russia, Belarus against threatening allies

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Brussels, June 6: NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg Sunday warned Russia and Belarus against threatening the alliance's allies, following the forced landing of a passenger plane within the European Union (EU) by Belarusian authorities.

"We are of course ready, in an emergency, to protect and defend any ally against any kind of threat coming from Minsk and Moscow," dpa news agency quoted Stoltenberg as saying to the Welt am Sonntag newspaper. "We are vigilant and we are following what is happening in Belarus very closely," he said. Belarus is becoming "more and more dependent" on Russia, he added.

Stoltenberg said NATO was seriously concerned about the closer cooperation between Moscow and Minsk in recent months. "We have had to learn in the past that Russia has massively violated the territorial integrity of states such as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova." He did not want to speculate too much, Stoltenberg said, noting, "NATO is a defensive alliance." Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, all members of NATO, share borders with Belarus.



cooperation between Moscow and Minsk in recent months. "We have had to learn in the past that Russia has massively violated the territorial integrity of states such as Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova." He did not want to speculate too much, Stoltenberg said, noting, "NATO is a defensive alliance." Lithuania, Latvia and Poland, all members of NATO, share borders with Belarus.

EL SALVADOR TO MAKE BITCOIN LEGAL TENDER

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

San Salvador, June 6: El Salvador President Nayib Bukele has announced that he would send a bill to Congress next week to make the bitcoin cryptocurrency a legal tender in the Central American country, in what will be a world first.

Bukele announced the move in a pre-recorded message played on Saturday at the Bitcoin 2021 conference in Miami, Florida, during a presentation hosted by Jack Mallers, founder digital wallet company Strike, reports dpa news agency.

"Next week I will send to Congress a bill that will make bitcoin a legal tender in El Salvador," Bukele said.

"In the short term this will gen-



erate jobs and help provide financial inclusion to thousands outside the formal economy," the President added.

Mallers said he has been working with Bukele to determine the logistics of the move.

"Over 70% of the active population of El Salvador doesn't have

a bank account. They're not in the financial system," Mallers said during the presentation.

"They asked me to help write a bill and that they viewed bitcoin as a world-class currency and that we needed to put together a bitcoin plan to help these people."

As cited by the Strike founder, the bill says that "in order to mitigate the negative impact from central banks, it becomes necessary to authorise the circulation of a digital currency with a supply that cannot be controlled by any central bank and is only altered in accord with objective and calculable criteria".

The International Labour Organization estimates that six out of every 10 Salvadorans are scraping a living out of the informal economy in the country.

Nasa announces two missions to Venus by 2030

THIS MARKS A CONSIDERABLE CHANGE IN DIRECTION FOR NASA'S PLANETARY SCIENCE DIVISION, WHICH HASN'T SENT A MISSION TO THE PLANET SINCE 1990.

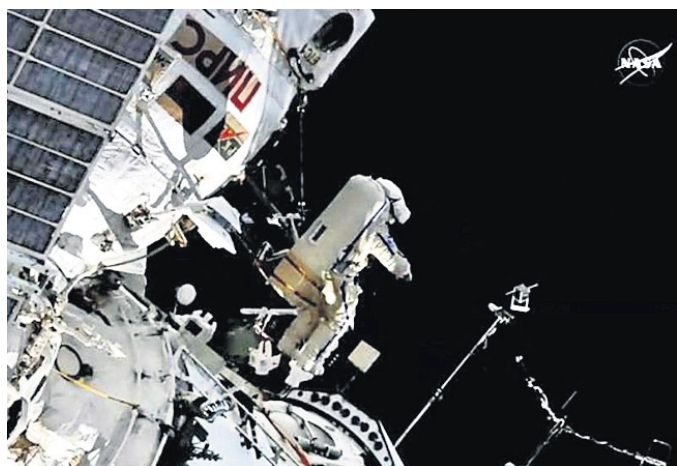
AGENCIES

Nottingham, June 6: For decades, the exploration of our solar system left one of our neighbouring planets, Venus, largely unexplored. Now, things are about to change. In the latest announcement from Nasa's solar system exploration programme, two missions have been given the go-ahead — and they're both bound for Venus. The two ambitious missions will launch between 2028 and 2030.

This marks a considerable change in direction for Nasa's planetary science division, which hasn't sent a mission to the planet since 1990. It's exciting news for space scientists like me.

Venus is a hostile world. Its atmosphere contains sulphuric acid and the surface temperatures are hot enough to melt lead. But it has not always been this way. It is thought Venus started out very similar to the Earth. So what happened?

While on Earth, carbon is mainly



trapped in rocks, on Venus it has escaped into the atmosphere — making it roughly 96% carbon dioxide. This has led to a runaway greenhouse effect, pushing surface temperatures up to 750 kelvin (470 degree celsius or 900 degree Fahrenheit).

The planet's history makes it an

excellent place to study the greenhouse effect and to learn how to manage it on Earth. We can use models which plot the atmospheric extremes of Venus, and compare the results to what we see back home.

But, the extreme surface conditions are one of the reasons planetary exploration missions have

avoided Venus. The high temperature means a very high pressure of 90 bars (equivalent to roughly one kilometre underwater) which is enough to instantly crush most planetary landers. It might not come as a surprise, then, that missions to Venus haven't always gone to plan.

Most of the exploration done so far was carried out by the then Soviet Union between the 1960s and the 1980s. There are some notable exceptions, such as Nasa's Pioneer Venus mission in 1972 and the European Space Agency's Venus Express mission in 2006.

The first landing happened in 1970, when the Soviet Union's Venera 7 crashed due to the parachute melting. But it managed to transmit 20 minutes of data back to Earth. The first surface images were taken by Venera 9, followed by Veneras 10, 13 and 14.

THE DESCENT MISSION The first of the two selected Nasa missions will be known as Davinci+

(a shortening of Deep Atmosphere of Venus Investigations of Noble Gases, Chemistry and Imaging). It includes a descent probe, meaning it will be dropped through the atmosphere, taking measurements as it goes. The descent has three stages with the first investigating the entire atmosphere.

The probe will be looking at the composition of the atmosphere in detail, providing information on each layer as it falls. We know sulphuric acid is confined to cloud layers at around 50km (30 miles) up, and we know that the atmosphere is 97% carbon dioxide.

But studying trace elements can provide information on how the atmosphere ended up in this state. The second stage will be looking at lower altitudes to measure weather properties such as wind speed, temperature and pressure in detail. The last stage take surface images in high resolution. While this is very common for Mars, it has always been a challenge on Venus.

'Delta variant 40% more transmissible'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London, June 6: The Delta variant of Covid-19, or the B.1.617.2 variant first identified in India, is around 40% more transmissible than the Alpha or so-called Kent variant of concern (VOC), UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock said Sunday.

The senior Cabinet minister said the spread of the Delta variant, behind a recent rise in coronavirus infections in the country, had made the unlocking plans set for June 21 more difficult.

However, he pointed out that a majority of those in hospital as a result of the Delta variant had not had a vaccine at all but only a few had both doses of a vaccine, which the minister said reflects the scientific advice that one vaccine is not quite as effective against the Delta VOC as against the Alpha variant.



business



I want to share it for all startups, entrepreneurs and scientists, whoever is innovating and leading research institutions; to join our mission by bringing new technology solutions, quicker and more affordable healthcare solutions for Indians
YUVRAJ SINGH | FORMER INTERNATIONAL CRICKETER

MANIPAL HOSPITALS, DR REDDY'S JOIN HANDS

Leading hospital chain Manipal Hospitals on Sunday said it has collaborated with Dr Reddy's Laboratories to add the Sputnik V Covid-19 vaccine in its existing vaccine portfolio that consists of Covishield and Covaxin



of the day quote

Tamil Nadu has to take back its first position in the growth rate at country level, for which the government will initiate more pro-active measures
PALANIVEL THIAGARAJAN | FINANCE MINISTER, TAMIL NADU

Demand is expected to bounce back from June onwards on the back of easing of restrictions, increasing vaccination and a normal monsoon
ASHISH GUPTA | BRAND DIRECTOR, VOLKSWAGEN PASSENGER CARS (INDIA)

In the mid-SUV, our market share is actually quite low, even though Vitara Brezza is leading in the entry-SUV segment. In the mid-SUV, we have the S-Cross, which we recently launched with a new engine in August
SHASHANK SRIVASTAVA | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (MARKETING AND SALES), MSI

2nd wave not to impact agri sector: Niti Aayog

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 6: Niti Aayog Member (Agriculture) Ramesh Chand Sunday said the second Covid-19 wave will not impact the Indian agriculture sector in anyway as rural areas saw spread of infections in May when agriculture activities remained at bare minimum.

In an interview with PTI, Chand said that India's policies on subsidy, price and technology have remained too much in favour of rice, wheat and sugarcane, and there is need to make the procurement and minimum support price policy favourable to pulses.

"Covid-19 cases started spreading in the rural areas in the month of May, with the beginning of the month of May, and agriculture activity in the month of May is bare minimal, particularly land-based activities," he added.

"...It (May) is a peak summer month and no crop is sown, no crop is harvested except little bit vegetables and some off-season crops," Chand further explained.

Agriculture activity, Chand said, peaks in the month of March or till



middle of April, after that it comes down significantly and again peaks with the arrival of monsoon.

"So even if less availability of labour is there in the month of May till mid-June, I don't think that will impact agriculture in anyway," Chand said.

He pointed out that labour force is moving to rural areas as there has been a lot of increase in Covid-19 cases in urban areas and these labourers are willing to work in the agriculture sector for livelihood.

"From the output side, you look

at agriculture market data. Market for agriculture (is) just working normally everywhere," he argued.

The Niti Aayog member noted that income from the agriculture sector, which is a major source of earning for rural people, is intact.

"So that large segment of rural income...It is remaining intact and rural demand on that count will not be affected," he opined. Chand added that only in case of some services which are not working in rural area, there is an issue.

"I would say that the government should keep its emphasis on

From the output side, you look at agriculture market data. Market for agriculture (is) just working normally everywhere

RAMESH CHAND | MEMBER (AGRICULTURE), NITI AAYOG

MGNREGA," Chand suggested.

The Niti Aayog member, however, admitted that remittance from urban areas that has been going to rural areas and aiding rural demand will fall.

On being asked why India is not self-sufficient in pulses production, he said there is need to increase pulses area under irrigation and that will make a lot of difference in production and stability in prices.

He added that "In India, our subsidy policy, our price policy, technology policy, have remained too much in favour of rice and wheat and sugarcane. So I strongly believe that along with the technological breakthrough, we need to make our procurement, our MSP favourable for pulses".

Can India suspend Twitter if it fails to comply with IT rules?



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 6: As India takes its fight with Twitter over non-compliance of the new IT rules to the final round, can the country go ahead and block or suspend the platform the way Nigeria has done?

The Nigerian government has indefinitely suspended Twitter, just days after it accused the US micro-blogging platform of double standards and supporting the secessionists.

The government expressed doubts about Twitter's operations in the country, after it deleted a tweet by President Muhammadu Buhari.

In India, Twitter is in the eye of storm for not complying with the new IT (intermediary) rules 2021 requires the social media firms to appoint a grievance officer in the country. The company has requested the IT Ministry to consider a minimum of three-month extension in order for the company to implement the new intermediary guidelines.

Amid the ongoing notice-and-letter game with Twitter, the Indian government has now told the micro-blogging platform it is clear from the responses of the company that till date it has not informed about the details of the Chief Compliance Officer as required under the Rules.

The IT Ministry also said in its fresh notice that the Resident Grievance Officer and Nodal Contact Person nominated by the platform are not its employees in India as required under the new rules.

According to experts, although it may be difficult for India to impose a suspension of services on Twitter for indefinite period as done by Nigeria, the company must ensure it has its grievance officers in India and not in the US.

"If such a drastic action (like Nigeria) is taken against Twitter,

In India, Twitter is in the eye of storm for not complying with the new IT (intermediary) rules

then similar enforcement of law will have to be ensured across other social media platforms including Facebook and WhatsApp," said Virag Gupta, the lawyer of former RSS ideologue K.N. Govindacharya, who is arguing the social media Designated Officers' matter before the Delhi High Court.

"As per new intermediary rules, Twitter and other social media giants must have their grievance officers in India. These companies are stakeholders in the intermediary rules and must comply with new IT rules, in order to ensure protection under Section 79 of IT Act, and further criminal liability," Gupta told IANS.

Twitter did not comment on the latest notice by the IT Ministry.

The platform and the Centre are at the loggerheads for quite some time. The war of words has been going on, but no stern action has been taken by the government to date.

According to leading cyberlaw expert Pavan Duggal, India needs to effectively enforce the provisions of the IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, which have sought to define new parameters of due diligence that need to be followed by social media intermediaries.

"India needs to ensure that the new IT rules do not become mere paper tiger and are effectively implemented. Measures like invoking the criminal liability against social media companies could be a good way to transmit a message of deterrence to social media service providers that the Indian Cyberlaw means business," Duggal told IANS.

'Need to increase green cover, protect earth'

POST NEWS NETWORK

Bhubaneswar, June 6: All inclusive approach to protect the environment and increase the green cover on mother earth, as company planned for plantation of 2.7 lakh trees over 150 hectare of land in Odisha during the current financial year 2021-22, said PK Sinha, Chairman-cum-Managing Director, Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL).

On the occasion of World Environment Day, this year, Sinha unfurled environment flag at the company headquarters and administered an oath to senior officers present at the venue as well as others connected virtually from the project areas in Angul, Jharsuguda and Sundergarh districts.



"With the world beginning to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, there is increasing recognition that healing from the pandemic is linked to healing the planet," he said.

Asserting that ecosystem restoration can help protect and improve livelihoods, regulate disease, reduce risk of natural disasters and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, Sinha said MCL committed to protect the environment and conserve natural resources by adhering to best practices in a sustainable manner.

CMD congratulated operations teams at MCL for achieving a rare feat of producing a record 94 per cent coal.

SHORT TAKES

Samsung adds smart healthcare centres

Bhubaneswar: Samsung India has added new Samsung Smart Healthcare centres at Government hospitals across the country, as part of its citizenship initiative, helping Covid Warriors perform faster Covid-19 diagnosis. This addition takes the number of hospitals in the country covered under this citizenship program to 142. In the last year alone, Samsung ramped up the program to add 56 new Samsung Smart Healthcare centres in hospitals across 19 states, contributing to Covid management. This included 15 Smart Healthcare centres in the last two months.

'Coal India alive and sensitive'

New Delhi: Coal India chief Pramod Agrawal has said that the coal behemoth is alive and sensitive to the need of environmental protection and the PSU pursues sustainable mining practices persistently. The statement assumes significance especially when there has been concerns about the global climate change on account of burning of fossil fuels, including coal, which releases green gases into the atmosphere.

Dettol to replace logo

New Delhi: FMCG major Reckitt, which owns popular hygiene brand Dettol, Sunday said it is replacing its logo on its handwash with the image of Covid protectors along with their inspiring story. Under its #DettolSalutes campaign, Reckitt has curated 100 such stories from across India and carried them on its liquid handwash packs in honour of the protectors who have helped numerous people during the pandemic.

HDFC commits ₹40 cr for relief

New Delhi: As part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative, HDFC Ltd has committed an initial amount of ₹40 crore this year for Covid-19 support and pledged to increase this commitment over the next two quarters based on need. The Covid-19 initiatives are being undertaken through its philanthropic arm the HT Parekh Foundation. HDFC Ltd said in a statement. Through partnerships with government and charitable hospitals, HDFC has planned healthcare initiatives to support long-term health infrastructure across India, it said.

Indian Public Cloud market to reach \$9.5bn by 2025

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, June 6: The Indian Public Cloud services market revenue reached \$3.6 billion for 2020 and is set to reach \$9.5 billion by 2025, grow at a CAGR of 21.5 per cent, according to a new IDC report.

For the second half of 2020, the Indian public cloud services market totalled \$1.9 billion, according to IDC's 'Worldwide Semiannual Public Cloud Services Tracker'.

The Public Cloud services market includes infrastructure-as-a-service (IaaS), platform-as-a-service (PaaS) solutions and software-as-a-service (SaaS).

"Public clouds played a critical role for organisations in 2020, driven by business continuity, flexibility and agility. Cloud will become crucial as organisations expedite the development process and deployment of business applications to meet the changing work and business environment," said Rishu Sharma, Principal Analyst, Cloud



and Artificial Intelligence, IDC India.

SaaS continued to be the largest component of the overall public cloud services market, followed by IaaS and PaaS last year.

The spending continues to accelerate, with the top two service providers holding 49 per cent of the Indian public cloud services market for 2020.

Even though enterprises in the country have been discussing cloud adoption for the past few years, the Covid-19 pandemic forced en-

terprises to expedite their cloud strategy.

"This accelerated cloud adoption in the country by several years. Businesses started adopting cloud to host a wide array of applications ranging from email servers to many complex systems like data warehousing, advanced analytics, etc.," said Harish Krishnakumar, Senior Market Analyst, IDC India.

There was also an increased migration of enterprise applications to the cloud.

FPIs INVEST ₹8,000 CRORE IN INDIAN EQUITIES LAST WEEK

AGENCIES

Mumbai, June 6: Amid robust fourth quarter earnings and declining daily cases of Covid-19, foreign portfolio investors (FPI) have made a comeback in June and invested nearly ₹8,000 crore during May 31-June 4. FPIs made a net investment of ₹7,967 crore during the week, as per NSDL data.

The surge in foreign funds have also led the Indian stock market to touch new highs. The Nifty50 on the National Stock Exchange recorded a record high of ₹15,733.60 during the week. The inflow comes



after two consecutive months of outflow.

In April and May, FPIs net selling stood at ₹9,659 crore and ₹2,954 crore in Indian equities, respectively.

The aggregate net investment of FPIs into Indian equities so far in 2021 stands at ₹51,086 crore.

'Original content creators lose money as digital piracy rises'

AGENCIES

New Delhi, June 6: The second wave of Covid-19 has accelerated digital piracy in India, which was already on the rise when the pandemic hit the country last year, making original content creators lose money by up to five times of what they make through genuine displays, according to a senior official of consultancy firm EY India.

The shift of organised content from theatres to OTT platforms with the advent of new technologies has also increased digital

piracy as these platforms don't come for free.

"The second wave has accelerated this problem because more and more people are now looking at these things sitting at home, and now the technology infrastructure enables you to view anything and everything from home," EY India, Partner - Forensic and Integrity Services, Mukul Shrivastava, told PTI.

He further said, "The situation was the same then (first wave) and probably worse now because people are now used to watching every-

thing on an OTT platform and they would go to any angle to watch free content."

In the new age, some of the methods by which people pillage video content include - password and credential sharing, sharing files over internet and via social media, and purchasing illegal streaming boxes.

On the risk of original content creators losing revenue due to piracy, he said, "I think that is a huge problem. We definitely saw that increased last year and it continues this year also. We are working with clients on how to curtail this piracy."

India likely to gain from global min 15% 'corporate tax pact'

THE FINANCE MINISTERS OF G7 COUNTRIES, SATURDAY REACHED A LANDMARK DEAL ON TAXING MNCs AS PER WHICH THE MINIMUM GLOBAL TAX RATE WOULD BE AT LEAST 15%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, June 6: India is likely to benefit from the global minimum 15 per cent corporate tax rate pact inked by the world's richest nations as the effective domestic tax rate is above the threshold, and the country would continue to attract investment, tax experts said Sunday.

The Finance Ministers of G-7 countries, comprising US, UK, Germany, France, Canada, Italy and Japan, Saturday reached a landmark deal on taxing multinational companies as per which the minimum global tax rate would be at least 15 per cent.

They also agreed to put in place

measures to ensure businesses pay taxes in the countries where they operate, a move aimed at plugging loopholes in cross-border taxation.

Nangia Andersen India Chairman Rakesh Nangia said the G7 commitment to global minimum tax rate of 15 per cent works well for the US government and most other countries in western Europe. However, some low-tax European jurisdictions such as the Netherlands, Ireland and Luxembourg and some in the Caribbean rely largely on tax rate arbitrage to attract MNCs.

"The global pact would face the challenge of getting other major nations on the same page, since this impinges on the right of the sov-



ereign to decide a nation's tax policy," Nangia added.

India had in September 2019 slashed corporate taxes for domestic companies to 22 per cent and to 15 per cent for new domestic manufacturing units. The con-

cessional tax rate was extended to the existing domestic companies as well, subject to certain conditions.

Consulting firm AKM Global Tax Partner Amit Maheshwari said India is expected to benefit as it is a big market for a large

number of tech companies.

"It remains to be seen how the allocation would be between market countries. Also, the global minimum tax of at least 15 per cent means that in all probability the concessional Indian tax regime would still work, and India would continue to attract investment," Maheshwari added.

EY India National Tax Leader Sudhir Kapadia said the global corporate tax pact is a path breaking one, especially for large and developing countries like India which would always find it very difficult to keep corporate tax rates artificially lower in a bid to increase much needed foreign direct investments in the country.

"Even the recently announced lower rate of 15 per cent for new manufacturing units in India just about meets this new threshold, thus, not affecting this much needed boost to manufacturing in India. Equally important is the explicit granting of taxing rights to 'market countries' for a share of global profits of multinational corporations, thus aligning right to taxation with place of economic contribution," Kapadia added.

The decision of the Group of seven (G-7) advanced economies would be placed before the G-20 countries, a group of developing and developed nations, in a meeting scheduled for July in Venice.

SHORT TAKES

Milkha stable

Chandigarh: Indian sprint icon Milkha Singh is showing 'continuous improvement' as he battles Covid-19 in the Intensive Care Unit of PGIMER hospital here, the facility's spokesperson said Sunday. The 91-year-old is being closely monitored by a medical team at the hospital. "Iconic sprinter Shri Milkha Singh ji, who has been admitted in the ICU of PGIMER since June 3 and getting treatment for Covid-19, is showing continuous improvement," hospital spokesperson Prof Ashok Kumar stated. Milkha's family also issued a statement stating that his condition is stable.

Kuldeep hopeful

Mumbai: Spinner Kuldeep Yadav is disappointed at missing out on India's tour of England for the WTC final against New Zealand and a five-match Test series against the hosts. He is however, hopeful that he will get picked for upcoming tour of Sri Lanka. "I am disappointed not to be part of the Indian team to England. So hopefully I will go to Sri Lanka and get the chance to perform there. Cricket should continue happening, every player is sad when he is not in the team," Kuldeep said.

Tame stalemate

London: The first of the two Test series between England and New Zealand ended in a draw at the Lord's here Sunday. With one day lost due to rain, it was the most likely result possible. New Zealand declared at 169 for six in the second innings setting England a target of 273. However, the hosts were never interested in the chase and finished on 170 for three for the game to end in a draw. Opener Dom Sibley (60 n o, 207b, 3x4) and skipper Joe Root (40, 71b, 5x4) held the England innings together as the Kiwi pacers tried their best to take early wickets. AGENCIES

20-TIME GRAND SLAM CHAMPION NOT READY TO PUT PRESSURE ON HIS KNEES

Federer withdraws



Roger Federer plays a forehand during his third round match against Dominik Koepfer at the French Open

AGENCIES

Paris, June 6: Roger Federer pulled out of the French Open on Sunday, less than 12 hours after he won a difficult and lengthy third round match. The tournament committee announced the 20-time Grand Slam champion's withdrawal. Federer said in a statement that it is important for him to listen to his body as he returns to action after two operations on his right knee. "After discussions with my team, I decided that I should withdraw from the French Open today (Sunday). After two knee operations and more than a year of rehabilitation, it's important that I listen to my body and not rush back into competition," Federer said in a statement. Earlier in the day, the Swiss had indicated that he would withdraw. Just a couple of months away from

It is important that I listen to my body and do not rush into competition. So I decided to pull out of the French Open as my team said

ROGER FEDERER

his 40th birthday Federer took three hours and 35 minutes to achieve a 7-6 (7-5), 6-7 (3-7), 7-6 (7-4), 7-5 victory over 59th-ranked Dominik Koepfer. The match began Saturday night and ended at around 1.00am Sunday morning on Court Philippe Chatrier. "I don't know if I am going to play," said Federer after the match. "I have to decide whether or not to continue playing. Is it too risky to keep putting pressure on the knee? Is it a good time to rest?" he asked. Federer has always said Wimbledon is his priority this year.

He is chasing a ninth title at the All England Club where the action starts June 28.

"Every match I have to reassess the situation and see the next morning in what state I wake up and how my knee is doing," informed Federer. "I wish I could play the way Novak (Djokovic) and Rafa (Nadal) are playing, but frankly speaking, I am not," the Swiss added.

Serena knocked out

In a women's singles match played later in the day Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova reached the last eight with a 5-7, 6-3, 6-2 win over former World No.1 Viktoria Azarenka. However, the biggest upset was to come later in the evening as Elena Rybakina knocked out 23-time Grand Slam winner Serena Williams 6-3, 7-5. The American was not her usual self in the contest.

Manjrekar won't brand Ashwin as a 'great' spinner

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, June 6: Former India batsman Sanjay Manjrekar has said that he has a 'few problems' when people call Ravichandran Ashwin as 'one of the all-time greats of the game'. The off-spinner, who has played 78 Tests and taken 409 wickets, has 30 five-wicket hauls, most of them on Indian pitches. "When people start talking about him as being one of the all-time greats of the game then I have a few problems. When you look at SENA (South Africa, England, New Zealand and Australia) countries, Ashwin doesn't have a single five-wicket haul there," Manjrekar was quoted as saying by a cricket-specific website.

Of Ashwin's 409 Test wickets, 286 have come in India, including 24 five-wicket hauls. Manjrekar said that all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja has matched the off-spinner in the last four years.

"The other thing is when you talk about him (Ashwin) running through sides on Indian pitches that are suited to his kind of bowling. However, in the last four years, Jadeja has matched him with wicket-taking abilities," Manjrekar pointed out. "Then, interestingly, in the last series against England, Axar Patel got more wickets than Ashwin on similar pitches. So that is my problem with accepting Ashwin as a real all-time great," he added.

BLUE TIGERS TRYING TO END WINLESS STREAK

Positive India eye win over B'desh



Indian skipper Sunil Chhetri trains with a teammate in Doha. PHOTO: AIFC.COM

AGENCY

Doha, June 6: A winless India desperately need a positive result against neighbours Bangladesh in their joint World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers match here Monday, if they want to avoid the ignominy of playing in the qualifying play-off round of the continental show-piece. India are already out of contention for a World Cup berth but still in the reckoning for a place in the 2023 Asian Cup.

However, with just three points from six matches, India are at the fourth spot in Group E and are not yet guaranteed an automatic berth in the third round of the Asian Cup qualifiers. Only the best four fourth-

place finishers in each of the eight groups directly qualify for the third round of the Asian Cup qualifiers.

Historically, 105th-ranked India have the edge over Bangladesh (184th). India had beaten Bangladesh twice in the World Cup qualifying rounds, though the wins were registered way back in 1985 (2-1 result in both double-legged matches).

"We still haven't opened our account in Doha. We need to focus (against Bangladesh) and then the next game," said senior defender Sandesh Jhingan. But India cannot be complacent as Bangladesh can be tough opponents. The last time the two sides met in 2019 in Kolkata, the Blue Tigers could only manage a 1-1 draw.

Perez triumphs in Azerbaijan GP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Baku (Azerbaijan), June 6: Sergio Pérez won the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in a two-lap shootout after championship leader Max Verstappen crashed while leading with a tire failure and Lewis Hamilton went off course trying to seize the win on the standing restart. Verstappen was four laps away from a second consecutive victory Sunday when his Red Bull sud-

denly slammed hard into the wall with a puncture to his left rear tire. The Dutchman climbed from his car, inspected the tire and kicked it in anger before stomping off in disgust over the race-changing failure. "Is he OK?" radioed rival and seven-time champion Hamilton.

Four-time champion Sebastian Vettel took second to give Aston Martin its first ever F1 podium in an impressive drive after qualifying 11th. It was Vettel's highest fin-

ish since 2019. Pierre Gasly was third for AlphaTauri as all three drivers made their first trip to the podium this season.

Pérez was the leader but Hamilton shot past him in his attempt to win the race and reclaim the points lead from Verstappen. But he failed to brake in the first corner and his Mercedes slid off track. This was the first time after 54 consecutive races that Hamilton failed to get to the points table.

4 MORE DAYS TO GO...

It has taken more than a year for the world to find any semblance of normalcy in the midst of the Covid-19 carnage. The pandemic brought the entire world to a grinding halt last year, which forced all major sporting events to either be cancelled or postponed by a few months or even by one whole year, as is the case with UEFA Euro 2020. In less than a week's time, the long-awaited, month-long 24-team extravaganza will finally get underway. Orissa POST takes a look at the groups...



GROUP B: Belgium, Denmark, Russia, Finland

BELGIUM (BEL)

FIFA ranking: 1 Euro appearances: 5 times Best finish: Runners-up (1980)

Currently ranked the No.1 team in the World, Belgium are one of the favourites in the Euro 2020 competition. However, it remains to be seen whether they live up to their promise. In the past also, Belgium have flattered to deceive. Belgium won all their 10 qualifying games and became one of the first teams to seal their spot in Euro 2020. The team coached by Roberto Martinez and captained by Eden Hazard have a number of brilliant players in their ranks. Belgium have always been a strong team but have failed to win a major title so far. With players like Romelu Lukaku, Kevin de Bruyne, Dries Mertens and not to forget Hazard himself, Belgium will definitely seek to win this major title that has eluded them. Till date, Belgium's best show has been a runners-up finish in the 1980 edition of the European Championships.

Coach: Roberto Martinez



KEY PLAYER
Kevin De Bruyne

GROUP B FIXTURES					
Date		Match			Time (IST)
June 12	DEN		vs		09:30pm
June 12	BEL		vs		11:30pm
June 16	FIN		vs		05:30pm
June 17	DEN		vs		09:30pm
June 21	RUS		vs		12:30am
June 21	FIN		vs		11:00pm

Telecast: SONY TEN Network

DENMARK (DEN)

FIFA ranking: 10 Euro appearances: 8 times Best finish: Winners (1992)

The 1992 winners of the European Championships, Denmark have lots of quality in their side. They made it to Euro 2020 without losing a single game in the qualifiers. However, they managed to win only four of the eight matches they played, the remaining ones finishing in a stalemate. The current Danish team are different from previous sides that had more attacking flair. Present head coach, Kasper Hjulmand is a person who lays special emphasis on defence. The player to watch out for in the side led by Simon Kjaer, is Christian Eriksen, who scored five goals in the qualifying stages. Striker Andreas Skov Olsen has the speed and deft touch to trouble any defence. In Kasper Schmeichel, the Danish side has a solid player under the bar while midfielder Mathias Jensen is the playmaker of the side.



KEY PLAYER
Christian Eriksen

Coach: Kasper Hjulmand

RUSSIA (RUS)

FIFA ranking: 38 Euro appearances: 4 times Best finish: 3rd place (2008)

Russia were in the same group with Belgium during the qualifying stages of Euro 2020. Except for losing their two games to Belgium, they won the remaining eight matches to finish second in the group and book their spot for Euro 2020. Not much is known about their players as they rarely venture out to play in top European clubs. Currently they are 38th in FIFA rankings. Soviet Union, before the country broke up, was a dominant force in the European Championships winning the title in 1960 and finishing second best in the 1964, 1972, 1988 editions of the tournament. However, since dissolution of the Soviet Union, the results have not been much to cheer about. They managed a third-place finish in 2008. Russia's head coach Stanislav Cherchesov however, is optimistic that his team will put up a good show against all opposition and finish among the top four. Forward Artem Dzyuba will lead the team in Euro 2020.



KEY PLAYER
Artem Dzyuba

Coach: Stanislav Cherchesov

FINLAND (FIN)

FIFA ranking: 54 Euro appearances: None Best finish: N/A

Even the footballers of Finland could not believe when they qualified for the Euro Championships in November 2019 with a 3-0 victory over Liechtenstein. In the qualifying stages, Finland finished second in the six-team group to qualify for Euro 2020 which will be the country's maiden appearance in a major football tournament. Coached by Markku Kanerva, the Finnish national side will try to spring a surprise or two. However, they are considered as the weak links in Group B and all the other three sides will definitely be gunning for three points when they face Finland. The key players of the team are Teemu Pukki (forward) and Glen Kamara (midfielder). The Finnish team will be led by Tim Sperv and are currently ranked 54th in the world. So against competitors like Belgium, Russia and Denmark, the Finnish players will certainly have their work cut out. But as underdogs they will have nothing to lose.



KEY PLAYER
Teemu Pukki

Coach: Markku Kanerva